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THE CAUSE AND RESULT

We long since pointed out that when men would begin to think critically upon the dogmas of so-called Orthodoxy, they would not only throw away the errors, but the truths as well. As an illustration take the following extract from the sermon of the Rev. R. H. Newton of New York, preached Sunday, Jan. 25th, 1885:

“What an utterly baffling arithmetical puzzle is the conventional dogma of the trinity; what a moral monstrosity is the God of Calvinism; how fiendishly wicked the decrees which predestinate a mass of men to unescapable damnation; how thoroughly commercial is the traditional doctrine of the atonement; how frightfully beyond the dream of insanity is the vision of the orthodox hell; how thoroughly unethical is the ordinary statement of justification by faith. These are the dogmas against which the sharp arrows of a merciless wit are leveled fair and straight. They deserve every blow they receive. As formulas of faith their best service now to mankind, is to gently die, and so leave room for a noble growth of thought around the heart of those old and sacred faiths.”

Here, as usual, doctrines unsupported by Scripture, are spread side by side with those which are so supported, and the bad odor and inconsistency of the false, *attaches* itself to the true, so that the whole becomes nauseous and is rejected together. For instance, the doctrine of the TRINITY is supported by only one text (part of 1 John 5:7,8) which, as is known by all intelligent teachers, is an interpolation found in no manuscript written before the tenth century, and evidently thrust in there, because that doctrine had no Scriptural basis.

“The vision of the orthodox hell” cannot be found in the Bible at all, and is only found in catechisms and hymn-books; and the only statements of the Bible which might be construed as favoring such a theory, are either found in the symbolisms not generally understood, or else are occasioned by the erroneous construction placed upon the Greek words *hades* and *gehenna*, by popular theology—self-styled “Orthodoxy.” On

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the other hand, the doctrine of the atonement by and as a result of the sacrifice of Jesus, in which he “bought us with his own precious blood,” is taught either directly, typically, or symbolically by every book in the Bible. And all that could possibly be repulsive in the Bible teaching of a *ransom* for sin, is the result of a failure to apprehend the real penalty of sin and what Jesus gave on our behalf. On these subjects the Scriptures wisely appeal only to believers. The philosophy of the

plan, and its wisdom and reasonableness, is not such as will be appreciated by the worldly wise—the reasons as yet are made clear only to the consecrated children of God.

The teacher above quoted, wisely [from *his standpoint*] throws out the doctrine of “*justification by faith*.” Though this like the *atonement* is interwoven with every part of Scripture, it would be absurd to believe in justification by faith if the *ransom* is denied. The two doctrines are really one, because there could be no justification by faith in a ransom if there were no ransom; there could be no righteousness of Christ imputed to us, if our sins could not be and were not imputed to him. We could not bear and be clothed in his righteousness, if he could not bear our sins in his own body on the tree.

The same speaker further said in the same discourse:—

“Let us look at another dogma of the Churches—original sin. This is a very charming subject to consider. Through the eating of the forbidden fruit our first parents became dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed and that same death in sin conveyed to all their posterity. This all looks like a nightmare dream to us in the light of our day. It lacks any historical ground. The vista of history through which our fathers looked back to an original Adam, who, 6,000 years ago, in his lovely eastern garden, ate an apple which not only disagreed with him so seriously, but continued to disagree fatally with all his innumerable posterity, has forever faded out in a vastly larger and grander vision of the past. We see now quite clearly, that in this traditional vision we were mistaking a poem for a fact. The God whose grandeur SCIENCE REVEALS to us, surely never thus started the human race on its career.”

Here the lecturer wanders still further, and tells us in so many words that he does not believe in the God which the Bible reveals, but in, “*The God whose grandeur SCIENCE REVEALS TO US.*”

We will not pause to see or inquire just what grandeur Mr. Newton’s new scientific God has; but we cannot forget the wide differences in the teachings of so-called scientists on the subject; some of the *most* advanced claiming that Nature is the *intelligent* God which has been and is, by a system of “evolution” and “a survival of the fittest,” creating all things.

This teacher tells of a “nightmare dream” of a fall through Adam. Here, too, let us note the cause which turns the clear and emphatic statement of God’s Word, repeated over and over by prophets and apostles as well as by Jesus, (Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 18:2; Rom. 5:17-19; Acts 3:21; Mat. 19:11;) into “a nightmare dream” in the scientific “light of our day,” in the minds of some thinkers whose only dishonesty seems to be in yet calling themselves Christians. Is the cause not found in the

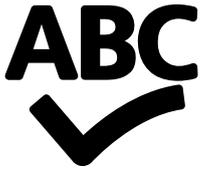
expression used above—"dead in sin"? The general teaching of so-called orthodoxy has long been, that the wages of sin is DEATH IN SIN, a theory advanced in support of the doctrine that man's nature is *undying*, hence that when God said to man "Dying thou shalt die," and "The wages of sin is death," he did not mean really extinction of being, or ceasing to live. Their theory of a *never-ending torture* in a place called hell, implied the never-ending existence of the wicked, hence to hold to the doctrine of everlasting torture, the meaning of the word *hades* [grave] must be misrepresented; and not only so, but the original penalty, DEATH—the loss of existence—ceasing to be—was represented to mean, *ceasing to be* GOOD; endless existence in torture, "dead in sin," etc.

Had the truth been held, viz., that man was a perfect being, put into a perfect garden on trial, in order that through his trial and fall not only God's Justice, Love, Power, and Wisdom should be manifested, but that mankind should ultimately be benefitted by the experience gained, and prepared the better to everlastingly choose good and shun evil, and to love and honor his Creator, then this Bible teaching of death (extinction) through one man's sin, and revival or restitution by one man's sacrifice, would not have appeared as "a nightmare dream"—in the light of *truth*. It is the false light which the Church has willingly received and cherished, that now blinds and staggers so many. Their judgment of Scripture is warped by the traditions of men which they have imbibed almost unconsciously, and held so long, because they neglected the *true standard* and tested themselves by their own standards—each deciding on the truth of any matter according to the "Standards" of his own sect, to the neglect of the only true standard of THE CHURCH—the Bible.

Bear well in mind; "think it not strange"; the conclusions now reached by the above-quoted speaker, are but the legitimate fruit of the "traditions of the elders," when brought in contact with the light of to-day—*reason* unguided by the Divine Revelation. Only in two ways can general infidelity (such as the above) be obviated; either ignorance and bigotry must be cultivated and fostered, or the Bible must be studied in the light of itself, and the traditions of men rejected, totally. The last is the right way, but will not be followed. The former will not succeed, for knowledge is being increased and the masses will not long remain in ignorance; hence losing their bondage to tradition, and being without a true knowledge of the Bible, the mass of the nominal Church is hastening into infidelity, under the leading of false teachers who still cling to the name Christian, though they have rejected the doctrines of Christ.

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— March, 1885 —



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