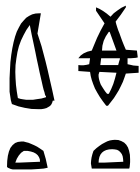


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DCCCLXXXVIII

THE GOSPEL  
ACCORDING  
TO  
ST. BERNARD SHAW





A.:A.:  
Publication in Class C

*(aka The Gospel According to Saint Bernard Shaw). A lengthy study of Christianity, cast in the form of a reply to the Preface to Shaw's Androcles and the Lion.*

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888 = Iesous (Greek), Jesus

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**Liber**

**DCCCLXXXVIII**

**The Gospel According**

**to**

**St. Bernard Shaw**

**by**

**Aleister Crowley**

.... I had with me a copy of BERNARD SHAW's ANDROCLUS AND THE LION and bethought myself that I would criticize the preface. The almost unparalleled knowledge of the text of the Bible which I had acquired in early childhood was shocked by Shaw's outrageously arbitrary selection of the texts that sustained his argument. His ignorance of the Asiatic life and thought had led him into the most grotesque misapprehensions. I set out to criticize his essay, section by section; but the work grew under my hand, and in three weeks or so I had produced a formidable treatise of some 45,000 words. I had intended to confine myself to destructive criticism of my author; but as I went on, my analysis of the text of the Gospels revealed the mystery of their composition. It became clear both those who believe in the historicity of Jesus and their opponents were at fault. I could not doubt that actual incidents and genuine sayings in the life of a real man formed part of the structure. The truth was that scraps of several such men, distinct from, and incompatible with, each other, had been pitch-forked together and labelled with a single name. It was exactly the case of the students who stuck together various parts of various insects and asked their professor What kind of bug is this? Gentlemen, he replied, this is a hum-bug.

In writing this book, I was much assisted by Frazer's Golden Bough, and, to a less extent, by Jung's 'Psychology of the Unconscious.' But my main assets were my intimate knowledge of the text of the Gospels, of the conditions of life and thought in the East, and the details of magical and mystical Work, and of the literary conventions which old writers employed to convey their ideas.

.... I claim that my book establishes the outline of an entirely final theory of the construction of Christianity.

**ALEISTER CROWLEY** (quotation from his *Autobiography*.)

# *THE GOSPEL ACCORDING*

*TO*

*ST. BERNARD SHAW*

This is an imperfect world. The greatest of human minds has its limitation.

The intelligent reader will already have guessed from the foregoing that the subject of this paper is George Bernard Shaw. It cannot be doubted that England today would be hard put to it to show a bare dozen men capable in their highest flights of the kind of thought which is the breath of life to Mr. Shaw. In destructive criticism he stands practically unchallenged.

But there seems to be one flaw in the emerald of his mind; one piece of bad steel in his bag of tools. He shares the almost universal infirmity of being unable to detach himself completely from the phenomena which he is observing. He loves to twist a text to suit his rope.

We had an excellent example of this failing in his book on Wagner. Wagner was a socialist like Mr. Shaw himself; and Mr. Shaw felt himself bound to read the socialism into the operas. The monarchist might just as easily have claimed that Wagner was a king's favourite, and the operas mere praise of kingship. The position would be quite as easy to defend. The result of this was that Mr. Shaw found himself in a very awkward position, for the fourth drama of the Ring would not fit in. He was obliged to ask us to believe that Wagner suddenly and without reason abandoned his great and serious purpose, abandoned the whole course of his thought, and reverted to mere opera with an entire {1} lack of consecution. It is really asking us to believe that Wagner became demented, exactly as one would say of an architect who gave forty years of his life to building a cathedral, and then gave up the design and finished it off with minarets. But let us to our muttons - or rather to our lions!

Criticism of Christianity by a thinker of Mr. Shaw's eminence marks an epoch in the history of religion. His preface to *Androcles and the Lion* is just as important as the ninety-five theses which Martin Luther nailed to the door of the church of Wittenburg. Mr. Shaw, as might be expected from so original a thinker, takes the fairest point of view. He asks us to clear our minds of everything that we have ever heard about Christianity, and to place ourselves in the position of the rude Indian whose untutored mind gains its first schooling in the gospels from a missionary. To this he only makes one reservation, that the reader must know something of the human imagination as applied to religion. This of course is rather like blowing a hole in the bottom of your boat before you launch it. But we will take Mr. Shaw as he stands.

I feel that the moment has come for a digression, of the nature of a personal apology. No one can feel more strongly than myself, I may add more painfully, the impertinence of an entirely obscure individual like myself to enter the lists, and offer to break a lance with Galahad! My only excuse is that I have a very special qualification, namely, an intimate knowledge of the Bible so deeply rooted that it seems hardly unfair to say that it formed the whole foundation of my mind. {2}

My father was a leader of the Plymouth Brethren, and from the age of four, when I learnt to read, until I went to Trinity College, Cambridge, I had practically no books but the Bible; and the few I did get were carefully selected stories adapted for the use of the pious, and so, being devoid of literary merit, left no impression upon my mind. It should be explained further that the cardinal point of the faith of the Plymouth Brethren is an absolutely literal acceptance of the text of the authorized version of the Bible. It may give some idea of the extraordinary thoroughness with which I studied the Testaments if I mention

that my father had a great perception of the beauty of antithesis, and frequently preached sermons on texts containing the word but. At nine years old I went through my Bible word by word, and drew a square in ink around the word 'but' every time it occurred; as I occasionally missed one I went through it again and again, until I was sure that I had made no omission.

I was not very robust in health. I could not take the ordinary enjoyment in games. There was this further restriction that it might corrupt my morals to play with any others than the sons of Brethren, who were as difficult to find as pure and beautiful things usually are! Reading was therefore my principal resource, and I was thrown back again and again upon the Bible. My verbal memory is excellent, and I can still find almost any text that may be quoted to me in a few minutes search. This of course was aided by special training. The Plymouth Brethren, if the whirl of their lives should for some reason slacken slightly for a moment, would indulge in the wild dissipation of Bible searching. Competitions {3} were run by magazines, which gave lists of obscure texts, and the sportsman had to find them as best he might. It was of course a foul stroke to employ a Concordance, and even the use of a reference Bible was not considered quite playing the game. In this sportsman-like attitude I yet abide. In preparing this essay I have had no book whatever but the Bible itself - without reference columns (I procured later a 'Golden Bough' [The Golden Bough, by J.G. Frazer] etc., when I found quotation exigent).

It is trusted that this excuse may be deemed sufficient in this matter. The main axis of this paper will be a demonstration of the errors of omission and commission in Mr. Shaw's actual reading of his text. Other criticisms will be offered upon other points of the brilliant essay under discussion, but the edge of the axe, which it is proposed to lay to the root of Mr. Shaw's tree, is proof that he has entirely misread the Bible, that he has picked out texts to suit his purpose, and ignored those which contradict him; and that he has done this (no doubt unwittingly) in order to prove that the whole essence of the teaching of Jesus is no more or less than the epitome of the political propaganda of the distinguished essayist. Owing to the extraordinary reverence with which the name of Jesus has been fortified, that name has always been the ace of trumps in the hand of the theologian. It has always been the aim of every religious reformer to prove that Jesus Christ was on his side. The opinion of Jesus Christ on any matter was the decision of the Supreme Court. Every heretic based his ultimate argument on some saying of the prophet of Nazareth. {4}

Mr. Shaw therefore, in spite of his brilliant, original manner of thought, has really done what every one else has done from Arius to Renan. Even the atheist is compelled to base his whole position upon the teaching of Christ. That and no other is the standard by which he measures his work. He evidently differs from St. Paul only by advancing this reason as a ground for disbelief and disagreement instead of faith and adherence. In Huxley's argument with Gladstone, the professor's whole aim was to prove that Jesus said certain things which were ridiculous or untrue, and did things which were unworthy or immoral. He relegated to the background the far more important position that the entire book is a collection of fables. The argument of the preface to 'Androcles and the Lion' is then that Jesus Christ was an up-to-date socialist of the same shade of opinion as Mr. Bernard Shaw. We shall now proceed to show that this view is incompatible with a catholic exegesis of the text of the Bible as it stands. Mr. Shaw is singularly judicious in taking the text of the authorized version, and having as little as possible to do with the 'higher criticism', for no one knows better than Mr. Shaw that if we venture into that morass we shall be over our heads before we have taken three steps. The majority of persons who have gone deeply into the fundamental question of the Bible have come to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is merely a convenient title, a kind of hatstand on which to hang the sayings and doings of a number of people, just in the same way as Zoroaster in the matter of the Chaldean Oracles, David in the matter of the collection of the Hebrew Songs which we call the Psalms, and possibly Homer as {5} regards the Iliad and the Odyssey. Of course it is a common literary trick.

We now turn to the text of Mr. Shaw's essay.

### **Why Jesus More Than Another?**

*NOTE: Throughout, save for the exception presently to be noted, we follow Mr. Shaw's captions*

It is extremely painful to find oneself obliged to begin by a direct attack upon Mr. Shaw's logic. The record that Jesus said certain things is not invalidated by a demonstration that Confucius said them before him. This is perfectly true, but it is a valid reason for talking about Confucius rather than about Jesus. Mr. Shaw admits this to some extent; for the only reason that he gives for his choice of subject is that, The imagination of mankind has picked out Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, and attributed all the Christian doctrines to him; and he adds that It is the doctrine and not the man that matters. In this case the doctrine should be argued on first principles. It is entirely beside the question as to whether Jesus ever existed, and it is therefore a rhetorical trick to associate the life of Christ with any such argument.

We go on to the next sentence. Those who claim a literal divine paternity for him cannot be silenced by the discovery that the same claim was made for Alexander and Augustus. This is true enough, for such persons are not accessible to reason. If I assert antecedently incredible things, my proof depends on an investigation of the facts; but if it happens to be the case that my statement is identical, except for names and places, with the familiar statements of admitted lunatics or liars, no serious person will take the trouble to investigate the facts. {6}

In the case under discussion, as it happens, the investigation of the facts is impossible. We are face to face with the fact that it was an invariable custom to honour any distinguished man by attributing divine parentage to him. It may have begun in magic or religion; but by the time of the alleged life of Jesus, it was hardly more than a literary flourish. In saying that Romulus and Remus were begotten by Mars upon a vestal virgin, no one with any sense of poetry combined with common sense would understand that the person making the statement wished to do more than emphasize their greatness as warriors, and to accentuate the chastity of their mothers.

Such a story was naturally also useful to impress the vulgar. It is to be remembered that in these times the art of writing was called magic. The old word for magic 'gramarye' merely means 'writing'. It was a miracle in the eyes of the vulgar to understand a man at a distance otherwise than by word of mouth. The whole question of miracles depends, as will be later demonstrated, upon the psychology of the people among whom they are performed. The claim of literal divine paternity for any person therefore only means that some one thought he was a great man. If we are to read anything more than this into any such text, we must admit that no one has any reason for attributing truth to one story more than to another. There is no choice for the logician, where science is silent, but to accept all or none.

### **Was Jesus a Coward?**

There is little to criticize in this section of the essay. One does not question the courage of one who is too proud to fight when a few days previously he has given unmistakable {7} proofs of that quality by raiding the local Wall Street.

But we now come to the first of Mr. Shaw's troubles with the text of the Gospels. He should really read them again. He says, Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is a snivelling modern invention, with no warrant in the Gospels. Turning to the Gospel of Matthew, we find in the 11th Chapter and the 29th verse, Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. This is a direct assertion of his meekness.

Now see Matthew XXI, 5. It was necessary for him to be meek on account of the prophesy, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, the King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

Meekness is also one of the cardinal points of his teaching. Matthew V,3, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. and again, Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Again in the same chapter, verse 44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. In Luke VI,30, we read: Give to every man that asketh of thee: and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

There are dozens of other similar passages.

This is certainly being too meek to fight a policeman. Mr. Shaw then says, That such a figure could never have become a centre of the world's attention is too absurd for discussion. But in the texts cited above is

the absolute demonstration that he was such a figure; and he certainly did become a centre of the {8} world's attention, for here are Mr. Shaw and myself snarling over his bones!

### **Was Jesus a Martyr?**

This admirably clear section requires no comment.

### **The Gospels without Prejudice**

When I was young it was impossible to read them (the Gospels) without fantastic confusion of thought. The confusion was so utterly dumbfounded that it was called the proper spirit to read the Bible in. Jesus was a baby; and he was older than creation. He was a man who could be persecuted, stoned, scourged, and killed; and he was a God, immortal and all-powerful, able to raise the dead and call millions of angels to his aid. It was a sin to doubt either view of him: that is, it was a sin to reason about him; and the end was that you did not reason about him, and read about him only when you were compelled.

I must confess myself unable to see any confusion of thought in this matter. The explanation is given elsewhere in the preface itself. He was an 'avatar', to use the Indian phrase. He was playing a part, and he naturally accepted its limitations.

Even skeptics who were especially on their guard, put the Bible in the dock, and read the Gospels with the object of detecting discrepancies in the four narratives to show that the writers were subject to error as the writers of yesterday's newspaper. Here we must remark that this labour was necessary. The theory of the Bible at that time was that it was written down at the direct dictation of the Holy Ghost. It was this theory which the skeptics were trying to shatter; and the whole argument therefore pivoted {9} on the question of contradiction. In point of fact, the argument had been decided centuries before, the Catholic Church recognizing so clearly that the skeptics were right, that they forbade to the laity the perusal of the Scriptures, and refused to allow the validity of reason and logic as applied to exegesis.

### **The Gospels now Unintelligible to Novices**

We cannot agree that the average reader will fail to make sense - or what he calls 'sense' - of the Gospels. Mr. Shaw forgets that the critical faculty is so rare among men that the average reader accepts whole pages of contradiction, or even sheer nonsense without noticing anything.

Even in the case of trained students, discrepancies are not always easy to recognize. Philosophies full of fallacy have passed muster for centuries, despite all the efforts of hostile schools. It may be said that the history of philosophy is but the record of alternate hypotheses and criticisms. How long was it before it was discovered that the argument for immortality in the *Phaedo* was one gigantic *petitio principii*?

### **Worldliness of the Majority**

I can find no fault with this just section.

### **The Difference between Atonement and Punishment**

In this section I find an important omission, and it is important to point it out on account of certain considerations whose use will be later apparent when we come to a full discussion of John Barleycorn. Primitive Peoples, by which I mean those in whom the sense of causality is not assimilated into the very structure of the mind, have a certain dread of happiness. There is a kind of feeling that luck will not last. We therefore find sacrifices {10-} offered in the moment of success. The vow of Jephthah to sacrifice the first living thing that met him, should he return victorious, is a case in point.

So also the Romans and Greeks enjoined that at the pinnacle of prosperity the thing which was dearest to the man should be sacrificed to the infernal gods. Greek drama is full of stories of the punishment of 'hybris', the state of mind which declared that everything was going well and would always do so, that the man was a fine fellow much too big to fall. We still 'touch wood', or, in Scotland, 'cauld airn'.

There was also the custom of slaying a man beneath the foundation stone of a building. The first-born son of the builder was considered a suitable offering. See Joshua VI:26 and II Kings XVI:34 [*WEH NOTE: SIC, it should be I Kings XVI:34, Hiel of Bethel's rebuilding Jericho with the sacrifice of two of his sons beneath the foundations and the gate*]. This custom has survived to this day in symbolic form. We habitually bury coins and various other treasures in foundation stones, just as we still use the talismans of Mithras on the harness of our horses.

Thus, too, we have Abraham commanded to sacrifice his only begotten son, and thus, too, the Gospel story is the record of the sacrifice by God himself of his only begotten son. We give up the most precious thing we have, so that in other matters we may be left alone. Of course, being practical persons, we take something which is of no value to us whatever for this purpose; but in order to cheat God we make elaborate pretense that it is priceless. Here lies the essential formula of 'god-eating'; which Frazer and others have shown, is universal from Mesopotamia to Mexico. We take someone who doesn't matter, call him king and God, dress him up for the part, worship him, and treat {11} him in every way accordingly. Then at the end of the appointed period we slay him barbarously. This thesis will be developed further in the proper place.

### **Salvation at first a Class Privilege; and the Remedy**

Acute as Mr. Shaw invariably is, he appears to suffer from the sense of Sin, as one would expect in a Protestant Irishman or Scotch blood. As explained above, it is not so much the idea of escaping punishment as of escaping bad luck. There is little trace of the idea of sin in our modern sense of the word before Paul, except in the religions of the effeminate and cowardly inhabitants of some parts of the Indian Peninsula. Sacrifice is in Egypt simply a magical ritual to ensure the due rising of the Nile. The 'conviction of sin' is a modern invention due principally to the tyranny of a Pauline priestcraft. In the dark ages every calamity was attributed by the priests to sin; and, as calamities were frequent, the spirit of the people was broken. Today we have even a form of melancholia whose principal delusion is that the victim has committed the 'sin against the Holy Ghost'.

Such ravings are only possible to slave-peoples, just as the melancholia which persuades the sufferer that he has lost all his money only occurs in a commercialized civilization. The Jews themselves had the sense of sin derived from their four hundred years of bondage in Egypt, but nothing of the sort is found among virile peoples such as the Arabs and Afghans, who do not permit the domination of the priests. It does not appear even in India until the Brahmans had supplanted the Kahatriya or warrior caste. The sense of justice is very one-sided in the strong man armed. All he means by justice is the execution of his will upon the weaker man. The {12} whole idea of sin and redemption is a direct metaphysical creation of the slave spirit.

We do not think that Mr. Shaw is quite justified in his aetiology of the centralization of the redeemer. It was the expansion of the Roman Empire, and the beginning of travel and commerce, which showed the various priests that multiplicity of competing temples was bad business. They got the idea of the Trust. The Christian Religion is packed in consequence with survivals of pagan rites.

May it be permitted to quote from an ancient manuscript preserved in one of the secret sanctuaries of Initiation, so closely treasured and so jealously guarded that perhaps not fifty living people have been privileged to see it?

To those who have stultified themselves, who have darkened their own eyes, who have betrayed their own reason in seeking out phantastic gods, foul and tangled cobwebs of metaphysics spun by emasculate spider-professors in sunless cloisters, bubbles blown by idiots and madmen, myths misinterpreted, fables taken for history, lies pushed forward by every engine of forgery, fraud, intrigue, treachery, and murder, to such Truth seems false, and the Light darkness.

Such gods as Parabrahman merely bewilder the people, and render them the prey of priestcraft, while the Christs alike of the Lutheran, Latin, and Anglican Churches are but the machine-gods of all fraud and oppression, being stolen and prostituted from that Christ in whom our fathers in the Gnosis strove to synthesize the warring Gods of Syria, Greece, Chaldea, Rome, and Egypt at the time when the growth of the Roman Empire first made {13} travel possible, and the intercommunication of the priests of Mithras,



Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Dionysus, Isis, Astarte, Venus and many scores of others. Traces of this recension are still visible in the Mass and in the Calendar of the Saints, all major Gods and Goddesses of universal import receiving the same honour by the same rites as before, while the local Gods were replaced by Saints, virgins, martyrs, or angels, often of the same name, always of the same character.

Thus on the altar the Solar-phallic Crucifix is surrounded by six lights for the planets, to use one example only of a hundred at our disposal; and Christmas is at the winter solstice, the birth of Christ put for the birth of the Sun.

All these points may be studied in *La Messe et ses Mysteres*, Rome pagan and papal, *The two Babylons*, *Rivers of Life*, *Two essays on the worship of Priapus*, and many other books. It is rather amusing to observe that ultra-Protestants, in proving that Roman Catholicism is pagan and phallic, which they do quite irrefutably, need merely to be confronted with the proof of the Catholics that every point of their religion is derived from Scripture, to form the premisses of a syllogism, whose conclusion is that Christianity is but an adaptation of Phallicism.

*NOTE: Renan admitted that the only rational God is the Sun, who is in the Macrocosm what the Phallus is in the Microcosm.*

### **Retrospective Atonement and the Expectation of the Redeemer**

There are periods when whole nations are seething with this expectation and crying aloud with prophecy of the Redeemer through their poets. By whole nations Mr. Shaw must be taken to mean the oppressed and unhappy in those nations. When people are prosperous they do not want a Redeemer. It is simply the manifestation {14} of the slave spirit. Brave men redeem themselves whenever a nation or a class emancipates itself from oppression. Salvationism fades away. We have only to observe the decay of Christianity with the growing prosperity of the world since the conclusion of the continual wars of the middle ages, and to compare that with Frank Harris' story of his atheist friend, who, having lost two sons at the front, wrote with regard to the third: *Que Dieu l'ait en sa sainte garde! May God have him in His Holy Keeping!*

### **Completion of the Scheme by Luther and Calvin**

There is little to say about this section, but one sentence calls for attention. We see one of the great flaws in Mr. Shaw's critical chisel. In India men pay with their own skins, torturing themselves hideously to attain holiness.

This is one of those half truths which are more misleading than any lie. For holiness in India means control of the body and mind, of the emotions, thoughts, and passions, and the reward is supposed to be the mastery of nature as well as deliverance from sin and its penalties. In fact they pursue precisely the same course of conduct as the chemist, who risks his life and denies himself all ordinary human pleasures in order to make discoveries in his science.

### **John Barleycorn**

Elsewhere in this essay will be found many references to what may be called the John Barleycorn ritual. It is only necessary here to make one or two remarks with regard to the eating of the god. It is a perfectly rational idea that, by taking a divine substance, and making it part of oneself by the miracle {15} of assimilation, the eater should become possessed of the qualities of the substance.

The theory has in fact never been disproved. Pace [*T NOTE: or face? WEH NOTE: or Peace?*] Mr. Shaw, nine vegetarians in ten have to give up their revolting habit sooner or later; and there is this argument for the inherence of some metaphysical quality in living protoplasm which does not depart immediately on the occurrence of death, that fresh meat is found by the experience of explorers to be much more revivifying than canned meat; and the canned meat itself degenerates noticeably with time, though there is no apparent change in the food. In the extreme case of eating living food, it is within the

experience of everybody that raw oysters pick one up quicker than anything else. It is not a question of nutriment alone, the replacing of the tissues to repair their expenditure. It is the actual entrance into the body of some subtle substance, or, as the ancients would have said, divine substance, which manifests itself in the eater as abundance of life and joy. It is also impossible to doubt that Catholics obtain real spiritual sustenance from the Host.

Mr. Shaw will doubtless reply that many people are cured by homeopathic medicines, and by Christian Science. But this is merely to admit the argument, and even to confirm it, since the facts are not disputed. The efficacy of the rite of god-eating is incontestable; and it is important, if only to help the imagination, that the substance of the sacrament should be supremely, and sublimely, that thing of all things which is believed by the partaker to be the most precious, and the most holy, and the most powerful thing that exists either in heaven or upon earth. This of course is the main argument for transubstantiation. To eat {16} a piece of bread merely in order to remind oneself of an event, which one has gone to church especially to commemorate, is a work of supererogation, redundancy, and naughty superfluity.

Mr. Shaw is on dangerous ground historically in his last paragraph. From the interweaving of these two traditions, (the theory of god eating and the resurrection of John Barleycorn) with the craving for the Redeemer, you at last get the conviction that when the Redeemer comes he will be immortal; he will give up his body to eat and his blood to drink; and he will prove his divinity by suffering a barbarous death without resistance or reproach, and rise from the dead and return to earth in glory as the giver of life eternal. It is open to argument that the three ideas are really one from the beginning, and are either symbolical representation, or actual sympathetic magic, whose basis is to be found in those facts of the life of the earth, and of its inhabitants, which are obvious to the most ignorant of savages as well as to the most enlightened men of science.

### **Looking for the End of the World**

Mr. Shaw is exceedingly right, even for him, in this section. The whole of the belief in heaven, and in hell, of a great upheaval of existing conditions, and their supersession by a permanent state of reward and punishment is suited, both to the masters for efficient bribes and threats which cost them nothing and to the slaves to gratify (equally without expense) their hopes of emancipation and revenge, or, when they have become ineradicably slaves, their prospect of adequate reward for that subservience. {17}

### **The Honour of Divine Parentage**

In a previous section comment has been made upon this matter, and it will again be referred to later. Here it is only necessary to establish Mr. Shaw's carelessness in the reading of his text. He says, As the gospels stand, St. Matthew and St. Luke give genealogies (the two are different) establishing the descent of Jesus through Joseph, and yet declare that not Joseph but the Holy Ghost was the father of Jesus. He adds further, a little lower down, It is quite possible that Matthew and Luke may have been unconscious of the contradiction.

There is no contradiction, Matthew says, Chapter I, verse 16: And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. His purpose is evidently to show that Mary was a 'femme coverte', the wife of a highly respectable person, even a man of royal descent. He seems to mean no more than this, although he does loosely speak of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, in the first verse. Luke again says, Chapter III, verse 23: And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli. It may be remarked parenthetically that there is no agreement even on the point of who was the father of Joseph, and it is also interesting to note that Matthew (Chapter I, verse 6) derives his line from David through Solomon, while Luke in verse 31 of the Chapter above mentioned derives him through Nathan.

It is more important to discuss somewhat fully the arguments in favor of the view that the whole story of the virgin birth is a late interpolation, a view which Mr. Shaw, if he does not hold, at least does not discourage. It is first to be noted that Mark {18} and John know absolutely nothing of the story. Jesus appears suddenly, just as did Elijah in the Old Testament. He comes upon the scene as an adult. Matthew, as will be seen later, appears to be merely a new and enlarged edition of Mark specially prepared for a

particular class of readers; while Luke is evidently the very much later romance (in all probability of a Greek physician) comparable, except for the quality of the Greek, to 'Daphnis and Chloe', or the 'Golden Ass'. He had presumably access to a manuscript of Mark or Matthew, but takes as many liberties with his text as Shakespeare did with Macbeth.

As Mr. Shaw says, Paul knew nothing of the divine birth. In Romans, Chapter I, verse 3 and 4, he says, Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. It seems likely, however, that Paul knew of the story and strongly objected to it, as likely to raise trouble in the Church; for in his first Epistle to Timothy he says in the first Chapter, the third and fourth verses, As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went to Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith; so do. They could hardly have been squabbling about any other genealogy than that of Jesus himself.

This Epistle to Timothy was written from Laodicea, but after Paul had been some time in Rome, he may have thought that the story was good bait; for in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was written {19} from Italy, he begins to hedge. The whole of the first chapter is a kind of ode upon Jesus as the Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, as if he had to some extent adopted the metaphysical view of John. But of course there is nothing to show that he had heard the story of the virgin birth. We have seen that Mark and John do not mention it. The majority of scholars hold that Mark was the scribe of Peter, or in some way got his information from that source. Whether this be so or not, it is very remarkable that neither mentions what seems to us such a vitally important matter.

But they are not even aware that Jesus was born at Bethlehem! In the first Chapter of Mark, the ninth verse, it says simply that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee. John begins in the 29th verse of his 1st Chapter, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, but does not say where he comes from. However, in the 45th verse, Philip, having been chosen by Jesus as a disciple, goes to Nathaniel and says to him, we have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathaniel said unto him, can then any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

In the 7th Chapter John speaks of the brethren of Jesus without any hint that there is a mystery in the matter, and in the same Chapter we find in verses 41 and 42, Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? And again in verse 52, the controversy again arises: They answered and said {20} unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

The whole matter would have been settled in a moment by the explanation of how the birth took place at Bethlehem on account of Caesar taxing the world, and how, in consequence of the visit of the Wise Men, Herod massacred the innocents, a trifling circumstance which ought to have aroused remark even in those days, and one which (one would have thought) would cause trouble with the procurator. But they do not know the story, and they cannot set the Jews right on the point. It seems not altogether an unreasonable suggestion that this argument against Christianity so stuck in the gullet of every orthodox Jew that it became absolutely necessary to invent a story to controvert it.

Mr. Shaw sums up these first pages with the remark that, With no more scholarly equipment than a knowledge of these habits of the human imagination, anyone may now read the four gospels without bewilderment, and without the contemptuous incredulity which spoils the temper of the modern atheists. We may remark that the temper of the modern atheists may have been spoiled not by their contemptuous incredulity, but by the systematic torture to which as children they were subjected in the name of Jesus. As to the bewilderment, Mr. Shaw says himself, Let us admit that without the proper clues the gospels are, to a modern educated person, nonsensical and incredible, whilst the Apostles are unreadable. But with the clues, they are fairly plain sailing. Jesus becomes an intelligible and consistent person. Mr. Shaw seems to think that he has given us the clues in the pages which we have been reviewing. It is true that the reasons of Jesus for {21} permitting himself to be crucified were plain enough, but Mr. Shaw assumes

without proof that this is the crux of the difficulty. To a certain extent, unquestionably, we have been helped by this preface to the preface. But one still feels a little sympathetic over Mr. Shaw's friend the writer of distinguished intellectual competence, who was yet so simple that he had not even so much Scholarly Equipment, as a knowledge of these habits of the human imagination, now revealed to us by Mr. Shaw, the result being that he found it all such nonsense that he could not stick it. His position is exceedingly painful, and he must now be feeling it acutely. Worst of all, it sounds terribly as if it might be Mr. H.G. Wells. And it appears to a mind possibly dull of understanding, that there are still many contradictory and phantastielements to the stories, which need further clues to lead us to the heart of their labyrinth. At the end of this essay, when it has been demonstrated that Mr. Shaw's whole reading of the gospels has been as carefully selected as that of any other heretic, an endeavour will be made to put into the hands of the reader the true theory of the narrative, its sources, and reasons for its shape. It is a concatenation, and must be resolved into its links. But at present it is necessary to follow our laughing philosopher into his own analysis of the elements of the Testament.

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## Matthew

### **The Annunciation: the Massacre; the Flight**

In this section it is unfortunately necessary once more to call attention to Mr. Shaw's carelessness. Matthew does not call the people who saw the star, Kings, but Wise Men. It is only in the Middle Ages that they developed into Kings. But even suppose that Kings was the word used, is there any difficulty? Mr. {22} Shaw's mistake is fortunate, for it permits us to point out, what will subsequently appear as an important factor in this criticism, that Mr. Shaw's ignorance of life in the East renders him entirely useless as an aid to realizing Jesus.

He says, Matthew tells us that the Mother of Jesus was betrothed to a man of royal pedigree named Joseph, who was rich enough to live in a house in Bethlehem to which kings could bring gifts of gold without provoking any comment. He begins to cast ridicule, and it is ridicule in the wrong place. As it happens, I myself was rich enough to live in a seven-foot tent to which Kings could and did bring gifts of gold. They were quite genuine Kings, entitled to a salute of guns if they ever went to Calcutta; and I would touch the gold and remit it, bestowing moreover upon the said Kings some pocket handkerchiefs and perhaps a few rupees, or a watch. It is quite an ordinary ceremony. They merely wished to do homage, and offer tribute, to the British Government in my humble person.

This may seem a very small point, but to some it will appear cardinal. It is a principal contention of this essay, that intimate knowledge of the manners of the East is necessary even to a rudimentary understanding of the gospel story. It is a shameful thing to say, but one could wish that Mr. Shaw, for the purpose of writing this preface, had sought the collaboration of Mr. Rudyard Kipling. Besides, the episode in Matthew does 'provoke comment'. In fact, it gets the Tetrarch all worked up, and he massacres all the children in the vicinity in the hope of catching the one he wants. But perhaps Mr. Shaw will plead that this is not fair comment, like the plaintiff in a libel action! {23}

Mr. Shaw takes occasion to remark at the end of this section, Nothing that interests us nowadays turns on the credibility of the massacre of the innocents and the flight into Egypt. Mr. Shaw is a secularist, and his placidity may be ascribed to the fact that he has long ago discarded all such points as obvious fictions. But it is necessary for us to make up our minds on this question. Mr. Shaw's claim, no less than that of Pope Benedict, is that Jesus was a unique character, far in advance of his time, who enunciated certain teachings which we should do well to follow.

To rebut this claim, it is desired to show the character of the documents on which he relies. If it be agreed that the statements of fact are all false, and if it be shown that the sayings recorded, instead of being original, are the common-places of all time, what becomes of the claim? Mr. Shaw ceases to be a thinker, if this be so. He becomes a rhetorician offering an ad captandum argument to the vulgar, just like the people who used to excuse themselves at table for picking chicken bones, without the use of a fork, on the ground that Queen Victoria and Mr. Gladstone did so. Once having introduced the names of those

illustrious personages, it becomes pertinent to inquire whether in fact this was their custom, while the bolder type of democrat may even ask whether, if they did so, they were right in so doing. Admit the possibility that they were wrong, and the introduction of their names has become superfluous to the argument. It may prove that Mr. Shaw has 'dragged in Velasquez.' This matter of the credibility of the gospels will be discussed more fully under the section so headed. {24}

### **John the Baptist**

Our only criticism of this section is that John does not for a moment suggest that circumcision should be discarded. There is no evidence that anything in the teaching of John particularly annoyed the Pharisees. It is perfectly usual, now as then, for any Eastern to set up as a wandering ascetic. It is only when some cardinal doctrine or practice is attacked, that the orthodox take offence. It is important to note this because of what Mr. Shaw says in the next section.

### **Jesus Joins the Baptists**

Mr. Shaw now tells us how Jesus came to John and demanded baptism. As far as established Jewry was concerned, he burnt his boats by this action, and cut himself off from the routine of wealth, respectability, and orthodoxy. This is altogether contradicted by the text in the third chapter of Matthew, verse 5,6,7, Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? It is evident from this that John's teaching was not considered seriously heterodox, any more than a church of England Christian to-day would be necessarily excommunicated for playing at theosophy, or, as Mr. Shaw says himself, as certain well-to-do young gentlemen forty years ago joined the socialists.

### **The Savage John and the Civilized Jesus**

If Mr. Shaw had been fired with the ambition to improve the quality of his vital fluid by the introduction of seventy times {25} seven kinds of malaria germs, and to enrich the P. and O.S.S. Co. by some Pounds150, he would have recognized at once these two types of 'holy man' as such. There are plenty of John the Baptists to-day in India. Take a dirty piece of cloth, a little tumeric, a lot of cowdung, and a pair of tongs; and you have him. He is a half crazy half savage individual, brusque and violent in speech, impossible in manner, who practices all kinds of austerity, feeds on refuse, and is usually in a condition of more or less maniacal excitement produced by fasting, or the use of such drugs as opium or hashish, or both.

Contrast with this type the man, often of excellent family, perhaps even a great king, who quits the world and its vanities as soon as he feels that he has performed his duty to mankind. This course of action is prescribed for everybody in the Sacred Books of Hindustan. Some feel the call more strongly, and take a chance by refusing to fulfil such duties as marriage, going out while still quite young men into the desert or jungle.

Such men are totally different from those described above, in nearly all respects. They are learned in the Scriptures. They do not inflict torture upon themselves except in the same way as a 'blue' does when he is training for the boat race. Their manners are, however, much superior to those of the average 'blue'. They care nothing for the conventions of society, but respect the feelings of others, though, if they are of the teaching kind, they will sometimes publicly perform some unconventional act to call attention to some point of their doctrine.

The main position of such men is not that the Scriptures are {26} wrong in prescribing certain courses of action, but that formalism has destroyed the virtue of such teachings; just as any earnest clergyman to-day, without leaving his pulpit, might rebuke his flock for the shallowness of their religion.

It will be observed that this is exactly what Jesus did. Practically all of his attacks on the Pharisees are not directed against the strictness of their observance of the Mosaic law, but against their formalism, and sometimes even against their laxity. For example, we read in Matthew, chapter XII, verses 10, and 11

And behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold of it, and lift it out? He says that his mission is only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as is shewn in Matthew, chapter X, verses 5 and 6. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So far from being in any way a reformer as opposed to a mere revivalist, he says plainly (in Matthew Chapter V, verses 17, 18, 19, and 20) Think not that I am come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in now wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same {27} shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

He evidently regards himself as a new Isaiah. There are other sides to his character which will be discussed later, but there was at least this side, and we cannot follow Mr. Shaw in stamping him plainly as unorthodox, for he is found dining with Pharisees as well as with publicans, and throughout the whole of the gospel we find that he is permitted to teach in the synagogues.

One point, however, mentioned by Mr. Shaw is so vital that it must be discussed at once. Mr. Shaw says: When reproached, as Bunyan was for resorting to the art of fiction when teaching in parables, he justifies himself on the ground that art is the only way in which the people can be taught.

Here again Mr. Shaw's ignorance of the East betrays him. He quite misses the significance of the explanation given by Jesus, which is as follows: And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to these it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not: and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. (Matthew XIII. 10-13).

There is no question of art, but of mystery and initiation. In the East every teacher has his particular secrets, usually {28} received from some other teacher before him, which he guards with extreme jealousy, and communicates only to most carefully chosen disciples. It may be a simple matter like inducing the Apana-Vayu to move upwards into the Svadisthana-cakra, or it may be something much more complicated; but whatever it is, he makes a great secret of it, and his claim to possess such secrets is his principal asset. Why should people leave all and follow him unless he has something to tell them which they can get from no one else?

