

THE COMMONWEALTH

"Excelsior" is Our Motto.

SCOTLAND NECK, N. C., THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1909.

Napoleon's Argument for Divine Origin of Scriptures

It has been requested that the following article which appeared in the Charlotte Observer of February 28, be published in this paper:

To the Editor of The Observer: The following is a most remarkable confession and its authenticity is abundantly certified. It is the first Napoleon argument for the Divine origin of the Scriptures, in a conversation with General Bertrand at St. Helena. If you will give this "argument" space in your columns I will appreciate the same.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM. "True, Jesus Christ offers to our faith a series of mysteries. He commands us authoritatively to believe, and gives no other reason than His word, I am God. True, this is an article of mere faith, and upon it rests all the other articles of the Christian system; but the doctrine of the divinity of Christ once admitted, Christianity appears with the precision and clearness of algebra. It is the connectedness and unity of a science. This doctrine, resting upon the Bible, best explains the traditions prevalent in the world. It throws light upon them; and all the other doctrines of Christianity are strictly connected with it, as links of the same chain. The nature of Christ's existence is mysterious, I admit; but His mystery meets the wants of man. Believe it, and the world is an inexhaustible riddle; believe it, and the history of our race is satisfactorily explained. Christianity has one advantage over all systems of philosophy and all religions. Christians do not exclude themselves in regard to the nature of things. You cannot reach them with the subtleties and theories of those idealists who think profound theological problems by their empty dissertations. Their efforts are those of the man who tries to touch the sky with his hand, or cries to have the world as his plaything. Christianity is simple: 'No man hath seen God nor hath any man comprehended His revelation.' God reveals what He is, and man's imagination nor reason can conceive. But when God speaks, man must believe.' This is sound common sense.

"The Gospel possesses a secret virtue of indescribable efficacy, a warmth which influences the understanding and softens the heart. In meditating upon it, you feel as you do in contemplating the heavens. The Gospel is more than a book; it is a living thing—active, powerful, overruling every obstacle in its way. Upon this table this table this Book of books (and here the Emperor touched it reverently): I never saw reading it, and always with new delight. Christ never hesitates, never varies in his instructions; and the least of his assertions is stamped with a simplicity and a depth which captivate the ignorant and the learned, if they give it their attention. Nowhere is to be found such a series of beautiful thoughts, fine moral maxims, following one another like beads of a celestial arch, and producing in the soul the same emotion as is felt in contemplating the infinite extent of the resplendent heavens on a fine summer night. Not only is our mind absorbed, it is controlled; and the soul can never go astray with this Book for its guide. Our master of our mind, the Gospel is a faithful friend. God Himself is our friend, our Father, and truly our God. A mother has not greater care for the infant on her breast. The soul, captivated by the beauty of the Gospel, is no longer its own. God occupies it altogether; He directs its thoughts and all its faculties; it is His. What a proof it is of the divinity of Christ, that with so absolute an empire His single aim is the absolute amelioration of individuals, their purity of conscience, their union of truth, their holiness of soul.

"My last argument is, there is not a God in heaven if a mere man was able to conceive and execute successfully the gigantic design of making himself the object of supreme worship by usurping the name of God. Jesus alone dared to do this; He alone said clearly and unflinchingly of Himself, I am God; which is quite different from saying I am a god, or, there are gods. History mentions no other individual who has appropriated to himself the title of God in the absolute sense. Heathen mythology nowhere pretends that Jupiter and the other gods themselves assumed divinity. It would have been their part the height of pride and absurdity. They were deified by their posterity, the heirs of the first despots. As all men are of one race, Alexander called himself the son of Jupiter; but Greece laughed at the silly assumption; and so in making gods of their emperors the Romans were not serious. Mohammed and Confucius merely gave out that they were agents of the Deity. Numa's goddess, Egeria, was only the personification of his reflections in the solitude of the woods. The Brahmas, of India, are only deifications of mental attributes. How, then, should a Jew, the particulars of whose history are better attested than those of any of his contemporaries—how should He alone, the son of a carpenter, give out all at once that He was God, the Creator of all things? He arrogates to Himself the highest adoration. He constructs His worship with His own hands, not with stones, but with men. You are amazed at the conquests of Alexander; but He is a conqueror who appropriates to His own advantage, who incorporates with Himself, not a nation, but the human race. Wonderful! the human soul, with all its faculties, becomes blended with the existence of Christ.

