

THE BANKRUPTCY OF CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURALISM

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF HISTORY

BY

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VOLUME III

Twenty five Cents per Copy, Stamps or Coin

THE BRADFORD-BROWN EDUCATIONAL CO.
GALION, OHIO

Twentieth Thousand

1931

DEDICATION

This little book is gratefully dedicated to the workers in five adjoining fields of science, archaeology, anthropology, comparative interpretations of religion, biblical criticism and history. These scientists have made three showings which are changing all the ideas of orthodox Christians: (1) that Adam and Eve are not historical personages; (2) that, hence, the Jesus of the New Testament and the Prayer Book is not an historical person, and (3) that, therefore, there is no doctrine of Christian supernaturalism based upon the solid ground of the facts of history; but on the contrary, that the immense dogmatic structure of orthodox Christianity is an imaginary castle floating in the air, a fabrication of theories resting on clouds of myth.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The six little volumes in this series of booklets, entitled, *The Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*, are so many appeals by me to the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church for restoration to its House of Bishops. They are made from the important viewpoints of the trial, the sciences, history, philosophy, the Bible and sociology.

These appeals are based wholly upon science, for history and sociology are now as really sciences as geology and biology, and no professor of philosophy in any great university can hold his chair unless he is a scientific philosopher; even a theologian must be well acquainted with the field of science in which the phenomena of religion have been carefully investigated and compared, if he would command the attention of educated people by his sermons and books on Biblical subjects.

But while founding each one of my appeals on some rock of science, I realized that its effectiveness in the church as a plea for restoration to the house would be in proportion to its value to the world as an educator; and, therefore, I am doing all that in me lieth to make the booklets of the series primmers for high school boys and girls and post graduate text books for collegians.

Let me call attention especially to the first volume of this series, because its Memorials to the Court of Review, to the House of Bishops and to the House of Deputies give a bird's-eye view of the whole field of scientific culture, and also constitute a most thorough-going introduction to the succeeding volumes, throwing much light upon many of their representations.

The appeal of these little books is primarily to the General Convention; but, nevertheless, they will be found to be of equal or even greater interest to the rank and file of our church; also, to all orthodox and unorthodox Christians of every ecclesiastical name; indeed, to all the votaries of every supernaturalistic interpretation of religion, and even to so-called infidels and atheists. I would not have sustained the trial with its labor, expense and turmoil, if I had not seen that the issue involved in it is of universal and momentous concern.

Every article of the whole arch of Christian doctrine is involved in that issue. But I will mention only its two basic doctrines, the Fall of Adam and the Blood of Jesus. Do these doctrines stand for literal realities, as the Courts and House of Bishops contended at my trial, or for symbolic realities, as I contended?

Any man or woman who reads the first of this series of booklets will perceive with me the immenseness of this issue, at least vaguely; and if he goes on through the other five, he will see it as clearly as he ever saw anything by the light of the sun on a cloudless noonday.

Brownella Cottage,
Galion, Ohio
September 4th, 1930.

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY BROWN

THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE

WHOSOEVER will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith. Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

First, it is to be noted, that all and singular the twelve Articles, contained in this (Apostles') Creed, be so necessary to be believed for man's salvation, that whosoever being once taught will not constantly believe them, or will obstinately affirm the contrary of them, he or they cannot be the very members of Christ and His Spouse the Church, but be very infidels or heretics, and members of the Devil, with whom they shall perpetually be damned.

Second, it is to be noted, that all true Christian men ought and must most constantly believe, maintain, and defend all those things to be true, not only which be comprehended in this (Apostles') Creed, and in the other two symbols or Creeds, whereof the one was approved by the ancient General Councils, and the other was made by that holy man Athanasius; but also all other things which be comprehended in the whole body and Canon of the Bible.

Thirdly, that all true Christian men ought and must not only repute, take, and hold all the said things for the most holy, most sure, and most certain and infallible words of God, and such as neither ought or can be altered or convelled by any contrary opinion or authority; but also must take and interpret all the same things according to the selfsame sense and interpretation which the words of Scripture do purport and signify, and the holy approved doctors of the Church do agreeably entreat and defend.—
The Doctrine of the Church of England.

CONTENTS

Announcement	5
Introduction	9
Chapter I. The Origin and Evolution of Civilization	21
Chapter II. The Character of the Ancient Empires	45
Chapter III. How the Hebrews became a Civilized People	63
Chapter IV. The Pagan Cradle of Christianity.....	87
Chapter V. How the Church Triumphed in Europe	115
Chapter VI. The Making of the Dark Age.....	139
Chapter VII. How Europe was Reawakened.....	163
Chapter VIII. The Relation of the Church to Medieval Art	189
Chapter IX. Did the Church Persecute Science ..	213
Chapter X. The Cause of the Reformation.....	239
Chapter XI. The World after the Reformation...	265
Chapter XII. The Real Redemption of Man ...	287

HERBERT SPENCER'S DOCTRINE

O LORD, you know that I do not believe in you as you are described in the Bible and believed in by the church. You know that I do not believe in the Bible as the word of God. If it be true, as affirmed, that you created the universe, it follows that you have created all that is in it. You have created evil as well as good, the devil as well as the angels, hell as well as heaven. If you have made men at all, you have made them as they are. If they are good it is because you have made them so, if they are wicked, it is equally your work. If you are omnipotent and universal, as you are said to be, there can be no evil thing or wicked deed that is not the result of characters and conditions which you have created. If there is a hell and men are to be burned, it is because you have wished it to be so. All things are possible with you; had you wished to make men good and happy, you would have done so. It has pleased you to make them evil and wretched. You are not, then, good, nor do you love your creatures. It is evident their sufferings give you pleasure or you would make them happy. Could I believe in you, I could not worship you except through fear, the meanest of emotions, but the only one you seem desirous to excite. We cannot love you for the good you have done, for it serves only to render us more miserable by contrast with the evil you have forced us to endure. And so, O Lord, if the Bible be truly your word, and you are as the Old Testament describes you, I can only hate you and be thankful that I do not believe. And now O Lord, if I am wrong it is because you have made me so for you can make me believe and do what you please. Created by you, I am a mere creature in your hands and am responsible for nothing. I have not the power to choose between good and evil, as I am told I should do, for I can judge of right and wrong only through the use of a brain created by you in the full knowledge of the conclusions it would lead me to; with you and not with me lies the responsibility. I can only be thankful that I am not cowardly enough to fear nor weak enough to worship so horrible a creature as the God of the church. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

In this third volume of the series of six small books in which I show how near-sighted was the attempt to represent my opinions as those of an isolated if not eccentric thinker, we turn from science to history.

In the second volume I proved that the accredited facts of science which are taught in our colleges and universities compel us to abandon the fundamental doctrines of supernaturalistic Christianity, unless they be understood symbolically; and, besides, I put forward serious reasons for believing that such is the conviction of our leading men of science. Few of them associate with any church, and they are strangely reluctant to say clearly in sufficient detail what they believe.

Almost all the eminent men of science who have in the last ten years written about religion, in the sense of expressing and making entirely clear their personal convictions, have pleaded only that there is a vaguely conceived power, an energy, a mind behind the phenomena of the universe. This is mysticism and I reject it as completely as I do spiritism. In this they are giving a philosophical meaning to words which are used differently in their science. I have shown, and will later again show, that few experts in modern philosophy will support them.

But it is more important to notice that even these men of science and the scientific philosophers who plead for impersonal deities are few in number and lacking in eminence. The silence of the great majority and most outstanding is explained only by the famous analysis of their beliefs by Professor Leuba; at least more than two-thirds of our greater scientists and philosophers, do not believe in a personal God or a personal immortality.

10 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

And even the few who do believe these doctrines are not orthodox Christians unless their belief is the utterly impossible one of the Biblical saints, Nicene fathers and Reformation doctors concerning the existence of God as a triune personality and the future existence of man in either a heaven above the earth or a hell below it. But no educated man or woman so believes either of these doctrines.

It appears, then, that so far as the divine trinity of orthodox Christianity is concerned, there is a grim truth in that apparently frivolous saying of a French philosopher of the last century: Science has conducted God to its frontiers, thanking him for his provisional services. But the conclusion of the fundamentalists, that they will therefore expel science from our colleges or falsify its teaching, is as futile in its aim as it is wrong, and not less useless is the attempt of modernists to force the facts of science into their new formularies.

I have referred to a book by Professor Leuba, *The Belief in God and Immortality*, which tells the result of a private inquiry into the beliefs of a thousand American men of science whose names were selected as representative by twelve of the most eminent men in each branch of science. For the purpose of this inquiry history and sociology were included, and the result will surprise those who think that what is usually called science is the only or the chief branch of modern knowledge that is fatal to the old beliefs. It was found that, while a little more than one-third of the greater physicists (whose unbelief is so often explained on the ground that they deal only with dead matter) believe in God, less than one-third of the historians professed that belief.

There have been some feeble attempts made to belittle the work of Professor Leuba, though it is a

strictly scientific inquiry, but no one has ventured to dispute the relative proportions of unbelief which it reveals between scientists and historians. If any man were so disposed, I should call his attention to two significant and well-known facts.

The first is that in the manifesto of support to religion (vague as it was in comparison with Leuba's clear statements and figures) which Professor Osborn and Dr. Millikan organized, the names of our historians were conspicuously absent though the subscribers were certainly not all men of science.

The second and weightier fact is that, although quite a number of scientific men have in recent years written works or essays on their belief in God (not the God of the orthodox church but a vague cosmic principle) hardly one of the greater historians of our time has followed their example. If then science is godless, if its teaching prevents men from subscribing literally to our creeds, what shall we say of history?

Will our fundamentalists now look for some element that they may cut out of the teaching of history? There is no such element. It is the uniform silence of the historical record, the complete absence of any voice but the voice of man, that impresses historians, as it impressed me when, to prevent the loss of faith and the disgrace of a trial for heresy, I hopefully turned from modern science to modern history. And it must surely make a deep impression on every thoughtful man (if it is true, as certainly it is) that in the entire chronicle of man's stumbling efforts we find not the slightest trace of the aid of a supernaturalistic power.

A few astronomers and physicists say that they find evidence of a great cosmic power in or behind the structure of the universe. A few biologists find traces

12 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

of the same power in the shaping of beautiful flowers and the ingenious frames of animals. But if there were this vast, intelligent and beneficent reality which they call power or mind, and the church calls God, surely we should expect far more confidently to see it in the slow shaping of man's ideals and institutions.

And in history, just where we should most expect it, the experts are in a greater number than ever opposed or indifferent to the idea of a personal God. A few may believe with the modernists in a vague, intangible, unprovable general guidance of the course of evolution. But open any page of a manual of modern history and do you find any force mentioned except the slowly developing wisdom and power of man?

Did my accusers, the heresy hunting bishops, reflect on this when they condemned as eccentric or untrue my alleged heretical propositions? I think not, else I would have to conclude that they really were as ignorant of the beliefs of modern historians as they seem to have been of those of modern scientists and philosophers. They picked out from my booklet, *Communism and Christianity*, as propositions which they thought it was quite safe to condemn, such sentences as these:

1. On page 22. Within the social realm, humanity is my new divinity, and your divinity (my old one) is a symbol of it, or else, so I think, he is at best a fiction and at worst a superstition.

And I am now going to prove that in the light of the long record of social evolution which we call history a man is compelled to adopt that position, and a large majority of our greater historians have adopted it.

Here is another proposition which the House of Bishops pronounced to be crude and extravagant:

4. On page 61. Do you not now see with me that the christ of the world is not a conscious, personal God, but an unconscious, impersonal machine? It is to the machine of man, not a lamb of god, to which we may hopefully look for the taking away of the sins of the world.

But that is only saying in simple language what the large majority of historians and sociologists, the experts on the forces which have made progress in the past and make for progress in the present and future, are saying in more learned language. Does any person seriously doubt this? If so, will he tell us why, when an expert on religion, a man who commands their confidence, asks a group, not selected by himself, of our greater historians and sociologists if they believe in God, more than two-thirds reply that they have no such belief? And we are surely reasonable when we suppose that those who decline to tell their convictions were not on the side of the fundamentalists or even the modernists.

The reasons why the survey of the history of the race does not dispose the majority of experts to recognize a personal God will be made ever clearer in the course of this little book. Here I want to call your attention to the fact that even the minority of expert historians who do believe in God do not say that they find the finger of God in history. They may be impressed by the splendor of the heavens; but the majority of the astronomical experts see in it no such supernaturalistic significance. They may appeal to the facts of biology, which do not seem to suggest religious lessons to many biologists, or they may rely on philosophical arguments

14 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

which are, as we shall see in the fourth volume, out of date in philosophy. They do not appeal to history. What must impress any man who carefully watches modern literature is that history as a whole has become completely godless.

At one time historians used to write large works on the clear trace of providence in the story of man. How many years, how many decades, is it since such a work was written by a distinguished historian? You may get it from a biologist or a medical man, but who among the hundreds of professors of history in our day attempts it? Not one outstanding historian to-day would dream of supporting the fundamentalist, who sees miraculous interferences in the course of human events.

But how many will even endorse the claim of the modernist that because the human race does in the long run make progress there must be a conscious personal God directing the development? Modernists call it the providence of God in history. Let the modernist tell us how many eminent historians have adopted what they evidently regard as their profound view of history; and then, perhaps, they will cease to speak of my view as superficial.

There is an even more important aspect of this question of history and theology. It is an essential part of my pleading that the ancient formularies of our creeds and Prayer Book were shaped by the knowledge which men had in early or medieval times, and that, since there has been a vast correction of that knowledge by modern science and history, we are compelled, if we would keep the formularies, to take them in a symbolical sense.

Now this obviously applies more to history than to science. In the second volume we had not often to correct statements of fact in the formularies. We all agree to take such representations as the firmament of Genesis with the waters above it, the ascent of Elijah or Jesus into heaven, symbolically. What we did in that volume was to show that masses of new facts must alter our general ideas of the nature of the world and man.

But it is different with history. Not only had the ancient writers of our formularies false views of the history of man, but modern theological literature teems with historical statements which contradict the teaching of our expert historians. The history of the Hebrews is told falsely in almost the whole of the literature of the theologians; and, what is worse, the faith of our people is largely based upon that false version of history.

An entirely false view of the character of such older peoples as the Babylonians and Egyptians is still quite generally found in church literature. Assyriologists and Egyptologists smile at our ignorance when we speak of those peoples as, in comparison with the Hebrews, living in darkness and the shadow of death.

We are not honest about the origin of Christianity, as scores of modern expert historians have studied it, or about the moral and spiritual condition of the world in which it appeared. The theological writers persist in saying things about the Greeks and Romans which the authorities in history find false, and things about the Middle Ages which cannot now be admitted. In short our theological literature perverts the whole story of the development of civilization in the interest of our ancient formularies, and that is one of the reasons

16 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

why our expert historians and their pupils keep away from us.

This modern history which is so drastically opposed to our literature (this modern knowledge, taught to our young folk in every college and university, for I am not going to speak of the speculations of a few or of disputed matters) is an important part of that body of facts which I bring to the notice of members of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. The first act of justice that I may demand of them after my long service in the church is that they shall judge between my accusers and me on this point: whether my propositions are, as my accusers say, merely my personal interpretations of the facts of science and history that I have not understood, or whether they are, as I say, necessary expressions of the established knowledge of our time, endorsed in their substance by the overwhelming majority of our scholars.

Is there one bishop, priest or layman, of the Episcopal church who will doubt my word when I say that, if to-day you took a thousand of the leaders of culture in America and put before them the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth of our Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, not one would subscribe literally to those Articles? None would profess to believe in Adam's sin, or even his existence; in the corruption and damnation of the whole human race because of that sin; in the moral and spiritual distinction, in virtue of baptism, between Christian and non-Christian peoples. The idea itself is repugnant, and the history of the race that is implied in it is totally false.

A literal acceptance of those articles is fundamentalism pure and simple; and, though I am confident

that many of our bishops do not literally accept those articles, they condemned and degraded me for not doing so.

But I am going to show that the modernists are in no better case. They also have their perversions of history. They reject the miracles of Joshua and Moses, they reject even the miracles of Jesus. But they make a supernatural event of the whole history of man, because they claim that it shows supernatural providence or guidance. On the contrary it shows only the play of natural forces—the development of all human ideas and ideals under the stress of environment.

Modern history has magnificently vindicated the general truth of what Karl Marx called the materialistic determination of history. You shall judge, for I will give only facts on which the experts are agreed.

And you shall judge also whether the facts of history, as now known, justify what modernists say about the rise of Christianity and its medieval and post-medieval influence.

Remember that my first plea to you as members of the General Convention is that my brethren in the House of Bishops do not know the facts; that, anyhow, they did not regard them in their dealing with me, else I would not have been brought to trial.

All the authorities in every field of culture are on my side, in none more so than that of history. Read this sketch of the race that I now offer. Test it at any point by consulting any of the brilliant and fascinating historical works which are now produced in America; the works of Breasted or Huntingdon, of Robinson or Jastrow, of Bury or Dill, Thatcher or Shapiro. Then judge for yourselves whether the bishops

18 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

were just or enlightened in degrading me as an ill-informed rebel, or whether I have not explained to you the one way, absolutely the only way, in which men with full modern knowledge can be reconciled to our formularies, the way of free symbolical interpretation.

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLU-
TION OF CIVILIZATION

THE MAN OF GALILEE

and

THE MAN OF GALION

ON the theory that there is a conscious, personal God in the sky who brings things to pass on earth, and that the Man of Galilee was his Son, the world will never cease to wonder why the verdict of the Sanhedrim of the Jews meant so much in the way of defeat, loss, depression and misery to him in the first century, while the verdict of the Sanhedrim of the Episcopalians means so much in the way of victory, gain, inspiration and happiness to the Man of Galion in the twentieth century.

Nothing about the first of these trials was favorable to the divine defendant: the people went with the court; even his disciples fled, leaving him alone, helpless; and all was over soon.

Everything about the second of these trials was favorable to the human defendant: he was not left alone, far from it; able lawyers and learned men of science defended him: comrades thronged the hall; he had the sympathy of the journalists so completely that most of the millions who read their accounts of the proceedings in the daily press condemned the House of Bishops for ordering the trial, and even in the Episcopal Church itself their action was widely and deeply regretted.

All this contrast in favor of the Man of Galion! What is the explanation? It is not his natural endowments and cultural acquirements, for as to them he is barely mediocre. What, then, would be the contrast if he were a genius of wit and a prodigy of learning—a Voltaire, a Paine, a Bradlaugh or an Ingersoll?

Is this the explanation: the strong Man of Galilee, standing before the Sanhedrim of the Jews, had what the world then regarded as a weak cause, and the weak Man of Galion, standing before the Sanhedrim of the Episcopalians, has what the world now regards as a strong cause? Increasing millions outside of the churches, and rapidly multiplying thousands inside think that this is the explanation.—W. M. B.

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF CIVILIZATION.

We are accustomed to speak of history as an entirely different branch of human knowledge from science because we are not constantly finding new documents about the past, as we are constantly finding new facts in science. We cannot imagine that modern history has made a progress that can be compared to that of science. Let us first understand what history really is. It is simply a continuation of science and it uses scientific methods.

Probably most of you have been to New York and have wandered through the galleries of the wonderful Natural History Museum which illustrate history—the history of life in past ages. You examine the weird forms of the earliest fishes and insects, next the giant reptiles and primitive birds of the following age, then the remains which illustrate the development of the highest animals, the mammals, culminating in the appearance of ape-men, and lastly the ugly, almost animal form that we call prehistoric man.

Now that is all history, though it is written in stones and bones instead of books and though it counts the years in hundreds of millions instead of centuries.

If you then ask for what is called the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York you will wander among the remains of new types of life—of ancient Babylonians and Egyptians, of Cretans and Persians, of Greeks and Romans. Now you have gotten into the vaults of real history, you say, but an expert would tell you that you are still in the world of science—the science of archaeology. These stones and statues are the fossils

22 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

of civilizations. They are studied, and made to tell a story, just in the same way as the fossilized bones of the first birds or the first monkeys.

Science and history and art mingle together and overlap. They yield knowledge, scientifically, that is to say, very carefully, acquired and tested knowledge. There is no sharp division of modern knowledge. When we have gotten rid of all the illusions that linger from the ignorant past there will only be one form of knowledge, science.

The word science is merely the Latin word for knowledge. At present you might almost say that science is the knowledge of the remote past of life. History is the knowledge of the nearer past. Sociology is, or ought to be, the knowledge of the present and a prophecy of the future. You know why I say, ought to be. Too many sociologists are afraid of glancing at the social forms of the future because it might tempt them to say that our present social, political and economic forms are capable of improvement! All these things will one day be worked out scientifically.

I

Let me briefly recall the earlier history, or what some scientists call the pre-history, of the human family, as I told it in volume two.

I mentioned in the last volume that Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, of the Natural History Museum, does not admit that man had an ape-like or arboreal ancestor, and the way in which his ideas have been put before the public in the press and loudly trumpeted by the fundamentalists have misled many people. Professor Osborn's theory is one of those personal eccentricities which men of science sometimes betray when they try

to force the facts of science into agreement with some sort of orthodoxy.

He is quite alone among eminent men of science in some of the extraordinary statements he is making. The human race, commonly known as the Piltdown men, whom he represents as wandering over the south of England a million and a quarter years ago are put by every British expert at only about three hundred thousand years ago; and the large brain-capacity which Professor Osborn gives them is founded upon an early and now rejected reconstruction of the very battered and fragmentary skull. The flint implements found in England belonging to about a million years ago, which Professor Osborn confuses with later implements, were examined by an international commission of experts and said to be due to a semi-human maker. Professor Osborn distorts the evidence at all points in favor of his eccentric theory. The simple truth that man's body corresponds in every feature with that of the higher apes can be explained only by the assumption that both had an immediate common ape-like ancestor.

The man-like ape to which all the authorities in the world except Osborn now trace the descent of man, took at least ten million years to reach the form of an ape-man like the very lowly being whose bones we found in the island of Java, or the slightly higher type lately found near Peking. These creatures spread along the coast of Asia as far as the Philippines and across the south of Europe as far as Britain, and they took several hundred thousand years to reach the human form as we know it in the lowest savages of to-day.

A hundred thousand years ago these men of the old stone ages covered more than half of Europe, and they

24 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

have left millions of stone implements and dozens of skulls or skeletons.

Then the climate of Europe which, as we can tell from the buried plants and animals, was as warm as that of southern California, became colder and colder, until at last a permanent sheet of ice and snow covered four million square miles of Europe. The last great ice age had reached its height.

Men were now compelled, owing to the complete change of their environment and food, to change all their habits, to live in caves in social groups, to have fires and skin-clothes, to make finer weapons and to develop speech and art. They then rose much more rapidly to a higher level.

All this I explained before in the volume on the *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism* written from the viewpoint of science, but let me repeat that the entire body of scientific experts (all the professors of every branch of science in every non-sectarian university and higher college in the world) are agreed as to it all and have been for the last twenty years. The fundamentalists who dispute it cannot quote one scientific man of the last half century in their support.

For me that is enough. I am not going to accept, on a scientific matter, the assurance of the late Hon. William Jennings Bryan or of the Rev. Dr. John Roach Straton against the unanimous assurance of ten thousand specially trained experts. At least, if any among you care to follow the fundamentalists rather than the scientists you will not ask me to discuss your preference seriously. The peculiar ancient story of Adam, and the equally peculiar doctrines based on it, are not now solemnly discussed even by bishops.

This freezing of the earth rapidly drove the in-

habitants of Europe to a higher level. There was nothing supernatural about it. There was no sudden leap onward, as some of the modernists say. It took cavemen thousands of years to develop their intelligence and artistic skill. In fact, it was not from this comparatively higher branch of the human race that civilization came. The ice age ended at last, about fifteen thousand years ago, and the cavemen had a miserable time in the great thaw that followed. The sodden earth, the dank air, the floods and mighty rivers (remember that billions of tons of ice and snow had to melt) replaced the exhilarating cold, dry air of the glacial period. These cavemen degenerated and were absorbed and killed by tribes that now came into Europe from the south and east.

If you will take the trouble to look at a map of the Old World, you will understand at once how beautifully modern science explains the origin of civilization. Most of Europe had become like the Arctic region of to-day: and, as the cold came on gradually, most of the stone-age men retired south. It was not merely a matter of warmth and sunshine for the naked savages. All the food to which they were accustomed was disappearing, and they had to follow it south. But the direct road south from Europe is barred by two mighty obstacles; the Mediterranean Sea and south of that, the great Sahara Desert. That is why they did not retreat into Africa. The one broad green corridor out of Europe, between the great ice-fields of the Alps and the Black Sea, was across the Balkans to the lower-lying land round the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea.

The mountainous region of the Balkans would be bleak and icy, but there was then far more land

26 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

at the sea-level than there is to-day. Geologists have examined the terraces under water round the Mediterranean Sea, and they can prove that about twenty thousand years ago there were simply two large lakes, one to the east and one to the west of Italy, instead of the great sea of to-day. This is not a speculation. It is a fact which enables us to see very clearly what happened. Driven from Europe by the bleak conditions, bands of men would pour through that broad corridor between the Alpine ice-sheet and the Black Sea and press on in search of fertile, green, warm territory. Even in the south all the mountainous districts would be covered with snow most of the year at that time.

The city of Chicago is as far south as the city of Rome, yet during the ice age the site of Chicago was buried a mile deep under ice. But at the southeast of Europe there were lowlands as well as highlands, and over these the refugees from Europe spread in every direction. I am speaking of a period which lasted tens of thousands of years, and you will understand how these refugees overcrowded the fertile regions between the bleak mountains and pushed out on every side in search of more green valleys.

You have here the key to the origin of civilization. That congested mass of humans, competing against each other, watching each other's practices and ideas, improving upon each other, was the first condition of progress. You know how to-day originality or mental vitality is in proportion to the congestion of the population. There is more originality in Galion (some people would tell you that there is too much) than in a scattered country district, more in Cleveland than in Galion, and more in New York than in Cleveland.

If this is true in our day, when literature and the press and broadcasting spread ideas, how true must it not have been in those primitive days? The clash of minds, not the clash of weapons, is the condition of progress, of new ideas; and the great ice age of Europe has brought about the first great concentration of humans.

Where was it? Round the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. Where did the first ancient civilizations appear? Every one of them at or close to the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. So the historian thinks no longer about Adam and Noah, about Shem, Ham and Japheth. He has solved, and I think you will admit, beautifully solved, the great problem of the beginning of civilization.

II

Now let us work all this out a little more in detail. When we speak of civilization in science and history we do not look to moral or humane qualities. We are thinking only of intellectual development, and scientific men and historians are generally agreed to call a nation civilized when it has developed written language and has a finer type of pottery. These of course, do not constitute civilization but they merely indicate that a certain height of intelligence has been reached. We can be sure that we shall at that stage find a certain degree of social, political and religious organization. We shall find agriculture, weaving, pottery and the use of metal. All these things had been developing for thousands of years, but I have explained that in the second volume on science.

Written language has been one of the mightiest implements of civilization. Until wireless was invented, and one man could reach hundreds of thousands with

his voice, the written word was the great means of conveying ideas from mind to mind, from country to country, so that one man could improve on the ideas of another, which is the real meaning of progress. So we count it the dawn of civilization when men began to express ideas by making little pictures of objects, and this began in Egypt more than five thousand years ago, before the Hebrews appeared on the stage with their new made God, Jehovah. Egypt already had kings and taxes, and we still find how many baskets of wheat a peasant was taxed. The ancient tax-gatherer drew the rough form of a basket on the wall of the peasant's mud-hut and made marks for the number due.

That was the beginning of the art of writing. There were no letters of the alphabet. They came two thousand years later. The words were just pictures of objects, like those Mexican hieroglyphics that you may have seen. Men found in time in Egypt that the reeds which grew on the river bank made something like what we call paper (their word for it, papyrus, is in fact the origin of our word, paper) so they could draw or paint beautiful little images of objects. In Mesopotamia they had no reeds, so they scrawled on clay, and that is why the Babylonian writing is so different. But all writing was at first picture-writing, as you find it among the Eskimo to-day.

I said that we find this first sign of civilization a little more than five thousand years ago. It is naturally difficult to fix dates in that misty dawn of time, but the general idea is that civilization began in Egypt about 3400 B. C., when there was one king over the whole valley, when men learned to make vessels of bronze, and when picture-writing began.

But there is a sort of rivalry between experts on

Egypt and experts on Babylonia as to which country made the first beginning of civilization. American and British explorers are now opening up tombs in Mesopotamia which show a fair state of civilization about 3500 B. C. Then an Egyptologist discovered remains in Egypt, with beautiful pottery, which he wants to put at about 10000 B. C.; though that is very much disputed. It is enough for us that between 4000 and 3000 B. C. the well-organized folk in Egypt and in Mesopotamia laid the foundation of civilization. It was about the year 3000 B. C. when those wonderful pyramids of Egypt began to be built.

Now the valley of the Nile runs into the Mediterranean. It is a very fertile valley. Its soil is made from the mud of the Nile and it has a delightful climate. Clearly from the time when men began to grow their food and raise cattle, as they had done before 5000 B. C., this valley was extremely desirable, and tribes poured into it from all quarters and, mingling together, made great progress by exchanging their different ideas.

You may have seen images of the remarkable animal-headed gods and goddesses of the Egyptians and wondered why so clever a people should worship such monsters. We fairly understand it. One tribe came in from a pastoral district and cattle were their great concern, so they gave their goddess a cow's head. Another tribe came from the desert, where the hawk was the most striking form of life. Others were from river-lands and had a crocodile as the symbol of terrible power. They did not believe that the deities themselves had animal-heads. It was all symbolism. You see I am not the first symbolist.

The second (or perhaps the contemporary great civilization of early history) was along the banks of

the rivers of Mesopotamia. We call it Babylonia, as the city of Babylon came in time to rule the whole of it, but at first Babylon was only a large village on the river. What the Bible calls Ur of Chaldees was one of the oldest cities, but there are the ruins of a score of cities scattered over Mesopotamia. What we learn from them is that about 5000 B. C. Mesopotamia, which was then far smaller than now, was a land of swamp and marsh lying between the Persian hills to the north and the Arabian desert. On those hills or on the green foothills overlooking the valley was another of those congestions of people of which I have spoken, cultivating the ground and moving on toward civilization.

There is now some reason to think that the ancestors of the Egyptians and Babylonians lived together at an earlier date and that from their common center in Asia Minor the Egyptians carried the rudiments of civilization to the valley of the Nile. The others, the Sumerians (or Highlanders) as we call them, passed down from the hills to Mesopotamia. There they learned to drain the swamps and irrigate the dry places, and soon Babylonia was an earthly paradise that grew two or three crops of corn and fruit every year from its rich soil.

It is generally agreed that this is the grain of truth in the old Hebrew legend of Paradise. Eden is really the Babylonian word for plain; and it was certainly from the Babylonians, directly or indirectly, that the Hebrews got their mythical stories of creation, deluge, forbidden fruit and fall of man.

We shall see something about that later when we study the Hebrews. In this chapter I want to show simply that the origin of civilization is explained. I said that the key is the pressure of an ice age in Europe

which caused a congestion of peoples round the eastern end of the Mediterranean. I should like you to realize this very clearly. South of this district was the great African desert, except just where the narrow valley of the Nile pierced it, stretching from ocean to ocean. East of this area was the Indian Ocean. Northeast of it was a wild and mountainous region of Asia, and northwest was frozen Europe. So we easily understand that the fertile part of this crowded region bore the first civilizations. Egypt and Mesopotamia are the finest valleys of the region and exactly where we should expect to find the earliest civilizations.

We know now that there was a third great civilization in the dawn of historical time. It is not so well known to the general public, because it was only discovered about thirty years ago, but it was as great, and probably as ancient, as the other two, and the remains that we have of it are fascinating. Its center was the island of Crete, right at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea; though, as it spread over all the other islands, and they are in what is called the Aegean Sea, it is often called the Aegean civilization.

So here is the third and last of the three primitive civilizations right in the heart of the region in which we should expect the refugees from frozen Europe to gather. We have linked them all together and seen how they all come under the explanation I gave in the second of the series of little volumes on the Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism of which this is the third.

It is not certain whether these Cretans came from Asia Minor, which would link them even more closely with the common cradle of Egyptian and Babylonian civilization, or whether they were marooned in the island of Crete when the present basin of the Mediter-

32 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

ranian Sea was flooded. We do know that originally all this end of the Mediterranean was dry land. Many believe that, when the masses of ice and snow melted in Europe, the floods raised the level of the Atlantic Ocean and it burst through at Gibraltar and flooded the whole present basin of the sea. Were there people living in the basin who were drowned in thousands in the flood? Are the Cretans and other islanders the survivors who fled to the highlands? We are not certain, but you see what an interesting speculation it is. It would explain the story of the deluge, which was common to all the nations of that region. However, we are not sure, and I will keep to facts.

In the last few years these facts about early civilization have received an interesting addition. We now know that about 3500 B. C., when civilization was beginning in Egypt and Babylonia, and perhaps Crete, it was beginning also in the northwestern provinces of India, Sindh and the Punjáb. As early as 3000 B. C. we find that there were here large cities with picture-writing, woven cotton garments, and very fine pottery and metal work, including gold and silver jewelry. We have even found what seems to be a small toilet-set of some lady of those very ancient days. This has altered our opinion about the early history of India, which was thought to be uncivilized until the Aryans arrived about 2000 B. C.; though our new discoveries do not mean such a great change, because for some unknown reason this early civilization decayed.

But the discovery does not alter our general view of the origin of civilization. The culture of these ancient folk in the north of India so closely resembles the culture of the Sumerians of Mesopotamia that there must have been a connection between them. Where the common

origin was we do not yet know, but we now extend that great family of the founders of civilization from Crete to India. On the map of the earth it is still a small area, but it is no mystery why it became the cradle of civilization. Asia seems to have been the cradle of the race, and the main body of the race during hundreds of thousands of years clung to southern Asia and southern Europe. Then the ice age drove them into a narrower space; and, as they discovered agriculture, they concentrated on those most favorable parts of the region where we now find the foundation-stones of civilization.

III

Many other civilizations arose in time in this area, with its special conditions, but they all, among them the Syrians and the Assyrians, came later, and no doubt learned from the more ancient empires.

But you may wonder why I have said nothing about the great civilizations of Asia or those that developed in America. You may remind me that these arose thousands of miles away from the region which I have called the cradle of civilization, and you may ask if they do not spoil the theory. No, they strongly confirm what I have said. There is no reason whatever why man should not rise to the level of civilization, if it is a natural development, in more regions than one, but you must have the same material conditions; and that is exactly what we find in Central America.

The essential condition of progress is that the material circumstances shall drive or attract together great numbers of tribes with different ideas and different habits. Well, you all know the hour-glass shape of our continent. You see how that narrow region south

34 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

of Mexico squeezes tribes together, as they pass north or south, just in the same way as the freezing of Europe threw tribes together in the south-east, and the fertile valley of the Nile or Mesopotamia attracted them. It is the same principle. Just as the electric spark leaps out only when clouds charged with different electricity meet, so new ideas arise when tribes with different culture are brought together.

It is probable that the first Indians came over from Asia about ten thousand years ago, when the ice age ended and Alaska was clear, at least in summer. Stream followed stream southward. After much disputing it is fairly settled that there were no human beings in America until that time, and right down to Patagonia all natives descend from those Asiatic invaders.

But they were hunters, each tribe requiring large spaces, and most of them scattered and made little or no progress. You know how very different in culture Indians (as Europe began to call them when the first explorers mistook America for India) are in different regions. You will understand it on the principle I have given you, isolation means no progress or even decay (as in the Brazilian forests) concentration means progress.

It is in perfect harmony with this principle that we find the beginning of what we call civilization in the narrowest part of America. The Pueblo Indians, about whose picturesque dwellings you read, were never really civilized. It is on the western coast of Central America, the best pathway from north to south, that we find the tribes slowly advancing in the two or three thousand years before Christ. They learned to make baskets and pottery, to cultivate the wild corn and beans, and to weave. They spread down to

what is now Guatemala and Honduras, and it is in that very favorable area that we find the earliest traces of what we should call civilization.

This seems to have been in the first century before Christ. Some writers have given a fabulous antiquity to the Mayan civilization, and some have even attempted to trace its civilization to Egypt. Both these ideas are rejected. America developed its own civilization, but it was three thousand years later than that of Egypt and has in detail no resemblance of it.

You have seen photographs of the great cities of Central America and their wonders, and I am here only pointing out the influences that led to the first development of civilization. It spread from its cradle to the Mayan tribes, a little farther north, and they built the great cities of southern Mexico and Yucatan—cities sometimes three or four miles in diameter, with magnificent and massive stone buildings in the center, and hundreds of thousands of people. They flourished until about the thirteenth century, and then it was the turn of the Toltecs, and after them the Aztecs of Mexico City. But there was a score of really great, if in some respects primitive, civilizations, and we are only at the beginning of the study of them.

Of the Asiatic civilizations I need say only that they arose far later than the Egyptian, and we do not know how much they borrowed. The Hindu civilization which is known to history appeared only in the millenium before Christ; and the Chinese at the earliest about 1700 B. C. Sensational and mystic writers, who talk about the wisdom of Asia, give the most fantastic dates. Some say that Egyptian civilization is a million years old! The truth is that there was no Egypt, no valley of the Nile, fifty thousand

36 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

years ago. Others say that Chinese civilization is twenty thousand years old, but there is no trace of it four thousand years ago.

So it is suspected that even the founders of the Chinese civilization may have come from the west and brought the rudiments of civilization with them. It is not clear, but there certainly is a curious physical resemblance between the founders of the Babylonian civilization and the Chinese. In any case, we have no difficulty. The rich river-valleys of China would draw tribes from all sides as the valley of the Nile did, and out of all their striving and struggling arose the brilliant and artistic and at first remarkably peaceful civilization of the Chinese.

Let us remember one thing when we read libels against the Chinese. They were fully civilized long before the Greeks, or any members of the white race, yet they had, in their remote isolation, no teachers like the Persians and Egyptians as the Greeks had. The Japanese borrowed their civilization from the Chinese long afterwards, in what we call the Middle Ages of European history.

IV

All that I have told you about the dawn of history has been learned by scientific methods, just the same as those which we use in geology. Mounds that covered the remains of ancient civilizations have been explored, and half a century of brilliant cooperative work of scientists and historians has pieced together this wonderful story for us. But, though the material belongs to the science of archaeology, it is the first chapter of history that we have been studying, and from the point of view of the purpose of this book it is the

most important chapter of all. It answers the greatest question that you can put to the historian: how came man, after ten millions of years of blind stumbling in a state below the level of savagery, after hundreds of thousands of years of what we call savagery, to receive at last some impulse to rise to the higher level?

There is no need here to point out how the new history has swept away the old legends. Any man who to-day believes in Adam and Eve, in Noah and the deluge, in the division of men into children of Shem, Ham and Japheth, in a tower of Babel, has against him, not only all the scientific men of the world, but all the historians, all the university professors and all their pupils in every part of the civilized world. I might be excused if I laid stress on this since the form in which I was condemned was so crude that, if such a test of literal belief were generally applied, there would hardly remain in the church a person properly acquainted with modern thought. But I take it for granted that fundamentalism is, as regards early history, just as foolish a defiance of all the scholarship of the world as it is in regard to the origin of man. At least as far as the story of Abraham, the history of the race told in Genesis is so clearly proved to be mythical that a professor of history would hardly believe a bishop who said that he accepted it.

However that may be, this is the situation to-day. What is taught about the early history of the race in Bible classes, in reference to Adam and Noah, is embodied in the Prayer Book and the Articles of Religion and is frequently given in fundamentalist sermons, is in flat contradiction to the version of ancient history which is taught, officially, as the accepted truth, in every university, college and normal school in America.

38 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

If you have any doubt about that (and it is surely a situation that every churchman ought to realize) take any single manual of ancient history that is now used in those institutions. The best and most attractive to read is Professor Breasted's *Conquest of Civilization*.

Then there are writers, we might call them semi-modernists, who say: Oh, yes, Adam and Noah became myths more than a half century ago, when we found the original Babylonian stories of the Garden of Eden and the deluge, but here and there archaeological research has confirmed the history of the race as it is told in Genesis. We have found, for instance, that there really was a great battle of Armageddon. What does that matter? These events and places mentioned in Genesis which are said to be confirmed in our new profane history belong to a late period of ancient history, and no one doubts that the compilers of Genesis used some old traditions. I will speak of that later and just now need point out only this, even in these writers, who say proudly that not every fragment of biblical history is discredited, the standard of authority is modern history, not the narratives of Genesis.

An amusing illustration of the misplaced joy of the fundamentalists when they hear that the discoveries of the archaeologists have confirmed Old Testament history at some point or other is the finding of Jericho. Writer after writer has assured us that the higher critics are confounded and the pure word of God vindicated because the ruins, and even walls, of a city identified with Jericho have been discovered. They either do not know or they conceal the fact that what we discovered really disproves what the Old Testament says. The walls had not been miraculously thrown down. They were standing just as much as we should

expect to find in a city of three thousand years ago.

But there is an issue of much greater importance. The modernist is willing to sacrifice all the old version of history. For science and history he goes to scientists and historians but for religious and moral teaching to the Bible. He says, even the new history contains a religious philosophy. Slow as the progress of man was, we who now look back on the twenty or thirty million year pilgrimage of our race do see that it was leading to a goal, it was heading for civilization; and, the modernist says, that implies a leader, a head, a directive mind. That is why Bishop Brown was condemned, they tell you. He went too far. He said that the historical process was materialistic; he denied that it betrayed the guidance of a personal, spiritual God.

Well, what a pity that the bishops did not say so instead of bringing contempt on the American church in the press and the mind of the public by demanding of me a literal belief in our ancient formularies, not a modernist gloss on them.

And what a pity the modernists cannot point to any of our masters of history who agree with them that all these new discoveries still point to a personal, spiritual God in history!

And what a pity the modernists do not point to some definite stage in the evolution of civilization, some definite part of the great story I have put before you and say: see, there is the divine action visible! That, they will tell you, is just like Bishop Brown. He cannot see the wood for the trees. You must not look at the individual stages. You must look only at the fact that in time there was progress.