We now see Jesus in a totally different light. He is not only and orthodox revivalist, but a leader of what we should call nowadays a secret society. The idea of the parables, which it seems absurd to tell if nobody is going to understand them, is to excite the curiosity of the hearer, to show him that the speaker is a mysterious person, who knows something wonderful, and thus to induce him to become a disciple.

### **Jesus not a Proselytist**

It is hard to conceive how Mr. Shaw can make such a statement as now follows: A point of considerable practical importance to-day is that he expressly repudiates the idea that forms of religion, once rooted, can be weeded out and replanted with the flowers of a foreign faith. 'If you try to root up the tares you will root up the wheat as well'. Our proselytizing missionary enterprises are thus flatly contrary to his advice. Can Mr. Shaw explain away the following passage in Matthew, Chapter XXVIII, verses 18 and 19? And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Shaw apparently relies upon the {29} parables of the tares and the wheat. But this is apparently no more than an injunction to make no attempt to root out the wicked before the Day of

Judgment. That his plan was conversion is quite evident in the three other parables in the first part of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.

Later in this section Mr. Shaw accepts the view set forward above that Jesus merely wished to add a superstructure to the Law of Moses, but he goes on to make a most extraordinary statement, which must be quoted in full. To this day a Christian would be in religion a Jew initiated by baptism instead of circumcision, and accepting Jesus as the Messiah, and his teachings as of higher authority than those of Moses, but for the action of the Jewish priests, who, to save Jewry from being submerged in the rising flood of Christianity after the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, set up what was practically a new religious order, with new Scriptures and elaborate new observances; and to their list of the accursed added one Jeschu, a bastard magician, whose comic rogueries brought him to a bad end like Punch or Til Eulenspiegel: an invention which cost them dear when the Christians got the upper hand of them politically. The Jew, as Jesus, himself a Jew, knew him, never dreamt of such things, and would follow Jesus without ceasing to be a Jew.

Mr. Shaw appears to imply in this passage that the whole course of Christianity was determined by the action of the Jews subsequent to the destruction of the Temple, as if their hostility had been aroused only by the addition of the simple matters mentioned. Are we to understand that the Crucifixion of Jesus was intended only as a friendly admonition, or at most a paternal chastisement of {30} the kind that would hurt them more than it would hurt him? A first edition of My Heart bleeds for Louvain?

A word may be in season with regard to the Sepher Toldoth Jeschu, or Book of the Doings of Jesus. By what right does Mr. Shaw assume that an official publication of this sort is as false as any official publication of to-day? It is a life of Jesus, possessing on the surface of it more authority than the gospels, and of earlier date. It will be said that it is full of absurdities, and is evidently an exparte statement full of animus. But the gospels also are full of absurdities, and are admittedly written as partisan statements. It may then be replied that modern Jews have thrown over the Sepher Toldoth Jeschu. But then modern Christians have equally thrown over the Gospels! There is really no reason in the world why we should take sides in the controversy.

### **The Teachings of Jesus**

It is somewhat unfortunate that Mr. Shaw has not assisted the student of his excellent preface by always giving references to his authority, for one is sometimes at a loss as to what passage he may be honouring with his reliance. When Mr. Shaw says that Jesus advocates communism, one cannot tell what text he may be taking as his authority for the statement, to show that in many passages he strongly upheld the right of property. It is true that he tells the rich man, in Matthew XIX, verse 21, Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: come and follow me. This remark is the ordinary commonplace of any Eastern religious teacher, when any one comes to him for salvation. {31}

He makes a religious merit of renunciation in the 29th verse of the same chapter. And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. This is again in perfect accordance with ordinary Eastern doctrine; but it has nothing to do with communism. He makes rules for his own community, which are the ordinary rules prescribed by any wandering yogi then or now

Now read Matthew, Chapter XX, verses 25 and 26. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. This attitude is characteristic of all religious brotherhoods.

Now see the following passages in Matthew, chapter VI, verses 25, 26, 31, 32, 33, and 34. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink: nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowl of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your

heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you, Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall {32} take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. This is all very well as an instruction to a limited brotherhood. The Buddha had given identical instructions six hundred years before. You will wear three robes, he said to his disciples, you will pluck them from the corpses on the burning-ghat. You will take a bowl, and you will go around the village every morning and beg your rice.

Burma to-day is full of men who obey these precepts, though latterly their robes are usually furnished by the gift of persons who wish to 'acquire merit'. But as advice to the whole world it is lunacy. It would not be communism, but suicide. The sowing of wheat and cotton is certainly taking thought for the morrow. No doubt the hardiest of humanity should be able to survive by adopting the life of their cousins the monkeys. But we cannot assume that Mr. Shaw would regard this as an ideal state of society, though few reasonable people would consider it very much worse than what we have at present!

It is evident from other passages that Jesus upheld the rights of property as firmly as the Duke of Wellington. It has already been shown that Jesus was quite whole-hearted in his support of the Mosaic law. He was annoyed, in fact, because they had set casuists to work upon it. In Matthew XV, verses 1-9, we read: There came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the {33} commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whosoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Ezeias prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Now the Mosaic law is extraordinarily individualistic. One cannot think of any provision of it which sounds like an approach to communism. In Matthew, chapter V, verses 25 and 26, he says: Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. This view of debt seems as stringent as the laws of England, in the times of the old Fleet Prison, or those of Massachusetts to-day. In the beginning of the sixth chapter he advocates the giving of alms in secret. Is it a misunderstanding of communism to suppose that almsgiving is incompatible with it? In the 'Lord's Prayer', Matthew, chapter VI, verse 12, one of the petitions is Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. This passage certainly suggest that the elect should take a generous attitude, but it as {34} certainly contemplates the existence of such things as debts.

Mr. Shaw now tells us that Jesus advocates the widening of the private family with its cramping ties into the great family of mankind under the fatherhood of God. Mr. Shaw here evidently relies on Matthew, Chapter XII, verses 46 and 50. While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Here again, we have the normal attitude of the religious teacher of the East. There is no evidence that he intended this as general advice to the world.

In the matter of marriage, Jesus is quite as strict as the average Catholic or Church of England bishop. Read Matthew, chapter XIX, verses 3 to 12. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be



one flesh. That therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered {35} you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. This explanation is an expansion of another passage in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew, chapter V, verses 31 and 32.

Here Jesus definitely says that he does not expect all men to adopt the happy-go-lucky, promiscuous existence which we call the religious life. He makes the welfare of a wife depend upon her fidelity as strictly as any other lawgiver. In fact, the theory is that the rights of the wife are so paramount, that she can only forfeit them by the one act of absolutely unpardonable treachery, in which case she becomes an outcast from humanity altogether. This is not 'widening the private family', but tightening its bonds. Easy divorce is universally recognized, both by its friends and by its enemies, as a step toward socialism.

It is to be remembered also that even in the time of Jesus divorce was terrible punishment, when the cause was fornication, for the divorced woman had no means of livelihood. Under the Mosaic law the punishment was death for both parties offending; see Leviticus chapter XX, verse 10. And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. The severity of this law had evidently been relaxed in favour of something like that which still obtains in Mohammedan {36} countries. And Jesus objected!

Mr. Shaw next says that Christ advocates the abandonment of revenge and punishment, apparently on the strength of Matthew, chapter V, verses 43 and 45. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. This is a very fair statement of the ordinary rules for Hindu ascetics. The idea is that by becoming 'ahimsa' or 'harmless', by refusing to injure even a tiger or a snake, they will acquire the power of immunity from the savagery of others. Mr. Shaw's own Androcles seems to have been that kind of person. The doctrine is not to be taken any further than this. The 'Father in Heaven', who in these verses is so impartial, is exhibited in a very different character in such passages as the following: Matthew VIII, 11, 12. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew, chapter X, 14, 15. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Matthew, XI, 21 to 24. Woe unto them, Chorazin! woe unto {37} thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Matthew XII, 31, 32. Therefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Matthew XVIII, 6 to 9. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them

from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Matthew XXII, 1 to 14, And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parable, and said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage of his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, {38} Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth! and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants: The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew XXIV 50 and 51. The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him assunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew XXV, 31 and 46. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them {39} on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, When saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee with a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he also say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

It is hard to suppose that Mr. Shaw thought that all the preachers of hell-fire from the apostles themselves all the way down through Turricremata and Calvin to Charles Spurgeon and Billy Sunday had no warrant for their doctrine in the actual words of Jesus! Mr. Shaw would have done better to have sought his authority in the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. {40}

Mr. Shaw's next statement is that Jesus advocates an organic conception of society in which you are not an independent individual, but a member of society. This statement is really too vague to rebut. Even the Manchester School had some such conception. We think it certainly incumbent upon Mr. Shaw to quote some words of Jesus, which will allow us at least to compare him with Manu or Plato.

### **The Parables**

(Note: This caption is an insertion of our own.)

It is to be observed that there is no marked distinction between the parables attributed to Jesus and those of the ordinary Eastern sage. Yet the latter usually illustrates some spiritual truth, or applaud some virtue; the

former have no value but to induce the hearer to follow Jesus, or to illustrate some point of his salvationist theology. An analysis of them one by one will exhibit this quality in all due lucence.

**(1) Matthew XIII.3-8**- The Sower and the Seed.

Moral (XIII.18-23) - Various classes of hearers are described.

**(2) Matthew XIII.24-30**- The Wheat and the Tares.

Moral (XIII.37-43) - Jesus and Satan: Salvation or damnation in a furnace of fire, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth accordingly.

**(3) Matthew XIII.31-32**- The Grain of mustard seed.

Moral . . . . . - My doctrine will convert the whole world.

**(4) Matthew XIII.33**- The leaven.

Moral . . . . . - Same as no. 3.

**(5) Matthew XIII.44**- The treasure in the field.

Moral . . . . . - Give up everything for Jesus.

**(6) Matthew XIII.45,46**- The Pearl of Great Price.

Moral . . . . . - The same as no. 5.

**(7) Matthew XIII.47-48**- The dragnet cast into the sea.

Moral (XIII.49,50) - Same as no. 2. {41 }

**(8) Matthew XVIII 23-34**- The king and his debtors

Moral (XVIII.35) - Unless you show generosity to men, God will show you none.

(This is the first parable that has any moral value.)

**(9) Matthew XX.1-16**- The labourers in the vineyard.

Moral . . . . . - The greatest scoundrel shall be rewarded as well as the best of men, in my vineyard.

**(10) Matthew XXI 28-30**- The two sons.

Moral (XXI.31-32) . . - Unless you believe in Me, you are worse than an harlot or a publican.

**(11) Matthew XXI 33-41**- The wicked husbandman.

Moral . . . . . - The Jews will be miserably destroyed for rejecting Jesus.

**(12) Matthew XXII 1-14**- The Marriage of the King's Son.

Moral . . . . . - Outer darkness, with weeping and gnashing of teeth for bad Christians;

(V 13) destruction for the Jews (V 7).

**(13) Matthew XXIV 33**- The Fig Tree.[*WEH NOTE: XXIV,32*]

Moral (XXIV 33) . . . - The second Advent is to be announced by various tribulations and miraculous events.

**(14) Matthew XXIV 42-51**- The Servants. [*WEH NOTE: 45-51*]

Moral - in text. . . - Behave, or - weeping and gnashing of teeth, as usual.

**(15) Matthew XXV 1-12**- The ten virgins.

Moral (Verse 13). . . - Watch for My return; or you will get left.

**(16) Matthew XXV 14-30** - The talents.

Moral - in text. . . - Be faithful (apparently in Spreading the Gospel) or - more weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**(17) Mark IV 1-20** - As No. 1.

**(18) Mark IV 26-29** - The seed growing secretly.

Moral . . . . . - Work, and heed not the event. (This is the second parable of any value.)

**(19) Mark IV 30-32** - As No. 3.

**(20) Mark XII 1-9** - As No. 11.

**(21) Luke VIII 4-15** - As No. 1.

**(22) Luke VIII 16-17** - The Candle

Moral (Verse 18). . . - Be careful how you hear. (This moral does not fit the parable.) {42}

**(23) Luke XII 16-21** - The Rich Man.

Moral (VV 22-34). . . - Do not accumulate wealth, but live like ravens or lilies.

**(24) Luke XII 41-48** - As 14.

**(25) Luke XIII 18** - As No. 3.

**(26) Luke XIII 19** - As No. 4.

**(27) Luke XIV 16** - As No. 12, but with omissions.

**(28) Luke XV 3-6** - The lost sheep.

Moral (Verse 7). . . - The repentant sinner is of more value than 99 just persons.

**(29) Luke XV 8-9** - The piece of Silver.

Moral (Verse 10) . . - As 28.

**(30) Luke XV 11-33** - The Prodigal Son.

Moral - as 28. . . . - All righteousness is worthless; repentance alone brings reward.

**(31) Luke XVI 1-12** - The Unjust Steward.

Moral ? ? ? ?

**(32) Luke XVI 19-31** - Dives and Lazarus.

Moral . . . . . - Resurrection would not convince anyone who did not hear Moses and the Prophets.

**(33) Luke XVIII 1-6** - The Unjust Judge.

Moral (Verses 7-8) . - God will 'avenge his elect'.

**(34) Luke XVIII 10-14** - The PHarisee and the Publican.

Moral (Verse 9). . . - Do not be self-righteous, or despise others. (This is the third parable of any value.)

**(35) Luke XX 9-18** - As No. 11.

**(36) John X 1-6** - The Good Shepherd.

Moral (Verses 7-8) . - Beware all imitations; I am Unique.

Analysis has really left very little of these famous parables; only three have any signification apart from the Salvationist Theology.

### **The Miracles**

Mr. Shaw begins this extremely important section with the following statement: He has certain abnormal powers by which he {43} can perform miracles. He is ashamed of these powers, but, being extremely compassionate, cannot refuse to exercise them when afflicted people beg him to cure them, when multitudes of people are hungry, and when his disciples are terrified by storms on the lakes. He asks for no reward, but begs the people not to mention these powers of his.

I can find no authority for the statement that Jesus felt any shame in the matter, and as to his begging the people not to mention his powers, this (once again) is the ordinary attitude of the Eastern sage. It is difficult to explain what were (and are) the exact reasons of initiates for prescribing silence. There is a certain feeling of delicacy about it, which one would have to be an initiate in order thoroughly to understand.

Mr. Shaw does not mention this, but goes on as follows: There are two obvious reasons for his dislike of being known as a worker of miracles. One is the natural objection of all men who possess such powers, but have far more important business in the world than to exhibit them, to be regarded primarily as charlatans, besides being pestered to give exhibitions to satisfy curiosity. The other is that his view of the effect of miracles upon his mission is exactly that taken later on by Rousseau. He perceives that they will discredit him and divert attention from his doctrine by raising an entirely irrelevant issue between his disciples and his opponents. These reasons are doubtless obvious to Mr. Shaw, but they would not be obvious to any Eastern except the sub-reason about being pestered. They were certainly not obvious to Jesus.

Mr. Shaw continues to elaborate this thesis: Rousseau shows, {44} as Jesus foresaw, that the miracles are the main obstacle to the acceptance of Christianity. Jesus' teaching has nothing to do with miracles. If his mission had been simply to demonstrate a new method of restoring lost eyesight, the miracle of curing the blind would have been entirely relevant. But to say 'You should love your enemies; and to convince you of this I will now proceed to cure this gentleman of cataract would have been, to a man of Jesus' intelligence, the proposition of an idiot.

Now, on the contrary, Jesus seems to regard his thaumaturgical power as the sole and sufficient reason for accepting him and his mission. Read Matthew, XI, 2 to 6. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Moreover, in the same chapter, verses 21 to 24, which have already been quoted in another connection, we see that Jesus expected every one to accept him on this ground, and on no other, and is very angry that they are not convinced.

He further specifically argues the point in the 12th chapter of Matthew, verses 22 to 28. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, {45} the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand, And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub, cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

In other words, he says: The fact that I am able to cast out devils is sufficient evidence that the spirit of

God is in me. If it were not so, it would surly be more sensible for me to put devils into people rather than the reverse. If you admit this argument, the conclusion is obvious, the Kingdom of God is come, as I have told you. Therefore believe.

Mr. Shaw says that Christ expected the practical good sense of his proposals to convert people, but he does not quote a single text to support this view. Nor, indeed, would it have been any use. You cannot convince any Eastern by reason. The Eastern bows to authority. Proving anything to him is a waste of time. He enjoys argument, but does not guide his conduct accordingly. He bows to authority, and if you wish to make him act in any particular manner all you need do is to exhibit your authority. You can do this only by exhibiting your power, and you can exhibit your power in only one of two ways, firstly, by miracles, secondly, by sticks. Take the well known case of John Nicholson, who so impressed the natives of the Punjab by his executive power that some of them turned him into a god, and worshipped him. He, being a particularly pious Christian, tried to beat it out of them; but the more he beat them, the more godlike he appeared!

Once again Mr. Shaw's ignorance of the East has led him astray. {46} He has not realized the normal attitude of such people as those among whom Jesus lived. In the expedition which attempted to climb Chogo Ri in 1902, we had a Swiss doctor in the party, and at every halting place established a little clinic. Practically all the work done was crude surgery, such as tooth-drawing, and tapping for dropsy. A great reputation was, however, acquired, and on the return journey he found the villages full of people, some brought from a great distance, waiting to be cured. But when the doctor brought out his instruments there was an immediate revulsion, or at the very least profound astonishment. They all expected to be cured by the laying-on of hands! Now, considering that these people, only a couple of months before, had seen with their own eyes the actual methods employed, the incident throws a search light on the workings of the Oriental mind.

Here then is the pitfall in which Mr. Shaw has become entrapped. These people would not only expect miracles, but create miracles out of anything that occurred which was in the least degree unusual. Not only the common people, but the most educated, believed absolutely in miracles. The whole 'history' of the Jews was a succession of miracles; and the Pharisees of the period, as is shown in the passage quoted above, had regular exorcists. We read (for instance) a rather amusing account of some competing thaumaturgists of an entirely orthodox character in Acts, XIX, 13 to 16. Then certain of the vagabond ('vagabond' is merely the rudeness of the translators: peripatetic would have been fairer. It means the same thing, but suggests Aristotle.) Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name {47} of the Lord Jesus, saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know: but who are ye?

If any additional argument be required, as seems hardly credible, it is that Peter immediately upon the death of Christ bases his whole argument upon miracles. Acts II, 22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know. Paul's trump card is always the resurrection. Mr. Shaw will doubtless reply that this merely shows the stupidity of the apostles; but that is no answer to the question as to whether miracles would or would not discredit any given teaching. The historical fact is that they did not do so. Witness the circumstance that those who call themselves Christians to-day still hang on to the miracles in spite not only of Rousseau's argument, but of those of all the free-thinkers. Is not Mr. Shaw aware that 'Paley's Evidences' is still the text book for the 'little-go' at Cambridge? When that is replaced by Tom Paine and Ingersoll, it may be admitted that the argument of Mr. Shaw had penetrated to the seats of light and learning. Mr. Shaw is perfectly right in saying that miracles would not convince him of the value of the doctrine of any man who performed them; but Mr. Shaw, like other philosophers, is too apt to think that all men are made in his image. When Immanuel Kant stated that there were certain things which every man thought, and must think, it was universally recognized that he must be a supreme genius on the ground that {48} he was the first man who had ever thought them!

The preface continues to say that the intellectual energy of sceptics and divines has been wasted for generations in arguing about the miracles on the assumption that Christianity is at stake in the controversy as to whether the stories of Matthew are false or true. Christianity is at stake. Remove the miracles,

remove the prophecies, and nothing is left but a little doctrine, much of it contradictory, as has already been shown, and in any case explicable in a dozen ways beside that which appeals to Mr. Shaw. There are practically no incidents in the life of Jesus which are not miraculous, for the simple reason that the Evangelists thought anything natural not worth recording. The demolition demanded by Mr. Shaw reminds one of Berkeley's abstraction of the qualities from Hyle, or Buddha's analysis of the idea of Atman. In fact, Mr. Shaw's purpose appears to be to show that Jesus is only a name for a person who held the social, ethical, and political opinions of Mr. Shaw himself. But surely such ideas are the common property of most first-class minds.

### **Matthew imputes Bigotry to Jesus**

The evidence on this point has already been given fully enough. No further comment is needed.

### **The Great Change**

Mr. Shaw now takes us to the 16th chapter of Matthew, verses 13 to 23. When Jesus came into the coasts of Ceasarea Phillippi, he asked his disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of {49} man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

One small criticism is necessary at the outset. Mr. Shaw says: And he accepts his destiny as a god, announcing that he will be killed when he goes to Jerusalem; for if he is really the Christ, it is a necessary part of his legendary destiny that he shall be slain. There is no trace of this John Barleycorn tradition in the Jewish hope of a Messiah. They merely expected an emancipator to restore the legendary glories of their race. Of course, there are some passages in the Hebrew Prophets which may be twisted to identify the Messiah with the 'slain god', notably {50} the famous 53rd chapter of Isaiah. But the Jews as a class do not seem to have had any idea of this kind.

We regret that we are unable to see the 'great change' in the character of Christ observed by Mr. Shaw. Many of the claims to supernatural power, and threats of divine vengeance on those who refuse him, which have been quoted above, come from earlier chapters in the gospel.

It is not the first time, either, that Jesus has been hailed as the Son of God. See Matthew XIV. 33: Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Nor is this the first time that Jesus has shown symptoms of what Mr. Shaw in his more secularist moments would call megalomania. See Matthew, XI, 27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

In Matthew, IX, 6., he also claims the divine prerogative to forgive sins. The theological teaching of Jesus appears perfectly consistent from start to finish. It is really extraordinary, and it is painful beyond expression, to note how carelessly Mr. Shaw has read the gospel. In this section he says that Jesus forgets his own teaching and threatens eternal fire and eternal punishment. If the reader will refer to the passages quoted above under the section, The Teachings of Jesus, he will find the earlier curses identical in style, and in some cases identical in actual wording with the latter. {51}

### **Jerusalem and the Mystical Sacrifice**

This section demands little comment; but it may be observed that Matthew says in chapter XXVII, verse 50, that 'Jesus cried again with a loud voice' after the complaint that he was forsaken, as recorded by Mr. Shaw. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this last cry was the 'It is finished' recorded by other evangelists. Now these words are not merely what they seem to be. They, or their equivalents *Konx Om Pax*, were the technical cry of triumph used in the initiations of the ritual of the slain god.

At the risk of tediousness and reiteration we must complain once more of the extraordinary bias shown by Mr. Shaw in his reading of the text. He is so determined to be not merely a secularist, but a secularist determined to read history into legend, that he omits altogether any incidents in the story of the Crucifixion which might upset that reading. It is really as bad criticism as that of the ingenious gentleman who quite correctly reported Jesus as having said (Matthew, XXII, 40) 'Hang all the law and the prophets.' It is submitted that this method is utterly vicious. It would be just as reasonable to take an Arabian Night from the *Alf laylah wa laylah*, remove all the evidently fabulous incidents, and conclude that there is no reason to suppose that the remainder is not a true story. Quite right; it may be true, but there is no reason why we should suppose it to be so, and where, as in this case, there is really no particular point in the story except the fabulous elements, the universe of our discourse is, so to speak, reduced to zero. Mr. Shaw is anxious to convert the world to the {52} belief that the Jesus of the Gospels was a socialist after Mr. Shaw's own heart, and his method is to take from a great mass of legend just those facts of the recorded life which suit his purpose, and just those recorded sayings which seem to bear out his contention. It would be possible to make a socialist out of Machiavelli or Hobbes, by a similar method of exegesis; and it might be rather amusing to go through the prefaces of Mr. Shaw and prove him a Tory. It would be quite easy.

### **Not this Man but Barabbas**

Mr. Shaw says The choice of Barabbas thus appears as a popular choice of the militant advocate of physical force as against the unresisting advocate of mercy. As Mr. Shaw admits, he has gained this conception of Barabbas not from Matthew, but from the other gospels. It, however, is not a 'popular' choice! Read Matthew XVII, 20 [*WEH NOTE: XXVII,20*]: But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. And there seems no reason to suppose that Barabbas was chosen because he advocated physical force. It seems more likely that his name was taken simply as that of a wellknown man [In this connection the reader is referred to Dr. J. G. Frazer's theory of the Book of Esther.], who happened to be popular in the way that brigands have always been from the beginning of the world. It is the romance of a brigand's life that commends him to the popular imagination. There is no reason why we should suppose that Barabbas was in any special sense an advocate of physical force. For there has never been in any country until of very late years any person so equally degenerate and imbecile as to advocate anything else as the ultimate ratio. {53} And of course if any other plan were adopted, it would be instantly upset by the first man who chose to pick up a stick. Jesus himself is the strongest possible advocate of physical force. He boasts (Matthew XXVI, 53.) 'Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels? His reason for not mobilizing the angels is simply (verse 56) that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. It is a mere postponement of the exercise of warrior power, for he says to the high priest, in verse 64. Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. How are Satan and the unbelieving to be cast into the Lake of Fire except by superior force? It hardly seems the programme for the Unresisting advocate of mercy.

The reader should get it entirely out of his head that Jesus is a forgiving kind of person. Even in the early part of his life he announces his mission in most uncompromising terms. In Matthew X, 34, 35, we read 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And on the Cross he says: Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do. Ignorance is the only excuse, He has a splendid chance to show nobility by forgiving Judas: and he missed it. {54} It is utterly incomprehensible to me how this superstition of 'gentle Jesus' has endured.



Even Shelley, a professed atheist, talks in Prometheus Unbound about 'his mild and gentle ghost wailing for the faith he kindled,' though on a previous occasion he had written of the Galilean Serpent. No strictures can be too severe for people who deliberately mutilate texts and emasculate characters. The hell-fire evangelists are a thousand times better as critics than the Renans. Bernard Shaw, by these remarks becomes intellectually inferior to Billy Sunday!

### **The Resurrection**

No comment is here needed except as a further illustration of Mr. Shaw's carelessness. It is not said that Jesus was buried in the family vault of Joseph of Arimathaea. On the contrary it is (Matthew, XXVII, 60) his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock. Which is a very different thing. It doesn't matter; but a man who drops eggs is not to be trusted to carry dynamite.

### **The Date of Matthew's Narrative**

One effect of the promise of Jesus to come again in glory during the lifetime of some of his hearers is to date the gospel without the aid of any scholarship. It must have been written during the lifetime of Jesus's contemporaries: that is, whilst it was still possible for the promise of his Second Coming to be fulfilled. The death of the last person who had been alive when Jesus said 'There be some of them that stand here that shall in no wise taste death till they see the Son of man coming in his {55} kingdom' destroyed the last possibility of the promised Second Coming, and bore out the incredulity of Pilate and the Jews. And as Matthew writes as one believing in that Second Coming, and in fact left his story unfinished to be ended by it, he must have produced his gospel within a lifetime of the crucifixion. Also, he must have believed that reading books would be one of the pleasures of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

The whole argument of this paragraph appears to rest upon completely bad psychology, alike of the writer of the gospel and the readers for whom it was intended. If Matthew had been worrying about possibilities in the ordinary sense of the word, he would not have got very far with his gospel! The merest glance at Matthew's mind, the most casual and superficial appreciation of it, shows that he would have been simply amazed had any one offered to him such an argument as Mr. Shaw presents. The difficulties with regard to the Second Coming of Jesus have been pointed out often enough; and I have yet to see the Christian who was in the least disturbed by them. Very few apologists have even gone so far as to take the trouble to explain away the promise of Jesus that he would return. Such an explanation in any case is fairly easy, either on the obvious mystical tack, or by showing that the Transfiguration fulfills the promise in part, the apparitions to Stephen and to Paul in part; and so on. (Mr. Shaw seems to forget that it was thousands of years before anybody doubted that Moses [*T NOTE: wrote?*] the Pentateuch, although his own death and burial are described in it.)

It is a very poor argument too. There is no reason at all {56} why a man should not describe his own death and burial. (Especially is this so with Moses, who was buried by God himself, so that no man knew where his tomb was!!! (Deut. XXXIV, 5,6.) As luck would have it, I did it myself some years ago in my Book of Lies, chapter 65! Would Mr. Shaw quote this as a proof that the book was not written by me, and not until after my death? It never occurred to religious writers of such periods to try to guard themselves against any rational criticism. The thing practically did not exist; and to this day the vast majority of Christians are absolutely incapable of understanding any such arguments, which they regard as mere blasphemy. They do not worry about it, even so much as to say that the text is corrupt or interpolated, or may be interpreted after another manner. They simply ride over it without seeing it. The most powerful arguments do not even rock the boat. The type of mind is different, the plane of thought is different. It is not possible to find a common ground for intellectual discussion between Charles Bradlaugh and Charles Spurgeon, because Bradlaugh bases everything upon the mind, and Spurgeon merely remarks The carnal mind is enmity against God.

Moreover, all attempts of this kind to date documents are absolutely unscholarly. A document may be composite, and incorporate older elements. We might as well try to date Mark Twain's Yankee at the Court of King Arthur by saying that the author shows so much knowledge of the intimate life of the king that he must have been a contemporary, or at the very least have been informed by eye-witnesses. There

are fifty possibilities of error in all documents of this class, and Mr. Shaw ignores them in a {57} way that can only be called beyond amazement.

The only real way to date a book is to possess a dated copy. If I possess among (or rather above) my treasures a Leaves from the Journal of our life in the Highlands, and that copy contain an indubitable signature of King Edward VII, authenticated by comparison with that signature in the archives of the state, one might be justified in believing that the book was genuine. The mere date upon the title-page would prove nothing. The volume might be a piracy of many years later, and all sorts of liberties might have been taken with the editing of such a book.

Any one with any knowledge of bibliography knows that this is not only possible but even likely. Witness the adventures of Burton's Arabian Nights. We have a codex of Matthew which certainly belongs to the third or fourth century, but there is no real evidence whatever that that codex is derived from any previous codex. It may have been the first time that the manuscript ever appeared in that form.

### **Class Type of Matthew's Jesus**

Most of the points in this section have been dealt with previously in various places, but we must draw attention to Mr. Shaw's final admission. All this shows a great power of seeing through vulgar illusions, and a capacity for higher morality than has yet been established in any civilized community; but it does not place Jesus above Confucius or Plato, not to mention more modern philosophers and moralists. 'All this', as has been shown, is by no means admissable. But it leaves us to expect a further revelation {58} in some other gospel which will place Jesus above Confucius and Plato. We shall see later whether this expectation is to be realized, or whether it is in the same class of promises as that of the Second Advent. We now turn to the gospel according to Mark.

## **Mark**

### **The Women Disciples and the Ascension**

There is little need of complaint in this section. Mark, as Mr. Shaw says, is brief, one may add mercifully brief; and Mr. Shaw also evidently agrees in the general opinion of scholars that Mark is on the whole a much more genuine document than Matthew. It is still composite, for the reasons already given in the case of Matthew. Most of the quotations which have been given above as evidence for this way of thinking have parallel passages in the older gospel.

We need only cavil at one point of interpretation. Mr. Shaw takes Mark's statement with regard to Joseph of Arimathaea, and not only misquotes it, but interprets it quite unjustifiably. Mr. Shaw says that Joseph is described by Mark as One who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God as if it were in the text; which however reads (Mark XV. 43) An honourable counsellor which also waited for the kingdom of God. Why should this suggest to Mr. Shaw that he was an 'independent' seeker? On the contrary, it is perfectly compatible with the statement of Matthew that he 'also himself was Jesus' disciple'. Mr. Shaw in this preface is making a special point of distinguishing between the gospels, but it is evident that he has not been writing with his authority in front {59} of him. The phrase 'also himself' is in Matthew XXVII, 57, and in Luke XXIII, 51. It is evident that Mr. Shaw is trusting an excellent but not quite perfect memory. It is an extremely small point; but it goes to prove a big one, that Mr. Shaw is careless again and again, and therefore an untrustworthy guide, where such extreme accuracy is required as is here the case.

Another example follows immediately in Mr. Shaw's very next paragraph. Mark earns our gratitude by making no mention of the old prophecies, and thereby not only saves time, but avoids the absurd implication that Christ was merely going through a predetermined ritual, like the works of a clock, instead of living. In point of fact, the gospel begins with the fulfilment of a prophecy (Mark, 1, 2, to 4) As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. There are also references to prophecy in Mark XII, 10, 35, and 36, and Mark XV, 27 28. Mr. Shaw's statement is generally true; but not as accurate as it ought to be in a work of this kind.

We must protest against a later statement in this paragraph of Mr. Shaw's. The ritual through which Jesus was going 'like the works of a clock' is universal. It is not absurd at all. We are all going through this ritual at this hour. If it were not so, the ritual could never have taken hold of the imagination of man in every civilization in the way in which it has done. The ritual is merely a dramatic statement of the most evident and important facts of nature {60}

Mr. Shaw says that it is impossible to discover whether Jesus 'means anything by a state of damnation beyond a state of error'. It is true that the passage quoted does not make this clear; but damnation in the regular Christian sense is constantly referred to in other parts of the gospel.

Mr. Shaw concludes On the whole Mark leaves the modern reader where Matthew left him. It is not here, then, that we are to look for any facts which will 'place Jesus above Confucius and Plato.' Perhaps we may have better luck with Luke.

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## Luke

### Luke the Literary Artist

There is nothing to alter in Mr. Shaw's account of Luke. It may be helpful, however, to add that many biblical scholars surmise that Luke was a Greek physician. This Gospel is in fact very suggestive of the Greek romances of the decadence. The importance of this characterization of Luke is that one would justifiably reprimand even a servant girl who attached any historical value to such a work. The gospel was evidently retained because of its appeal to the Greek colonists of Asia Minor, where Christianity had made tremendous strides. We can agree with the ordinary scholar that Matthew primarily intended to convince Jews that Jesus was the Messiah who they had been expecting. Matthew starts from the crack of the pistol: The Book of the Generations of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Luke has to explain to his readers in Chapter I, verse 5, that Herod was king of Judaea, and when he comes to genealogy does not stop at Abraham, but ends {61} (III, 38) which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God. We also note that Luke's Gospel is addressed by name to a certain Theophilus, evidently a Greek.

### The Charm of Luke's Narrative

Mr. Shaw might have emphasized even more than he does the extravagance of Luke's imagination. Not content with a miraculous birth for Jesus, he plagiarizes the story of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis (chapters XVII and XXI) in order to make a miracle out of the birth of John the Baptist! Mr. Shaw explains with admirable conciseness and clarity the difference in the characterization of Jesus given by Luke, but he does not tell his readers the reason, which is simply that given above, that it was addressed to a different audience.

This disposes of the cavil of the freethinker about 'conflicting gospels', but it also disposes of the claim of the orthodox as to inspiration. It is perfectly comprehensible that a life of the Kaiser written by the court historian at Potsdam should differ markedly from that compiled in the office of the Daily Mail. But if an argument of this sort is advanced to explain discrepancies, the canon of truth has been abrogated and that of expediency put in its place. When we find a cure-all advertising in the 'Daily Cough-drop' that will cure consumption, and in the Strand Mercury that it will cure specific disease, sensible people begin to doubt whether it will cure anything at all. In the most favourable case, they pay no heed to the advertisement, but inquire into the matter by means of analysis and clinical {62} experiment. It is therefore absolutely unsafe for the orthodox to bring forward the explanation given above for the contradiction in the gospel narrative.

### The Touch of Parisian Romance

If for 'Parisian' Mr. Shaw had written 'Greek' there would be a truer characterization. There is really nothing else to be said. But Luke has no sense of anything at all except his art, and art of any kind always bears the seed of mysticism within it. It is extraordinarily amusing to find James Thomson in the City of Dreadful Night indulging in qabalistic speculations in the second section of that magnificent poem, the greatest of its kind that was ever written[The poet follows a man who goes to a church, where Faith dies, a villa, where Love dies, and a squalid house, where Hope dies: and repeats eternally this mournful cycle. I ceased to follow, for the know of doubt  
Was severed sharply with a cruel knife:  
He circled thus for ever tracing out  
The series of the fraction left of Life;  
Perpetual recurrence in the scope  
Of but three terms, dead Faith, dead Love, dead Hope[Life divided by that persistent three = LXX = .210 333 ]. We should like, however, to add one remark, Mr. Shaw here admits that Luke can record a mystical view of the kingdom, yet still thinks of it as entirely material. What then becomes of his argument about the date of Matthew's Gospel? {63}

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## JOHN

### A New Story, and a New Character

Mr. Shaw's characterization of Jesus is a fairly sound one. He says that he gives the impression of an educated not to sophisticated mystic. The statement is, however, masked and overlaid by details of discrepancies.