"And how? By a prodigy surpassing all other prodigies—He seeks the love of men, the most difficult thing in the world to obtain; He seeks what a wise man would fain have from a few friends, a father from his children—in a word the heart; this He seeks, this He absolutely requires; and He gains His object. Hence I infer His divinity. Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal, Louis XIV., with all their genius, failed here. They conquered the world and had not a friend. I am perhaps the only person of my day who loves Hannibal, Caesar, Alexander, Louis XIV., who shed so much lustre upon France and the world, had not a friend in all his kingdom, not even in his own family. True, we love our children, but it is from instinct, from a necessity which the beasts themselves obey; and how many children manifest no proper sense of our kindness and the care we bestow on them—how many ungrateful children! Do your children, General Bertrand, love you? You love them, but you are not sure of being requited. Neither natural affection nor your kindness will ever inspire in them such love as the Christians have for God. When you die your children will remember you—doubtless while spending your money; but your grandchildren will hardly know that you ever existed. And yet you are General Bertrand! And we are here upon an island where all your cares and all your enjoyments are centered in your family. Christ speaks, and at once generations become His by stricter, closer ties than those of blood; by the most sacred, most indissoluble of all unions. He lights up the flame of a love which consumes self-love, which prevails over every other love.

"In this wonderful power of His will we recognize the Word that created the world. The founders of other religions never conceived of this mystical love, which is the essence of Christianity, and is beautifully called charity. Hence it is that they have struck upon a rock. In every attempt to affect this thing—namely, to make himself beloved—man deeply feels his own importance; so that Christ's greatest miracle undoubtedly is the reign of charity. He alone has succeeded in lifting the heart of man to things invisible; and in inducing him to sacrifice temporal things He alone, by influencing him to this sacrifice, has formed a bond of union between heaven and earth. All who sincerely believe in Him taste this wonderful, supernatural, exalted love, which is beyond the power of reason, above the ability of man; a sacred fire brought down to earth by this new Prometheus, and for which Time, the great destroyer, can neither exhaust the force nor limit the duration. The more I think of this, I admire it the more. And it convinces me absolutely of the divinity of Christ. I have inspired multitudes with such affection for me that they would die for me. God forbid that I should compare the soldier's enthusiasm with Christian charity, which are as unlike as their causes. But after all, my presence was necessary, the lightning of my eye, my voice—a word from me, then the sacred fire was kindled in their hearts. I do, indeed, possess the secret of the magical power which lifts the soul; but I could never impart it to any one—none of my generals ever learned it from me; nor have I the secret of perpetuating my name and love for me in the hearts

of men, or of effecting these things without physical means.

"Now that I am at St. Helena—now that I am alone, chained to this rock, who fights and wins empires for me? Who bestirs himself for me in Europe? Who remains faithful to me? Where are my friends? Yes, two or three of you, who are immortalized by your fidelity; ye share, ye alleviate my exile. . . . Yes, my life once shone with all the brilliance of the diadem and the throne; and yours, Bertrand, reflected that brilliance, as the dome of the 'Invalides,' gilded by me, reflects the rays of the sun. But disasters came, the gold gradually became dim, and now all the brightness is effaced by the rain of misfortune and outrage with which I am continually pelted. We are mere lead now, General Bertrand, and soon I shall be in my grave.

"Such is the fate of great men. So it was with Caesar and Alexander, and I, too, am forgotten, and the name of a conqueror and an emperor is a college theme; our exploits are tasks given to pupils by their tutor who sits in judgment upon us, awarding us censure or praise. How different the opinions formed of the great Louis XIV.! Scarcely dead, the great king was left alone in his solitary chamber at Versailles—neglected by his courtiers, and perhaps the object of their ridicule. He was no more their master. He was a dead body, in his coffin the prey of a loathsome putrefaction.

"Such is soon to be the fate of the great Napoleon. What a wide abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored and which is extending all over the earth? Is this death? Is it not life rather? The death of Christ is the death of a God."

The Emperor paused, and as General Bertrand did not answer, the Emperor resumed: "You do not perceive that Jesus Christ is God? Then I did wrong to appoint you general!"

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A French journal gives the following conversation related by Count de Montholon, the faithful friend of the Emperor: "I know man," said Napoleon, "and I tell you that Jesus is not a man! The religion of Christ is a mystery which subsists by its own force, and proceeds from a mind which is not a human mind. We find it in a marked individuality, which originated a train of words and maxims unknown before. Jesus borrowed nothing from our knowledge. He exhibited in Himself the perfect example of his precepts. Jesus is not a philosopher; for His proofs are miracles, and from the first His disciples adored Him. In fact, learning and philosophy are of no use for salvation; and Jesus came into the world to reveal the mysteries of Heaven and the laws of the Spirit."

"Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself founded empires; but upon what did rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for Him. It was not one day, or one victory, which achieved the triumph of the Christian religion in the world. No; it was a long war, a contest for three centuries, begun by the apostles, then continued by the blood of Christian generations. In this war all the kings and potentates of earth were on one side, on the other I see no army, but a mysterious force—some men scattered here and there in all parts of the world, and who have no other rallying point than a common faith in the mysteries of the Cross.

"I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth. We say without hesitation that DeWitt's Kidney and Bladder Pills are unequalled for weak kidneys, backache, inflammation of the Bladder and all urinary disorders. They are antiseptic and act promptly. We sell and recommend them. E. T. Whitehead Co.

to become food for the worms. Such is the fate which so soon awaits him who has been called the great Napoleon. What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved and adored, and which is extending over the whole earth! Call you this dying? Is it not living rather? The death of Christ is the death of a God!"

Count Montholon, who heard the conversation of Napoleon with General Bertrand, wrote to the latter, saying: "I do not think it possible to express better the religious belief of the Emperor."

Unfilled Ideals of Lincoln.

This solemn and instructive day that marks the anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln a century ago should nerve all Americans to take up with fresh courage the three unfilled tasks that engrossed his thought, and for which chiefly he would have desired to live longer. What were these incomplete undertakings of his?

THE UPLIFTING OF THE WHITES.

First, is the uplifting of the masses of plain white people in the South, to whom Lincoln belonged. "God must love the common people, because he made so many of them." Such a sentence, so full of the milk of human kindness, bespeaks his individual history as well as betrays his unflinching affection for his kith and kin in their lowly estate. Four millions of native American stock are skulking yonder in the passes of the Appalachian chain, with mental horizons no broader than their narrow valleys, and all unconscious of social efficiency—"our contemporary ancestors." In the remote rural districts they lead joyless lives upon thin patches of soil, or they have been swept by the thousand about the newly built cotton mill, where child labor brings its train of social ills. Proofs abound that these people do not lack capacity, but opportunity. The school opens to them the door to life. If we love Lincoln, let us serve this humble folk, of whose native worth he is an inspiring example.

Second, is the training of the Negroes for life under conditions of freedom. Slavery was only one stage in the continuous process of racial adjustment which is going on in the South. There was never a greater mistake than to suppose that the abolition of slavery was the end of the Negro problem. It is truer to regard emancipation as marking the beginning of that problem in its most baffling aspects. If Lincoln had lived to fill out the span allotted to his contemporary in birth, Gladstone, his mightiest achievement would probably have been in efforts to train these millions of former slaves in the basal lessons of responsible life, love of home, obedience to law, kindly feeling for one's neighbor, and, in a word, character.

In the alembic of the school, can the nature of the Negro be transmuted in the character of the citizen? I believe firmly that it can. The school must be nicely adapted to this specific racial purpose. If results thus far do not satisfy you, fault is to be found, not with the principle or efficacy of training to attain this end, but rather with the kind of school which has been used. If the school we inherited from the English does not do the work needed for the Negro, let us experiment until we find the exact discipline that will yield the moral results demanded in his case. Human nature is too elastic and susceptible to right education for me to despair of the Negro's ability to rise in the scale of economic efficiency and moral reliability.

This stern necessity of discovering the best method of fitting the Negro for freedom is a commanding challenge to the constructive energies of modern educators. It is because Hampton and Tuskegee have manfully addressed themselves to this knotty question that they merit the attention of the American people. If we love Lincoln, let us serve the black people whom he set free by moralizing them for the daily duties of life. Universal education is a surer test of democracy than universal suffrage. According to the strict ethics of democracy, quality of citizenship is more necessary than equality among citizens. Let us energize reason and conscience to do their perfect work in every American, and politics will take care of itself.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION.

Thirdly, the task of reconciliation between the rent sections of our common country was what lay heaviest upon Lincoln's heart when he breathed his last. Greater than his genial gift in soothing party friction, greater than that rare commingling of strength and gentleness in his large nature, greater than his clear vision of the central issues at stake in that juncture of affairs, greater than the patience shown in the solitude of his majestic spirit in that terrible crisis into which destiny had thrust him, greater than his faith in eternal principles of justice and humanity, was his divine spirit of forgiveness. That was the Christ-like touch in Lincoln's life.

As regards the perpetuity of the Union and the freedom of the slaves, Lincoln's untimely death did not leave his work fragmentary. The main thing that was left undone by his sudden death was the fact that the North and South remained unreconciled. Singularly fitted was he to conduct the war; but still rarer ability had he to add reconciliation to peace between the two sections. This supernal achievement suffered shipwreck in his overthrow. Lincoln and Lee, unlike in so many respects, and the forefront of the opposite sides in that fratricidal struggle, were yet absolutely one in their passionate eagerness to bring about reconciliation for their country. If we love Lincoln, let us try to serve the cause of national conciliation which he cherished as dearer than life.—President S. C. Mitchell in The Congregationalist.

