

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING COMPANY'S EDITION.

# What must we do to be Saved?

BY

COL R. G. INGERSOLL.

PART I.



LONDON:

FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING COMPANY,

63, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1884.

—  
PRICE ONE PENNY.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY ANNIE BESANT AND CHARLES BRADLAUGH,  
63, FLEET STREET, E.C.

## WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

---

*"The Nuremberg Man was operated by a combination of pipes and levers, and though he could breathe and digest perfectly, and even reason as well as most theologians, was made of nothing but wood and leather."*

---

THE whole world has been filled with fear. Ignorance has been the refuge of the soul. For thousands of years the intellectual ocean was ravaged by the buccaneers of reason. Pious souls clung to the shore and looked at the lighthouse. The seas were filled with monsters and the islands with sirens. The people were driven in the middle of a narrow road while priests went before, beating the hedges on either side to frighten the robbers from their lairs. The poor followers, seeing no robbers, thanked their brave leaders with all their hearts. Huddled in folds they listened with wide eyes while the shepherds told of ravening wolves. With great gladness they exchanged their fleeces for security. Shorn and shivering, they had the happiness of seeing their protectors comfortable and warm. Through all the years, those who ploughed divided with those who prayed. Wicked industry supported pious idleness, the hut gave to the cathedral, and frightened poverty gave even its rags to buy a robe for hypocrisy. Fear is the dungeon of the mind, and superstition is a dagger with which hypocrisy assassinates the soul. Courage is liberty. I am in favor of absolute freedom of thought. In the realm of mind, every one is monarch; every one is robed, sceptred, and crowned, and every one wears the purple of authority. I belong to the republic of intellectual liberty, and only those are good citizens of that republic who depend upon reason and upon persuasion, and only those are traitors who resort to brute force.

Now, I beg of you all to forget just for a few moments that you are Methodists or Baptists or Catholics or Presbyterians, and let us for an hour or two remember only that we are men

and women. And allow me to say "man" and "woman" are the highest titles that can be bestowed upon humanity. Let us, if possible, banish all fear from the mind. Do not imagine that there is some being in the infinite expanse who is not willing that every man and woman should think for himself and herself. Do not imagine that there is any being who would give to his children the holy torch of reason, and then damn them for following that sacred light. Let us have courage. Priests have invented a crime called "blasphemy," and behind that crime hypocrisy has crouched for thousands of years. There is but one blasphemy, and that is injustice. There is but one worship, and that is justice. You need not fear the anger of a god that you cannot injure. Rather fear to injure your fellow-men. Do not be afraid of a crime you cannot commit. The reason that you cannot injure God is that the Infinite is conditionless. You cannot increase or diminish the happiness of any being without changing that being's condition. If God is conditionless, you can neither injure nor benefit him.

There was a Jewish gentleman went into a restaurant to get his dinner, and the devil of temptation whispered in his ear: "Eat some bacon." He knew if there was anything in the universe calculated to excite the wrath of an infinite being, who made every shining star, it was to see a gentleman eating bacon. He knew it, and he knew the infinite being was looking, that he was the eternal eavesdropper of the universe. But his appetite got the better of his conscience, as it often has with us all, and he ate that bacon. He knew it was wrong, and his conscience felt the blood of shame in its cheek. When he went into that restaurant the weather was delightful, the sky was as blue as June, and when he came out the sky was covered with angry clouds, the lightning leaping from one to the other, and the earth shaking beneath the voice of the thunder. He went back into that restaurant with a face as white as milk, and he said to one of the keepers: "My God, did you ever hear such a fuss about a little piece of bacon?" As long as we harbor such opinions of infinity; as long as we imagine the heavens to be filled with such tyranny, just so long the sons of men will be cringing, intellectual cowards. Let us think, and let us honestly express our thought.

Do not imagine for a moment that I think people who disagree with me are bad people. I admit, and I cheerfully admit, that a very large proportion of mankind, and a very large majority, a vast number are reasonably honest. I believe that most Christians believe what they teach; that most ministers are endeavoring to make this world better. I do not pretend to be better than they are. It is an intellectual question. It is a question, first, of intellectual liberty, and after that, a question to be settled at the bar of human reason. I do not pretend to be

better than they are. Probably I am a good deal worse than many of them, but that is not the question. The question is: "Bad as I am, have I the right to think?" And I think I have for two reasons: First, I cannot help it. And secondly, I like it. The whole question is right at a point. If I have not a right to express my thoughts, who has? "Oh," they say, "we will allow you to think, we will not burn you." "All right; why won't you burn me?" "Because we think a decent man will allow another to think and to express his thought." "Then the reason you do not persecute me for my thought is that you believe it would be infamous in you?" "Yes." "And yet you worship a God who will, as you declare, punish me for ever?" Surely an infinite God ought to be as just as man. Surely no God can have the right to punish his children for being honest. He should not reward hypocrisy with heaven, and punish candor with eternal pain.