He does not sufficiently emphasize the great discrepancy. John does not begin with Jesus at all. He begins with the Logos. The gospel starts in chapter I, verses 1-5. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. We learn the other half of the story later, Verses 9 to 14, That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Here are two main points. There is an eternal Light or Word which is capable of being made flesh. That is to say, John is concerned with an avatar, exactly like an Indian or a Gnostic. John's object is simply to prove that Jesus is that avatar. Hence John the Baptist is introduced to us entirely as a prophet, not in the least as a religious reformer. Read John, chapter I, verses 6 to 8. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The {64} same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but he was sent to bear witness of that Light.

John I, 15 to 16. John bare witness of him and cried, saying, This is he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

John, I, 19 to 27. And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No, Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not. Immediately that John sees Jesus he bears witness that he is this avatar. John, I, 29 to 37. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the

world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel. {65} therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples: and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! One of these disciples who followed Jesus proceeds to spread this statement. John, 1, 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is being interpreted, the Christ. This is a very remarkable verse. Two Jews are talking; one of them says that the Messiah has been found; naturally a Jew would have understood no other allusion. It is to be noted that John everywhere speaks of 'the Jews' as an alien race. The author of his Gospel was certainly not a Jew himself. This fact alone is sufficient to dispose of the imbecile identification of him with 'the beloved disciple'. The character of the latter was invented by John to please certain elements of psychology which were peculiarly dear to Greeks. But John immediately explains to his readers that Messiah merely means Christ, which is rather like explaining that the Prince of Wales is Balder the Beautiful. It is impossible in this brief essay to go into the entire story of the Christ idea, but it is as different from that of Messiah as Parzival is from Horatio Nelson. The error has arisen from the etymological accident that both words mean 'annointed'. {66} The Christ is a purely mystical conception, which is not only a person but a spiritual attainment. It comes from the Gnostics and then from Chaldea, India, and China. Even the most enlightened of the Jewish prophets, occupied as they were with the material prosperity of their country, show no glimmering of the Christ idea. The whole theology, philosophy, and eschatology connected with Christ are utterly different from anything in Judaism, except the high Qabalah, which was by no means accepted in a general way, some authorities (though not the best) going so far as to say that it had not yet been invented, but that it was a mediaeval forgery, or at the very best never antedated Rabbi Schimeon, who is credited with the Zohar, the date of which is given as the first century A.D. (Footnote: The date of the Qabalah. In the text of the Old Testament (Gen. XVII 5. XVII. 15) the numerical value of the name Abram is increased by five, and it becomes Abraham, while that of Sarai is reduced by five to Sarah, in connexion with the promise of a son. Some sort of Qabalah, deriving mystic truths from numerical considerations, therefore certainly existed at the date of the writing of the Book of Genesis. Students will note that this sort of trickery with words is common. It can hardly be an accident of trickery that MITHRAS the sun-god adds to 300, and is later spelt MEITHRAS 365, as is also his secret name ABRAXAS. With regard to 360 and 365, consult the authorities on the ancient calenders.)

It is evident from all this that John was writing to an extremely specialized class of persons. A few of the old sayings and doings of Jesus are retained; but the characteristics of the Oriental 'holy man' have practically vanished. The parables of {67} the Synoptics disappear completely, and are replaced by a single parable (John X, 1-6) which is hardly a parable at all, but a metaphor. The sayings of Jesus are totally different from those recorded by the synoptics. Even the 'Sermon on the Mount' and the 'Lord's Prayer' are omitted. Nor are there any practical injunctions as to life. The conversation of Jesus is plain Greek mysticism with hardly a tinge of anything else. He is almost as anti-semitic as Mr. Hilaire Belloc. He does not even keep the Jews' passover, as he does in other gospels. He has a perfectly ordinary supper. (John XIII, 1, 2,)

### **John the Immortal Eyewitness**

Mr. Shaw takes it for granted that John is at least in part the writer of the gospel bearing his name, but the evidence for this view is almost comically indirect. It rests principally upon the 24th verse of chapter XXI: This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. The identification of John is simply that the disciple who 'testifieth of these things' is also the disciple whom Jesus loved. (John XXI, 20.) But there is no evidence whatever except ecclesiastical tradition that this disciple was John, unless we admit the minute literary point that the writer of the gospel is careful not to make the identification. This is presumed to be John's modesty. But the grounds for an

actual identification are astonishingly small. The good folk of Georgia would hardly convict a negro of chicken-stealing on such evidence.

It may be further remarked that this argument for John's authorship somewhat defeats itself. In the verse quoted above, it appears much more likely that the book was written by some one {68} claiming to be a disciple of John, and using in all probability both his conversation and manuscript in the preparation of the document. This gospel is composite from much more contradictory elements than the other gospels. For it attempts to combine with a more or less Jewish story not the sayings of a wandering ascetic, but the speculations of a Gnostic or an Essene.

The orthodox identify this John with the author of Revelation, and here again we are plunged into the most extraordinary whirlpool of contradiction. It is of course perfectly possible for a writer to develop from his earlier manner to his later manner, to alter his views, to increase his knowledge; but it is very rare to find such development in a simple fisherman. The extreme sophistication of intellect is essentially Greek or Phoenician. There is nothing at all like it in any Hebrew documents of this period. It is evidently of a piece with the Bruce Papyrus[*WEH NOTE: This papyrus is the Codex Brucianus, Bruce MS. 96. Bod. Lib. Oxford. It contains the principal surviving collection of Gnosticism of the Valentinian line, quite different from the descriptions found in Patristic sources. The Codex also contains magical and mystical works, including the attribution of the Greek alphabet to Astrology. Only parts of it have been translated from the Coptic and published, notably A Coptic Gnostic Treatise contained in the Codex Brucianus, Charlotte A. Baynes, 1933. Crowley probably read of it in G.R.S.Mead.*].

It seems perfectly clear that the gospel is a clumsy dovetailing of some manuscripts of the general character of Mark with a merely mystical treatise. The effect is that of using that charming book of extracts The wisdom of Bernard Shaw, to fill up the dialogue of 'Kipps'. It seems an impossibility, at least to such minds as mine, to regard this gospel in any other light.

Mr. Shaw disregards the views of the experts as to the date of the gospels on the ground that the experts quarrel among themselves. In agreeing with him, it appears sufficient to base one's amiability on the fact that, no matter how old any document may be, one cannot positively affirm that part of it may not have been copied from some earlier document, perhaps contemporary {69} with the events described in it. The only exception to this rule would be the case of a plain historical statement whose accuracy was confirmed in all points from other sources.

An amusing example of recent date is the 'prophecy of the Abbot Johannes'. Here the course of the European war was described in simple symbolism. Down to the Battle of the Marne, the account exhibited praiseworthy accuracy. After that point it went off the rails. It was easy to conclude that the prophecy was not ancient, but had been written immediately after the Germans had been rolled back from Paris. There was less doubt in this case because the person responsible for the 'prophecy' had been known for many years as a charlatan, and as a literary composer and jester of considerable ability. Something of the same sort of argument appears to underlie Mr. Shaw's contention as to the date of the gospel. His argument is rather long to quote verbatim, but it is mainly that John expected to live until the Second Coming of Christ; and he says John was certainly not the man to believe in the Second Coming and yet give a date for it after that date had passed. The conclusion appears to be that John was alive and not dead when he wrote the gospel.

Mr. Shaw is naif enough to offer us his personal impression, as a student of literature, that this gospel was written by an eyewitness. He says: John's claim to give evidence as an eyewitness whilst the others are only compiling history is supported by a certain verisimilitude which appeals to me as one who has preached a new doctrine and argued about it, as well as written stories. This verisimilitude may be dramatic art backed {70} up by knowledge of public life; but even at that we must not forget that the best dramatic art is the operation of a divinatory instinct for truth. Would it be too much to ask Mr. Shaw to trouble himself to dream the Derby Winner three times running? This remark may seem unduly indignant, but there is really little to choose.

Browning asks how we are to distinguish between Washington's oracle and Sludge's 'itch O' the elbow when at whist he ought to trump. How are we to distinguish between the story of an eyewitness and that of a clever literary artist, who is trying to persuade us that he is an eyewitness? How many war stories have been written in Fleet Street and in New York City by men who have never heard a shot fired? As a

general rule 'fake' stories read more convincingly than genuine ones because the liar is naturally at great pains to appear plausible. The 'impression' of a literary critic is the very least argument that ought to be brought forward.

But we may go a little further than this. It may easily appear to some that the passage of which Mr. Shaw makes so much is to be interpreted in a precisely opposite sense. Let us quote it in full. (John XXI, 21 to 23) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. It is at least possible to interpret this passage as an attempt to avoid the very consequences which Mr. Shaw fears. I therefore assume as a matter of common sense that, interpolations apart, the gospels are derived from narratives written in the first century A.D. I include John, because though it may be claimed that he hedged his position by claiming that Christ, who specially {71} loved him, endowed him with a miraculous life until the Second Coming, the conclusion being that John is live at this moment, I cannot believe that a literary forger could hope to save the situation by so outrageous a pretension.

It may appear to some that all this is beating the air. Let us put up a perfectly simple and natural scene and look whether this is not almost inevitable. The scene is laid, let us suppose, in one of the Seven Churches that are in Asia, probably Ephesus. A fishing boat has come in from Patmos, and one of the sailors, who is a Christian, comes to the house of the 'angel' of the church, stupefied and heartbroken. I bring the most terrible news, he says to the 'angel'. John is dead; and Christ has not yet returned! All present are thunderstruck. Jesus has not fulfilled his promise. The whole of their faith has broken away from under them. It is a spiritual earthquake. Falsus in uno, falsus in omni. The entire theory of Christianity has broken down. The hope in which they have all been living, for the sake of which they have endured ostracism and even martyrdom, is annihilated with a single blow. Fortunately there is a young man present, who in his worldly life has been trained by the sophists in the School of Retic. Be of good cheer, Brethren, he exclaims. Jesus never said that John would tarry until he came again. Jesus said not unto him; 'he shall not die' but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Much virtue in If! The Brethren immediately cheer up. Instructions are given that the matter be explained on these lines to the whole church, and all goes merrily as before. Is not this an adequate explanation? {72}

Agree with the paleographers that John is a composite document of late date, and all the difficulty disappears. On the other hand, what adversary is there but Mr. Shaw's 'hunch' that the gospel was written by an eyewitness?

Not but that Mr. Shaw at his initiation was taught to be cautious! I therefore assume as a matter of common sense that, interpolations apart, the gospels are derived from narratives written in the first century A.D. Remove the interpolations, which may mean removing nearly everything, and it remains 'common sense' to suppose that there was some sort of contemporary document used in the compilation.

Let us do the same thing with 'Macbeth'. Macbeth and Banquo must obviously be discarded because they are mixed up with evidently fabulous elements such as witches; remove Lady Macbeth as a mere artistic attempt to give feminine interest to the story; remove Duncan and his thanes as 'mere interpolations' only provided in order to give Macbeth somebody to murder, and conclude by saying that A certain verisimilitude hints, and common sense declares, that Shakespeare was an eyewitness of the scenes which he describes.

### **The Peculiar Theology of Jesus**

There is little to say on this section, which deals principally with the attitude of Jesus, though Mr. Shaw might have gone much further in emphasizing the constant quotation of the mystic commonplaces of that and every other period, which punctuate the reiterated claims of Jesus to be the Christ, the avatar of Vishnu, or whatever else you like to call the Father. {73}

But there is one astonishing statement. John has no grip of the significance of these scraps which he has picked up; he is far more interested in a notion of his own that man can escape death and do even more extraordinary things than Christ himself; in fact he actually represents Jesus as promising this explicitly, and is finally let into the audacious hint that he, John, is himself immortal in the flesh. Still, he does not miss the significant sayings altogether. The overwhelming audacity of this statement makes one gasp for

breath. John fills chapter after chapter with these sayings. He even interpolates them in the most unexpected places. Between the exit of Judas, for example, and the end of the Supper we have no less than four chapters, totalling 117 verses. Something like 20% of the whole gospel! And John has 'no grip of the significance of these scraps which he has picked up'. One stands stupended.

It is perfectly true that these mystic passages are totally incompatible with the other ideas mentioned to such minds as Mr. Shaw's. But that is merely an argument for the composite nature of the gospel. There is a somewhat similar case however, observable today. We have the Tao Teh King, a mystical treatise at once abstruse and simple, the most admirable of all the ancient classics of mysticism. But in practise the Taoists of to-day are mere fetichists. It might be argued that John was such a person, that he quoted his classic as a matter of form without understanding it. But the document still remains in every reasonable sense of the word composite. {74}

### **John Agreed as to the Trial and Crucifixion**

The substance of this section hardly justifies the title. Mr. Shaw is mostly concerned to ask why Jesus did not defend himself, and gives the evident reply that Jesus believed himself to be John Barleycorn. Mr. Shaw points out that all the gospels agree on this point. The consensus on this point is important, because it proves the absolute sincerity of Jesus's declaration that he was a god. No impostor would have accepted such dreadful consequences without an effort to save himself. No impostor would have been nerved to endure them by the conviction that he would rise from the grave and live again after three days. Fortunately he saves himself by continuing If we accept the story at all we must believe this.

But why should we accept the story at all? What is unnatural in a man, especially a militant man who drives money changers out of temples, is natural enough if applied to the Sun or to the Seed. If the words and deeds of Jesus are simply those of the principal actor in the drama of John Barleycorn, we need be no more surprised than we are when we hear a lady of doubtful reputation (and it is said there were no less than four such on the stage in the bad old days about one hundred years ago) explain to the villain that she prefers death to dishonour.

Mr. Shaw reiterates his view with regard to the date, and I think it unreasonable to doubt that all four wrote their narratives in full faith that the other promise would be fulfilled too, and that they themselves might live to witness the Second Coming. But all four are by no means agreed about the Second Coming. Matthew (chapter XXIV) gives all sorts of premonitory symptoms, {75} evidently expanded from the account in Mark, and both say that this generation shall not pass until all these things be done. But Luke's wording differs considerably. The word 'generation' could, moreover be taken to mean 'race' John omits this passage altogether. In any case it seems quite clear that if the church could accept the gospels despite this alleged difficulty, the evangelists, who are far less critical and sophisticated than those Fathers of the Church, many of them eminent Greek scholars well trained in dialectics, who made the canon of Scripture, may have ignored it. There is no reason for supposing that the writers of the gospel were in any way conscious of the trouble that they were going to cause in the purlieux of the Tivoli, to say nothing of the shores of Lake Pasquaney N.H., U.S.A. some chiliads later! [*T NOTE: Crowley had an important mystical vision here which he referred to as the Star-Sponge Vision. In this vision he saw the interconnectedness of all things and described the night sky as nothingness with sparkles, but oh, what sparkles!.*]

Here we are, by the way, at the end of John, and we cannot find that Mr. Shaw has redeemed his promise to place Jesus above Confucius and Plato.

### **Credibility of the Gospels**

In this section Mr. Shaw indulges in his characteristic whimsicality. He gives various examples of things generally believed which never happened, and things generally disbelieved which did happen. He points out quite admirably that life itself is the miracle of miracles, and concludes in a totally sceptic mood that there is no reason why any given person should believe any given thing. His section ends as follows: I am convinced that ia dozen sceptics were to draw up in parallel columns a list of the events narrated in the gospels, which they consider credible [Credible is a silly word. It only means 'consonant with the main



content of our knowledge of the Universe.' Hence any fact which when established requires an extension of that knowledge is antecedently incredible.

Now the canon of credibility varies widely because the knowledge of men varies widely. If I describe the fall of a man from a plank thirty feet above the street, and say 'a second later his head struck the flagstones', not one person in ten thousand would see anything peculiar or surprising. Yet the truth of the statement would imply the uprooting of the whole banyan tree of metaphysics. I should have described a 'miracle' of just the same kind as Joshua's prestidigitation of the Sun and the Moon. [T NOTE: *The rate of acceleration of a falling body is 32 feet per second per second*] and {76} incredible respectively, their lists would be different in several particulars. Belief is literally a matter of taste.

Mr. Shaw's question is just like the famous 'Have you left off beating your moth-in-law'? No sceptic with a grain of sense would fall into so silly a trap. All Mr. Shaw's writings show that he is totally incapable of understanding the scientific type of mind. Huxley has stated the Canon of Belief so admirably that it would be the grossest impudence on my part to attempt to better it. One must simply refer Mr. Shaw to the pages of that great man, in my opinion as eminent in philosophy as he was in science. But one may say briefly that the scientific mind is concerned entirely with the weighing of evidence. Mr. Shaw says Belief is not dependent on evidence and reason. Every scientific man that ever weighed a precipitate would deny this flatly. It is true only of the belief of the vulgar and the untrained mind. {77}

He goes on to say There is as much evidence that the miracle occurred as that the Battle of Waterloo occurred, or that a large body of Russian troops passed through England in 1914 to take part in the war on the western front. This statement (which is of course perfectly accurate) reveals a lamentable state of mind. It does not occur to Mr. Shaw for a single moment to inquire into the quality of the evidence. The Russian story was not believed for a second by any one who happened to know that Archangel is only served by a single line of railway. It was not believed by any one who was in a position to know the facts. It was believed by people whose minds were such that if they saw a railway carriage with the blinds drawn, it was a natural conclusion that the carriage contained several hundred thousand Russians.

In other parts of this paper are given examples of modern belief in miracles. Credulity is entirely a matter of education, incidentally, at times, of very specialized education. There were plenty of so-called educated people who thought aeroplanes impossible. But engineers who had studied the subject thoroughly were not among them. So far as any such person was incredulous, it would be a very modified incredulity. He would say, The problem cannot be solved unless we can get an engine developing a certain ratio of power to weight, and unless we can get a material of a certain proportion of strength to weight; and I rather doubt whether we shall be able to find such. This sort of incredulity is perfectly reasonable, and is immediately destroyed by new evidence. The common incredulity or credulity of the ignorant and prejudiced classes is simply not worth discussion. Belief is {78} literally a matter of taste; but only among people who are so intellectually inferior that they have never taught themselves to think.

### Fashions of Belief

Mr. Shaw develops his thesis in an extremely amusing manner, doubly amusing, for thereby he illustrates yet another lacuna in his mind. He has not studied the Middle Ages, and he has not the key to the language in which they wrote. In order to elucidate this we must make a somewhat lengthy excursus on the subject of the science and philosophy of that period of history.

In the first instance, it should be mentioned that the system of what we may call numerical hieroglyphics, which is about to come under our consideration, dates very much further back than what we call the Middle Ages. Its origin is in fact lost in antiquity. The Book of Revelation is full of numerical symbolism. Witness the problem of 'the number of the beast', over which so many people have gone mad. Note also the four beasts, and the seven seals, and four and twenty elders, and the seven heads, and the ten horns, and foursquare city of God with its twelve gates, and twelve foundations, its length and breadth, and height of twelve thousand furlongs, and its wall of cubits twelve by twelve. Any one who supposes that John meant these numbers as numbers knows nothing of numbers.

But John is after all much later than Daniel, who is almost as full of numbers. He too, has various beasts to correspond to the four quarters, and he too has mystical times like seventy weeks and three score and

two weeks and one thousand, two hundred {79} and ninety days, and one thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days.

In profane history too, we have elaborate systems of numbers like that of Pythagoras, and we have the Jewish Qabalah and the Greek Qabalah, this last so important that no less an authority than Dr. S.H. Perry has said, Nothing matters but the Greek Qabalah. The oldest book in the world, The Yi King, is based entirely upon what is really a numerical foundation, the combination of two things taken first three and then six at a time.

The imagination of the earliest philosophers was exercised by the question, What are Numbers? Simple numerical relations excited them tremendously. 'Magic squares' were considered really magical. It struck them as enormously significant that the number nine should always remain the result of adding together the digits of any number which was divisible by nine. In one of the Oracles of Zoroaster it says, The number nine is sacred, and attains the summit of perfection. and again, The mind of the Father said 'Into three'; and immediately all things were so divided.

Now then let us try to discover what the ancients meant by the number four. They noticed that you could not make a magic square of any four numbers, though you can of one, or nine, or sixteen, or twenty-five, up the series as far as you care to carry it. They also noticed the four quarters, and of course a hundred other things. From all these consideration [sic], they got the idea of four as expressing principally dominion and limitation and resistance and so on, until ultimately the number four became an extremely complex concept, of which its definition as one more than three and one less {80} than five was the smallest part; Consequently 'four beasts about the throne of God' means that his power extended in every direction. It does not mean that there were four of them.

We have chosen an exceptionally simple case to illustrate a general truth. Mr. Shaw is only telling a fraction of the truth when he says that sevens were all the rage. All the numbers were all the rage, but each had its special significance. Seven was considered the perfect number, or rather one of the perfect numbers, because it united the spiritual three, which was what may be called the first expansion or explanation of one, and the four, which represented the first expansion or explanation of two

One, of course, is the originally perfect number, because, however much you multiply it by itself it remains one, while two is the original imperfect number, because it implies conflict. One is therefore spirit, two represents matter; and seven consequently becomes a harmonization of spirit and matter, the number in which they again unite. Similarly twelve is 'perfect', as another form of harmonizing three and four.

There was a bad aspect to seven, because ten was the completion of the units, and a map of the universe having been constructed on the basis of these ten numbers, and the first three being given to the Trinity, the remaining seven were called the Inferiors. Thus in the Qabalah we have 'ten hells' grouped in seven palaces!

It is therefore to be understood that when a medieval philosopher spoke of seven anything or twelve anything, he did not mean that if you counted them there would be seven or twelve. He was characterizing them in an extremely elaborate and subtle manner, which no other words could have expressed. He was conveying {81} an idea beyond words, just as every great poet does. So also the criticisms levelled by Freethinkers at the Doctrine of the Trinity have been merely examples of ignoratio elenchi; and Christians were unable to defend it because they too had no idea of what the Fathers of the Church meant by it. Criticisms by Christians of other worships, with their strange rites, have been equally foolish for the most part. The founders wisely shrouded their truth in hieratic symbol.

The schoolmen were extraordinarily clever at these hieroglyphs. Instead of laughing at them, we should try to understand them. We may take for instance the lines beginning Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferioque priores. Which are not even Latin, but which contain in themselves practically the whole of the laws of thought even as they are known to-day. Every single letter in the modern form of the verses stands for an important truth!*[WEH NOTE: These names and words form part of a set of mnemonics used by students of logic to memorize syllogism modes and structures. The vowels in the words signify the valid moods of each figure of the syllogism, and some of the consonants show how to reduce the modes of some syllogistic figures to the simple form. The s, ,,,,p, ,,,,m and c consonants show how to reduce imperfect moods to perfect moods. Crowley's selection is known as the Ist Figure and modernly rendered: Barbara*

*Celarent Darii Ferio. The other two figures are Cesare Camestres Festino Baroco and Darapti Felapton Disamis Datisi Bocardo Ferrison. For more information, see Osterle's Logic, pp. 147-150.* We are much too ready to assume that our ancestors were fools.

But to return to Mr. Shaw's 'fashions of belief', he says to us; The number seven is the stamp of superstition. It may be so among the superstitious, but it is not so among men of science, a class of persons with whom Mr. Shaw should really try to get acquainted. Has he never heard of the Periodic Law, which dates from 1828, the division of the elements on a sevenfold basis? He says that We will believe in nothing less than millions. It is perfectly true that we have millions in astronomy and bacteriology, but we still have two arms and two legs. There are still seven holes in our heads, and the number of the main bodies of the solar system has not increased from seven to millions but {82} only from seven to nine.

### **Credibility and Truth**

Mr. Shaw continues his diatribe in this section. He says, The modern man who believes that the earth is round is grossly credulous. Flat earth men drive him to fury by confusing him with the greatest ease when he tries to argue about it. Mr. Shaw's acquaintances do seem to be very unsophisticated people. The charm of their conversation must be amazing. Most schoolboys know the evidence of astronomy, the evidence of exploration, the evidence from eclipses, the evidence of the disappearance of a ship at sea [*NOTE: below the horizon*], the evidence even perhaps from the Bedford Canal experiment [*WEH NOTE: I am not acquainted with this one, but the Bedford Canal was probably a dead-level and straight waterway. If one sighted a transit on the tip of the mast of a boat going away on it, the curvature of the earth would cause the mast tip to dip*] Mr. Shaw continues, The things he believes may be true, but that is not why he believes it: he believes it because in some mysterious way it appeals to his imagination. Imagination has nothing to do with it; if he knows it at all, it is because he has been taught it, and if he has been taught it properly he should remember the reasoning which ought to have been given him at the time.

Mr. Shaw admits that he can laugh at the earlier estimates of the number of angels that can be accommodated on the point of a needle. This simply means that Mr. Shaw's knowledge of the subject is derived entirely from the report of some flippant journalist. If he had studied the question first-hand, he would have known that it was not only serious, but vitally important to philosophy. There is nothing in all this talk of credulity and incredulity. It is all a question of knowledge and ignorance. As Huxley pointed out, belief is a pathological state of mind. {83} Either you know or don't know, and if you don't know you had better say so. If it is necessary to speak at all on subjects where doubt exists, you should give the arguments on all sides fully and fairly, and if your judgement incline to one side rather than the other you should explain with the utmost care your reasons, and even then you should be very cautious.

Mr. Shaw admits later in this section, A Mahometan Arab will accept literally and without question parts of the narrative which an English Archbishop has to reject or explain away. Can Mr. Shaw not see the reason for this? It is that the English Archbishop has been educated in certain ways which make it impossible for him to accept certain obvious fables for truth. The Mohammedan has not that knowledge, and therefore simply believes what he is told. We know that Joshua did not cause the sun to stand still in the valley of Ajalon. We cannot even hedge by saying that he caused the earth to stand still, because as Mr. Wells has admirably shown in the story of the man who could do miracles, to check the revolution of the earth would send everything on its surface flying into space, and even if another miracle prevented this, we should require a third miracle to prevent astronomers discovering the traces of the perturbation. But an Arab, knowing nothing of mechanics, is not in the least surprised. He can stop a camel; indeed, he often finds it hard to make it go; and he sees no reason why the sun should not be stopped in an equally simple manner.

It must be admitted that Mr. Shaw has whittled at the branch he is sitting on as much as he dare. His final paragraph is as follows: Every reader takes from the Bible what he can get. In {84} submitting a precis of the gospel narratives I have not implied any estimate either of their credibility or of their truth. I have simply informed him or reminded him, as the case may be, of what these narratives tell us about their hero. The first sentence is splendid! He stumbles over his own toe, and admits that any other critic may be

justified in proving Jesus to have been a Vedantist or a Thug, as he is himself trying to make him out a Socialist. The second sentence is admirably cautious; but Mr. Shaw is basing his argument on the truth of certain sections-carefully selected sections-of the Bible. It is useless to try to couch his statement in the form This perhaps imaginary person is said by some unknown party to have said so and so. The cogency of his argument depends very much, at least in the minds of most people who will read him, upon the substantial truth of some part of the gospel story.

The last sentence in the passage quoted above is the one which we are principally at pains to deny. It has been our endeavor to show that Mr. Shaw has by no means given an accurate account of what the gospels tell us about Jesus.

### **Christian Iconolatry and the Peril of the Iconoclast**

Mr. Shaw now asks, Whether, if and when the medieval and Methodist will-to-believe the Salvationist and miraculous side of the gospel narratives fail us, as it plainly has failed the leaders of modern thought, there will be anything left of the Mission of Jesus. He is himself one of the leaders of modern thought, and has evidently considered this question with extraordinary {85} care. He abandons the worship of Jesus, he abandons the stories about Jesus, and he argues that the aloofness produced by the idolatry given to him has made him unreal and unimportant. He proposes to play Pygmalion by turning this image into a political force, a rallying centre for revolutionary influences.

It appears that here is a confusion of thought. Why not use Shelley or Karl Marx or Mr. Shaw himself? Here are real persons who really did suffer for the faith that was in them. Why then choose Jesus, simply on account of the prestige of Jesus, which depends entirely upon that worship of him, and those stories about him, which Mr. Shaw has expressly rejected in order to bring his image to life! To parallel: I admit that the advice of Polonius is neither better nor worse because I have discovered (being a crank) that Shakespeare did not write it; and when I am asked why I should bother my head about the advice, I say reverently Shakespeare wrote it.

I hate to beat a dead horse-but if Mr. Shaw claims that it is Pegasus?

### **The Alternative to Barabbas**

We have now reached a point when argument is thrown aside, and the *petitio principii* is in full swing. Now those who, like myself, see the Barabbas social organization as a failure, and are convinced that the Life Force (or whatever you choose to call it) cannot be finally beaten by any failure, and will even supersede humanity by evolving a higher species if we cannot master the problems raised by the multiplication of our own numbers, {86} have always known that Jesus had a real message, and felt the fascination of his character and doctrine.

Not that we should nowadays dream of claiming any supernatural authority for him, much less the technical authority which attaches to an educated modern philosopher and jurist. But when, having entirely got rid of Salvationist Christianity, and even contracted a prejudice against Jesus on the score of his involuntary connection with it, we engage on a purely scientific study of economics, criminology, and biology, and find that our practical conclusions are virtually those of Jesus, we are distinctly pleased and encouraged to find that we are doing him an injustice, and the nimbus that surrounds his head in the pictures may be interpreted some day as a light of science rather than a declaration of sentiment or a label of idolatry.

May we submit in reply to this firstly that there are quite a number of people (from Laotze to Charles Bradlaugh) who are quite sound about Barabbas and the Life Force, yet who have not known or felt what they are here asserted to have done? Nor do the vast majority of students of economics (and the rest of it) find that their practical conclusions are virtually those either of Jesus or of Mr. Bernard Shaw.

As to the fascination of his character and doctrine, I wish to call the very special attention of the reader to the fact that the purely literary value of a 'gospel' of any kind or its translation is of as much importance as the brightness of a spoon bait in salmon fishing. The great classics of religion rarely travel beyond their own climate, as Frazer and fifty others have {87} shown; but they never travel far beyond their own language. The Qu'ran in English is mere ditchwater for the most part; in Arabic it is sublime poetry. The

same is true of most Indian and Chinese Classics.

Hence Protestantism is due to the accident that the translation called the Authorized Version was done by scholars of that period of the marvellous flowering of English which not only gave us Marlowe and Shakespeare and Malory, but such masters of translation as North for Plutarch, Florio for Montaigne, Urquhart and Motteux for Rabelais, and a dozen more. Previous translations, like Wicklyffe's, possessing small literary value, never took hold of the hearts or imagination of the people. The German translation, it is said, is also exceedingly fine: which accounts for the vogue of Lutheranism in that country.

Mr. Shaw imagines the Bible to be out of date, as he imagines himself to be superseding Shakespeare. How the twentyfirst century will laugh!

No; the Bible is great literature-in parts; and will stand as such while Shakespeare stands.

But its doctrine will never convince Islam, until a translator arises who can match Mohammed's sonorous and exquisitely balanced prose, with its internal rimes and its incomparable rhythm, that is at once like the thunder, and like the simoom, and like the whisper of the desert wind. And there is many an immoral and indecent book which lives by such virtue; we may admire the manner of such while we reprehend the matter.

Mr. Shaw goes on to announce in summary form the doctrines {88} which he has selected as being those of Jesus. We shall deal with these by the simple process of printing parallel passages, at the risk of recapitulation. It will be seen that nearly every statement made by Mr. Shaw is categorically contradicted by Jesus himself in one or other of his sayings.

**1. The kingdom of heaven is within you.**

Matthew XIII 47 to 50. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just. It is quite evident from this passage that the conception of the kingdom is that of the ordinary Protestant.

Luke XIII, 24 to 28. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

John XIV, 2, 3. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there {89} ye may be also. There is no question whatever of any spiritual kingdom in either of these passages. Dozens of others could be quoted, but I picked in two instances such as contain the actual expression 'kingdom of heaven'.

**2. You are the son of God; and God is the Son of man.**

Matthew XXIII, 33. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can we escape the damnation of hell?. If Mr. Shaw is right God is a viper.

Mark VII, 21 to 23. For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. This can hardly be called compatible with either of Mr. Shaw's statements.

John III, 3[*WEH NOTE: Actually John III, 13*]. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. Jesus here insists that he is the only son of God. There are plenty of other such passages.

John VIII, 23. And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath: I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world: another text on the same line, distinguishing Jesus from other men.

John VIII, 41, 42, and 44. Ye do the deeds of you father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, if God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceed forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a {90} murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own:

for he is a liar, and the father of it. No contradiction can be more categorical than this.

**3.** God is a spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and not an elderly gentleman to be bribed and begged from.

Matthew VI, 11. Give us this day our daily bread.

Matthew VII, 11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Mark II, 24.[*WEH NOTE: should be XI, 24*] Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

John XV, 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John XVI, 23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Nothing much is said about bribery, but the implication is always that we have to keep on good terms with God. The bribe suggested is always belief in Jesus.

**4.** We are members one of another; so that you cannot injure or help your neighbour without injuring or helping yourself.

Matthew VII, 23, And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

John XVII, 9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. It is to be noticed in the latter passage that Jesus is quite satisfied {91} with the 'elect'. He will not even use his obviously great influence with the Father to save one other soul.

**5.** God is your father: you are here to do God's work; and you and your father are one. This is little more than a paraphrase of sentence 2 above.

**6.** Get rid of property by throwing it into the common stock.

Matthew XXVI, 9, 10. For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. Here we have a direct prohibition of the course recommended by the Shavian Jesus.

Mark X, 29, 30. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the gospel's. But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come eternal life.

Luke XVIII, 29, 30. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and the world to come life everlasting. These passages show clearly that material rewards were to be looked for by the disciples.

**7.** Dissociate your work entirely from money payments. It is not clear upon what passage in the gospels Mr. Shaw relies.

**8.** If you let a child starve you are letting God starve. {92}

Again one is at loss to discover Mr. Shaw's authority

**9.** Get rid of all anxiety about to-morrow's dinner and clothes, because you cannot serve two master: God and Mammon. This is partially contradicted by the texts quoted above in reference to material rewards. The passages from which Mr. Shaw gets this doctrine have been explained elsewhere as part of the regular formula of the wandering ascetic.

**10.** Get rid of Judges and punishment and revenge.

Matthew XII, 36, 37. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Matthew XVIII, 7, 8. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life half or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Matthew XIX, 28. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in

the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Mark III, 28, 29. Verily I say unto you. All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. {93}

Mark XVI, 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Luke XI, 32. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Luke XVIII, 7, 8. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

John III, 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John V, 26 to 29. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

John IX, 39. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come {94} into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

John XII, 31. Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

John XII, 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. Mr. Shaw may object that these passages refer mostly to divine judgement, but surely that has proved a far more terrible weapon against the unfortunate than any merely human oppression and injustice.

**11.** Love your neighbour as yourself, he being a part of yourself.

Matthew X, 14, and 15. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. This is not loving your neighbours to any marked extent! Professor Huxley has dealt exhaustively with the Gadarene Swine, showing that if Jesus himself loved his neighbours, he was at least a little careless about their property, which was in this instance their sole means of livelihood.

**12.** And love your enemies: they are your neighbours.

Luke XIII, 26, 27, and 28. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and {95} Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. It is useless to urge that Jesus intended us to love our enemies in this world, while permitting their eternal damnation in another. The doctrine of supernatural punishment for one's enemies is but the invention [As Jung shows, the unfulfilled wish of the slave manifests itself in his dreams, and actually in his myths.] of the coward and the slave.

**13.** Get rid of your family entanglements. Every mother you meet is as much your mother as the woman who bore you. Every man you meet is as much your brother as the man she bore after you. Don't waste your time at family funerals grieving for your relatives: attend to life, not to death: there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and better. In the kingdom of Heaven, which as aforesaid, is within you, there is no marriage nor giving in marriage, because you cannot devote your life to two divinities: God and the person you are married to.