And I say once more, as I said in the case of biological evolution, this inference from the fact of

40 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

progress is superficial and illogical, because a man has to prove first that there would have been no progress, no rise to civilization, if there had been no divine guidance. I have never found a modernist who tried to prove that; and it is the essence of the argument. I know no master of history who would admit it.

Both as a whole and in detail the story told by modern history as to the rise of man to civilization is a story of the action and reaction of material changes, such as, the rise of mountains and spread of seas and deserts, of revolutions of climate affecting the food supply, of geographical conditions which concentrated the race in one place and scattered it in others.

The course of man's development was guided, then, in exactly the same materialistic sense as is the course of the Mississippi. Man was developed by his material surroundings. Those material changes which the new history discovered when it became a science throw a strong light on the rise of man through savagery and barbarism to civilization. Our knowledge is still far from complete, but to compare the new history with the childlike story of the early race in Genesis, or in the Babylonian tablets, or in early Chinese annals, is like comparing a search-light with a glow-worm.

Seventy years ago that great economist, Karl Marx, worked out this principle that history is shaped or determined by material conditions. He was thinking chiefly of the way in which the economic institutions of any generation shape or determine its ideals, but he held that all man's history is determined by material conditions and not spiritual guidance. I found, when I turned to the study of the new scientific history and the wonderful story it tells, that it was simply a splendid vindication of the Marxian theory. The material con-

ditions, the genial climate and abundance of food, alone explain why early man had no stimulation to progress in millions of years. Moreover we saw how a revolution in material conditions at last gave him the required stimulation. Now we see how still other material conditions explain the rise of civilization, which never was understood before Marx. You at last realize that my heresies (my stress on the importance of material conditions and my claim that humanity has had no supernatural aid in its journey onward and upward) are simple expressions of the great truths that science and history have discovered, and that in proportion as we master those truths we shall master the world in which we live and move and have our being and cleanse it of its remaining evils.

CHRISTIANITY, as such, never rose above crusades and persecutions of heretics; it has never even attained to tolerance, which yet is merely the negative side of universal benevolence.—Strauss.

THE CHARACTER OF
THE ANCIENT EMPIRES

WE have become so accustomed to the religious lie that surrounds us that we do not notice all the atrocity, stupidity and cruelty with which the teaching of the Christian church is permeated.—Tolstoi.

CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTER OF THE ANCIENT EMPIRES

Some years ago a brilliant British sociologist, Mr. H. G. Wells, wrote a complete history of the human race of a very novel and attractive character. In this Outline of History he showed how the stream of life, as we may symbolically call it, was guided by its material conditions until it produced a human form, and the great empires of the ancient world appeared. Then Mr. Wells, although he is regarded as a terrible rebel, began to be disloyal to scientific history and made a series of blunders. He talked a great deal about the kings and the imperialist wars of the Egyptians and Babylonians, as the older historians used to do. But he said very little about the new discoveries which have won our respect for the character of those ancient peoples. And when he came to the Greeks and Romans, the finest of the ancient nations, he was positively unjust.

We understand it. The world has believed so long that these ancient peoples lay in darkness and the shadow of death that even this arch-heretic cannot rid his mind entirely of the idea, or feels that he had better make some concession to it in his work. It is an essential part of orthodoxy to hold that the Hebrews had a unique place among the ancient nations, that Christ was unique among the world's moralists, and that Christianity was unique among the world's religions; and to prove this it was necessary to show that the ancient peoples were lower than the Jews in their moral ideals and practices, and much lower than the world after it became Christian. That idea of uniqueness pervades the whole literature and teaching of the Christian church. Its principle

46 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

is repeatedly and emphatically stated in the Ninth and Tenth Articles of the mother church of England and its American daughter:

The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God.

These articles base the whole Christian system, the need for redemption by Christ, on a supposed corruption of the nature of every man, which can be counteracted only by the knowledge and grace of Christ. So also speaks the Prayer Book in the Baptism of Infants; and there is no Christian preacher or writer who does not infer from that principle that before the Christian message was given to the world it was far more wicked and far inferior in its ideals. Take that standard collection entitled, *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches*. It says:

For of ourselves we be crabtrees, that can bring forth no apples. We be of ourselves of such earth as can bring forth but weeds, nettles, brambles, briars, cockles, and darnel.

And it goes on to draw the conclusion that the children of Adam, blinded through original sin, fell into the most monstrous errors and practices until, first the divinely inspired Hebrew prophets and afterwards God himself, Jesus, brought light into the world. That is still church history. Our preachers know no deeper word of reproach for a man than to say that he is pagan or for a city than to say that it is Babylon.

And here the modernists have a peculiar difficulty. Just because they reject the supernatural uniqueness of Christ and Christianity, they lay all the more stress

on their natural uniqueness, and they continue to falsify the moral and religious history of the race.

Modern history rejects every idea of either supernatural or natural uniqueness for either Judaism or Christianity. So do modern science and philosophy. History will recognize nothing but natural, slow, gradual evolution, one religion learning from its predecessors, and it is compelled to do this by the remarkable discoveries we have made about ancient life.

I

I have already said that a broad difference between science and history is that the scientists are constantly accumulating great numbers of new facts while historians now rarely discover new documents. But this does not apply to ancient history because it depends upon a science—the science of archaeology. This science has in the course of the last century gathered such a vast quantity of new facts (those inscriptions and fragments which I have called the fossil remains of ancient civilization) that our idea of the character of most of the ancient civilizations has been revolutionized.

We have made the singular discovery that these ancient Egyptians and Babylonians were extraordinarily like ourselves. They married and loved their wives and children as we do. They had exactly the same rules for conduct and the same ideals of justice and truth and purity as we have. No doubt they too had the same little weaknesses in observing them.

Main street in ancient Memphis or ancient Babylon must have been, in point of character, very much like Main street in Minneapolis or Baltimore. But, if that is so, the orthodox theory of human nature and history is altogether wrong.

48 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

In regard to the Egyptians the change of ideas is not so great. One reason is that the Egyptians never chastised the Jews as heavily as the Babylonians did, and so they do not bear so black a character in the Old Testament! But there are other reasons. Until the last century all the remains of Babylon were buried under shapeless mounds of clay and sand. All the temples had been made of clay or brick, and not a sign of them met the eye as one crossed the desert of Mesopotamia.

But in Egypt the remains of magnificent temples stood out high above the soil and travelers felt that the ancient people must have been deeply religious. When, in the last century, the archaeologists began to explore Egypt and to find innumerable tombs with sacred inscriptions and traces of a profound belief in a future life and a judgment after death, there was a tendency to go to extremes and regard the Egyptians as an exceptionally serious and religious nation.

In recent decades our discoveries have restored the balance. In the beautifully made stone tombs of Egypt we have found the toys of the little girls, the school books of the boys, the libraries of the scholars, even little paintings of the lives of the workers of four thousand years ago, and we can imagine ourselves not merely looking into their homes but into their hearts.

The Egyptian workers were fond of wine and beer, dancing and festivals; they were fond of love and adventure stories and gay songs. The story of Joseph in *Genesis* and some of the stories of the *Arabian Nights*, like Sinbad the Sailor, are only new versions of popular stories of ancient Egypt, and the Song of Solomon is really a collection of old Egyptian wedding-chants. The Egyptians, then, both owners and workers, were a

very gay as well as a very religious people, and their literature shows that between the gaiety of their volatile nature and the moral commands of their stern religion they made much the same compromise of life as the Irish do to-day. In respect to such compromises no two people were ever more alike than the Egyptians and Irish.

There was a very good reason for being virtuous in ancient Egypt. Everybody believed, as far back as Egyptian history goes, that when he died his soul went before the great god, Osiris, and, if the good deeds of his life did not outweigh the bad deeds, his soul was annihilated.

These people who lay in the darkness and the shadow of death did not believe in eternal woe for the evil, but they did believe in eternal bliss for the good; and, of course, everybody wanted it just as orthodox Christians want heaven. We have always known this, because the Greek writers tell it—though, unfortunately, no one in Europe could read Greek for nearly a thousand years. But what men did not know so clearly was the moral code in the light of which Osiris judged the dead. Now we have this code and a good deal of modern literature of ancient Egypt, and we see that their ideas were excellent.

There was a sacred book, a bible, in ancient Egypt which is now generally called, the Book of the Dead. Most of it is a fantastic description of the perilous journey, through a devil-infested country, of the soul after death. But at last the soul reaches Osiris, and we get the code of judgment in the form of protestations of the dead man. A few lines will suffice to show that five or six thousand years ago (for the oldest quotations go back so far) the Osirians had the same ideals as the Christians have. Here are some of the protestations

put into the mouth of the dead man as recorded in the Osirian Bible:

I have not brought forward my name for exaltation to honors. I have not ill-treated servants. I have not defrauded the oppressed one of his property. I have not caused misery. I have not caused pain. I have made no man suffer hunger. I have made no one weep. I have committed no murder. I have not inflicted pain upon mankind. I have not committed adultery. I am pure. I am pure. I am pure.

This is a moral code far higher than the Decalogue, and a thousand years older. Texts in the oldest tombs show that this was the code at least five thousand years ago, before Jehovah was born, and sketches of the judgment carved on the walls of the tombs show how rigorous it was, for the heart of the dead man is symbolically represented as weighed against a feather. If the man's evil deeds outweighed that feather, he had no hope of eternal life in the kingdom of Osiris.

Of the same period we have tomb-stones which show that it was at least recognized by the rich that it was a sin against Osiris to exploit or oppress the poor; and we have copies of morals, essays or counsels, written by laymen, which show that they treasured the finer shades of character just as we do. If one of these, the Maxims of Ptah-Hotep, were translated into modern language, its sentiments would allow it to pass as a work of our own time, yet Egyptologists think it four or five thousand years old.

We must therefore not be misled by the ugly forms of the animal-headed deities of Egypt. Whatever gods a man chose to worship, he believed firmly in the judgment of Osiris after death. But we have further found that religion itself reached a high level in ancient Egypt

at least fifteen centuries before the time of Christ.

You remember all the fuss about the opening of the tomb of King Tuth-ankh-amen a few years ago: how the papers said that this prince was honored because he suppressed the heresy of a previous king and restored the gods of Egypt.

What that earlier heretical king had really done was to establish by royal decree the worship of one eternal spiritual God, symbolized by the sun. More than half a century ago we found in Egypt a hymn that had been sung in the temples as part of this solar cult. Let me give you a few lines of it:

How manifold are all thy works!
They are hidden from before us.
Thou didst create the earth according to thy
desires—
Men, all cattle, large and small,
All that are upon the earth.
Thou settest every man in his place;
Thou suppliest their necessities,
Making floods upon the mountains like the
great seas.

And now listen to certain lines that are more familiar, verses of the 104th Psalm, which many commentators regard as the most beautiful in the Psalter:

O Lord, how manifold are thy works.
In wisdom thou hast made them all.
The earth is full of thy riches.
These wait all upon thee,
That thou mayest give them their meat in due
season.
He watereth the mountains from his chambers;
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

These verses correspond very closely. If you have seen the full translation of the Egyptian hymn, set

52 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

side by side with the Hebrew Psalm in Professor Breasted's book, you cannot doubt that the monotheistic Psalm of the Hebrews is only an adaptation of the monotheistic hymn of the ancient Egyptians, which is nearly a thousand years older. And you will find other monotheistic hymns and prayers in Professor Steindorff's *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, or any work on the subject.

In the few centuries before the time of Christ Egypt went even further. Colleges or monasteries of ascetic priests arose everywhere, and in the worship of Isis, the virgin-mother of the god, Horus, there was a special devotion to purity and austerity. Every Christian virtue was developed in the course of Egyptian civilization. Christianity made no additions to the moral precepts which the world possessed at the time when it came into existence, and few, if any, have been made since.

II

Two thousand five hundred years ago Babylon was the greatest city on earth. It had been rebuilt after destruction, and it was counted one of the wonders of the world, with its shining pyramid temples towering to a height of three or four hundred feet. Its hanging gardens, its beautifully tiled walls relieved with large colored figures were twelve miles in length, and so broad that two chariots could run a race abreast along the top of them.

Ships of all races moored at its quays, and men of all races mingled in its streets and squares. And among them, in the sixth century before Christ, were descendants of the Jews who had been brought prisoners to Judea. It is some of these who, when they returned to Judea, gave Babylon such a reputation for wicked-

ness that almost everybody still thinks of it as the worst city in history. Here, at least, the historical discoveries of the last thirty years have completely revolutionized our ideas.

First we found, in the year 1901, the code of laws of ancient Babylon, compiled nearly four thousand years ago and carved on a stone pillar. Scholars were amazed when it was translated.

We found that in this sink of iniquity (as our church writers and preachers were calling Babylon, and I fear they are still calling it) a man and woman caught in adultery were bound together with ropes and drowned in the river.

We found that the sentence for rape was death, and the incestuous were burned alive. If a retired priestess were seen in a wine-shop she was burned alive. It was staggering to find that wicked Babylon had the most ruthless laws ever known against immorality.

The famous Greek historian Herodotus is supposed to have visited Babylon and, though he gave the Babylonians a good character generally, he spoke of practices in the temples which confirmed the idea of the looseness of Babylon. It is now clear that he was entirely wrong. There was no paper or papyrus in Babylonia. All letters and documents were clay tiles which were, when the writing was made on them, baked hard. As a result we find a most remarkable volume and variety of literature in the ruins of Babylonia, and it shows, as in Egypt, that men had the same ideals as we. Among other things we discovered a large number of marriage-contracts, and the bride regularly described as a virgin. Another libel about Babylon was thus exposed.

I may add, in fact, that woman had a higher position both in Egypt and Babylon than she has had

anywhere else in the world until recent times. She was in all respects the equal of man. You know the bitter fight that women have had to make for sex equality even in the United States of America. The only country in which women are on exactly the same footing with men is the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

We might put the profound and pervasive error of orthodox literature forcibly in this way. Babylon and Rome are universally represented in it as the most immoral cities of all time, yet Babylon and Rome are the only metropolitan cities or empires that imposed a death-sentence for adultery, laid down a legal minimum wage for every class of workers, and gave complete liberty and justice to woman; for in the later centuries of Roman law, at least, woman had no disabilities.

Surely there is something monstrously wrong with the common idea that these ancient nations lay in darkness and the shadow of death. This Babylonian code of four thousand years ago is most remarkable for its justice to the injured, the workers and women. At the close of it the king expressly says that it is the command of the gods that he shall be the shepherd of salvation to his people, that he shall see that the strong may not oppress the weak and that the orphan and the widow shall be protected.

The vast sacred or temple literature that we have found explains all this. The Babylonians had not, like the Egyptians, a vivid and definite belief in a future life, in which they might be punished for their sins, but they did believe very effectively that they were punished for sins in this life. Legions of devils were supposed to hover invisibly about (it is from Babylon and Persia that this idea also was derived by the Jews) and if a man sinned they were let loose on him.

All the aches and miseries of life were punishments of sins; and what the sins were we know just as well as we do in the case of Egypt. We have found the lists of sins which a priest would read out when a man or woman came to the temple to confess and receive forgiveness. We have the prayers and hymns and penitential psalms which the priests and people recited. The ideals are the same as ours. The sins are what the Roman Catholic confesses to-day. The hymns and prayers might almost come sometimes from a modern prayer book. Listen to this anticipation of the Lord's Prayer which, the Rev. Professor Sayce, an Assyriologist and a clergyman of the Church of England, tells us, was chanted in the temples of Ur of the Chaldees about 2500 B. C.:

Father, long-suffering and full of forgiveness,
whose hand upholds the life of all mankind!
First-born, omnipotent, whose heart is immensity,
and there is none who may fathom it!
In heaven, who is supreme? Thou alone
On earth, who is supreme? Thou alone
As for thee, thy will is made known upon earth,
and the spirits below kiss the ground.

That is a prayer to the god Sin. Here is an address to Shamash:

O god of justice in the heaven, eternal art thou!
Thou art the justice and wisdom of the land.
Thou knowest the pious: thou knowest the wicked.
O Shamash, righteousness lifteth up to thee its head.

That is taken from an official publication of the University of Philadelphia, which has a party exploring in Mesopotamia. In its works, in the Rev. Professor Sayce's *Assyria*, in Professor Morris Jastrow's *Religions of Babylonia and Assyria*, or any recent work, you

will find scores of similar passages. All the great deities of Babylonia were gods or goddesses of righteousness, insisting on justice and purity and punishing sin in this life. Every fragment of Babylonian literature tells the same story. They had the same ideals as we; and no doubt, in view of the punishment of transgression, they observed them much as Christians do. Certainly we must conclude from the temple-literature and the law-code that in this supposedly giddy Babylon, sinners were at times drowned or burned and that the courts of the temples were full of groans of repentance.

III

I said in the first chapter that there was a third very ancient civilization, the Cretan, and we should now observe its conduct and ideals. Unfortunately, though we have a very rich and varied collection of objects from the ruins of its palaces and towns, though it seems to have been most advanced in many respects (there were baths in the houses and perfect drainage systems in the palaces) no one can yet read its ancient language.

One thing at least we know, and it is remarkable. In the ruins of its towns, which were destroyed three thousand five hundred years ago, there are no slums, no great differences in the sizes of the houses. There were wonderful royal palaces in the country, yet at the other end of the scale the workers, whose houses we can recognize from the tools of the artisans, lived in a comfort not far short of that of the other citizens. But as we cannot read the inscriptions we must pass over this profoundly interesting civilization of ancient Crete.

We will take Persia, which, though it comes much

later, was the most important connecting link between the more ancient civilizations and the Jews, Greeks and Romans. It was the Persians who liberated the Jews in Babylon and protected them while they restored Judea; so, naturally, the Jews have given them an angelic character in the Old Testament! Scholars have, in fact, never had any doubt about the high character and ideals of the Persians, at least not until they set out in their turn to conquer the world, and their great wealth led to deterioration.

We have the ancient sacred book of the Persians, the Avesta, and we know that as early as the seventh century, when the great prophet Zarathushtra reformed their religion, they believed in one supreme God of the most profoundly ethical character. Like the god, Osiris, of Egypt he judged the dead, on a strict moral code, and rewarded the virtuous with eternal happiness.

I need not quote from this work, the Avesta, the Persian bible, but its oldest section, which is translated into English in Vol. XXXI of the Sacred Book of the East, will surprise every man who reads it. Strange the language is, of course, and often unintelligible to us. If these sacred writings or bibles of long ago had been translated into the fine old English of the Jewish-Christian Bible we should be better able to compare them. But any careful reader will gather what was the leading idea of the Persians; or you may conveniently read it in such a work as the Dictionary of Ethics and Religion or any good Encyclopedia. There is no dispute about it, and it has been known for nearly a century, yet it will startle most people.

The Persians recognized one supreme God, Ahura Mazda, who had made all that was good and beautiful. Such a god they could not conceive as the creator of

anything evil or ugly, and to explain the existence of these they supposed that there was also a great wicked creative principle, Angra Mainya, who lived in a home of fire underground and had legions of minor devils tempting the souls of men and bringing to him those who yielded. It is often said that the Persians had two gods, but, as we shall see in a moment, the evil principle was not infinite. The good god had created spirit, light, beauty and goodness. The evil principle had created matter, the flesh and its lusts, ugliness and darkness. So life was a battle between the angels of Ahura Mazda, who led men to virtue and purity, and the demons of Angra Mainya.

But it would not last forever. The day was appointed when the kingdom of Ahura Mazda would come, and doubtless they prayed constantly (if not in those precise words) thy kingdom come. At all events in every chapter of their bible, the Avesta, there is a yearning for the kingdom—the holy realm which shines with splendor as the sun.

The coming of the kingdom meant that some day Ahura would silence the evil spirit and destroy his work. Ahura's good angels would summon the souls of all men to a general judgment, and through an ordeal of fire, a sort of purgatory, the souls of the righteous would pass to eternal bliss. You see how much of Christianity the world had long before the beginning of the Christian era.

These things, and the facts I have given about the ethical ideals of Egypt and Babylonia, are no more disputed than are the facts of astronomy. But surely these well-known facts of themselves show how utterly wrong it is for orthodox Christian writers to say that there was no god of righteousness, no sense of sin or

guilt, in the world apart from Judaism and Christianity.

The literature which is current in the church is disdained by our scholars, by historians, archaeologists and students of comparative religion. Those ancient empires were laboratories of religious and moral experience, and by the seventh century before Christ, in Egypt and Babylonia and Persia (and even in the remote civilization of China under Kung-fu-tse, or Confucius, and India under the great Buddha) every sort of spiritual ideal, and even the ascetic or monastic ideal, had come to birth.

How the Hebrews and the Greeks entered upon this heritage, how the ideals were transformed and further diffused in those few centuries before the birth of Christ, is one of the most wonderful pages in the history of thought. We shall see it. But we have lifted the pall from the faces of the dead empires and we greet in them the new and kindlier features that we have discovered.

IT would be a curious, were it not a melancholy spectacle, to see the indifference with which the laity look on while theologians thrash their wheatless straw, utterly unconscious that there is no longer any common term possible that could bring their creeds again to any point of bearing on the practical life of men.—
Lowell.

HOW THE HEBREWS BE-
CAME A CIVILIZED PEOPLE

CHRISTIANITY was intended to reform the world. Omnisience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates to our age to have been utterly unsuccessful.
—Shelley.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE HEBREWS BECAME A CIVILIZED PEOPLE

The contradiction between modern history and the historical traditions of the church which we have seen in the case of the older empires reaches an acute point when we come to the history of the Hebrews. Here the orthodox or fundamentalist believer finds arrayed against him all the historical scholars of the world, just as in regard to evolution he has all the scientific scholars of the world against him.

The fundamentalist believes that Abraham went from Ur of the Chaldees to Palestine and founded the Hebrew family; and it is possible that some such Semite went in remote days to Palestine, as many did, though the name Abraham is a word of no meaning, and Ur was not then a city of the Chaldeans.

The fundamentalist believes that Joseph brought the Hebrews to Egypt, and some scholars still believe that the Hebrews may have settled for a time as unwelcome squatters on the fringe of Egypt.

But no historian in the world agrees with the fundamentalist that, about 1500 B. C., Moses wrote an account of all these events and organized the Jewish religion; that Solomon built such a temple with such a worship as is described; that we can take the so-called historical parts of the Old Testament as more or less contemporary accounts of events.

One impatient modernist would like us to ignore all that. Not only lay historians, he says, but also all the more learned biblical and theological scholars of modern times have agreed that the history of the Jews in the Old Testament can only be regarded as true

64 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

when it is confirmed by profane history, so why bother about it.

Our modernist friends often forget that they are not the whole church and are very far from being the whole Christian world. Sometimes they even seem to forget that the formularies, services and literature of the Anglican national churches are in every part still full of the fundamentalist doctrine, that the Old Testament history is the very truth. I do not remember that the modernists made any serious protest when in 1925 an Anglo-American bishop was degraded because he would not accept its supernaturalism as literal truth.

When the modernists have won the whole Anglican church to their view and when they have won at least the majority of the members of the other Christian churches we will discuss these elementary controversies no longer. Until then I am more concerned about the beliefs of a thousand orthodox Christian fundamentalists than about the beliefs of ten heretical Christian modernists. Since there are these Christian fundamentalists and modernists, why may there not also be Christian symbolists?

There are two very strong reasons why every man and woman should understand clearly how the Bible narrative stands in the light of modern history.

The first reason is that those who are not fundamentalists often wonder how educated men and women can snap their fingers at the hundreds of great scientists and historians; also, at all the more learned theologians of the world, and say that the unanimous agreement of these trained experts in science, history and theology makes no impression on them. Some twenty million people in the United States alone take that attitude.

But it is not difficult to understand. Right in the

forefront of their mind is the belief that the Bible, the whole Bible, is the word of God, and therefore all the learned men in the world must be wrong if they say it contains error. The only way to approach them therefore is to ask them to examine the grounds of their belief; to realize that you cannot call any writing the word of God simply because it says it is; to examine it patiently and inquire in what way it justifies its claim to be the word of God, if it does make that claim. Neither the Old nor the New Testament makes it.

The second reason is that, though the more advanced modernists now say there is nothing divinely unique about the Bible or the Hebrew race, large numbers of them still claim a human uniqueness. Some say that the Bible is a marvellous piece of great literature or that it is a unique record of the religious evolution of a nation. Some say that the Hebrew moralists, the prophets, are unique among the moralists of their age.

Now I am not going to argue about the literary qualities of the Bible. It is translated in the fine old English of the seventeenth century, and some of it is really beautiful poetry in any language. If you think also that the Pentateuch and the historical books are great literature, I leave it to you. But when any man tells you that there is, for the age in which it was written, a unique morality in the Old Testament, or that it is a unique record of the religious evolution of a nation, he is not candidly facing either the teaching of modern scientific history or the facts of the science of the comparative interpretations of religion, and he is making a statement that, as I show in this chapter, no bishop should be guilty of, for it is based on ignorance; and, of course, therefore, no bishop should be tried, condemned and punished, as I have been, for

disbelieving it. The proceeding of the House of Bishops against me on account of such disbeliefs was an injustice, especially since most of its members shared many of them with me.

I

Let us now see how an ordinary historian, who puts all dogmas aside and deals with the evidence as he does in the case of Assyria, spells out for us the early history of the Hebrews. He says that apart from the Old Testament, the first reference we have to the existence of this people is an official Egyptian dispatch, of about the year 1200 B. C., which reports that the "Israelic has been vanquished." This seems to mean that on the fringe of the Egyptian empire in Palestine a rebellious tribe which called itself "Israalu" has been brought to order. Before that date there is no trace in all the vast remains of the ancient world of such a people as the Israelites or Hebrews.

There was by this time a long string of civilizations stretching from Egypt to Mesopotamia. Much of this region is now desert, but three thousand, or even two thousand, years ago it had more moisture and nearly all was inhabited. In the part of this country which we now call Syria or northern Palestine there was an important and highly civilized people called the Arameans, on the coast were the Phoenicians, another highly civilized people, and pushing into Palestine were the Philistines, whom many scholars now regard as refugees from the old civilization of Crete.

By 1400 B. C. there were, then, three highly civilized nations in Syria and Palestine, and they were familiar with all the culture of Egypt and Babylon. That is all that the historical remains can tell us, and

we have really abundant historical remains of the time.

Then we begin to get references to Moab and Edom and Israel as smaller peoples who are forcing their way into the good lands of Palestine from the bleak deserts to the east, and we now understand this. Arabia, the home of the Semitic peoples (the descendants of Shem) is mainly desert. It could breed splendid desert types of men, but it could not support them, and all through history until the time of Mohammed we find waves of these Semites overflowing from Arabia into Mesopotamia and Syria.

The ancestors of the Hebrews were only one of these Semitic tribes which came in hungrily from the desert, somewhere about 1400 B. C., settled on the rocky fringes of Palestine, and, like the other Semitic tribes, began a long fight for the better pastures on the plains.

There was nothing more miraculous about the fights of the Hebrew tribe than those of the other tribes which also came from barren regions and tried to force their way into fruitful ones. The waters of the Jordan did not separate so that they might march between them on dry land to the slaughter of the inhabitants of Palestine whose country they wanted. No walls fell down at the blast of their trumpets to enable them to massacre the men and children and rip open the women with child, keeping only the young virgins, all at Jehovah's command. Nor did the sun stand still in order that they might win a battle before night would prevent victory.

The Semitic tribes are mentioned as a rebellious obscure people, or a raiding tribe, about 1200 B. C. They are not mentioned again in the historical remains, which inform us about every important nation, until

long after the days of the mostly legendary David and Solomon about 900 B. C. We have no evidence that they had any written language, which is the chief test of civilization, until 1000 B. C. It is altogether improbable that any part of the Old Testament was written until at least a hundred years later. This being the case the representation that David wrote psalms, and Solomon books is absurd.

So far it is not very important to try to find any harmony between the Old Testament narrative and what the historians have discovered. From Adam to Abraham the narrative is not now seriously considered. It is based on known Babylonian legends, and it flatly contradicts both science and history.

As to Abraham, we should think that here we have probably a real ancient tradition of the Hebrews, but it has become a legend. You remember how in the 17th chapter of Genesis it is explained why his name was changed from Abram to Abraham, which is said to mean the father of many nations. It does not. It is a meaningless word, and it shows that the writer was certainly not a Hebrew of the second millenium before Christ. All that we can say is that some of the kings mentioned in the story of Abraham really existed. but that is of little interest to anybody.

Then there is Joseph and the sojourn in Egypt. A hundred years study of the rich remains of Egypt does not establish a single undisputed indication that the Hebrews were ever in Egypt. Some scholars think that in their desert wanderings, before they entered Palestine, some of them may have settled for a time on the fringe of Egypt and were later expelled, but there is nothing whatever in Egyptian history to correspond with the story of Joseph and the Exodus. This

story and all that follows it for a long time is pure myth.

One curious discovery the historians have made. They found a story that seems to have been very popular in ancient Egypt, and it is quite clearly the original of the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. And, as in the case of Abraham, we find in Genesis itself a proof that the story, as we have it, was put together so long afterwards that both the writer and his readers were completely out of touch with the time.

You remember how in Genesis XLI, 43, which is the culminating point of the whole story, Pharaoh made Joseph rule over all the land of Egypt (which is unthinkable) and his absurd servants cried before him in the street, bow the knee. The older biblical students thought that this phrase, which is not Hebrew, must be the original Egyptian. It is not. It is a Babylonian expression, so the Rev. Professor Sayce tells us, and quite certainly Egyptian crowds did not, in the supposed time of Joseph, understand a word of the language of Babylon. The narrative belongs to the later days when the Hebrews knew that language because they had been conquered by the Babylonians and carried away as slaves.

II

But let us turn from modern history to the Bible and see if we can discover for ourselves anything of interest. You remember that II Kings and II Chronicles described how Hilkiyah the priest found the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. Read the story very carefully. The discovery is dated about the year 622—centuries after Moses and Aaron are said to have fully organized the religion of Jehovah or Jahveh, and after the building of the wonderful temple of Solomon.

Yet we are asked to believe that the priesthood had lost every copy of the sacred law and completely forgotten the contents of it! This is bad enough, surely, but the story gets much worse. A scribe reads the law to the king. In modern clean print, to say nothing of a dusty manuscript centuries old, you could not read the ancient manuscript of Deuteronomy, much less the whole Pentateuch, in half a day, probably not in half a week. Then they send to consult a witch or prophetess about it, which was expressly forbidden in the new law. Now they read the book to the whole Hebrew nation gathered together in a crowd. I wonder if they had loud speakers. Next, four hundred years after what is described as the magnificent temple of Solomon, they begin to organize the worship of Jehovah. If there is a limit to the absurdities of the so-called history of the Bible it must be here. But this is only a little in advance of hundreds of other absurdities concerning the history of the Jews and Christians. It is for the greater part at best a fairy tale and at worst a senseless propagandism.

Surely even a fundamentalist must feel uneasy about this impossible story concerning the finding of the Pentateuch and some other books of the Old Testament. But he will tell us that it is equally impossible to think that the Jewish priests and scribes really wrote the parts of the Bible which they pretended to discover and ascribed it to Moses. It is not at all impossible if the story is a fiction and that is what it is. Let me prove this from the Bible itself. There was then growing up in Judea a very wise and upright prophet named Jeremiah, and if you look up what the real translation is of Jeremiah VIII, 8, you will find that it is this:

How do ye cry, we are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? But behold the false pen of the Scribes hath wrought a lie.

Jeremiah describes the whole land, just after the time of Hilkiyah, as not observing any law of Jehovah. He says:

From the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely—that is tells lies.

The so-called historical books, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, contain the most obvious proof that they were written centuries after the events and are absolutely unreliable. I must confine myself to one or two illustrations.

Ezra gives a list of 42,360 Jews, with 7337 servants and thousands of vessels of silver and gold, who returned to Jerusalem from Babylonia. But the Old Testament itself says that less than ten thousand had been sent into captivity, and we are asked to believe that in an age when a population took at least a century to double, they had grown to far more than 50,000 in two generations; for great numbers remained in Babylonia.

The book Daniel absurdly misspells all the Babylonian names. It is wrong in calling Belshazzar the king of Babylon, is wrong in saying that Darius the Mede took Babylon, and is wrong in representing that he took it by fighting. We have found an authentic contemporary account of this event. Daniel is quite obviously a composition made (so the Rev. Professor Sayce says) two or three centuries after the fall of Babylon.

From one end to the other the historical books of the Old Testament have been shown to be quite unreliable and contrary to known facts. They contradict

72 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

each other repeatedly and are refuted by the Babylonian monuments. We cannot enter here into the details, which are given now in scores of theological works, but I have said enough to show that we must listen to the biblical scholars who now reconstruct the making of the Old Testament for us.

There is no trace of any Hebrew written language before the ninth century, when the pastoral Hebrew tribes borrowed the writing of one of their neighbors and became what we called civilized. Until then Jehovah's chosen people had been passing through savagery to barbarism and through it to civilization, just exactly as other tribes and nations had already done or were still doing, so that they had no advantage on account of the alleged favor which Jehovah had bestowed upon them.

No doubt the Hebrews already had, as all tribes have, oral traditions of earlier times, legends about the origin of the world that had spread from Babylon all over the region, and other legends and stories from Egypt.

No doubt also their native God was Jahveh, or Jehovah, a god of the mountains, of thunder and lightning, though they freely borrowed or, to use the biblical phrase, went after the gods of their neighbors.

When they began to compose books out of their traditions and songs and stories we do not know, but probably the earliest prophecies are the most ancient books of the Old Testament. In time the priests of Jehovah became powerful and they compiled the law of Moses or Deuteronomy, and later Leviticus.

Very little if any seems to have been written before the Babylonian captivity, about 600 B. C. It was the priests and scribes of the restored Judea, men who

had seen the powerful organized priesthoods of Babylon, who composed the so-called historical books, blended all the different and often contradictory narratives of the Pentateuch, and gave the Jews the Old Testament as we have it to-day, apart from later additions like Daniel. All the books of the Bible are really worthless as history.

Thus the priests and scribes completely destroyed the Bible as a folk-lore story of the religious development of a people. They had to represent that their cult or religion of Jehovah had existed from earliest times. They had to glorify their religion by a narrative teeming with miracles. They had to work up all the traditions of the nation in harmony with their purpose of showing that Jehovah was the national god and the greatest god on earth.

III

But, say the moderate modernists, as we may call them, the Hebrews remain unique in their religious and ethical genius, their monotheism and the high ideals of their prophets. You will generally find that the people who call a prophet or a book unique have never compared it with others. When a man calls the religion or the morality of the Hebrew prophets unique he must mean, if he means anything, that in the age of which he is speaking there was no other religion or code of morality to compare as to its excellency with that of the Hebrews. This was not true in any age of the moral requirements of either the Jews or Christians. There have always been other religions far in advance of both. Superiority cannot be claimed for Judaism and Christianity by any who have read translations of the hundreds of prayers and hymns that we have found in the ruins of Babylonia and Egypt.

Yet this superiority runs from end to end of those Homilies which the thirty-fifth article declares to contain a godly and wholesome doctrine. But I need not go back to these medieval formularies, though the bishops expressly referred me to them as the standard of doctrine. It is, apart from a very few modernists, the universal belief in the church to-day that the Jews brought monotheism and a higher morality into the world, but they did not.

First, let us see what happened in Judea as regards monotheism. We have no definite knowledge of Hebrew religion before 800 B. C., but it looks as if they had come into Palestine about 1400 with one god only, Jehovah. Is that a unique distinction? There had then just come to an end the great Cretan civilization, which had lasted two thousand years, and, as far as we can see, it never had more than one deity.

In that same period also, as we saw, the Egyptians had established monotheism by law, and the Babylonians had over and over again exalted a deity to the position of the one Lord of the universe. Persia had only one real God, Ahura Mazda, and China had only one God in its early history, Heaven.

Monotheism is a natural and constant result of development in the religious world. The priests of a deity exalt him above all others and try to suppress all others.

In Judea they succeeded permanently because it was a small country, and because the priests of Jehovah created a fictitious literature, the Old Testament, which represented the nation as achieving extraordinary triumphs when it was supposed to be faithful to Jehovah and suffering reverses when it fell away from him. There is no question here of religious genius or in-

stinct, much less of a supernaturalistic revelation.

In every country in which monotheism has triumphed over polytheism we have the same story—one priesthood has generally by capturing the monarch, got all other priesthoods and their gods suppressed.

When we turn to the moral question, we are referred at once to the prophets. How many books and how many sermons have been written claiming that the highest moral note yet struck in the world is in the Hebrew prophets. Through them, the orthodox believe, God gave his first clear message to the puzzled consciences of men, to be completed later in the message of Christ; and even Christians of the new school, the so-called modernists, have said that their moral message was humanly unique. Even men who were not Christians, like Matthew Arnold, found a moral genius in the Hebrew race, especially in the words of the prophets. I might ask which prophets they mean. The prophets cover several centuries, and I cannot imagine any man putting on a common level the words of Amos and the second part of Isaiah—Chapters 40-66 which were written after the time of Isaiah. But I would draw your attention to a more important fact.

When our articles and classic homilies were written, when the tradition was started in the church that the moral sentiments of the prophets were higher than any yet known in the world, no scholar even had any suspicion what were the moral sentiments of other ancient nations. The Egyptian bible, the Book of the Dead, was unknown; the Persian bible, the Avesta, was also unknown, and the ideas of the Babylonians were supposed, as the Jews represented, to be entirely evil and corrupt.

No wonder then that the divines of the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries thought that there was something unique or supernatural about the moral message of the prophets. They were justified in thinking it in those days. But no man is justified in repeating it to-day. From the tomb of the dead empires, from the graves of Egypt and the mounds of Mesopotamia and Persia, our scholars have summoned the ancient spirits and we hear their voices. I have quoted them. I have given you specimens, in their own words, of the moral messages of nations far older than Judea, and there is not a line of the moral code or precepts of the Jews in the Old Testament that they did not anticipate. This is equally true of the morality of the Christians in the New Testament.

You see once more what is the precise difference between the bishops and me. In this flood of new light, I say, you must either alter our formularies or leave a man free to see a symbolism in them. I complain that the bishops and church will not move with the thought and the increasing knowledge of our age. This unfortunate backwardness explains why the thinkers and scholars with their pupils desert Christianity. I am not even allowed to tell what this new knowledge is.

When a great opportunity occurred to tell it the doors of a cathedral were slammed against me. I must wander forth, an outcast, and put my case before the world in a series of books. And there is surely not one of my readers who does not see in these books that the old doctrine of a supernatural revelation, as the fundamentalists say, or natural revelation, as the modernists say, in Judea was based upon ignorance.

On every side of the little Hebrew nation there were advanced civilizations that had for centuries, even

thousands of years, recognized a divine command of justice, brotherly love and purity. The civilization of the Hebrews never equaled the much older civilizations of the far greater peoples, the Egyptians, the Babylonians and Persians. Why, then, should Christians give a supernaturalistic character to this one and deny it to the other three? We have the answer in the ignorance of the so-called saints who wrote the Old and New Testaments, and the fathers who formulated the Catholic Creeds, and the doctors who promulgated the Reformation Confessions of Faith.

What is the message of the prophets? The first is that of Amos, a grim shepherd. The second is that of Hosea, whose sentiments toward the enemies of his people or his class are that their infants shall be dashed in pieces and their women with child shall be ripped open. This is the eighth century before Christ, and it shows that the Hebrews were still at a most primitive level of morality at a time when the great empires were already feeble with age. How different was that immeasurably older moral code of the Egyptians: I have made no man weep. How much more admirable was the moral ideal that is incorporated in the Babylonian laws of twelve centuries earlier.

But even if you take the finest of the Jewish prophets, you find them saying only what we read in Babylonian and Persian sacred literature. They begin in the seventh and sixth centuries. That is just the age of Zarathushtra in Persia, Confucius and Lao-Tsze in China, and Buddha in India; and their moral message is unsurpassed. No Hebrew prophet ever insisted more sternly on purity than the Persians, and none ever laid such stress on the love of all men, as Buddha. It was his fundamental moral note.

Modern writers on the prophets particularly praise them for the eloquence of their demand for justice. In splendid language they do indict the vices and luxuries of the rich and the cooperation of the priests with the rich, and they do make themselves the champions of the poor and the oppressed. I admire it. But I have one little difficulty when I read how the pastors of wealthy congregations in modern American cities wax eloquent over this virtue of the prophets. I try to imitate the prophets, to apply their message to the distribution of wealth in our own time, to plead for the poor; and, forthwith, I am angrily denounced as a bolshevik, and the clergy whisper that, whether my Darwinian heresies ought or ought not to have been punished, my Marxian heresies justify everything that the bishops did! It is a strange and difficult world for a simple-minded man who would walk peaceably with his fellows and avoid guile.

There is indeed in the Hebrew literature much lofty and eloquent idealism. Most of it (the second part of Isaiah, with its new note of tenderness, and the best of the Psalms) was written during or after the Babylonian captivity. That is significant enough. The Jews have now read the best literature of Babylon and Persia. Later Greek influence reaches Judea, and there is the broader note of the wisdom books.

But take it all at its best, and I need not quote it. Compare the Babylonian prayer to the God Sin, of 2500 B. C., which I have quoted, and reflect whether two thousand years of further natural development are not enough to explain the moral sentiments of 500 B. C.

In short, before you ever again say, or let any preacher persuade you to believe, that the Hebrew morality is higher than any other, read the oldest parts

of the Chinese King, the Persian Avesta, and the best Psalms, hymns and prayers in recent writers on the Egyptian, Babylonian and Assyrian interpretations of religion. Then, and only then, your belief will be of some value, otherwise it will continue to be worthless superstition.

IV

I have said that there are twenty million people at least in the United States who would support the bishops heartily and quite sincerely. I mean the believers, of all churches, who say flatly that the Bible is the word of God and therefore one may smile at all this new knowledge. Whether the bishops are proud that these are the only folk who unreservedly support them in demanding of me literal acceptance of the Bible, the Catholic Creeds and the Protestant Confessions, I do not know; but, anyhow, let us, before we pass from Judaism to Christianity, consider this position, the so-called fundamentalist position.

