

to rebel against God. "Let us break the bands of God and His Anointed One, and cast away their cords from us," is a true representation of the vanity and rage of the rulers of the world. Obedience to a supreme power is the very point that haughty men always object to. Submission is a virtue not desired and not much understood. Hence infidelity. Men take refuge in the dark caves of this barren wilderness in order to escape God and His ruling power.

But this natural depravity of man does not give the full explanation. In this lies the fact that Christianity was never understood except comparatively by very few. The high principles introduced by Christ, were never grasped by the masses of the people. Even the first Apostles of our Lord were but partially enlightened on many points; and the light grows more and more dim as those bold messengers of God are taken away and the ages roll on. Anybody who will compare the writings of the so-called apostolic fathers, and later on, the Church fathers, with those of the Apostles, will readily perceive how light and intelligence gradually faded away until lost in the mists of silliness. Once in a while the clouds open and rays of heavenly light break forth upon mankind; but again its blessings are grasped only by the few. The gates of the world are thus always wide open to infidelity, from the very fact that the masses of the world never had a right understanding of the truth.

An illustration of this may be given in the miraculous phenomena of Christianity. There was a time when miracles were not objected to. It was not thought impossible for God to arrest the course of the heavenly bodies, to divide the waters of the Red Sea, to feed 5000 men on a few loaves of bread, or heal a blind man with the touch of a hand. It could not be explained, or, rather, the explanation that "God did it" was thought to be sufficient. It was looked upon as a matter of fact that God could do whatever He desired. But science advanced, natural "laws" were discovered, and the assertion was boldly made that a miracle was an impossibility, on the ground that events always take place according to certain natural laws. Now, the friends of Christianity proved their utter ignorance of the spirit of their religion by denouncing this as untrue. They persisted in holding that miracles are against, or at least above, natural laws; and thus by their ignorance they broke down what they pretended to defend. If Christianity could not live without miracles thus explained, Christianity would have to go; and there are probably millions of infidels today who are so because they believe that the God of nature is at variance with the God of the Bible, an assumption founded on pure ignorance.

Another instance may be found in the position of the "Christians" towards natural philosophy. There was a time when everybody believed in an unseen world—a "spirit

world." This was divided into three parts: Heaven, where all the angels and the good people lived; hell, where all the devils and the bad people had apartments; and hades, where those went who were not good enough for heaven nor bad enough for hell. Heaven was situated far above the stars, in the infinite regions of light and bliss; hell was situated in the centre of the earth; and hades had no clearly-defined geographical position.

In this system the earth was the great centrum of creation. The sun and all the brilliant stars were nothing but so many lamps, made for the exclusive benefit of man. The earth was a stable habitation and the heavens with all their hosts had to revolve round the earth in the short time of twenty-four hours. Satan and his angels governed the air to a large extent, and caused much trouble among the children of men. They would have done a great deal more had it not been for the good angels who guarded and preserved men in their doings on earth.

This system, crude as it is, satisfied theologians and philosophers alike. The students of the Bible found no better information in the sacred volume, nor was Platonic-Aristotilian-Scholastic Philosophy at variance with it. For 1500 years it predominated. But suddenly the monk Copernicus appeared. With mighty arm he threw the earth out of its supposed position as the centrum of creation, and put in the sun as such, instead of the earth. This caused a wonderful revolution in the general modes of thinking. The stars became suns, and the earth itself was reduced to a mere atom, rolling its course in space. To commence with, the "defenders of the faith" gave the Copernican discovery no heed at all; but after a while the system was further developed and proved in all its details. Then the conflict between "science and Christianity" commenced. The "Christians" understood their religion as imperfectly as possible, and philosophers attacked them mercilessly. Two points were made. This little earth of ours, it was said, cannot be the chief point of creation. God's Son could not choose such an insignificant spot of the world to live and to die in. The thought is preposterous. This was the first point. The second was that it was a ridiculous idea to fancy the "spirit-world" heaven, hades and hell with all its angels, human souls, or devils should turn round in twenty-four hours or following the law of gravitation, with the earth run round the sun in a year. The idea was a laughable one. But the Christian world stood almost without an answer. The Catholics continued to sell admission tickets to heaven, and the Protestants said nothing. Christianity was not understood, and human wisdom had it all its own way.

Subsequent researches led to further-reaching conclusions. Matter was subjected to the closest scrutiny; and when nothing more than matter could be discovered there came the too hasty conclusion that nothing more existed—that matter was

its own originator, governed by fixed, immutable laws. The whole world became nothing more than a working machine; and when everything happened according to laws, inherent in matter, so was the idea of God totally abandoned. For in a world moving according to its own "laws" a God had clearly nothing to do.

Thus men succeeded step by step to form a system wherein God had no room.

But man existed yet as a being endowed with will, understanding and conscientiousness. How could his "free will" harmonize with the unchangeable laws of the new system? When everything happens upon fixed laws, how is a free agent possible? The answer to this came soon. The Creator, whoever he was, had foreseen everything, even the special acts, good or bad, of men, and the world had been made so that all these acts could fit into it, and the whole work together to the furtherance of the general plan. Thus it was thought that a "free will" and unchangeable laws were made to fit into each other. And again there was no room for God; for everything is "foreseen." It can consequently not be otherwise than as it is. What is, is the only thing that possibly could be. It is, therefore, idle to talk of freedom, responsibility, sin or virtue. What is, is right. No God can make it otherwise. To these conclusions the system of Leibnitz necessarily led. And to such fearful conclusions human wisdom has ever led. The "defenders of faith" have stood powerless because they did not, as a rule, understand the religion they professed. The Word of God in the Bible, in nature, in history, were all illegible hieroglyphics to them. Hence there was nothing to prevent the flood of infidelity from inundating the world. To all this comes another mighty factor which is by itself the originator of more infidelity than all the rest put together. I refer to the inconsistency which many professed Christians have shown, in professing one thing and practicing another.

Look at the Christian world. They claim to believe in Christ and try to demonstrate that claim by innumerable religious performances. The spires of their Gothic "temples" and cathedrals of magnificent and curious workmanship, significantly point towards the sky—the "heavens." Their "priests" officiate in gorgeous apparel, adorned with gold embroidered crosses; and the nations bow in adoration. But a little nearer acquaintance with the whole show discloses the fact that this same Christian world, including pope, priests, bishops, etc., does not believe one single word of what Christ has spoken. Not one word! This is a fearful charge and must be substantiated.

Christ taught holiness as the condition upon which alone man can obtain the privilege of seeing God. The "Christian" world practices unholiness in various ways, and says "God is and will always be invisible and incomprehensible."