It is difficult to find passages to contradict Mr. Shaw's assertions, but he has subtly misrepresented the meaning of the passages on which he founds the doctrine. Take the obvious passage in Luke XIV, 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. It seems to follow from this that everybody is to be 'loved as your neighbour' except yourself and your family. Such a statement can only be interpreted

reasonably in light of Eastern asceticism. It is the characteristic formula of renunciation demanded of every disciple {96} by every 'holy man'. Mr. Shaw, in his wildest moments would not seriously suggest that we should all kick our mothers out of doors, and ask the rest of the town to take her place. Moreover, we find that Jesus himself took pains to have his mother adopted by the beloved disciple (John XIX, 25-27). As to the general point of the supposed conflict between the interests of the individual and the state, we find that it was just those civilisations which Christianity corrupted which held the doctrine to which Mr. Shaw would unquestionably subscribe. We here quote the great authority of Dr. J.G. Frazer. Greek and Roman society was built on the conception of the subordination of the individual to the community, of the citizen to the state; it set the safety of the commonwealth, as the supreme aim of conduct, above the safety of the individual whether in this world or in the world to come. Trained from infancy in this unselfish ideal, the citizens devoted their lives to public service and were ready to lay them down for the common good; Or if they shrank from the supreme sacrifice, it never occurred to them that they acted otherwise than basely in preferring their personal existence to the interests of their country. All this was changed by the spread of Oriental religions which inculcated the communion of the soul with God and its eternal salvation as the only object worth living for, in comparison with which the prosperity and even the existence of the state sank into insignificance [sic]. The inevitable result of this selfish and immoral doctrine was to withdraw the devotee more and more from the public service, to concentrate his thoughts on his own spiritual emotions, and to breed in him a contempt for the present life, which he regarded merely as a probation for a better and eternal. The saint and the recluse, disdainful of earth and rapt in ecstatic contemplation of heaven, became in popular opinion the highest ideal of humanity, displacing the old ideal of [T NOTE: Page -97- of the typescript edition is in a different typeface. Perhaps the typing is a modern retyping of an illegible page of the original. The evidence for this lies in the fact that the last line is short 19 characters of a complete line, and the much clearer print. The right margin is also considerably larger than other pages] [WEH NOTE: No, this page 97 was part of the first edition in this form. Probably it was simply found to be in error and replaced on a handy typewriter before mimeographing.] {97} the patriot and he who, forgetful of self, lives and is ready to die for the good of his country. The earthly city seemed poor and contemptible to men whose eyes beheld the City of God coming in the clouds of heaven.[WEH NOTE: This doctrine stems from Augustine's City of God, introduced to compensate for the sack of Rome] Thus the centre of gravity, so to say, was shifted from the present to a future life, and however much the other world may have gained, there can be little doubt that this one lost heavily by the change. A general disintegration of the body politic set in. The ties of the state and the family were loosened: the structure of society tended to resolve itself into its individual elements and thereby to relapse into barbarism: for civilisation is only possible through the active cooperation of the citizens and their willingness to subordinate their private interests to the common good. Men refused to defend their country, and even to continue their kind. In their anxiety to save their own souls and the souls of others they were content to leave the material world, which they identified with the principle of evil, to perish around them. This obsession lasted for a thousand years. The revival of Roman Law, of the Aristotelian philosophy, of ancient art and literature at the close of the Middle Ages, marked the return of Europe to native ideals of life and conduct, to saner, manlier views of the world. The long halt in the march of civilisation was over. The tide of Oriental invasion had turned at last. It is ebbing still. Dr. J.G. Frazer Attis, Adonis, Osiris, I.300.

We leave the matter here. We deny that the propositions given above are characteristic of Jesus, since we have been able to produce Jesus himself to refute them; but as they interest Mr. {98} Shaw, who finds 'experience and science' driving him more and more to consider them favourably, we must take them as worthy of our most serious study.

Mr. Shaw tempers the wind to the shorn lamb saying, We shall waste our time unless we give them a reasonable construction. He then says, We must assume that the man who saw his way through such a mass of popular passion and illusion as stands between us and a sense of the value of such teaching was quite aware of all the objections that occur to an average stockbroker in the first five minutes.

There is nothing whatever in the sayings of Jesus to show that he saw his way through any mass of popular passion and illusion. Everything that he said was perfectly commonplace to those people of his time who knew any mysticism. But esoteric doctrine having more or less slept in the west, despite such



people as Boehme and William O'Neill (in whom persons not genealogically inclined may be pleased to recognize William Blake) until the Great Revival, initiated by certain persons whom I will not specify, through the medium of Eliphaz Levi, Anna Kingsford, and H.P. Blavatsky, the whole world into which Mr. Shaw was born was undoubtedly in the material bondage of which he complains.

The man who saw through the milestones was then not Jesus but Mr. Shaw himself, and no doubt he is aware of all the objections that occur to the average stockbroker. But how does he deal with this matter? It is true that the world is governed to a considerable extent by the considerations that occur to stockbrokers in the first five minutes; but as the result is that the world is so {99} badly governed that those who know the truth can hardly bear to live in it, an objection from an average stockbroker constitutes in itself a prima facie case for any social reform. This is not exactly answering the stockbroker, who after all is a man as Mr. Shaw is, and perhaps may know a different world, possibly a less pleasant world in some ways, than that which Mr. Shaw inhabits. However, in the next section some of these objections are specified.

### **The Reduction to Modern Practice of Christianity**

In this section Mr. Shaw, in approved manner of all Utopians, spreads his wings and soars. One fears that on the hard ground of the facts of life he might seem as awkward as Baudelaire's albatross when it landed on the deck. Here, says Mr. Shaw, there are a few difficulties; and with one flap of his wings leaves them a million miles below him. The disciple cannot have bread without money until there is bread for everybody without money; and that requires an elaborate municipal organization of the food supply, rate supported. I am not sure that Mr. Shaw's organization would not mean that somebody took some thought for the morrow.

Even in Syria in the time of Jesus his teachings could not possibly have been realized by a series of independent explosions of personal righteousness on the part of the separate units of the population. On my reading of the gospels Jesus was not a fool, not a socialist; the only evidence I can find of any tendency to socialism is his objection to washing; and he never contemplated for a moment that the entire population should follow the religious life. He was perfectly familiar with the immemorial Eastern distinction between the householder and the ascetic, and if he had {100} heard Mr. Shaw's opinions he would have understood them as little as I do myself. When Mr. Shaw says that 'a man who is better than fellows is a nuisance', he is merely a nuisance! No one was ever so obviously better than his fellows than Mr. Shaw.

### **Modern Communism**

The identification of the apotheosis of Capitalism with the Trust is a familiar fallacy. Co-operation is one thing and communism is another. The sole object of creating trusts is to secure greater inequality in the distribution of the common wealth, not less; and if this incentive were removed the whole fabric would fall to pieces. The object of concentrating power is not to give everyone a square deal. The little man is frozen out simply because he threatens to interfere with the game of despoiling the people. There is certainly economy in what Mr. Shaw misleadingly calls 'communism in production'. But it is the economy of wolves who hunt in packs in order to pull down their quarry. It is such sophistries that make political economy the morass we know it. And it might further be observed that this 'communism in production' over which Mr. Shaw gloats has been the very means by which the self-respecting apprentice, with a secure future, has been turned into what that brilliant young Angel of the Revolution, Gerda von Kothek, calls 'factory-fodder'.

### **Redistribution.**

In this section there is little to criticize but the rhetorical and exaggerated form of the statement made in it. {101}

### **Shall He Who Makes, Own?**

In this section are repeated the elementary commonplaces of John Stuart Mill. One wonders that it was worth while to demolish the maker's right theory. The section ends as follows: If God takes the dreadnought in one hand and a steel pen in the other, and asks Job who made them, and to who [SIC] they should belong by maker's right, Job must scratch his puzzled head with a potsherd and be dumb, unless indeed it strikes him that God is the ultimate maker, and that all we have a right to do with the product is to feed his lambs. Please, do not count me in among the lambs! My constitution, already impaired by the task of answering earlier objections, might be fatally affected by a protracted diet of either of the products in question!

### **Labour Time**

In this section Mr. Shaw refers to the doctrines of the Manchester School as if they were inevitable. It is not possible to argue the whole question in so limited a space as is at our disposal. But it is anyhow obvious that some arrangement of state enforcement of a minimum wage is an alternative, though possibly not a wholly satisfactory one.

### **The Dream of Distribution According to Merit**

Here Mr. Shaw becomes exceedingly humorous; and we are somewhat disposed to laugh with him. Life is not a Sunday School, but a battlefield; and the conflict between evolution and ethics has not yet been wholly decided in favour of the latter. Some {102} of us may even think that it can never be. For the progress which made ethics possible was the result of the variations brought about by evolution, and the result of ethics in checking the operations of evolution is in some ways to discourage variation, and so to cause the stagnation of society.

A secure social order inevitably favours mediocrity; and it further causes the atrophy of the manly virtues. War has to be artificially replaced by sport, which is a very poor substitute, just as religion lost its excitement and fascination when human sacrifice was replaced by symbolic offerings. However, sport is better than nothing; and when society is threatened, it is the sportsman (if any one) who saves it. The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton; and the people who rushed to the colours in the war now raging were the cricketers and golfers and footballers-the amateurs, not the professionals. The people whose minds were full of money and trade and beer had to be conscripted.

### **Vital Distribution**

In the end you are forced to ask the question you should have asked at the beginning. What do you give a man an income for? Obviously to keep him alive. Since it is evident that the first condition on which he can be kept alive, without enslaving somebody else is that he shall produce an equivalent for what it costs to keep him alive, we may quite rationally compel him to abstain from idling by whatever means we employ to compel him to abstain from murder, arson, forgery, or any other crime. Would it be impertinent to ask Mr. Shaw to write a short essay upon the {103} differences in the meaning of his expression We may compel him to abstain from idling, and this other We may enslave him? (Note: I am not arguing that some such process is avoidable; I am pointing out the confusion of thought of Mr. Shaw, the characteristic British quality of thinking that if you call whipping 'paternal chastisement', it doesn't hurt.)

I am bound to say that personally I regard a leisured class as the only possible field for the highest types of wheat to grow. The socialistic idea that every one should work menially for an hour or so every day would check the entire race. Any mechanical labour degrades; it is necessary that it should be performed, and must therefore always produce a degraded class. To equalize men in this matter is to bring them all down to the level of the dock labourer.

My parents spent several thousand pounds on giving me a public school and University Education. On its completion I found that I knew nothing. I thereupon spent fifty thousand pounds of my own to pursue it; and I still know nothing. That is a good start, however; and I have great hopes. But certainly I never could have arrived even at my present stage if I had had to spend a couple of hours a day in cleaning out

somebody's drains. For one thing, all the higher kinds of work require a fineness and delicacy both of manual and mental energy such that a life of leisure is absolutely necessary to their proper functioning. The surgeon's hands, or the pianist's would be ruined forever if he had to chop wood for a month. (How, by the way, is society to 'compel' people without first 'judging' them?) {104}

When it comes to the artistic element, and Mr. Shaw will be the first to agree that the artist is the salt of the earth, the case becomes extreme. Idling is actually necessary to a great many artists as a peculiar mental state which ultimately produces ideas. I am personally acquainted with one artist who can only be forced to work by the boredom of prolonged idleness. If you gave him some healthful employment he would be a perfectly commonplace man. All the subtler qualities of humanity depend on leisure. To 'compel' artists to 'work' would be as reasonable as to sow seed in a field and keep on plowing it all through the year.

These facts are perfectly familiar to Mr. Shaw. He says indeed We all know as well as Jesus did that if we had to take thought for the morrow as to whether there shall be anything to eat or drink it will be impossible for us to think of nobler things, or live a higher life than that of a mole, whose life is from beginning to end a frenzied pursuit of food. One of the conditions, however, of thinking of nobler things is to abstain from thinking of ignoble things. It is impossible to appreciate literature if you rot your mind by habitually reading newspapers. Just as in currency the baser always ousts the better, so in life one must have an absolute gold standard, or one comes down to inconvertible notes in a terribly short space of time. The aspirations of the mind must be continuous, unwearying, unsparing of self, and an hour lost can never be recovered.

Mr. Shaw apparently fails to recognize the extraordinary devotion to great things which is shown by nine in every ten of leisured men of good family. The parasites of whom he complains usually {105} spring from the plutocracy; and the remedy is not to make it impossible for a man like Lord Dunsany to give up his whole time to his art, but to re-establish in the aristocracy the standard of honour and worthy ambition. Mr. Shaw says: Until the community is organized in such a way that the fear of bodily want is forgotten as completely as the fear of wolves already is in civilized capitals, we shall never have a decent social life. Indeed, the whole attraction of our present arrangements lies in the fact that they do relieve a handful of us from this fear; but as the relief is effected stupidly and wickedly by making the favoured handful parasitic on the rest, they are smitten with the degeneracy which seems to be the inevitable biological penalty of complete parasitism, and corrupt culture and statecraft instead of contributing to them, their excessive leisure being as mischievous as the excessive toil of the labourers.

I made a little attempt of my own to solve the problem nine years ago in an essay entitled Thien Tao. May I be pardoned if egotism prevails upon me to quote the essential passages?

The condition of Japan was at this time (What time? Here we are in trouble with the historian at once. But let me say that I will have no interference with my story on the part of all these dull sensible people. I am going straight on, and if the reviews are unfavourable, one has always the resource of suicide) dangerously unstable. The warrior aristocracy of the Upper House had been so diluted with successful cheesemongers that adulteration had become a virtue as highly profitable as adultery. In the Lower House brains were still esteemed, but they had been interpreted {106} as the knack of passing examinations.

The recent extension of the franchise to women had rendered the Yoshiwara the most formidable of the political organizations while the physique of the nation had been seriously impaired by the results of a law which, by assuring them in case of injury or illness of a lifelong competence in idleness which they could never have obtained otherwise by the most laborious toil, encouraged all workers to be utterly careless of their health. The training of servants indeed at this time consisted solely of careful practical instruction in the art of falling down stairs; and the richest man in the country was an ex-butler who, by breaking his leg on no less than thirty-eight occasions, had acquired a pension which put that of a field-marshal altogether into the shade.

As yet, however, the country was not irretrievably doomed. A system of intrigue and blackmail, elaborated by the governing classes to the highest degree of efficiency, acted as a powerful counterpoise. In theory all were equal; in practice the permanent officials, the real rulers of the country, were a distinguished and trustworthy body of men. Their interest was to govern well, for any civil or foreign disturbance would undoubtedly have fanned the sparks of discontent into the roaring flame of revolution. And discontent there was. The unsuccessful cheesemongers were very bitter against the Upper House;

and those who had failed in examinations wrote appalling diatribes against the folly of the educational system

The trouble was that they were right; the government was {107} well enough in fact, but in theory had hardly a leg to stand on. In view of the growing clamour, the official classes were perturbed for many of their number were intelligent enough to see that a thoroughly irrational system, however well it may work in practise, cannot forever be maintained against the attacks of those who, though they may be secretly stigmatized as doctrinaires, can bring forward unanswerable arguments. The people had power, but not reason; so were amenable to the fallacies which they mistook for reason, and not to the power which they would have imagined to be tyranny. An intelligent plebs is docile; an educated canaille expects everything to be logical. The shallow sophisms of the socialist were intelligible; they could not be refuted by the profounder and therefore unintelligible propositions of the Tory.

The mob could understand the superficial resemblance of babies; they could not be got to understand that the circumstances of education and environment made but a small portion of the equipment of a conscious being. The brutal and truthful 'You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear' had been forgotten for the smooth and plausible fallacies of such writers as Ki Ra Di.

So serious had the situation become, indeed, that the governing classes had abandoned all dogmas of Divine Right and the like as untenable. The theory of heredity had broken down, and the ennoblement of the cheesemongers made it not only false, but ridiculous.

We consequently find them engaged in the fatuous task of defending the anomalies which disgusted the nation by a campaign of glaring and venal sophistries. These deceived nobody, and {108} only inspired the contempt, which might have been harmless, with a hate which threatened to engulf the community in an abyss of the most formidable convulsions.

Now attend to the solution!

What, said Juju, O great Tao, do you recommend as a remedy for the ills of my unhappy country?

The sage replied as follows: O mighty and magniloquent Daimio, your aristocracy is not an aristocracy because it is not an aristocracy. In vain you seek to alter this circumstance by paying the noxious vermin of the Dai Li Pai Pur to write fatuous falsehoods maintaining that your aristocracy is an aristocracy because it is an aristocracy.

As Heraclitus overcame the antinomy of Xenophanes and Paramenides, Melissus and the Eleatic Zeno, the Ens and the Non-Ens by his Becoming, so let me say to you; the aristocracy will be an aristocracy by becoming an aristocracy.

Ki Ra Di and his dirty-faced friends wish to level down the good practice to the bad theory; you should oppose them by levelling up the bad theory to the good practise

Your enviers boast that you are no better than they; prove to them that they are as good as you. They speak of a nobility of fools and knaves; show to them wise and honest men, and the socialistic ginger is no longer hot in the individualistic mouth.

Juju grunted assent. He had gone almost to sleep, but Kwaw, absorbed in his subject, never noticed the fact. He went on with the alacrity of a steam-roller, and the direct and purposeful {109} vigour of a hypnotized butterfly. Man is perfected by his identity with the great Tao. Subsidiary to this he must have balanced perfectly the Yang and the Yin. Easier still is it to rule the sixfold star of intellect; while for the base the control of the body and its emotions is the easiest step.

Equilibrium is the great law, and perfect equilibrium is crowned by identity with the great Tao.

He emphasized this sublime assertion by a deliberate blow upon the protruding abdomen of the worthy Juju.

Pray continue your honourable discourse! exclaimed the half-awakened Daimio.

Kwaw went on, and I think it only fair to say that he went on for a long time, and that because you have been fool enough to read thus far, you have no excuse for being fool enough to read farther.

Phenacetin is a useful drug in fever, but woe to that patient who shall imbibe it in collapse. Because Calomel is a dangerous remedy in appendicitis, we do not condemn its use in simple indigestions.

As above so beneath! said Hermes the thrice greatest. The laws of the physical world are precisely paralleled by those of the moral and intellectual sphere. To the prostitute I prescribe a course of training by which she shall comprehend the holiness of sex. Chastity forms part of that training, and I should hope to

see her one day a happy wife and mother. To the prude equally I prescribe a course of training by which she shall understand the holiness of sex. Unchastity forms part of that training, {110} and I should hope to see her one day a happy wife and mother.

To the bigot I commend a course of Thomas Henry Huxley; to the infidel a practical study of ceremonial magic. Then, when the bigot has knowledge and the infidel faith, each may follow without prejudice his natural inclination; for he will no longer plunge into his former excesses.

So also she who was a prostitute from native passion may indulge with safety in the pleasure of love; she who was by nature cold may enjoy a virginity in no wise marred by her disciplinary course of unchastity. But the one will understand and love the other.

I have been taxed with assaulting what is commonly known as virtue. True; I hate it, but only in the same degree as I hate what is commonly known as vice.

So it must be acknowledged that one who is but slightly unbalanced needs a milder correction than who so is obsessed by prejudice. There are men who make a fetish of cleanliness; they shall work in a fatter's shop, and learn that dirt is the mark of honourable toil. There are those whose lives are rendered wretched by the fear of infection; they see bacteria of the deadliest sort in all things but the actual solutions of carbolic acid and mercuric chloride with which they hysterically combat their invisible foe; such would I send to live in the bazaar at Delhi, where they shall haply learn dirt makes little difference after all.

There are slow men who need a few month's experience of the hustle of the stockyards; there are business men in a hurry, and {111} they shall travel in Central Asia to acquire the art of repose.

So much for the equilibrium, and for two months in every year each member of your governing classes shall undergo this training under skilled advice.

But what of the Great Tao? For one month in every year each of these men shall seek desperately for the Stone of the Philosophers. By solitude and fasting for the social and luxurious, by drunkenness and debauch for the austere, by scourging for those afraid of physical pain, by repose for the restless, and toil for the idle, by bullfights for the humanitarian, and the care of little children for the callous, by rituals for the rational, and by philosophy for the credulous, shall these men, while yet unbalanced, seek to attain to unity with the Tao. But those whose intellect is purified and co-ordinated, for those whose bodies are in health, and whose passions are at once eager and controlled, it shall be lawful to choose their own way to the One Goal: videlicet, identity with that great Tao which is above the antithesis of the Yang and Yin.

Even Kwaw felt tired, and applied himself to sake-and-soda. Refreshed, he continued: The men who are willing by this means to become the saviours of their country shall be called the Synagogue of Satan, so as to keep themselves from the friendship of the fools who mistake names for things. There shall be masters of the Synagogue, but they shall never seek to dominate. They shall most carefully abstain from inducing any man to seek the Tao by any other way than that of equilibrium. They shall develop individual genius without considering whether in their {112} opinion its fruition will tend to the good or evil of their country or of the world; for who are they to interfere with a soul whose balance has been crowned by the most holy Tao?

The masters shall be great men among men; but among great men they shall be friends

Since equilibrium will have become perfect, a greater than Napoleon shall arise, and the peaceful shall rejoice thereat; a greater than Darwin, and the minister in his pulpit give open thanks to God.

The instructed infidel shall no longer sneer at the church-goer, for he will have been compelled to go to church until he saw the good points as well as the bad; and the instructed devotee will no longer detest the blasphemer, because he will have laughed with Ingersoll and Saladin.

Give the lion the heart of the lamb, and the lamb the force of the lion; and they will lie down in peace together [sic].

Kwaw ceased, and the heavy and regular breathing of Juju assured him that his words had not been wasted; at last that restless and harried soul had found supreme repose.

There is of course another solution to the problem of human sorrow, and that is indeed one which the wandering ascetics of the world have known. Whoever said The kingdom of heaven is within you certainly knew it.

Man is only a very little lower than the angels. He is far more independent of circumstance than most

people are aware. Happiness is not so utterly beyond his reach as those who do not climb mountains are sometimes apt to suppose. {113}

But there are remedies nearer than the mighty pyramid of Chogo Ri, and the tented pavilion of the massif of Kangchenjanga. You have only to draw a little of the hypochloride of cocaine into your nostrils, and you become full of intense virility and energy, a devourer of obstacles; to smoke a few pipes of opium, and you rise to the cloudless and passionless bliss of the philosopher; to swallow a little hashish, and you behold all the fantastic glories of fable, and them a thousandfold; or to woo a flask of ether, breathing it as if it were the very soul of the Beloved, and you perceive all Beauty in every vulgar and familiar sight. Every one of these drugs gives absolute forgetfulness of all misfortune; nay, you may contemplate the most appalling catastrophes imminent or already fallen upon you: and you care no more than Nature Herself.

The only drawback to the use of drugs is that toleration is so soon set up, and the effect diminished; while for weaklings there is always the danger of the formation of a habit, when the treacherous servant becomes master, and takes toll for the boon of his ephemeral heavens by the bane of an abiding hell. These remarks have only been introduced to emphasize that happiness is an interior state; for every one of these drugs gives happiness supreme and unalloyed, entirely irrespective of the external circumstances of the individual. It would be folly to fill the apartment of an opium-smoker with the masterpieces of Rembrandt or Sotatsu, when a dirty tower or a broken chair suffices to flood his soul with more glories than it can bear, when he realizes that light itself is beautiful, no matter on what it may {114} fall, and when, if you asked him what he would do if he were blind, he would condescend from heaven to reply that darkness was more lovely still, that light was but a disturbance of the serenity of the soul, a siren to seduce it from the bliss of the contemplation of its own ineffable holiness.

But why should we talk of drugs? They are only counterfeit notes, or at best the Fiat notes of a discredited government, and we are seeking gold.

This pure gold is ours for the asking; its name is mysticism.

We may begin by reassuring ourselves. The gold is really in the vaults of the Treasury. The mystic quest is not a chimaera. The drugs assure us of that. They have not put anything supernatural into us; they have found nothing in us that was not already there. They have merely stimulated us. All the peace, the joy, the love, the beauty, the comprehension, they gave us; all these things were in us, bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh, and soul of our soul. They are in our treasury, safe enough; and the chief reason why we should not burglariously use such skeleton keys as morphia is that by so doing we are likely to hamper the lock.

We see then that we are but so very little lower than angels that the most trifling stimulus raises us to a plane where we enjoy without consideration even of what it is that we enjoy. Raise humanity by a matter of five per cent, and the problem is solved! Our trouble is due entirely to the law that action and reaction are equal and opposite. We have to pay for the pleasure with pain. We sat up all last night, and now we must go to bed early; we {115} drank too much champagne, and now it is the turn of Vichy.

The question then has always been whether we can overcome this law of duality, whether we can reach-one step-to that higher plane where all is ours. Mysticism supplies the answer.

The mystic attainment may be defined as the Union of the Soul with God, or as the realization of itself, or-there are fifty phrases for the same experience. The same, for whether you are a Christian or a Buddhist, a Theist or (as I am myself, thank God!) an Atheist, the attainment of this one state is as open to you as is nightmare, or madness, or intoxication. Religious folk have buried this fact under mountains of dogma; but the study of comparative religion has made it clear. One has merely to print parallel passages from the mystics of all ages and religions to see that they were talking of the same thing: one gets even verbal identities, such as the That Tao which is Tao is not Tao of the Chinese, the Not That, Not That of the Hindu, the Head which is above all Heads, the Head which is not a Head of the Qabalist, the God is Nothing of the Christian, and the That is not which is of a modern atheistic or pantheistic mystic [*NOTE: Crowley himself, presumably*].

Mysticism, unless it be a mere barren intellectual doctrine, always involves some personal religious experience of this kind; and the real strength of every religion is consequently in its mystics. The conviction of truth given by any important spiritual experience is so great that although it may have lasted

for a few seconds only, it does not hesitate to pit itself against the experience of the lifetime in respect of reality. The mystic doubts whether he the man exists at all, because he is so certain {116} of the existence of him the God; and the two are difficult to conceive intellectually as coexistent! [T NOTE: Refer to Crowley's article *Berashith* in *Collected Works* vol. II]

Now the extreme state of Being, Knowledge, and Bliss which characterizes the intermediate stages of mystic experience, is a thousandfold more intense than any other kind of happiness. It is totally independent of circumstance. We could bring a cloud of witnesses from the ends of all the earth; but one, the Persian bard Al Qahar [WEH NOTE: Crowley under one of his pen names], whose masterpiece is the *Bagh-i-Muattar*, must suffice.

Whether Allah be or be not is little odds so long as His devotees enjoy the mystic rapture. -Whether He exists or no, whether He love him or no, Al Qahar will love Him and sing His praises.

The perfect lover is calm and equable; storms of thunder, quakings of the earth, losses of goods, punishment from great men, none of these things cause him to rise from his divan, or to remove the silken tube of the rose-perfumed huqqa from his mouth.

It is therefore unnecessary to fret over social problems and the rest of it; the root of the cause is duality, the antithesis of the Ego and the Non-Ego; and the cure is Realization of the Unity. Why treat symptoms, when we can eradicate the disease, especially as in this case the symptoms are sheer hallucinations [sic] on the part of the patient?

It is the old story of the man in the railroad car with a basket, and the importunate stranger. Say, stranger, 'scuse me, but may I ask what you have in that basket? Mongoose, What 'n Hades is a mongoose? Mongoose eats snakes. But what do you want with a mongoose? My brother sees snakes. (A pause) But, say, {117} stranger, them ain't no real snakes. This ain't a real mongoose.

Socialism, and religion, and love, and art, are all phantastic things, good to lull the ills of life, dreams pitted against dreams. But the only cure is to attack the cause of all the trouble, the illusion of duality.

Now to do this is a matter of common knowledge: or if not, it is no fault of mine, for I have written two million words or more upon the subject, and this is no place to add to their number; but it is very decidedly the place to observe that both the goal and the means are constantly advocated not only by the Jesus of John, but even here and there by him of the Synoptics. Most of His instructions to his disciples to 'take no thought for the morrow' to 'abandon father and mother and all other things', 'not to have two cloaks', 'not to resist evil', are the ordinary rules of every eastern and western mystic. He must have nothing whatever to divert his mind from its concentration.

The whole secret of 'Yoga' is given in Matthew VI, 22. The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. This is a perfectly simple statement of the virtue of what the Hindus call *Ekagrata*, one-pointedness.

The gospel of John, too, is full of dithyrambs expressing the results of mystic practice. I and my Father are one; I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. Kappa Tau Lambda. [T NOTE: *k.t.l.*]

It may be remarked incidentally that a great deal more can be made out on this line by studying the Greek original, when {118} the technical value in mystical phraseology of the words employed is noted. (See the Commentaries on Matthew and John of the Hon. P. Ramanthan C.M.G., whose mystic name is Sri Parananda.)

The Evangelists have been very stupidly accused of copying such passages from Chinese and Indian classics, on the grounds of absolute identity of idea, and even close verbal parallelism. It might be difficult to rebut the charge if all this were talk in the air. If I happen to begin a poem, The purple pigs lament the music of Madrid; They cook the nightingale with limping eyes of kid it is fair to assume that I am plagiarizing Missinglinck's *Les cochons rouges pleurent un musique espan~ol; leurs yeux de suede boitent a cuire le rossignol*, because it is unlikely that two such complex pieces of pure nonsense should occur to two independent thinkers-unless, indeed, they were German metaphysicians. But fifty men may observe independently that still water reflects images, and record it; no question of copying arises.

There is, it is true, an universal tradition of the means and of the end of mysticism, and we may perhaps think that Jesus, like other mystics, had his teacher; but there is no necessity for any such supposition. During an experiment made by me with a certain drug in a certain hospital in the English Midlands, the

matron, who was one of the subjects, had not even a smattering of the history or even of the terminology of mysticism; yet she passed through trance after trance in the traditional order, and described her experiences in the very same language as Laotze and Boehme, and Sri Sabhapaty Swami, and all the rest, of whom she had never heard so much as the names. {119}

One remedy for the ills of life is therefore by dealing with the subjective mind, by training it to independence of the senses, by cleansing the soul of the contamination of illusion; and whether we think that this is the best way, or the only way, or regard it in its turn as mere delusion, there can be no reasonable doubt in the mind of any student of comparative religion that this way is the way pointed out by at least one of the figures in the Gospels who is included in the comprehensive word Jesus.

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The root of the trouble is the standardization of the common good or wealth, in the minds of the vulgar. This illusion is produced principally by the efforts of the cheap press, which works always on the assumption that the possession of purchaseable treasures is the only good desirable by men. Thus the poor have been taught to envy the bilious and atrabilious millionaire, instead of the artist, the saint and the athlete.

The cure for the whole misery of poverty is the development of the appreciation of those things that are really worth while. The Greeks and Chinese throve-the latter still thrive-because having attended to necessaries such as the production of corn and wine, they devoted their surplus energies not to the production of that kind of luxury which can only be enjoyed by few, but to the creation of beauty. Beauty is at the door of every man who can appreciate it: and with that comes happiness.

O foolish men! who hath bewitched you? Wish no more to have, but will to be!

### **Equal Distribution**

It is impossible to treat Mr. Shaw's conclusion that the share of every member of the community must be equal, at all seriously. It would simply mean that most rare and beautiful things would cease to exist. Even assuming (what is enormous exaggeration) that the income of each person would work out at five hundred pounds a year, who is to wear a pearl necklace worth a hundred thousand pounds? The interest on the money comes to more than the total share. The necklace would have to be broken up or put in a museum, {120} and all its value lost to mankind.

Similarly there could be no private ownership of pictures of any value, there could be no beautiful houses, or gardens, no parks except public parks, which produce (in me at least) nothing but a sense of dreary dissatisfaction, and are not even enjoyed by the people they are intended to benefit. Battersea Park, for instance, is within three minutes' walk of innumerable slums; but the children play in the slums, not in the park.

There is also the obvious point that people will not work exceptionally unless they get exceptional payment. If there were no possibility of in some way improving my position-if only by making myself more infamous even than I am (Matthew V, 11,12) by writing this essay, I should certainly not trouble to do it. Men will work themselves to death to advance in the world, or to make the lives of those they love happier. But if everything is to be on the dead level, they will not 'put themselves out', they will not take risks. Humanity will become stagnant.

### **The Captain and the Cabin Boy**

Mr. Shaw's argument for equalizing the income of these two persons, is as follows: Nothing, therefore, is really in question, or ever has been, but the differences between class incomes. Already there is economic equality between captains, and economic equality between cabin boys. What is at issue still is whether there shall be economic equality between captains and cabin boys. What would Jesus have said? Presumably he would have said that if your only object is to produce a Captain and a cabin boy for the purpose of transferring you from Liverpool to New York, or to manoeuvre {121} a fleet and carry powder from the magazine to the gun, then you need give no more than a shilling to the cabin boy, for every pound you give to the more expensively trained captain. But, if in addition to this you desire to



allow the two human souls which are inseparable from the captain and the cabin boy, and which alone differentiate them from the donkey-engine, to develop all their possibilities, then you may find the cabin boy costing rather more than the captain, because cabin boy's work does not do so much for the soul as the captain's work. Consequently you will have to give him at least as much as the captain unless you definitely wish him to be a lower creature, in which case the sooner you are hanged as an abortionist the better. That is the fundamental argument.

It is really good to hear the fundamental argument at last! The only explanation of it appears to be that Mr. Shaw is making the common error of confusing money and money's worth. If a man has everything he wants, he does not care, unless he happens to be a money maniac, in what terms his wealth is expressed. Suppose (for example) that I wish to achieve a gigantic and highly desirable feat, such as the codification of the Laws of England. For me to do that I must be trained from childhood in an extremely special way. I must always have servants to attend to food and clothing so that I never have to think about them. I must have secretaries to save me manual labour, to look up my references, and to do a thousand other services of the kind. I must have a comfortable house, an enormous library, and a thousand other things which are expressions of wealth, and which certainly everybody cannot have. In these circumstances I should not mind whether you called my {122} income a cent a year or a dollar a minute. And since I am enjoying these special advantages, they cannot be equally enjoyed by all those who are working under me. It is not obvious how they can be compensated spiritually for the inferior character of their tasks merely by giving them a larger income than mine. If it achieved anything at all, it would tend to unfit them for the work for which they are fitted. [*T NOTE: Crowley obviously intends that a butler who received a salary equivalent to his master would not remain long a butler.*]

I do not know whether Mr. Shaw really wishes to hang me as an abortionist. I do not 'definitely wish one person to be a lower creature than another', but I do recognize that there are bound to be vast differences between the different people. It is simply a fact of nature that Mr. Shaw is not equal to the average native of Dahomey. He would probably be entirely nonplussed if he were asked to cut up and cook a plump young woman.

The grand error of all social idealists is in their definition of equality. The Indian caste system, and even to a certain extent the Church of England ideal, is much more sensible. The Indians recognize that there must be thieves, prostitutes, murderers, and even judges; and each class has its special honour. A man can develop his soul perfectly in his own orbit of life provided that he does his duty in 'that station to which it has pleased God to call him'.

The judge is not 'lower' than the prostitute; he is only a different kind [*T NOTE: Note Crowley's obvious irony towards judges.*]; and a self-respecting judge does not complain of his disabilities. He makes up his mind to get the best out of his situation by increasing the gaiety of nations through the absurdity of his decisions. He affords matter for the jests of Swift, {123} Gilbert, and Mr. Shaw himself, and on his death-bed he can say just as cheerfully as Wainwright or Crippen, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

What is needed is self-respect, whether your business is to dig drains or to command armies. You should realize that you are performing a service to the community. Your government should help you to do this. The Germans, with their common sense and sound grasp of psychology, have already gone far in this direction, so that we have Mrs. Butcher Schmidt, and Mrs. Baker Meyer and Mrs. Candlestick-maker Ringler. Happiness comes with pride in what you are, unhappiness with wanting to be something that you are not. The discontent in England is principally the result of the intense social snobbery which prevails in every circle.

### **The Political and Biological Objections to Inequality**

What Mr. Shaw says about democracy in this section is perfectly true, but he omits to offer any proof that the cause of the corruption against which he exclaims is class stratification of income. The objections which he advances are objections to democracy. The troubles of which he complains hardly exist in Germany on the one hand and in many native Indian States on the other.

### **Jesus as Economist**

In this section Mr. Shaw goes a little backward. By equal income he really means that everyone should be assured of the bare necessities of life. That is a more reasonable proposal. The objections to it are chiefly practical, and the average {124} stockbroker will certainly be able to think of them in five minutes, so that it is unnecessary to labour the point.

But now we come back to Jesus, whose advice is crystallized in the following paragraph: In other words, that we should all be gentlemen and take care of our country because our country takes care of us, instead of the commercialized cads we are, doing everything and anything for money, and selling our souls and bodies by the pound and the inch, after wasting half the day haggling over the price. To some minds the omission to formulate a practical scheme of carrying this excellent programme into effect may appear a slight drawback. The section concludes: Decidedly, whether you think Jesus was God or not, you must admit that he was a first-rate political economist. Praise from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed, and one cannot resist the temptation to try to earn it so easily; so here goes. I think we should all be kings like Charlemagne, with minds like Newton, hearts like Shelley, souls like Goethe and bodies combining Hercules with Antinous. Decidedly, whether you think I am God or not, I am some kind of a very fine fellow!

### **Jesus as Biologist**

It is impossible to understand why Mr. Shaw should say, He was also as we now see a first-rate biologist. All the evidence offered is the statement that We and our Father are one which Jesus never made at all, and one or two other phrases of a similar kind, which, as has been shown above, do not in the least represent the doctrine of Jesus.

Mr. Shaw may be reminded that from days long before Jesus even {125} to this hour the ordinary greeting of two Hindus who meet is to place the palms of their hands together [sic], by which they signify a denial of duality, and say, Thou art That, the word 'That' meaning supreme existence far beyond and above any personal and creative God. The actual statements of Jesus, I and my Father are One, ye are of your Father the Devil, are not at all in keeping with this line of thought.