I respect the fundamentalists because they are entirely sincere. But because I do respect them, I approach them with a simple question—how do you know that the Bible is the word of God? You may not have the opportunity to read the learned works, even of the clerical professors of the colleges and universities, in which it is fully proved that many books of the Old Testament claim to have been written by men who certainly did not write them. You may hesitate to take the word of Hebrew scholars that often in a single book, even a single chapter, there are passages which from their style are known to belong to totally different periods (just as we can at once distinguish English of the fourteenth century from English of the seventeenth) showing that the books are late compilations.

Who told you that God inspired the Pentateuch, or even that Moses wrote it? The books themselves could not tell you; and they do not. I submit that any man who will seriously and patiently examine the grounds of his belief that the Bible is the word of God has only an ancient tradition of the church, repeated in every age by teachers, preachers and writers, to fall back upon. What, therefore, you are setting against the unanimous teaching of all the learned scientists and historians of our time, and a very large part of our theologians, is not the authority of God, but the authority of your church, of men who repeat ancient formularies and are ignorant of those vast additions to our knowledge which make a literal acceptance of such formularies no longer possible.

I have shown this from the side of science and from the side of biblical study. Let us now glance at another set of new facts which bear upon the subject. In the ruins of the Assyrian libraries, where tens of thousands of the baked tiles which served as pages of books have been found, we recovered fragments of a kind of romance that was very popular in ancient Mesopotamia. Figures on seals and stones, which illustrate it, show that in some form it goes back to a time long before the Hebrews were civilized.

The hero is a man named Gilgamesh who, when he feels the oncoming of age, searches out an aged relative who is supposed to know the secret of immortality. Once, this man tells him, men became so wicked that the gods decided to drown the whole race. But the teller of the tale, Ut-Napishtim, was a very good man, and the gods warned him to make a large boat. In this he and his family and pairs of the animals floated on the waters, until rain-flood covered the earth. Then

at last the boat settled on a mountain. So, to test if there was yet dry land in the valleys, the old man sent out in succession a dove, a swallow and a raven. The first two came back, but the raven did not, so they came out of the boat. Who can read that story and still say that the story of the deluge in Genesis was a revelation of the God, Jehovah, to Moses?

But that is not the end of it. When Ut-Napishtim came out of the boat, he was put in charge of the garden of the gods. He and his wife were free to eat whatever grew except the fruit of one tree. But a devil seduced the man (the Babylonians were too just to woman to put the whole blame on her) and the pair fell, and so mankind lost its primitive happiness. Does anybody imagine that these Babylonian stories never reached Judea and all the surrounding region? Does anybody hold that they needed to be revealed to the Jews by their God when they had been in circulation in the nearest great civilization for ages?

And there are many such stories. Other tablets or pages tell how the gods created the world, dividing the light from the darkness, made the lights of heaven, and made the plants and animals and finally man.

It seems even, from a tablet found by the explorers of Philadelphia University five or six years ago, that the Babylonians came at last to believe that man was evolved, as we say, from an animal form; but our fundamentalists have not yet heard of this, so in the year 1930 they want to force the older Babylonian version of creation on the schools and colleges of the United States, as my brethren in the House of Bishops tried to force it on me.

It is probable that all these things (and the seven-day week, the Sabbath, a Babylonian word, and much

82 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

of the Babylonian law) reached the Hebrews indirectly, through the civilized races of Palestine, but can any reasonable person read them and say they were not borrowed from Babylon? Through Damascus and Tyre and Sidon the learning of Babylon spread over every part of Syria and Palestine.

We realize now that the Hebrews came as wandering Bedouins or uncivilized vagabonds of the desert into the borders of a region where civilization was already thousands of years old. They had great teachers on every side, and they slowly learned from them art and letters, science and morals, and clung only to their desert-god, Jehovah, until the priests welded it all in one great theocratic and national system in the service of Jehovah.

Do you wonder that the scholars of our world, and the young folk who have passed through the history-courses of our colleges and universities, smile at the old idea of the chosen people, the specially privileged or gifted race, and at all who still hold the idea? This conception belongs to an age when men could not possibly think otherwise, for they knew naught of the greatness of that old world.

But we know it. We see our race as a whole, in the valley of the Nile and in Mesopotamia, on the Persian hills and in the valleys of India and China, learning from its experience to raise without divine assistance its civilization from lower to higher stages and reveal the mighty resources of the human heart and mind.

As I am here telling the great truths of history, I have taken only a few details from biblical science to show how unreliable the Old Testament is. No doubt to many these selected details will seem strange and

How the Hebrews Became a Civilized People 83

will not all fit in with their ideas of the Bible. But I will later devote the whole of one of these volumes to the Bible and explain how and when the Old and New Testaments were written. We shall then realize fully how useless it is for any man to say that the bishops were bound to tell me to accept the creeds literally because they express the truths of the Bible.

IN every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch.

This materialist concept is the Socialist key to history. It is the first principle of a science of society, and, being directly antagonistic to all religious philosophy, it is destined to drive this 'philosophy' and all its superstitions from their last ditch.—Frederick Engels.

THE PAGAN CRADLE
OF CHRISTIANITY

THE whole history of the spirit of religion is only the history of the errors of the human mind, . . . which while always dreaming of wisdom and happiness, wanders blindly in a labyrinth of illusion.—Volney.

CHAPTER IV

THE PAGAN CRADLE OF CHRISTIANITY

Fourteen centuries ago, when southern Europe had become entirely Christian, it was proposed that the history of man should be divided into two sections or eras, B. C., the years before Christ, and A. D., the years of the Lord. The record of what man called the earthly life of Christ was so poor that men did not know the year in which he was born; and, theologians now say, the Christian Era was made to begin in the wrong year.

Of the date of the birth there was not the least indication in the Gospels and December 25th was chosen because it had been the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun, the sun-god, in the pagan Roman calendar, and also the birthday of Mithra and other saviour-gods.

Of the appearance of Christ no man knew anything, for all the early pictures, even that which Roman catholics foolishly claim to be the actual impress of Christ's blood-covered face on the veil of Veronica, are pictures of the type of face, not of the Jews, but of the Lombards, a Teutonic people that settled in Italy.

These uncertainties puzzled many people, but it was felt that since the Son of God had come in the form of man and brought redemption to the world, it was proper to make that monumental event the dividing line of history. Beyond this line all lay in darkness and the shadow of death, but this side of it the sun shone, the sun of truth and virtue, and the world was transformed.

That is the very essence of the Christian gospel when it is taken literally. Christ did not merely redeem the world from Adam's sin. He brought a great light

in the form of a unique gospel or divine revelation into a darkened world, and he left behind him a unique record of miraculous birth, resurrection and ascension.

We shall see presently what is the historical value of the gospels and epistles from which the miraculous life, the divinity and the atoning death of Jesus are derived. That is a purely historical question, but few historians dare touch it. They find it safer to respect the church's division of history into sacred and profane.

The experts in the story of the ancient world have at least a very full knowledge of the first century before Christ and the first century after Christ, and they will unanimously tell you this: Apart from the Gospels, Epistles and Acts, which they refuse to examine, they find no disturbance of the world, and no trace whatever that even a human prophet named Jesus ever existed.

It is not until the second century that they find evidence that a new religion, the religion of Jesus, existed and then, and for long afterwards, it made no difference to the general world development. They find, when they study the moral and religious development in particular, that the ideas which later appear in the Christian church can be accounted for even if Jesus had never existed; for the whole Greco-Roman world was, by the first century before Christ, familiar with those ideas. Instead of finding a great light break upon a moral darkness they see a perfectly normal and gradual development of moral ideas and ideals.

Once more the creed, literally interpreted by my fellow bishops, as they say, is in deadly conflict with the sure and accepted knowledge of this modern age. As I am proving in this series of six booklets the learned scientists, historians, philosophers and sociologists are on my side. The orthodox bishops have only the

support of the ignorant theologians of the Middle Ages. This is the age of science and no man of science is with them.

I

We have already seen that, as every educated person now knows, the ancient world had long before the time of Christ risen to a high moral level. In particular there was an increasing tendency to what is called asceticism, the laying of great stress on purity of spirit or soul, and the evil of sins of the flesh. We saw how stern was the teaching of the Persian religion in this respect, and in the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ this Persian nation ruled almost the entire civilized world from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Its influence spread all over Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine.

Remember the fundamental doctrine of the sacred books of Persia. The flesh had been created by the evil spirit, and on some unknown day Ahura Mazda, the righteous God, as the Persian Bible calls him, will descend to the world and his angels will summon all men to judgment. That teaching spread over Judea as far as Egypt and over Asia Minor as far as Ephesus and the cities of the coast.

In India there was, from the seventh century before Christ, a similar development. Apart from Buddha, whose teaching is summed up in purity and love of all men, there was a Jainist religion which, centuries before Christ, inspired large monasteries in which men mortified the flesh as zealously as did the famous Christian monks of Egypt long afterwards. It is, however disputed to what extent Buddhist influence reached Europe and Palestine, through Persia, and we will leave it out of account.

But it is certain that the spread of the power of Persia from India as far as Egypt and the Greek cities of Asia Minor led to the growth everywhere of moral teachers and in many places of ascetic practices.

In Egypt, for instance, where a new god, Serapis, became popular, the colleges of the priests became monasteries of the most severe description. They never tasted wine or meat, and they slept on the ground and were famed for the strictness of their conduct, as the Egyptian historian Manetho describes. These priest-monks lived chiefly at Alexandria; and, as the city had many Jews during the two or three centuries before Christ, there was the closest connection with Judea. In fact, we shall see presently that the Jews of Egypt formed similar ascetic communities.

Meantime, as the name Alexandria (which was founded by Alexander the Great) reminds us, the Greeks in turn had become a world power. They first discovered their genius in the cosmopolitan cities of Asia Minor, and their earliest philosophers were moralists of a lofty type.

Anaximander, of the sixth century B. C. taught a doctrine so like that of Buddha that many think he had learned Buddhist ideas: yet you probably never heard of Anaximander, who, six centuries before St. Paul, taught in the very cradle of Christianity.

Everybody will have heard, however, of Pythagoras, Socrates. Plato and their stern insistence on justice and the superiority of the spirit over the flesh. People are apt to think of them as high-brows who just gathered a few pupils about them, but the sternest and most ascetic, a devotee of piety among them all, Pythagoras, a Greek who lived in southern Italy, had so extensive a following that the ancient writers pretend that a single

army of one hundred thousand of them took the field to destroy the wicked city of Sybaris.

It would take a large volume to tell of all the wonderful Greek moralists of those days. Most people think only of Plato and Aristotle, in the city of Athens, but these are only the best known of thousands of teachers of truth and morals.

Scores of them were women who wandered from city to city in the Greek world, which stretched from Sicily to Egypt, from the seventh century until after the birth of Christ. Every shade of moral idealism was taught, apart from the temples, in every city of that wonderful world; and the most influential schools were the very rigorous and puritan schools of the Platonists, the Stoics and the Pythagoreans, who would never taste meat.

You often read about the famous Greek moralists at or just after the time of Christ. Apollonius of Tyana was a contemporary of Christ and the most remarkable parallel to him in history.

Then there were Epictetus (an ex-slave whose doctrine also is remarkably similar to that of Christ) and Dion Chrysostom, a pet of the Roman aristocracy, but an orator who denounced slavery to them centuries before any Christian teacher did. These are only the last representatives of the wandering moralists of the severest type who covered the Greco-Roman world during six centuries B. C.

No doubt to many of my readers all this will seem a strange and violent contradiction of everything which they have been told all their lives by Christian preachers about the ancient world in the few centuries before Christ. Instead of being sodden with vice, it seems to

have been drenched with the teaching of virtue, even of asceticism.

One among those moralists, Pythagoras, who died about 500 B. C., had far more followers during his life than Christ or St. Paul secured in the first century. Probably he made more converts to his philosophy than all our missionary bishops together have made to the gospels of Jesus and Paul. What little success our missionaries have had was chiefly due to the teaching of realities in their mission schools rather than to the preaching of fictions in their mission churches. The physicians did at least as much toward this success as the theologians. Nor in converting heathens into Christians must the great part of the mission loaves and fishes be lost sight of; because without these there would have been still fewer converts, by one-half at least. The desire for loaves and fishes in this life did far more toward the winning over of the benighted heathen, as they are called, than both the fear of hell and the hope of heaven together.

What I am driving at is that the doors of our churches in China, Africa, South America and elsewhere never would have been opened or soon would be closed if opening and keeping them open depended chiefly upon teaching the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, even as the doors of most churches in the United States would be closed if keeping them open were dependent upon preaching these doctrines.*

Am I not, therefore, fully justified in the contention by which I am supporting my appeals to the General Convention for restoration to the House of Bishops, that Christian orthodoxy is on account of its supernaturalism utterly bankrupt and that our orthodox bishops

* See what this doctrine is on page 6.

and rectors are intellectually insolvent?

Pythagoras, Plato and Zeno had without loaves and fishes an immense influence for several centuries.

But let me state the situation truthfully, not like those writers and preachers who represent that the old world (B. C.) was devoid of virtue.

On the one hand, the influence of these moralists or philosophers was generally limited, and the older religions did not give moral lessons to the mass of the people.

On the other hand, we must not be misled into thinking that the vices of Corinth or of a certain set in Athens were the common life of the Greek world.

No high authority now admits that the Greeks (we shall see about the Romans later) were, on the whole, worse than we are, or were nearly so corrupt as the Christians of the Middle Ages. One of the highest special authorities on this subject, the Rev. Professor Mahaffy, a clergyman, makes, in his *Social Life in Greece*, a spirited defense of the Greeks.

I am concerned here, however, with ideas and ideals, not practices. We see the thought of the whole civilized world in the six centuries before Christ taking an ethical direction and finding expression, in all parts, in the strictest doctrines of purity, justice and brotherly love. Not one word that I have said is in dispute or is a new discovery. Turn, to save time, to any good encyclopedia (if possible see the authoritative *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*) and look up the Greeks, the Persians, or the Egyptians. You will find the facts even more impressive than I have said. Christianity was born and reared in a world which was drenched with the highest ethical teaching in every province.

II

Judea is geographically on the fringe of this Greco-Roman world, but it is on the shore of the Mediterranean, which bore the ships of all nations, and for centuries it had been the highway between Egypt and Syria and Babylonia. It now came under the influence of Persia, and the Hebrews who went in great numbers to Alexandria adopted the Greek language and steeped themselves in Greek culture. The Persian influence led to a more definite belief in a future life, which is so faint in the Old Testament. The Greek influence led to broader and more progressive thinking. Because of these two civilizing influences (Persian and Greek) the Hebrews, or Jews, made far more progress in the way toward a higher civilization than is generally supposed.

The historian does not take his information from anonymous gospels of unknown date. He consults the famous Jewish historian, Josephus, or the still more learned Jew, Philo of Alexandria. From these we see that the gospels are misleading. No doubt the Sadducees were skeptics, under Greek influence, but the idea that one usually gets from the gospels, that the Pharisees were another small sect among the educated, and a particularly vain and narrow-minded body, is quite wrong. The bulk of the people, workers or merchants, were Pharisees. Paul was a Pharisee. To be a Pharisee meant little more than being a zealous and patriotic Jew. And it had a liberal wing as well as its hair-splitting zealots. Some of its teachers, who began to be called rabbis or masters just about the time of Christ, taught a very humane and sensible morality. Their leader was the Rabbi Hillel, of the first century, and his followers were very numerous and taught much the same as Jesus.

Let me give here another curious illustration of the

wrong impression of contemporary Jews that we get from the gospels. It is generally admitted that the gospels must have been written far away from Judea, and errors are natural enough, to say nothing of strong feeling against the Jews.

You remember how in one place it is said that Jesus spoke to the people in parables, not like the Scribes and Pharisees. This is not true. He taught exactly as they did, and his teaching was in no respect an improvement upon theirs. Thousands of sermons have been preached on this gross misrepresentation. And not one preacher in a hundred knows that we have the actual teaching of the Pharisee-Rabbis in the Talmud, and not one in a hundred thousand ever opens the Talmud to see how they really taught. The parable was the favorite method in which the Rabbis taught their pupils.

Professor McCabe in his *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels* shows that almost all the chief parables of the gospels are found also in the Talmud in the teaching of the Rabbis, and he gives strong reason to think that the writers of the gospels borrowed them from the Jews, not the Jews from the Christians. Beyond question one borrowed from the other. In any case, Professor McCabe shows that some of the Rabbis of the time of Jesus, whose teaching is given in the oldest part of the Talmud, had just the same moral ideals as his.

Where the teaching of Jesus differs from that of most of the Rabbis is not in the matter of brotherly love (everybody ought at least to know that the great precept: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is a quotation from the Old Testament) but in advocating passive resistance, voluntary poverty and abstinence from marriage.

If you heard to-day of a man who thinks that when a burglar has taken his purse he ought also to give him the key to the safe, or that when a man has done you one injury you must ask him politely to do another, well, you know what you would say. You may or may not, nevertheless, call the teaching of Jesus on this point sublime, but if you call it unique or helpful you are wrong.

Speaking of uniqueness, I could quote exactly the same sentiments of non-resistance to evil and strict purity even of thought from Plato, Epictetus and Seneca, as Professor McCabe does, but I will quote something even more interesting. In his *Jewish War* (Whiston's translation) the great historian of the Jews, Josephus, describes a sect, the Essenes, which, in his own time and in that of Jesus and long before, dwelt in monasteries on the hills beyond the Jordan and went about the cities in pairs preaching and healing. They were the most virtuous men on earth, says Josephus, who does not mention the Christians; and early Christian writers like Hippolytus and Eusebius praise the Essenes highly. Here are a few sentences from the very long account of them in the *Jewish War*:

These Essenians reject pleasure as an evil, but esteem continence and the conquest over our passions to be virtue. They neglect wedlock (never marry) . . . These men are despisers of riches, nor is there one to be found among them who hath more than another . . . They carry nothing at all with them when they travel into remote parts, though they have weapons with them (Philo denies this) for fear of thieves. Nor do they allow of the change of garments or of shoes till they be first entirely torn to pieces or worn out by time. Nor do they either buy or sell anything to one another, but every one of them gives what he hath to him who

wanteth it . . . Only these two things are done among them at everyone's free will, which are to assist those that want and to show mercy . . . They are eminent for fidelity and are the ministers of peace; whatsoever they say is firmer than an oath, but swearing is avoided by them and they esteem it worse than perjury.

Voluntary poverty and common ownership, strict celibacy, prohibition of oaths, constant exhortation to peace and virtue, wandering from city to city in pairs (and let me add that they were healers of sick and denounced war and slavery) were thus familiar in Judea long before Christ was born.

Philo tells us of a similar body of Jews, or mixed Jews and Greeks, in Alexandria: the Therapeuts or Healers. They lived in monasteries for each sex, avoided flesh and wine, and dressed soberly; and they also sternly condemned slavery. Their chief center was Alexandria, but they spread to the cities far beyond Egypt.

Now where is the uniqueness of the Christian gospel? And, although these things have been known all through the Christian Era, how many preachers or religious writers, have ever told you that Judaism had produced these ascetic movements quite apart from Christianity and much earlier?

The fact is that many are now tempted to believe, seeing the extraordinary parallel between the teaching of the gospels and that of the Essenes, that Jesus, if he existed at all, was just an Essenian healer and preacher who was stung to greater fervor from hearing the Persian idea of the coming end of the world and thought that it was close at hand.

III

So far I have spoken only of wandering lecturers or philosophers or semi-monastic bodies who, in the

first century before Christ, conveyed to their followers the moral or ascetic ideals which that remarkable age had developed. The old religions, I said, did not preach to the mass of the people. In this, naturally, I referred to the religions of Greece and Rome, since we have seen that all the greater dieties of Egypt and Babylonia and Persia were understood to punish sin and insist on virtuous conduct. But the Greek religion also had a strong ethical note. However indifferent to virtue Zeus, the great god of the Greeks, might be in the early poets, in the great tragedians he is the guardian of justice and the punisher of sin. Moreover in those occasional celebrations which the Greeks called Mysteries moral purity or purification was demanded; and every free-born Athenian attended the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Just before the time of Christ there was a considerable development in the interpretations of religion which were both ascetic and ritual. The chief of these, Mithraism, came, naturally, from Persia, where even the old religion had laid such stress on spirit and flesh, purity and impurity, light and darkness. Mithra was an ancient Persian sun-god who had for a time been displaced by Ahura Mazda.

By the fifth century B. C., however, the Persians realized that if Mithra were conceived as a shining young warrior against the powers of darkness he would make an ideal deity. He was clothed with the moral attributes of Ahura Mazda, hailed as the Saviour of Men, and honored with a very elaborate ritual. Like the sun, which begins to rise from its annual enfeeblement in midwinter, Mithra's Nativity was put on December 25th and honored with a gorgeous mid-night ceremony.

Mithra was said to have been born in a cave (as

the sun rises from the cave of darkness) and his temples were built underground to resemble caves. They were lit with a blaze of candles and reeked with incense, and the chief services were a commemorative supper of bread and wine (celebrated on the altar by priests) and the baptism of neophytes in the blood of a bull. He was the ram of God, the savior of men from sin: and, once men were baptized in his name, the strictest virtue was required of them.

Mithraism was the chief rival to early Christianity in the Greco-Roman world. All the authorities agree that it far outstripped Christianity in the third century, for the martial note appealed to soldiers, and the emperors strongly favored it. Developed long before the birth of Christ, it had spread all over Asia Minor by the first century of the Christian Era. And there were other ritual religions which celebrated in midwinter the birth of a deity vaguely conceived as a savior.

December 25th was marked in special type in the Roman Calendar as the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun, and the days that preceded it were the most joyous of all days. the Feast of the Saturnalia (the God Saturn) when stalls laden with little dolls and other presents filled the streets, and for a day slaves were waited upon by their masters. *

In Egypt midwinter was the feast of the nativity of the God Horus. In later Egypt at least Horus was the son of the virgin-goddess Isis. Not only the Roman writer Macrobius, but the Christian writer of the Paschal Chronicle tells us that on that day Horus was represent-

* See my lecture sermon on the Human Meaning of Christian Doctrine, an effort to summarize Professor Frazer's great work, *The Golden Bough*, so far as it concerns the death and resurrection of these saviour-gods, sent free.—W. M. B.

ed as an infant lying in a manger, and beside it was a statue of the virgin-mother Isis; while the white-robed priests of Isis, with shaven heads performed the service in the temples, amidst blaze of candles and perfume of incense. Horus was, like Mithra, an ancient sun-god, as Macrobius expressly says. The Greeks represented the birth of their god Dionysos, as a baby in a basket, in the same way.

Thus the whole Greco-Roman world was familiar with the birth-celebration of a god in midwinter long before Christ was born, and in most cases the god was said to be the savior of men and the protector of virtue. As there is not the least doubt that the two foremost of these deities, Mithra and Horus, were sun-gods, sneers at me on account of my acceptance of the solar myth theory of the midwinter celebration which we call Christmas are quite out of place.

The similar celebration of midwinter all over northern Europe called Yule is also just as clearly in honor of the sun. But in countries where the temperate winter was rather welcomed after the hot southern summer it was not the birth of the sun, but the rebirth or resurrection of the spirit of vegetation in spring that was celebrated; and in many places this was preceded by a somber celebration of the death of the God.

The Christmas and Easter celebrations are but different versions of the greatest of dramas, the ageless drama of human redemption from hell to heaven by the savior-god. Those who commemorated this redemption in winter had for their divine redeemer the sun-god as the central figure of the drama, but those who commemorated this redemption in the spring had

for their savior-god the vegetation-spirit incarnated in a man.

In all ages people have taken either a happy or sad pleasure in dramatic performances. The emotion of joy greatly dominates the winter version of the drama of redemption, but in the spring version these emotions are far more equally blended. In most interpretations of redemptive religion there are both the Christmas and Easter parts of the drama, though the Christmas part does not appear in some.

I am trying to make it clear that in all interpretations of redemptive religion we have, in accordance with my contention at the trials and in these appeals, symbolic drama, not literal history as the prosecution contended. There literalism is the letter which killeth. So far as educated men and women are concerned it is dead and buried never to be resurrected. My symbolism is the spirit which maketh alive and never dieth. It is as the outstanding educator in the world, Professor John Dewey says, Christian fundamentalism and modernism combined. Neither fundamental literalism nor modern mysticism ever has been or ever will be true, but symbolism always has been, is now and ever will be the truth, the way and the life.

So, then, the temple of every cosmopolitan city all round the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, in which every nation and every religion were represented, had great spring, as well as for the most part winter, festivals in commemoration of the birth, death and resurrection of a savior-god.

Such a festival there had been, though in November, when the corn is sown, from immemorial time in Egypt, in honor of the god Osiris, the guardian of virtue and judge of the dead. During four days the

people mourned the death of the God, which was somehow dramatically portrayed by the priests, then there was a week of rejoicing over this rebirth. This annual celebration of death and resurrection, in connection with the oldest and most ethical god of Egypt was the greatest festival of the year and had been for ages before the beginning of the Christian era. In Babylonia also there was an annual day of mourning in summer, over the god Tammuz, figured as a handsome young man lying on a bier, followed by a rejoicing; and so impressive and popular was the spectacle that it spread all over Syria, and even the Jewish women are scolded in the Old Testament for mourning over Tammuz.

Far away in Greece historians describe the women planting gardens of Adonis round the bier of the dead god.

Either owing to the gradual shift of the imperfect calendar of early times or from some other cause these oldest death and resurrection ceremonies were at various periods of the year. But the ritual religions which spread most over the Roman world, the Persian cult of Mithra and the cult of Attis and Cybele, held their festival in the spring. It is one of the early Christian Fathers who, unconscious of the irony, tells us of the death and resurrection festival, in March, of Mithra. Firmicus Maternus says, in his *Errors of the Profane Religions*:

On a certain night an image is laid upon a bier and it is mourned with solemn chants. When they are sated with this fictitious lamentation, a light is brought in. Then the mouths of all the mourners are anointed by a priest, who murmurs slowly, 'Rejoice, followers of the saved (resurrected) god, because there is for you a relief from your grief.'

Firmicus Maternus was speaking, remember, not of some remote age, but of what was going on in the pagan temples of the world in which he lived. At a time when the Christian church had no such elaborate celebrations. And it is another and greater Christian Father, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, born 354, who tells how he saw in the streets of Rome the death and resurrection festivals of Attis. He says that in every other city of the Greco-Roman world this occurred with dense crowds looking on. On March 17th the priests of Attis and of the Mother of the Gods, Cybele, had a reed-bearing procession, probably the original of Palm Sunday. March 24th was the terrible Day of Blood. The statue of the young god Attis was bound to a pine tree and borne in procession, with soul-stirring dirges and music to an artificial sepulcher in the temple; just as catholics do with the sacrament on Good Friday. And on the next or the following day, the tomb was opened, Attis was restored to light, and there was frenzied rejoicing. In Phoenicia also there was much the same festival; and, from there, it ran to Carthage and on to Spain.

IV

Now let us pause for a moment after this breathless survey of the moralities and religions of the Greco-Roman world in the century before Christ. Let me repeat, for it will seem strange to many that they never heard these things before, that not one line of what I have written is disputed. I need not quote authorities, for any good recent encyclopedia will tell you these things in its relevant articles.

In the century before Christ the mingling of all the old civilizations in the Roman Republic (later

empire) had brought about an extraordinary cosmopolitan crowd of cities. All round the Mediterranean Sea, from Alexandria to Antioch, Athens and Rome, and even Carthage, were great cities with every known religion and philosophy. Every shade of morality, up to extreme asceticism, was taught in them by settled or wandering teachers; and every city was perfectly familiar with annual celebrations of the birth, death and rebirth of savior-gods, with cries of sin and remission of sin, with baptisms and vestments, candles and incense. The Roman catholic who imagines that the Christmas and Easter services of his church were inaugurated after the death of Jesus is pathetically ignorant even of early Christian literature.

But there is a much broader interest in these matters. The early Christians were clearly troubled by the close parallel of these pagan ideas to their own. Some said that the prophet Jeremiah had foretold to the Egyptians the birth of Christ from a virgin, and others said that the devil had inspired all these things to thwart the appeal of Christianity. We smile at these explanations to-day. We have to judge these matters on broad historical principles, just as we judge the claim of Mohammed to have received a revelation.

And the first point that will occur to any thoughtful man is this. Seeing that all these moral sentiments and beliefs already existed in the Roman world, we must make very sure that they were not simply transferred to or concentrated in the Christian story. That is what the pagans said, as the fathers tell us. Instead of there being something unique in the Christian story, its elements already existed from Alexandria to Rome, from Tarsus to Athens. On what evidence then, do we claim that, in spite of these beliefs all over the

world, there did actually arise in Judea a savior-god who was born, dead and resurrected to redeem men, or at least, as the modernists say, a prophet so sublime that his memory drew to itself all these legends and celebrations of the Roman world?

We have only the New Testament. Nearly all scholars now reject as spurious a reference to Christ in the history of Josephus, and there is no other profane reference in the first century. The Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, who came next, wrote eighty or ninety years after the death of Jesus, and are not historical witnesses even to the fact that he ever lived. They wrote about the year 120; and no writer, Christian or pagan, quotes a single line of our gospels before that date.

How do we know that the gospels existed? Who guarantees that the anonymous authors wrote with a knowledge of the events? In history those are the tests we use. If the author is anonymous or of unknown character, some other author of known character must give us confidence in his statements. It was a very uncritical age. All sorts of books were written (Apocryphal gospels and spurious epistles, for instance) and accepted which we know to be worthless.

There is no need to examine all over again the question of the date and credibility of the gospels, because the state of that question ought to be known to those who profess to be astonished at what I have said about Jesus. The bishops selected these propositions from my book for condemnation:

3. On page 51: Orthodox Christians say that Jesus founded their sectarian churches, though each sect insists that he had to do with

only one church, theirs. I doubt that he lived.

16. On page 106: There is no rational doubt about the fictitious character of the divine Jesus.

22. On page 154: From the viewpoint of the self-styled one hundred per cent Christians, I am a betrayer of Brother Jesus, because I do not believe that he ever had any existence as a god and that, if he was at any time a man, the world does not now and never can know of one thing that he did or of one word that he said.

That seems to the ordinary believer not only dreadful but unintelligible—blasphemous, the shocked bishops said. There are the four Gospels, we are assured telling all about what Jesus said and did. But if you ask the ordinary believer why he believes the narrative of the Gospels he has not the ghost of an idea and really this is as true of the bishops. He was taught to so believe. The church says so. But the church has to prove the truth of what it says; for, as I said in regard to the Old Testament, you cannot accept the word of an unknown writer that he is telling you the truth or that he speaks with a divine authority. Any person can claim that. In the course of history hundreds of writers have done so.

The church fully recognizes this, and its great biblical scholars and theologians try to prove that the Gospels were written within a reasonable period after the death of Jesus and by men who knew the facts and told the truth. Now what people who condemn me ought to know is that for more than a century church scholars in every country have been engaged on this

problem and they are no nearer agreement than they were fifty years ago.

The Gospels are almost the most difficult books in all literature when you want to prove their historical value; yet people condemn me as if there were no doubt or difficulty about them. Every now and then we have a new theory about the origin or date or credibility of different books of the New Testament.

Only a few years ago a distinguished theologian startled his colleagues by claiming that St. Paul had never heard of the Jesus of the Gospels. The general opinion is that Mark is the oldest gospel and was written somewhere between 65 and 70 A. D. You remember that the writer of Mark knows nothing about a miraculous birth and infancy of Jesus. He begins with the baptism of Jesus as the beginning of his preaching; just as if Jesus were, as some say, a monk from an Essenian monastery who had at the age of thirty felt a call to go and warn men of the approaching end of the world.

Even a space of thirty years is time enough in the east to allow legends to grow up about the memory of a man. We have had an actual illustration in the last century when a Persian reformer, Ali Mohammed, was put to death by the authorities in 1850. Two or three years after his death his followers wrote a simple life of him, and it contained no miracles. A few decades later biographies of him were circulated which were full of miracles.

If this can happen among followers of a modern prophet why not nineteen centuries ago? Moreover, even the theologians who pretend to prove (and their so-called proofs are of the frailest description) that Mark was written about thirty-five years after the death of

108 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

Jesus do not pretend to prove that we have the book as it was originally written. Remember how the writer professes to know what Jesus said when the only possible witnesses were asleep; and how he has to interpret the common language of Palestine for his readers, as if he is writing far away from Judea and for people who are ignorant of it.

But that great controversy about the Gospels fills whole libraries, and the very magnitude and uncertainty of it compel us, on ordinary historical principles, to keep an open mind. The experts, the theologians, are hopelessly divided.

No Christian writer refers to or quotes a single one of our Gospels within a hundred years after the death of Christ. It is about the middle of the second century that we first hear of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and are told that there is a tradition in the church that the gospels were written to embody what they remembered of Jesus.

Papias is the most important witness. He is an old man. He says, about the year 140, that when he was young, the elders told him about the writing of the Gospels. What was in them? When were they written? Papias gives us no idea. It is certain that if it were not for the doctrinal consequences history would completely ignore the Gospels as witnesses to the events of the first century. On broad historical lines all that we could say is that the Epistles of St. Paul may possibly contain the worthless church tradition of the first century, that certainly groups of Christians existed in most cities of the Roman world at a time when St. Paul is supposed to have flourished, that a zealous preacher named Jesus may have died in Judea twenty years earlier, and that the legends, so common at the

time, of death and resurrection were already gathering about his memory.

Yet those who make these vague representations should qualify them with the observation that at least a few high theological authorities (Van Manen) reject all of the so-called Epistles of Paul as spurious impositions upon a credulous world. I give you my own conviction for what you may think it to be worth and it is, that neither St. Paul nor any among the apostles ever lived. They are fictitious personages and the story of the Bible as a whole has ten times more fiction in it than truth.

Fortunately, I think, the opinion spreads in modern times that even the human personality of Jesus is mythical. In America Professor W. B. Smith, in England the Right Hon. J. M. Robertson, in Germany Professor Drews and the famous literary critic George Brandes of Denmark have written very learned works to prove that Jesus is a myth in the human as well as the divine sense. Only a few years ago a distinguished scholar of France, Dr. Couchoud, wrote a similar work, *The Enigma of Jesus*, and one of the most authoritative of modern experts, Sir J. G. Frazer, wrote an introduction to it and said that, while he was not convinced that Jesus was merely a myth, Dr. Couchoud had certainly laid his finger on a weak point in the chain of evidence on which hangs the religious faith of a great part of civilized mankind.

We may leave the matter there. The evidence for even the human existence of Jesus is extraordinarily scanty and poor compared with the evidence which historians generally use, and a man is in good intellectual company when he concludes that it does not prove that there ever was a Jesus. But even if we follow Professor

McCabe and say that it is broadly probable that a zealous reformer named Jesus lived and was executed in Judea, our conclusion is as he says, neither interesting nor important.

We know nothing of what he said or did. The documents we have, our Gospels, belong to the end of the first century or, more probably, the beginning of the second, and they are therefore historically unreliable. No historian uses them. It matters little therefore, whether the Gospels point to a shadowy form of a real Jesus in Judea. What does matter (as far as the formularies of the church and most of its members are concerned) is the divine Jesus, the miracle worker, the atoner, the risen God. It would be difficult, indeed impossible to name one distinguished historian of our time or to name six men in the United States of cultural distinction, who will admit, literally, the sin of Adam, the curse of the entire race for that sin, and therefore the need for a divine atonement, the sole basis of orthodox Christology.

In that case does it seriously matter that one should go on, as historians are not likely to do, to doubt if there was a human Jesus? That, and my connecting the nativity and resurrection with the solar myth, were the only points on which I could not allege the general support of learned men; though scholars of distinction agree to both. I said:

11. On page 91: The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world is the sign of the zodiac, Aries (sheep, ram) through which the sun passes towards the end of March, when all the saviour-gods annually died and rose again.

I had in mind, of course, the resurrection of Mithra, who was admittedly a sun-god and who was (as the greatest authority on Mithraism, F. Cumont, says) addressed as the Ram of God. And I had far more than the religion of Mithra in mind when I wrote:

14. On page 101: The birth, death, descension, resurrection and ascension of all the Saviour gods, not excepting Jesus, are versions of the sun-myth.

Does it matter to the bishops that Sir J. G. Frazer and other eminent scholars would say vegetation-myth instead of sun-myth? In any case, Mithra and Horus at least were sun-gods, and the point of importance for every thoughtful man is not that experts on the comparative interpretations of religion are not agreed whether some god whose nativity or resurrection were celebrated was a sun-god or a vegetation-god, but that they are agreed that our Christmas, Good Friday and Easter are but Christian forms of world-old celebrations. We can maintain them only as symbols of the ever-rising, perpetually renewed hope and power of man.

And you see plainly that no modernist subterfuge will help us here. Christ was no more unique in his teaching than in the miracles attributed to him. No new and higher moral message fell upon a dark and troubled age. It is as false historically as the idea that the new religion startled the pagans with a novel claim of a slain and risen god. If, indeed, any points seem original in the new religion they are the statement that the end of the world was near at hand, which time has proved false, and Paul's insistence that the whole race was cursed and must have a divine atoner, which now actually alienates people of refinement and education.

But it was an age of most intense debating of the religious and moral results of six centuries of philosophy (the age of the Gnostics) and so much literature has been destroyed that we do not know how the Gospels and the early theology really arose. I take my stand with the new history and the science of the comparative interpretations of religion. Nothing unique happened nineteen hundred years ago. One more savior-god was added to Osiris, Horus, Serapis, Mithra, Esmun and Heracles. The religious and moral evolution of the ancient world flowed on without a break because of the birth of Jesus, if indeed he was born. Anyhow, I shall show that the orthodox followers of this last of the great savior-gods have done little towards the betterment of the world and that in the long run and on the whole they have made it much worse than it would have been without Jesus and the Christian church.

HOW THE CHURCH TRI-
UMPHED IN EUROPE

JEFFERSON occupied his Sundays at Monticello in writing letters to Thomas Paine (they were unpublished, I believe, but I have seen them) in favor of the probabilities that Christ and his Twelve Apostles were only personifications of the sun and the twelve signs of the Zodiac.—Conway.

CHAPTER V

HOW THE CHURCH TRIUMPHED IN EUROPE

The next point on which modern history conflicts with the teaching of the church is in regard to the method by which, of all the religions of the first few centuries of our era, Christianity alone survived and conquered the world.

It might be pleaded that the church is not responsible for the version of its early history which is almost invariably given in sermons and in religious literature. That version so describes the triumph of the church that it is put outside the range of ordinary historical events and made to reveal the working of a divine power. We hear in sermons and read in books, of a Roman Empire steeped in vice and, when the ascetic doctrine of Christ spreads in it, the emperors have tens of thousands of the faithful slain in the hope of exterminating the new religion. The blood of martyrs was the seed of Christians, and at length Rome, weary of its vices and its brutality, voluntarily embraced the Christian faith to the exclusion of all others.

These representations are not true. No historian stands for them. Yet they are repeated or implied in thousands of sermons every Sunday; and, worse, they are supported by the passages of the New Testament and Prayer Book which give the utterly false impression that when God, the Son, Jesus, ascended into heaven, God, the Holy Ghost, descended to earth and dwelt in every one who approached Jesus through his divine bride, the Church, and through her sacramental means of grace for salvation, that is, for redemption from hell to heaven.

116 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

According to Christian orthodoxy it was this descent and indwelling that gave to Christianity the supernatural power which enabled it to triumph over its rivals. There is not one word of truth in all this. From the viewpoint of history it is seen to be, so to speak, a textile fabrication without a thread of truth in either its warp or woof.

Whether we take these representations literally, with the fundamentalist, or mystically, with the modernist, they consist essentially in a series of statements concerning the triumph of Christianity which we now know to be false.

The story opens with a version of Roman character and of Roman vice and brutality which modern authorities on Rome have shown to be libels.

The story contains accounts of innumerable martyrdoms which ecclesiastical historians themselves have now shown to be for the far greater part inventions of a later age.

The story represents that the rapid growth of the early church was due to the supernatural power given by the Holy Ghost to the preaching of the apostles making its persuasive influence to be without parallel in history. This is untrue. History tells us of many greater successes by natural means, also that all rival religions were suppressed by the emperors at the instigation of the bishops.

In this chapter it will be shown from the viewpoint of scientific history that the character of the Romans and the persecutions of the Christians by them had little or nothing to do with the triumph of Christianity in Europe. And we shall see that the teaching of modern history is irreconcilably inconsistent with

either the fundamentalist or the modernist account of what happened in the first four centuries.

I

It is not essential to any scheme of Christian doctrine that the traditional view of the character of the ancient Romans should be maintained; but, if you would understand why so large a proportion of college-trained men and women dislike the very atmosphere of a church and never read church literature, it is interesting to see how different is their estimate of Rome from that which is still constantly expressed in sermons. For example, such things as these are usually said that the Romans were a hard, brutal exploiting race; that Christianity brought into their lives for the first time a note of tenderness, of brotherly love, of sympathy with the weak; that the Romans led a life of extreme sexual license, and that Christianity revealed to them and won them to an ideal of purity.

In so far as the repute for brutality of the Roman rests, as it largely does, upon slavery, one must be amazed at the lack of fairness on the part of the writer or preacher who raises the issue. Roman slaves, who at one time outnumbered the free men in the empire by three or four to one, were mainly war-captives and their descendants. The Romans were only a few centuries out of barbarism at the beginning of the Christian era, and doubtless it had earlier been their practice, as it was that of the early Hebrews, to slay all captives. But now they regarded it as a humane improvement to spare their lives and make slaves of them; and, whatever sophistry or taint we may see in their argument, they at least did not raid neutral countries for the purpose of enslaving innocent people,

118 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

Need I point the contrast? Hardly a Christian minister in Europe or America protested when, after more than a thousand years of Christian influence the Dutch and English and Spanish raided the helpless villages of Africa, conveyed hundreds of thousands of the colored folk with terrible brutality to America, and sold them into the slavery which we all know so well. A work which has just been published on the subject, W. L. Mathieson's *Great Britain and the Slave Trade*, quotes an aristocratic statesman, a particularly cold and shrewd diplomatist, Lord Palmerston, as saying:

If all the other crimes which the human race has committed, from the creation down to the present day, were added together in one vast aggregate, they would scarcely equal, I am sure they would not exceed, the amount of guilt which has been incurred by mankind in connection with this diabolical slave trade.