The next question then is: Can I commit a sin against God by thinking? If God did not intend I should think, why did he give me a thinker? For one, I am convinced, not only that I have the right to think, but that it is my duty to express my honest thoughts. Whatever the Gods may say we must be true to ourselves. We have got what they call the Christian system of religion, and thousands of people wonder how I can be wicked enough to attack that system. There are many good things about it, and I shall never attack anything that I believe to be good! I shall never fear to attack anything I honestly believe to be wrong! We have what they call the Christian religion, and I find, just in proportion that nations have been religious, just in the proportion they have clung to the religion of their founders, they have gone back to barbarism. I find that Spain, Portugal, Italy, are the three worst nations in Europe. I find that the nation nearest infidel is the most prosperous—France. And so I say there can be no danger in the exercise of absolute intellectual freedom. I find among ourselves the men who think are at least as good as those who do not. We have I say, a Christian system, and that system is founded upon what they are pleased to call the "New Testament." Who wrote the New Testament? I do not know. Who does know? Nobody. We have found many manuscripts containing portions of the New Testament. Some of these manuscripts leave out five or six books—many of them. Others more; others less. No two of these manuscripts agree. Nobody knows who wrote these manuscripts. They are all written in Greek. The disciples of Christ, so far as we know, knew only Hebrew. Nobody ever saw, so far as we know, one of the original Hebrew manuscripts. Nobody ever saw anybody who had seen anybody who had heard of anybody that had ever seen anybody that had ever seen one of the original Hebrew

manuscripts. No doubt the clergy of your city have told you these facts thousands of times, and they will be obliged to me for having repeated them once more. These manuscripts are written in what are called capital Greek letters. They are called Uncial manuscripts, and the New Testament was not divided into chapters and verses, even until the year of grace 1551. In the original the manuscripts and gospels are signed by nobody. The epistles are addressed to nobody; and they are signed by the same person. All the addresses, all the pretended ear-marks showing to whom they were written, and by whom they were written, are simply interpolations, and everybody who has studied the subject knows it. It is further admitted that even these manuscripts have not been properly translated, and they have a syndicate now making a new translation; and I suppose that I can not tell whether I really believe the New Testament or not until I see that new translation. You must remember, also, one other thing. Christ never wrote a solitary word of the New Testament—not one word. There is an account that he once stooped and wrote something in the sand, but that has not been preserved. He never told anybody to write a word. He never said: "Matthew, remember this. Mark, do not forget to put that down. Luke, be sure that in your gospel you have this. John, do not forget it." Not one word. And it has always seemed to me that a being coming from another world, with a message of infinite importance to mankind, should at least have verified that message by his own signature. Is it not wonderful that not one word was written by Christ? Is it not strange that he gave no orders to have his words preserved—words upon which hung the salvation of a world? Why was nothing written? I will tell you. In my judgment they expected the end of the world in a few days. That generation was not to pass away until the heavens should be rolled up as a scroll, and until the earth should melt with fervent heat. That was their belief. They believed that the world was to be destroyed, and that the saints were then to govern the earth. And they even went so far among the apostles, as we frequently do now before election, as to divide out the offices in advance. This Testament, as it now is, was not written for hundreds of years after the apostles were dust. Many of the pretended facts lived in the open mouth of credulity. They were in the waste-baskets of forgetfulness. They depended upon the inaccuracy of legend, and for centuries these doctrines and stories were blown about by the inconstant winds. And when reduced to writing, some gentleman would write by the side of the passage his idea of it, and the next copyist would put that in as a part of the text. And, when it was mostly written and the church got into trouble, and wanted a passage to help it out, one was interpolated to order. So that now it is among the easiest things in the world to pick out at

least one hundred interpolations in the Testament. And I will pick some of them out before I get through.