The feat of interpreting megalomaniac egotism and sectarian bigotry as mystic monism gives cards and spades to the folks of half a century ago, who tried to read Modern Science into the Book of Genesis. And anyhow I do not quite see what Mystic monism has to do with bigotry.

### **Money, the Midwife of Scientific Communism**

Mr. Shaw comes back to the earth a little. He perceives that the extreme variety of possessions demanded by different men involves, for convenience, a medium of exchange. Advanced thinker as he is, he flashes upon us the discovery that the system of barter has its drawbacks.

But having paid tribute to this perspicacity, we must regret that it does not also extend to seeing that most of the things-at any rate, the new things-which are really desirable, and even useful to humanity, are produced by persons who have a very great deal of money to spare. Any one who has had any experience in dealing with governments knows that it is quite impossible to get them to experiment. Does Mr. Shaw suppose for a moment that we should ever have had railways or aeroplanes, if the matter had {126} been left to government? The state knows only too well, apart from the question of finding the money for elaborate improvements, there is always the vested interest[In this phrase I wish to include the conservatism of the stupid and the old. Under communism, though it would make no financial difference to the flint-chipper to be turned into a bronze-caster, he would still object to undergo the fatigue of learning a new trade. And all selfish incentive would be denied him; he would therefore be just as obstinate as the stage coachman was when we introduced the steam-engine.] to fight.

Practically all inventions of any size or importance have had to force their way to acceptance through a thousand obstacles. How could the motor car have been introduced but by the faith of capitalists? These men were not working in the least to benefit humanity; they saw a fortune in it, and they threw away their

money by the hundred thousand in the hope of getting it back many times over, like the man in the parable of the Talents. The late Isaac Rice, for example, submitted to a yearly loss which came near to crippling him rich man as he was, in order to perfect the Holland submarine. The inventor (if he is lucky) may find one man or even a half a dozen to believe that what he proposes is possible. But to convince a state department would be a greater miracle than any of those recorded in the gospels. Even when an invention has been working satisfactorily for years, the state remains the Old Guard of the sceptics. This is another reason why humanity would stagnate under communism. It is true that the inventor would not be troubled by the impossibility of his finding money for his experiments for the simple reason that he would not take the trouble to invent, when he could get no good for it. {127}

### **Why Jesus did not Marry**

The first point to notice is another example of Mr. Shaw's carelessness in reading the Bible. He says The disciples, like Jesus himself, were men without family entanglements. We find in Matthew VIII, 14. And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of fever. Of course Peter's wife may have been dead, but we are not told so, and anyhow a wife's mother is the worst family entanglement that any one can have, on the evidence of any vaudeville comedian in the world. But Mr. Shaw speaks further of the bachelordom of Jesus, and it is therefore worth our while to examine the precise meaning of this superficially fascinating phrase.

We cannot doubt, in fact, we have absolute knowledge, that in one curious respect Jesus differed from all other 'holy men' of the East. One of the regular functions of the prophet or ascetic is to remove the curse of sterility, for his sanctity tends to bring him into close relationship with a creative deity, and his mode of life conduces to physical vigour. Such men are always followed by all classes of women, and it is considered no disgrace to them; for in Judaea and the East generally it is more shame to be a barren woman than to be a harlot; and therefore any means are justifiable to remove the stigma. There is usually a thin veil thrown over the transaction; it is a shrine of dead saints' bones, or a hot spring which works the miracle. (Footnote. There was such a place within recent years, near Nice; Frank Harris has written an amusing story on the subject.)

Dr. Frazer give endless instances of the custom, and it survives {128} all over the East to-day.

If we think of the conditions of life in Syria two thousand years ago, we must admit that it would be impossible for women to follow a prophet unless on some such excuse of pilgrimage or what not. They would be utterly lost to all shame; for the Eastern harlot is much more modest in her demeanour than the English or American virgin; and they could not, even at that, earn their livelihood. It was women of position, as well as 'sinners', that followed Jesus, and 'ministered' to him of their substance', as Luke tells us.

We cannot doubt then that the object of all these women was to repair the deficiencies of their husbands; and we cannot doubt that in this case they were disappointed. Jesus of course could hardly have failed to understand their desires; but he knew how to soothe their feelings without yielding to their wishes, for they never ceased to follow him.

It is curious that legend should have anticipated this fact in the case of the Buddha, who was also a wandering ascetic, and also chaste, though in this case he had abandoned a harem and his children to follow the religious life. But his chastity was assured by divinely-ordained anatomical precautions; for from his birth *membrum ejus membrano quodam continebatur, ne copulare posset* as an early biographer assures us, failing however to explain the children previously referred to.

It is then certain beyond all doubt that Jesus was an exception to the prophetic rule.

Should a freethinker of no propriety demand our authority {129} for this conviction, it will be useless to seek it in Holy Scripture, for the gospels give no hint of any sort that this was so; but they will confidently rely in this matter upon the opinion of my Uncle Tom, who is President of the Children's Special Service Mission, and therefore in a position to know.

Still less attention should be paid to those critics who claim that the Greek words 'agape' (love or charity) and 'agapao' should be interpreted in any other than a strictly spiritual sense; for the word is used of the relation between Jesus and John, who is also described as 'qedesh' or holy, a technical phrase applied to

certain temple servants in Judaea [T NOTE: Crowley is making a veiled allusion to his XIth degree O.T.O. practice of homosexual sodomy. The masonic title of this magickal degree is described with the appellation of Qadesh, which is translated also as 'holiness unto the lord.' Apparently Crowley is insinuating that Jesus buggered John][WEH NOTE: Although the XIth degree is often thought to be homosexual and is in fact apart from the primary structure of O.T.O., there is no historical basis for equating XIth degree and homosexual practice. The evidence relies on what Crowley said and did when he coincidentally styled himself XIth degree O.T.O. in a very few instances. Most of the Libers marked Baphomet ... XIth have to do with heterosexual symbolism or nonsexual matters entirely, e.g. Liber XV and others in the Blue Equinox. As to John, yes, it is possible that Crowley suggests a homosexual relationship, but it is equally plausible that John was a sacred prostitute and stand-in for a sexually impotent Jesus. This latter view can also be read into Crowley's hint, and it carries more of the context. If we stroll down that lane a bit, we come to another interpretation of the beloved disciple, not beloved by Jesus so much but by all the Jesus groupies. Ambling quite around the bend, we might suggest that the slang John, meaning the client of a prostitute, has a sound New Testament base! After all, homosexual friendships in biblical times and places were ubiquitous to the point of being unremarkable. This preposterous arch western taboo is relatively recent. Heterosexual irregularity was much more spicy in biblical times. In any event, the context suggests impotence for Jesus; and it is therefore more correct to suggest John buggered Jesus than the other way 'round] and grossly mistranslated in Deuteronomy XXIII, 17, I Kings XIV, 24, XV, 12, XXII 46 and II Kings XXIII, 7; it is doubtless better rendered as 'the divine'. Such conjecture, supported as it may be by profane scholarship so-called, makes in this instance the most abominable nonsense. Such interpretation as scholars have suggested may be, as they say, perfectly usual and natural in the East; but in the case of Jesus we have absolute knowledge that it was not so.

It is useless to urge that we have no ground whatever for that knowledge; knowledge of this exalted kind needs no basis in fact; it is for this very reason that it is unshakeable. Such facts as we may have all point in a precisely opposite direction; in all men of proper spirit this should strengthen instead of weakening their conviction. What better test is there of faith than that it should be utterly opposed to reason?

It has been necessary to violate one's feelings by mentioning these utterly unfounded and repugnant conjectures, because Mr. {130} Shaw has taken the curatical view of the celibacy of Jesus; and it appears necessary to point out that this view is not based on anthropology or theology or on any other branch of science or of reason; and it is not based on any statement whatever in the Gospels; it is founded on that wondrous gift of faith-the evidence of things not seen-which is our sole true guide in Life.

It may however be observed in this place that chasitivity has been from the first a matter of priestly forethought. The first genius that caught the idea of living withough work-he got the idea from the village idiot, who was supposed to be divinely possessed-said to villagers: I too am inspired; you must let me wander about all day and do as I like; and you must feed me. What, they indignantly exclaimed, You are a holy man too? Where does the holiness come in? Oh, replied the aspirant to Holy Orders, that's all right. I'm not at all like you are. You eat pig and dog; I will touch nothing but chicken and gazelle. You have wives; I never degrade myself to the level of an animal. For shame! In other words, his holiness was proved by his refusing to do the orthodox thing, just as in the case of plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath day, in the gospels.

It is the natural and even the necessary formula. How else is he to prove his holiness, and get free meals?

The alternatives are prophecy and thamaturgy; and the best holy men have always combined these methods. As Solomon says, A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Of course, the priest soon saw how to indulge himself secretly under the cloak of his sanctity; if he were actually seen in adultery, it was only necessary to explain that it was not he, {131} but a demon who had taken his shape in order to destroy his reputation. A man who so excited the malice of the Evil One must be holy indeed!

So celibacy began; later, it was organized, and came to mean sexual freedom without sexual responsibility, as it does to-day. [WEH NOTE: See the ancient oath of the Crusading Order of the Knights of Malta to the effect that they forswore marriage in return for the pledge of their Order to insure inheritance and protection for any future children]

### **Inconsistency of the Sex Instinct**

The whole of this section is founded upon the gravest error. In our sexual natures we are torn by an irresistible attraction and an overwhelming repugnance and disgust. We have two tyrannous physical passions; concupiscence and chastity. We become mad in pursuit of sex: we become equally mad in the persecution of that pursuit. Unless we gratify our desire the race is lost: unless we restrain it we destroy ourselves. [*T NOTE: Crowley will attack this point from his thelemic standpoint that Christianity is the accursed and unnatural source of the so-called 'chastity instinct' which conflicts with the natural sexual drive.*]

This is not the sex-instinct at all. It is sexual degeneracy gross, morbid, and revolting. If the above passage were read to an Afghan he would not understand it; after about three weeks' explanation he would grasp the purport sufficiently to exclaim, that it was a ridiculous lie. It is the exacerbation to madness of the fact which the Latins expressed in the phrase 'post coitum animal triste', a fact, by the way, which itself depends on ignorance of sexual technique and hygiene.

And what exaggerated this mild malaise into the melancholia which Mr. Shaw seems to think common to humanity? The very influence of Christianity itself. The doctrine of 'sin' is the root of all evil. It was indeed time that a prophet should come forth to declare: The word of Sin is Restriction. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. {132}

### **For Better, for Worse**

This section is extremely profound and well worth study. It appears to lead to the conclusion that kindness and conscientiousness and altruism are really drawbacks to the progress of humanity. As Nietzsche said this, and I too agree with him, there is little more to be said. The way out does indeed seem to be that word of Jesus To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he seemeth to have. It is curious, by the way, that Mr. Shaw did not quote this text in his argument for communism and equality! What is needed is quite obvious; the great man will make his greatness felt, and will draw to himself a crowd of lesser people utterly willing to sacrifice their own advantage and development by devotion to his, or, as I should prefer to put it, by finding their own advantage and development through that devotion. This is really a Christian doctrine, by the way: He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (Matthew X, 39.)

### **The Remedy**

Mr. Shaw's remedy for the trouble outlined in the preceding paragraph is economic independence. The argument is here expressed in what are to me almost unintelligible terms. The love of power is the strongest instinct of humanity, beyond mere appetites, and if one weapon were removed another would be quickly forged. It is here permissible to quote one of the most admirable parables ever written. It is in one of the lesser known books of Robert Louis Stevenson. {133}

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## **THE HOUSE OF ELD**

From Fables, by Robert Louis Stevenson

So soon as the children began to speak, the gyve was riveted; and the boys and girls limped about their play like convicts. Doubtless it was more pitiful and more painful to bear in youth, but even the grown folk, besides being very awkward on their feet, were often sick with ulcers.

About the time when Jack was ten years old, many strangers began to journey through that country. These he beheld going lightly by on the roads, and the thing amazed him. I wonder how it comes, he asked, that all these strangers are so quick afoot, and we must drag about our fetter.

My dear boy, said his uncle, the catechist, do not complain about your fetter, for it is the only thing that

makes life worth living. None are happy, none are good, none are respectable, that are not gyved like us. And I must tell you besides, that it is very dangerous talk. If you grumble at your iron, you will have no luck; if ever you take it off, you will be instantly smitten by a thunderbolt.

Are there no thunderbolts for the strangers? asked Jack.

Jupiter is long suffering to the benighted, returned the catechist.

Upon my word, I could wish I had been less fortunate, said Jack, For if I had been benighted, I might now be going free, and it cannot be denied the iron is inconvenient, and the ulcer hurts.

Ah! cried his uncle, do not envy the heathen! Theirs is {134} a sad lot! Ah, poor souls, if they but knew the joys of being fettered! Poor souls, my heart yearns for them. But the truth is they are vile, odious, insolent, ill-conditioned stinking brutes not truly human-for what is a man without a fetter?-and you cannot be too particular not to touch or speak with them.

After this talk, the child would never pass one of the unfettered on the road but what he spat at him and called him names, which was the practice of the children in that part.

It chanced one day, when he was fifteen, he went into the woods and the ulcer pained him. It was a fair day, with a blue sky; all the birds were singing; but Jack nursed his foot. Presently another song began; it sounded like the singing of a person, only far more gay; at the same time there was a beating on the earth. Jack put aside the leaves; and there was a lad of his own village, leaping and dancing, and singing to himself in a green dell; and on the grass beside him lay his iron.

Oh! cried Jack, you have your fetter off!

For God's sake don't tell your uncle! cried the lad.

If you fear my uncle, returned Jack, why do you not fear the thunderbolt?

That is an old wives' tale, said the other. It is only told to children. Scores of us come here among the woods, and dance for nights together, and are none the worse.

This put Jack in a thousand new thoughts. He was a grave lad; he had no mind to dance himself; he wore his fetter manfully, and tended his ulcer without complaint. But he loved the less to be deceived or to see others cheated. He began to lie in wait {135} for heathen travellers, at covert parts of the road, and in the dusk of day, so he might speak with them unseen; and these were greatly taken with their wayside questioner and told him things of weight. The wearing of gyves (they said) was no command of Jupiter's. It was the contrivance of a white-faced thing, a sorcerer that dwelt in that country in the Wood of Eld. He was one like Glaucus, that could change his shape, yet he could always be told; for when crossed, he gobbled like a turkey. He had three lives; but the third smiting would make an end of him indeed, and with that his house of sorcery would vanish, the gyves fall, and the villagers take hands and dance like children.

And in your country? Jack would ask.

But at this the travellers with one accord, would put him off, until Jack began to suppose that there was no land entirely happy. Or, if there were, it must be one that kept its folk at home; which was natural enough. But the case of the gyves weighed upon him. The sight of the children limping stuck in his eyes. The groans of such as dressed their ulcers haunted him. And it came at last in his mind that he was born to free them.

There was in that village a sword of heavenly forgery, beaten upon Vulcan's anvil. It was never used but in the temple, and then the flat of it only. And it hung on a nail by the catechist's chimney. Early one night, Jack rose, and took the sword, and was gone out of the house and the village in the darkness.

All night he walked at a venture, and when day came he met strangers going to the fields. Then he asked after the Wood of Eld and the house of sorcery; and one said north and one south, {136} until Jack saw that they deceived him. So then, when he asked his way of any man, he showed the bright sword naked; and at that the gyve at the man's ankle rang, and answered in his stead; and the word was still Straight on. But the man, when his gyve spoke spat and struck at Jack, and threw stones at him as he went away so that his head was broken.

So he came to that wood, and entered in. And he was aware of a house in a low place, where funguses grew, and the trees met, and the steaming of the marsh arose about it like a smoke. It was a fine house, and a very rambling; some parts of it were ancient like the hills, and some but of yesterday, and none finished; and all the ends were open, so that you could go in from every side. Yet it was in good repair,

and all the chimneys smoked.

Jack went in through the gable; and there was one room after another, all bare, but all furnished in part so that a man could dwell there; and in each there was a fire burning where a man could warm himself, and a table spread where he might eat. But Jack saw nowhere any living creature; only the bodies of some stuffed.

This is a hospitable house, said Jack, But the ground must be quaggy underneath, for at every step the building quakes.

He had gone some time in the house, when he began to be hungry. Then he looked at the food, and at first he was afraid; but he bared the sword, and by the shining of the sword it seemed the food was honest. So he took the courage to sit down and eat, and he was refreshed in mind and body.

This is strange, thought he, that in the house of sorcery there should be food so wholesome. {137}

As he was yet eating, there came into that room the appearance of his uncle, and Jack was afraid because he had taken the sword. But his uncle was never more kind, and sat down to meat with him, and praised him because he had taken the sword. Never had these two been more pleasantly together, and Jack was full of love to the man.

It was very well done, said his uncle, to take the sword and come yourself into the House of Eld; a good thought, and a brave deed. But now you are satisfied; and we may go home to dinner arm in arm.

O, dear, no! said Jack. I am not satisfied yet.

How! cried his uncle. Are you not warmed by the fire? Does not this food sustain you?

I see the food to be wholesome, said Jack, and still it is no proof that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg.

Now at this the appearance of his uncle gobbled like a turkey.

Jupiter! cried Jack, is this the sorcerer?

His hand held back, and his heart failed him for the love he bore his uncle; but he heaved up the sword and smote the appearance of his uncle on the head; and it cried out aloud with the voice of his uncle; and fell to the ground; and a little bloodless, white thing fled from the room.

The cry rang in Jack's ears, and his knees smote together, and conscience cried upon him: and yet he was strengthened, and there woke in his bones the lust of the enchanter's blood.

If the gyve's are to fall cried he, I must go through with this; and when I get home, I shall find my uncle dancing. {138}

So he went after the bloodless thing. On the way he met the appearance of his father; and his father was incensed and railed upon him, and called to him upon his duty, and bade him to be home while there was yet time. For you can still, said he, be home by sunset, and then all will be forgiven.

God knows said Jack, I fear your anger; but yet your anger does not prove that a man should wear a gyve on his right leg.

And at that the appearance of his father gobbled like a turkey.

Ah, heaven, cried Jack, the sorcerer again!

The blood ran backward in his body, and his joints rebelled against him for the love he bore his father; but he heaved up the sword, and plunged it in the heart of the appearance; and the appearance cried out aloud with the voice of his father; and fell to the ground; and a little bloodless white thing fled from the room.

The cry rang in Jack's ears, and his soul was darkened; but now rage came to him. I have done what I dare not think upon, said he, I will go to an end with it, or perish. And when I get home, I pray god this may be a dream, and I may find my father dancing.

So he went on after the bloodless thing that had escaped; and in the way he met the appearance of his mother, and she wept. What have you done? O, come home (where you may be by bed-time) ere you do more ill to me and mine; for it is enough to smite my brother and your father.

Dear mother, it is not these I have smitten, said Jack, it is but the enchanter in their shape. And even if I had, it should not prove that a man should wear a gyve upon his right leg. {139}

And at this the appearance gobbled like a turkey.

He never knew how he did that; but he swung the sword on the one side, and clove the appearance through the midst; and it cried out aloud with the voice of his mother; and fell to the ground-and with the fall of it the house was gone from over Jack's head, and he stood alone in the woods, and the gyve had

fallen from his leg.

Well, said he, the enchanter is now dead and the fetter gone. But the cry rang in his soul, and the day was like the night to him. This has been a sore business, said he, Let me go forth out of the wood, and see the good that I have done to others.

He thought to leave his fetter where it lay, but when he turned to go, his mind was otherwise. So he stooped and put the gyve in his bosom, and the rough iron galled him as he went, and his bosom bled.

Now when he was forth of the wood upon the highway, he met folk returning from the field; and those he met had no fetters on the right leg, but behold! they had one upon the left. Jack asked them what it signified, and they said, that was the new wear, for the old was found to be a superstition. Then he looked at them nearly, and there was a new ulcer on the left ankle, and the old one on the right was not yet healed.

Now may God forgive me! cried Jack, I would I were well home.

And when he was home, there lay his uncle, smitten on the head and his father pierced through the heart, and his mother cloven through the midst. And he sat in the lone house and wept beside {140} the bodies.

## **MORAL**

Old is the tree, and the fruit good,  
Very old and thick the wood.  
Woodman, is your courage stout?  
Beware! the root is wrapped about  
Your mother's heart, your father's bones....  
And like the mandrake comes with groans.

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## **The Case for Marriage**

At last this admirable preface admits that for which we have been contending. The existence of domestic virtue is no longer denied. But there is still a good deal of confusion: for example, Mr. Shaw speaks of Self-denial, which is not a virtue at all. The root of the whole trouble is this infernal consciousness of sin, which has been the ruin of mankind, and has its root in the grossest animism and fetichism. The crops will not grow, unless we sacrifice seventy-seven virgins every month. We did not smear the image of Mumbo-Jumbo with the proper kind of blood, and that accounts for the thunder storm.

There is no such thing as self-denial. Self-denial is merely the self-indulgence of self-denying people. There is an old, old story of an old-old woman, very benighted, who had not heard of Christianity till the Scripture reader came and read her the story of the Crucifixion, at which she wept copiously; but she soon dried her tears, remarking: after all, it was 'is 'obby. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law; or, as Mr. Shaw himself once said, The golden rule is that there is no golden rule.

## **Celibacy no Remedy**

{141}Mr. Shaw is really very unfortunate; he seems deliberately to make the worst of life. Not only is marriage intolerable but its alternatives are intolerable; and yet we get on very well! The grim humour of Sir Richard Burton's remark about women, We can do neither with them nor without them, is a much bigger statement of the case.

It does appear, however, that whether Mr. Shaw is right in thinking that economic independence would assist or no, he is dimly aware that the mischief lies principally in the sense of sin; or so at least one interprets the following passage. The practical solution is to make the individual economically independent of marriage and the family, and to make marriage as easily dissoluble as any other partnership; in other words, to accept the conclusions to which experience is slowly driving both our sociologists and our legislators. This will not instantly cure all the evils of marriage, nor root up at one stroke its detestable traditon of property in human bodies. But it will leave Nature free to effect a cure; and in free soil the root may wither and perish.



## After the Crucifixion

We now return to the New Testament narratives. Mr. Shaw says that Christianity as a specific doctrine was slain with Jesus, suddenly and utterly. He was hardly cold in his grave, or high in his heaven (as you please), before the apostles dragged the tradition of him down to the level of the thing it has remained ever since. And that thing the intelligent heathen may study, if they would be instructed in it by modern books, in Samuel Butler's novel, { 142 } *The Way of All Flesh*.

We need hardly reiterate that the Christianity to which Mr. Shaw objects is in the gospels just as much as that of which he approves. All that he has praised is the regular routine of any Eastern ascetic, a splendid rule for the individual of exceptional temperament, but utterly inapplicable to society as a whole.

As to the other Christianity, every one has not read the *Way of All Flesh* or even Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*, which is their fault and not mine, and one which they should take pains to remedy. But I can forgive them for not having read a book called *The World's Tragedy*, [*NOTE: An extended dramatic poem by Crowley which tells the story of the world before the birth of Christ and after in an exceedingly blasphematory form. There is a long prose introduction which is, as Crowley says here, autobiographical. The blatant homosexuality and anti-clerical attitude caused the book to be quickly banned (and burned). It is currently (as of 1988) in print from Falcon Press*] for it is somewhat rare and difficult to obtain, so I will quote a section of the author's autobiographical preface, which has the merit of being cold-drawn fact without evasion, equivocation or any mental reservation whatever.

## A Boyhood in Hell

The Revd. H. d'Arcy Champney M. A. of Corpus Christi College, had come out of sect.

He had voted at the Parliamentary elections by crossing out the names of the candidates and writing: I vote for King Jesus.

He has started a school for the Sons of Brethren at 51, Bateman Street, Cambridge. May God bite into the bones of men the pain that hell on earth (I have prayed often) that by them it may be sowed with salt, accursed for ever! May the maiden that passes it be barren, and the pregnant woman that beholdeth it abort! May the birds of the air refuse to fly over it! May it stand as a curse, as a fear, as an hate, among men! May the wicked dwell { 143 } therein! May the light of the Sun be withheld therefrom, and the light of the Moon not lighten it! May it become the home of the shells of the dead, and may the demons of the pit inhabit it! May it be accursed, accursed, accursed - accursed for ever and ever!

And still, standing as I stand in the prime of early manhood, free from all the fetters of the body and the mind, do I curse the memory thereof unto the ages.

It was a good enough school from the point of examiners, I dare say. Morally and physically it was an engine of destruction and corruption. I am just going to put down a few facts haphazard as they come to my memory; you may form your own judgment.

1. We were allowed to play cricket, but not to score runs, lest it should excite the vice of 'emulation'.
2. Champney told me, a child of not twelve years old, that he had never consummated his marriage, (Only the very acute verbal memory which I possess enables me, years after, to recall and interpret his meaning. He used a coarser phrase).
3. We were told that 'the lord had a special care of the school, and brought to light that which was done in darkness', etc., etc., ad nauseam. 'The instrument was on this occasion so-and-so, who had nobly come forward, etc., etc. In other words, hypocrisy and sneaking were the only virtues.

Naturally, one of several boys who might be involved in the same offence would take fright, and save his skin by sneaking. The informer was always believed implicitly, as against probability, or even possibility, with complete disregard of the testimony of other and independent witnesses. { 144 }

For instance, a boy named Glascott, with insane taint, told Mr. Champney that he had visited me (12 years old) at my mother's house during the holidays - true so far, he had - and found me lying drunk at the bottom of the stairs. My mother was never asked about this; nor was I told of it. I was put into 'Coventry' i.e., nor master nor boy might speak to me, or I to them. I was fed on bread and water; during work-hours

I walked solitary around the playground. I was expected to 'confess' the crime of which I was not only innocent, but unaccused.

This punishment, which I believe criminal authorities would consider severe on a prisoner, went on for a term and a half. I was, at last, threatened with expulsion for my refusal to 'confess', and so dreadful a picture of the horrors of expulsion did they paint me - the guilty wretch, shunned by his fellows, slinks on through life to a dishonoured grave, etc. that I actually chose to endure my torture, and to thank my oppressor.

Physically, I broke down. The strain and the misery affected my kidneys[*WEH NOTE: Renal failure is a common issue of malnutrition*]; and I had to leave school altogether for two years. I should add in fairness that there were other accusations against me, though, as you shall hear, almost equally silly.

I learnt at last, through the intervention of my uncle, in a lucid interval, what I was supposed to have done. I was said to have tried 'to corrupt Chamberlain' - not our great patriotic statesman, shifty Joe - but a boy. (I was 12 years old, and quite ignorant of all sexual matters till long after). Also I had 'held a mock prayer meeting'. This I remembered. I had strolled up to a group of boys in the playground, who were indeed holding one. As {145} they saw me one said 'Brother - will now lead lead us in prayer.' Brother - was too wary, and walked away. But instead of doing what a wise boy would have done; gone straight to the head and accused them of forty-six distinct unmentionable crimes, I let things slide. So, fearing that I might go, they hurried off themselves, and told him how that wicked - had tried to lead them away from Jesus.

Worse, I had called Page 1 a pharisee. That was true; I had said it. Dreadful of me! And Page 1, who 'walked very close to Jesus', of course went and told.

Yes, they all walked close to Jesus - as close as Judas did.

**4.** A boy named Barton was sentenced to 120 strokes of the cane on his bare shoulders, for some petty theft of which he was presumably innocent.

Superb was the process of trial. It began by an extra long prayer-time, and Joshua's account of the sin of Achan, impressively read. Next, an hour or two about the Lord's care of the school, the way he brought sin to light. Next, when well worked up, and all our nerves on the jump, who stole what? Silence. Next. the Lord's care in providing a witness - like the witnesses against Naboth! Then the witness and his story, as smooth as a policeman's. Next, sentence. Last, execution with intervals of prayer!

Champney's physique being impaired, one may suppose by his excessive devotion to Jesus, he arranged to give 50 strokes one day, and 60 the next.

My memory fails - perhaps Barton will one day oblige with his reminiscences - but I fancy the first day came so near killing him {146} that he escaped the second.

I remember one licking I got - on the legs, because flogging the buttocks excites the victim's sensuality! - 15 minutes prayer, 15 more strokes - and more prayer to top it!

**5.** On Sunday the day was devoted to 'religion'. Morning prayers and sermon (about 45 Min.). Morning 'Meeting' (1 1/2 to 2 hours). Open-air preaching on Parker's Piece (say 1 hour). Bible reading and learning by heart. Reading of the few books 'sanctioned for Sunday' (say 2 hours). Prayer-meeting (called voluntary, but to stay away meant that some sneak in the school would accuse you of something next day), (say 1 hour). Evening prayer and sermon (say 30 minutes). Preaching of the Gospel in the meeting-room (1 1/2 hours). Ditto on Parker's Piece (say 1 hour). Prayer before retiring (say 1/2 hour).

**6.** The 'Badgers' Meeting'. Every Monday night the school was ranged round the back of the big schoolroom, and the scourgings of Barnswell (Cambridge's slums) let in, fed, preached to, and dismissed. Result, epidemics of ringworm, measles and mumps. Oh no! not a result; the Lord's hand was heavy upon us because of some undiscovered sin.

I might go on for a long while, but I will not. I hope there are some people in the world happy enough to think that I am lying, or at least exaggerating. But I pledge my word to the literal truth of all I have said, and there are plenty of witnesses alive to confirm me, or to refute me. I have given throughout the actual names, addresses and other details. {147}

Too ill with albuminaria brought on by the savage treatment of Champney to do any regular work, I was sent away with various tutors, mostly young men from Cambridge, members of the unspeakable C.I.C.C.U.

I remember in my first term at Cambridge how I was in the rooms of a leading light of the C.I.C.C.U., the Revd. Something Doddridge.

I remember how eloquently he held forth on the courage to stop any 'impure conversation'. I remember how impressed we were; how a gentleman with 'honourable' in front of his name, destined to be celebrated in the world of motors and balloons, [He was a pioneer of the aeroplane, and killed at Bournemouth during an exhibition flight. In gloria requiescat!] walked into the room and told us rather a lively story. The Reverend Something Doddridge thought of the 'honourable' and laughed pleasantly.

I remember how, boys as we were, we filed austere from the rooms without farewell. Oh, you must know the C.I.C.C.U.!

I remember too how this Doddridge, while in charge of my morals, aided and abetted me in extinguishing street lamps; and how when a policeman pounced upon me, he forsook me and fled! A true disciple of Jesus!

I had no playmates; my morals might be corrupted! Only the 'children of brethren' were eligible, and these were as a rule socially impossible.

I was always being watched for signs of masturbation, and always being warned and worried about it. It says something for human innocence that after four years of this insane treatment I was still absolutely ignorant, though on fire in every nerve to learn the practice that people made so much fuss about. {148}

But really - my tutors! Of all the surpassing prigs! I was so mentally shattered by the disease and torture - for both continued - that I remember practically nothing of the next two years.

But at least I shall take care that this book comes into the hands of the Very Reverend Armitage Robinson Esq., M.A., D.D., Dean of Westminster; for through I suppose he knows how his missionary brother Jack seduced to sodomy his missionary brother Fred, he may still be ignorant of how that brother Fred (one of my tutors) attempted to seduce me in his own mother's house at Maze Hill. This came a little later; and I knew exactly what he was doing, as it happened. I let him go as far as he did, with the deliberate intention of making sure on that point.

I think my readers will agree - enough of my tutors!

(Footnote re this passage: This short passage is too shocking to reprint in a book intended for general circulation, with regard to the conduct of one tutor with unusually high clerical connections, is here omitted.) [WEH NOTE: This footnote carried in place in text and not at the page foot in the 1st edition].

I ought to make an honourable exception of one Archibald Douglas, an Oxford man and a traveller. He taught me sense and manhood, and I shall not easily forget my debt to him. I hear he is dead - may earth lie light upon him!

Of course my Mother and her brother my uncle couldn't stand him. (I must excuse my mother and my uncle. The former was the best of all possible mothers, only marred beyond belief by the religious monomania which perhaps started in what one may call 'Hysteria of Widowhood'; the latter a typical sexual degenerate.) They stole his letters and faked up some excuse for getting rid of {149} him. And if 'an orphan's curse can drag to hell a spirit from on high', what of the curse of a child on those who betrayed him in their bigotry and meanness to such tortures as I have described?

My whole soul cramped; society denied me; books debarred me, with the rare exception of Scott, Ballantyne, and some of Dickens, with a few even worse!

To illustrate the domestic principles of literary criticism:

I was forbidden David Copperfield because of 'little Em'ly'. Emily being my Mother's name, I might cease to respect her. For the same reason she proscribed the Bab Ballads, recommended by a rash tutor, because 'Emily Jane was a nursery maid!' Coleridge's Ancient Mariner was condemned because of the water-snakes whom he 'blessed unaware'; snakes being cursed in Genesis!

As it happened, however, I had a backbone in me somewhere. I had always refused to join the sneaking hypocrite gang at Champney's; now I accepted the war, and began to fight for my freedom. I went long walks in the mountains, where my tutors could not follow me, and where delightful peasant girls could and did follow me - God bless them!

One day I had a difference of opinion with a tutor, in the course of which he fell from a rock into a loch (whose name I forget) near Forsinard. Memory fails to recall the actual cause of dispute; but I think I had thrown his fishing-rod into the loch, and thought that it was expedient for him to try and retrieve it.

The same night he found me in the heather with Belle Mc.Kay the local beauty (God bless her!) and gave me up as a bad job.

So I fought the swine! They sent me to Malvern, where my {150} weakness made me the prey of every bully, and saved me from the attention of every budding Eulenburg. Sodomy was the rule at Malvern; my study-companion used even to take money for it. I cunningly used my knowledge of the fact to get away from the school.

It must not be supposed that we had no other amusements. There was 'pill-ragging'; a form of fight whose object was to seize and hurt the opponent's testicles; and 'greasing'; i.e., spitting either in each other's faces or secretly so the victim could not detect the act. In my time this had died out of the other houses; but still flourished in my own house 'Huntingdon's, No.4. There was bullying, too; and now and then cricket and football.

They sent me to Tonbridge; my health broke down; partly, one may say, through what would have been my own fault or misfortune if I had been properly educated; but, as it was, was the direct result of the vile system that, not content with torturing me itself, handed me over bound and blindfold to the outraged majesty of Nature.

I escaped from Tonbridge. They sent me to Eastbourne to a P.B. family where I had more liberty, and could have been happy; but the revolting cruelties which they inflicted on the only pretty and decent member of the family, my dear 'sister' Isabelle, caused me one day to knock their heads together and walk out of the house.

They sent me to Cambridge. I found myself my own master, and settled down to lead a righteous, sober and Godly life; and to make up for lost time in the matter of education.

Outside purely scholastic subjects, they had taught me to fight, to love the truth, to hate oppression, - and by God! I think they taught me well. {151}

On my soul, I should thank them.

### **The Vindictive Miracles and the Stoning of Stephen**

Of Jesus alone of all the Christian miracle workers there is no record, except in certain gospels that all men reject, of a malicious or destructive miracle. A barren fig-tree was the only victim of his anger. Every one of his miracles on sentient subjects was an act of kindness.

That is perfectly true as far as it goes. But Jesus constantly approves vindictive miracles. The destruction of the whole earth by the flood, and that of Sodom and Gomorrah, by fire do not make him bat an eyelid. Furthermore, he gives in the parable of the wheat and the tares his reason for not destroying the wicked in detail. He prefers to wait until the end of the world and make one tremendous holocaust.

It must appear to the ordinary reader a very poor kind of mercy to leave people alone on these terms, and the Inquisition, in burning men alive in order to save their souls, is by comparison no more to be reckoned cruel than a surgeon. At the same time, all this apart, there is admittedly a distinct difference in the flavour of the miracles. It almost lends verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative. It does suggest that the fountain of authority was gone, and that his successors had to take practical steps to assure their succession. It would be a natural step to take in the circumstances.

Yet Mr. Shaw's phrase contains one caveat. He talks of 'certain gospels that all men reject.' But seeing that 'all men' of {152} whom it is here spoken were not 'all men' at all - for surely the writers of these gospels did not reject them - but only partisans determined to allow nothing to pass the censor, may not this fact have been a reason for the rejection? The excellence of a biography is not to be determined by its amiability or the reverse, according to our personal ideas of what we should like the truth to be. That is carrying pragmatism a little too far!

We have, for example, in the past few years no less than five biographies or 'gospels' of Oscar Wilde in English. Those extremely stupid persons who cannot believe that the dramatist was anything but a combination of all virtues with all the graces indignantly reject the Gospel according to Frank Harris. But we, who do not care twopence whether Wilde was a second Prince Consort or a second Caligula, but want to know exactly what kind of man wrote *An Ideal Husband*, take the opinions of such people with a grain of salt. The very partisanship displayed tends to make us incredulous. We accept, in a word, Frank

Harris's account of Wilde for this reason, above many, that he says the best and worst of the man with the most absolute carelessness as to what any one may think.