Be What You Will Be.

If you desire to be anything in character, disposition or conduct—be it. Say to yourself each day—I am love, cheerfulness, joy, usefulness, kindness. Sit in your room alone a few moments morning and night, inhale deep, slow breaths, and make these assertions. Then go forth every day determined to look for the agreeable trait in everyone you meet—for the pleasing and pathetic quality, and, for a chance to add a little to the world's store of kindness by some kind act.

Think of yourself as necessary to the world—say: "There is need of me or I would not be," and then look for the opportunity to prove the fact. You will find it. There is need of each one of us every hour in the twenty-four, so help brighten the world for others less fortunate than ourselves. Your great trouble seems to be that you dwell too much on thoughts of yourself and your troubles and think too little of other people about you.

Think of yourself just as you would like to be, and insist mentally that you are that. Never mind if no change seems to come at once. Keep on insisting, and by and by the results will appear. And all the time watch for opportunities to do kind acts. It is wonderful what an interest we will find in people whom we can benefit.—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Uncertain.

The Secretary of one of the college classes of Princeton, in sending out each year a list of questions to be answered by members of the class, in order that the result may be duly tabulated and set forth in the university annual, is said always to include in his list this question: "Are you engaged?" It would seem that one of the members was cursed with doubt in this respect, for in the blank space given over to the query mentioned he made his return as follows: "Do not know. Am awaiting letter."—Harper's Magazine.

Don't let the baby suffer from eczema, sores or any itching of the skin. Doan's Ointment gives instant relief, cures quickly. Perfectly safe for children. All druggists sell it.

of men, or of effecting these things without physical means. "Now that I am at St. Helena—now that I am alone, chained to this rock, who fights and wins empires for me? Who bestirs himself for me in Europe? Who remains faithful to me? Where are my friends? Yes, two or three of you, who are immortalized by your fidelity; ye share, ye alleviate my exile. . . . Yes, my life once shone with all the brilliance of the diadem and the throne; and yours, Bertrand, reflected that brilliance, as the dome of the 'Invalides,' gilded by me, reflects the rays of the sun. But disasters came, the gold gradually became dim, and now all the brightness is effaced by the rain of misfortune and outrage with which I am continually pelted. We are mere lead now, General Bertrand, and soon I shall be in my grave.

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Taking One's Self Too Seriously.

There is such a thing as taking ourselves and the world too seriously, or at any rate too anxiously. Half of the secular unrest and dismal, profane sadness of modern society comes from the vain idea that every man is bound to be a critic of life, and to let no day pass without finding some fault with the general order of things, or projecting some plan for its improvement. And the other half comes from the greedy notion that a man's life does consist, after all, in the abundance of the things that he possesses, and that it is somehow or other more respectable and pious to be always at work making a larger living, than it is to lie on your back in the green pastures and beside the still waters and thank God that you are alive.—Henry Van Dyke.

The best known pills and best pills made are DeWitt's Little Early Risers. They are small, easy to take, gentle and certain, and are sold by E. T. Whitehead Co.

Hub—But if you like the young fellow, Kate, why do you object to our daughter marrying him? Wife—Oh, she'll marry him, for all that; but I want to give her a chance to say, when they quarrel, that "Mother didn't want me to marry you, any way."—Boston Transcript.

This is the most dangerous time of the year to catch cold, and it is the hardest time to cure it. If you should take cold, a few doses of Kennedy's Laxative Cough Syrup will act very promptly. Its laxative principle cures the cold by a gentle but natural action of the bowels. Children especially like Kennedy's Laxative Cough Syrup, as it tastes nearly as good as maple sugar. It is sold by E. T. Whitehead Co.

Mr. Scraggington (musingly)—As Lincoln said, a man may fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time. Mrs. Scraggington (briskly)—But you can't fool me any of the time.—Puck.

It Saved His Leg.

"All thought I'd lose my leg," writes J. A. Swenson, Watertown, Wis. "Ten years of eczema, that 15 doctors could not cure, had at last laid me up. Then Bucklen's Arnica Salve cured it sound and well." Infallible for Skin Eruptions, Eczema, Salt Rheum, Boils, Fever Sores, Burns, Scalds, Cuts and Piles. 25c at E. T. Whitehead Co's.

His Ma—Willie, where have you been? Your hair is suspiciously wavy. Willie—I fell in the river. His Ma—But your clothes are not wet. Willie—Well, you see, ma, while I was standin' on the bridge, I thought maybe I'd fall in, so I took off my clothes, an' I did. Illustrated Bits.

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