And let me say here, once for all, that for the man Christ I have infinite respect. Let me say, once for all, that the place where man has died for man is holy ground. And let me say, once for all, that to that great and serene man I gladly pay the tribute of my admiration and my tears. He was a reformer in his day. He was an infidel in his time. He was regarded as a blasphemer, and his life was destroyed by hypocrites, who have, in all ages, done what they could to trample freedom and manhood out of the human mind. Had I lived at that time I would have been his friend, and should he come again he will not find a better friend than I will be. That is for the man. For the theological creation I have a different feeling. If he was in fact, God, he knew there was no such thing as death. He knew that what we called death was but the eternal opening of the golden gates of everlasting joy; and it took no heroism to face a death that was eternal life. But when a man, when a poor boy sixteen years of age, goes upon the field of battle to keep his flag in heaven, not knowing but that death ends all; not knowing but that when the shadows creep over him, the darkness will be eternal, there is heroism. For the man who, in the darkness, said: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—for that man I have nothing but respect, admiration, and love. Back of the theological shreds, rags, and patches, hiding the real Christ, I see a genuine man.

A while ago I made up my mind to find out what was necessary for me to do in order to be saved. If I have got a soul, I want it saved. I do not wish to lose anything that is of value. For thousands of years the world has been asking that question: "What must we do to be saved?" Saved from poverty? No. Saved from crime? No. Tyranny? No. But "What must we do to be saved from the eternal wrath of the God who made us all?" If God made us, he will not destroy us. Infinite wisdom never made a poor investment. Upon all the works of an infinite God, a dividend must finally be declared. Why should God make failures? Why should he waste material? Why should he not correct his mistakes, instead of damning them? The pulpit has cast a shadow over even the cradle. The doctrine of endless punishment has covered the cheeks of this world with tears. I despise it, and I defy it. I made up my mind, I say, to see what I had to do in order to save my soul according to the Testament, and thereupon I read it. I read the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and found that the church had been deceiving me. I found that the clergy did not understand their own book: that they had been building upon passages that had been interpolated; upon passages that were entirely untrue, and I will tell you why I think so.



## THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

ACCORDING to the church, the first gospel was written by Matthew. As a matter of fact he never wrote a word of it—never saw it, never heard of it, and probably never will. But for the purposes of this lecture I admit that he wrote it. I will admit that he was with Christ for three years; that he was his constant companion; that he shared his sorrows and his triumphs; that he heard his words by the lonely lakes, the barren hills, in synagogue and street, and that he knew his heart and became acquainted with his thoughts and aims.

Now let us see what Matthew says we must do in order to be saved. And I take it that, if this is true, Matthew is as good authority as any minister in the world. The first thing I find upon the subject of salvation is in the fifth chapter of Matthew, and is embraced in what is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. It is as follows:—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Good! "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Good! Whether they belonged to any church or not; whether they believed the Bible or not. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Good. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake (that's me, a little!) for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Good!

In the same sermon he says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." And then he makes use of this remarkable language, almost as applicable to-day as it was then: "For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Good! In the sixth chapter I find the following, and it comes directly after the prayer known as the Lord's prayer: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." I accept the condition. There is an offer; I accept it. If you will forgive men that trespass against you, God will forgive your trespasses against him. I accept the terms, and I never will ask any God to treat me better than I treat my fellow-men. There is a square promise. There is a contract. If you will forgive others God will forgive you. And it does not say you must believe in the Old Testament, or be baptised, or join the church, or keep Sunday; that you must count beads, or pray, or become a nun, or a priest; that you must preach sermons or hear them, build churches or fill them. Not one word is said about eating



or fasting, denying or believing. It simply says, if you forgive others God will forgive you ; and it must of necessity be true. No God could afford to damn a forgiving man. Suppose God should damn to everlasting fire a man so great and good, that he, looking from the abyss of hell, would forgive God—how would a God feel then ?

Now let me make myself plain upon one subject, perfectly plain. For instance, I hate Presbyterianism, but I know hundreds of splendid Presbyterians. Understand me. I hate Methodism, and yet I know hundreds of splendid Methodists. I hate Catholicism, and like Catholics. I hate insanity, but not the insane.

I do not war against men. I do not war against persons. I war against certain doctrines that I believe to be wrong. But I give to every other human being every right that I claim for myself.

The next thing that I find is in the seventh chapter and the second verse: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged ; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Good ! That suits me. And in the twelfth chapter of Matthew: "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother. For the son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according——." To the church he belongs to ? No. To the manner in which he was baptised ? No. According to his creed ? No. "Then he shall reward every man according to his works." Good ! I subscribe to that doctrine.

And in the sixteenth chapter: "And Jesus called a little child to him and stood him in the midst ; and said 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" I do not wonder that in his day, surrounded by scribes and Pharisees, he turned lovingly to little children. And yet, see what children the little children of God have been. What an interesting dimpled darling John Calvin was. Think of that prattling babe, Jonathan Edwards ! Think of the infants that founded the inquisition, that invented instruments of torture to tear human flesh. They were the ones who had become as little children. They were the children of faith.