There are some persons who regard loyalty as entirely superior to truth. It is a noble attitude; but it is not a critical attitude. Certainly judgment is far from such people, and the fact that they reject certain gospels would if anything incline the unbiassed person to close examination of them.

## Paul

We may now approach a section of this preface which is in many {153} ways the heart of the whole argument, without wishing to deprive the author of a single laurel, it is only fair to the memory of Anna Kingsford to remind the reader that the theory of Paul's character presented in this preface is due to her, and was one of the principal features of her attempt to reconstruct Christianity on the basis of what Jesus taught. [She seems to have possessed a subconscious knowledge that Jesus was a synthesis of the Pagan gods. It is a very significant demonstration of the occasional accuracy of intuition; for her conscious mental equipment was but mediocre.] We do not know enough about Paul to be perfectly sure from what bodily infirmity he suffered. But there is a great deal of evidence in his treatment of the sex question to make us suspect that he was some kind of sexual degenerate. Any man who is Abnormal sexually, if he should combine with this defect a powerful intellect and some degree of personality, is a far more dangerous wild beast than any dragon of fable. Paul was evidently a monster of this type.

Mr. Shaw more or less admits this, though he does not put it quite so plainly. The ordinary rationalist adds epilepsy to this diagnosis on the ground of the phenomena recorded of his conversion. But epilepsy is a dangerous weapon. People who talk too much of it are usually themselves moral epileptics. Was it Lombroso or some other lunatic who proved that Mohammed, Caesar, Goethe and most other great men of the world were epileptics? The specialist is always trying to prove that ninetyfive per cent of humanity suffer from the disease he is studying. It would be easy to call a convocation of doctors to prove that everybody had everything.

The purpose, however, of these pages must be to show that the Pauline doctrine is perfectly consonant with that of Jesus. {154} Paul reconstructed the old Salvationism from which Jesus had vainly tried to redeem him, and produced a fantastic theology which is still the most amazing thing of the kind known to us. Being intellectually an inveterate Roman Rationalist, always discarding the irrational real thing for the unreal but ratiocinable postulate, he began by discarding Man as he is, and substituted a postulate which he called Adam. And when he was asked, as he surely must have been in a world not wholly mad, what had become of the natural man, he replied 'Adam is the natural man.'

We have shown earlier by the quotation of innumerable passages the Jesus taught Salvationism in the plainest terms. We will take moreover, in this instance, one of the most famous passages in the gospels. It is the first discourse of Jesus given by John, and is a discourse with a Pharisee named Nicodemus. It occurs in the third chapter of John, verses 14 to 21. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the {155} light, lest his deeds should be reprovèd.

This discourse begins in the following way, in the same chapter, verses 1 to 6. There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him. Rabbi we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the

kingdom of God.

From these passages we learn that 'a man', that is any man, or if you like, 'the world', that is, all men, are in an unregenerate condition. They cannot see the kingdom of God. They were ready to perish, and Jesus came into the world especially to redeem them from this condition. The change is symbolized by a new birth. It is perfectly clear that this operation is to be accomplished by believing in Jesus. That this belief is not a pure matter of free will is evident from John VI, 28, 29, 27, 44. Then said they unto him, what shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me to draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is rather {156} amusing to read in verse 60 of the same chapter the comment of the disciples. This is an hard saying: who can hear it? It is an evident statement of the doctrines of election and predestination.

However, the main point is that man as such is unregenerate and needs salvation, which is practically Paul's doctrine. The only point at which Mr. Shaw cavils is the identification of the 'man' of Jesus with the 'Adam' of Paul. But Jesus did not say 'man'; he was talking Hebrew, or a dialect of it, and said 'Adam' If Mr. Shaw will be good enough to draw a clear distinction between the doctrine of Paul and that of Jesus, he will certainly earn the thanks of humanity.

It is further to be observed that Adam means mankind, and is not merely the name of the first man. It is the German 'mensch'. The enlightened or mystical school of commentators upon the Hebrew Scriptures did not believe in the story of Genesis in the crude way sanctioned by ancient savages and modern so-called literalists. It was man's disobedience to God, his fallen nature, which was recorded in a sort of parable in the book of Genesis. The commentators took a piece of popular folk lore, and read a philosophical meaning into it, just as one draws universal morals from plays and novels without in the least believing that they have any historical foundation.

This section continues with an identification of sin with sex. Paul's theory of original sin was to some extent idiosyncratic. He tells us definitely that he finds himself quite well able to avoid the sinfulness of sex by practising celibacy; {157} but he recognizes, rather contemptuously, that in this respect he is not as other men, and says that they had better marry than burn, thus admitting that though marriage may lead to placing the desire to please wife or husband before the desire to please God, yet preoccupation with unsatisfied desire may be even more ungodly than preoccupation with domestic affection. This view of the case inevitably led him to insist that a wife should be rather a slave than a partner, her real function being, not to engage a man's love and loyalty, but on the contrary to release them for God by relieving the man of all preoccupation with sex, just as in her capacity of house-keeper and cook she relieves his preoccupation with hunger by the simple expedient of satisfying his appetite. This slavery also justifies itself pragmatically by working effectively; but it has led to many foolish surmises about Paul's personal character and circumstances, by people so enslaved by sex that a celibate appears to them a sort of monster.

The boot is entirely on the other leg. It is Paul who is obsessed by sex, and to such an extent that he makes 'sin' of it; instead of regarding it as a perfectly natural human appetite like eating or drinking. A celibate is a sort of monster. The sexual process is connected so closely with consciousness (or, if you prefer it, subconsciousness [The psychoanalysts now call this 'unconsciousness', an awkwardly ambiguous word.]) that any departure from the normal colours not only the mind but the character in the most fantastic ways. We have only to think of the notorious cruelty of eunuchs, {158} the peculiar modifications of character noticeable in old maids, and the actual changes in physical appearance determined by these limitations. One may think of the extremely common insanities associated with puberty on the one hand, and on the other the occurrence of the menopause in women, and of impotence in men, to see that modern medical opinion is perfectly right in holding that any variation from the normal healthy exercise of these functions is exceedingly dangerous to mental stability. The average man, if deprived of proper care in this matter, may become a dangerous lunatic for the time being.

Where there is congenital incapacity we almost always find fanaticism. The very cases quoted by Mr. Shaw of men who have defied the tyranny of sex [A man born blind can hardly be described as 'defying the tyranny' which compels other men to see what is under their eyes.]. Carlyle and Ruskin, are examples

of the very great mental damage which is almost invariably caused by sex-abnormality. He also quotes whole priesthods; one can only remark that the priests of Attis can hardly be said to be eminently quotable as examples of the harmlessness of interference with the most important functions of life! It is possible for people engaged in violent athletic exercise involving real hardship and bodily emaciation, such as explorers, to be perfectly undisturbed by long privation. But any one with any knowledge of schools and universities is acquainted with the lack of mental balance caused by this kind of disturbance. Religious hysteria at the age of puberty is an almost universal phenomenon. We do not find the average {159} man of the world is in any way obsessed by sex. It is the abnormal people who talk, and talk, and talk about it in a way which is nauseating even though it be so pitiful!

**The Confusion of Christendom.  
The Secret of Paul's Success.  
Paul's Qualities.**

Mr. Shaw keeps on repeating his original statement, that Christianity as we know it has no foundation in the words attributed to the gospel. It is rather like the Bellman in the Hunting of the Snark. What I tell you three times is true. As for me, I am prepared to deny it unto seventy times seven, and find fresh texts every time. In this section, however, Mr. Shaw rather gives himself away by saying There is not one line of Pauline Christianity in the characteristic utterances of Jesus. That seems rather like confessing that he is aware of the size of his petitio principii. The whole subject of the dispute is as to what the characteristic utterances of Jesus were. Suppose, pray, that I were to find half a dozen statements of Mr. Shaw's, which were errors of fact. (It is human to err, and I doubt whether any one ever got through such a life's work as his without some error.) Suppose I were then to quote these sentences, and say, There is not one word of sense or truth in the 'characteristic' utterances of Bernard Shaw. Mr. Shaw might be forgiven for thinking me unfair, particularly as it is the usual method employed by his critics, especially those who do not trouble to look for error, or have the capacity to know one when they see it.

In this section Mr. Shaw takes us into the controversy about {160} Faith and Works. But certainly the passages quoted above from the third and sixth chapters of John, and an hundred others, show that Luther was justified in saying that salvation depends entirely on faith, and Calvin in maintaining that faith was not a matter of free will, but of election. It is true that Jesus adds in John XIV, 15. If you love me, keep my commandments. But it is evident that such keeping of commandments is merely evidence of faith. St. James says in this epistle, the second chapter and the 17th verse to the end. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without work is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

For this reason Luther wished to remove the Epistle of James from the Canon, knowing as he did that works merely meant Tetzels, and the sale of indulgences. This, however, rests solely on the statement that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. {161} But the word 'justified' is not identical with the word 'saved'. You may be a naughty child, but you do not cease to be a child, and if he that believeth on Jesus hath everlasting life, it is not obvious how he is to lose it merely through failing to manifest the evidences of life.

The general tenor of the passage in James, which is after all a mere instruction to the church in practical matters, as is evident from a perusal of the whole epistle, is that saving faith is an invisible quality. The Catholics are perfectly right to excommunicate a person who does not give evidence of the faith which is in him. The Penitent Thief had no time to do any works. It is perfectly natural and right in the practical

government of a church to say, with the poet; It was all very well to dissemble your love, but why did you kick me downstairs? If a man is elected to be saved, saved he is. But only God knows whether he is elected or not. God knoweth the heart; we can only judge the tree by its fruits.

Paul is perfectly in line with Jesus on this matter of Faith and Works. His doctrine is perfectly clear in such passages as the following: Romans VI, 12 to 23. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace? What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants {162} ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience, unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Romans VI, 1 to 4. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

God, who has elected us from all eternity to escape the damnation of our fellows, appeals to our generosity and gratitude. But he will never go back on his word, except in the case of the 'Son of Perdition'. That is Paul, and that is Jesus, Mr. Shaw can never evade it.

### **The Acts of the Apostles**

The only remark in this section which calls for comment is as follows: The author of The Acts, though a good story-teller, {163} like Luke, was (herein also like Luke) much weaker in power of thought than in imaginative literary art. Hence we find Luke credited with the authorship The Acts by people who like stories and have no aptitude for theology. It may be observed that these people include practically all orthodox theologians. Mr. Shaw's argument appears to be that The Acts is full of salvationist theology; but so is Luke, as we have shown abundantly. Even if it were not so, there would be no reason for doubting that one man wrote both books. All works of theology are full of contradictions; besides, Luke may have changed his mind. But we cannot see any particular contradiction. Even if we could, it would not weigh with us against the plain statement with which The Acts of the Apostles begins.

Acts I, 1 to 4 and 8 to 9. The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Compare this with Luke, 1 to 4. Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us. Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect {164} understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus. Luke XXIV, 49 to 51. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

There are slight discrepancies as to the actual last words of Jesus, but nothing that would make any reasonable person doubt that the one narrative is the continuation of the other by the same hand.



## **The Controversy on Baptism and Transubstantiation**

This section again is fairly accurate, except that we cannot agree that there was any dispute about baptism and circumcision as 'means of salvation'. These were merely 'outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace.'

### **The Alternative Christs**

Under this heading it appears fitting to clarify still further. Mr. Shaw says, Let us now clear up the situation a little. The New Testament tells two stories for two different sorts of readers. One is the old story of the achievement of our salvation by the sacrifice and atonement of a divine personage who was barbarously slain and rose again on the third day: the story as it was accepted by the apostles. And in this story the political, economic, and moral views of the Christ have no importance: the atonement is everything; and we are saved by our faith in it, and not by works or opinions (other than that particular opinion) {165} bearing on practical affairs.

The other is the story of a prophet who, after expressing several very interesting opinions as to practical conduct, both personal and political, which are now of pressing importance, and instructing his disciples to carry them out in their daily life, lost his head; believed himself to be a crude legendary form of god; and under that delusion courted and suffered a cruel execution in the belief that he would rise from the dead and come in glory to reign over a regenerated world. In this form, the political, economic and moral opinions of Jesus, as guides to conduct, are interesting and important; the rest is mere psychopathy and supersitition. The accounts of the resurrection, the parthenogenetic birth, and the more incredible miracles are rejected inventions; and such episodes as the conversation with the devil are classed with similar conversations recorded of St. Dunstan, Luther, Bunyan, Swedenborg, and Blake.

Part of this is exceedingly amusing. Mr. Shaw has picked out a dozen passages from the whole gospel, misinterpreted them and misapplied them, and remarks that the rest is mere psychopathy and superstition. It reminds one of the famous way to cook an olive. Stuff a lark with the olive, a quail with the lark, a fowl with the plover, a goose with the fowl, a turkey with the goose; roast, throw the birds out of the window, and eat the olive. I am perfectly in agreement with him in those passages, which he calls valuable as guides to conduct. I only object to his imagining that any teacher from the East was ever silly enough to suppose that the excellent rule devised for the freedom of the recluse {166} from all disturbances of material anxieties or desires could be made into a rule for the community at large.

And now, we may try to put the whole question of the life of Jesus in the light of what we know of the religions of the East from the 'Yoga of Patanjali to the worship of Dionysus and Attis.

### **The Yogi Jesus.[This, and the following seven section-headings, are mine, and not Mr. Shaw's.]**

The life of Jesus, omitting the mystical birth and death, is altogether characteristic of the 'holy man' of the East. The only record of his childhood is given in Luke II, 42 to 52. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him: son, why hast thou dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them. How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came {167} to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. This is the natural sort of incident which one remembers and thinks worthy of mention in the early life of a teacher. He was a very clever and even precocious boy; and he behaved well to his parents. (It would spoil the author's

purpose to make him a miraculous boy; for his object is to prove how mystic practices can convert a commonplace person into a genius) We hear nothing of the life of Jesus from the time he was twelve to the time he was thirty. There is no evidence whatever that he worked as a carpenter. During the dispute about whether he came from Galilee or not, which has been quoted previously, it is asked, is he not the carpenter's son? And are these not his brethren? Nobody says 'Is he not the carpenter?' It is as if there was some slight mystery in regard to what he was doing before the age of thirty.

There is no mystery to any one acquainted with the religious life of the East. It is evident (any such person will say) that Jesus felt the call of the religious life as a young man, found a guru or teacher, and became his disciple. Either he became a fullfledged Adept, or the old man died, and he came forth into the world from his concealment ready to take disciples of his own. With these he wanders about the country, living, as is customary with such people, on the bounty which is always assured by the piety of the vulgar to men who have given up the world. He picks up disciples in different places; a chosen few he keeps with him for special and secret instruction in spiritual development, others he sends out as sort of advance agents with a simple message { 168 } to prepare people for his coming.

It is also exceedingly characteristic of the Eastern 'holy man' to shine in dialogue with the 'Zahid' or orthodox. He begins by doing something unconventional, and confutes those who reproach him. There are endless examples in the writings of the Sufis and dervishes as well as in Indian accounts of the lives of their 'holy men'. It is unnecessary to labour this point further.

Now those sayings of Jesus which Mr. Shaw approves are all characteristic of this form of life. Let us take a few of the ancient aphorisms of Patanjali. Yoga is restraining the mindstuff from taking various forms. That is the whole definition of 'Yoga'. The mind is supposed to be concentrated on 'the effulgent one which is beyond all sorrow', or something of the kind; and if one 'takes thought for the morrow', it is a disturbance. We are to control the mind-stuff 'by practice and non-attachement', which is defined later in these terms: 'that effect which comes to those who have given up their thirst after objects either seen or heard, and which wills the to control the objects, is non-attachemnt'. This is identical with the advice not to allow the affections and passions to disturb the concentration of the mind.

We learn further that 'grief, mental distress, tremor of the body, irregular breathing accompany non-retention of concentration'. Compare the sayings of Jesus, 'let the dead bury their dead, but come thou and follow me.' Further, 'friendship, mercy, gladness, indifference being thought of in regard to subjects happy, unhappy, good and evil respectively, pacify the mind'. Compare this with the instruction of Jesus to love your neighbour as yourself. { 169 } You must have no unkind thoughts and yet no passionate thoughts, for all these disturb the mind.

We are also to note the following phrase of Patanjali. 'the pain-bearing obstructions are ignorance, egotism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life. Ignorance is taking that which is not eternal, impure, painful, and non-self for the eternal, pure happy self. Egoism is the identification of the seer with the instrument of seeing (that is, the body of the mind). Attachment is that which dwells on pleasure. Aversion is that which dwells on pain. Flowing through its own nature, and established even in the learned, is the clinging to life.' This is he very teaching of Jesus as approved by Mr. Shaw in every respect.

Much more could be said, but this appears to me to be enough as a clear identification of the teaching of Jesus with the universal and much more ancient doctrine. There is no new item.

With regard to the manner of the life of Jesus we should also note that he frequently goes 'apart into the desert place to pray'. This is a common practice of all Eastern Yogis: it is essential that they should not be disturbed during meditation. We may quote the Kshurika Upanishad which recommends 'a noiseless place', and the S'vetasvatara which says,

Let the place be pure, and free also from boulders and sand.  
Free from fire, smoke and pools of water,  
Here where nothing distracts the mind or offends the eye  
In a hollow protected from the wind a man should compose himself.

The power of working various miracles is also given by 'Yoga'. Patanjali says, 'By making the Samyama on the form of the body {170} the power of perceiving forms being obstructed, the power of manifestation in the eye being separated, the Yogi's body becomes unseen. This explains perfectly the miracle recorded in the gospels where they took up stones to stone him, but he passing through the midst of them Went his way.

Patanjali continues, Karma is of two kinds, soon to be fructified, and late to be fructified. By making Samyama on that, or by the signs called Arishta, portents, the Yogis know the exact time of separation from their bodies.' This explains how Jesus foretold the time of his death.

We learn further from Patanjali that 'concentration on the well of the throat' causes hunger to cease, which explains how Jesus was to resist the temptation of Satan to turn stones into bread.

We next read that the Yogi, 'by the conquest of the current Saman, is surrounded by blaze', which accounts for the Transfiguration; and again: 'by making Samyama on the relation between the Akasa and the body' the Yogi, becoming light as cotton wool, goes through the skies; from which the ascension becomes the most natural thing in the world.

We need not continue. All writers on Yoga tell us of other powers as that of the ability to walk on the surface of the water, to multiply food, and to heal diseases. Any one who is conversant with the literature of the subject is absolutely bound to read the story of Jesus the thaumaturgist as the account of a 'holy man', who had succeeded in all these practices and attained all these powers. {171}

They are really all one power, by the way. On the theory, all material things are illusions caused by ignorance, and one who has conquered ignorance by the realization of the truth I and my Father are one, (by realization we do not here mean the mere formulation of the mental conception that it is so, but something far deeper) knows the mediate causes, which are 'fine' as opposed to gross, and spiritual in their nature, so that, by modifying by the power of the mind that mental state which causes the illusion of gravitation or the impermeability of matter, he can suspend these phenomena and rise through air or pass a brick wall,[In order to prevent a person from hearing a bell which is struck close to him, it is only necessary to place the bell in vacuo. All phenomena depend on certain conditions; and if we can remove the conditions with which they occur, we can prevent them. All material things are 'illusions caused by ignorance'. Professor Elihu Thomson wrote to me recently that our ideas of all phenomena must be based on 'a sort of something which we know exists, but which we cannot quite describe', and all phenomena are to be subject -- ultimately -- to electrical laws. The electrical current is itself therefore an example of 'matter passing through matter' to use the old and yet more ignorant term; and for us to pass through brick walls is only a question of knowing how to place our bodies and the walls in such electrical conditions that the phenomenon occurs. Words like 'solid', 'heavy', 'material', are only formulae of the credo of ignorance.] The above discussion of the subject is extremely summary; but we trust that it will be found conclusive.

### **The Jewish Prophet Jesus**

This element in the character of Jesus needs no elaboration. It is evident from many of the passages quoted previously in this essay that he was merely carrying on the tradition of Isaiah, Jeremiah {172} and Ezekiel in such passages for example as Matthew XI, 21 to 24, which have been quoted above as evidence of the inclination of Jesus to use threats. Compare with Isaiah XVII, 1. The burden of Damascus, Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. and twenty other passages.

The woes pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees are exactly paralleled by Jeremiah XXIII, 1 to 4. Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase, and innumerable other passages.

The long passage in the twenty fourth chapter of Matthew, and repeated in the other synoptics, is precisely in the style of Daniel XII, 1 to 3. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince, which

standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Jesus even acknowledges Daniel in Matthew XXIV, 15 as his authority. The return to God, the repentance of the people, and the restoration of the kingdom, are practically the sole theme of Jesus the patriotic Hebrew prophet. Sufficit. {173}

### **Jesus as the typical god of Asia. (with contributions from Egypt, Greece, and Rome.)**

In the opening of this subject, it is desirable to glance for a moment at history. Asia at this time was being thrown open to the western world. Alexander the Great had invaded India, and the wars of Greece and Persia had ceased, just about long enough for things to settle down to commerce, and the interchange of ideas. As to Egypt, the fall of the Ptolemies was within the memory of living men, Alexandria was still the storehouse of learning, in spite of the destruction wrought by Caesar.

Syria was geographically an absolute focus of these three main currents.

Rome was spreading civilization, enforcing the Pax Romana on the nomadic tribes and savage settlers, making the lives of merchants comparatively safe, and their property secure. Men began to travel widely, and new ideas became possible and even inevitable. We see something not dissimilar to-day; the British conquest of India was the means of orientalizing European thought, and the result is now, as it was then, that a synthetic religion has once more become possible.

These three main influences were at work, then, upon Syria. Against them was the invincible prejudice and obstinacy of orthodox Jews, who clung to Moses and the Prophets with dogged tenacity. But Judaism had never really taken root in Israel. The 'lost ten tribes', and even Judah and Benjamin, were always 'whoring after strange gods', insisting the Jehovah was best worshipped under his title of King or 'Moloch', by passing their {174} children through the fire to him, building 'groves' and 'high places', with sacred prostitutes complete, both male and female, and even indulging in sheer idolatry, the worship of graven or molten images. One has only to read the prophets to be bored stiff with their eternal diatribes against all these practices. Most of them talk of nothing else - one cannot quote them; one would have to reprint them.

We have Ezekiel besieging a tile with the city of Jerusalem portrayed upon it, and building a fort against it, and casting a mount against it, and setting a camp against it, and setting battering rams against it round about, with an iron pan between it and the real city, all on the best principles of sympathetic magic. (Ezekiel IV, 1-2.) And in chapter V he burns hair, and chops it, and scatters it, with a similar object; and (again in chapter IV) he cooks his food with dung, so as to cause the Jews to eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles.'

Hosea is commanded by God to take a wife of whoredoms on whom he begets a whole series of illegitimate children, and calls them by 'unlucky' names, in order to make still more trouble for his unhappy countrymen.

Even the records of the Kings show that, beyond a few foreign wars, they did nothing but do righteousness in the sight of the Lord by taking away 'abominations', or evil in the sight of the Lord by putting them back again, just as later on the apostles spend half their time reproaching the Christians for all manner of hideous crimes, to say nothing of mere vice. [Rom. XIII, 13. I. Cor. V, 1. VI, 18. XI, 20, 21. Eph. IV, 25, 28. V, 3-5, 18. Phil. III, 17-19. Col. III, 8, 9. I. Thess. IV, 3-7. I. Tim. I, 6-10. Titus I, 10. II, 16 [WEH NOTE: possibly Titus III, 1 is intended here. There is no II, 14. II, 1-3. I. Peter II, 11. II. Peter, 11, 13, 114 [WEH NOTE: possibly II. Peter, II, 13-14 is intended. III. John 9, 10. Jude, 4, 12, 13. Rev. II, 14, 20-22 - etc. etc. etc. I expect all apostles have similar trials!] {175}

It is evident throughout, that the Children of Israel as a whole never lived up to their prophets, whom indeed they stoned and sawed asunder, and otherwise zeped.

But the time of Herod was worse than all others previous. There had been a small revival through the rebuilding of the temple, but a perusal of the Books of Maccabee will show what a very small remnant the Jews really were. Even within a few days' journey of Jerusalem itself was Samaria, with whose people

the Jews had 'nothing in common', while within the precincts of the temple itself were warring sects of Pharisees and Sadducees and many more.

Conceive now the three currents above referred to clashing at this focus of the temple, under the protection of the Roman government, which was as sensible in the matter of religious toleration as the British Empire of to-day. These currents must be now studied in more detail.

Let us therefore take a cursory survey of various Asiatic religions; we shall find many essential features practically universal, with no graver differences than unimportant local variations.

I trust that I shall not go too far astray from the teaching of Dr. J.G. Frazer - I am proud to be the humblest member of the college of which he is so honourable a boast - if I try to summarize corn-worships, wine-worships, sun-worships, moon-worships, phallic-worships, and the rest, by indicating one point in which all agree; namely in possessing a periodic cycle.

Nature repeats herself, like history. Whatever in Nature we {176} most cherish, whatever we regard as most necessary to our life and joy, we celebrate; thus, all celebration being lyrical or dramatic, we choose the moment of the triumph of our 'hero' over death, whether that be the renewal of the earth in spring, or the renewal of the sun at dawn.

In all such dramas, then, the central point is the death and resurrection of whatever it is that saves us (from starvation or what not), in a word, of Our Savior.[I do not here wish to imply adherence to any particular doctrine of the original reason for such celebration; on any basis the facts stand.]

It is also to be remembered that these celebrations were not originally merely such; the early peoples of the earth, with their history and geography limited to a few years and a few miles, had not our present certainty that nature would repeat herself, and the approach of winter may have seemed to such as a catastrophe. At first the savage sowed no seed; he simply noticed that things grew again. When some genius grasped the idea of cause and effect deeply enough to induce him to till the earth, it was a sort of magic, a direct conspiracy of man to conquer nature - and so it was. He therefore sowed his seed with all kinds of formalities intended to propitiate the unknown powers that presided over the destinies of the earth.

When, therefore, we find the rising of the Nile attributed to the tears of Isis, and when we know that Isis, the great Mother of Nature, wept on the death of Osiris, the reaping of the corn, we can understand that corn would be thrown into the Nile, as it were to {177} give her something to weep for! But Osiris being personified later as a man or man-god, the rite would soon develop into the hewing asunder of a man as the representative of Osiris, and casting his limbs into the Nile, instead of the actual corn. And the King of the country being responsible for the prosperity of the people, what more natural than to sacrifice the King himself? In hundreds of tribes this was actually done; the King had to suffer in person. This was true even of daily sacrifice in some cases. But the savage more often tried to fool Nature by dressing up a common man as the King, rendering him worship, and then slaying him.

The above is not an actual example in all details, but it will suffice to show part of the general reasoning which led to the custom of a periodic sacrifice of a man dressed as a King. The reader may study the subject in elaborate (and even rather overwhelming) detail in *The Golden Bough*. Associate with this main idea of ritual a few obvious points of ceremonial like preliminary dedication to the powers of Nature by purification by water and consecration by fire, and we are ready to study the magical life of Jesus the typical Asiatic god. We are to note that in this character Jesus does no miracles (except the doubtful case of the healing of the ear of Malchus, only recorded in one Gospel, and that the least reliable and most obviously doctored, that of Luke) but while he boasts of his mighty powers makes no effort to exercise them. The story is wholly miraculous, but the wonders are performed upon Jesus, not by him. The real exception to this rule is after the resurrection, where in spite of the demonstration to Thomas (John XX) and his willingness to eat, he behaves rather like the Cheshire {178} Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*, appearing and disappearing in a ghostlike manner.

Now at last we are ready to compare the stories told of the life of Jesus with those of similar deities; and we shall anticipate slightly by heading our section:

### **The Lesser Mysteries**

## 1. The Virgin Birth.

Practically all heroes of antiquity were said to be born of divine fathers, or occasionally of divine mothers. Hercules was the son of Zeus, who made the night last fortyeight hours in order to 'mak' siccar'; Romulus and Remus were sons of Mars; Alexander of Apollo and so on. More definite demi-gods than these were equally fortunate in their parentage; Nana, the mother of Attis, conceived miraculously without commerce with the male. But we wish to call very particular attention to the story of Dionysus. Semele became pregnant by Zeus in the form of a lightning flash. Hera (a name curiously like Herod) sought to destroy the child, but Zeus hid it in his 'thigh' to use the Scriptural expression.

Now a flash of lightning is the 'divine fire'; we read in Acts II.3.4 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.... This symbolism is no accident. The Hebrew letter Shin is shaped like a triple flame; it means a tooth; its numerical value is 300, which is identical with that of the words Ruach Alhim, the Spirit of God, or of the Gods.[In Jewish mysticism this fact makes it possible to use the letter as a hieroglyph of the divine name numerically corresponding to it.] Now the name Jesus or Jeheshuah {179} in Hebrew is spelt by placing this letter Shin in the midst of the four letters of the name Jehovah,[*WEH NOTE: Not true. This is a qabalistic spelling popularized by P. Riccius in the 16th century as an argument for conversion of the Jews. It is interesting, and useful; but it is not the proper spelling of the name Jeheshuah or Joshu*], and represents the mitigation of that terrible deity by the influence of the Spirit. Hence Jesus is also made equivalent to Joshua, 'saviour', for he shall save his people from their sins.

To put this story in dramatic form it is then only necessary to represent a virgin as impregnated by this flame of fire.

There is here no space to pursue the significance of the name Mary, connected with 'mare' the sea,[This is a good pun in Hebrew as well as Latin, Miriam, the word for Mary, being Maim the See, with the letter R, the Hieroglyph of the Sun, in her womb. Similarly Shamaim, heaven is formed by putting The Shin before the Maim; The Spirit of God brooded upon the Waters.][*WEH NOTE: True, but Miriam as a name translates from Hebrew as Rebellious*] and thus making the nativity result from the mystic wedding of fire with water. Volumes have been written on the subject.

## 2. The flight into Egypt.

Egypt in Hebrew symbolism nearly always means 'darkness'. We now see the flight as symbolical of the hiding of the seed in the earth, thus saving it from the terrible forces of winter.

## 3. The Baptism of Jesus.

Omitting any elaborate analysis of the symbolism of the name John, we only point out the marriage of fire and water, the sun and rain that conspire to the growth of corn and wine, for in John I, 32, we read And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. The dove is the common symbol of the creative force, both male and female. This was later symbolized in initiation ceremonies and the like by 'purification by water and consecration by fire' before {180} a man could enter the temple, that is, become the neophyte new-born, or the hero of the mysteries therein celebrated.

## 4. The hailing.

(John I. 47-49.) Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathaniel saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Here we see the hero proclaimed king and God, just as in Carnival to-day, just as in the rites of Osiris and Saturn and Marduk and Tezcatlipoca three thousand years ago, just as in those of every nature-god, almost without exception. The intended victim must be identified as the King-god formally by his being acknowledged as such by some person of importance, John, too, and various disciples, make this acknowledgement, and no one who does not do so is mentioned.

## 5. The miracle of Cana.

Dionysus reappears; the first miracle done by Jesus was the turning of water into wine, which is exactly what Dionysus does; the vine is the alchemist that transmutes the rain of heaven into the juice of the

grape. And Jesus said I am the vine. John writes (II,11) This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. It is certainly an excellent reason!

Now in John's gospel, which is in many ways the best for our purpose, save that there is no mention of the virgin birth,[As will be seen immediately, there is no birth-story in the corresponding mysteries at the end of life. John's ritual lacked this particular feature.] this {181} miracle is immediately followed by the cleansing of the temple.

∴∴∴There was no lack of old Sherris sack,  
Of Hippocras fine, or of Malmsey bright;  
And aye, as he drain'd off his cup with a smack,  
He grew less pious and more polite.

She pledged him once, and she pledged him twice,  
And she drank as Lady ought not to drink;  
And he press'd her hand `neath the table thrice,  
And he wink'd as Abbot ought not to wink.

And Peter the Prior, and Francis the Friar,  
Sat each with a napkin under his chin;  
But Roger the Monk got excessively drunk,  
So they put him to bed, and they tuck'd him in.

. The cleansing of the temple.

John II, 13-16. And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the temple those what sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting.

With this we must compare the mysteries of Attis, where the priests in their excitement would dash through the town, lashing everybody with whips, in some cases with the very knives which they had just used to mutilate themselves, none daring to resist them. There may be some connection with the use of the flail in threshing; or, more likely, the waving of the whip is a symbol of the motion of reaping; but I only offer this as a conjecture. The reader will agree that it is hardly probable that the merchants in the temple, a numerous body of persons surrounded by active slaves of great physical strength, would have permitted a single man armed only with a scourge of small cords to drive them all out. As a history the story is absurd; as part of a sacred custom it falls into line at once. Just in the same way, one would instantly knock down a man who threw paper at one in the street; but, at Mardi Gras, one only laughs, and throws a lot more back.[Every carnival has a 'Lord of Misrule', 'Bishop of fools', or 'Abbot of Unreason', who enjoys just this license. See Frazer, The Scapegoat p. 251, p. 331. sqq etc.]

And we see immediately the close connection of this rite of scourging the people with the great central mystery of the whole life of the God. The very next verses explain it. Jesus does {182} these things for a very good reason.

**7. The prophecy of death and resurrection.**

John II, 18-21. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

Now there is no connection at all between the scourging and the 'sign'. No sign is given; no excuse made. But if we take it symbolically as part of a ritual all becomes clear. Why do you whip these people? I am the god who is to die and rise again. It is a sufficient answer. It is all part of the play.

The temple cannot be destroyed and raised again until the other part of the formula has been fulfilled. I cannot go into the whole history of flagellation - that most popular of British sports - but besides the explanation offered above, there is that of the Hekas Hekas Este Bebeloi, the warning of the profane to depart from the vicinity. In New Guinea a bull-roarer is whirled around the head, and all uninitiate flee

from the sound. This seems to me the most probable explanation, if the other be rejected.  
A moment's pause. Let us go over these points again. We have

1. A birth ) not given
2. A hiding in 'darkness' in John
3. A baptism with water and fire.
4. A hailing, thrice repeated.
5. A supper where water becomes wine. {183}
6. A scourging.
7. A death and resurrection foretold.

Now all this occurs on the very first appearance of Jesus; for in John 1 and 2 are missing.

The Baptism takes place, then, the next day after (John I, 35) John and two disciples proclaim him King and god; The day following (John I, 43) Phillip and Nathaniel follow suit. The third day there is a marriage, and Jesus makes wine; and then, after not many days John II, 12. as soon in fact as The Jews' passover was at hand (John II, 13 comes the final scene.)

There are therefore seven incidents in John's 'ritual';

1. The baptism.
2. The first hailing.
3. The second hailing.
4. The third hailing.
5. The making of the wine.
6. The scourging.
7. The prophecy of death.

To any one acquainted with ritual there is a formal feeling about this. It was usual in the ancient mysteries to have a sort of prologue which played the drama in petto, as it were to prepare the mind of the candidate for the real thing. Or the mysteries were played beneath a deeper veil for the postulants to lesser grades. (The High grade mason will note that the third degree is a veil for the eighteenth; and the 18th for the 30th.)

Now if we were to find these same stage directions, as we must now call them, repeated on a larger scale later on, it would confirm {184} our view mightily.

I particularly beg the reader to observe the crowding of these symbolic incidents together, beginning a few days before the passover and ending at that date; and to note well also that nothing of this kind takes place at all for the whole of the Gospel, until the last Passover is at hand, in Chapter XII. In the interval Jesus is the conventional worker of miracles, and dispenser of discourses; there is nothing in any way to suggest ceremonial. But the events at the end of his life are crowded into a few days, just like those which we have considered above.

### **The Greater Mysteries**

(Just as John omits the Virgin Birth, he also omits the Transfiguration which corresponds with it in intention in the end of the matter.)

1. The anointing. (Six days before the Passover)

John XII, 1-3, 7. Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

It is the custom to wash the newborn child (neophyte); it is the custom to anoint the dying with oil. It is also the custom to annoint a king with oil before proclaiming and crowning him.

2. The Proclamation. (Five days before the Passover.)

John XII, 12-15. On the next day such people that were come {185} to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of the palm tree, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written.



The reader will observe how closely this corresponds to the 'hailing' in John 1; but it is more ceremonial. Compare Frazer (Adonis (Attis) Osiris, 3rd edition, Vol. 1. 266) Certainly the Romans were familiar with the Galli, the emasculated priests of Attis, before the close of the Republic. These unsexed beings, in their Oriental costume, with little images suspended on their breasts, appear to have been a familiar sight in the streets of Rome, which they traversed in procession, carrying the image of the goddess and chanting their hymns to the music of cymbals and tambourines, flutes and horns, while the people, impressed by the fantastic show and moved by the wild strains, flung alms to them in abundance, and buried the image and its bearers under showers of roses.