What irony that in the face of this appalling crime of the modern Christian civilizations in Europe and America, with the full consent of their churches, an argument against the Roman civilization in favor of the Christian should be sought in the very much lesser crime of slavery in ancient Rome!

Further, were the early Christians the first to condemn slavery? They were not. The Essenians of Judea and the Therapeuts of Egypt had already condemned it long before. The Christians did not become civilized enough to condemn it entirely (in the form of serfdom) for nearly a thousand years, and even then to no great or lasting purpose. The new godless civilization of Soviet Russia has done more within the short period of its existence, thirteen years, than have all the supernaturalistic interpretations of religion to-

gether in all the ages not excepting the Christian, to abolish slavery with its terrible evils.

We have still two eloquent orations of the Stoic Dion Chrysostom, delivered to public audiences in the heart of Rome about the year 120, which deal entirely with and ruthlessly condemn the cruel and blighting institution of slavery. Before that time four Roman Emperors had passed laws for the protection of the slave from cruelty. Yet apart from one passage in a work which bears the name of Gregory of Nyssa (which work most experts regard as spurious) we have not a word of condemnation of slavery in any Christian writer until the ninth century, and by that time the economic conditions of Europe had destroyed the great slave-holders of Roman days. In the seventh century the Roman church or Pope Gregory the Great was the largest slave-owner in Europe.

Yet in Christian countries it is the claim of many books and sermons that Christianity broke the fetters of the slave. The truth is exactly the contrary. By example and precept Christianity has all through the ages furthered the diabolical institution of slavery and is still doing it. Wage slavery is the worst form of human exploitation which the workers ever endured: and, since its rise, the church always was and now is with the exploiter against the exploited.

It also is a commonplace of preachers that the poorer free workers were so despised and exploited in Rome that only in the new Christian communities could they find a feeling of brotherhood. This is a monstrous perversion of history.

The half million free workers (including wives and children) of the city of ancient Rome had, relatively to the age, wonderful privileges. They had about two

hundred holidays every year, and on nearly half of these the most princely free entertainments were provided for them.

Of these entertainments the brutal games of the amphitheater, against which Stoic emperors had protested, though the Christian emperors maintained them for more than a century after the triumph of the church over its rivals, were not, as is usually said, the most popular. Ninety thousand men could witness the bloody fights in the amphitheater, but four hundred thousand were accommodated for the bloodless games of the Great Circus probably, the most commodious of all the amusement places the world has possessed.

Marble colonnades of the most beautiful description were built for the people. An abundant and free supply of pure water flowed through every tenement. Free education, even higher education, was provided for the children of the workers. Free medical attendance was given by municipally-paid doctors, and by the priests of Aesculapius, the god of medicine. Free supplies of grain were dealt out to every worker twice a week.

Superb baths, with libraries and gymnasia, were open to all for less than a cent in modern coinage. The emperor Diocletian, moreover, established by law a minimum wage for each class of workers. How much of all this have the wage slaves in Christian America to-day? Incomparably less.

As to brotherhood, we have known for the last hundred years that throughout the Greco-Roman world the workers of each craft were organized in unions (colleges they called them in Rome) just as they are to-day. In the club-room, with its periodical suppers, all were equal, and often women and slaves were admitted on equal footing. Workers of the same craft

from other cities or lands were welcomed. It is very probable that Paul belonged to the union of his craft, tent making, and made his first converts everywhere in its club.

Wealthy men often built or endowed the meeting-places for unions. Are the millionaires in America doing this? They are more apt to have the police raid and destroy them. And there were in the Greco-Roman world funds to help the sick and bury the dead.

Strange? No! Not in the least. For the brotherhood and equality of men was one of the first principles of the old pre-Christian Stoic morality which ruled the lives of the better Greeks and Romans. It is only because Christian preachers and controversialists (eager to blacken Rome in its pagan days for the aggrandisement of the church) have selected the evil and omitted the good that an utterly false idea of Rome so generally prevails.

The propagandism which brought this about is now listened to with disgust by professors and students of history in our colleges and universities. The preaching of it no longer convinces any properly educated man or woman; but, instead contempt is inspired for the Christian church because it needs the support of such defamatory reflections upon the great Greco-Roman civilization to which the world owes far more of its salutary morality and of its highest ideals than to Christianity.

There was no mercy, no pity, in the Roman heart, you are told by Christian preachers and writers, but the truth is that in the second century under the acknowledged influence of Stoicism, there was a philanthropic movement in the whole of Italy to which you will find no parallel in history until modern times when

philanthropy is rightly credited to science rather than to religion. The rapidly developing civilization of Soviet Russia is wholly based on naturalistic science, not at all on supernaturalistic religion, yet it has more of helpful, joyous, loving, inspiring human service in its accomplishments and ideals than any Christian nation ever has had.

In Rome every injustice and disability was removed from woman. Orphanages and homes for the aged and the poor rose in thousands. Poor children were fed. At one time in the first century there were 300,000 orphans in the institutions. Dowries were provided for poor girls.

But lest you think I am exaggerating, let me sum it all up in the words of Sir Samuel Dill, the most learned writer on Rome in recent years, who in his *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, says:

Anyone who knows the inscriptions may be inclined to doubt whether private benefactions under the Antonines were less frequent and generous than in our own day.

Now let me tell you that one of these inscriptions speaks of how the Emperor Trajan paid for the support of three hundred poor children in a small Italian town, and in this inscription it is recorded that only two or three of these children were illegitimate.

An illegitimate birth-rate of one percent is almost incredibly low, and we must take this to be exceptional; but, anyhow, it warns us that the general opinion about the license of the Romans must be reconsidered. In fact, we may say at once that we have no historical evidence that the majority of people were looser in the worst Roman days than they have been in the best

Christian days. The Romans were certainly not worse than the Christians during the thousand years of the Middle Ages or, in Italy, until recent times.

Almost the entire charge against the Romans on account of immorality refers to certain emperors and certain periods when the wealthy were encouraged in licentiousness. Those periods were shorter than is generally supposed. Of the twenty-nine Pagan emperors no less than twenty-one were good men, and they ruled for 245 out of the 320 years (all but 85) of pagan reign. They did not, it is true, enforce the old death penalty for adultery, but those who speak about the license of the rich under the first emperor, Augustus, ought to add that this ruler sent into a cruel exile for life his own daughter, of whom he was passionately fond, when she was proved guilty of adultery. It would be difficult to find in the later history of royalty a parallel to that rigorous act. The great poet Ovid also was banished for indecency, while the virtuous Virgil was the idol of Rome.

It is not merely unjust but a perversion of history to take, as our preachers do the repulsive statements of such poets as Juvenal and Martial (and the charges of the former are now regarded with suspicion) about certain sets in Roman society at particular periods and pretend that these are general pictures of Roman morals.

The impartial historian confesses that, apart from these irregularities of some of the wealthy, to which one can find a parallel in every age, we have no evidence that the general condition of morality under the ancient pagan Greco-Roman civilization was worse than it is in the modern Christian Anglo-American civilization.

But there is an even graver error in the claim of Christian preachers. Whatever the moral condition was

at Rome in the later years of the republic and the earlier years of the empire, to which critics generally refer, all the Roman historians inform us that there was a great improvement before the end of the first century. To imagine that the wealthy Romans who, after the year 70 A. D., covered the land with charities, under the influence of the Stoic morality, were generally dissolute men is absurd. The plain truth is that our preachers have the most confused ideas about Roman social history.

Our preachers appear to know nothing about the great idealist movement of Stoicism in the first and second centuries, at a time when the Christian church in Rome was still a very small community on the fringe of the city, using Greek for its language, and having not the least influence on the life of Rome.

Our preachers appear to be unaware that when the Roman church did at last enlarge to the proportions of twenty or thirty thousand (in a city of one million) we have in the letters of Symmachus and the work of Macrobius an intimate picture of the last generation of pagan patricians, and it is an admirable picture.

Our preachers appear not to know that morals did not improve; but, as we shall see, degenerated when at length all Rome was forced to enter the church.

Thus in almost every respect informed people are shocked to have the historical illusions of the Middle Ages repeated from our Christian pulpits and in church literature. They are told that the church gave the world education, and they should know that one cannot open any manual of the history of education without reading that the pagan Roman Empire gave free schooling to all, and that in the eleven centuries after the fall

of paganism not one in a hundred, except clerics, was taught to read and write.

Our college-trained men and women are told that the church abolished slavery, when even the worker knows to-day from his Marxian literature that the church did not condemn the old slavery, and that its destruction was due to economic changes.

What really happened as the result of the development of a new economic system, capitalism, which supplanted the old, feudalism, was not the abolition of slavery but the change in its form from a bad one to a worse. The church has stood for the masters and against the slaves under both forms.

Our women are told that Christianity emancipated woman when they have a score of feminist histories showing that the Stoics of Rome did secure complete justice for woman, and the church destroyed it. They are told also that the church ennobled and sanctified marriage, whereas divorce was common from the fourth century to the eleventh. The fictitious and untruthful statements which have now been noticed are made about ancient Rome for the purpose of making the Christian moral message seem something entirely novel, if not unique, in that age. We have seen that it was not. On the contrary Christianity borrowed all of its moral teachings from paganism.

The old Roman religion was not an ethical agency; but, as we saw, there were philosophers for the educated, and religions, like Mithraism, for all. Christianity was one of the moral movements that came to meet the desire of the minority of the people for such an influence in their lives, and in the rigorous early days its little local churches were indeed so many centers of virtue. But here again the historian finds our literature very

gravely untruthful; and since the untruth has been exposed by Christian writers, both catholic and protestant, it is particularly painful to hear it still habitually repeated in sermons.

II

We now turn to the consideration of another false representation of our preachers as to the blood of the martyrs being the seed of Christians. But in passing to this subject, let me call your attention to the fact that orthodox Christianity is not concerned so much with the truth as with beliefs. Any one will see this to be the case if he examines a catholic creed or a protestant confession. One of the creeds strikes the keynote of the Christian interpretation of religion in these opening words: Whosoever would be saved it is necessary before all things that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

It has been known for two centuries, since the days of the famous French historian Tillemont, a priest, that the church tradition of the martyrs is fiction for the far greater part.

We need not consider here why, although Rome was generally very hospitable to alien religions, some of the emperors did persecute the Christians; but, in the triumph of the fourth century, the church was naturally proud of the few who really had laid down their lives for the faith.

It is now, however, fully recognized in learned ecclesiastical circles that there then began a practice of creating fictitious martyrs and of filling out the slender stories of the genuine martyrs with an amazing mass of purely imaginary details. From this the forgers, large-

ly clerics of both the Roman and the Greek churches, went on to invent martyrs on a really extraordinary scale. Two generations of Christian scholars have been at work in this field, and there are relatively few martyr-stories that remain intact. They have found that in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries advantage was taken of the general ignorance of Europe to fabricate this kind of literature quite recklessly.

Many theologians and ecclesiastical historians (in English the works of the French Jesuit Father Delehaye may be consulted) have published the results of this inquiry, and it shocks profane historians to see how Christian preachers still use the discredited ancient fictions. In the protestant churches this is generally done by repeating the old story that there were tens of thousands of martyrs, and that the Christian body was heroic in its faithfulness unto death.

How misleading this is may be gathered from the fact that of the twenty thousand Christians at Rome when the Emperor Diocletian initiated the last persecution, none are authentically known to have offered their lives. Almost all of them went back to the temples. There were at the most two general persecutions, not ten, and even these nearly emptied the churches. If the church had by the end of the third century several million members, as is estimated, then there was not one in ten thousand who remained loyal to it under persecution.

The protestant church generally respects martyrs in silence, but in the Anglican Communion of National Churches there is a ritualistic section which imitates Rome and in its stories of martyrs that Christian scholars have wholly discredited are used without scruple. For it is just the most popular and most picturesque martyr-

stories that the new history has discredited: the stories of St. Agnes, St. Sabastian, St. Catherine, St. Lawrence, St. Cecilia and St. Andrew.

The horrors of the Roman amphitheater or coliseum are constantly recalled by the preachers, yet Father Delehayé has proved that no Christian was ever exposed to the lions in it. It may be said in a word that more than ninety percent of the traditional martyrs have been found to be fictitious, and in the stories of the genuine martyrs more than ninety percent of the details are fictitious. This discovery is almost entirely the work of Christian scholars, yet the majority of our preachers and writers seem to be totally unaware of it.

It is therefore a rhetorical untruth that the blood of martyrs was the seed of Christians. The contrary is the case. The stories of conversions at the sight of the heroism of the persecutions are almost always taken from the legendary narratives. The few genuine persecutions were sheer disasters for the church. For every death of a Christian on account of the few and mild persecutions of the Roman government, there were at least ten backsliders to one convert.

The claim that the church in the long run made an almost miraculous progress in the Roman empire is just as false. It is so difficult to say how much progress was made since expert estimates of the number of Christians at the beginning of the fourth century range from five to fifty millions. Even the lowest of these figures, however, is now regarded by some historians as too high.

But all agree that the progress of Mithraism was greater than that of Christianity. We know that at Rome the Christians had no chapel before 220 A. D., though there had been very little persecution since the days of St. Paul. By the year 300 they are estimated

to have numbered from twenty to fifty thousand, though they had only two small chapels, and the experts say that there are no authentic acts of martyrs at Rome during the last and worst of the persecutions.

It was chiefly in the eastern provinces that there were large bodies of Christians, but the progress made in two and a half centuries is not comparable with the progress of Mohammedanism. The contrast is often rejected with the statement that conversion to Mohammedanism was compulsory, but it was only one or two Caliphs, who could quote no command of the Koran, who forced converts. The contrast is quite just.

The real advance of the church began after the conversion of Constantine. The wealth which he and his successors showered upon the church, the favor which they extended to the clergy and to converts, sufficiently explain the new advance in the fourth century. But there began very soon afterwards in the east, and it spread to the whole Roman Empire, a policy of compulsion and precaution to which the church really owed its triumph; and, in suppressing this recourse of the church to coercion, those preachers who speak of its triumph as miraculous once more incur the disdain of historians.

III

Since Count Beugnot wrote his *Fall of Paganism* a century ago, to be followed by various French and German historians, the facts about the suppression of the rival religions have been known to all historians; indeed most of them were given still earlier in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, though he did not entirely appreciate them and wasted much ingenuity in devising other reasons for the progress of Christianity. The great

historians did not know, as we now do, that Mithraism, and later Manicheism, made as much or even more progress, apart from imperial favor or compulsion. What is certain is that, even when Constantine and his sons did everything in their power to promote the Christian body, it remained in the minority, and the bishops at last suggested a policy of legal coercion. How many in the church have even a suspicion that the rival religions and sects held their ground so firmly, even in the fourth century, that a score of imperial laws had to be passed and repeated during fifty years, enjoining the severest penalties, even death, on any who refused to become Christians?

The importance of the matter is, not merely that historians find our literature deceptive, but that it is largely this enforcement of Christianity on reluctant masses, especially in the cities, which explains why there was no moral improvement in the Roman empire. The sermons of all the great preachers of the fourth century (of Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine in particular) reflect the low condition of their congregations.

The letters of St. Jerome represent the Roman church, and especially its clergy, as extraordinarily corrupt; and he is supported by the repulsive struggles for the papacy, in one of which a hundred and sixty corpses were left on the floor of one small Roman church.

Few historians now doubt that the Emperor Constantine had his wife and stepson murdered, and none ever did doubt that at the death of that first Christian monarch there was an orgy of murder in the palace. Yet our preachers turn instead to the Emperor Julian, whom all historians respect, and repeat the old libels of him. The floods of passion let loose in the struggles against heresies and schisms were such that far more

Christians were killed by Christians in one century than had been put to death by pagans in the preceding three centuries, as I will show in the next volume.

These facts, which are well known to the historian, are suppressed by preachers simply that the fiction may be sustained that the Roman world voluntarily embraced Christianity and improved in character under its influence. There is so long a tradition of falsehood in the church that probably most of our preachers never think of consulting the general historian. They do not even reflect that by the middle of the fourth century the character of the church itself had been transformed, and its services no longer contained the simple moral exhortations of its primitive days, except where an Ambrose or an Augustine appeared.

Most of the bishops were more interested in securing wealth and power for the church; and they permitted the imperial family to exhibit to the world such an example of vice and violence that pagans like Julian sincerely believed that the new religion was an injurious influence. Of those descendants of Constantine who escaped the court massacre at his death, or in whose interest that massacre had been perpetrated, at least one half were profoundly vicious, and few of them commanded respect.

The historian justly complains that our preachers in the interest of the church, give the world a false version of what happened in Europe in the fourth century. They tell people of the virtues of the Egyptian monks and conceal the appalling violence, even to murder, of which they were guilty. They constantly reproduce St. Jerome's account of the virtue of about a score of wealthy ladies at Rome, and carefully sup-

132 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

press his statement, in the same letters, that all the rest of the church was corrupt.

But most guilty of all are our preachers in concealing the fact that every other religion was suppressed by law, and that it took fifty years of terrible violence to make the world Christian.

The Emperor Constantius issued the first Christian persecuting law in 341, yet in 415, when Hypatia was murdered by the monks, the majority of the educated people of Alexandria still supported the great pagan schools, and paganism was still strong, if not in the majority, among the educated men of Rome. Between those dates a score of laws were enacted for the forcible suppression of all rival religions.

Constantius had in 341 merely threatened condign punishment to all who offered sacrifices to the gods, and we may or may not believe the pagan orator Libanius when he tells us that the sentence was death. But a few years later Constantius issued an edict explicitly inflicting the death-sentence on any man who offered sacrifice and commanding that all the pagan temples must be closed.

In the year 356 the death-sentence was confirmed for any who offered sacrifice to or worshipped idols, that is, worshipped any other than the Christian God.

But the pagans resisted so stubbornly that, when the emperor visited Rome in the following year, he permitted the pagan priests to offer sacrifices in his honor and he respectfully visited the more famous temples; and even twenty-five years later St. Augustine, on visiting Rome, found nearly the whole of the patricians and a very large part of the people pagan, and he saw pagan processions in the streets. Chrysostom tells us

(in the year 375) that only one-fifth of Antioch was yet Christian.

For thirty years even these repeated imperial decrees were foiled by the attachment of the people to the old religions, and then, chiefly under the influence of St. Ambrose, a dozen fierce decrees were passed in a dozen years and, after sanguinary struggles, the bulk of the temples in the east were closed or destroyed, and the severest penalties, culminating (in 391) in confiscation for lighter offenses and death for the obstinate, were again decreed for the entire empire.

Still the educated Romans resisted. The word pagan means villager or rustic, and the explanation is usually given by preachers that before the end of the fourth century only the rustics still worshipped the statues of Jupiter and Juno that they had hidden in the woods. It was quite the contrary. At least that was not the situation until a hundred years after the first decree for the suppression of paganism had been passed.

In the history of the Roman church, for instance, we find remarkably few of the leading male Romans counted among its members before the fall of the city in 410. It was the ruin of the Roman empire by Goths and Vandals, the destruction of the old economic order and the closing of the schools, that finally enabled the bishops to enforce the decrees and make the secret practice of the old religions really pagan, that is, confined to villages and country.

Even Augustine (about 400) confesses that he made so little headway in his efforts to secure voluntary conversions that he had to join in the policy of coercion. His greatest work, the finest of early Christian literature (the last great book that would be produced in Europe for eight terrible centuries). *The City of God*,

134 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

was a defense of Christianity against the pagans, and this was more than a hundred years after the conversion of Constantine and the peace of the church.

Eighty years after the persecution of the pagans had opened, they were still impressive enough to enlist the genius of Augustine against them.

We do not know how many suffered death for the old Roman and Greek religions. One can hardly imagine a man laying down his life for Jupiter or for the new Persian and Egyptian religions, though we do know that tens of thousands of heretics and schismatics, who were equally persecuted, were killed.

However, when we reflect on those fifty years of imperial violence and legal repression, and when we recall that during the earlier persecutions of the Christians, which had never lasted more than a few years, not more than one in ten thousand had been faithful unto death, we are not sure that the balance of heroism, of stubborn attachment to their religion, was not on the side of the pagans.

But let us avoid all exaggeration. I am pleading only that we see the human truths of history with clear eyes and accept all the lessons they teach us. The story of that wonderful century (325-425) in which one out of a score of rival religions, and one of the lowliest of them all, rose to be supreme and saw all the others completely perish has not the least element of the supernatural or the mysterious. It is just one more chapter in that natural evolution of religion and moral idealism which I have traced from the beginning of civilization.

Many of those old religions were doomed with the advance of intelligence just as Christianity now is doomed. Indeed most of the educated Romans saw no more than symbolism in the ancient legends and

ceremonies. With the Stoics they saw only a great mind in the universe of which the law of nature, or the moral law, was an expression; or with the Epicureans they saw only symbols of material and human forces in all the stories of gods.

Do you now see, what I am very anxious to have you see, that my idea of converting the dead supernaturalism of the church into living symbolism is not new or erratic? It really is a very old bridge by which the representatives of an ancient interpretation of religion which no longer could be believed literally were enabled to cross over the gulf to a modern interpretation of it.

How can the bishops cross the gulf which confronts them? The answer is: Do what always has been done, take the bridge of symbolism. This is how the first priesthood of naturalism, the magicians, got over to the second priesthood of supernaturalism, the theologians, and this priesthood must now cross this bridge and get over to the third and last priesthood, the men of science who like the first priesthood know nothing about supernaturalism.

Priesthoods have always educated the world and they have done this for the reason, that their representatives were the recognized experts in the interpretation of nature. The scientists are now recognized as such experts; and, therefore, they are supplanting the theological leaders, even as these supplanted the magicians.

Symbolism was the direction in which the mind of man was developing in that Greco-Roman world, with all its art and philosophy and moral idealism. In its best elements it agreed with what was best in Christianity. There was a chance for all new religions.

But let us candidly face the fact that the victory of Christianity was a victory of brute force. It consecrated intolerance and checked the freedom of thought on which progress vitally depended. Christianity borrowed the drapery of paganism for the new temples and made religion a mere matter of rites and ceremonies. It created hypocrisy, as force always does, by compelling men to say that they believed what they obviously did not believe, and it thus prepared the way for the Dark Age.

Do you remember the Nineteenth Article of Religion of the Anglican Churches? The second part of it runs:

As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

That is an indictment of the four great centers of the Christian body, the Metropolitan Churches; and, therefore, it is in effect an indictment of the entire early church. It is all very strange if, as the church says, the Holy Ghost had at Pentecost literally descended upon the church, to live in it forever, and if there really was a divine or supernatural power working for it in the fourth century. But it is not strange, if the church did not then have any more of such power than it has now, that is, none at all. It erred even more grievously than the bishops who drew up that Nineteenth Article were willing to admit, and we will in the next chapter trace the ghastly effect of its errors in the degradation both of religion and civilization.

THE MAKING OF
THE DARK AGE

THEY all did their best—to kill being the chiefest ambition of the human race and the earliest incident in its history—but only the Christian civilization has scored a triumph to be proud of.—Mark Twain.

CHAPTER VI

THE MAKING OF THE DARK AGE

It is no part of the plan of this book to contrast the teaching of modern history at every stage with the historical tradition of the church. A large volume would be needed for that purpose, and I must be content to take a few important statements made by preachers and writers in the interest of the church that are familiar to everybody and judge them in the light of our modern knowledge.

One such statement we examined in the last chapter, the claim that Christianity won an amazing spiritual victory in conquering the Roman empire. And since we found that claim to be untrue, we naturally wonder whether the church tradition is not false also in what it claims as the fruit of that imaginary spiritual victory—the moral improvement of the world.

I am surely right in thinking that chiefly as the result of what they are taught by preachers, the overwhelming majority of the members of the churches believe that the conversion of Europe to Christianity led to a great social improvement, and that to it ultimately is due the rise of the higher civilization of our time. But the moment you ask when this improvement occurred, and in what exactly it consisted, you begin to realize how history again conflicts with church teaching. You begin to see that the real basis of the claim is the false idea as to the inferiority of the ancient Roman civilization. In no respect was there an improvement in the civilization of Europe but rather a degeneration after the whole of the Roman empire had become Christian.

So general is the belief that the world improved, however, that one even finds non-Christian writers on history like Professor Lecky or H. G. Wells making general statements of that character, but when they come to tell the facts about the state of Europe after 450 A. D., which we may take as dating the end of paganism, their language is somber. Here is the summary of the facts by Professor Lecky:

In the first two centuries of the Christian Church the moral elevation was extremely high, and it was continually appealed to as a proof of the divinity of the creed. In the century before the conversion of Constantine (third century) a marked depression was already manifest. The two centuries after Constantine are uniformly represented by the Fathers as a period of general and scandalous vice. The ecclesiastical civilization that followed, though not without its distinctive merits, assuredly supplies no justification of the common boast about the regeneration of society by the church. That the civilization of the last three centuries (sixteenth to nineteenth) has risen in most respects to a higher level than any that preceded it I at least firmly believe. —History of European Morals.

Time after time, when he confronts the facts, Lecky repeats this statement that Europe actually degenerated after its conversion and remained at a lower level of civilization than the Greek and Roman level for more than a thousand years, from 400 to 1500 A. D.

This most astonishing conclusion was also reached by the brilliant Dean Milman who specialized in the history of the church covering this momentous period, and fearlessly gave the results of his searching investigations in seven large volumes entitled, *History of Latin Christianity*. A part of this illuminating work contains a history of the popes to 1455. He says that with

the conquest of the world Christianity began rapidly to barbarize, and that the clergy were at last swept away by the torrent.

His explanation is that evil was too profoundly seated in the habits of the Roman world to submit to the control of religion. This explanation is, we saw, wrong, and his great work is full of errors. But the Dean is right where he says that the fact remains that there was not, as he reluctantly admits, the control of religion which is supposed. Then he rightly observes the Goths and Vandals fell upon the empire, and barbarism introduced into Christianity all its ferocity, with none of its generosity or magnanimity.

But on the theory that Jesus was God, the Son of God the Father, Jehovah; that the church was his divine Bride, and that God, the Holy Ghost, the third person in the divine Trinity, became her soul in order that she might have the power to give birth to a new world of saints to take the place of the old world of sinners, why could not the Christians convert those wicked heathen invaders into good Christians instead of themselves being converted into bad barbarians? My answer to this question is that there was no God, Jesus, who ascended from earth to heaven, and no God, the Holy Ghost, who descended from heaven to earth to comfort and help the divine Bride, the church.

But conceding for the sake of the argument that there is a Holy Ghost who did come for the purpose of helping the church to found an ideal civilization, it must be admitted that he tired of his undertaking in less than three hundred years; and, then, according to both Lecky and Milman, with whom most historians agree, abandoned it for more than a thousand years. Indeed the Holy Ghost has never worked regularly

142 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

even since the Reformation. Certainly he is not working now. Was he doing anything while the World War was on? No. He was reclining in a deep sleep. It was the devil of savagery and barbarism who was awake, up and doing then, and he has not rested a day since. The whole conception of orthodox Christianity, as it is seen from the viewpoint of scientific history, is an utter absurdity.

In effect, the dean and professor tell the same story. From whatever cause, Europe rapidly and painfully degenerated after the year 450, and a hundred and fifty years later it was semi-barbaric.

But as nearly all the preachers constantly represent and even some of our modern history-writers (who are not necessarily expert historians any more than I am) occasionally repeat the common boast about the regeneration of Europe in particular and the world in general was accomplished by the church, let us see the facts for ourselves.

I

We have seen that Milman is entirely wrong in his estimate of the immorality of the Romans, painful as it must have been for him to admit that there was any degree of wickedness that the church could not control. But he has a further and equally futile excuse for the church. Barbarism he says, poured over the Roman empire. Yes. That is true. We certainly must take this seriously into account. Those institutions of civilized life which the Romans had constructed, the imperial and municipal administration, the law and law-court, and the school were indeed almost entirely destroyed. Christianity confronted a moral and social condition of the severest description; and, if we note

its failure, we must note also the magnitude of the task.

But here again we are in danger of leaping to a conclusion; just as those do who infer that because the Christian gospel was high it must have regenerated society.

Let us first see what happened in the fifth century. By the light of our modern knowledge we shall find it one of the most interesting illustrations of what Marx called the materialistic determination of history, the directing of the human stream by material conditions not spiritual influences.

Some years ago the vine-growers of Palestine sent to the Pasteur Institute in Paris specimens of vine-roots with strange wart-like growths on them which were very injurious. The French scientists found that each of these warts consisted of a certain winged insect living in close operation with a fungus. The insect was so sensitive to drought that it could not live in the open dry air of Syria and accordingly sought the moist companionship of the fungus underground. But the insect was further identified as one mentioned in the Old Testament, that two thousand years ago had lived out on the leaves of the vine, and we thus had proof that, as the mighty ruins in the deserts of Asia long ago suggested, before the Christian era there was much more moisture in western Asia than there now is.

And this gave us the clue to the convulsive movements which shook Europe and destroyed the Roman empire fifteen centuries ago. The savage war-like Huns of central Asia were kept out of China by the Great Wall; and, as large regions of central and eastern Asia became desert in consequence of the change of climate, the fierce little horsemen made their way into Europe. The Teutonic tribes of Europe were notoriously war-

like, but they fled before the fierce Huns, and great masses of them sought protection in the Roman empire.

These were mainly half-civilized Goths who had long been in contact with Roman civilization, and numbers of them had been trained to fight in the Roman army. They might have settled down in peace and helped to strengthen the frontiers of the empire, but they were goaded to revolt by the injustice and brutality of the Christian officials.

The success of the revolt seemed to rouse the whole of barbaric Europe, the northern half of which was still untouched by civilization. Masses of skin-clad fierce men with their women and children, often numbering in all from a quarter to half a million, moved like swarms of locusts over nearly every part of the empire. The Goths and the Vandals, and later the Franks, are the best known of these peoples. They settled in Italy, Gaul, Spain and north Africa, and they in most places wrecked the frame of the Roman empire.

Now clearly it would, on the one hand, be unjust to Christianity to point out simply that Europe degenerated lamentably after its triumph over rival religions about the year 450, and not take into account this convulsion of civilization. On the other hand, we see now how foolish is the common belief that Christianity raised the level of civilization. It could not.

It was not until near the end of the fourth century, say 375 A. D., that even the majority in the Roman empire became Christians, and no serious historian disputes that from that time onward it degenerated. Let us ascribe the hastening of this degeneration in the fifth century to the barbarians. This is the only plausible claim that can be conceded on behalf of the helpless Christians.

But, if the supernaturalism of Christian orthodoxy is literally true as the Courts and House of Bishops contended at my trial and not a symbolic fiction as I contended; if, therefore, after the ascension of the second person of the divine trinity of orthodox Christianity, Jesus, the third person of this trinity, the Holy Ghost, really descended upon the church vitalizing, illuminating and empowering it for the conquest of the world, why were the millions of its members so dead, and ignorant and helpless that they could not at least preserve the elements of the Greco-Roman civilization, so that when at last the invasions by the Goths, Vandals and Franks were over, those elements would be at hand for use in reconstructing a better civilization on a Christian foundation? The claim that the church by the power of the Holy Ghost did so was made or assumed by my brethren at the trial and this is done on every Sunday by hundreds of preachers in their sermons. I am sorry to say that some historians give the claim more or less of their endorsement. This being the case there is here a surprise in store for the great majority of my readers, if they will now look with me a little more closely into this claim.

How long did it take for civilization to rise again to the Greco-Roman level? Since the answer is, at least a thousand years, we begin to suspect that there is something wrong.

Roman catholic writers would, of course, claim that Europe was fully civilized once more by the thirteenth century. The papacy dominated Europe, and they are naturally eager to vindicate its civilizing influence. They do this by libeling the Romans as we saw, on the one hand, and by magnifying the virtues of the Middle Ages on the other.

But no historian who is fully and correctly informed about the Roman empire would admit that Europe in the thirteenth century was again civilized as fully as the empire had been; and we shall see that it certainly was not. Some historians would say that the old level was reached once more during the Renaissance, a word which symbolizes the revival of learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Sir Samuel Dill, the chief modern expert on Roman social life, says that in the fourth century the morality of the Romans was equal to that of Europeans in the eighteenth century. In other words, civilization according to this great authority with whom most historians agree, took fourteen centuries to rise again to the pagan level. Some expert historians hold, in fact, that the world did not return to the Greco-Roman level until the middle of the nineteenth century.

I am not an expert in history or any science, yet I am presumptuous enough to contend that the civilization which the bishops, who condemned me, and all orthodox preachers call Christian still falls short in several important respects of the civilization which Christianity supplanted in the fourth century, more than fifteen hundred years ago.

In spite of the progress of art, we certainly cannot admit that Europe was civilized fully again in the thirteenth century. We must say with the positivist historian, J. Cotter Morison, who has written a very admiring history of St. Bernard, that the thirteenth century was an age of violence, fraud and impurity such as can hardly be conceived now.

In other words, whatever elements of civilization we may find in that century its moral features, for which alone we might hold the church responsible, were de-

plorable. And it took Europe eight hundred years, from 450 to 1250, to reach this low level! So we ask the historian whether he knows other instances of an invasion of a civilization by barbarians, and how long it took it to recover. We have here another illustration of the general recklessness or carelessness of Christian preachers. Few among them ever check their conclusions in this way.

The statement of the preachers is to the effect that Europe would have lost its civilization entirely, or at least would not have recovered it so quickly but for the church. This is the only definite meaning of the claim that the church saved civilization.

Now the historian reminds us that the Roman empire had already split into two halves: the eastern (or Greek) and the western (or Roman) empires. The capital of the eastern empire was Constantinople, but it spread over Asia Minor as far as Syria and Mesopotamia. And this eastern empire was not wrecked, or to any serious extent invaded, by barbarians, and it had been Christian even before the western empire.

Here, then, the church had an ideal opportunity. What happened? Was it anything which justifies preachers in claiming that the triumphs of Christianity over paganism raised civilization to a higher level than it ever had attained? No. It was exactly the contrary. Civilization degenerated almost as badly in the east as in the west. This Byzantine civilization, as we call it, represents one of the least noble forms that civilization has yet assumed. Professor Lecky says this much and adds, there has been no other enduring civilization so destitute of all the elements of greatness. There is no serious dispute about that; and I particularly recommend the fact to those members of the Episcopal church

who want to ape the Roman church. For the Greek church was in every essential respect the same as the church of Rome. But though the Greek church was up to this time free from barbarian invasions, it did no more than the Roman church to reform, save and advance the Greco-Roman civilization which rapidly declined in both the eastern and western parts of the world after the triumph of Christianity over rival interpretations of supernaturalistic religion. This being the case we should require something in the nature of definite proof that the form of Christianity which was so clearly devoid of inspiration in the east was full of social or moral inspiration in the west.

But the historian takes us a step further. In the course of time this eastern or Greek empire was invaded by barbarians. In the seventh century the Arab followers of Mohammed overflowed the greater part of it, and they were certainly as uncivilized as the Goths and Vandals. Between 630 and 650 these barbaric Arabs spread over Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, and sixty years later they conquered north Africa and Spain. So again we have a most instructive parallel, and we ask how long it took these Arabs to become civilized or to restore the civilization they had at first destroyed. The answer is, less than a hundred years.

After one or two generations of fanatical conquering they learned the elements of civilization from the Persians and became fully civilized. Within less than two hundred years after the death of Mohammed, or one hundred and fifty years of their spread over the world, they without any help that Christians would allow to be divine had created a civilization not much, if at all, below the Greco-Roman level. I will describe it later.

Of course orthodox Mohammedans claim that their God, Allah, helped them to do all this within a short century; and, of course, orthodox Christians deny that Allah is a reality. But since the orthodox Christians, during a long millenium, were not helped by their God, the Holy Ghost, to do anything at all, why may not Mohammedans deny his reality?

It seems, then, to be quite false that barbarians cannot be civilized in less than a thousand years or even (on the catholic theory) eight hundred years. Some writers remind us that barbarians from the north continued to invade Europe and this kept back the work of reconstruction. But if once more we look at the facts and do not listen to vague general statements we see how loose and reckless are all these efforts to keep up the old fiction.

The Normans from Scandinavia were the last invaders of the western or Roman empire. Now we have to face this very significant fact that, where the Normans settled in Christian France, they were civilized very slowly and imperfectly, but those of them who went on to Sicily and conquered the Saracen civilization, were very quickly civilized by it and played a great part, through Frederic II, in the recivilization of Europe; and these Normans were the least Christian of all the converted barbarians.

In fact, the historian points out that most of the real attempts made to restore the western civilization were made by the barbarians themselves under monarchs who were little or not at all influenced by Christian Rome. The Goths settled in north Italy, and within twenty years, under their king Theodoric, they created a very promising civilization. Later the Lombards settled in north Italy, and in a few generations they raised its

cities higher in the scale of civilization than Rome. And the greatest effort of all was made by Charlemagne, one of the most licentious and independent Teutonic monarchs of the time.

Thus the claim that the barbaric invasions of Europe explain why it remained below the ancient level of civilization for at least a thousand years is false.

And the claim of the church that it has the help of an all powerful God, the Holy Ghost, to conquer the world for its betterment is therefore false.

II

But some of our modernists will tell you that I am again in history behind the times, as they said I was in regard to science. They will tell you that quite a number of historical works published in America during recent years say that the Dark Age is a myth, and that we have discovered that during its centuries when I describe Europe as semi-barbaric it really had a distinctive civilization.

Yes, I know something about all that. Professor C. H. Haskins in his work (1927) on the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, protests that there was not a uniform darkness from 500 to 1300 A. D., as if anybody had ever said there was. Dr. Lynn Thorndike in his *Short History of Civilization* (1926) says that we are contracting the period of the Dark Ages so much that soon there will be nothing left of them. Professor G. S. Ford says in the introduction to the book, *Medieval Founders of Western Civilization* (1929) by Professors Sellery and Krey, that people used to talk about Dark Ages, but the clouds of dust have cleared from the pages of modern writers, and we see now the works and worth of the centuries between Romulus

Augustus (476) and Richelieu (1640) as if any historian had ever made the Dark Age stretch from the fifth to the seventeenth century! I have made myself aware of all these so-called recent discoveries. Most historians do not take them seriously.

The Dark Age really had a few lamps in it but I am puzzled by a very curious fact. It is this. You will scarcely find one European historian of any distinction who agrees with these American professors of history; and after all they ought to know something about Europe. I find it still more curious that the historians who have written great original works on European history in from four to ten large volumes, based strictly upon medieval documents, all speak of the Dark Age, and it is almost only our compilers of one little volume manuals for college use who have made these discoveries.

The most authoritative work on the Middle Ages published in recent years is the Cambridge Medieval History, in five very large volumes, and it expressly says (in the opening words of Vol. V) that the phrase Dark Age is quite just. It is strange that all these greatest European authorities on the history of their own continent should be put right by a few American teachers who generally give no indication of having read, or even being able to read, the medieval documents? One would almost suspect that it is simply a new and admirable affection for our Roman catholic citizens (especially where they have a veto on teachers and schoolbooks) which leads them to pay compliments to the medieval world and its church.

Seriously, these writers, except Professor Haskins of Harvard, have made no discoveries at all; and what Professor Haskins has discovered is simply further proof

of the civilizing influence of the Mohammedans. The facts about the Dark Age (by which is generally meant the period from about 450 to about 1050 A. D., approximately six centuries) are correctly stated in the great works of Milman, Lecky, Buckle and other historians, and no new evidence of any importance has turned up.

Professor Haskins, for instance, who really has made original research into the European Middle Ages, tells us that those who talk about the Dark Ages forget the medieval universities and cathedrals, the Canon Law, the charming poetry, and the revival of philosophy.

But every single one of these things begins after 1050 A. D., and they have always been recognized. They for by far the greater part, really belong to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and no historian wants to count those centuries as part of the Dark Age. They constitute a part of the later Medieval Age. It has always been recognized that the Dark Age closed in the eleventh century, the first part of the Middle Ages.

Let me by a little repetition, try to make myself clear as to the times referred to in three phrases which often appear in this little volume: (1) the Dark Age, (2) the Medieval Age, and (3) the Middle Ages.

By the Dark Age, I refer to a period of nearly six hundred years beginning with about 450 A. D.

By the Medieval Age, I refer to the period of about five hundred years beginning with 1050.

By the Middle Ages, I refer to the period of eleven or twelve hundred years which intervened between ancient times and modern times or (to speak broadly in round numbers) the period from 500 to 1500 A. D.

Dark that period from 450 to 1050 assuredly was. When a man wants to tell you that we have under-

estimated its writers and scholars, open any manual you like of the history of literature or of science. The only names of writers that you will find mentioned between 400 and 1100 are the philosopher Boetius, the theologians Cassiodorus and Bede, and the anonymous poems of Beowulf and Caedman. Hardly any of this scanty literature is read at all to-day; and you will not find a single scientific work mentioned.

If you are told that at least a good deal of education was given, look up an expert manual of education; and you will find that, except that Charlemagne forced the monks and the bishops to open schools for a few years, the record is again almost blank for six centuries. The utmost that is claimed by an expert is, as Professor C. L. Wells says in his *Age of Charlemagne*: Through the dark age which intervened between the age of Charlemagne and the twelfth century there were at least a few monasteries, and perhaps one or two cathedrals, where the fame of some great teacher drew students from distant lands.

Nobles and kings and bishops could not in some cases write their names; the clergy were grossly ignorant; ninety-nine percent of the laity were illiterate. This condition lasted until the eleventh century, so most of us will agree that between 450 and 1050 Europe was pretty dark.

But, you will ask me, what about those famous monks of the Middle Ages who preserved the classics and thus did so much for education and culture? That myth of the Roman catholic church has been completely discredited. It was against the Rule of St. Benedict for monks to concern themselves with any but religious literature; and, if you know anything about the character of some of the Latin poets that have been preserved,

you will not imagine that it was pious monks who preserved them.

It was a few liberal-minded abbots with literary tastes who now and again got together little collections of the Latin classics. They were so few and so scattered that when at last, in the fourteenth century, scholars appeared who had a zeal for the ancient literature, it took them a hundred years to get together a fairly good collection of the Latin classics from the monastic libraries of Europe.