Dionysus, too, came from Syria and India riding upon an ass, attended by satyrs and nymphs in triumphal procession who hailed him Saviour and God.

Now comes a further proclamation. John XII, 28. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. (If Jesus had really made an entry of this sort into Jerusalem where a small Roman garrison was terrorizing a seditious and fanatical populace, Pilate would have needed no {186} urging to crucify Jesus, and a few score of the ringleaders as part of an annual carnival, it would be harmless.)

Here heaven as well as earth is made to bear witness to the divinity of Jesus (Compare the record of fire and water in the Virgin Birth and in the Baptism. Fire represents heaven, water earth, in ancient symbolism.)

3. The Last Supper. John XIII, 4, 5. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Here ritualism is evidently in full swing. The new King accepts office by performing this menial function. Jesus himself then gives the cue to Judas to betray him (John XIII, 21, 26, 30.) When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the Son of Simon. He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

It is an amazing fact that John makes no mention whatsoever of the institution of the Eucharist as given in the Synoptics, but replaces it by this bewitchment of Judas, and that though he is very minute in detail, filling five of his twenty one chapters with the account of the supper.

The account in Mark is as follows: (Mark XIV, 22-25.) And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took {187} the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Here we have the Greater Mystery corresponding to the Lesser Mystery told in the supper at Cana.

The story now becomes very confused in many ways; its main points are familiar to all readers, and one may forbear to quote in detail.

4. The Scourging. (Mark XIV, 65, XV, 15, 19, John XVIII, 22, XIX, 1, etc.)

Note that Dionysus was tried, insulted, and scourged by Pentheus. This whole scene in the Bacchae is extraordinarily like the trial of Jesus.

Jesus is also led before the religious and royal authorities - the persons in fact whose godship and kingship he has taken on himself that he may die in their place - and they condemn him to death. Here we must refer again to the magical reason of the sacrifice, which is to renew the powers of the king, or of the corn. The sham King is therefore condemned, and at the same time the executive officer (in this case Pilate) whether or not he realizes that this magic is rather a cruel business, ceremonially washes his hands of it lest the ghost of the victim should get back at him.

We must now pass to the ceremonial robing and crowning of the mock King, already explained, and to the final scene of crucifixion. In this latter we get the solar symbolism introduced almost for the first time, for previously there has been little to suggest it but the twelve disciples, one of them a traitor and accurst, {188} which recall the twelve signs of the Zodiac which surround the Sun, one of them (Scorpio) being astrologically considered treacherous and fatal. The bar of the crucifix is the equator, which the Sun surmounts at the Vernal Equinox when Jesus is said to have died.

We must here really quote Frazer; Attis, Adonis, Osiris[*WEH NOTE: Should be Adonis Attis Osiris, Vol I.*], pp. 301-310. Among the gods of eastern origin who in the decline of the ancient world competed against each other for the allegiance of the West was the old Persian deity Mithra. The immense popularity of his worship is attested by the monuments illustrative of it which have been found scattered in profusion all over the Roman Empire. In respect both of doctrines and of rites the cult of Mithra appears to have presented many points of resemblance not only to the religion of the Mother of the Gods but also to Christianity. The similarity struck the Christian doctors themselves, and was explained by them as a work of the devil, who sought to seduce the souls of men from the true faith by a false and insidious imitation of it. So to the Spanish conquerors of Mexico and Peru many of the native heathen rites appeared to be diabolical counterfeits of the Christian sacraments. With more probability the modern student of comparative religion traces such resemblances to the similar and independent-[An alternative theory is that these are the ruins of older civilizations. It has the advantage of leaning less heavily upon coincidence; and if it should appear that such stories as that of Atlantis have a basis in fact, becomes not improbable] workings of the mind of man in his sincere, if crude, attempts to fathom the secret of the universe, and to adjust his little life to its awful mysteries. However that may be, there {189} can be no doubt that the Mithraic religion proved a formidable rival to Christianity, combining as it did a solemn ritual with aspirations after moral purity and a hope of immortality. Indeed the issue of the conflict between the two faiths appears for a time to have hung in the balance. An instructive relic of the long struggle is preserved in our festival of Christmas, which the Church seems to have borrowed directly from its heathen rival. In the Julian calendar the twenty-fifth of December was reckoned the winter solstice, and it was regarded as the Nativity of the Sun, because the day begins to lengthen and the power of the sun to increase from that turning-point in the year. The ritual of the nativity, as it appears to have been celebrated in Syria and Egypt, was remarkable. The celebrants retired into certain inner shrines, from which at midnight they issued a loud cry, The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing~! The Egyptians even represented the newborn sun by the image of an infant which on his birthday, the winter solstice, they brought forth and exhibited to his worshippers. No doubt the Virgin who thus conceived and bore a son on the twenty-fifth of December was the great Oriental goddess whom the Semites called the Heavenly Virgin or simply the Heavenly Goddess; in Semitic lands she was a form of Astarte. Now Mithra was regularly identified by his worshippers with the Sun, the Unconquered Sun, as they called him; hence his nativity also fell on the twenty-fifth of December. The gospels say nothing as to the day of Christ's birth, and accordingly the early Church did not celebrate it. In time, however, the Christians of Egypt came to regard the sixth of January as the date of the Nativity, and the custom of {190} commemorating the birth of the Saviour on that day gradually spread until by the fourth century the Western Church, which had never recognized the sixth of January as the day of the Nativity, adopted the twenty-fifth of December as the true date, and in time its decision was accepted also by the Eastern Church. At Antioch the change was not introduced till about the year 375 A.D.

What considerations let the ecclesiastical authorities to institute the festival of Christmas? The motives for the innovation are stated with great frankness by a Syrian writer, himself a Christian. The reason, he tells us, why the Fathers transferred the celebration of the sixth of January to the twenty-fifth of December was this. It was a custom of the heathen to celebrate on the same twenty-fifth of December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and festivities the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day and the festival of the Epiphany on the sixth of January. Accordingly, along with this custom, the practice has prevailed of kindling fires till the sixth. The heathen origin of Christmas is plainly hinted at, if not tacitly admitted, by Augustine when he exhorts his Christian brethren not to celebrate that solemn day like the heathen on account of the sun, but on account of him, who made the sun. In like manner Leo the Great rebuked the pestilent belief that Christmas was solemnized because of the birth of the new sun, as it was called, and not because of the nativity of Christ. {191}

Thus it appears that the Christian Church chose to celebrate the birthday of its founder on the twenty-fifth of December in order to transfer the devotion of the heathen from the Sun to him who was called the Sun of Righteousness. If that was so, there can be no intrinsic improbability in the conjecture that motives of

the same sort may have led the ecclesiastical authorities to assimilate the Eastern festival of the death and resurrection of their Lord to the festival of the death and resurrection of another Asiatic god which fell at the same season. Now the Easter rite still observed in Greece, Sicily, and southern Italy bear in some respects a striking resemblance to the rites of Adonis, and I have suggested that the Church may have consciously adapted the new festival to its heathen predecessor for the sake of winning souls to Christ. But this adaptation probably took place in the Greek-speaking rather than in the Latin-speaking parts of the ancient world; for the worship of Adonis, while it flourished among the Greeks, appears to have made little impression on Rome and the West. Certainly it never formed part of the official Roman religion. The place which it might have taken in the affections of the vulgar was already occupied by the similar but more barbarous worship of Attis and the Great Mother. Now the death and resurrection of Attis were officially celebrated at Rome on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of March, the latter being regarded as the spring equinox, and therefore as the most appropriate day for the revival of a god of vegetation who had been dead or sleeping throughout the winter. But according to an ancient and widespread tradition Christ suffered on the twenty-fifth of March, {192} and accordingly some Christians regularly celebrated the crucifixion on that day without any regard to the state of the moon. This custom was certainly observed in Phrygia, Cappadocia, and Gaul, and there seem to be grounds for thinking that at one time it was followed also in Rome. Thus the tradition which placed the death of Christ on the twenty-fifth of March was ancient and deeply rooted. It is all the more remarkable because astronomical considerations [The fact the Easter is a moveable feast, depending on the moon, is conclusive proof that it is not the anniversary of an historical event. This view does not contradict that of Dr. Frazer; it shows that a solar was conjoined with a lunar festival.] prove that it can have no historical foundation. The inference appears to be inevitable that the passion of Christ must have been arbitrarily referred to that date in order to harmonize with an older festival of the spring equinox. This is the view of the learned ecclesiastical historian Mgr. Duchesne, who points out that the death of the Saviour was thus made to fall upon the very date on which, according to a widespread belief, the world had been created. But the resurrection of Attis, who combined in himself the characters of the divine Father and the divine Son, was officially celebrated at Rome on the same day. When we remember that the festival of St. George in April has replaced the ancient pagan festival of the Parilia; that the festival of St. John the Baptist in June has succeeded to a heathen Midsummer festival of Water; that the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin in August has ousted the festival of Diana; that the feast of All souls in November is a continuation of an old heathen feast of the dead; and that the Nativity of Christ himself was assigned to the winter solstice in {193} December because that day was deemed the Nativity of the Sun; we can hardly be thought rash or unreasonable in conjecturing that the other cardinal festival of the Christian Church - the solemnization of Easter - may have been in like manner, and from like motives of edification, adapted to a similar celebration of the Phrygian god Attis at the vernal equinox.

At least it is a remarkable coincidence, if it is nothing more, that the Christian and the heathen festivals of the divine death and resurrection should have been solemnized at the same season and in the same places. For the places which celebrated the death of Christ at the spring equinox were Phrygia, Gaul, and apparently Rome, that is, the very regions in which the worship of Attis either originated or struck deepest root. It is difficult to regard the coincidence as purely accidental. If the vernal equinox, the season at which in the temperate regions the whole face of nature testifies to a fresh out-burst of vital energy, had been viewed from of old as the time when the world was annually created afresh in the resurrection of a god, nothing could be more natural than to place the resurrection of the new deity at the same cardinal point of the year. Only it is to be observed that if the death of Christ was dated on the twenty-fifth of March, his resurrection, according to Christian tradition, must have happened on the twenty-seventh of March, which is just two days later than the vernal equinox of the Julian calendar and the resurrection of Attis. A similar displacement of two days occurs in the festivals of St. George and the Assumption of the Virgin. However, another Christian tradition, followed by Lactantius and perhaps by the practice of the {194} church in Gaul, placed the death of Christ on the twenty-third and his resurrection on the twenty-fifth of March. If that was so, his resurrection coincides exactly with the resurrection of Attis.

In point of fact it appears from the testimony of (an) anonymous Christian, who wrote in the fourth century of our era, that Christians and pagans alike were struck by the remarkable coincidence between

the death and resurrection of their respective deities, and that the coincidence formed a theme of bitter controversy between the adherents of the rival religions, the pagans contending that the resurrection of Christ was a spurious imitation of the resurrection of Attis, and the Christians asserting with equal warmth that the resurrection of Attis was a diabolical counterfeit of the resurrection of Christ. In these unseemly bickerings the heathens took what to a superficial observer might seem strong ground by arguing that their god was older and therefore presumably the original, not the counterfeit, since as a general rule an original is older than its copy. This feeble argument the Christians easily rebutted. They admitted, indeed, that in point of time Christ was the junior deity, but they triumphantly demonstrated his real seniority by falling back on the subtlety of Satan, who on so important an occasion had surpassed himself by inverting the usual order of nature.

Taken together, the coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental. They mark the compromise which the church in the hour of its triumph was compelled to make with its vanquished yet still dangerous rivals.

This passage is extremely illuminating on the whole question of dates, and has the further merit of explaining the interpolation {195} of the story of the Virgin Birth.

With regard to the eating of the god after his adornment and murder, see again Frazer *The Dying God* page 55. Among the Jaintias or Syntengs, a Khasi tribe of Assam, human sacrifices used to be annually offered on the Sandhi day in the month of Ashwin. Persons often came forward voluntarily and presented themselves as victims. This they generally did by appearing before the Rajah on the last day of Shravan and declaring that the goddess had called them to herself. After due enquiry, if the would-be victim was found suitable, it was customary for the Rajah to present him with a gold anklet and to give him permission to live as he chose and do what he liked, the royal treasury undertaking to pay compensation for any damage he might do in the exercise of these remarkable privileges. But the enjoyment of these privileges was very short. On the day appointed the voluntary victim, after bathing and purifying himself was dressed in a new attire, daubed with red sandal-wood and vermilion, and bedecked with garlands. Thus arrayed, he sat for a time in meditation and prayer on a dais in front of the goddess; then he made a sign with his finger, and the executioner, after uttering the usual formulas, cut off his head, which was thereafter laid before the goddess on a golden plate. The lungs were cooked and eaten by such Kandra Yogis as were present, and it is said that the royal family partook of a small quantity of rice cooked in the blood of the victim.

With regard to the reason why it must be that the 'first-be-gotten son of the Father' of all should thus be slain, we refer once more to the same great authority in *The Dying god*, the whole {196} section on the Sacrifice of the King's son, of which we take the liberty of quoting a few short passages only. Page 160. A point to notice about the temporary kings described in the foregoing chapter is that in two places (Cambodia and Jambi) they come of a stock which is believed to be akin to the royal family. If the view here taken of the origin of these temporary kingships is correct, we can easily understand why the king's substitute should sometimes be of the same race as the king. When the king first succeeded in getting the life of another accepted as a sacrifice instead of his own, he would have to shew that the death of that other would serve the purpose quite as well as his own would have done. Now it was a god or demigod that the king had to die; therefore the substitute who died for him had to be invested, at least for the occasion, with the divine attributes of the king. This, as we have just seen, was certainly the case with the temporary kings of Siam and Cambodia; they were invested with the supernatural functions, which in an earlier stage of society were the special attributes of the king. But no one could so well represent the king in his divine character as his son, who might be supposed to share the divine afflatus of his father. No one, therefore, could so appropriately die for the king and, through him, for the whole people as the king's son. Page 176-177. The one thing that looms clear through the haze of this weird tradition is the memory of a great massacre of firstborn. This was the origin, we are told, both of the sanctity of the firstborn and of the feast of the Passover. But when we are further told that the people whose firstborn were slaughtered on that occasion were not the Hebrews but their enemies, we are at {197} once met by serious difficulties. Why, we may ask, should the Israelites kill the firstlings of their cattle for ever because God once killed those of the Egyptians? and why should every Hebrew father have to pay God a ransom for his firstborn child because God once slew all the firstborn children of the Egyptians? In this form the tradition offers no

intelligible explanation of the custom. But it at once becomes clear and intelligible when we assume that in the original version of the story it was the Hebrew firstborn that were slain; that in fact the slaughter of the firstborn children was formerly, what the slaughter of the firstborn cattle always continued to be, not an isolated butchery but a regular custom, which with the growth of more humane sentiments was afterward softened into the vicarious sacrifice of a lamb and the payment of a ransom for each child. Here the reader may be reminded of another Hebrew tradition in which the sacrifice of the firstborn child is indicated still more clearly. Abraham, we are informed, was commanded by God to offer up his firstborn son Isaac as a burnt sacrifice, and was on the point of obeying the divine command, when God, content with this proof of his faith and obedience, substituted for the human victim a ram, which Abraham accordingly sacrificed instead of his son. Putting the two traditions together and observing how exactly they dovetail into each other and into the later Hebrew practice of actually sacrificing the firstborn children by fire to Baal or Moloch, we can hardly resist the conclusion that, before the practice of redeeming them was introduced, the Hebrews, like the other branches of the Semitic race, regularly sacrificed their firstborn children by the fire or the knife. The Passover, {198} if this view is right, was the occasion when the awful sacrifice was offered; and the tradition of its origin has preserved in its main outlines a vivid memory of the horrors of these fearful nights.

Page 178-179. If this be indeed the origin of the Passover and of the sanctity of the firstborn among the Hebrews, the whole of the Semitic evidence on the subject is seen to fall into line at once. The children whom the Carthaginians, Phoenicians, Canaanites, Moabites, Sepharvites, and probably other branches of the Semitic race burnt in the fire would be their firstborn only, although in general ancient writers have failed to indicate this limitation of the custom. For the Moabites, indeed, the limitation is clearly indicated, if not expressly stated, when we read that the King of Moab offered his eldest son, who should have reigned after him, as a burnt sacrifice on the wall. For the Phoenicians it comes out less distinctly in the statement of Porphyry that the Phoenicians used to sacrifice one of their dearest to Baal, and in the legend recorded by Philo of Byblus that Cronus sacrificed his only-begotten son. We may suppose that the custom of sacrificing the firstborn both of men and animals was a very ancient Semitic institution, which many branches of the race kept up within historical times; but that the Hebrews, while they maintained the custom in regard to domestic cattle, were led by their loftier morality to discard it in respect of children, and to replace it by a merciful law that first born children should be ransomed instead of sacrificed.

Page 194-195. With the preceding evidence before us we may safely infer that a custom of allowing a king to kill his son, as {199} a substitute or vicarious sacrifice for himself, would be in now way exceptional or surprising, at least in Semitic lands, where indeed religion seems at one time to have recommended or enjoined every man, as a duty that he owed to his god, to take the life of his eldest son. And it would be entirely in accordance with analogy if, long after the barbarous custom had been dropped by others, it continued to be observed by kings, who remain in many respects the representatives of a vanished world, solitary pinnacles that topple over the rising waste of waters under which the past lies buried. We have seen that in Greece two families of royal descent remained liable to furnish human victims from their number down to a time when the rest of their fellow countrymen and country women ran hardly more risk of being sacrificed than passengers in Cheapside at present run of being hurried into St. Paul's or Bow Church and immolated on the altar. A final mitigation of the custom would be to substitute condemned criminals for innocent victims. Such a substitution is known to have taken place in the human sacrifices annually offered in Rhodes to Baal, and we have seen good grounds for believing that the criminal, who perished on the cross or the gallows at Babylon, died instead of the king in whose royal robes he had been allowed to masquerade for a few days.

Further evidence with regard to the custom of hanging the god upon a tree is given in Attis, Adonis, Osiris. [WEH NOTE: Vol. I] We again quote. (Page 289-291.) We may conjecture that in old days the priest who bore the name and played the part of Attis at the spring festival of Cybele was regularly hanged or otherwise slain upon the sacred tree, and that this barbarous custom was afterwards mitigated into the form in which it is known to us in later times, {200} when the priest merely draw blood from his body under the tree and attached an effigy instead of himself to its trunk. In the holy grove at Upsala men and animals were sacrificed by being hanged upon the sacred trees. The human victims dedicated to Odin were regularly put to death by hanging or by a combination of hanging and stabbing, the man being

strung up to a tree or a gallows and then wounded with a spear. Hence Odin was called the Lord of the Gallows or the God of the Hanged, and he is represented sitting under a gallows tree. Indeed he is said to have been sacrificed to himself in the ordinary way, as we learn from the weird verses of the Havamal, in which the god describes how he acquired his divine power by learning the magic runes:

'I know that I hung on the windy tree  
For nine whole nights,  
Wounded with the spear, dedicated to Odin,  
Myself to myself.'

The Bagobos of Mindanao, one of the Philippine Islands, used annually to sacrifice human victims for the good of the crops in a similar way. Early in December, when the constellation Orion appeared at seven o'clock in the evening, the people knew that the time had come to clear their fields for sowing and to sacrifice a slave. The sacrifice was presented to certain powerful spirits as payment for the good year which the people had enjoyed, and to ensure the favour of the spirits for the coming season. The victim was led to a great tree in the forest; there he was tied with his back to the tree and his arms stretched high above his head, in the attitude in which ancient artists portrayed Marsyas hanging on the fatal tree. While he thus hung by the arms he was slain by a spear thrust through his body at the level of the armpits. {201} We need hardly proceed. Every detail of the death of Jesus appears as the essential in some ritual or other of some earlier faith. We need not trouble the reader with similar parallels to the resurrection: we trust that the tests which we have offered him will induce him to make the Golden Bough the chief cornerstone of this religious library.

It will be objected that we have proved almost too much, that we have had to mingle the rites of Attis with those of Osiris; we have traced one incident to the worship of Dionysus, another to that of Mithras or the Sun. [WEH NOTE: *the following is an extended footnote by Crowley. Regular text resumes after the note concludes on page 204.*]

[ As an alternative answer to this criticism, may I briefly point out that the story of the Crucifixion is already told in the romance called The Book of Esther?

There is a king Ahasuerus who has seven chamberlains (? The sun and the planets?) His queen Vashti (The Elamite goddess Mashti) refuses to show herself to the people, as any modest woman in the East would do. Ahasuerus was 'merry with wine'. There are seven princes who propose to punish Vashti, who is accordingly deposed.

The king then chooses a virgin named Esther (Ishtar or Ashtoreth or Asteria or Astarte, the regular name of the Goddess of those countries) adopted daughter of her cousin Mordecai (the local god Marduk) to be queen.

Mordecai, doing a service to the king by revealing a conspiracy against him, on the part of two chamberlains, obtains favour through Esther; but he has a rival in Haman (The Elamite god Human) who is made 'prince minister'. Haman tries to destroy all the Jews; Mordecai persuades Esther to come to the rescue. She orders all the Jews to fast and mourn for three days. At the end of this time Esther, pleasing the king, asks him and Haman to a banquet. Meanwhile Haman has prepared a gallows for Mordecai.

The king, sleepless on the night before the banquet, reads history, and remembers that he has neglected to reward Mordecai for the service rendered him.

Now comes the 'comedy'.

The king asks Haman what shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. Haman, thinking himself to be meant, recommends that the man should be dressed in the royal and crown, set on the king's own horse, and led through the city and proclaimed. The king orders Haman to do this to Mordecai; an excellent jest.

Now comes the banquet, and Esther pleads for the Jews to be spared, accusing Haman. The king is angry and goes into the garden to walk it off. Haman, taking occasion by the hand to make {202 - note continues} the bounds of freedom yet wider pleads for his life with Esther by attempting to violate her. At this he is caught by Ahasuerus, who forthwith orders Haman to be hanged on the gallows that he had built for Mordecai.

The king gives the ring of office to Mordecai; the Jews slay all the regular subjects of Ahasuerus, instead of those subjects slaying them; and they all live happy ever after.

In commemoration of these events the Jews established the feast of Purim.

This story is evidently a romance in which myth is adapted to, and incorporated in an historical background. We have the same materials as for our Columbine, Harlequin, and Pantaloon. (Note especially the costume of Harlequin.)

The essential features of it are much older than the romance; they - are derived from the Babylonian Sacaea.

Dio Chrystostom describes this festival in the following terms: They take one of the prisoners condemned to death and seat him upon the king's throne, and give him the king's raiment, and let him lord it and drink and run riot and use the king's concubine's during these days, and no man prevents him from doing just what he likes. But afterwards they strip and scourge and crucify him. Compare this with the events of Holy Week.

There is in short no doubt that among the Jews themselves there was a festival of the 'slain god', adopted during the Babylonian captivity. For the main features of the crucifixion we have not therefore even to assume the influence of a foreign current. Purim, though a month earlier in the year, may have become assimilated in this respect with Passover, whose doctrine of the substituted sacrifice of a lamb for the firstborn is so similar to that of the substituted king. For those who object to seek any materials for the Gospels outside of Syria, it may be suggested that the gospel story was an attempt to fortify Judaism by an identification of the Babylonian and Hebrew festivals, just as people in recent years have tried to make 'Empire Days' and such out of Sir John Lubbock's purely humanitarian 'Bank Holidays'.

It may possibly be objected that the important figure of Ishtar is lacking in the Jewish festival; but the revival of monotheism after the return from the captivity explains how this was dropped. The priests would see little harm in acquiescing in a mere 'mock king' ceremony, of which the religious import was obsolescent, or even not only kept alive the memory of a fabled racial glory, but was closely connected with their own old annual festival of the scapegoat.

In Leviticus XVI, 1 we read: And the Lord spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord and died. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And he shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord, at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat, upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot {203 - note concludes and text resumes} fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

Purim means lots, and the reference is evidently to the expiation here described. Here one goat is Haman, the other Mordecai; one Jesus, the other Barabbas.

I am indebted to Dr. J.G. Frazer for the outlines of this note, and would refer the reader to his full and most able discussion of the whole subject in the 'Scapegoat' volume of *The Golden Bough*; but I have been bold enough to make several independent suggestions which it is hoped may do away with some of the difficulties of the subject.]

The point is excellent; but it proves our contention. Recall now what was said at the beginning of this section with regard to the political condition of the period. The local gods did very well while travel was rare; but as their devotees began to wander upon the face of the earth a clash was imminent.

The priests took counsel together, in 'the way they have in the' priesthood! They decided upon the only possible course, to devise a composite rite, with a composite story to suit it. Each priest, by the slightest modification of his own ritual, could join the 'trust', and keep or even increase his revenues. *Quod erat faciendum*.

It may be observed that a precisely similar process was carried out in ancient Egypt in circumstances of a like kind. The corn-nymph was identified with the moon-goddess and the Nile goddess and the Mother-goddess, and labelled Isis, all to her advantage. Not only does Isis ripen your wheat, the priest would explain, it is her tears that swell the Nile; it is her light that guides you in the night; it is she that gives you children. Hence the formation of groups of 'thirty-three superior gods', presently 'enneads', then 'triads', and finally the resolution of the three into one, while yet keeping them separate, by the doctrine of {204} the Trinity.

We now see, then, Jesus as a harmonizer between all these conflicting cults.

The reader will naturally remark that all this is very fine, but it is only an hypotheses, and he would like some evidence that it was actually carried out. Fortunately we have something of the sort to offer.

In the first place the silence of John and Mark with regard to the birth of Jesus is explained in the simplest manner. We have only to suppose that these were the earlier gospels and failed to satisfy certain sects, whose central celebration involved the legend of a mysterious birth. In order to secure the adhesion of these people, it would only be necessary to incorporate their rite; and instructions would immediately be given to insert these into the gospels, or into some subsidiary religious documents such as the calendar.

Now we have actual examples that this was done. Frazer says, in the first volume of *The Golden Bough*. We can hardly doubt that the Saint Hippolytus of the Roman Calendar who was dragged by horses to death on the thirteenth of August, Diana's own day, is no other than the Greek hero of the same name, who after dying twice over as a heathen sinner has been happily resuscitated as a Christian saint.

This is by no means the only example. We find in the same volume: Perhaps then the images of cattle found in Diana's precinct at Nemi were offered to her by herdsmen to ensure her blessing on their herds. In Catholic Germany at the present time the great patron of cattle, horses, and pigs is St. Leonhard, and {205} models of cattle, horses, and pigs are dedicated to him, sometimes in order to ensure the health and increase of the flocks and herds through the coming year, sometimes in order to obtain the recovery of sick animals. And curiously enough, like Diana of Aricia, St. Leonhard is also expected to help women in travail and bless barren wives with offspring. Nor do these points exhaust the analogy between St. Leonhard and Diana or Aricia; for like the goddess the saint heals the sick; he is the patron of prisoners, as she was of runaway slaves; and his shrines, like hers, enjoyed the right of asylum.

These are only two of very many cases. Even gods like Bacchus and Priapus were turned into saints. Not only do we find identity or similarity of name, but also of legend. If the god was accompanied by twenty-four nymphs, there would be twenty-four virgins to minister to the saint. If he had a company of fauns the saint would have a corresponding number of martyrs. If he was represented as the patron of some particular fish the saint would do some miracle, with regard to that fish, which would suggest the pagan story.

When therefore we see in quite a historical way, despite the obvious interests of the church in concealing or masking the transaction, that the lesser religions were deliberately incorporated in Christianity by slightly editing their legends and their rites, it is quite a reasonable corollary that this was merely an extension of the original process.

But why Jesus? the reader still queries. Because the Jesus whom Paul preached was popular with the democracy. Christianity was at first the religion of criminals and slaves. Its salvation {206} was dirt cheap. In the gradual decay of the Roman Empire the sacred priesthood had no choice but to attach the name and tradition of Jesus to their already modified rites. Only by this means could they refill their emptying temples, replenish their depleted coffers, and re-establish their waning power and influence. As Mr. Shaw says, *Faith without Works*, in the sense of payment to the priests, did the trick. It was the people, not the enemy, whom Constantine feared; it was them that he conquered 'in this sign'. Even so it was long before the new Empire of the Papacy built up its power. The arts, the sciences, learning, literature, all fell into darkness; men knew no longer whence Jesus had arisen; they became so ignorant that they accepted the phantastic miracle story, with all its absurdities and contradictions, literally; and even the Renaissance, with its return to Pagan light and leading, the foundation of all that is good in modern civilization, left the Teutonic savages of Prussia and England still in the gloom, lit only by rare flashes of those who loved the Greeks, of that charnel where the mass of the people pullulate - unto this day.

### **The Fabrication of the Final Canon of the Gospel**

In this (I fear) somewhat over lengthy disquisition the reader may have lost the sense of the proportions of the argument. It will now be convenient to reweave the threads more closely, summarizing the positions taken, and surveying the field of battle as a whole.

If the reader will take his Testament in hand, and make a synopsis {207} of the statements recorded, he



will find a very striking circumstance. There are three main sections, and three only, of the Life of Jesus. First comes the birth-story; we have already discarded this as an evident interpolation, since even Paul (and probably Peter and John) were either totally ignorant of the existence of any such fable, or utterly incredulous of, and hostile to, it. Next comes the life of the wandering preacher, and finally, like a thunderclap, the tragedy, from Palm Sunday to the Resurrection. These two do not dovetail at all well and a study of their sources will explain why. Also we shall see how they came to be pieced together. We may call them the Life, and the Death, of Jesus; and we will analyse them seriatim.

### **The Life of Jesus**

The whole misunderstanding of the Bible is due to the fact that it is an Eastern Vine planted in a Western garden. If Mr. Shaw (with all his ability and learning) is in the same quagmire as the most ignorant peasant in Lincolnshire, it is due to the fact that he has never been to the East to live. The incidents - the simplest incidents - of the Gospel are as strange to him as fairy tales.

People in Eastern cities remove their shoes or sandals on entering a house; not because of any weird superstition, but because no provision is made by sanitary authorities for removing the excreta of animals from the streets. The city of Yunnan-Fu is many feet above the surface of a perfectly flat plain. It is not on a hill, but on its centuries of refuse. There is no 'strange Eastern religion' about Sati or, as Englishmen usually spell it Sutee; {208} it is common sense. Hindu 'wives cook their husbands', and the only way to prevent a woman from poisoning her good man is to prevent her from surviving his funeral.

If you wish to shock a Christian very badly indeed, get him to picture - to visualize - Jesus at meat, his hands unwashed (Matthew VII, 2[*WEH NOTE: not Matthew, Mark VII,2*], Luke XI, 38) Yogis will not wash, because the ceremonial Law of the orthodox is so strict they should do so; this being universal in the east, it is also universal for dirt to be a sign of sancity. Now imagine Jesus dipping one of the said hands in the dish with eleven other very imperfect ablutioners. If this fail, give him a few more intimate Eastern details; explain exactly why cleanliness in cooking and eating is so vitally important in such countries as Syria.

The understanding of Eastern customs is imperative, if the life of Jesus is to be truly imagined and realized. A few years travel in India and North Africa familiarizes one with the atmosphere, and it is to smile when people talk of the 'wonderful life' of Jesus. By every roadside in India you may find a holy man today - you might have found me in 1901! - who is living exactly the life recorded of Jesus. He begs his food, or else 'women minister to him of their substance' (Luke VIII, 3.) just as happens to the idle and vicious rascals who come out of India to America and England to pose as 'yogis' at the expense of lazy and good-for-nothing society women in search of a new fad. Only, in India, the support of yogis is decent and honourable. The men are really saints, and demand nothing but a little rice and curry. You can support one for a year on the price of a lunch at the Claridge. {209}

Most yogis in India are solitaries. Very likely they have a vow of silence. But in some few the itch of teaching works, and they wander from place to place picking up disciples. Now and then they go mad under the strain of the life, or the use of drugs, or the abuse of religious ecstasies, become ferocious run 'amok' perhaps do murder, perhaps attack the temple of a rival sect on some pretext, or try to reform their own temples in some such violent way as Jesus took with the money-changers. Sometimes they get politically drunk, and start a campaign against the powers that be. Every Indian official will tell you what a plague such men often become; half the raids on the frontier are due to some such 'exalte'. England at large (even) has heard of the Madhi, and the Mad Mullah, and the Senussi, and perhaps even in older days of the Druses and the Old Man of the Mountain, with his Hashish-maddened disciples, from whom we have our word 'assassin'. The good people of England may be shocked to hear that there is not a penny to choose between such men and their idolized Jesus. But it is the fact.

All these men have their disciples, and their following of women - usually loose women, hermits and holy men having a great reputation everywhere for sexual prowess. They have their sayings, they make up their parables and fables to amuse their followers by the camp-fire at nightfall, they do their miracles, and fulfil the ancient prophecies in exactly the same way as Jesus did. The complaints of the Pharisees against Jesus are the stock complaints of the Orthodox in India to-day against the Yogis. They omit ceremonial

washings; they eat filthy food; they take no heed of religious festivals or of the prescriptions of the Rishis and {210} other great teachers. They care nothing for caste; they are shiftless, idle, and vagabond; they pray instead of working; and so on. Similarly, nine-tenths of the injunctions of Jesus are aimed at the most cherished rules or fads of the Pharisees; and so are most of the Wise sayings of the 'holy man' of India and all Islam to-day.

+ The little dialogues in which Jesus refutes the Scribes and Pharisees are extremely characteristic. The Oriental loves to have his 'darwesh' outwit the heckler. Every Eastern story-teller has (a) hundred such in his repertoire. Here is a sample. A certain king asks a darwesh: How is it possible that Iblis (Satan), who is made of fire, should be tormented by fire? The holy man picks up a clod of earth and throws it at the king, who howls. What! impossible! exclaims the darwesh, you who are made of earth cannot be hurt by earth. Here the saint has the right end both of the argument and of the brick. The type of story is as common as the desert sand itself.

What Mr. Shaw calls the 'comic miraculous overdraught of fishes' is also an absolutely universal story. The greedy man tries to exploit the powers of the thaumaturgist, and has his prayer granted to his own confusion. There is hardly a book of Fairy Tales in the world that has not some such story. One need only mention Ingoldsby's tale of Laybrother Peter and the beer. [WEH NOTE: *The Ingoldsby Legends were written under the name of Thomas Ingoldsby by Rev. Richard Harris Barham (1788 to 1854). These delightful comic stories and poems were published in the mid 19th century. They revolve about the follies of the clergy, commoners and high born, ghosts, devils and witches (always done up as figures of fun), gluttony and excess of drink. If anything deserves to be reprinted in this too serious age, it's 'Ingoldsby. In over a thousand non-indexed pages, the tale of Laybrother Peter is a bit hard to find, but here's a quote from A Lay of St. Nicholas:*

*:::There was no lack of old Sherris sack,  
Of Hippocras fine, or of Malmsey bright;  
And aye, as he drain'd off his cup with a smack,  
He grew less pious and more polite.*

*She pledged him once, and she pledged him twice,  
And she drank as Lady ought not to drink;  
And he press'd her hand 'neath the table thrice,  
And he wink'd as Abbot ought not to wink.*

*And Peter the Prior, and Francis the Friar,  
Sat each with a napkin under his chin;  
But Roger the Monk got excessively drunk,  
So they put him to bed, and they tuck'd him in.*

(*The Lady gets dashed with a pint and a quarter of holy water later in the evening and turns into a great hoary Devil.*) It is of the very root of the tree of primitive comicality; greed or pride or some such quality o'erleaping itself and falling on the other, the engineer hoist with his own petard. It is better than a true story; it is a story of All Truth, to use the admirable distinguish of Hermes Trismegistus. {211}

But there is no reason why we should pick out one set of miracles, one set of parables, one set of dialogues, and yell Unique! It is not even worth our while to prove that the Sermon on the Mount is stolen from the Talmud; it might have been stolen from anywhere. Go now to any holy man from Marrakesh to Tali-Fu, and get him talking. Inquire further concerning his miracles from the villagers, 'take thy pen, sit down quickly and write' another gospel like Luke's or John's according to your literary ability.