In any case, civilization was not in the least bound up with this ancient Latin literature. We might say that there was some inspiration in the works of the ancient Greeks, but not a single one of these had been preserved by the monks of Europe.

It is now fully proved that the enormous majority of the monks, who swarmed in every country from the fifth century to the end of the Dark Age, were ignorant idlers. The first fervor of the genuine monks soon spent itself. In Ireland and England they kept some zeal for religious education until the eighth century, and Charlemagne used some of these British monks to found a school-system. But nearly all the schools he opened were closed again after his death, and all that the apologists for the monks have succeeded in showing is that one abbot in a thousand or more occasionally, showed some zeal for culture and education.

Compayré shows in his *History of Paedagogy* that even after the close of the Dark Age not a single monk in one of the greatest abbeys of France, St. Gall, could read or write. As to those famous monastic libraries or copying-rooms, of which we are so often reminded, the largest collection of books known in any monastery was less than ten thousand; whereas the pagan Alexand-

rian Library had contained 700,000 books (all destroyed by the monks and the Arabs) and there were in Moorish Spain innumerable large libraries, one of which contained 600,000 books.

The monasteries of the Dark Age are really one of its most discreditable features. I do not want to discuss their morals, though we shall have to glance at that subject presently; but, as very few of them did any kind of work, and there were tens of thousands of monks in every country during these six centuries, we realize what they might have done for learning and education. But the church did not produce, in seven hundred years of the history of Europe, one single book, unless it is Bede's History of England, that even a literary expert reads to-day.

Pope Gregory I had condemned secular teaching and literature. The popes generally followed him. But the fact that not a single great religious work was produced in Europe between St. Augustine's City of God and Dante's famous poem (a period of nearly nine hundred years) ought to make the Roman church blush for its monks instead of boasting that the monasteries were the refuges of refinement and culture.

No one has ever said that there were no scholars at any time in those nine centuries or that no monastery or bishop opened a school. If that were so, Europe would not have been half-barbaric but wholly barbaric. But this ghastly blank in literary history and the history of science and philosophy shows that intellectual life was almost suspended from the fifth to the eleventh or twelfth century.

III

We could understand the feeling of any man who

claimed that perhaps Europe was now so absorbed in religious matters, and the church was so concerned about faith and morals, that we should not expect a promotion of education or culture. We are, however, now so convinced that progress in civilization vitally depends upon a healthy intellectual life that the apologist tries desperately to prove that the church promoted it. That claim entirely fails, and we ask what other elements there were in the Dark Age which ought to make us reconsider our opinion. The answer is, there were none, not even one. Every element of civilization was as fully suspended as education. In this section on the moral condition of Europe, between 500 and 1050, I will show that civilization itself was suspended; and, worse, I shall show that if its resumption had depended upon the Christian church it never would have been resumed to this day.

Does anybody ask us to recognize a measure of social justice which has not been found in pagan Rome? We should smile if it were suggested. All the privileges of the Roman workers had naturally disappeared after the fall of Rome. Indeed the towns and cities of the Roman empire were crumbling ruins. The population of Rome had sunk from a million to about forty thousand. The overwhelming majority of the laborers of Europe were now agricultural workers, and their condition was brutalizing.

Instead of saying that slavery was abolished we ought to say rather that the freedom of the great masses of Roman workers had been abolished. War no longer brought thousands of captives to be enslaved, and the demoralization of the whole empire had left millions of slaves without owners, free, and eager to work for any master. By the tenth century slavery

was almost extinct. But the workers were now serfs and were little better off. They had no moral rights against their masters, and they were owned and bought and sold like cattle. Their lives were sordid, and their supposed freedom was a mockery.

It is a church apologist, Mr. Brace, who says, in a work, *Gesta Christi* (Acts of Christ) expressly written to prove the civilizing influence of the church, that the condition of the serfs (which means ninety percent of the people) during the Dark Age was one of the most melancholy pictures in human annals.

Shall we be asked to see the new civilization promoted by the church with the help of the Holy Ghost in the administration of justice? I think not; for, after the fine juridical system of ancient Rome it was not semi-barbaric, but savage. Not only the convicted but the accused were made to suffer the vilest tortures, often of the organs of sex, that the horrible imagination of the time could suggest. The tortures of Dante's Hell are really based upon what was still done to men in the thirteenth century.

Women and serfs had no rights, and the Jews were treated barbarously. The system was so stupid that even animals were solemnly tried and executed. As late as 1396 a sow was hanged in France for biting a child. In 1474 a rooster was burned by the public executioner, after trial, because it had laid an egg.

But why should we linger over these various aspects of civilization? If the church did not succeed by the help of the Holy Ghost in at least enforcing upon Europe her three supreme moral principles (justice, peace and purity) we need not look further for a civilizing influence. And it is one of the most notorious of historical facts that, during the Dark Age, Europe

was in those three respects horrible.

What I have just said about the workers, women and law sufficiently illustrate the lack of a sense of justice. As to violence and vice, I doubt if there is one master of history who will question that there is, apart from the short reign of Charlemagne in Germany, no other stretch of six or seven centuries in the history of civilization in which they were so flagrant. After the fall of the Roman empire in the fifth century we should expect a spread of violence, for police-systems almost disappeared, except in a few rare periods such as the rule of Charlemagne in Germany, of St. Louis in France, or of King Alfred in England, but the general grossness of life is almost inconceivable.

We have a work on the morals of Europe in the fifth century by a priest, Salvianus, and he protests on every page that conduct is far worse than it had been among the pagans. For the sixth century we have the historical work of Bishop Gregory of Tours, and no one who reads it will fail to agree with Dean Milman that it is difficult to conceive a more dark and odious state of society.

Queens, nobles, bishops, monks and all the characters introduced are described by Gregory as involved in the most shocking murders and adulteries. The work flames from beginning to end with unbridled passion.

And it does not encourage us to seek moral influence when we find the outstanding Pope of the Dark Age, Gregory the Great, writing flattering letters to one of the most licentious of the Frank queens, Brunichildis, and to an even more repulsive monarch, Phocas, who had murdered the Greek emperor and his six young sons and usurped his throne.

Charlemagne, it is true, made a vigorous attempt to

restore civilization, but he was himself a man of unbridled license of conduct, and nearly all his work perished at his death.

But instead of going over this repulsive period century by century I will just glance at the closing part of the Dark Age, the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh—900 to 1050 A. D. Invasions of Italy had ceased long before, yet there is no dispute about the fact that Italy and the Roman church touched the lowest depth of degradation in this tenth century. It is ecclesiastical historians who have given it the name, the Iron Century. It opens with a pope and his supporters digging from its grave the putrid body of an earlier pope, holding a solemn trial of it in the Sacred Palace and mutilating it.

From that time for a period of a hundred and fifty years Rome and the papacy were unspeakably corrupt. The majority of the popes of that period were openly immoral, some guilty of murders and the very worst of vices in the papal palace itself. What were called noble ladies of the highest rank (they could not write their names and were completely licentious) ruled for the popes twenty years. The Black Age, as we ought to call it, lasted from 896 to 1045, when a German emperor at length turned with disgust upon Rome and purified it.

If the papacy itself was permitted to remain for more than a century in this degraded condition we know what to expect in Europe generally. Even popes and bishops were mutilated in savage fashion. It became quite common in Europe to cut out men's eyes with a knife or to inflict indecent mutilations. This was done by priests in the streets of Rome and at the command of popes. It is a veritable nightmare of vice

160 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

and violence that the chronicles of the time put before us, and to say that we must not speak of the period as the Dark Age because a saintly abbot or bishop in widely separated times and places cultivated high ideals which the overwhelming majority trod underfoot is little short of ridiculous.

We have to revise our historical traditions. In east and west the degeneration had grown steadily worse, and it had reached the lowest depth in the tenth century, nearly six hundred years after the Goths and Vandals had broken upon the Roman empire. During all that time art was feeble, science and philosophy were forgotten, no book that any man now cares to read was written, little justice existed, vice and violence were triumphant everywhere.

Perhaps we should not speak of the Dark Age. It might be juster to call it the Black Age. But at least we must cease to incur the disdain of historians by claiming that, once Christianity was established in Europe, it raised the level of civilization. We must cease to pervert history in support of supernaturalistic beliefs and candidly accept its very human truths.

We have now reached the summit of one of the many peaks on the mountain range of scientific truth from which all who care to climb so high may see with us that during one of the long and critical periods of European civilization the bankruptcy of Christian supernaturalism was complete. Indeed it was not only bankrupt itself of any civilizing influence by which the invading barbarians might have been won to a life of peace, justice and purity, but it dragged down the Greco-Roman civilization to a moral insolvency which was as helpless as its own.

HOW EUROPE WAS
REAWAKENED

A CAREFUL study of religious toleration will show that in every Christian country where it has been adopted, it has been forced upon the clergy by the authority of the secular classes.—Buckle

CHAPTER VII

HOW EUROPE WAS REAWAKENED

There is a story told of an estimable English queen of the last century, Queen Victoria, which well illustrates the attitude of the supernaturalist toward historical facts. Someone asked her what was the source of England's greatness, and she solemnly pointed to a Bible that lay on the table. A famous artist has painted her in that attitude, and probably millions of sermons have had it for their text. Yet the moment you reflect, you see that it is really ridiculous.

Sixty years ago, before the commercial rise of Germany and the United States, England was certainly one of the greatest powers of the world. But what do we mean by greatest? Great in the size of its possessions overseas. Great in its wealth and its commercial and financial supremacy. Great in its political power and system. And even Englishmen will admit all this greatness was won by the most flagrant defiance of the principles of the Sermon on the Mount or in virtue of material advantages (such as coal and an extensive coastline) which had nothing to do with the Bible. It was the manufacturers, the merchants, the inventors, the machinists, the laborers, the seamen and the soldiers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who laid the foundation and it was the great industrialists, the scientists, the engineers, the technicians and the skilled workers of the nineteenth century who raised the superstructure. The less the kings and queens, the bishops and priests say about the Bible and the church in connection with the greatness of the advance of civilization in England or in Europe generally, the better.

164 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

The Bible contains two interpretations of religion, the Jewish and Christian, but neither of these ever has been the foundation of a great civilization in any nation.

Religion and politics lie at the basis of all human greatness, individual and collective, but it is the religion and politics which are inseparably united as soul and body, and which live, move and have their being in the realm of naturalism in which science is the king and truth is the queen. *

The religion and politics which the world has in its ancient Bibles (Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan and others) live, move and have their being in the realm of supernaturalism of which ignorance is the king and superstition the queen.

This supernaturalistic religion and politics have never advanced and never can advance any nation one step in the way towards a great civilization: therefore, contrary to the representations of preachers, the communists of Soviet Russia are not endangering civilization, as the Pope of Rome and the Archbishop of Canterbury contend, by their suppression of it. They instead are leading the nations on the way to a better world. There is no other way to this goal. You will see this with increasing clearness as we proceed in this chapter.

But we all know that the frame of mind of Queen Victoria is so common that we still constantly find expression of it in literature which is not in the least ecclesiastical. It is a first principle of American journal-

* See my Catechism beginning on page 245 of Communism and Christianity and a Marxian Catechism, page 231. If readers have not seen this booklet, I shall be glad to send complimentary copies.—W. M. B.

ism that our civilization was inspired by the Christian religion and is inseparable from it.

Sometimes the real advantages of our civilization (the absence of slavery,* our general education, the position of woman, the growing demand for peace and justice) are singled out as specific results of church influence in the world. In nearly all these matters we have merely improved on the Middle Ages and returned to the ideals of the old civilizations, yet writers and journalists are continually trying to scare us with the cry that the world is returning to paganism.

Probably the only historical work of modern times that has sold several hundred thousand copies and, through our public libraries, had millions of readers is H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*. You would not think of looking to Mr. Wells for ecclesiastical prejudice. He is not a church member. Yet in the early editions of the work he said: Christianity gave the world schools and broke the fetters of the slave. Any history of education or of slavery would have told him the opposite. In fact, he had to cut the words out of later editions.

I am trying in these historical sketches not only to induce people to look to the facts of history but to show them that certain propositions of mine in the booklet, *Communism and Christianity*, which the bishops condemned as heretical are really simple expressions of those facts. I have quoted all of them in the first volume of this series of five little books on the Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism and some among them again in the second.

* On this subject see the lecture on the American Race Problem in the first issue of my quarterly magazine, *Heresy*, 1930. If readers have not seen this pamphlet, I shall be glad to send complimentary copies.

The very first proposition which the Episcopal heresy hunters shudderingly selected for condemnation was: Within the social realm humanity is my new divinity. Then they picked out my statement: It is the machine of man, not a lamb of God, to which we may hopefully look for the taking away of the sins of the world.

Every time I made some such remark in that little book my dear brethren of the House of Bishops swooped down upon it. I am a heretic because I say, the world's saviour-god is knowledge. I am cast into outer darkness (but let me tell you that there is not much weeping and wailing there) because I say, gods in the skies are all right as subjective symbols of human potentialities and attributes and of natural laws.

You will find such expressions all through the series of propositions which the bishops offered Americans as their excuse for reestablishing the Inquisition in a country where freedom of thought and expression are supposed to be almost boundless. But there is much more of such freedom in England. The heresy hunters of its House of Bishops would not have thought of presenting me for trial. Now and then they growl and bark a little at Bishop Barnes and Dean Inge (much worse heretics than I) but they have never bitten them, yet they with many others in highest places long have openly avowed disbelief in the stories of the creation, the Garden of Eden, the fall and the doom of man, the redemption of him from a hell below the earth to a heaven above, and the teaching of the Bible, Prayer Book and the Thirty Nine Articles about the necessity of this redemption by the blood of the Savior-God, Jesus, and of a supernaturalistic church, ministry and sacraments. All these heresies are already allowed in the Church of England and soon

will be in all the national churches of the Anglican Communion, not excepting the Anglo-American Church which indeed is already full of such heretics.

Do you now see how absurd it was for my brethren to try me for heresy? The utter absurdity of their proceedings against me will appear more clearly if you remember that they were set on foot as late as the year 1924 by bishops who are almost without exception college graduates.

Every one of the twenty-three propositions quoted against me is a simple expression of a truth of science or history and, therefore, I say that any bishop who condemns these propositions either has done very little scientific or historical reading, or else he gives the ancient and discredited supernaturalistic interpretation to what he has read, instead of the modern naturalistic one which is indorsed by a rapidly increasing majority of experts in the various fields of learning.

I say not only that it is man who redeemed himself from the barbarism of the Dark Age, but that it is most important for us to realize the true nature of the constructive forces of civilization. No God had anything to do with his redemption or with aught else in human history.

I have shown that from the first we discover in civilizations only a natural development of man, a growth of ideals that are taken up into the Christian gospel; and that we then find the bishops and priests losing their influence because they turn to the false gods of wealth and power, and allow civilization almost to perish.

Yes, I have shown all this to be ordinary historical truth, and now I must go on to show that in the recovery of civilization it is once more only the work

of man himself and of material conditions that modern, scientific, non-biblical history recognizes, and that this history is the only one that counts in our age of science.

I

In order that you may realize that here I have behind me the entire force of the facts of history, as in the last volume I had the entire force of the facts of science, let me repeat the distinction between the Dark Age and the Medieval Age. We mean by the Dark Age the period of five or six centuries of semi-barbarism that followed the fall of the Roman empire; and since no one ever said that it was uniformly dark, no one ever forgot that there was a Charlemagne or a King Alfred, or denied that there was a saintly abbot or learned bishop here and there, we need not be troubled by recent writers who profess to have discovered these things.

But these writers are in the main mistaken because they confuse the Dark Age with the Medieval Age, which runs on to the sixteenth century. These together constitute the Middle Ages. It was in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, after six hundred years of generally squalid life, that Europe began to do things which cause us to say that the Dark Age is over. In the Medieval Age which followed (1050-1550) they built majestic cathedrals and painted beautiful pictures and founded universities. They had large and well organized towns. They compiled the Canon Law of the church. None of these things go back to the Dark Age.

Why, then, does Europe begin after that age to make appreciable progress? Here we may speak of a real redemption of the race, and we want to know whether I am right or the bishops; that is, whether it was natural

or supernatural power that redeemed man. Every historian is on my side, not one with the other bishops. None will hesitate to answer that the new development was natural in every respect. Indeed it was very largely, if not mainly, a process of the secularization of art and knowledge, industry and law.

The most that any sincere and informed writer could say of the Dark Age is that such art and industry and knowledge as were inherited from the Greco-Roman civilization had been preserved to a very limited extent by the monks and the bishops; and, therefore, in a sense, by the church. In a sense, yes; but, without any wish to cavil at every step, we must understand in what sense. We must realize that in that depressing and disorganized age the large monasteries and the bishoprics were almost the only centers of wealth.

There were, of course, princes and nobles, and they did just the same as the bishop-nobles in fostering what industry and art there were. But scarcely anybody, during most of the Dark Age, was educated except the clerics (you know how we still call a writer a clerk, which means cleric) so it fell to the monks and clerics to preserve a few fragments of the old learning. It was not because they were religious, but because they and the nobles almost alone had money and leisure in those days. There was astonishingly little money in circulation. Men traded with goods, and the only small accumulations of wealth were in the castles of the nobles, which were few, or the large abbeys and the mansions of the bishops. Both abbots and bishops were generally nobles, and they ruled the small towns and the country districts and employed such artisans and artists as there were.

Life could not remain indefinitely on this small and

simple scale. The wonder is that it remained so long, with monuments and memories of a great past all round it. By the eleventh century the towns had slowly grown large enough to have some civic consciousness. They began to buy what were called *charters*, title-deeds of independence, from the bishops and nobles and to rule themselves.

Probably a great part was played in this by the rise of guilds and unions of the workers. You often hear these described as due to the inspiration of the church, but modern historians who have studied the earliest traces of them find the opposite. No movement or institution which has been for the good of the working class was due to the inspiration of the church. The church councils of the age of Charlemagne, and for a century afterwards, uniformly condemn the guilds as secret and more or less pagan conspiracies of the workers. There can be little doubt that they were in some way revivals of those colleges of the Roman workers which I described in an earlier chapter.

The church could not suppress these guilds or unions of the workers and so it began to patronize them, and they played a great part in the growing civic consciousness. They led to increased and better production and larger wealth and commerce. This in turn led to the rise of the middle class merchants and secretaries, and then of artists, teachers and lawyers. These and the artisans took the business of life away from the bishops and monks and put fresh vitality into it.

When we read about the guilds or unions of the Middle Ages we must remember that they included very few of the workers. There were not many towns of thirty thousand people anywhere in Christian Europe until the last part of the Middle Ages.

The overwhelming majority of the people, certainly ninety percent, were agricultural serfs. They lived in miserable one-room huts, with earthen floors, no windows or chimney and no cutlery or earthenware, no sanitation and a wretched diet. Their lords could sell them in groups, with the soil, and take appalling liberties with them.

The civilization of the church in which the bishops and abbots ruled without let or hindrance had provided no sort of medical assistance, and the serfs suffered atrociously from the rampant diseases and plagues. One horrible epidemic of the fourteenth century, the Black Death, slew twenty-five million people, in fearful torment, in Europe alone, or half the population.

The worst sufferers from all the evils of life were the serfs, and no priest was in a hurry to break their fetters. But in the general movement of the thirteenth century large groups of them began to win independence by military service or payment. The spendthrift nobles and bishops wanted money for their crusades, and in the wars of town against town or noble against king the serfs were often emancipated to get their help. But it made little difference in their condition. If you have any imagination, you will realize what this means. In modern sanitary conditions a population would double in quarter of a century, but in the Middle Ages it took three or four centuries to double. The death rate was appalling. The average expectation of life was not thirty years.

II

I have quoted Professor Haskins, of Harvard as saying that there was more civilization in the Dark Age than used to be thought, and I said that he had made

172 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

real research into European history. But, like the other critics, he mistakenly includes the later period of the Middle Ages, or the Medieval Age, in what he calls the Dark Age. It is another book of his *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* (1924) which is of more value and authority, because it shows that he has made a personal study; and what he says in this book is extremely instructive. He studies the first beginnings of science in the Middle Ages, and he finds that the whole of it came from outside Christendom, from the Mohammedans. In spite of the natural economic development of Europe you will have wondered why so very little progress was made in four or five centuries and then a comparatively rapid advance began. This we have now to explain. The impulse came from the Mohammedans without, not from the Christians within.

Here one may quarrel with recent historians, or most of them. Some ignore this almost sudden advance, which is beyond question and others give rather fantastic and unsatisfactory explanations of it. The advance was really due to a set of facts which no historian disputes, but these facts are very unpalatable to the ecclesiastical authorities or are never given their full weight in explaining the recivilization of Europe.

The main fact, or the summary of the facts, is this: while Christian Europe was at the lowest depth of its degradation, there was in the south of Spain, in the south of Italy, and in the east, beyond the Mediterranean, a Mohammedan civilization almost as brilliant as that of ancient Greece, and it was largely this so-called heathen civilization which reawakened Christian Europe and caused it to advance.

Our manuals of history require broadening. They tell us the story of Europe in the Middle Ages, and by

the year 1000 Russia, Prussia and Scandinavia were as yet hardly civilized. You will then realize that they are talking about a small fragment of the world, when they seem to imagine that they are telling the story of its whole civilization. They are really confining history to a semi-barbaric (the Christian) era in Europe which probably had a population of less than fifty millions. But south of this squalid area, stretching from Spain and Portugal right across the planet as far as the China Sea, was a connected series of splendid Mohammedan civilizations with many hundreds of millions of people. The southern half of Spain and Portugal alone had forty million happy and prosperous people, and they have nothing like that number even to-day. There was a corresponding civilization in Sicily and the south of Italy. There were others in Egypt, Syria and Persia; and, through India, they were in touch with China, which was then in the closing years of one of its most splendid periods under the Tang emperors.

I have in mind facts like these (and you can verify them in any expert history of the countries) when I say that the version of history which is current in the orthodox world is narrow and worse, false, and that when we take a broad and truthful view of history it is simply a revelation of the power of man, a proof that human nature was never blasted by a divine curse but is rich in slowly developing potentialities.

Read any book about the civilization that flourished in Spain from the ninth century to the fifteenth, and you will wonder why a proper appreciation of it is not included in historical education. But I must give

here at least a few facts about it lest you think that I am exaggerating.

In the year 1000 there were few towns in Christian Europe with twenty or thirty thousand people, but in Moorish or Mohammedan Spain alone there were seven cities with from a quarter to half a million people. It is estimated by some writers that the capital, Cordova, may have had a population of one million, and its wealth was stupendous. The Caliph had, though taxation was light, an income of \$20,000,000 a year, and we read of one of his chief ministers making him a present of forests, slaves, horses, armor and jewels worth \$5,000,000.

The chief mosque, which still survives, had a scarlet and gold roof supported by a thousand marble and porphyry columns, and it was lit by two hundred and eight massive silver chandeliers, the largest of which was more than two yards in diameter and bore 1454 silver lamps that burned perfumed oil. This one mosque had cost, in days when money bought far more than it does now, about \$300,000,000. Christianity has never had a church comparable to it.

Besides the many royal palaces, there were, lining the river for miles, ten thousand palaces of the wealthy, with superb and spacious gardens, leading to one of the most wonderful royal palaces that ever existed. It had fifteen thousand doors from the magnificent gardens, and in the central hall columns of marble and rock crystal, their capitals adorned with pearls and rubies, supported a gold and silver roof. It had three hundred princely baths (more, probably, than in the whole of Christian Europe put together) and nearly 25,000 brilliantly dressed servants; while the gardens

were so spacious that it took twelve thousand loaves of bread a day to feed the gold-fishes.

I am not quoting from the Arabian Nights, but from Mr. S. P. Scott's great work on the Moors, which is based upon Arab chronicles that any man in those days could have verified for himself.

And do not imagine that because the monarch and nobles and great merchants were so wealthy the mass of the people were ground down like the serfs of Europe and of Christendom generally, or even like the rank and file of workers in America. The whole country was marvellously prosperous because production and commerce were scientifically fostered. There were five thousand mills at Cordova alone (not one in the rest of Europe) and more than four thousand public markets; and a wonderful system of agriculture covered the country. The hills, which are to-day in Christian Spain so barren, were terraced and irrigated. Fields that now lie fallow bore four crops a year under the Moors.

There was a school in every large village (while probably ninety-nine percent of the rest of Europe was illiterate) and a great zeal everywhere for poetry, music, science and history.

Cleanliness was universal (there were ninety public and innumerable private baths in Cordova) whereas in Christian Europe bathing, clean linen and carpets were all but unknown.

The finest metal and leather work in the world was produced, while the ships brought every product of the known world. It was these Moors who brought to Europe the orange and the palm and myrtle; everything that could beautify the home and give variety to the table.

176 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

But they were not merely wealthy and great lovers of beauty. Not even the Greeks had manifested a more splendid zeal for knowledge and education. The Greeks never educated the people as a whole, while the Moorish rulers extended it to every class. Their civilization was unique in many things, but it was most so in that the men who were chosen for the highest offices and the largest incomes were, not the good talkers, but the most learned men. The way to qualify for an income of from fifty to five hundred thousand dollars was to study for sixteen hours a day until you are thirty or forty years old.

One Caliph had a library of 600,000 volumes, and he is said to have known the contents of them all, and he offered, literally, their weight in gold for new and rare manuscripts. There were eight hundred public schools and colleges in Cordova, and poor students were maintained out of public funds.

There was, for the greater part of Moorish or Mohammedan history, complete religious tolerance, and Jews and Christians sat side by side with Moors. Immense sums were spent on education and charity, and there must have been few who were destitute or distressed. Refinement, courtesy, good will, learning and art were the ideals everywhere in Mohammedan countries and not anywhere in Christian countries.

During these centuries of zeal for knowledge, not only in Spain but throughout the Mohammedan civilization, the mind of man made remarkable progress. Philosophy, history, law, medicine, astronomy and chemistry were the chief studies. Sometimes a strict Mohammedan reached the throne, and then there were restrictions. But the great majority of the Mohammedan rulers were liberal or skeptical, and they took little

notice of the Koran except in some public respects.

Women, downtrodden in the rest of Europe, wore the veil in public in Spain but they were free and honored in the home and the school.

The Jews had a golden age and were among the finest scholars. Science in all its branches was taken up where the Greeks of Alexandria had left it, and great progress was made in mathematics, optics, chemistry and astronomy, and a beginning made in other branches of science. One Arab wrote eleven hundred books on philosophy, history and medicine. There were in the libraries encyclopedias of knowledge of fifty or more volumes. The finest astronomical instruments the world had yet known were produced. There were more than a thousand historians of distinction, and one of them wrote the history of a single city in eighty volumes.

I have said that the general history of literature contains only about five names in Christian Europe in eight centuries; but Stuart's History of Arabian Literature, covering about the same length of time, deals with two thousand Mohammedan writers of distinction.

III

Most people who read for the first time the wonderful story of which I can give only a few fragments here, ask why the history of the world is so written that they have no suspicion of these things. One reason is this that the ignorant and bigoted Christians of Spain and Italy so utterly destroyed this remarkable civilization, from sheer religious prejudice, that many people are anxious that we should not realize what the world lost. All the great libraries were burned. All the

splendid astronomical instruments were broken. All the chemical laboratories were destroyed. All the schools and colleges, all the thousands of mosques except one, all the tens of thousands of palaces except the Alhambra, were swept off the face of the earth.

What the fierce Goths and Vandals did in the Dark Age to the Roman civilization was inconsiderable in comparison with what the fanatical Spanish and Italian Christians did in the Medieval Age to the Mohammedan civilization in Spain. A priceless quantity of scientific and historical literature went up in flame.

And, though the last and worst of these orgies of Vandalism took place less than five hundred years ago, I suspect that very few of you have ever heard of it. That is how you are taught history; and that is why my dear brethren could represent my opinions as eccentric and could exclude me from the House of Bishops by a vote of eighty-six to eleven. I blush for them when I think of it.

The other reason is obvious enough. I have said that these Mohammedans of Spain were tolerant in religion and welcomed Christian scholars from the rest of Europe. In the book to which I have referred Professor Haskins has traced scores of English, French and Germans who went to Spain, learned the Arabic language, studied in the Moorish colleges, and even translated Arabic works into their own tongues. This was the way science and philosophy were introduced into Europe; but we will consider that later.

The Jews also enjoyed the greatest freedom and favor in Spain; and, with their genius for business, they made themselves the peddlers of the good things of Spain to the rest of Europe. It would be impossible to have this brilliant Mohammedan civilization, of so

tolerant a disposition, on one side of the Pyrenees and leave the Christian barbarism unaffected on the other side. The influence of the Moors was spreading. Before the end of the twelfth century nearly the whole of the south of France had followed their example and developed a very prosperous civilization. It was, of course, heretical.

And it was not only from Spain that the Mohammedans were stimulating Europe. From Egypt the Arabs had pushed along the north coast of Africa and, just as they crossed into Europe at Gibraltar, so in time they crossed to Sicily and the south of Italy. Here they were known as the Saracens (which means Orientals) and they were at first semi-barbaric like the people of Europe, or like the Goths and Vandals.

The usual manual of history will tell you all the horrors that these Saracens perpetrated in their wars with the Christians who were, however, just as ferocious. I do not want to excuse them, but these Saracens who devastated southern Italy, and even sacked some of the churches of Rome, about the middle of the ninth century were barbarians. I do not care to describe the many and great outrages they committed. But note what followed, and you will realize how the facts of history are usually put before us in such a way that you can almost forgive my brother bishops for their treatment of me.

I have already explained how the Roman Christians themselves remain barbaric for two further centuries, and that the tenth century is the foulest in the history of the papacy. But the Saracens, who were in touch with their more advanced brethren in Spain and the east, quickly learned the lessons of civilization. By the tenth century, when Rome was at its lowest, they had

made one great garden of the island of Sicily. All that I have said about the art and learning, the beauty as well as the efficiency of life in Spain applies equally to Sicily in the tenth century. It was part of that great crescent of advanced civilization that spread from the Atlantic Ocean to the China Sea.

Sicily is an island just off the coast of Italy, but the Saracens soon had more millions of people flourishing on it than there were in half of Italy. One single valley of Sicily supported in prosperity nearly as many people as there then were (in great poverty and misery) in the whole of England.

Palermo, the capitol, was a great city of light and learning and joy while Rome was a squalid town (constantly fouled by murders and brutal outrages) in which some of the highest nobles could not write their own names. In Sicily alone the chronicles counted five thousand of those graceful Mohammedan mosques or temples which the Arabs had introduced, and from the lofty minarets of most of them there were such astronomical instruments as would have been regarded as magical in the rest of Europe.

The more closely we study the actual facts of history, the more pitiful we find this legend that the barbarians were so obtuse that even the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost that dwelt in the church must take a thousand years to civilize them. It was Christian Rome that was obtuse to civilization. Because of the church, Rome was almost the last city in Europe to admit the new art and new learning.

Three different barbaric peoples had settled in Italy. The Goths in the north. Also the Lombards in the north. Next the Saracens in the south. The Goths had founded a very promising civilization in a genera-

tion. The Lombards had fallen upon this as barbaric conquerors, but by the ninth century they also had highly civilized and artistic cities in the north of Italy; and the Saracens had a wonderful civilization in the south.

I may add that there then came, by sea, the ferocious Normans, and they captured the Saracen civilization. But it captured them in two or three generations, and it was the son of a Norman princess, King Frederic II, who did more than any other single man to extend the great civilization of the south over Europe. And, while one barbaric people after another in Italy arose rapidly, through the stimulation of ancient pagan Rome or of the Arabs, to a high culture, medieval Christian Rome and the Papal states, which some historians still represent as the real educators of Europe, remained hostile or indifferent and at the lowest level of culture and character.

IV

In a third way Christian Europe came under the influence of the Mohammedans, and its debt in this respect is acknowledged by all historians. This was through the crusades, or the attempts of Christian armies to recover the holy places in Palestine. The Turks had now come from Asia and settled in the east. They embraced the Mohammedan religion, and, though they had come almost as savages from Asia, they soon became highly civilized. It was against these that the Crusades were fought. But modern history (you will find the best short account in Professor O. J. Thatcher's and Professor F. Schwill's *Europe in the Middle Age*) has stripped the romantic elements from these encounters. It was mainly through

182 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

the Greeks offering to submit to the Roman church if the pope would send Christian armies to recover their territory for them from the Turks that the Crusades began.

Here, then, we have another impressive confirmation of the truth of the Marxian theory as to the materialistic determination of history. As Professor Thatcher says, the chief aim of the most of the knights was to get loot or territory for themselves. You should read the sordid story of the Crusade of 1212 under the great Pope Innocent III.

Here I need point out only that, as all historians tell, contact with the Mohammedan taught the boorish Christian knights lessons of cleanliness, refinement and courtesy that they sorely needed. Almost for the first time in many centuries Europe began to take a bath occasionally and to wear washable underlinen. A finer taste was inspired, and carpets and other decorations came into the homes, while the superior and more varied articles produced in the east (silks, cottons, beautiful leather and metal work) gave a stimulus to the new industries of Europe. All this is acknowledged, but it seems to many of us that what these rough soldiers learned in the east, in the intervals between their savage fights, was less important than the peaceful penetration of Europe by the civilization of Sicily and Spain.

However that may be you see now why Europe, which has made so little progress in six centuries, began in the eleventh century to advance more rapidly. It was dazed by the brilliance of the Moors, by their wonderful learning, by the beauty of almost every object they used, by the refined courtesy of their ways, by the rich variety of their food and their skill in curing diseases. If the Roman religion is to be mention-

ed at all in this connection, we must frankly say that it was the greatest hindrance to the adoption of the southern civilization by Europe. By political influence Rome in the midst of its degradation, in the year 999, was made to accept a Pope, Silvester II (or Gerbert) who had been educated in the science of the Moors and Saracens. He lived only four miserable years as pope, hated and suspected of magic by his clergy, and left not a trace of his learning behind. It was under the influence of the clergy, too, that the Spaniards destroyed all the libraries and laboratories and priceless objects of the Moorish civilization. It was, moreover, not the popes, as Catholic writers say, who founded the first great schools or universities in Europe, at Salerno and Montpellier. The names will tell their own story. Salerno in the south of Italy was on the fringe of the Saracen civilization, and it was a school of Saracen science. Montpellier, in the south of France, was close to Moorish Spain, and it borrowed all its science from these.

But how far the church cooperated in or obstructed the revival of culture in Europe we shall see presently. I have shown you that up to this turning point in the history of Europe, the eleventh century, the facts compel me to say that human knowledge and human effort alone are traceable in man's own constructive work, and that version of history in virtue of which the bishops condemned me is itself medieval and wholly discredited. No matter what compliments some of our history-writers pay to the medieval church and medieval monks, either because they are themselves orthodox or because they fear orthodox authorities, the universally accepted facts are fatal to the traditional versions of European history.

184 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

The Greco-Roman civilization was, with all its faults, immensely superior to that of the Christian Europe which succeeded it, and I have shown in a dozen different historical instances that barbarians can be fully civilized in less than a thousand years. I have shown, further, though here proof is hardly necessary, that it was the shining example of the Mohammedan civilization that made Europe stir from its sordid lethargy in the eleventh century.

Therefore the excuse of the church for not raising the Huns, Goths and Franks out of their barbarism up to civilization for so long is baseless. The truth is that the credit for their civilization is not due to the Christians but to the Mohammedans; and, indeed, they civilized the Christians themselves. Unlike Mohammedanism, Christianity has not possessed the power to civilize barbarians and to help their converts up from lower to higher stages of civilization. But the builders of the Mohammedan civilization did not rest it upon belief in Allah any more than the builders of our American civilization rested it on belief in Jesus. Washington said: The government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.

The one serious criticism that you will find of this Arab, Moorish or Mohammedan civilization is that there was much vice in it; and these critics never trouble to learn that there was just as much vice in Christian Europe, and far more coarseness and violence. These matters are not pleasant to discuss, but the historical truth is too often concealed on the pretext of decency. I need give you only one instance. The most common criticism of the Moorish civilization is that there seems to have been in it a good deal of unnatural vice; yet, as

these critics fail to notice, just at that time a cardinal of the Roman church, a monk and saint, Peter Damiani, wrote a fearful book on the prevalence of this vice in Christian Europe, chiefly among the clergy. No one would dare to translate that book into a modern tongue, but its title will be enough for you, *The Book of Gomorrha*.

In all science and history, in all those expressions of their great truths which have been selected from my little book, *Communism and Christianity*, and branded heretical, I seek the real constructive forces which account for what is best in an imperfect civilization. To these we must look for the building of the higher civilization of the future. If dogmas stand in the way of a truthful study of these forces, let us be heretics. Heresy is not so bad. All reformers were at first heretics. But my heresy is no speculation on the meaning of ancient documents. It is a blend of what was good in the past with what is greatest in the present—our magnificent new knowledge. I do but point the way, the only way, in which the church can lay aside all these petty perversions of history and look into all truth with clear and honest eyes.

THE Christian church has steadily used its influence against progress, science, the education of the masses and the freedom of women.—Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

THE RELATION OF THE
CHURCH TO MEDIEVAL ART

IN looking back with our present experience, we are driven to the melancholy conclusion that, instead of diminishing the number of wars, ecclesiastical influence has actually, and very seriously, increased it.—Lecky.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO MEDIEVAL ART

The history of the last fifteen hundred years is, from the scientific point of view, the story of how the human race slowly rose once more to the high level of the Greco-Roman civilization and then surpassed it. That may seem a strange statement to those who have always imagined that the pagan civilization was of a very low type, and that the Christian policy which succeeded it was at least of a far higher moral and humanitarian type. But about that there is no dispute in serious history. The old formula must go. However much or little we blame the barbaric invasions of Europe, civilization in every respect degenerated and remained profoundly degenerate until the eleventh century. Then Europe began to recover more rapidly.

One of the reasons why this indisputable truth has escaped the recognition of those who read history only in religious literature and hear it only in sermons is that they are not clear about the date of the real creative work of the Middle Ages. They have a vague idea that during the whole Christian period men were building beautiful churches and painting beautiful pictures, that they had orderly cities with guilds of workers, that there were everywhere great abbeys which taught all the children and youths of the district and were busy all day copying books. Some of the recent writers on history who confuse the Dark Age and the Medieval Age rather encourage this misunderstanding, but they are right about facts. It is the later Medieval Age, not the Dark Age, that had crowded schools and produced great works of art.

If we call the Christian Era, as we ought, the period from the end of the fourth century when Christianity had triumphed over its rivals to the nineteenth century, nearly half of it was over before the first Gothic cathedrals and Christian universities appeared, and most of the great art was produced still later. And now that we have an alternative explanation of this late beginning of the creative period (the stimulation and example of the culture of the Mohammedan Arabs) we shall find it interesting and very instructive to analyze it carefully and so to see exactly what constructive forces were at work.

Let me repeat that no one in modern times has ever claimed that nothing great or good was done in Europe in the Middle Ages, say from 450 to 1550. In the fifteenth century, there was what we call the Renaissance, a phrase meaning the recovery and study of the Greek and Latin literatures. Then scholars began to realize once more how great the Greco-Roman civilization had been and naturally there was a tendency to despise everything medieval. But it was in the Medieval Age, 1050-1550, when the really beautiful architecture of the great cathedrals of France and England was created.

It was called Gothic, that is, worthy only of the Goths, by the men of the Renaissance, but it is superb work. History was a very poor thing in those days. For the last hundred years at least all historians have recognized that the advance began in the twelfth century, or the latter part of the eleventh, and that even earlier, in the Dark Age, there had been great constructive monarchs like Charlemagne. The work of the latter, however, had not been permanent. Most of Christian Europe still lay very low when the eleventh

century opened. The revival began with two very different and hostile developments.

One of these developments was a revival in the church itself, and this naturally took the form of a movement looking towards the purifying of the church and the increasing of her power. It was then, about nine hundred years ago, that a law of celibacy was enforced on Roman priests and divorce was abolished.

The other was a poetical or artistic development which was lax in morals and rather anti-clerical.

There is no need here to consider the first of these developments. In despising human affections, in using violence to secure its aims, and in employing forgery on a large scale, as all historians admit, to establish the power of the medieval church, it prepared the way for its own failure. Let me say, once for all, that while there was a temporary improvement of morals in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, within certain limits, the conduct of Europe generally remained very gross all through the Medieval Age.

In the one way in which the church might be expected to lead Europe, that of morality, it utterly failed. And if there is a second way in which we might expect the church to be especially influential it is in securing justice and peace; and there was no social justice in Europe until modern times, and unhappily there is still very little of it and not much peace. We Christians have just had the greatest and most ruinous of all wars, and already we are fearfully looking forward to a greater.

I

As we have said, the second development was in the realm of art and in it the church does appear to

192 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

much better advantage than in the realm of morality, justice and peace. It is worth while to consider to what extent we are indebted to the church for our art, without which life would be far less attractive.

As everybody knows in a general way, there developed in Europe (after 1050 A. D.) a great age of chivalry, of romance, of poetry and music. We all know of the knights who roamed in search of adventure or broke lances on each other in the tournaments and were crowned by the fair ladies who looked on at the fights.

There was nothing in the least admirable in these encounters of the knights, though the romances of Sir Walter Scott have invested them with a certain glamor. They were no better than murderous duels. The axe or the dagger generally finishing what the lance had begun. The whole of this so-called Christian movement towards a higher civilization was just a comparative refinement of the old violence and brutality of the Teutons by the application of the courteous forms, the rules of chivalry, the prettier ways that had now been learned from the Mohammedan Saracens. The more religious among the knights, who set out sometimes to seek an injustice to remedy, were exceptional. This Christian crusade was generally a consecration of murderous violence and was extremely immoral.

Those who are not careful students of these matters are misled because they read only the latter ballads and songs of the troubadours. Some in fact, think that they know the age of chivalry and crusades from modern poems like Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, which is an expurgated and imaginary version of that age, containing too much poetry and too little truth.

Of recent years literary experts have carefully studied

this early literature of the Middle Ages, beginning in the twelfth century, after the start of the crusades, and they tell us that the later and finer poets of the movement have considerably falsified the earlier songs and ballads by removing the courser features from them. They assure us that the entire movement was licentious, the women (of the noble class) in particular being extraordinarily aggressive, and the sanctity of marriage almost forgotten. Where we can correct the troubadour literature by genuine chronicles we find it very misleading. The Spaniards, for instance, glorified a national hero who became known all over Europe as the heroic Christian Cid; but history shows that he was a coarse adventurer who sold his sword to the highest bidder, Christian or Mohammedan.

The good side of this crusade movement is the advance in taste which it shows in Europe. Nobles began to dress in fine silks with linen underwear. The dining-halls of the great castles, with their foul straw-strewn floors and heavy gluttony, became more refined. Fine pottery, glass and table-linen were introduced. Minstrels and troubadours gave the new light songs instead of the old drinking and fighting songs. The importance of it was that it really relieved the coarseness and dirtiness of the wealthier or aristocratic world to some extent (their everyday language was still appalling) and prepared Europe for an appreciation of art. The whole movement is so clearly due to outside influence (Mohammedan) not Christian, that no one disputes the point, and we need say no more about it.

But I cannot pass on without observing that what my dear brethren of the House of Bishops refer to in all their sermons as our glorious Christian civilization,

and which they never fail to credit to the gospel of Jesus and to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, is not Christian but Mohammedan. The true story is just this: The Christians were barbarians and the Mohammedans civilized them.

II

The architecture which is the chief glory of the Middle Ages, is, on the other hand, decidedly ecclesiastical in origin. All through the Dark Age (450-1050) there had, of course, been artists in Europe. In the illumination of manuscripts, the carving of crucifixes and of altar vessels, the monks were very skillful, and there was a good deal of secular art also.

A devout bishop of the tenth century, Ratherius, tells us, with great sadness and indignation, of the luxurious life of most of the Italian bishops of his time. He speaks of gorgeous dresses and gold belts, of horses with golden bridles, of beds inlaid with gold and silver, and spread with covers and pillows of silk. There was then a Lombard civilization in north Italy and a Saracen civilization in the south, and so these objects were easily imported or imitated. We may say if we wish that religion inspired the crucifixes and illuminated Bibles, but in that case we should have to say that vice inspired the other and equally artistic productions. The fact is that where there is money there is art, religious or profane, according to the demand.

We have then even in Christian architecture one more proof of the truth of the Marxian discovery concerning the economic or materialistic determination of history.

But art, like literature and everything else, began to advance more rapidly in the eleventh century, and

it is interesting to see in what sense the church inspired it. The first sign of progress was in architecture, and there began the great era of church-building. Very few buildings before the eleventh century, nine hundred years ago, except those which were raised before the Dark Age opened, are worth going to see, but some fine cathedrals go back, at least in part, to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

There is no need to look for Arab influence here. The development began in western Germany, which had long been the most settled part of Europe and had the most powerful monarch. In these conditions the growth of towns and concentration of wealth which I described as the first condition of progress were most marked in Germany, and one of the first demands was for finer churches. So the Romanesque architecture, which was inspired by, and largely followed, the ancient Roman style (Romanesque simply meant Roman at the time) spread over Germany, and then to France and England, to which the Normans took it. A large number of the great cathedrals of England were begun in this style. It is not a matter of supernaturalistic, spiritual inspiration. It is the natural result of the increase of materialistic wealth in towns where a bishop resided. He still ruled the town and had a large share of its wealth.

Meantime the famous Gothic architecture, which is familiar in pictures of the great cathedrals and abbey-churches, was developed, and this is more interesting. It appeared first in central France about the beginning of the twelfth century; and you may notice, in passing, that Rome had so little to do with these art-movements that it remained almost entirely indifferent to art for two further centuries.

A great deal of mysticism has been written about the origin of the Gothic art, but you will find the modern authorities quite prosy in explaining it. Let me give you one illustration. The Roman buildings had flat roofs, but a flat roof to a very large building in more northern lands would lead to a dangerously heavy accumulation of snow; and a Roman building wanted small windows, to keep out the sun, while in the darker north large windows (especially when stained glass began to be used) were required, to let in as much light as possible.

Thus the architects of the Middle Ages had new technical problems to meet, and it was in the course of decades of wrestling with these problems that they slowly transformed the Roman style into the Gothic. So when you read how the pointed arches of a Gothic roof reproduce the branches of the forest-trees, or how the pinnacles and lofty columns and walls express the soaring of the medieval spirit, or something of that sort, close the book and turn to a modern manual of architecture.

To say that this architectural beauty which now spread over western Europe was inspired by religion is a confused and largely rhetorical statement. We should have to say, in that case, that the old pagan religion of Greece was even more inspiring, since most people admit a higher beauty in the more famous Greek temples. The very skeptical mood of the Moors was just as inspiring, since their buildings were, in a different style, just as beautiful. In fact, even in western Europe these architects and artists did equally beautiful work in building city halls as in building cathedrals.

The truth is that we very rarely know anything about the character of the architects, and from the

fantastic and often improper gargoyles that they put on many of the cathedrals some writers suspect that they were not particularly religious. Even in the earlier phase, when the architects were commonly monks, we must not be too ready to credit them with piety. The writers of the twelfth century give the monasteries generally a very bad name. In any case, the work was soon taken from the monks, and architecture and sculpture became lay professions. One of the best recent writers on medieval art, Élie Faure, expressly calls this first great art of the Middle Age the art of the communes; a lay art in contrast to the poorer monastic art which had preceded it.

Religious feeling is, in many places, more distinctly seen in the zeal of the population of a whole region to take part in the building of their cathedral. The beautiful cathedral at Chartres was built very largely by the voluntary labor, directed by experts, of the people themselves. We know human nature and must suppose that then, as in our own time, the general feeling was a very natural desire to have a larger and finer church than the next town, but in some places there really was a remarkable outburst of fervor in building the cathedral. Labor and material were pitifully cheap in those days, and there were no contracts with time-limits. They just got some unknown architect, who was too badly paid to become famous, to draw a plan, and they might be two centuries in completing the building.

III

It is easy to point out that in Europe the art of building has always created its most beautiful work in connection with religion; but, in that case, we should

have to find an equal inspiration in the religion that inspired the great temple of Karnak in Egypt, the Parthenon in ancient Athens, the great mosque at Cordova, or the Taj Mahal in India.

When we do thus reflect that four different religions, two of which, the Egyptian and Greek, everybody now regards as false, seem to have inspired equally beautiful work, we come nearer to the psychological truth. It is simply that the artist enters into the spirit of his task and instinctively develops the fitting mood, whether or no he shares the ideas of those for whom he works.

Mozart could compose a frivolous opera or (though he had ceased to be a catholic) an impressive Requiem Mass. Rubens could paint a moving Calvary or a Venus and Adonis that would cause a blush. We shall realize this fully if we glance at the great medieval sculpture and painting which followed the development of architecture.

As long as the sculpture on the cathedrals was done by monks it was, though often beautiful in execution, lifeless and conventional. They had to follow traditional models, to make figures look spiritual by putting little flesh on their bones and no blood in their veins. The great days of sculpture began with the transfer of the work to lay sculptors, who were free to use living human models.

Historians of the subject will tell you how, about the middle of the thirteenth century, Italian lay sculptors having the opportunity to admire the ancient Greek and Roman remains in Rome, threw off the monastic yoke and began to copy nature. They immediately began to carve more beautiful pulpits, bronzes and then statues, than had been known before. Sometimes their art was religious, sometimes not, but it was equally

beautiful. And often the most beautiful religious work was done by men like Cellini, who were neither pious nor virtuous. Almost all, in any case, were full of the spirit of ancient Greece and Rome.

One of the most beautiful pieces of religious sculpture in Italy is a bronze door of the Baptistery at Florence, yet the artist, Ghiberti, though a Christian, used to date his letters by the old Greek chronology, not the years of the Christian era. Even Michael Angelo is just as great when he carves human symbolical figures like Day and Night as when he carves a religious figure.

Painting was still slower to develop. All the paintings of the ancient Greeks, which are said to have been very beautiful, had been destroyed in the iconoclasm of the fourth and fifth centuries, so there were no classical models. The Arabs offered no models whatever, as the Koran forbade them to paint or carve either human or animal figures. The stiff models of the Greek church were followed, chiefly in making pictures or frescoes on the inner walls of churches. But the development of the new style of architecture, with its large windows and small wall-spaces, checked this. Hence it was not until the beginning of the fourteenth century that the great age of the painters opened; and it opened, as usual, by lay painters casting aside the models and rules of the monks and taking live men and women for models.

We should lose ourselves in a forest of Italian, Flemish and Dutch names if we began to consider this story of painting in detail, but a few general reflections will let us see the psychological truth about art and religion.

Of course religion inspires art; but so also does the physical beauty of nature or of the human form and

200 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

human scenes. That must be a truism to any person who has visited galleries of medieval painting or seen reproductions of them. Indeed, apart from Fra Angelico, the pious Dominican monk, and in a mystic way Michael Angelo, few of the great painters of the Middle Age seem to have been particularly devout or moral. The same men (say, Rubens or Pinturicchio, though it applies to most of them) painted religious scenes with very proper feeling, and also very pagan scenes and figures with equal feeling and skill. As one of the chief authorities on them says, when they were painting they were neither Christians nor pagans. They were just artists, forming the highest and most appropriate conceptions they could of the subject committed to them and, whether it was a Venus or a Madonna, realizing it with perfect skill and great affection.

One other point, and then we have the whole truth about medieval art and the church. The catholic writer who boasts that his church alone inspired, or could inspire, the great art of the Middle Age, is merely foolish. He forgets that there was equally great art in China, Persia, Greece or Moorish Spain. He forgets that his church dominated Europe for eight centuries before any great art was produced. And what the Roman catholic forgets is nothing in comparison with what he never learned.

He does not seem to have learned, as he might do from any history of art, that in the main center of his church, Rome, the very fount of its inspiration, there was no great art until the fifteenth century, when the papal court again became a scandal of immorality and worldliness. And the boasting Roman catholic does not see that Rome itself pro-

duced remarkably few great artists in any branch, or that the great painters of what is called the Roman school, and the magnificent sculptors and architects who created St. Peters and the vatican, worked in an atmosphere so full of vice and skepticism that some historians regard it as the very worst period in the history of Europe.

We need not go so far as that, but it is a commonplace of history that Europe in the later Middle Age, when all its great art was produced, was generally and comprehensively corrupt. The puritan movement of the church in the eleventh century could not or would not save Europe from this degeneration in morals and it had spent itself almost before the artistic era opened. It was the new wealth and craving for luxury, and the feeling for beauty derived from the Arabs, Greeks and Romans, which mainly inspired that great artistic development, at least after the first architectural fervor for building cathedrals was over.

IV

To complete our naturalistic account of the restoration of culture in Europe we must glance at the development of education and literature. A catholic writer, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, a man whom catholics regard as one of their best living historians, has had the audacity in his *Catholic Church and History*, to say:

Educated Europe meant a far larger body in Catholic times than it does now. Universities were then popular institutions and their attendance was from every class.

What must be the frame of mind of people in orthodox circles when a popular writer can make such statements in a serious work? Catholic times must be understood to mean the period from the establishment

202 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

of the Roman church in Europe to the Reformation, from 400 or 450 A. D. to about 1550. During seven or eight centuries, or two-thirds of this time, there were no universities, and illiteracy was more widespread and the state of culture lower than at any other period in the last four thousand years, in civilized lands; and, what is worse, the Roman church had taken over a so-called pagan or heathen world in which free schools had been provided everywhere by the municipalities, and even higher schools and what we may call universities received youths from every class.

South of this catholic world was another civilization, the Mohammedan or Arab, which was just as zealous for education as the pagan Roman had been, and its highest colleges were equally open and free, to every class. Yet in this period of Roman catholic Christianity lying between the Roman and the Arab civilizations educational experts find so few schools that we can safely say that ninety-nine percent of the population was illiterate. As late as the eleventh century we find a bishop writing in France that there was more than one bishop who could not name the letters of the alphabet. Nevertheless I suppose some ten million adult catholics, and possibly many others, in America call a man an historian who writes such gross misrepresentations as I have quoted from the distinguished Mr. Belloc's book.

It is about the end of the eleventh century that we begin to find a revival of education in Europe. Again let me repeat that no one says, or ever said, that there had been no schools or scholars in Europe in the Dark Age, so we are not in the least disturbed when some learned professor discovers that there was a school somewhere in France in the seventh century

or in Germany in the eighth. The general condition was altogether different from Mr. Belloc's account. The fact that not even a religious or historical book worth reading appeared in seven centuries tells its own story. And when we find numerous schools open toward the end of the eleventh century, it is clearly part of the general economic advance and of the impulse of the Mohammedan Moors of Spain.

One of the greatest teachers of this early period, the first master who counted his pupils by the thousand, was Peter Abelard. Not only do we find this brilliant scholar giving to his son the name *Astrolabe* which is not the name of a forgotten saint but of a Moorish astronomical instrument, but we find him, when he is bitterly persecuted, saying that he proposed to go and live among the enemies of Christ, the Moors. The impulse of the Mohammedan schools is thus clear from the start.

And the Mohammedan impulse is equally clear in the rise of the first two scientific (medieval) schools or universities which were on the fringe of the Mohammedan world. But Europe was bound to recover from the gross neglect of education by the church during the Dark Age. The new poetic movement in the castles of the nobles and the growth and emancipation of the towns all tended to create a demand for books and schools.

Mr. Belloc and his friends might pay a little serious attention to a fact which no authority in history denies, that, whereas, nearly all Europe had a very vigorous school-life in the twelfth and thirteenth century, Rome, the center of the Christian church, lagged two centuries behind the rest of the world, as it did in connection with art.

Well, they will say, at least these schools were kept by the bishops and the monasteries. Naturally, the church would not tolerate an education which it could not control. Lay teachers had to have licenses from the church. They had little chance of promotion, and were very apt to be prosecuted for heresy. But let us take a broader view. Any expert on education would laugh at the idea that there were more educated people in the Middle Ages than now. If you mean literate people, it is easily checked. The Reformers opened more schools and the Jesuits founded schools everywhere. Yet with all these additions to medieval education Europe was still illiterate to the extent of ninety percent in the eighteenth century.

In fact, the best answer to all this nonsense about education in catholic times is that catholic countries, Spain, Portugal and Italy, retained this ninety percent illiteracy far longer than protestant countries. The pope maintained it in his papal states until the Italian government took them from him sixty years ago. Spain is still appallingly uneducated.

Mr. Belloc might say that he means that there were comparatively to the population, more people with a university education in those days. Even this is ridiculous. He had probably been reading some of the reckless medieval statements that there were, for instance, 60,000 students at Oxford at one time and twenty thousand at Paris, and he has not asked what modern experts, like Dr. Rashdall, say about *these* stories. They are unreliable. Certainly there were in the later Middle Age tens of thousands of students at the few universities of England, France and Italy, but (this is what people like Belloc overlook) they were mainly clerics and monks studying the unrealities of

theology instead of the realities of science. In other words, they were the seminaries of the time, and the number of clergy and monks, relatively to the general population, was enormous in those days. Any man with a tincture of history ought to be ashamed to compare these exclusively masculine and clerical universities (with their mere smattering of inaccurate knowledge apart from theology, which is not knowledge but superstition) with the magnificent educational institutions of modern America and Europe.

We come back once more to our broad and humane view of this stage in the restoration of civilization. It was inevitable that the new life of Europe should enkindle some intellectual curiosity. Living was very cheap, and travel was always on foot (except for bishops and abbots) and the police did not forbid begging, so there was for a time a great wandering population of students, seeking some brilliant teacher or, especially, some town where two brilliant teachers fought each other, as they did in those days. It was a late imitation of what had gone on for centuries in the great Arab-Persian civilization.

And what was the outcome of it all? What great books did this wonderful educated age of Mr. Belloc's produce? I should feel inclined to answer, one, the poetry of Dante, if it were not for the fact that Dante was not quite a product of the medieval universities. As a poet he reminds us rather of the century of the troubadours who had gone before him and made the Italian language. In his learning he shows a curious blend of Arabic science and philosophy and medieval theology.

All the other books of the later Middle Ages which anybody ever reads to-day were written by men

(Petrarch, Boccaccio, Froissart, Chaucer and Villon) who deserted the scholastic movement and its useless speculations and wanted to divert the minds of men from it. Even the scientific work of Roger Bacon is a protest against the scholastic movement; but I reserve the important subject of science for the next chapter.

In case we have overlooked something, let us turn to one of these professors who have discovered that the Dark Age was not dark and see what we have to admire. In addition to what I have noticed, Professor Haskins draws our attention to two things: the creation of Canon Law, the code of law of the Roman church, and the philosophy of the Middle Ages, of Thomas Aquinas and those great thinkers of Mr. Belloc's.

I fear Professor Haskins does not know much about the Canon Law of the Roman church. I know a little about it, as the law of the Episcopal church is only a modification of it, and they gave me a specimen of its working in Cleveland a few years ago. The less said about medieval Canon Law the better I think. For centuries this powerful medieval church, which some imagine as the successor of the Roman Empire, was without any code of law at all. It was guided by an uncoded jumble of decisions of councils and popes; and there is not a single serious ecclesiastical writer of modern times who does not admit that most of these were forgeries. What the monk Gratian and others did in the twelfth century was to arrange these in some sort of order, but law is the last thing in which the church of Rome should boast of its genius. It was only recently, in the year 1918, that Rome compiled at last a comparatively respectable code of

Canon Law; and in the preface the compilers admit that up to that time the condition of church law was chaotic.

Then there is the philosophy of the Middle Ages. Most people wonder what that is but they feel sure it is something very profound. I will consider in the next of these books on the Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism how philosophy is related to science and religion and need say here only that, if you want an unbiased opinion on the philosophy of the Middle Ages, look into any modern history of philosophy. Some of the authors do not mention it, and some give it one page out of a thousand, but every single modern thinker who does notice it tells you that wherever it was true it was not new and wherever it was new it was not true.

In other words, this philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and the Middle Ages was just a corrupt version of the ancient philosophy of Aristotle. It was neither invented by the Middle Ages nor preserved by the monks. It was borrowed from the Arabs, who had been teaching it for four centuries. The Arabs themselves had not a correct version of the philosophy of Aristotle, but the medieval theologians distorted it still more when they turned it into Latin and tried to make it support their peculiar dogmas.

Those who want to talk to us of the scholastic philosophy as one of the great creations of the Middle Ages should first consult experts on the history of philosophy. And remember that this philosophy and a series of theological speculations which no one reads to-day (such as whether angels in going from place to place pass through the intermediate space) were all that was taught in most of the medieval universities.

Now that we have seen the facts about this important period of human development we can safely take a broad view of it. And what will occur first to every man who does thus carefully consider all the facts is this: unquestionably there was a great creative period in Europe after the close of the Dark Age, but it was curiously one-sided. It produced works of art that will command the admiration of the world for all time, but it did not produce a single work of intelligence that has more than a few sectarian admirers to-day. It was extraordinarily fertile on the ecclesiastical side, but equally barren on the human side. The best intellects of Europe were unfortunately directed by the church into a field that was sterile.

They created, certainly but we do not take even an archaeological interest to-day in their creations. On every analogy of history the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when wealth increased and intellect was roused after centuries of slumber, should have been as original in intellect as in art, but the history of literature still remains almost blank (except for Dante) and the history of philosophy altogether blank. History itself made almost no progress, and the light of science, as we shall see, flickered for a moment only to be extinguished.

Not a single positive contribution was made to human knowledge, and moral and political conduct became steadily worse. And for this the intellectual tyranny of Mr. Belloc's church, which had now established the Inquisition, was mainly responsible. It did not inspire the art, but it did sterilize the intellect of the Middle Age. It did not improve morally, but it did encourage Machiavelli.

It is not possible to imagine a more immoral doctrine

than that of Machiavellianism. It taught that right should be subordinated systematically to expediency, and that all means may be resorted to, however untruthful or treacherous, for the establishment and maintenance of the power of rulers over their subjects, of states over their citizens, and of churches over their members.

Machiavelli flourished at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries. He did not originate this wicked doctrine, but he made so much of it in the interest of the ruling monarchs of his day that ever since his name has been a symbol of it.

THE position of woman was the very worst during those centuries in which the doctrine of Christianity were most widely accepted and were enforced by the civil law.—Matilda Joslyn Gage.

DID THE CHURCH
PERSECUTE SCIENCE?

SCIENCE is the result of inquiry;
theology is the result of faith. In
the one the spirit of doubt; in the other
the spirit of belief . . . Science ascribes to
natural causes what theology ascribes to
supernatural ones.—Buckle.

CHAPTER IX

DID THE CHURCH PERSECUTE SCIENCE

There can be no doubt in the mind of any thoughtful observer that the chief thing which has lifted our age high above every earlier civilization is science. On its speculative side it has completely transformed our knowledge of the world and of human nature. On its practical side, or in the application of this knowledge, it has created a wealth which has enabled us to carry out schemes of universal education and social service which far transcend anything in all history. Besides all this the outlook from the viewpoint of science is most inspiring.

On the one hand, we see that science promises to create a wealth which (when justly used under the rising classless, or communist, system for the production and distribution of all the necessities for an increasingly high standard of individual and collective life) will do away with the most ruinous of all the evils by which mankind has suffered—exploitation, poverty, slavery and war.

On the other hand, we see that science promises to improve the mind and character of all representatives of every race until, in the no distant future, the world will have a harmonious cooperation in slaying the great dragon which all along has been filling it with ignorance, prejudice and selfishness.

Even those improving sentiments of men which we should not directly connect with science (the growing resentment of injustice and violence, the feeling of brotherhood with the weak, the wider enjoyment of art and good music) are in large measure due to changes,

214 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

such as education and cheap literature and higher wages, which we owe to the scientific improvement of production.

It is therefore of peculiar interest to find out why civilization has had to wait five thousand years for this wonderful development. That is a very long story, but it does not really concern me here to inquire why, for instance, such powerful civilizations as the Egyptian, Babylonian and Roman, did so little for the development of science. Every supernaturalistic interpretation of religion has been a hindrance to the development of scientific knowledge and to the establishment and advancement of the ideal civilization depending upon that knowledge; but, my object being what it is, I shall have to confine myself to an important point which may be stated thus: Seeing that among the many things which Europe learned from the Arabs in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was a really considerable body of scientific truth, why had the world to wait several further centuries for the development of it? That question at once raises another which interests most people to-day. Did the medieval church persecute science and scientists? This is our subject in the present chapter.

We might say, in a feeling of good-fellowship, that this is ancient history, and we all enjoy science and its fruits to-day. But do we? Has the type of mind which is represented by the fundamentalist, either catholic or protestant (which means twenty or thirty million of our people) a proper appreciation of science and its work and promise? Have even the bishops of the great Anglican communion of national churches satisfactory views when they persecute men who honestly accept the teaching of science, even when it

becomes necessary to reject the literal teaching of the Christian Bible, Catholic Creeds, Protestant Articles and Anglican Prayer Book?

However that may be the series of statements of mine which were condemned and this vindication of them have a serious sociological purpose. I want to bring people to a knowledge of the real constructive forces which have made us what we are and will make a far more satisfactory future. I say that the first of these forces is science, and that we should be much further advanced to-day if religious prejudice had not set the cross and the crescent into deadly conflict, or if the church had not used its influence to check or retard the acceptance and development of science in Christendom. I say that all the churches have been moved by that distrust of science which still displays itself in the condemnation of heretics, and that such distrust will remain until the ancient formularies may be interpreted by any man in harmony with any discovery or even any speculation that science may impose upon him.

I

For those who are not familiar with the story of science let me say that the more ancient civilizations acquired even in three thousand years very little of that positive knowledge of nature and of man which we may call scientific and which is necessary to the advancement of civilization. They, for practical purposes, developed the elementary notions of mathematics, and Egypt contributed a little chemistry and Babylonia a very fair elementary astronomy. Then, in the seventh century B. C., the Greeks of Asia Minor began to speculate very boldly on the secrets of the heavens and

the earth and they would probably in time have laid the foundations of exact science. But in most of the Greek cities, as in medieval Europe or in modern states, the religious democracy checked this tendency.

Aristotle was a genuine scientific man as well as a philosopher, but the Greeks generally lost themselves in philosophical speculations. I have ceased to make any difference between the speculations of philosophers and those of theologians. Philosophy is as utterly worthless as theology unless it is based on the scientifically ascertained doings of nature and correctly interpreted with reference to making the most of human life. The speculations of theologians in support of the representations of supernaturalistic interpretations of religion are never so based: therefore, they are at best tentative theories awaiting verification by the scientific methods of ascertaining and interpreting facts and at worst they are will-o-the-wisp hallucinations.

Unverified theories are the stock in trade of both the unscientific philosopher and theologian, but neither has ever hit the nail of truth on the head with his theory. The hammer of a relevant fact is the only one by which that nail can be driven home and no fact is a reality discovered by thinking. All facts are realities revealed by the doings of nature.

It was chiefly in outlying parts of the Greek world like Sicily and Alexandria, where there was not the same tyranny of a religious democracy, that mathematics and astronomy made some progress. Let us boldly face this fact from the start; supernaturalistic religion was even then hostile to science but never has it been more so than now. The Greek race was wonderfully fitted to inaugurate the era of science, but supernaturalistic religion of an orthodox type checked it, and it

was only in the colonial fringes of the Greek world (Asia Minor, Sicily and Alexandria) that it had freedom.

Science made most progress in Alexandria. There, in the one or two centuries before and after Christ, the foundations of science were solidly laid. In that most cosmopolitan of cities, where the wisdom of Egypt, Babylonia, Persia and Greece was blended, and where religion was at its weakest owing to the number and variety of cults, there was considerable progress in mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry and medicine, as you may read in any history of science. One Alexandrian scientist even discovered the principle of the steam engine and built a working model.

All this perished when Christianity triumphed. The wonderful library of Alexandria was partially burned. The Arabs later completed its destruction. The great college attached to the temple of Serapis was destroyed. In short, nearly the whole of the Alexandrian culture was lost.

During the next seven centuries Europe had only a few fragments of Greek science which had not been destroyed in the burning of the Alexandrian library. One Roman scholar of the fifth century, Martianus Capella, and one learned Spanish bishop of the seventh century, Isidore of Seville, preserved these scanty fragments in certain fantastic cyclopedias of knowledge (mostly spurious knowledge) which they compiled. This preservation of a few unburned pages of the Alexandrian Library of 700,000 volumes is the only atom of truth, as far as science is concerned, in the familiar statement that the Christian monks preserved ancient culture; and neither of these compilers was a monk. Indeed, except that it was from the work of

Martianus Capella that Copernicus got the idea (of certain ancient Greek writers) that the sun is the center of the solar system, no contribution to science was made in virtue of these books; in other words, what they preserved turned out to be of no importance and no use.

It was the Arabs and Persians who at last took up the science of the Alexandrian Greeks and began to appreciate the greatness of the ancient civilization. This is how it came about that when Christian Europe was at its darkest, the rest of civilization was at its brightest.

In an expert work like S. P. Scott's *History of the Moorish Empire in Europe* you will find a full account of the amazing progress in science that was made by the Arabs and Persians. As it would take half this book to summarize that progress I must refer the reader to histories of science.

I have said a little about the progress of science in Spain and Sicily, but the work was just as vigorously prosecuted in the east. We think of the Asiatics as natural degenerates, and we say foolish things about their enervating climate. Read what the cities of Egypt, Syria and Persia were like in the Middle Ages. At Cairo there was a royal observatory in the library of which were six thousand works on mathematics alone. In the city of Bagdad there were in the eleventh century nine hundred works by medical experts, and many of them specialized as ours do. One Arab treatise on diseases of the eye ran to six hundred pages. One on hernia and tumors ran to four hundred pages. One on general practice took the author twenty years to write. This was only one of ten branches of science, but it is impossible to summarize their great work here.

Modern science is a development of this Arab-Persian science. I have already referred to a book by Professor Haskins, *Studies in the History of Medieval Science*, in which he traces dozens of Christian scholars who went to Spain, learned Arabic, and gave Europe Latin translations of many scientific works of the Moors or Mohammedans. Some of these scholars were English, and they formed a little group cultivating Moorish science in connection with Oxford University.

It was there, in the thirteenth century as no historian now questions, that the monk, Roger Bacon, learned all his science. Modern writers on science believe that, though he must have had a high scientific ability, he discovered nothing and could not in his monastic condition have discovered anything. In those days it generally meant real death here and now by a real burning for a monk to find out anything and even whisper it to a few of his fellows in private. In these days it sometimes means an unreal eternal death elsewhere and elsewhen by an unreal burning in an unreal hell for a bishop to find out something and loudly tell about it in public. So you see that in the interim of about 1500 years the church has become a little more civilized. Perhaps in the course of the next one thousand five hundred years any one will be free to find out as many things as he can and broadcast all he knows about them. It seems too good to be true, but let us hope and work for it. These appeals to the General Convention for restoration are my contributions toward the securing of this freedom.

Roger Bacon was the ablest of the men who wanted Europe to turn away from the sterilities of the philosophy of Aristotle and of medieval theology and cooperate with the Moors in the development of science.

A German monk of the same thirteenth century, Albert the Friar, wrote with the same aim. But Friar Albert was a count, so instead of bringing him to trial and to the stake for heresy, they made a bishop of him, and he was more diplomatic after that, as bishops generally are, but not always. In a word, it is not now disputed that whatever science there was in Europe in the Middle Ages came to it from the Moors of Spain or the Saracens of Sicily, all Mohammedans. None of it from Christians.

II

So far the story is clear, but when we ask what was the attitude of the church we seem to get very different opinions. The catholic says that the church patronized science. The mystic says that the church was very properly indifferent to science. The historian says that the church was hostile to science.

Now the first thing to do is to ask ourselves what we mean by the church. Do we mean the popes? The answer would then have to be that no pope until the seventeenth century knew anything about science, or about anything except theology and theology is as far from being a science as the east is from the west. It is superstition not knowledge.

A chemist of the fourteenth century, was also a skillful physician, and the reigning pope, Clement V, being exceedingly ill, sent for him. Do we call that patronizing science?

Similarly Innocent VIII, another not very edifying pope, patronized an English alchemist, a canon of Ripley, because alchemists were supposed to turn base metal into gold. Is that patronizing science?

Another pope, Boniface VIII (curiously enough,

another unedifying pope) issued a bull which had the effect of checking dissection; but we admit that he knew nothing about anatomy and did not expressly speak about dissection.

Let us say broadly, then, that until we come to the time of Galileo (1564-1642) no pope ever bothered his head about science. The popes left it to the Inquisition, which had not to consult them, to deal with such trifles as science and the heresies arising from it, and the popes never promoted any kind of culture except (in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) art. We shall avoid a good deal of confusion if we understand this. The pope who cooperated personally with the Inquisition in condemning Galileo, Urban VIII, was the first pope who deliberately interfered with science; and that was in 1633, and Urban himself would probably not have intervened personally if it had not been generally understood that Galileo had made a fool of him in his *Dialogues*.

That was in the seventeenth century, and as half of Europe was now protestant, astronomy was free to make progress in Germany and England. It is the earlier period that is more interesting. In the thirteenth century Arab science was well known in Europe, and it was greatly in advance of the old Alexandrian science; yet the science of Europe even in the sixteenth century was not above the Alexandrian, to say nothing of the Arab, level. The distinguished geologist, Dr. Woodward, says as much in his *History of Geology* and few would question it.

Thus no progress was made in the three centuries from 1200 to 1500 and it would therefore be ridiculous to speak of the medieval church as a patron of science. The whole question is whether the church, represented

222 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

by its local authorities, actually checked the development. Those who think that the church did not check it may very justly be asked to explain how it was that even when Friar Roger and Friar Albert had shown the importance of Moorish science in their books, no progress was made.

It used to be thought that the works of Bacon and Albert represented remarkable discoveries and scientific genius, but we now know differently. It is the science of the Arabs, and they urged Europe to take it up. What happened? Albert was side-tracked into an ecclesiastical dignity, and Roger was very drastically suppressed. As soon as Roger, in his thirty-fourth year, began to advocate science, the authorities of his monastic body confined him in a French monastery and forbade him to have scientific works or instruments, and even pen and parchment.

Then an easy-going cardinal, who afterwards became an easy-going pope, got permission for Roger to write his books. The pope, however, died before the books were completed, and the monastic authorities promptly confined and silenced Roger once more. He was virtually imprisoned for from twenty to thirty years. That is how the church encouraged science from its triumph about 450 A. D. to the death of Roger Bacon near the beginning of the fourteenth century.

We need not try to puzzle out whether the friendly cardinal or the very hostile monastic authorities represented the church. The net result was that monks were not permitted to take up science, and the Inquisition soon made it plain that any man who did so ran a serious risk.

The next name you will find in the history of science (very modestly) is that of Professor Cecco

d'Ascoli of Bologna University. He was burned alive, in 1327, to encourage the others, I suppose.

The next name is that of Peter of Abano, an Italian physician. He cheated the Inquisition by dying in its prison and so he had to be burned dead instead of alive.

The next was a French friar or monk alchemist, Jean de Raquetaillade; who also was so inconsiderate as to die in prison instead of at the stake.

Other monks or ex-monks who were credited with a zeal for chemistry were Raymond Lully and Basil Valentine, but modern chemists say that they are almost mythical figures.

Then there was a Nicholas of Cusa, the cleverest of them all, the man who first found that the earth does travel round the sun and that the power of the popes was based upon a mass of forgeries. He proved amenable to more humane treatment; he was made a papal legate and a cardinal, and his heresies miraculously disappeared.

Apart from a few alchemists, who were petted when they promised to make gold out of clay for the bishops and went in fear of their lives when they failed to deliver the goods, and a few surgeons, who could make little progress because they could not dissect without permission (though heaven knows dead bodies were plentiful enough) this is really the story of science until the Reformation in the sixteenth century. You will no longer wonder that it had not risen above the old Greek level.

The catholic medical professor, Dr. J. J. Walsh, has written a book, *The Popes and Science*, to show that at least surgery was encouraged to make splendid progress. Yet one of the highest authorities he quotes,

224 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

Sir. T. C. Allbutt, says in his *Historical Relations of Medicine and Surgery*:

The vigorous push of surgery in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was checked in the west by the feudal pride and academic bigotry which, culminating in the reactionary ferocity of the church, thrust surgery down into the ranks of illiterate barbers, reckless specialists, and adventurous charlatans.

Just the same story, you see, the Arabs give an impulse in the thirteenth century and the church (the local ecclesiastical authorities and the Inquisition) check it. I may add that the greatest anatomist of the sixteenth century, Vesalius, was driven from country to country, fell foul of the Inquisition, and lost his life in performing the penance it imposed on him. It is the reverse of the truth to claim as most preachers do that the church patronized science, and one grows weary of exposing the inaccuracy of their sermons and of the books of many authors.

III

By this time, in fact before the end of the fifteenth century, the Turks had destroyed the Arab civilization and its culture in the east, and the Spaniards had totally destroyed it in the west. Frederic II, King of Sicily and Roman emperor, a great admirer of Saracen art and science, had made a noble effort to introduce them into Europe, but the church had bitterly attacked him and destroyed much of his work.

The cities of north Italy however, had always despised Rome and never been very docile to the popes, and in them a certain amount of science lingered. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the papal court again became very corrupt for nearly a hundred years,

and some of the Italian universities took advantage of this to establish teachers of mathematics, physics and astronomy—not at Rome, but in the provincial universities. Out of this arose the famous case of Galileo.

Long before Galileo there was a Polish canon, Copernicus, who took an interest in astronomy. He read in the old work of Martianus Capella that some of the Greeks had considered the sun to be the center of the solar system, and this seemed to him probable. He was by no means a great astronomer, and he made no discoveries. He merely said that this seemed to be the truth, and he worked out a new (and quite wrong) idea of the solar system. It is even said that in 1500 he gave lectures in Rome and in the course of these he mentioned the theory that the earth traveled round the sun.

This leads catholic writers to say that the Copernican system was, as Belloc says, taught with clerical approval in catholic universities before Galileo was born. They then go on to mislead completely their readers as to the reasons why Galileo was condemned.

You see, there is hardly a single incident in the relation of the medieval church to science, or to anything else for that matter, which is not misrepresented in the literature that actually circulates in the churches.

The simple fact is that in certain lectures at Rome Copernicus, who was already a cleric, referred to the old Greek idea, and he was not molested. But any fair-minded historian ought to add that Rome was then, in the year 1500, under the most corrupt of its popes, the Borgia Pope Alexander VI, and the general degradation was such that there is no significance in a very small scientific heresy escaping notice; besides that

226 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

Copernicus, who was very timid, may merely have mentioned it as an ancient idea.

The truth is that the story of Copernicus does show plainly how the church checked the cultivation of astronomy. He was convinced that the sun is the center of the solar system, and at last, in 1530, he wrote a book on those lines. But he kept that book unpublished for another twelve years in his dread of what the church would do to him. The book dare not be given to the press until a friend of Copernicus wrote a preface to it in which he pretended that Copernicus did not offer this system as the truth, but merely as a hypothesis.

Copernicus was dying when the book appeared, and the Inquisition could not touch him. He had withheld the truth for half a century out of fear of the church, and in the end he was afraid to say that it was the truth. Even with this reserve the book was put by Rome on its black list for the reason that it needed correction. It was modified to the point of emasculation.

When half a century later, the monk Giordano Bruno taught Copernicanism as a truth and tried to express a religious philosophy in harmony with what was sound in Arab philosophy and science, he was promptly burned alive in papal Rome in 1600.

A few years later, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, Galileo invented the telescope. The Arabs had developed so far the principle of optics that a Dutchman was able to invent magnifying glasses or lenses and make the first pair of spectacles. Hearing of these, Galileo arranged lenses in a little tube and made the first telescope.

Think of the significance of this. Those principles

of optics had been fully known to and expounded by Roger Bacon three hundred years earlier, but under the wintry patronage of the church they remained undeveloped.

Think what has come from them, not only an immense relief to the short-sighted and long-sighted, but the microscope and telescope and all their momentous discoveries, the camera, the cinema and a hundred other sources of progress or enjoyment.

If the church had permitted, especially if it had encouraged, a free development of science from the thirteenth century onward, we should be three centuries more advanced than we are.

If the early church had not wrecked and suppressed the scientific culture of the Alexandrian Greeks, we might be a thousand years further on.

If supernaturalistic religion had never existed the world would have reached the goal of the ideal civilization long before Christianity was born. The triumph of Christianity over the older supernaturalistic interpretations of religion was the next most unfortunate event in human history.

Galileo, as he swept the heavens with his little optic tube, as it was called, was soon convinced that the earth revolved round the sun. When he said so, his teaching aroused a fury in the Italian universities. The professors who taught Aristotle's philosophy were just as bitter against him as the theologians who maintained that we must believe literally that Joshua made the sun stand still. Catholic writers, who forget that they have asked us to admire this philosophy as a great creation of the Middle Ages, now try to distract attention from the church by reminding us how mischievous the prejudice of the philosophers was. But

the philosophers did not trouble Galileo, for he had a vigorous command of the Italian language and soon silenced them. It was the theologians, especially those who constituted the Roman Inquisition, which had burned the noble-minded Giordano Bruno only sixteen years earlier, that had to be taken seriously. Galileo was reported to it, but he forestalled its summons by going to Rome and submitting himself to it.

Of what happened in Rome one important point is quite clear (for all the documents have now been published by the chief modern authority, Antonio Favaro) and one point is not clear.

We can now sweep aside all the inaccurate statements that Galileo was condemned only because he was conceited or dogmatic or offensive to the pope. For an historical writer like Mr. Belloc to say in 1926 that Galileo was condemned merely for teaching that the new theory was a fact instead of an hypothesis, when the official documents had been published in 1907, only shows how reckless is the service of orthodoxy; besides that we wonder why it is the business of the Roman church to say when a scientific statement is a fact and when it is only an hypothesis! But the time for these quibbles has gone. The official documents published by Favaro show that the Inquisition accused Galileo of teaching these two propositions: (1) the sun is the center of the world, therefore immovable from its place, and (2) the earth is not the center of the world and is not immovable, but it moves, and with a daily motion.

The official documents tell in plain Latin that the Inquisition, headed by the most famous scholar of the Roman church at that time, Cardinal Bellarmine, condemned the first proposition, the most elementary truth

of astronomy, as "formally heretical, inasmuch as it expressly contradicts the doctrine of Holy Scripture in many passages," and the second proposition as "at least erroneous in faith."

The point that is not clear is whether, as Rome afterwards claimed, Galileo made a solemn promise never to mention these ideas again. However that may be, he was stung by the taunts of his opponents and the ignominy of this suppression of scientific truth, and in 1633 he was summoned to Rome by the Inquisition for teaching heresy. As he was seventy years old and very ill, it is absurd of orthodox writers to boast that he was not put in a dungeon and tortured; and it is worse than absurd for them to say that he was not condemned by the pope, but by an organ of the church.

The pope, Urban VIII, directed the whole proceedings, and with great zeal, for it was understood that Galileo had ridiculed him in a recent book. Galileo was threatened with torture (the official documents state) and would certainly have gone to the dungeons but he agreed to recant. On his knees the aged scientist repeated the long formula drawn up for him. Here is the essential part of it:

I abjure, curse, and detest the said errors and heresies of the movement of the earth and the stationary sun.

There are few more melancholy spectacles in history than this of the venerable scientist kneeling and swearing on the gospels that what he knows to be the truth is a heresy that he abjures.

It is a worthless story that, as he rose from his knees, he muttered: It (the earth) moves for all that. He was broken. Torture or death would have followed

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230 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

such a defiance. Even so, he was condemned to confinement in a house for life.

Is it not then a mockery and a deceit for preachers and writers of our time to boast that the church never checked the progress of science and never was unjust to Galileo? Mr. Belloc cheerfully proves, by totally misrepresenting the facts, that what the church did was quite right and proper. Dr. J. J. Walsh, the chief American Catholic writer, actually tells his readers that Galileo's life was the most serene and enviable in the history of science. The catholic Encyclopaedia vindicates its church by changing the words, expressly contradicts to, seems to contradict the doctrine of Holy Scripture, in the official condemnation of Galileo.