It will not be material that is lacking. Show me any collection of the sayings of such men, and I will show you the ideas, even the very phrases, of your Jesus. Read the Tao Teh King on nonresistance, the Bhagavad-Gita on faith and devotion, the Dhammapada on right conduct, the questions of King Milinda on metaphysical puzzles, the Jataka for parables, the Upanishads for high theology; then find a saying of Jesus which is not explicit in some one or more of them! More, take an anthology of the whole collection;

ask some person unfamiliar with religion to pick out the sayings of Jesus, and to build up a coherent and consistent system of philosophy, theology, and ethics from them. It would be easier to spin ropes of sand. The Bible itself testifies to the universality of the wandering 'holy man', and his aptitude for the founding of sects and communities. (Acts XXI, 38, and elsewhere) The evidence that Jesus was such a 'holy man' or 'yogi' has been worked out in the utmost detail by another of the same guild, known to the initiated as Shri Parananda, and to the profane as the Hon. P. Ramanathan C.M.G. Solicitor General of Ceylon, in two commentaries, one on Matthew {212} and one on John. These books are unquestionably the most illuminating ever written on the life of Jesus, being written, as it were, from inside information. Any doubt of the truth of the theory put forward in this essay that may remain in the mind of any unprejudiced thinker must immediately be dispelled forever by a study of these two books.

This thesis being accepted, we may formulate it thus: Jesus was the most popular of the 'holy men' of Syria of his time, and his sayings were already being collected by a scribe. In the case of John's gospel, we have another 'holy man', this time of the Essene persuasion. There is also what is to my mind a very minor portrait in the group, that of the orthodox Jew who wished merely to restore the strict law of Moses, or even to tighten its bonds. This is compatible either with Yogi, or with Essene. Finally, there is the attempt to identify Jesus with the Messiah, which has no basis in any of the stories recorded of the sayings or doings of Jesus.

### **The Death of Jesus**

At the age of ten I was ambitious. I had gained a prize for 'distinction in Religious Knowledge, Classics, and French', and already felt myself a marked man. Now I perceived a difficulty in the Scriptures. The beginning of my fall? I could not see how any one could be three days and three nights in the grave between Friday night and Sunday morning. I took my trouble to one of the masters, who admitted his own perplexity upon the point. It never occurred to him to doubt the story at all; he simply {213} said that no one had been able to explain it. Then and there I resolved to astonish the world. Alas for boyish ambitions; the problem is still unsolved, though I think that it might be tackled by the aid of Christian mathematics, beginning with the famous Trinitarian Equation.

But make one assumption, and the difficulty disappears. Suppose that the whole story of the Crucifixion is not a record of fact, but the scenario of a sacred drama or ritual of initiation. Have we any grounds for making such an assumption? The reader must be referred to Dr. J.G. Frazer, Herbert Spencer, Grant Allen, and J.M. Robertson for the general analogy between the crucifixion story and those of Egypt, India, Mexico, Peru and a dozen other places. But Mr. Robertson argues the case specifically in this matter of Unity of Time. He shows how absurd it is to suppose that the Procurator held his courts at midnight: all Eastern cities being still after sunset, except on certain festivals, for festival purposes of music and dancing. He shows how incident is crowded upon incident, without reason, all with the evident necessity of getting the drama confined to a given number of hours. It is impossible to quote his proof in detail, for it is as elaborate as it is cogent.

It is permissible however to call attention to several very astonishing facts. The entire symbolism of the Jesus who died and rose again is astrological and mystic in its minutest points. The incident of the anointing, which is a regular part of any ritual, like the ceremonial purification elsewhere recorded; the man bearing a pitcher of water (Luke XXII, 10) which suggests {214} the Zodiacal sign of Aquarius; the command of Jesus (Luke XXII, 36-38); to furnish swords which were not to be used, however (Luke XXII, 50, 51); the ceremonial robes and crownings and scourgings; all these things suggest a drama and not a history; a symbolic representation of John Barleycorn; not at all the record of what happened to any one man, but of what happens to all men.

The mere facts of the Nativity at the Winter Solstice, and the Crucifixion at the Equinox of Spring, suggest the birth of the year and the elevation of the Sun above the equator, which was pictorially represented exactly in this way long before the time of Pilate.

The reader can find in a Dictionary of Antiquities many pre-Christian pictures of a crucified man or a slain bull. Sometimes he is between two 'thieves', one saved and the other damned, as shown by the one being represented anatomically and in a state of joy and excitement, the other as depressed and gloomy.

Sometimes he is between the Sun and Moon also, or in their stead. Usually, at the foot of the cross, is a skull (Golgotha, see Mark XV, 22.) Sometimes, the equivalent of the thieves is given by a palm tree and a cornucopia; sometimes, the figure of the crucified is replaced by an egg about which a snake is twined, or a cross on which a snake hangs. (Numbers XXI, 8). The original Calvary, a tree on a hill, goes back to the cave-man himself. Compare, too, Exodus XVII, 11, 12, where, to prevail against Amalek, the hands of Moses were held up by a man on either side of him.

There are dozens of variations upon this theme, but the symbols are always equivalent. The subject of the picture or the story is always the same; it is the eternal miracle of abounding life, ever self-restored, triumphant over death, the return {215} of the Sun and the resurrection of the Seed, which makes even George Bernard Shaw, professional sceptic, iconoclast of romance, scourge of poets, break out into lyrical prose he will not resist you nor reproach you, but will rise again in golden beauty amidst a great burst of sunshine and bird music, and save you and renew your life. It is indeed a triumph for Solar-Phallic worship to add to the names of General Forlong, Sir Richard Burton, Sir R. Payne Knight, Messrs. Hargrave Jennings, Godfrey Higgins, Gerald Massey and Theodor Reuss the name of Bernard Shaw!

It has been impossible in so few brief words even to glance at the evidence for this view that the Story of the Death of Jesus is merely a variation intended to epitomize many older variations of a ritual of commemoration of the mysterious activities of the Father of All in Macrocosm and in Microcosm. To present the evidence at all fully mean(s) the reproduction of many thousands of buildings, monuments, sculptures, pictures - everything in short 'movable or immoveable under the Canopy of Heaven', whereon the Master Mason has written, indited, carved, marked, engraved, or otherwise there delineated', and thousands of pages of parallel passages from the rituals of Dionysus and Attis to those of Set and Quetzlacoatl. The work has been done, and the conclusions are as certain as anything can be in human knowledge; and despite the Spanish proverb *De las cosas mas seguras, mas seguro es duvidar*, the reader may rely on them.

Every new fact that comes under his notice will enlarge and confirm his confidence. Enough then of the death of Jesus; he dies and is reborn in the life of man and the life of the year; {216} and he was wrong when he said *The poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always*, and a thousand times right when he said *Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

### **The Unnatural Wedding**

A few words upon the psychology of the people. In Syria 2000 years ago, as in London to-day, there were people who go to church like sheep, not knowing so much as the nature of the doctrines they are supposed to hold, and others who were like those modern Christians who think a little, and prefer the Rev. R.J. Campbell to the Rev. F.B. Meyer, or the 'Gloomy Dean' to the 'Boisterous Bishop'. In India to-day there are many who pay strict reverence to custom, and have only vague and distant admiration (sometimes, indeed, contempt) for the 'holy men' who deliberately violate convention in order to prove superior sanctity.

Jesus, the Jesus of Mr. Shaw, appealed naturally to the rarer class that knows a little of Yoga, and appreciates it. Now, when Paul came to the throne he found these people, and these people only, already 'Christians'. His dream of world-dominion asked for more. He needed orthodox Jews, and he needed Gentiles. Having himself been an orthodox Jew, he at first regarded the idea of converting them as chimerical, called them all the bad names he could lay his tongue to, went out with a gun loaded exclusively for Gentiles, proved himself a Roman citizen free-born, broke with Peter because he avoided dining with Gentiles when certain visitors from James came to see him (Galatians XI, 11-14[*WEH NOTE: There is no Chapter XI, Galatians. Crowley probably intended Galatians II, 6-8*]) and generally acted as though he hoped never to see a Jew again. {217}

But whether the Gentile campaign went badly, or whether he found some unexpected Jews in the bag, he suddenly changed front. He found a community of real Hebrews large enough to write to, and devoted an epistle to the most passionate endeavour to persuade them that Jesus was the real High Priest of Israel after the order of Melchisedec.

This policy of pleasing everybody was successful; and when it came to be desirable to issue histories of

the movement, those in charge simply classified the world as they knew it, the Roman world, and saw to it that something was put in to suit everybody. Contradictions might arise, but who minds contradictions? Germany and the Critical Spirit were in their infancy.

So, as there were patriotic Jews, they must be told that Jesus was the Messiah, of the seed of David; Talmudic Jews, who must be told that Jesus came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it; mystical and Qabalistic Jews, Gnostics and Pythagoreans and Platonists, who must have Jesus identified with the Logos, and the Wisdom by whom God made the world; Pagans, who must be made happy by the story of the Virgin Birth; worshippers of Attis, Adonis, and Osiris, who must see the eternal sacrifice and resurrection of Nature crystalized in Jesus; ascetics who must be told of renunciation, and voluptuaries who must be comforted with the doctrines of atonement; slaves who must have freedom preached to them, and masters who must be reassured that Caesar shall always have the things that are Caesar's; primitive folk such as loving hearing stories of miracles and prophecies fulfilled; metaphysical folk, who must be tickled with abstruse theological dogmas; literary folk, who enjoy witty {218} dialogues, and people with conviction of sin who want a Saviour. Whosoever will may come! The Gospels have something to please every single one of you. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Bless the bed that I lie on; and it doesn't matter who made the bed!

The whole hotch-potch of the Testament is now explained in the simplest manner. Everything becomes natural and probable. [I am happy to find myself in agreement with scholars of such eminence as Jung, Drews, and Kalthoff in considering Christ as a synopsis of contemporary myth. When I wrote the above, I was not aware of this fact.]

(We have the main story of the wandering 'holy man' grafted with the story of John Barleycorn; St. John takes care of the Gnostic, metaphysical Platonist department of the business; add a few condiments for the minor sects; and there are the documents of a world-religion.) Additional elements of confusion are negligibly small, and such as would naturally have crept into manuscripts copied carelessly or ambitiously by scribes at any time in the presumed three centuries between the original writings of Mark and the first codex yet discovered. Such alleged earlier documents as the Logia help the present theory of exhibiting one of the two main sources of the legend apart from the other. The Gospels are therefore, in that sense of the word which most implies moral turpitude, forgeries; the legend has been deliberately pieced together of incongruous elements, like a mermaid at a country fair, in order to defraud the lieges. Backed by the power of the priests of the various religions in the 'merger', the plan could not fail of success. Christianity spread by the very convenience of its {219} international character in a world whose keynote was becoming daily more that word of Horace: *Luctantem Icarius fluctibus Africum Mercator metuens, otium, et oppidi, Laudat rura sui; mox reficit rateis Quassas, indocilis pauperim pati.* It only remained to lasso Caesar; and once this was done, the husbandman could return in peace, bringing his sheaves with him. The history of Christianity from that time on is but the account of how the robbers quarrelled among themselves over the spoils.

Let us now try to summarize our conclusions still further, by the adoption of tabular form. The main elements of religion in the Roman Empire, and the corresponding Jesus.

1. The orthodox Jew, satisfied by Jesus the Messiah, of the fulfilment of the prophecies.
2. The 'protestant' Jew, satisfied by Jesus the Isaiah-like prophet.
3. The Essene ) )
4. The Gnostic ) satisfied by the Jesus of the discourses ) given in John.
5. The Greek Philosopher ) )
6. The Mystic. )
  
7. The ascetic or Gymnosophist: satisfied by Jesus of the of Yogi. Sermon on the Mount, of the parables and miracles, and of the practical rules of life.
8. The Pagan. satisfied by the Jesus of the Virgin birth. and him of the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension.
9. The Slave. satisfied by the Jesus of Salvation by faith for himself, and Damnation for his neighbour.

## **The Solution of the Enigma according to the Plymouth Brethren**

Enough of these profane speculations, which have been inspired {220} by the devil himself, (permitted to act in this manner in order to lead the ungodly into yet further darkness) soaring rather to those unsullied realms of faith where nothing so vulgar as a fact has a card of admission, where all is miracle, all simplicity of light and peace, where an instant reply is found to every question. Let this essay be my filial offering to the manes of my sire; let me be empowered by the Holy Ghost to silence every objection to the New Testament as John Nelson Darby would have done himself.

The main argument is as follows: The actual working of the authorized version of the Scriptures bears the Imprimatur and the Nihil Obstat and the Ne Varietur of the Holy Ghost. The translators of 1611 were as directly inspired as the authors. (It is not 'inspired', really; a stronger word is requested. People like Matthew and Isaiah were not authors, but stenographers (like mine, God bless her!) incapable of error. The Holy Ghost is the author. Any 'difficulty' is therefore placed exactly as it stands by the Holy Ghost himself for a particular purpose.

To illustrate the idea: fifty years ago (it sounds like a bad mad sad impossible nightmare) quite serious people were arguing as to whether the universe (not merely this planet) was made in six days 6000 years ago. Geikie, a bold bad geologist, proving ad nauseam that the chalk alone would have required more than 6000 years to deposit, was met by a thousand subterfuges. There were arguments as to what a day was, and how there could have been days at all before the creation of the sun and moon, and so on - arguments which make Alice in Wonderland read like a text-book of plumbing {221} by a German! The whole literature is worth reading for its sheer fantastic folly. And these were the people who laughed at St. Thomas and the schoolmen!

In the end Geikie, driven absolutely to bay, turned savagely on his assailants with the outburst I will not believe that God has written a lie upon the rocks! The passion and force of the appeal silenced most of his adversaries without convincing them; but the Plymouth Brethren, by the mouth of Mr. Philip Gosse (the father of the well-known man of letters, Edmund Gosse) saw the opening, and struck the supreme blow. God shall send them strong delusion that they may believe a lie. God had written a lie upon the rocks, for the purpose of making absolutely sure that Archibald Geikie should be damned to all eternity! On some child of the Evil One remarking that Jesus said I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that it was a little hard on Geikie that he should roast eternally for his love of Truth, the reply was equally a thunderbolt. All our righteousness is as filthy rags. Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?

Mr. Gosse further condescended, however, and pointed out that God was Love, Not willing that any sinner should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and that he had not by any means predestined Professor Geikie to be damned. He had, on the contrary, separated the sheep from the goats, divided man-kind into two classes, the saved and the damned, predestined, chosen, and called the saved, but had carefully abstained from predestining, choosing, and calling the damned to that election. He had picked one apple out of ten, but had not left the other nine. (I feel {222} it absolutely incumbent upon me, at this stage, to pledge my personal honour as a gentleman and a man of letters that these arguments are stated with absolute fairness and accuracy. I have heard them almost every day for years. And if any man yet doubt, let him hunt up the nearest Plymouth Brother, and ask him if it be not as I have said.)

In all argument the same principles applied. The Bible is full of contradictions? the reply is, in the first instance, No; in the second, Yes; they are put there to try our faith. Argue any point, basing your position on the literal words of Scripture. The reply is firstly quotation of that passage of Holy Writ which contradicts the one you have quoted, and secondly a reference to the Temptation on the Mount, which gives us an illustration of the fact that the Devil can quote Scripture. (You are the Devil, of course.) Reply that the Plymouth Brother himself has been quoting Scripture, and that for all you know he may be the Devil, by his own argument, and you get a mixture of Uriah Heep and Calvin. He is an unworthy sinner saved by grace, putting humbly his trust in the efficacy of the Blood of Jesus, and you are one of those 'dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers, and idolaters, who loveth and maketh a lie referred to in the Apocalypse, and it was mistaken kindness on the part of St. John that he did not mention you by name.

It will be seen that this position is entirely unassailable. Every cannon of morality, or of thought itself, is a definite engine of the devil, if you aim it at a Plymouth Brother. While the Catholic Church maintained an almost identical position, centralized in patristic authority and culminating in Papal infallibility; {223} refusing to discuss the question whether any Papal remark was ex cathedra or merely a personal opinion, denying reason and logic, she remained unshaken, and the gates of hell did not prevail against her. To open religion to discussion is to destroy it.

The Plymouth Brethren must then be regarded as the only true Christians, if the foundation of Christianity be admitted to be the Bible. They obey each text as it is quoted; and as you cannot quote two texts at once, no possibility of contradiction can arise.

Is instrumental music allowable in the meeting, No; for the Bible says I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also, and makes no mention of an harmonium! Point out that musical instruments of all kinds, psaltery, sackbut, dulcimer, and psaltery, were used in the Old Testament; the Plymouth Brother placidly explains that this was the Old Dispensation, and continues to sing out of tune. (I quote the actual argument, as always.) Shall I buy railway shares? No; railways are not mentioned in the Bible. Or, if one thinks it is good business to buy them: Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might! Plunge, plunge, my brother! It is a perfect system; the Plymouth Brother can do no wrong; the other man can do no right.

If the Bible be the Word of god, Mr. Shaw is damned, and I am damned myself. May I hope that we may be permitted to argue in hell? For this small attempt on earth has been exceedingly amusing.

On the other hand; if the New Testament be the composite document which it is here maintained to be in this essay, I am the truest of all Christians. I agree with practically every word {224} reported of the Yogi Jesus, and nearly every word of the Essene. True, I reject Salvationism, and the Jewish element of prophecies fulfilled, and the praise of the Law of Moses; but trust humbly that any deficiency in these respects may be more than made up by superfluity in another. For not only do I hold the cult of John Barleycorn to be the only true religion, but have established his worship anew; in the last three years branches of my organisation have sprung up all over the world to celebrate the ancient rite. So mote it be.

### **Credulity no Criterion**

*(NOTE). - This section-heading, and those following, are once more those of the Preface to Androcles and the the Lion. The foregoing eight sections are really sub-sections of The Alternative Christs.)*

Mr. Shaw now makes a somewhat fatal admission. This arbitrary acceptance and rejection of parts of the gospel is not peculiar to the secularist view. Of course, it is not, but it is open to any other critic to reply: How dare you? 'A fool is more wise in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.' Every heretic has begun by discarding the passages that did not suit him, and his only reason is that they did not suit him. Now no one has any objection to Mr. Shaw arising in his might and saying This is my gospel, but it is monstrous that he should try to palm off his gospel on us as that of Jesus. Incidentally, one is a little puzzled by the title of the section, which appears to have little to do with its substance. Any criterion of what? {225}

### **Belief in Personal Immortality no Criterion**

The difficulty mentioned above persists.

It is impossible to agree with Mr. Shaw that Huxley was anything but what he said he was. If Huxley had been furnished with proof of the efficacy of the Crucifixion, he would have believed it at once.

### **The Secular View Natural not Rational, therefore Inevitable**

Here Mr. Shaw condescends to give us his sitoriacal view of Jesus, which is that he was a socialist who went mad. Unfortunately, as indicated in the comment on previous sections, many of the megalomaniac speeches of Jesus come earlier in his life than the communistic ones. It has also been shown how the supposed communism is to be explained, that it was nothing of the sort, that when Jesus dealt with politics

at large he had no notion of reform, but advised his disciples and the people generally not to meddle with government, but to mind their own business.

### **The Higher Criticism**

Mr. Shaw in this section tries to excuse himself for not having given any account of the gospels based on anthropology and paleography. He says: I should be the most exasperating of triflers and pedants if I were to digress into a criticism of some other belief or no-belief which my readers might conceivably profess if they were erudite Scriptural paleographers and historian(s), in which case, by the way, they would have to change their views so frequently that the Gospel they received in their childhood would {226} dominate them after all by its superior persistency.

Mr. Shaw's mind is incapable of understanding two things: the one is sex, [Mr. Shaw's remark that marriage affords the maximum of temptation combined with the maximum of opportunity is probably the silliest thing ever said on the sex question.] the other is science. He does not understand how science progresses, which is by the continual corrections of errors, and the gradual narrowing of their limits. He observes a terrible controversy between two astronomers as to whether the sun is ninety-two or ninety-three million miles away, and all he gathers of the controversy is that, since they disagree, very likely both are wrong, and consequently (for all any one knows) the sun may be within an easy morning walk from Adelphi Terrace. He seems to have no idea of the differential calculus in particular or mathematics in general. He seems to think that because opinion varies from time to time in matters of detail that the main body of doctrine is invalidated, which is like arguing that if a tree bears ten leaves more or ten leaves less on two successive springs there is no tree there at all.

He claims to have made a synthesis of his subject; in reality he has only made an extremely sectarian analysis. He has not even tried to analyze the Bible in an unbiassed way; he has only been concerned to pick out the bits that suited him and label them 'the Essence of Christianity'. He has in short wished to found a new heresy, and to popularize his own political views by attributing them to Jesus, just as a dishonest tradesman might try to thrust his biscuits on the public by stamping them with the name of Huntley {227} and Palmer.

Here let me voice my own objection to his method. It is pernicious because his opponents will not play fair. They will misrepresent him, as they have always done to every one who has not come out against them with fire and sword as did Voltaire. Better to be damned out and out with him than to suffer what Bernard Shaw will suffer! The Christian will wipe the slate clear of all that he has said about 'psychopathy and superstition!', and say Even Bernard Shaw admitted that in Jesus lay the one hope of the whole world. In the name of Bernard Shaw, therefore, I say unto thee, Sell that thou hast and give it all to me!

Mr. Shaw knows this as well as I do. He thought (I doubt not) to make his preface a subtle sidelong thrust at Jesus; but the weapon will turn in his hand. He had better have trusted to the broadsword of Bradlaugh. However, in the next sections his blow rings truer; let us pass on!

### **The Perils of Salvationism**

The Importance of Hell in the Salvation Scheme.

In these two sections we have the real objection to Christianity, the moral objection.

### **The Right to refuse Atonement**

Consequently, even if it were mentally possible for all of us to believe in the Atonement, we should have to cry off it, as we evidently have a right to do. Every man to whom salvation is {228} offered has an inalienable natural right to say 'No, thank you: I prefer to retain my full moral responsibility: it is not good for me to be able to lead a scapegoat with my sins: I should be less careful how I committed them if I knew they would cost me nothing'. Then, too, there is the attitude of Ibsen: that iron moralist to whom the whole scheme of salvation was only an ignoble attempt to cheat God; to get into heaven without paying the price. To be let off, to beg for and accept eternal life as a present instead of earning it, would be mean



enough even if we accepted the contempt of the Power on whose pity we were trading: but to bargain for a crown of glory as well! that was too much for Ibsen; it provoked him to exclaim, 'Your God is an old man whom you cheat', and to lash the deadened conscience of the XIX century back to life with a whip of scorpions.

There is yet another form of this argument, one based on humanitarian grounds. We may perhaps be permitted to quote it.

So not one word derogatory  
To your own version of the story!  
I take your Christ, your God's creation,  
Just at their own sweet valuation.  
For by this culminating scene,  
Close of that wondrous life of woe  
Before and after death, we know  
How to esteem the Nazarene. ...

You see, when I was young, they said:  
'Whate'er you ponder in your head,  
Or make the rest of Scripture mean,  
You can't evade John III, 16.'

Exactly! Grown my mental stature,  
I ponder much: but never yet  
Can I get over or forget  
That bitter text's accursed nature,  
The subtle devilish omission,  
The cruel antithesis implied,  
The irony, the curse-fruition,  
The calm assumption of Hell's fevers {229}  
As fit, as just, for unbelievers -  
These are the things that stick beside  
And hamper my quite serious wish  
To harbour kind thoughts of the 'Fish'. ...

Hence I account no promise worse,  
Fail to conceive a fiercer curse  
Than John' third chapter (sixteenth verse).

But now (you say) broad-minded folk  
Think that those words the Master spoke  
Should save all men at last. But mind!  
The text says nothing of the kind!  
Read the next verses! ...

This is my point; the world lies bleeding: -  
(Result of sin?) - I do not care;  
I will admit you anywhere!  
I take your premisses themselves  
And, like the droll spiteful elves  
They are, they yet outwit your plan.  
I will prove Christ a wicked man  
(Granting him Godhead) merciless

To all the anguish and distress  
About him - save to him it clung  
And prayed. Give me omnipotence?  
I am no fool that I should fence  
That power, demanding every tongue  
To call me God - I would exert  
That power to heal creation's hurt;  
Not to divide my devotees  
From those who scorned me to the close:  
A worm, a fire, a thirst for these;  
A harp-resounding heaven for those!

And though you claim Salvation sure  
For all the heathen - there again  
New Christians give the lie to plain  
Scripture, those words which must endure!  
(The Vedas say the same!) and though  
His mercy widens ever so,  
I never met a man (this shocks,  
what I now press) so heterodox,  
Anglican, Roman, Methodist,  
Peculiar Person - all the list! -  
I never met a man who called  
Himself a Christian, but appalled  
Shrank when I dared suggest the hope  
God's mercy could expand its scope,  
Extend, or bend, or spread, or straighten  
So far as to encompass Satan  
Or even poor Iscariot. {230}

Yet God created (did he not?)  
Both these. Omnisciently, we know!  
Benevolently? Even so!  
Created from Himself distinct  
(Note that! - it is not meet for you  
To lead me Schelling and his crew)  
These souls, foreknowing how were linked  
The chains in either's Destiny.  
'You pose me the eternal why?'  
Not I? Again, 'Who asks doth err.'  
But this one thing I say. Perchance  
There lies a purpose in advance  
Tending to a final bliss - to stir  
Some life to better life, this pain  
Is needful: that I grant again.  
Did they at last in glory live,  
Satan and Judas might forgive  
The middle time of misery,  
Forgive the wrong creation first  
Or evolution's iron key  
Did them - provided they are passed  
Out of this universe accurst.

But otherwise! I lift my voice,  
Deliberately take my choice  
Promethean, eager to rejoice,  
In the grim protest's joy to revel  
Betwixt Iscariot and the Devil,  
Throned in their midst! No pain to feel,  
Tossed on some burning bed of steel,  
But theirs: My soul of love should swell  
And, on those piteous floors they trod,  
Feel, and make God feel, out of Hell,  
Across the Gulf impassable,  
That He was damned and I was God.'

Ay! Let him rise and answer me,  
That false creative Deity,  
Whence came his right to wrack the Earth  
With pangs of death, disease, and birth:  
No joy unmarred by pain and grief:  
Insult on injury heaped high  
In that quack-doctor infamy,  
The Panacea of - Belief!  
Only the selfish soul of man  
Could ever have conceived a plan  
Man only of all life to embrace,  
One planet of all stars to place,  
Alone before the Father's face;  
Forgetful of creation's stain,  
Forgetful of creation's pain,  
Not dumb! - forgetful of the pangs  
Whereby each life laments and hangs,  
(Now as I speak a lizard lies  
in wait for light-bewildered flies) {231}  
Each life bound ever to the wheel - [*WEH NOTE: over - GBS,*  
*Ay, and each being! - we may guess but ever in TSS original*]  
Now that the very crystals feel! -  
For them no harp-resounding court,  
No palm, no crown, but none the less  
A cross, be sure! The worst man's thought  
In hell itself, bereft of bliss,  
Were less unmerciful than this!  
No! for material things, I hear,  
Will burn away, and cease to be -  
(Nibbana! Ah! Thou shoreless Sea!)  
Man, man alone, is doomed to fear,  
To suffer the eternal woe,  
Or else, to meet man's subtle foe,  
God - and oh! infamy of terror!  
Be like him - like him! And for ever!  
My soul must utterly dissever  
Its very silliest thought, belief,  
From such a God as possible,  
Its vilest from his worship. Never!

Avaunt, abominable chief  
Of Hate's grim legions; let me well  
Gird up my loins and make endeavour,  
And seek a refuge from my grief,  
O never in Heaven - but in Hell!

### **The Teachings of Christianity**

There is little in this section which has not already been discussed. But we must call attention once more to Mr. Shaw's incapacity to estimate the value and seriousness of arguments. When Hume said that Joshua's campaigns were impossible, Whately did not wrangle about it: he proved, on the same lines, that the campaigns of Napoleon were impossible.

It never seems to occur to Mr. Shaw that Whately was only trying to score off Hume. He was making a college joke to cure the dumps. His book is an academic squib, highly amusing to the Fellows of Trinity at the High Table over their port. It is not a serious argument. {232}

Besides, it is entirely bad logic. The proof that Napoleon's campaigns were impossible does not disprove the existence of Napoleon; it only proves the error of the historian. Hume did not wish to disprove the existence of Joshua, he only wished to show that the account given in the Bible was inaccurate; and this was the point at issue, because the contention of Christianity was that the book of Joshua had been dictated verbally by the Holy Ghost, so that there could not possibly be even the minutest error of fact in it. Whately's argument was therefore really on Hume's side. He gave one more instance of the fact that historians can err; and by drawing a parallel between Napoleon and Joshua, he implicitly admitted the error in both accounts, which was all that Hume desired to prove.

It is to be noted that Mr. Shaw anticipated that Christianity will continue to be taught. I do not think that he is in his prophetic mood in making this statement. I think that the next generation [The war was made by senile dribblers who had survived Queen Victoria by accident. Young men would never have been so stupid and obstinate as these Strulbrugg remnants of the age of Tennyson and John Stuart Mill.] will have a great deal to say with regard to the European War. I think that the war will be followed everywhere by revolution. I think that humanity will have had the facts of life presented to it with such soul-shaking violence that the pitiful pretense which some of us still make will fall at last by its own weight. I think that the controversy of the future will be between the law of nature or of Nietzsche, and that of compassion or of Shelley. I think that supernaturalism has received the mercy-stroke. I think that Christianity will be studied by {233} everybody (who has the leisure and inclination) just as it is to-day by anthropologists, is in the due relation to other religions of the world. I think that the use of Christianity as an engine of oppression of the poor is ended. I think that the tyrants of humanity will have to think up something new:

-  
Or it may be that a brighter day is in store for us! The author [Aleister Crowley.] of *The World's Tragedy* has presented his Jesus as the willing tool or rather the blind tool of oppression. He consents to his death in order to carry out the scheme of destroying the Golden Age. On the cross he attains humanity. We venture to quote the dialogue between him and the great magician whose power is directed to turn the tragedy to final good. We shall quote the passage at some length.

**Scene.** - The thick darkness of the Emptiness of Things.

Yet in the midst appears a certain glory veiling the figure of a tall stern man, the king Alexander. In his hand is a black rod clothed with twin glittering snakes, the royal Uraeus Serpents of ancient Khem; at its point gleams faint and blue A star of six rays, whose light now illumines the pale and tortured features of a man, with outstretched arms, who is hanging (apparently) in space. It is Issa, but the weariness is gone; and noble-strong is the scarred brow of his agony.

**Alexander.**

In the puissance of my will,  
Issa, I uphold thee still.

**Issa.**

Thou art?

**Alexander**

Keeper of the Way.

**Issa**

I am?

**Alexander**

Man, at mine essay.

By the balance reaching forth

To the south and to the North {234}

Have I consecrated thee

Co-victim with humanity.

O Mis-begotten, miscreate

Dwarf as thou wast, the child of hate;

Thou who hast felt the sordidness

Of thine own effect on thine own distress;

Art comest hereby to the stature of man

By my power, who am Pan.

And by this death shalt laugh to know

Thy father's final overthrow.

My soul the heights and depths has spanned.

I hold the star-streams in mine hand.

I am the master of life and death

And of every spirit that quickeneth.

Yea! in the light of knowledge, Pan

Hath grasped at the blackness of the ban:

And thus do I crush it. As the storm

Whirls shrieking round thy ghastly form,

Thy spirit's torture shall abate

The bodily pangs of thy fearsome fate.

Weak fool! The fate of Arcady

And the whole world - that hung on thee!

Hadst thou but made thee Emperor,

And led thy legions into war!

Thou broken reed - a birth unclean,

A life sucked up in sordid spleen,

A death absurd, most foully wrought

To the shape of thy father's leper-thought.

This be thy doom, that thou shalt see

The curses that are born of thee!

Thou black bat that hast barred the sun

From the sight of man, thou minion

Of death and disease, of toil and want,

Of slavery, knavery, greed and cant,

Of bigotry, murder, hypocrisy

- Speak thou the things that are seen of thee!

**Issa**

Canst thou not save me, Pan,  
And balk the bestial plan?

**Alexander**

I too have died to Pan, and he  
Hath begotten upon me  
A secret wonder that must wait  
For the hour of the falling of thy fate.  
Nineteen centuries shalt thou  
Plague earth with that agonizing brow,  
And then that age of sordid strife  
Give place to the aeon of love and life.  
A lion shall rise and swallow thee,  
Bringing back life into Arcady. {235}  
So strong shall he roar that the worlds shall quake  
And the waters under the heaven break,  
That the earth, of thy father's hate accurst,  
Shall be greener and gladder than at first.

**Issa**

I shall endure then, if the Ultimate  
Be reached through the black fate.

**Alexander**

Let that sustain thee - yet this hour  
I put forth all my torture-power  
To grind thee in the mills of martyrdom,  
That at last thy spirit may fully come  
To understand and to repent -  
Else might thy new-born strength relent  
And all thy father's hate corrode  
Thy will, as the breath of a bloat toad  
Might rot the lungs of a young child.  
Then were indeed the earth defiled  
And the sole seedlings that must lurk  
In the desert world - waste by thy work -  
Itself its loveliness transplant  
To a flawless field whose grace should grant  
Life to that bright inhabitant.

**Issa**

These eyes are blind with blood and tears;  
They strain across the doubtful years;  
They search the stars: the earth they scan;  
All, all spells Misery to Man.

Of whom I am. First, fables gross and foul  
Hooted and hissed by human snake and owl  
About me, twisted into doleful engines  
Of greed, hate, envy, jealousy and vengeance.  
Next, scythes laid to the root of every flower

That asks but sunshine for its brief glad hour.  
Next, axes at the root of every tree  
That strains its top to immortality.  
Yea, o thou terrible magician,  
I see the black wings of suspicion  
Fanning each ear with tales of spite,  
Blasting each bud with bitter blight.  
I see the poisonous upas-tree,  
Its shade the ghastly trinity  
- Religion, law, morality -  
Sicken with its stifling breath  
Human loveliness to death.  
I myself the tool of priests,  
Tyrants, merchants, hags and beasts, {236}  
Lawyers, doctors, artizans,  
Whores and theologians!  
All my live misunderstood  
Built in slime and nursed with blood!  
This my death divinely hallows  
Boot and rack, stake and gallows.  
Strong men crushed beneath my domes,  
Children tortured in my homes,  
Women tricked and raked and herded  
In the stinking sty bemedded  
With the putrid excrement  
Of the marriage sacrament.  
Every scourge and sore and shame  
Blest in mine accursed name!  
Love and beauty under ban!  
Wit and wisdom barred to man!  
Nature smirched by hideous lies!  
Meanness lauded to the skies!  
Pain and ruin and disease  
Praised, as if they made mine ease.  
Dead be dance and dream and revel!  
Thought and courage, things of evil!  
Corn and milk, wine and oil,  
The guerdon of degrading toil!  
Life's bright draught of honied leisure  
Soured to sick and tasteless pleasure.  
All the gracious grape degraded,  
To a fatuous foulness faded;  
Ecstasy divinely deep  
Bartered for a brutal sleep  
In whose grunting crapulence  
They may forget the glory whence  
They came, and hide in a stinking slum  
The beastliness they have become.  
Wealth complaining in its sty!  
Stark starvation standing by!  
Poet, painter, sculptor, sage  
Prostituted to their age;

Or starved or tortured, should they hold  
To the clear sunlight and the age of gold,  
- Scarce a tithe of all I see,  
Yet - thou dost not pity me?

**Alexander**

Thou art near death: thy corpse light dawns on us.  
See! the tenebrous glare and venomous  
And all it shews. Enough! I leave thee, man  
To hide me in the secret place of Pan  
Beneath the fallen groves Arcadian.  
He fades away, as if the new light, making  
the filth visible, made him invisible.

After the death of Jesus Alexander re-appears,  
and ends the tragedy upon a ray of hope. {237}

**Alexander**

The flood sweeps on  
From horizon to horizon.  
Beauty, strength, virtue, all are gone.  
(the eclipse passes.)  
Now sudden springs the natural face  
Of all the earth's old grace.  
The broad sun smiles, as if that fatal close  
Of the revel in the garden of Eros  
Had never been.  
Yet to this keen  
Sight, to this sleuth-hound scent for subtle truth,  
The essential youth  
Of all things is corrupt. I will away  
Into the mystic palaces of Pan  
Hidden from day,  
Hidden from man,  
Awaiting there the coming of the Sphinx  
Whose genius drinks  
The poison of this pestilence, and saves  
The world from all its lords and slaves.  
Ho! for his chariot-wheels that whirl afar!  
His hawk's eye flashing through the silver star!  
Upon the heights his standard shall be plant  
Free, equal, passionate, pagan, dominant,  
Mystic, indomitable, self-controlled,  
The red rose glowing on its cross of gold ...

Yea! I will wait throughout the centuries  
Of the universal man-disease  
Until the morn of his titanic birth ...  
The Saviour of the Earth!

Christianity and the Empire.



*I prefer to leave this essay in the key of hope just stated; Christianity and the Empire do not concern me; for the plainest sound to be heard on the planet at this moment is the death-rattle of just these two things.*

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