But we know the truth to-day as well as we know the truth about the death of Lincoln. When Napoleon's troops were in Rome, they stole the documents from the Papal archives, and they were returned only on condition that they should be published. The Vatican published a falsified version of them, but Favaro published the correct text of all the documents in 1907. Christian preachers and writers do not seem to realize how they provoke the disdain of men and women who have been educated in our universities when they continue to pervert the historical facts in defense of the ancient formularies.

IV

In dealing with Galileo we have passed beyond the Middle Ages (450-1550) into what historians call the Modern Age. That in itself is significant enough. It answers very drastically the question whether the church repressed science in the Middle Ages. From the imprisonments of Roger Bacon in the thirteenth

century to the condemnation and imprisonment of Galileo in 1633 the scientific calendar is a list of men who worked in fear and trembling, were afraid to publish their conclusions, and too often ended in the dungeons of the Inquisition or at the stake.

Most of the universities of Europe were under clerical control, and from the time of Roger Bacon onward the few men who saw the value of the new learning, as it was called, pressed in vain for chairs of science in the universities. For three centuries theologians and philosophers prevented this, and the men who sought to promote science by private effort were generally persecuted.

By 1600 ecclesiastical authority was weakened by division. Half the countries of Europe were protestant. It is quite true that the reformers and at first the protestant universities were just as much opposed to Copernicus and Galileo as Rome was. Their teaching was against the teaching of Genesis; and our fundamentalists might learn a little by noticing the ridiculous position into which the reformers were driven by adopting this as a principle.

But the world at large had been growing more liberal ever since the Renaissance (the revival of classical learning) and men arose in every country who sustained with great force the fight for the recognition of science. Lord Bacon and the poet, Milton, pleaded for science in England, and in the course of the seventeenth century Sir Isaac Newton and other great scientists secured, so to speak, the charter of science, which would in time extend to America and appear in the work of Franklin. In France the great mathematician, Descartes, fought for the liberty of science; and it is significant that catholic influence remained such that he had to take

232 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

refuge in Sweden. In Germany the famous Kepler founded modern astronomy and opened the illustrious chapter of German science.

But the most interesting situation was in Italy, and we will try to understand it. If you tell a catholic that his church persecuted science, not only in the Middle Ages but in the seventeenth century, he will make a very plausible reply. He will say, if the church of Rome checked the progress of science, how will you explain that in this important early period of science the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, nearly half the great names are Italian? What about Leonardo da Vinci, the pioneer of geology, in the fifteenth century? What of Torricelli and Borelli, Volta and Galvani, Malpighi and Morgagni and Spallanzani, men of the highest renown in physics, biology and physiology? Did not Harvey, who discovered the circulation of the blood, study in Italy? Did not Italy give the world the telescope, the barometer, the suction-pump and some of the greatest discoveries in anatomy? It looks very much as if the church must, after all, have actually patronized science.

Well, let us in the first place beware of what we may call the chronological fallacy. These great names are spread over a period of four centuries, which surely ought to be taken into account. Yet there certainly was a zealous cultivation of science in Italy from the year 1600, and very many Italian names will be found in the history of mathematics, physics and anatomy. After Galileo you will look almost in vain for a great name in astronomy until the nineteenth century; and there, quite clearly, we see the effect of the action of the church. We see it with equal clearness in the fact that Spain, with all its wealth, with all its memories

of the great science of the Arabs, had no science at all until the nineteenth century. And we see at least that there was no patronage of science by the church when we learn that hardly a single one of these Italian scientists was a Roman. Rome, one of the wealthiest cities of Europe from the fifth century until modern times, has the poorest record of all in the production of great writers, artists, scientists or philosophers. You could almost count on the fingers of one hand the geniuses it produced in all these branches of culture in fifteen centuries. No other great city in Europe has so poor and scandalous a record. I recommend that fact to those who want to reproduce Roman ways as many do in the Anglo-American church. I would not have been tried, condemned and punished for my disbeliefs, but for the so-called catholics in the House of Bishops.

When we thus realize that nearly all these scientific men belonged to the provincial universities we begin to understand. There was a medieval saying that the nearer you got to Rome the less Roman (in the religious sense) you found people. The cities of north Italy, in particular, had a long tradition of independence of Rome. In the period we are considering they were less docile to the papacy than were the cities of Spain, France and Austria; though, as a matter of historical fact, the catholic world as a whole was, after the Reformation, far more independent of the papacy than it is to-day.

Moreover, in north Italy (under the Medici princes of Florence and corresponding patrons of art and letters in other cities) the new culture of Europe had first been developed. These cities far surpassed Rome, which they disdained until at last it built the Vatican, St. Peters and the great palaces. Even then the northern uni-

versities were far superior to that of Rome and more independent of clerical dictation. Hence Galileo and his great successor Torricelli had found their opportunity as professors at the university of Florence, and most of the other distinguished men were in provincial universities. Sir T. C. Allbutt, the historian of surgery expressly says that they owed their success in Italy to the ascendancy of the secular element in the universities. In another book of his, *Science and Medieval Thought*, he says:

Amid materialism, indifference, and bold unbelief in Church and State, when even priests were making a mockery of religion, it was the men of science, in the armor of natural knowledge, who awakened religion anew.

At the most we may see that the church in Italy did not interfere with the cultivation of mathematics and physics, at least after the sixteenth century. But can any person suggest a plausible reason why the church should interfere with those quite innocent branches of knowledge? They are just the sciences which seemed at that time to have not the slightest chance of conflicting with religion. The church was indifferent to them, as any man ought to expect.

The only other branch of science in which the Italians won distinction was anatomy; and, as even popes and bishops and abbots were anxious to have the best medical service, we should positively expect them to encourage research in this.

As late as the seventeenth century the following incident occurred in Germany. The Margrave of Baden was very ill, and his two physicians quarrelled in the bedroom as to which part of the chest they must put a plaster on to relieve the heart. The prince had to

have a pig brought in and dissected, to tell the medical gentlemen where the heart was.

The moral of that long and pitiful story is, beware of obstructing or discouraging science, for you know not of what priceless things you may be robbing the race or what removable evils you help to prolong. Science, as such, does not concern supernaturalistic, other-worldly religion. A church, as such, is not expected to patronize science or promote it. Science desires liberty only to think and investigate freely, and to express its conclusions.

Unquestionably the work of science and of true religion which is dependent upon it has been checked, and the progress of the race grievously postponed, by the concern of theologians about the effect of its discoveries on their dogmas which are so many superstitions, not one a truth.

Scientific men will often tell you that all this is over, yet when some of us try to tell the full range of their discoveries in the church, the ancient artillery is brought out once more. In every church, in varying degrees, there is still the echo of the old conflict which has done the race so much harm. There is only one way of disarmament. Let the bishops say that a man may harmonize his religious belief, by symbolic interpretations, with anything that science may teach, then we shall have a full and general appreciation of this greatest constructive force of modern times.

CHRISTIANITY was born. Then ages of Europe passed in review before us, and we saw Christianity and civilization march hand in hand through these ages, "leaving famine and death and desolation in their wake, and other signs of the progress of the human race," as Satan observed.—Mark Twain.

THE CAUSES OF
THE REFORMATION

THE destruction of Christianity is
essential to the interests of civiliza-
tion.—William Winwood Reade.

CHAPTER X

THE CAUSES OF THE REFORMATION

Historians usually say that the Middle Ages, as they call the stretch of history lying between ancient and modern times, ended in the sixteenth century.

Some of the popular literature that is current in the church gives an entirely wrong impression of the progress that was made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It suggests to people that when Luther and Calvin and the other Reformers broke the power of Rome there was a great improvement in morals, a new sense of justice that began to soften the harsh and despotic institutions of the Middle Ages. This is a very misleading exaggeration. I will show in the next chapter that the condition of the workers actually became worse after the Reformation alike in both catholic and protestant countries. So it is useless for catholics to blame the reformers. The power of the monarchs of Europe became more despotic than ever, and there was not even a general improvement of character.

Yet there was one most momentous change, the beginning of the advance of science of which Darwin ultimately became the symbol, and there was a less visible and very much smaller but very significant change, the revival of social idealism of which Marx ultimately became the symbol. These are the greatest changes for the good of man in his whole history. The proof of this representation will be given in the last of this series of little volumes.

Man did at last begin to advance, slowly, in these two most important directions, and since my chief purpose in these historical sketches is to vindicate my

alleged heresy, that it is to science and the natural powers of man that we owe all our progress, we must carefully consider the reasons for these advances.

Next to the rise of a new economic system, capitalism, the two great events of the time are the Renaissance of the fifteenth century and the Reformation in the sixteenth. In dealing with these (the two greatest facts in the history of Europe until the French and Russian revolutions) some of our historians are very unsatisfactory. The social or religious importance of the Reformation has been greatly exaggerated, they say, and we have begun to realize that it was to a very great extent a series of economic developments and of political revolts due to them.

At the close of the Middle Ages there was an artistic movement such as the world had not known since the days of ancient Athens. There was a great literature produced in most countries, as the names of Shakespeare and his contemporaries remind us. Europe had produced only one great writer, Dante, in nearly a thousand years; now it produces scores in two centuries. There was a spirit of adventure and exploration which culminated in the discovery of North and South America. Printing and paper were invented, and books turned out a thousand times faster than before.

Let us try to get a clear idea of what really happened and why it happened. And first let us put firmly aside two errors that have been admitted into some of our modern historical literature and help to cause this confusion.

One error is that such progress as was made at this time was only a normal continuation of the progress that Europe had been making for some centuries. That is just a feeble and casuistic attempt to relieve the church

of Rome of its guilt in checking progress during the thousand years of the Middle Ages. There had been some progress. The brilliant civilization of the Mohammedans was bound to stimulate Europe in some ways, but it was checked chiefly by the church. Before and after the advance there was a splendid outpour of creative activity, in art and science, in literature and commerce.

Then came the Dark and Medieval Ages extending through a whole millenium during the first of which ages there was no advance and during the second a little progress was made, but in spite of the church which opposed every step of it.

The second error is that medieval Europe had been quite content with its church, even devoted to it, and that it was really or mainly a series of political rebellions that tore half of Europe away from the jurisdiction of the popes. Let us take this second error now and then the first. By doing so I can make some important facts stand out more clearly and convincingly.

I

The policy of persecution on the part of the supernaturalistic interpretations of religion by which the advance of civilization has been mightily obstructed in every age is now so well known and so repugnant to the entire world that we even find Roman Catholic writers in America protesting that their church would never again persecute even if it had the power. I have no doubt that these catholic laymen really believe what they say, but Rome smiles on the other side of the Atlantic.

It is the law of the Roman catholic church to-day

242 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

that it has the right and the duty to put to death any members of that church who wish to leave it.

All religious coercion, even when it takes the bloodless form of telling a bishop that he is degraded and must be thrust out of the society of respectable orthodox folk, is vile. It has filled the world with dishonesty and hypocrisy. It checks the liberty of thought and discussion which is one of the most vital conditions of progress.

But vilest of all, a moral aberration as disgusting as that of the poor savages who sacrificed maidens to the gods or killed their parents before they became aged for fear they would be senile in the next world, is the idea that because a man does not think as the church does you can tie him to a stake and burn him alive, or hang and disembowel him, or turn troops of fierce soldiers upon him and his wife and children. Does anybody to-day question that? Well, let me tell you something that I will prove in a moment—something that historians very politely keep in the background but not one disputes.

Between the year 1200 and the year 1500, the time when Europe was trying to make progress, the church of Rome did that to at least more than one million men, women and children. That is why the progress of Europe was checked. That is the main means by which Rome maintained its authority.

Most people have a vague idea that it was just a few bold people called heretics (witches and apostate monks) who suffered horrible deaths in the Middle Ages. There is a popular Roman catholic work, entitled, *The Calvert Handbook of Catholic Facts*, that actually tells people that these things were done, and done by both sides only in the violence of Reforma-

tion times. Let me tell you of one or two undisputed pages of history before that time.

The nearest part of Europe to the splendid civilization which the Moors set up in Spain was the south of France. It is a beautiful region, something like Florida or California, and there were hundreds of thousands of people living there in towns and villages. By the year 1200 the great majority of these had cast off all allegiance to the pope and had a church of their own. The pope sent his finest preachers, and they made no impression whatever on the heretics. Whole provinces of the south of France had embraced the heresy, and it was spreading over France and Switzerland and even Italy.

Pope Innocent III (1161-1216) summoned what he called a crusade, a great army of all the foulest soldiers of the age, men who were accustomed to commit the vilest outrages and were drawn by the prospect of plunder. The heretics were so numerous, and they held such powerful cities, that it took this vast army of crusaders three or four years to drown them in their own blood.

No one knows how many were slaughtered, but catholic writers of the time tell us, with the greatest joy, such details as these, that the first army of crusaders numbered 220,000 (and 100,000 were added later) and that in one town alone 40,000 men, women and children were butchered.

The pope himself boasts that his troops took five hundred towns and castles from the heretics and killed all the inhabitants.

That is what the historian very briefly refers to as the massacre of the Albigensians. But you might like to remind me that you have read in some modern

244 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

catholic writer that these Albigensians held certain ideas that were ruinous to human society. You see, these people have not even the grace to blush for their medieval church. They slander these poor butchered folk to justify the pope.

I need only mention one fact to prove that this is a slander. These cities of the south of France were the most prosperous, the most cleanly, the happiest and best organized in Europe. They were rebels against the pope, and so they were brutally extinguished.

Thousands had been burned alive before this time. As early as 1017, we are told, thirteen canons and priests, to say nothing of laymen, were burned alive for heresy at one place in France. And after the year 1200 the slaughter went on.

That appalling institution known as the Inquisition was set up by the popes and hardly any man that was ever denounced to it escaped punishment. Its legal procedure was infamous, as the judges and the informers were paid out of the property of the heretics, and once a man was accused he was tortured until he said that he was guilty.

A secretary of the Spanish Inquisition tells us that in that country alone it slew 341,042 men and women, and the attempts that have been made to show that he exaggerated are not at all convincing.

Add the violent suppression in England of Lollardism, a very high-minded evangelical religion that in the fourteenth century had between a quarter and half a million members.

Add the massacre of the followers of John Huss in Bohemia, which also numbered hundreds of thousands.

Add hundreds of thousands of witches and members of other anti-Roman sects in all countries.

You will realize then why from 1100 to 1500 a very high proportion of the people of Europe hated Rome.

The pope kept the people in submission to the church by violence and by the knowledge of that horrible torture and death which awaited a man if he dared even to think heresy. Besides he knew that his death for heresy meant the ruin of his family by confiscation of property.

Nothing is further from the truth than the idea that the heretic was a man who outraged the feelings of his neighbors, though even that would be a poor excuse for such brutality. The heretics who were killed in their thousands and tens of thousands (the Albigensians and the Waldensians, the Bogomils of Bulgaria and the Cathari of Italy, the Lollards of England and the Hussites of Bohemia) were not small groups who offended the general body of citizens. They were often almost the entire population of provinces and large towns.

But even the isolated victim of the Inquisition was rarely a man who spoke out and offended his neighbors. As a rule the Inquisition, when they visited a town, called for the secret denunciation to them of any man or woman who was suspected of heresy. Revenge and greed denounced many an innocent man, and he had to prove that he did not even think heresy. It was nothing to the Inquisition that he went to church regularly. He was not confronted with the informers or told their names, he had no lawyer, and he was brutally tortured until in his delirium he accused himself of heresy. Sometimes his wife and children and neighbors were tortured to accuse him; and the tortures

were as ghastly as those that any savage tribe had ever inflicted.

It is painful to read apologies for this barbarism of the medieval church, but it is a scandal that the untruths of these apologists should be admitted into serious literature.

One of the finest recent works to which you can refer on questions of religion is the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* edited by Dr. Hastings, but it invited a catholic writer, Canon Vancandard, to write the article on the Inquisition, and he gravely perverts the truth. He tries to hide the horror of the massacre of a quarter to half a million Albigenians by saying that their ideas wrought destruction to society and caused great distress in the south of France. I have already said that the south of France was, on the contrary, the brightest and most prosperous region of Christian Europe.

But that writer is just as untruthful when he goes on to say that this so angered the princes and rulers, that they began to put heretics to death, and that the church for a long time opposed these rigorous measures. It does not recommend orthodoxy as an inspiration to find its representatives stooping to such utter untruths.

Well, the truth is that the people of Europe hated the Inquisition, and that the princes and civil authorities executed the sentences it passed only because the popes threatened them with excommunication, interdiction and even deposition and civil war if they did not kill rebels against the church. It took the popes a hundred years, from 1139, when the Lateran Council first urged it, to 1232, when the Inquisition was finally established, to compel the princes of Europe to adopt this savage system; and for another hundred years the popes com-

plained that the secular authorities were shirking the task. In fact, some countries, like England, never admitted the Inquisition.

II

If we wish to understand the Reformation correctly we must know the truth, horrible as it is, about the four centuries which preceded it. The Reformation was, with all its faults, a vitally necessary step in releasing the mind of Europe from this appalling tyranny. I am not arguing for a narrow protestant orthodoxy against a narrow catholic orthodoxy. I am telling you why Europe passed into the horrors of the Middle Ages and how it recovered from them. I am telling you how, through all these changing forms of creeds and in spite of all tyrannies of kings and priests, the mind of man was working out its own salvation.

And now that we have cleared away all this casuistry and untruth we begin to get a broad and reasonable view of the human development. From about 500 to 1100 Europe was so comprehensively and densely ignorant that it could not in these six centuries produce a single book worth reading. This being the case it was hardly likely to produce heretics. Yes, during those six centuries Europe was very docile and devoted to the church, and shockingly dirty and immoral—just as the peasants of Mexico were a hundred years ago, and for the same reasons, ignorance and superstition.

Then Europe began to awaken, and we have seen what happened. Instead of people being docile and devoted to the church during the later Middle Ages, when those great cathedrals were built, they had to be coerced with a brutality to which you will find no parallel in the history of any other civilized religion.

248 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

A distinguished German historian, Sprenger, has estimated that within the next six centuries from the year 1100 to the year 1700, at least ten million men and women were put to death for heresy. The figure certainly runs into millions, and if you will realize that for every man who suffers such a penalty hundreds are intimidated from following his example, you will see that the world was ruled by terror and you will understand why it made such slow progress. The Reformation was no political movement. It was the culmination of a revolt against Rome that had continued for four centuries, ever since men began once more to think. All that we have to explain is why that revolt at last succeeded.

First let us estimate the share of the Renaissance. Whether or no it is true that the historians of fifty years ago exaggerated the importance of what is called the Renaissance (the new birth of Europe as to knowledge) it certainly helped to prepare the way for the success of the revolt. The word means literally the rebirth and has reference especially to the study of Greek and Roman literature.

When the Turks had destroyed the Greek empire in the east, and had taken Constantinople, Greek scholars fled to Italy. Long before this the Italians (not at Rome but in the progressive cities of north Italy) had begun to discover once more the splendid works of the old Roman and Greek writers. Instead of every great monastery having a collection of the classics, as some people imagine, it took these scholars a hundred years to get together the very incomplete collection of Latin writers that we have to-day. It was like exploring in the tombs of Egypt for papyri or in the mounds of Babylonia for clay tablets.

Then the Greeks began to come to Italy with the ancient Greek literature, and men discovered that the ancient pagan world had inspired a wonderful group of philosophers and moralists as well as poets and dramatists. We can understand their joy when we bear in mind what a miserable literature the Middle Ages had produced.

This zeal for Roman and Greek literature led to the appearance of a number of writers like Erasmus who are known in history as the humanists; and the name at once gives us an idea of the broad effect of the new birth of Europe, the Renaissance.

Humanist means one who is interested in the study of man. As the poet, Pope, said long afterwards: The proper study of mankind is man. That was the note of the new movement.

The humanists wanted to make an end of bitter sectarian hatreds, of sterile speculations about God and devils, heaven and hell and of all mental tyranny.

The humanists wanted to tell the world about the great democracies of Rome and Greece and all the wonderful work they had done in their religious and democratic freedom. Politically this was a dangerous doctrine but it had and has a mighty effect.

Most people have heard how the great English lawyer and statesman, Sir Thomas More, wrote the first Utopia, or sketch of an imaginary commonwealth in which men lived in a state of happy communism and brotherhood and complete liberty of conscience. More was one of the humanists, and it was in Greek and Roman literature alone that he found his inspiration. He wrote his Utopia in 1515 a book that you would call bolshevik. He was the Lord Chancellor of England and one of the finest scholars of his day.

250 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

In the next hundred years twenty or thirty of these utopian, or communist books appeared in Europe and had a very large circulation and almost a revolutionary influence.

Other and greater writers, like Montesquieu in his *Spirit of the Laws* and Montaigne in his *Essays*, introduced the humanist ideas more diplomatically into their works, and they spread slowly over Europe and in time to America.

If this were the place to do so, I could easily prove that the American Revolution and Constitution are based ultimately on the democratic ideas which the humanists derived from the Greek and Latin literatures. I will do this fully in the sixth and last of these little volumes on the *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism* which will be written from the viewpoint of sociology; but in the concluding chapter of this booklet, we shall see a little more about it.

Here I want to note particularly how it was this same spirit of revolt against tyranny, exploitation and untruth that prepared the way for the success of the Reformation. Kings were in those days becoming (like governments in our day) more despotic, and they were not disposed to encourage men to describe the ideal commonwealth as republican and communistic.

But it was a very different matter to attack ecclesiastical tyranny and exploitation. These oppressions of the popes weighed as heavily on the kings and nobles themselves as upon the common folk and were equally resented by both classes. It is ridiculous to represent Europe as wholly docile to the papacy at any time after the year 1000. There were few great monarchs who did not enter into conflict with the popes, and some of

the greatest of them, such as Frederic II and his successors fought them bitterly all their lives.

The papacy only kept its power over them by two terrible weapons: (1) the interdict, which would make all the priests of a kingdom close their churches and even refuse Christian burial to the terrified folk who imagined hell yawning for them, and (2) excommunication, which meant that if a king personally flouted it, some other king was authorized to seize his throne.

Under this galling tyranny, and seeing vast sums of money pass from their kingdoms to Rome every year or wasted on a useless and generally worldly body of tens of thousands of monks, the monarchs of Europe were prepared to admit criticism of the church. The humanists did the criticizing of it to perfection.

One of them in Italy, the historian Lorenzo Valla, discovered that the basis of the pope's temporal power, the Donation of Constantine, was a forgery.

Another, Nicholas of Cusa, discovered that an appalling number of the decrees on which the pope's spiritual power was based were forgeries.

All of them discovered that the words of Christ in the New Testament gave no support whatever to this hierarchy of wealthy bishop-princes and pope-monarchs, this vast system of worship of saints and relics and sale of indulgences.

So, then, the fierce criticisms of the popes by the humanists appeared in almost every part of Europe long before Luther joined in the fray. Fortunately, just at the critical period printing was invented, and copies of the Bible and of the works of the humanists spread by the hundred thousand.

We say, invented, and we dispute whether Guten-

252 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

berg or some other European invented it, but scholars know well that printing and paper came to Europe from China through the civilization of the Arabs. Gowen and Hall tell us in their *Outline History of China* that under the Tang Dynasty, which ruled just at the time when Europe was in its most squalid condition (from the seventh to the tenth century) the brilliant civilization of the Chinese had printing, color-printing, and; in fact, they had almost everything of the kind that we have now except the linotype machine. All the world was helping to civilize Europe, in spite of its popes, but it took more than five centuries for this greatest among all inventions to penetrate the defences of Christendom. Could there be a worse indictment of the Christian supernaturalistic interpretation of redemptive religion?

Perhaps the popes were wise in their generation. It was about 1450 when printing began, in a very rudimentary way, in Europe; but within seventy years, before Luther opened his war, Europe was flooded with copies of the Bible and criticisms of the church.

Let me illustrate. A French edition of one of the caustic works by Erasmus sold 24,000 copies in Paris in a few days as early as the year 1520. His books were translated into every tongue and sold by the hundred thousand. Almost equally popular and just as caustic were the works of Ulrich von Hutten, the poet laureate of Germany at that time. Even the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More contained deadly criticisms of the church and the monks.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the services of the Renaissance in thus preparing the way for the revolt of the Reformation and for the great social and humanitarian revolt which would begin with the American

Revolution two and a half centuries later. Why this second revolt against feudalism was so long delayed I will tell presently.

III

There is one aspect of the subject, the terrible corruption of the time, which we should prefer to ignore, but it is essential to my purpose to say a few words about it. If I am to make clear the truth about the recovery of civilization I must disprove all the false claims that are made in connection with it. The bishops have thrown out to me a historical challenge. Wherever I said in my *Communism and Christianity* that it is man who saved himself (that we must look to science and human good-will to redeem us from the grave evils that still disgrace civilization) my words were eagerly cut out by the sacred scissors of the heresy hunters and were branded with the ancient rubber-stamp as doctrine contrary to that of the church. The doctrine of the church is that next to the blood of Jesus it is the supernaturalistic power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the church, the Bride of Christ, which saves men. Yet our own Articles declare that the whole church went astray for twelve centuries. This is the representation of the fundamentalists. I am not sure how the modernists would put it.

Modernists cannot ask us to believe that their ideas saved the world, for if those devout Christians, John Huss, Jerome and Savonarola were burned alive, I fancy that if there had been a modernist in the fifteenth century the bishops would have given him a combination of all the aids to faith which they used in those days, the rack, thumb-screws, boiling oil, hanging, disemboweling and a slow fire. Now let us think seriously and patiently.

254 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

We have seen that the church did not inspire the art of the Middle Ages, it just employed the artists.

We have seen that the church certainly did not inspire the scientists of the Middle Ages, it burned them.

We have seen that the church did not inspire Gutenberg to print, for the invention had been made in China centuries before.

We have seen that the church did not inspire the great navigators to discover the Indies and America.

We have seen that the church did not attempt to improve law and justice, for the procedure of its own tribunal, the Inquisition, was barbarous, and its law contained a mass of acknowledged forgeries.

We have seen that the church did not inspire literature, for not one twentieth of the new literature of Europe was religious, and one half was immoral.

We have seen that the church did not inspire social or political justice, for kings became more despotic than ever, the mass of the people became poorer than ever, and the popes did more than other monarchs to crush the idea of democracy, from the murder of Arnold of Brescia to the fall of Cola di Rienzi.

We have seen, in short, that the church did nothing to advance civilization so much as one step.

I must assume, then, that the bishops mean in their persecution of me that, while whatever advances were made in these directions in the Middle Ages were due to the increase of knowledge and the new economic conditions, the church nevertheless helped by sustaining the moral and spiritual level of Europe. Here again I join issue with them in proving that my dear brethren are entirely wrong in their contention on this point, which credits the development of morality to the church, I must present from the historians some very unpleasant

facts about which they are almost unanimously agreed.

First let us glance at the condition of the papacy itself at that time, since it is supposed to be the special embodiment of the Holy Ghost and representative of Jesus; and you can read all that I will say here in the most authoritative Roman catholic history of the papacy the twelve volume work of Dr. Ludwig Pastor.

I have said nothing about the character of the popes since the eleventh century, when we saw a hundred years of papal degradation ended in a slight reform of Rome by the German emperor. A hundred years later, it was degraded again for there was a sanguinary battle of rival popes; and a hundred and thirty years later (1330) it once more entered upon a long period of corruption. The popes transferred their throne to Avignon and the great writer Petrarch, who lived near and was personally familiar with the town, insists that it became, as he says, a sink of iniquity, a second Babylon.

It was not until the year 1415 that Europe began once more to respect its popes, when the great Council of Constance had solemnly deposed the ruling pope, John XXIII. The council accused him of being "wicked, irreverent, unchaste, a liar, disobedient, infected with many vices . . . inhuman, unjust, and cruel . . . wholly given to sleep and carnal desires, a mirror of infamy . . . guilty of sacrilege, adultery, murder, spoliation, rape, and theft." That is part of the indictment of a pope drawn up by more than four hundred prelates, abbots and learned theologians. It probably is the most appalling moral indictment ever drawn up by a grave council. Yet I suppose you never heard of Pope John XXIII.

However, everybody has heard of Pope Alexander

VI who, less than a century later, defiled the papal palace with almost as deep a corruption for eleven years. I am not going to repeat the sordid details of the life of this pope, Alexander Borgia and his family, the full proof of which are given by Pastor in his history of the popes. Scenes that were witnessed in the Vatican palace, and are described in the Diary of the Master of Ceremonies, John Burchard, are on a level with the most licentious pictures given us by any ancient Roman writer. You may read those in any book about the Borgia family.

But if you want fully to understand the success of the Reformation you must know that Alexander VI was only the worst of a series of popes who again for a hundred years allowed the papal court to remain appallingly corrupt. Of the twelve popes who ruled the church from 1455 to 1549 no less than five had been admittedly corrupt before they became popes, and they entertained their illegitimate children openly in the Vatican. During all those hundred years at least half the cardinals were notorious all over Europe for their vices and heavy gambling, and it was these men who sold the papacy to the highest bidder without the least regard to character. Rome had become the most corrupt city in Europe, and there was not a city anywhere that was not perfectly familiar with its condition. These things are acknowledged, and it was these that gave point to the scurrilous critics of Rome everywhere.

The mere fact that the monarchs and prelates of Europe remained quite friendly with the papal court during all this time will tell you enough about the state of Christendom generally. Probably the foulest books that were written by any distinguished writer in the Christian era are the romances of Rabelias, published

toward the close of this period and after the Reformation had begun. Rabelias was an apostate monk, yet, precisely because he had written these very gross and very amusing stories, he was presented to the pope by the chief bishop of France, who was his warm friend, and was assured of papal protection. The looseness of thought and life during that half century, all over Europe, is as bad as any that is known in history; and let me remind you that is the only period when Rome had a great school of art and raised its finest monuments.

In such a world the moral corruption of Rome was to most people a joke. There was a minority of strict people to whom Luther could appeal, though even he had at times to use very broad and indelicate language, but the majority laughed. Besides the five popes I have mentioned, men told and believed everywhere equally scandalous stories about three other of those twelve popes and about the clergy, monks and nuns.

But what people did resent was that all this luxurious corruption of Rome was based upon a scandalous exploitation of Christendom. Let me give you three undisputed historical illustrations.

Pope Sextus IV, who is counted one of the good popes of the time, drew a raw young peasant (a nephew of his) out of a monastery and made a cardinal of him; and this youth spent more than \$3,000,000 of papal money in two years and killed himself with vice.

Alexander VI, father of six illegitimate children, bought the papacy with gifts worth at least half a million dollars.

Leo X, the corrupt and luxurious pope of Luther's day, spent about \$15,000,000 in the course of his eight years as pope.

258 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

These vast funds were obtained by the most flagrant sale of sacred offices and of indulgences, and from one end of Europe to the other men spoke bitterly of the infamous greed of Rome. It was this financial corruption that made the Reformation inevitable and successful. But for it Luther would have been a failure. The Reformation goes far towards proving the correctness of the Marxian theory concerning the economic determination of history.

The only point in all this which any serious catholic writer questions is the sale of indulgences, but the controversy is a mere play on words. In Spain to-day you go into a shop or to one of the priests and ask for an indulgence—not a permission to commit sin, as some think, but a remission of the punishment in purgatory for sins already committed. You put your quarter on the counter, and you receive a printed indulgence and ten cents change. The catholic asks you to regard this merely as a transaction in which you give an alms to the church and the church gives you an indulgence. What is still done in Spain was done all over Europe before the Reformation.

Let me show you how it worked in the days of Luther and assure you that my facts will never be successfully disputed. In the year 1514 Pope Leo X conferred the archbishopric of Mayence on a dissolute young noble, Albert of Brandenburg, and received from him a sum of \$60,000. Let us be very polite and not call it a sale. But Albert had to borrow the money from the Jews, and the security was that the pope not only promised him a share in the proceeds of the sale of indulgences in his three bishoprics, but sent his finest salesman, the monk Tetzel, to push the sale for him. And Tetzel and his assistants spread over

Germany, raised the papal banner in the churches, and roared out to the people the wonderful virtues of the indulgences they had to dispose of to every man who gave an alms to the church. That was how the monk Tetzel in 1517 came to be selling indulgences a few miles from Wittenberg, where the monk Martin Luther was a professor; and the first faint thunders of the great storm broke upon the ears of Europe.

IV

After all this you will be inclined to say that some of our historical writers would show more sense of humor if they tried to explain why the Reformation did not occur two or more centuries earlier instead of trying to find political reasons why it occurred at all! I have explained that infamous as the system was, when we remember that it masqueraded in the name of religion, the popes had been able to terrorize the secular authorities everywhere and compel them to stifle every revolt. Now I have merely to explain why this revolt was successful.

I must confine myself to a few points concerning the only issue between the bishops and me whether the revolt which we call the Reformation was or was not a purely natural development. There is not a historian in the world to-day who doubts that the Reformation was a perfectly natural event. The tendency is to go to the opposite extreme and make the Reformation more of a moral revolt than it really was. It was an economic revolt, as much so as our American Revolution, Civil War and World War. There was nothing moral about them, or the Reformation either.

Well, to proceed to what happened in Germany, Luther's fatherland. As we saw, the ground was well

prepared for him. For twenty years the humanitarian critics of the church had poured out books and pamphlets, and the announcement of Luther, that there was no warrant in Scripture for the idea of purgatory or indulgences (that these were papal inventions for the purpose of making money) was received with great enthusiasm.

Rome, when in its luxurious idleness it realized at last that the situation was serious, tried its familiar means of self preservation. If the emperor did not see that the heretic was duly condemned and punished or sent to Rome, he would find what the pope could still do. He would ally himself with France against the emperor. So at length, in spite of his princely protector, Luther was condemned as a stiff-necked heretic; though his protector saved him from going to feed the fires at Rome.

Then there occurred one of the most momentous events in the history of the Reformation. The rulers of Germany in the Middle Ages had, as successors of Charlemagne, the title of Roman emperor, and royal alliance had now brought Spain and the Netherlands also into his empire. It was in 1521 that the young Emperor Charles V had Luther condemned, and he then set out to settle the affairs of his vast empire and check the French. It is enough to say that he was absent from Germany nine years, and during that time protestantism, as it was now called, had spread to so many princes and their people that they could be crushed only by a terrible civil war; and just at this time the Turks were seriously threatening Europe.

So the protestants got a respite, and in the next few years their creed conquered Scandinavia and the greater part of Switzerland. When at last, in 1618,

the pope and the Jesuits did induce a bigoted emperor to make war on protestantism, it was too late for success. Thirty years of the most brutal warfare, which made a desolation of whole countries in Europe and suspended the advance of civilization in Germany for a century, ended in defeat. Half of Europe would never again bow to Rome.

It is obvious that political conditions favored the success of the Reformation, but it was not a political movement, any more than a religious one. It was an economic movement. It was the culmination of the sullen anger and disgust with Rome that had filled Europe for four centuries and had already had its hundred of thousands of martyrs.

Even in England, where the occasion for the revolt was the anger of the dissolute king because the pope refused him a divorce such as Rome had for centuries given to monarchs (in the form of annulling their marriages) very little violence was needed to make the nation protestant.

Cranmer proved nobly in his last hour that he was a convinced protestant, and there were remarkably few who defied the law when Henry VIII declared himself head of the church. The reign of the catholic Mary shed far more blood in trying to make England catholic once more. The protestant Elizabeth was greeted with national rejoicing. England had for decades resounded with denunciation of the popes, and long before Luther's time gospel-preachers had held services on the streets of London with impunity.

In fact the whole civilized world was moving away from its corrupt and effete medieval church and it was a perfectly natural, not at all supernatural, movement.

Protestantism spread so rapidly in France that,

262 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

although some tens of thousands of the leading Huguenots were butchered in the infamous St. Bartholomew Massacre (1572) they could still put such armies in the field that the court was compelled to give them toleration.

Even in Austria and Bavaria the Roman church only saved itself by the most cruel persecution. In Spain the Inquisition spread terror over the entire country. Violence alone kept half of Europe still catholic. The spirit of man was naturally roused, and it won, at appalling cost, its first measure of liberty, its first victory over the tyranny of the church which tyranny (if I was rightly tried, condemned and punished) was due to the supernaturalistic working of the spirit of God.

THE WORLD AFTER
THE REFORMATION

THAT terrible struggle between theology and science, which having begun in the persecution of science and the martyrdom of scientific men . . . is now manifestly destroying that old theological spirit, which has brought so much misery and ruin upon the world.—Buckle

we should expect their moral influence to hasten the triumph of justice in that wicked social and political world.

Yet what do we find? That science which rose and issued in the rise of capitalism and the fall of feudalism, made rapid progress, but social justice which the protestant preachers say rose with protestantism and the fall of catholicism was completely suspended until the American Revolution, 1776, and the French Revolution, 1792, nearly two centuries after the death of Luther and Calvin.

So, then, we have a third outstanding and indisputable fact of history to take into account. That measure of justice which religion ought first of all to inspire came neither with the triumph of catholicism nor of protestantism, but it did come with the rise and development of science and capitalism. It has been won by the peoples of the world in a period, the nineteenth century, when both the catholic and protestant churches very materially lost members and influence and when scientific capitalism had completely triumphed over unscientific feudalism.

Why this justice was won first in America, why the attempt of the French Revolution to secure it in Europe failed, I will tell in the next chapter. But every man ought to know that a hundred years ago apart from America (or, rather, one part of America, the United States) the mass of the people of every Christian country bore just the same tyranny, were just as poor and exploited, and almost as ignorant and coarse in their lives, as in the days of Luther, that is to say, the Reformation did not better the condition of the workers of any nation.

Even more clearly ought every man to know that

the still finer expressions of humanity and justice (the wide determination to end war, the hope at least that we will abolish poverty, the attempt to suppress drunkenness and all its evils, the scores of movements to relieve distress and provide high art and sound knowledge to everybody) are strictly modern movements which did not reach their full stature until in every great civilization (in France and Germany as well as in England and America) about one half the population ceased to attend church or read the Bible.

I shall prove these things, if any proof is needed, in the next chapter. But let me point out to you at once that the way in which orthodox people shrink from these facts and try to weaken them is the strongest possible proof of the need of my heresies in the church and the strongest possible reason why every church should throw its doors wide open to me.

The great quarrel between the bishops and me, and the chief issue that I am trying to put before the people of the world, is not whether the mind is material or spiritual. On that you might be inclined to say with a witty writer:

What is matter? Never mind.

What is mind? It's no matter.

The great issue is not whether there ever was such a person in history as Jesus Christ. Only lately (October, 1929) Dr. Robert Millikan, a renowned physicist, has written in the *Forum* an article pleading for religion and the Christian ethics yet insisting that the question as to whether or not Jesus was a person of history or a fiction of the imagination is of no importance to true religion or to true morality. This should convince anyone that the doctrinal position occupied by Professor Millikan is the one I occupy

rather than that of the orthodox bishops. In a powerful sentence which should be read, marked and inwardly digested by my brethren in the House of Bishops, he says:

The service of the Christian religion, and my own faith in essential Christianity would not be diminished one iota if it should in some way be discovered that no such individual as Jesus ever existed.

I have no doubt the bishops would eagerly welcome in at the front door of the Episcopal church so eminent a scientist as Professor Robert Milikan, the Physicist, while they put me out at the back door for saying the same thing; and, yet, Jesus means nothing to him and everything to me. I hope at least that my dear brethren in the House of Bishops are not ignorant of these repeated proofs by our distinguished men, in every branch of culture, that I was right in claiming that the time for freedom has come.

But that is not the main issue. It is outlined in these three questions: (1) what have been the real constructive forces in the development of civilization; (2) was the orthodox theology of any church such a force, and is it a vital force to-day, and (3) is it true as I say that this theology is only a force when it is brought into reasonable harmony with the great constructive force of science and human idealism?

The bishops must admit that down to the sixteenth century the Roman and Greek catholic churches were not such a force, for they had become teachers of untruth. That is an article of the Anglo-American church. But it is, if not an article, at least an essential teaching of this church that it was not simply science, but the moral force of Christianity, that created modern civilization. Let us see what the facts tell us.

I

We must make some allowance to the Roman church for its failure, at least in the early period, to maintain the great civilization created by the Roman empire because just then barbaric invasions destroyed the civic frame-work of the empire.

We must make a corresponding allowance for the protestant church. The establishment of protestantism in Europe was followed by the Thirty Years War, one of the most horrible, lengthy and devastating wars that ever afflicted civilization.

Nearly the whole of Europe was engaged in it. How many were killed during those three decades of bitter and ceaseless warfare we do not know, but this, which we do know, will give you some idea.

Bohemia, which up to then had been one of the most promising civilizations of Europe had its population reduced within the thirty years covered by the war, 1618-1648, from three millions to 780,000, its cities and towns reduced from 732 to 130, its villages reduced from 20,700 to 6,000.

Belgium also had been a very promising civilization. It had produced famous artists like Rubens and great industries before England and France did. You know how lowly it has been ever since.

Spain, which threw all its resources into the Thirty Years War, began at once to decline. From the position of the richest and most powerful state in Europe it became in a century the poorest and most reactionary.

And any historian will tell you that the progress of civilization in Germany was suspended for more than a hundred years.

Let us make this allowance, but let us at the same time be honest about this struggle. Like the world

war and all wars, this European war was an economic war. In the case of the ruinous world war it was a question as to whether Germany should keep on winning the markets of other countries from England, France and America. In the case of the ruinous European war it was a question as to whether its kings should keep on paying tribute to the pope.

Besides, a new economic system, capitalism, was rising and supplanting the old economic system, feudalism. So there would have been a terrible war in Europe anyhow, even as there soon will be another terrible world war, because a new economic system, communism, is rising and supplanting an old economic system, capitalism.

The reformatory movement which in the sixteenth century issued in the great war of Europe was of exactly the same kind as the revolutionary movement which in the twentieth will issue in another world war. The only difference between these movements is that the first was on behalf of the owners of the world, whereas the second will be on behalf of the workers. The Reformation continued the old class world. The coming revolution will give us a new classless world.

It is seldom that Dr. Millikan and I agree on religious questions. I agree with him on all questions of physics (when the majority of physicists are with him, as they generally are) because I am not an expert (as he certainly is) in the science of physics. I think he should return the compliment by agreeing with me on all questions of religion (when the majority of historians are with me) because he is not an expert in the science of history. I myself do not pretend to be an expert historian or scientist or philosopher or sociologist. I am not an expert in any branch of culture but

only a reader of the books written by representatives of the majority groups of experts in the several sciences and in all my writings I follow them only.

Well, if Dr. Millikan, had followed the majority of the experts in the science of history he would not have written this in the article to which I have just referred:

The so-called War of the Reformation is usually described as a religious war, and the horrors of it are sometimes attributed to the influence of Christianity; but I think that most historians will agree that it was not primarily a religious war at all . . . It represented simply the terrific struggle of a group of northern princes to free themselves from the yoke of a southern power which had used the machinery of a religious organization for cementing and perpetuating its control.

Professor Millikan will not I hope be offended if I venture to poke a little fun at him. We do not, as a rule, use machinery to cement anything, and we do not cement control with machinery or otherwise. But my dear Dr. Millikan the historical value of this is worse than its literary value. To what southern power do you refer? Obviously the pope, so it was perhaps a religious struggle, but certainly it was on an economic basis. Anyhow, it could not have been a struggle to throw off a yoke, for it began in 1618, and the northern powers had thrown off the papal yoke half a century earlier. It was simply, as scientific historians who have studied the science of economics would tell you, an attempt, on the one hand, of the pope to extend his rule once more in order that he might regain the revenues of his predecessors; and, on the other hand, it was an attempt of the protestant kings to prevent this.

France had treacherously murdered from twenty to

272 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

forty thousand protestants in this interest of the papacy.

Spain had butchered hundreds of thousands of Flemings and Dutchmen in the joint interest of the Spanish state and the church.

And now millions of men were killed and whole provinces of Europe were laid so desolate that the dead rotted unburied in some places, on the single economic issue of whether the kings should continue to pay tribute to the pope.

Let me, in passing, ask you to notice how men of great ability like Dr. Millikan make extraordinary blunders when they seek arguments outside their own province. They warn you off from their own field, science. You must not, they say, look for evidence of a personal God in nature; they have explained all its beauty and evolution without that hypothesis. Then, as Dr. Millikan does in this article, they turn to philosophy and history, which they have never studied, and they make statements that the majority of expert philosophers and historians reject.

Dr. Millikan makes up a wonderful story about the moral teaching of Jesus being far in advance of that of any other moralist of his time, of the profound revolution it wrought in civilization. We have seen that all this is totally untrue. We shall never find the real constructive forces of human welfare unless we first state the facts, and all the facts, correctly.

I need not dwell on the brutalities of religious persecution on both its catholic and protestant sides, but let us say for the credit of our protestant churches that they inherited the practice from medieval catholicism and they were the first to see the criminality of it. The popes had forced all the monarchs of Europe to burn heretics so many centuries before the Reformation that

men had come to regard it as a natural part of law.

But while the French and Spanish kings were still doing this in the eighteenth century, the protestant civilizations or states ceased to do it soon after the close of the Thirty Years War. England, which had put many catholics to death under fear of Spanish invasion and of plots at home, revoked the law imposing death for heresy in 1678.

Yet it has taken men in all churches two more centuries after that time to learn that liberty of conscience is as sacred as liberty of person, that all sectarian hatred is profoundly irreligious; and the next thing that our humane age will teach its popes and bishops will be that, even where they do not hate, they serve neither religion nor civilization in laying the rod on the backs of people who do not believe just as they do.

It is four hundred years since a great Englishman, a Roman catholic but a humanist, Sir Thomas More, recommended this ideal in his *Utopia*:

King Utopis made a decree that it should be lawful for every man to favor and follow what religion he would, and that he might do the best he could to bring others to his opinion, so that he did it peaceably, gently, quietly, and soberly, without hasty and contentious rebuking and inveighing of others . . . Though there be one religion which alone is true and all others vain and superstitious, yet did he well foresee that the truth of the one power would at last issue out and come to light.

Thus, from a study of the fine ideals of the ancient Greeks, did one of the greatest catholics and greatest lawyers of the sixteenth century defy the law of his own church and country. A hundred years later a London merchant, Henry Robinson, rebuked the clergy,

274 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

in a pamphlet entitled, *Liberty of Conscience* (1644) by saying:

The compelling of a man to anything against his own conscience, especially in matters of faith, is a doing evil.

And at length, in 1895, one of the most learned bishops the Episcopal church (in its English branch) ever had, Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London and notable historian, urged his church to accept the lesson in full. In a series of lectures preached before the University of Cambridge and published with the title *Persecution and Tolerance*, Creighton said:

The Church has been taught afresh truths which she really knew, but which she overlooked, concerning her organization and its uses. Shall we not frankly accept the lesson and put away any root of bitterness that remains? The day is past when any organization can claim to do God's work by the exercise of power . . . God has put His Church to shame at the bar of human judgment.

Thirty years after this I stood at the bar, in a modern American city, which is supposed to have been nurtured on liberty since its cradle, and pleaded in vain that I might preach the truth I am teaching in these books in my church.

II

Let us come back to the main theme of this chapter. Is it heresy or falsehood to say that man has worked out his salvation from the blunders of the Middle Ages by the exercise of his own intellect and consulting his own heart without any help from any God and church, not even from Jesus and the Christian church? Or is it sound history as well as orthodox teaching that at

least after the Reformation some supernatural power dwelling in the church lifted, or helped to lift, the European-American civilization to a higher level?

In answering such questions let us pay some attention to chronology. Obviously since the Reformation vast progress has been made, but we will not be so crude as to say: therefore, the reformed churches must have the credit of it. Let us give them their due. The progress took place almost entirely in protestant countries. Southern and catholic Europe lagged as far behind northern and protestant Europe as catholic America lagged behind the United States. France is the only exception, and its catholicism was, as we shall soon see, of a very questionable and superficial character. And if you search for a reason of a religious nature for this difference, you will find only one; there was less intolerance in the protestant countries. Liberty is essential to progress.

But to-day we have not merely to balance against each other the claims of orthodox catholicism and orthodox protestantism. A great force has grown up in the modern world which we call heterodoxy or heresy. And the only way, or the best way, to find out on which side the real constructive forces lie is to pay attention to time and place. Considerations of place definitely rule out the Roman catholic claim. Just those lands (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Russia and the Balkan States of Europe and those of Latin America) where catholicism (Greek or Roman) had absolute power remained, until the second part of the nineteenth century, the most backward, illiterate and criminal in the civilized world.

Now let us apply the test of chronology. In the other civilized states orthodox protestantism was the

276 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

dominant power during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but its power was increasingly undermined in the nineteenth century. Would any person think of disputing that? Then let us see in which of these periods real progress occurred.

We will not take the test of science and productive industry. It would be unfair, because obviously science had to work very laboriously for two centuries with small results to make possible its spectacular triumphs of the nineteenth century. But we may surely take social justice as a test. And let us be clear as to what we mean, because people are so often deceived by high-sounding phrases and vague statements like those of Dr. Millikan. We mean this: The overwhelming mass of the people had in the seventeenth century no more control over their own national affairs, their administration and laws and foreign policy of peace or war, no more freedom to organize against their rulers or employers, no more share of the wealth they created, no more education, than they had possessed in the thirteenth century. Social justice demanded that they should have. Is not that to-day clear and admitted? And is it not equally clear that the chief service a church ought to render is to preach justice and ensue it? Then we ask, what measure of justice the mass of the people obtained in the period of the domination of protestant orthodoxy?

And the historical answer is, none. Social justice began to find expression in the United States in 1776; and I will presently show that half the men who put it in our constitution were heretics. It began in Europe in the French Revolution (1792) but what it won here was completely wrecked. For European civilization generally social justice began just about one

hundred years ago; and it was no voluntary gift of rulers or employers, no religious or moral perception that the existing order was unjust. It was a small and grudging measure of social justice extorted by the people, and every subsequent measure of social justice has had to be extorted under pressure.

If you doubt that let us look at the facts. Self-government and the right of citizens to dictate or at least approve of their own laws is the first social demand of justice. Not one step of progress was taken in that direction in Europe until the French Revolution; or, as its work was destroyed, we must say until about a hundred years ago. Kings became more despotic than ever after the Reformation. That is a truism of European history. The rulers of England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria and Scandinavia nowhere yielded an atom of their autocracy, and in most countries it became worse, because they weakened the power of the barons or nobles who had hitherto restrained them.

Only one hundred years ago King George of England and King Charles of France refused the most elementary political rights to their subjects, and both had the full support of their bishops; and it was the very serious threat of civil war in England and a revolution in France that compelled them to yield. Germany, Austria and other countries did not get these elementary rights from their monarchs until the Revolution of 1848; and the pope clung to his autocracy, as a temporal prince, until his possessions were taken from him in 1870.

Still more important is the economic test. In an earlier chapter I showed that all the splendid art of the Middle Ages must not be allowed to blind us to

278 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

the fact that more than ninety percent of the people lived in terrible poverty, complete illiteracy and foul conditions. Artisans or craftsmen, generally the men who made the luxuries of the privileged few, were in those days not one tenth of the workers. The great mass of the race were the agricultural workers and their families. Millions of them were still serfs. In Russia half the agricultural population remained serfs, bought and sold with the land like cattle, until eighty years ago. Even in France large numbers remained serfs until the Revolution.

But the position of what were called the free agricultural workers was very little better, and it grew steadily worse during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The growth of Lutheranism in Germany had inspired the peasants with some idea of social justice. They rebelled and confidently appealed to Luther to say that the gospels justified them. But the only text Luther found for them in the gospels was: Be ye subject to the higher powers: and protestant historians admit that he wrote to their masters and rulers to shoot them down like dogs, and like mad dogs they were shot down.

In France, one of the richest countries of Europe, the wage of the agricultural workers sank by the end of the eighteenth century to ten or twelve cents a day. In England, the next richest country, it was about a quarter of a dollar a day. And in all countries the burden of taxation and restriction was intolerable.

And the artisans, as well as the agricultural workers, sank to a lower level, instead of rising to a higher, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Economic historians, like Professor Thorold Rogers in England, have given us the facts and figures as regards

the chief countries of Europe, and they are agreed that between the Reformation and the French Revolution the lot of the skilled workers became worse. The French economic historian Brissot has shown that in his country during that period the daily wage of the artisan sank from sixty-two cents to forty-four, and the purchasing power of the wage fell by nearly one half. Thorold Rogers has shown that in England also the price of food rose, the wages fell, and there was a conspiracy of the lawyers to prevent the workers from uniting to demand better conditions. Little more than two hundred years ago it was still the law of England that any worker who joined a union should have an ear cut off.

It was just the same in catholic and protestant countries, so that no one blames protestantism for the tragedy. It was a strictly economic phenomenon, and the causes of it (the greater abundance of labor as population now increased more rapidly, the loss in purchasing power of money owing to the crude economic policy of the time, the rise in the price of food as town industries grew at the expense of the country) are now well known to experts. But it means two things. In the first place it sternly refutes any man who claims that the Reformation brought any measure of either political or social justice to the mass of the people. It is an historical fact that in both respects their position became more unjust.

But the matter does not end here. Kings and nobles became richer than ever. It was in this period they built those superb palaces and country mansions which some of you may have seen in Europe. They extorted the money to build these, and for the vicious and luxurious lives they led, ultimately from the half-

starving brutalized workers. And not one church, not one pope or bishop, not one minister of the gospel in Europe raised his voice in protest. I have already referred to black slavery in America, the worst evil of that terrible time. The ministers of religion, of all sects, acquiesced in it.

In a later book I hope to tell more satisfactorily this ghastly story of the martyrdom of man during so many centuries of the Christian era, but there is no dispute about the two main facts which I state here: (1) the condition of the workers in Europe grew steadily worse between the Reformation and the French Revolution, 1550-1792, and (2) the protestant as well as the catholic church was silent as to the wrongs suffered by the workers.

You see now how important it is to pay attention to dates and to consider separately the period before the French Revolution and after it. As far as social justice is concerned there were no constructive forces at work before the American and French Revolutions.

The great improvement in the condition of the regularly employed workers has taken place entirely within the last one hundred years, and in the next chapter we shall see what were the causes of it. But you probably begin to see that the chief difference between me and those who still use orthodox language about the salvation of man is that I state the exact historical facts and am guided by them, while my critics delude people with rhetorical statements.

III

I have taken first the test of social justice as the most important. The unique service of the Christian religion was, Dr. Millikan says, in inspiring mankind

with the Christlike ideal—that is, the altruistic ideal which means, specifically, concern for the common good as contrasted with one's own individual impulses and interests. On the basis of the facts of European history we have to reply: That ideal existed in the Roman empire and it exists, very imperfectly, to-day, but from the year 500 A. D. to the nineteenth century the world was less imbued with it than it had been in the year 100 A. D. A privileged five percent, in state and church, lived luxuriously on the labor of the ninety-five percent who were condemned to lives of sordid poverty, few and coarse pleasures and abject submission to their masters.

Civilization reached the end of the eighteenth century with the overwhelming mass of the people earning two dollars a week or less, deprived of education, completely excluded from control of their own destinies, truculently forbidden to enter into combinations to secure better conditions, subject to brutal laws and a ghastly prison system, living in foul cottages or the still fouler slums of the cities of Europe.

Where, then, shall we find this stupendous influence of Jesus, this stupendous importance for the destinies of mankind? You see that I am trying patiently and conscientiously to ascertain what really happened, and why it happened, in the development of civilization. If we set aside for a moment the question of America and the temporary achievements of the French Revolution, we have a clear and undisputed historical situation.

This year, 1930, is the first centenary of the beginning of the rule of justice in Christendom. In 1830 the second French Revolution brought a permanent, though limited, democracy to that country; and in the same year in England began the fierce and menacing

282 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

agitation which forced the king to sign the Reform Bill, while it was only a few years earlier that the workers had won the right of combination. But I need not give a list. All that was done a hundred years ago was only the slenderest installment of justice.

No working man in Europe had a vote, and not one in ten had any chance of education. No woman had a vote or a legal personality anywhere. There were no laws to protect children from suffering and exploitation, and even the elementary sanitary laws that existed were not enforced. The law discriminated brutally between the rich and the poor, and death was inflicted for many crimes against property. The jails were filthy and deadly and were notorious breeding grounds of vice and crime. And still the church was silent; for it is not the slightest use to tell people, as the preachers do, that men must be just unless you say what is just or unjust.

Are we then to suppose that the betterment of the world since the Reformation had been an improvement of personal morals? There was certainly no such improvement. It is an unsavory subject, but surely everybody knows something about the state of morals in England under George III, in France under the Louises, in Prussia under Frederick the Great, in Spain under Ferdinand VII. Protestant lands were just as profoundly immoral as catholic lands.

We think of puritan times as periods of particularly rigid morals which were due to the Reformation; but, apart from the terrible unhappiness and the sourness and bitterness of such times, historians are finding that there was far more vice in them than was supposed.

One such period, about which we have more historical documents than about the puritans of New England,

was the Calvinist epoch in Scotland in the seventeenth century. Yet Burton's *History of Scotland* and Chambers' *Domestic Annals of Scotland* tell a frightful story of those times. It will be enough to quote one sentence from Chambers:

Offences of a horrible and unnatural kind continued to abound to a degree which makes the daylight profligacy of the subsequent reign shine white in comparison.

This subsequent reign was that of Charles II, one of the most frivolous and iniquitous in English history.

But I do not know that any historian has ever claimed that there was, taking the whole of Christendom, any moral improvement from the Reformation to the nineteenth century. It is only the man who has never patiently examined the historical facts who speaks loudly about tremendous influence and altruistic ideals. A hundred years ago the world still very badly needed redemption from its blunders, its injustice and its grossness and the work was then only just beginning.

Let us fully appreciate the real service which the Reformation rendered to civilization. It relieved humanity in part of the terrible tyranny that oppressed it and gave the world a limited measure of liberty to think where there had been none before. It exposed the hypocrisy of those who were posing as the spiritual rulers of Christendom. But it set up a new orthodoxy, and that orthodoxy allied itself with the rising capitalist system of economics, as the old had with the waning feudal system. Somehow it completely failed to realize the great plan that the reformers had foreshadowed. It is just as true of this period as of the Middle Ages to say, as a great historian did, that the banners of the Church were never on the side of the people. We have

not yet reached in this historical study the real constructive forces that have lifted our civilization above every one that ever preceded it. If any man would persuade you otherwise, let him give you facts, not rhetoric; and let the facts tell you the broad truth and not simply show that there was here and there a good man or a good woman of high Christian character. In every age there have been such. But we have as yet, on the threshold of the nineteenth century, not begun to perceive the redemption of the race generally from the demoralization which followed the fall of the Roman empire. The partial redemption which has at least inaugurated the reign of justice, imperfect as it still is, has been overwhelmingly accomplished within the last five or six generations.

THE REAL RE-
DEMPTION OF MAN

SCIENCE has done more for the development of western civilization in one hundred years than Christianity did in eighteen hundred years.—John Burroughs.

CHAPTER XII

THE REAL REDEMPTION OF MAN

In approaching the last part of this section of my defense let me put the issue once more with crystal clearness. Certain statements have been selected from my book by the bishops of the Anglo-American church, and they have declared those statements heretical and unfit to be taught in the church. The word heresy has an ancient and musty smell.

Let us, in the spirit of our age, be pragmatists, that is, practicalists. The question is whether those statements are true or false. If they are true, then a church which insists literally on its old formularies is teaching falsehood. It is telling the world that truth shall not be taught in our church of America if it conflicts with these formularies.

And America to-day is not interested in the question whether truths do or do not agree with ancient formularies. It wants to know if what you are teaching is true and helpful. So I have set out to prove with all the resources of modern culture, that my statements are true and that they indicate to men the real forces on which we may rely to complete the salvation we have begun. You will find no rhetoric here, no evasions, no play of words, no strained interpretations of facts. I state a plain issue.

Of those statements of mine many are of a merely theoretical nature. They are concerned with the nature of the universe and its forces, the nature of life and of man. I say that they are theoretical, but even here my aim is practical. If there is no personal God, no personal immortality, then the sooner men transfer

their devotion and their resources from those illusions to the realities of life, the sooner they realize that this life alone concerns them and they alone can improve it, the more rapidly we shall advance.

I have proved the truth of those statements of mine in the second book written from the viewpoints of the sciences; or, in so far as my critics rely on philosophy to establish their positions, I shall vindicate my case in the fourth of these books on the Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism. Friends write me that what I say about the silence of science is neutralized by the eloquent voice of philosophy. We shall see. Even here my opponents have neither the force of logic nor the weight of authority.

My supreme care, which is that men shall learn as quickly as possible what agencies they shall use to make this a better and happier world, chiefly finds expression in the theses which I defend in this historical volume. Well do I know that the belief in a personal God or a spiritual world has given strength and comfort to many and has inspired fine characters. That does not disturb me. Hundreds of men and women of high character, whose biographies are available to all, have in the last century surrendered those supernaturalistic beliefs and never suffered the least deterioration of their high qualities.

But I am concerned with the race; and I have said and now repeat, that reliance on supernaturalistic powers has held the world back and we have made more rapid progress since men began to abandon that attitude. I say that no help of personal Gods or redeeming saviors is perceptible in the whole of human history. I say that such progress in the way of salvation as has been made throughout history has been achieved by man's reliance

on himself alone. The real lesson of history is concealed from orthodox believers by false or rhetorical statements, and I have shown that, when we set such statements aside, we are at once confronted with the incontrovertible fact that most of the progress of the race has taken place in three periods in which, whatever their beliefs, men did not rely on gods or spirits: (1) the Greco-Roman period, when not a single creative mind believed in Zeus or Jupiter; (2) the Mohammedan period of the Middle Ages, when few scholars believed in and none relied on Allah, and (3) the modern period, when, however mixed we Christians may be in our beliefs, our actual constructive forces and motives are purely humanitarian.

That is the serious and profound meaning of all those twenty-three propositions which the heresy hunters found in my booklet, *Communism and Christianity*, in which I plead that we shall now take God and Jesus, spirit and salvation, merely as symbolical expressions of the real constructive forces. To these I have added, as symbols that mean far more to our age, the names of Charles Darwin and Karl Marx; symbols of the two greatest constructive forces—science and economic idealism.

I have said in this book no more about economic matters than is required to eliminate the supernatural from the advance of the race. This will be expanded and more plainly set forth in a later book. For the moment I have to complete my historical work by showing briefly that Darwinism and Marxism are the two great constructive agencies that entered the life of man in the last century and a half and enormously quickened the pace of development.

I

The historians of Europe fully admit that the American Revolution was the first break of a new age upon that unjust world that I have described. However conscious we may be of its limitations (and there were bound to be limitations of any reform of those remote days) the constitution that our ancestors formulated in 1787 was far in advance of anything that existed. It was a genuine herald of a new age. It proclaimed the democratic rights of man, religious freedom and toleration, and the right of all to education and equality of opportunity.

The liberals of the world, especially of England and France, hailed it with joy. In the British Parliament a great statesman, the Earl of Chatham, praised the manly wisdom and calm resolution of congress, and he had previously denounced the war. The city of London refused to finance a regiment to fight the colonists. Young nobles resigned their commissions in the army rather than fight America. As to France, everybody knows the enthusiasm that was created.

Well, is this a symptom of the stupendous influence of the teaching of Christ, as the great physicist Professor Millikan contends? No historian surely, will say that. The colonists took up arms with a human resentment of tyranny which is illustrated on every page of history, in all lands. Scarcely any at first dreamed of setting up a republic. That idea spread as the war proceeded, and at the close congress met to decide what ideals should be embodied in the new constitution. Is it here that we find the influence of Christianity? Historians know better.

One half at least of the constructive thinkers of the Revolutionary period were deists. They believed

in some kind of a God and in some kind of an immortality but rejected the Bible and the divinity of Christ.

Jefferson, one of the most serious students of philosophy and economics among them, was a dogmatic materialist, as he says repeatedly in his published letters. Franklin, Paine, Washington, Hamilton, John Adams, Monroe, Madison and other leading men were deists.* An American preacher of the year 1831, the Rev. Dr. Wilson, said that the deists were numerous enough to vote God out of the constitution and that among all our presidents from Washington downward no one was a professor of religion, at least of not more than Unitarianism.

These constructive thinkers of the Revolutionary period plainly indicate in their published letters or writings whence they derived their ideas. In America it was mainly Franklin, Paine, Jefferson and Adams who supplied the ideas, and they tell us that they got them from the writings of the skeptics of Europe—Locke, Montesquieu, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Rousseau and Beccaria.

Nine out of ten Englishmen who sympathized with the French Revolution were outside the established church, says the highest authority, the Cambridge Modern History; and this applied also to the American Revolution. Ten out of ten genuine sympathizers in France (apart from royalists who just rejoiced to see England in trouble) were outside the church.

Sometimes it is said that at least one principle of the constitution, religious liberty, was purely American

* A deist believes that there is some being or power behind nature who, so to speak, made the clock of the universe, wound it up and set the pendulum to swinging but has not done anything since and will never do aught again.

and that it was borrowed from catholic Maryland. But Maryland never was catholic. Of the two or three hundred original settlers at least three-fourths, Bancroft says, were protestants. The catholics were always in a minority, and they were bound to admit toleration if they wanted to remain in it and the colony was to grow. English catholics refused to go to it in large numbers.

Every high principle of the American constitution came, directly or indirectly, from what were called the infidel writers of France. And now you begin to see the truth of my earlier statement, that the ideals of ancient Greece and Rome which were revived at the Renaissance did not perish in the selfish days of the seventeenth century, but were handed on—from Montesquieu and Montaigne to the English deists, from these to Rousseau and the Encyclopedists—until they found expression in the American and the French revolutions.

Many Americans, no doubt, will be astonished to hear it said that the American and the French revolutions had a common source in the skeptical and humanitarian writers in France of the eighteenth century. The French revolution, yes, you say, with all its appalling massacres, its guillotine, its sodden and coarse crowds, but the American revolution . . . Let me give you a few undisputed facts about the French revolution, and you will see whether you have been correctly informed concerning it by preachers and orthodox writers.

II

It is not seriously disputed that the French revolution was overwhelmingly due to the teaching of these French skeptical writers, very few of whom, after Voltaire and Rousseau, even believed in God. In fact,

not only religious writers, but even some of those distinguished men who occasionally teach the world history which they have never studied, are so badly informed about the French revolution that they are only too eager to ascribe it to the atheistical teaching of the French philosophers. They have a confused idea that the French revolutionists were a coarse mob who at once set up a guillotine, massacred thousands and put prostitutes to sing on altars, and all that sort of thing. Well, here are three truths that you can verify at any time.

1. The French revolution occurred in the year 1789, thirteen years after the American revolution, 1776, but the guillotine was not known in France until, three years later, March, 1792.

2. The French nobles and bishops unanimously and voluntarily surrendered all their privileges on August 4th, 1789, when not a single one of them was in danger of death.

3. There never was any ribald festival in the church of Notre Dame, no woman ever represented the goddess of reason or stood on an altar in that church, and the new French government had no part whatever even in the dignified celebration which took place.

The truth is that people have a very confused idea of what they mean by the French revolution. By a revolution we usually mean a violent change which displaces one government and substitutes another for it. When the change is completed we say that the revolution is over. But in the case of France we call the entire period of ten years, from 1789 until 1799, when Napoleon became first consul, the French revolution; and, as it was a period of war and panic and plots, all the violence is attributed to the French revolution.

So people get the idea, and it is encouraged by stories and films, that the French revolution means that in 1789 the people of France rose with pikes against the nobles and the clergy and began to butcher them, and that all the worst elements of the population were let loose, and all Paris, at least, looked on with diabolical joy at murders and outrages.

The sober historical truth, which you will find in any responsible manual of history that is used in our colleges, is very different. France was in a bankrupt condition, and the king, in order to get further money, was in 1789 compelled to summon to a congress the representatives of the people, the nobles and the clergy.

The representatives of the people and of the lower clergy defied the king and demanded a reform of the law and the administration. They were a body of middle class men of high character, with a few liberal nobles, just as serious and respectable a body of men as those who had met in our continental congress thirteen years earlier.

The only violence, and it was quite inevitable, was that, when the king proposed to drive them out of Paris with his army, the people of Paris rose, destroyed the Bastille, and put to death a few of the king's supporters. The ignorant peasants in the country joined and burned some of the chateaux. Without that armed support of the people no reform could have been secured.

But the disturbance lasted only a few weeks, and on August 4th the clergy and nobles laid their privileges at the feet of the representatives of the people, the king consented, and this high-minded body of men began to write a new constitution, on the model of the American constitution and under the same inspiration of the skeptical writers of France. That work proceeded

for two years (1789-1791) with very little disorder in the country. The rights of man embodied in the new constitution were such rights as we admit should be enjoyed and the king signed it. The revolution was over and, after the initial disorders, it was peaceful and admirable. It was long after this date that the terrible excesses occurred; and, if we want to understand them, we must know two important facts.

The first of these facts is that when, in 1791, the first French assembly or congress had completed its constitution, it imposed on itself an ordinance. To avoid even the suspicion of graft the whole body of revolutionary politicians took an oath not to accept any office in the new government. No doubt our revolutionary politicians would do the same in similar circumstances, but at least let us note that this is an indication of the high character of the men who really were inspired by the atheistical writers to achieve the French revolution. It was a high-minded act, but it was a blunder. It left the government of Paris and the country to men of less ability and strength.

The second fact is that France now passed into a critical position which would have tried the ablest and strongest statesmen. The royalists and clergy inspired a terrible civil war in the catholic provinces; the formidable armies of Prussia and Austria were marching to destroy the new liberty of the French people and restore privilege. Panic spread through the country and every man was in danger of being suspected as a spy. It was in these panicky conditions that the excesses occurred. They were horrible, but let me state a few undisputed facts which will put them in their proper proportion.

1. The guillotine was not invented until March,

296 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

1792, nearly three years after the beginning of the revolution, and for some time it was little used.

2. The September massacre, the first really terrible event, occurred three years after the revolution had been accepted by the king, and only a few hundred men were involved in the massacre. The government was now weak and distracted, and in the increasing panic lawless acts became more and more possible. Most of the best men of France were at the frontier defending their new liberties.

3. It was not merely priests and nobles whom these men of the September massacre dragged from the prisons and butchered. The majority of the two thousand prisoners were criminals and prostitutes. Even these brutal men had a royal idea that they were cleansing Paris.

4. It was in the last part of 1793 and the beginning of 1794 (four years after the revolution) that most of the executions occurred, and the overwhelming majority were revolutionists, victims of the struggle of rival parties. In Lavissee's History of the Revolution, which is the largest and most authoritative work on the subject, it is proved that of all who were put to death during the two years of terror only six in a hundred were nobles and eight in a hundred priests; while twenty-nine in a hundred were artisans and domestic servants and thirty-eight in a hundred were peasants or laborers. In a word, of the victims of the French revolution only one-seventh were priests and aristocrats while more than two-thirds were workers.

Perhaps that will give you a different idea of the horrors of the French revolution, but I have not yet finished. In Lavissee's authoritative history it is estimated that the total number of victims of the revolu-

tion was about twenty thousand. Many do not know that during the same period the royalists and clergy stirred up a civil war in Normandy and Brittany which cost at least quarter of a million lives and withdrew a very large part of the army from the defense of the country.

Many do not know that when, in 1794, the red terror was ended by Napoleon, there was a white terror in the catholic towns (Lyons, Marseilles, Avignon) in which innocent republicans were butchered just as men had been at Paris; and that, when Napoleon fell, these butcheries by the catholics were renewed on a large scale in the south of France.

Many do not know that, while twenty thousand victims of the revolution are counted in France, the white terror or clerical-royalist reaction that followed in Italy, Spain and Portugal slew at least ten times that number, that is, fully 200,000.

You read often about the foul, blood-breathing people of France but you never reflect that the church of France, the richest in the world, was largely responsible for what these people were. And you do not read how the kings of Spain, Portugal and Naples, with the full support of all their refined statesmen and clergy, perpetrated ten times the brutalities that the French revolutionists had committed; and these men were butchered to protect the privileges of a few, while the revolutionists had fought for the rights of the mass of the people.

I have said that, however brutal some of the revolutionary workers of France may have been, their rulers and clergy were responsible for their condition. But there is a common idea that the revolutionary statesmen were responsible by depriving them of their

298 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

religion. This is just as false as all the other popular ideas of the revolution. There is a little work on the subject by Professor Aulard, one of the highest authorities, and he shows in detail that the people and priests of France spontaneously deserted the church in defiance of the wishes of their leaders.

Danton and Robespierre, the leading statesmen during the terror, sincerely believed that it was better for the people to cling to the church and they, in spite of all protests, paid the salaries of the priests until, in the second half of 1793 (again four years after the revolution, you will note) nearly all the clergy of France, catholic and protestant, abjured their office. Then occurred those feasts of liberty and reason about which you read. They were held in the provinces, and with the utmost dignity.

The great celebration in the Cathedral of Notre Dame at Paris was a solemn and most artistic ceremony. No loose woman took part in it and there was no goddess of reason. The altar was decently draped and not used. And the lady who symbolized Liberty (not reason) possibly an actress, merely recited a beautiful ode to liberty by Chenier, the best poet of France at that time.

How like the Russian revolution much of this sounds. Yes, there is a sense in which history repeats itself in the cases of the French and Russian revolutions; and, especially so far as religion is concerned there really is a wonderful similarity, most particularly is this true of the untruths which are common to both. It would seem that they are but different versions of the same falsehoods.

III

These few facts about the French revolution, not

one of which is now disputed by any historian, will show you once more how the truth is travestied in our sermons and literature in the interest of supernaturalistic Christianity and capitalism. The French revolution was, in its essential work, in its first three years, just the same sane and overdue declaration of the rights of man as had already been made in America; and the inspiration was exactly the same—the works of the humanitarian writers who almost, if not quite, without exceptions were radically skeptical. Certainly none were orthodox Christians. But, while the freedom won in America was secured by isolation, there were in Europe twenty kings, tens of thousands of nobles, a pope and all his hierarchy, whose privileges had been threatened by this gospel of the rights of the common man. The pope denounced those rights (the most elementary rights that we enjoy to-day) expressly and repeatedly, and after the fall of Napoleon (1815) church and state united in an appalling and bloody struggle to stifle the aspirations of the people.

I do not intend to tell the long story of the white terror. In the small country of Portugal alone it is estimated that seventeen thousand men and women were executed, as many more deported to deadly penal colonies, and thirty thousand committed to loathsome dungeons.

As to Spain, not even the most bloodthirsty wretches of the French reign of terror, says a British royalist historian, Major Hume, equalled the president of the military commission at Madrid: and the Cambridge Modern History remarks that the reaction (1822) was more violent, blind, and cruel than in 1814. The struggle lasted more than half a century in Spain.

Italy, too, was drenched with blood. The king

of Naples in the south, the pope in the central provinces, and the emperor of Austria in the north persecuted with inconceivable brutality (and in most cases continued to do so until the middle of the nineteenth century) every man who claimed the elementary human rights which the American constitution gave. The martyrs in the cause of humanity in Europe from 1815 to 1850 were ten times as many as the victims of the French revolution; a hundred times as many as the clerical and aristocratic victims of that revolution, or as the martyrs of the early church.

This was fourteen centuries after the complete establishment of the Christian religion in Europe. In those fourteen centuries there had been great artistic developments. There had been great literary periods, and a vast increase in the production of wealth, in luxury and (for the privileged minority) refinement. The golden rule has nothing to do with those advances. It teaches justice and humanity to all. What had been done in these respects in fourteen centuries?

In the year 1820 the mass of the people in every country of Europe had not one atom of political rights and were illiterate to the extent of ninety percent. They worked fifteen or sixteen hours a day for six days every week and had a wage which in the best conditions (England) averaged two and a half dollars a week. Ordinary workers, lived on bread, potatoes and cheap fat (or oil) and were housed in dens in which their masters would not house their dogs. Crime and vice were appalling. No woman had any rights. Children worked twelve to fourteen hours a day from the age of six and seven upward, for two cents a day, and not one in two of them ever saw a twentieth birthday. You can scarcely believe it? Read the book,

A Century of Stupendous Progress, 1825-1925, in which Professor Joseph McCabe established all this by contemporary documents and statistics which no one disputes. I am following this book closely.

Well, is it not clear that, contrary to the representation of Professor Millikan, science, not Jesus, was the stupendous influence which has made our modern civilization of the last one hundred years? Is it not clear that any other idea is based upon a loose, vague and inexact impression of the history of civilization? It is a characteristic modernist attitude.

The bishops say that my propositions, because they are written in simple and popular language are superficial and not based upon sufficient knowledge. You have all the facts in this volume; and I invite my readers particularly to picture to themselves the state of the world a century ago with the utmost clearness.

In the United States the era of justice had been inaugurated, but no one who knows the men of the time will suggest that its inauguration was a triumph of the golden rule. There were mighty struggles before the golden rule was imperfectly realized even in America.

In the rest of Christendom the situation makes a mockery of Dr. Millikan's talk about the stupendous influence of the teaching of Jesus. Remember that at the end of the eighteenth century the United States meant only a strip of land, with only three million people between the Atlantic and Alleghanies. It had no influence on European civilization with its population of between one and two hundred million people.

I have surely shown that even one hundred years ago the elementary principles of justice were not yet recognized in Europe. A privileged few exploited and held down with great brutality the enormous mass of

the people in 1830. The world had not gotten back to the level of civilization of the year 130 A. D. In another half century, by 1880, our civilization reached again the highest ancient level. To-day, in spite of all our wars, poverty and slavery, we have risen above every ancient level.

One has to say, when reading of the ghastly struggle of Europe to rid itself of its injustices a hundred years ago, that there was far more justice in the ancient Greco-Roman civilization than there was in the so-called Christian until the middle of the nineteenth century.

I do not see how anybody can doubt this, but you may feel that the men who sustained that brave fight in the first half of the nineteenth century must have been inspired at last by the teaching of the Christian churches. Quite the contrary. The overwhelming majority of them (nine out of ten) were heretics, for every branch of the Christian church was allied with the rulers and masters against them. I blush for my order when I tell you that not one bishop, Roman, Greek or Anglican, was on the side of the people and of progress in the first half of the nineteenth century; and of the tens of thousands of clergy in England and France, Italy and Spain, you could count on your fingers those who sided with the people. Few church laymen even joined the forces of progress.

In the Anglican churches there is much pride in William Wilberforce, the early emancipationist, and in Lord Shaftesbury, the opponent of child labor; but Wilberforce was a skeptic in youth when he began to oppose slavery, and Shaftesbury's idealism was so restricted that his house in London had to be barricaded against the workers.

No, it lies on the surface and in the depths of the

history of the last hundred and fifty years that the men who inspired and led the struggle for justice were men like Shelley, Robert Owen, Thomas Paine, Mill, Place and the Chartists in England; men like Fourier and Louis Blane in France; men like Bakunin in Russia, like Garibaldi and Mazzini in Italy. Hardly one was a Christian, and the majority had no religion. Let us acknowledge the facts if we want to make religion a vital force. But the church never can be such a force until it teaches scientific facts instead of superstitious fictions as it always has done to the great detriment of civilization.

IV

It is generally acknowledged by historians and sociologists that we have made more progress in the last hundred years than in the previous fifteen centuries. Luther Burbank, that famous idealist and scientist says in one of his books:

The last two generations of the human race have accomplished more toward real progress than the 138 generations that preceded them.

But I will quote a still stronger expression from Dr. Robert Millikan, who in an interview in *Collier's Weekly* (October 24th, 1925) said:

The processes of evolution have been enormously accelerated since man became conscious of himself and his powers . . . Do you realize that within the lifetime of men now living, within a hundred years, or a hundred and thirty years at the most, all the material conditions under which man lives his life on this earth have been more completely revolutionized than during all the ages of recorded history which preceded?

You will notice that he is careful to say material

304 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

conditions, for he is speaking of the service of science. But you cannot separate material conditions from vital conditions. In the time to which Dr. Millikan refers science has doubled the average expectation of life, enormously reduced pain, created such wealth that the regularly employed worker is three or four times better off than his grandfather was, and (in most civilized countries) reduced crime by fifty percent.

Science has created such wealth (it has increased the wealth of every advanced country ten-fold in a century) that we provide superb free systems of education, social services never before dreamed of and philanthropies never imagined in any previous civilization. And scientific men tell us that this is only the first installment. The future holds out a wonderful prospect.

So I hail Charles Darwin, the fittest symbol of this colossal scientific world, as a savior. But science, as it restricts itself at present, is blind on the moral side. It creates vast wealth, but it leaves it to us to say how it shall be distributed and whether it shall be squandered in war.

We need another savior, a sound economic science and idealism; and of that activity Karl Marx is the symbol. This I will justify in a later work, but the whole of this survey of the history of the world vindicates my position.

Man is not yet redeemed, and from the point of view of justice he was very far from redemption until, a century ago, he began to fight for himself, instead of relying on supernaturalistic powers. Call it the Christian era, if you will, from 450 A. D. to 1750 A. D., for all but a few during all that time were Christians; and that era closed with the mass of mankind still treated

with brutal injustice. Call it the era of science and humanitarianism from the time when civilization recovered from the reaction that followed the fall of Napoleon to our own time; and it has witnessed a phenomenal progress moral, social and intellectual as well as in industry and commerce.

I began by saying that in their historical challenge to me, in condemning as false my statements that man is his own Christ and savior, the bishops could no more quote our historians and sociologists than, as we saw in the last volume, they can quote men of science to support their theological position as it is outlined in the Prayer Book and especially in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

The overwhelming majority of our more important professors of history and sociology see no supernatural action, no personal God or spirit-intervention, in history. It is not they, but a few of our physicists and mathematicians and biologists, who speak, like Dr. Millikan, of the stupendous influence of the teaching of Jesus in history. There was no such influence because what is best in the ethics ascribed to Jesus, who was probably a dramatic personage, not historical, was never applied to human affairs. The world lay unredeemed; and those who began its redemption within the last hundred and fifty years hated the church for its alliance with injustice; and, at the joint direction of church and state, lost their lives on the scaffold or were more slowly murdered in the most squalid of dungeons. Let us not be persuaded by smooth tongues or fluent pens to lose sight of that noble and immense crowd of humanity and its martyrs and ascribe the progress of the world to the men who at least acquiesced in their murder.

306 *Bankruptcy of Christian Supernaturalism*

I look back once more on the wonderful story of man's broken march from savagery to civilization. I take account of every discovery of archaeology and every new estimate of modern history, and I say again that from the first dawn of civilization in those green regions between the snow of Europe and the sand of the Sahara to this advancing age in which we live we see the hand of man only.

We see the interaction of material conditions and the nervous system of man.

We see the efforts of men, through ages of ignorance and superstition, to formulate and realize a just law of social behavior.

We see a privileged few in every age exacting a luxurious sustenance from the majority upon whose eyes they keep the bandage of ignorance.

It is of that privileged few (the kings and statesmen, the scholars and artists, and the ministers of religion who always supported them) that history speaks in every age.

But at last a new era opens. The mass of the race are no longer the dumb oxen that draw the golden chariot. What has been won by their own efforts for themselves inspires them to look forward to a final and perfect redemption from crime and unnecessary disease and misery. And with this entire story of the race unfolded before me I tell the world to look only to human knowledge and human idealism to complete its work of salvation.

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"There is a job in this new civilization for the Church. But it must be a real Church, I contend, dealing with the realities which actually exist, not an imaginary Church dealing with unrealities. All my heresies can be summed up in that one conviction."

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THE JOHN DAY COMPANY

386 FOURTH AVE.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

The Human Meaning of Christian Doctrine

By

Bishop William Montgomery Brown, D. D.

This is the title page of a lecture-sermon delivered near the end of Lent, 1925, in Community Church, New York. It deals with the doctrines of the birth, death and coming to life again of the saviour-gods of the redemptive interpretations of religion; with special reference to Jesus. In it an attempt is made to condense the greatest among all anthropological works so far as they concern religion, that by Sir James G. Frazier, which is entitled, "The Golden Bough," and consists of twelve large volumes. I attach much importance to this piece of my propagandism because it proves that all the redemptive interpretations of religion, not excepting the Christian, have perfectly natural origin, development and history. There is nothing supernatural about any among them. Besides this piece of my propagandism throws much light upon the symbolism which is the only way out of an utterly impossible and absurd literalism.—W. M. R.

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