So I find in the nineteenth chapter: "And behold, one came and said unto him: 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' and he said unto him, 'Why call'st thou me good? There is none good but one, and that is God, but if thou wilt enter into eternal life, keep the commandments ;' and he said unto him 'Which?'" Now, there is a fair issue. Here is a child of God asking God what is necessary for him to do in order to inherit eternal life. And God said to

him: "Keep the commandments." And the child said to the Almighty: "Which?" Now, if there ever has been an opportunity given to the Almighty to furnish a man of an inquiring mind with the necessary information upon that subject, here was the opportunity. "He said unto him, 'Which?' And Jesus said: 'Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honor thy father and mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" He did not say to him: "You must believe in me—that I am the only begotten son of the living God." He did not say: "You must be born again." He did not say: "You must believe the Bible." He did not say: "You must remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." He simply said: "Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And thereupon the young man, who I think was mistaken, said unto him: "All these things have I kept from my youth up." What right has the church to add conditions of salvation? Why should we suppose that Christ failed to tell the young man all that was necessary for him to do? Is it possible that he left out some important thing simply to mislead? Will some minister tell us why he thinks that Christ kept back the "scheme"?

Now comes an interpolation. In the old times when the church got a little scarce of money, they always put in a passage praising poverty. So they had this young man ask: "What lack I yet?" And Jesus said unto him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven." The church has always been willing to swap off treasures in heaven for cash down. And when the next verse was written the church must have been nearly bankrupt. "And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Did you ever know a wealthy disciple to unload on account of that verse? And then comes another verse, which I believe is an interpolation: "And every one that has forsaken houses, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Christ never said it. Never. "Whosoever shall forsake father and mother!" Why he said to this man that asked him: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" among other things, he said: "Honor thy father and thy mother." And we turn over the page and he says again: "If you will desert your father and mother you shall have everlasting life." It will not do. If you will desert your wife and your little children, or your lands—the idea of putting a house and lot on equality with wife and chil-

dren! Think of that! I do not accept the terms. I will never desert the one I love for the promise of any God. It is far more important to love your wife than to love God, and I will tell you why. You cannot help him, but you can help her. You can fill her life with the perfume of perpetual joy. It is far more important that you love your children than that you love Jesus Christ. And why? If he is God you cannot help him, but you can plant a little flower of happiness in every footstep of the child, from the cradle until you die in that child's arms. Let me tell you to-day it is far more important to build a home than to erect a church. The holiest temple beneath the stars is a home that love has built. And the holiest altar in all the wide world is the fireside around which gather father and mother and the sweet babes. There was a time when people believed the infamy commanded in this frightful passage. There was a time when they did desert fathers and mothers and wives and children. St. Augustine says to the devotee: "Fly to the desert, and though your wife put her arms around your neck, tear her hands away; she is a temptation of the devil. Though your father and mother throw their bodies athwart your threshold, step over them; and though your children pursue, and with weeping eyes beseech you to return, listeh not. It is the temptation of the evil one. Fly to the desert and save your soul." Think of such a soul being worth saving. While I live I propose to stand by the ones I love.

There is another condition of salvation. I find it in the twenty-fifth chapter: "Then shall the King say unto them 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 hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; I was naked and ye clothed me; and I was sick and ye visited me; and I was in prison and ye came unto me.'" Good! I tell you to-night that God will not punish with eternal thirst the man who has put the cup of cold water to the lips of his neighbor. God will not leave in the eternal nakedness of pain the man who has clothed his fellow-men. For instance, here is a shipwreck, and here is some brave sailor who stands aside and allows a woman whom he never saw before to take his place in the boat, and he stands there, grand and serene as the wide sea, and he goes down. Do you tell me that there is any God who will push the life-boat from the shore of eternal life, when that man wishes to step in? Do you tell me that God can be unpitiful to the pitiful, that he can be unforgiving to the forgiving? I deny it; and from the aspersions of the pulpit I seek to rescue the reputation of the Deity. Now I have read you substantially everything in Matthew on the subject of salvation. That is all there is. Not one word about believing anything. It is the

gospel of deed, the gospel of charity, the gospel of self-denial; and if only that gospel had been preached, persecution never would have shed one drop of blood. Not one. According to the testimony, Matthew was well acquainted with Christ. According to the testimony, he had been with him, and his companion for years, and if it was necessary to believe anything in order to get to heaven, Matthew should have told us. But he forgot it, or he did not believe it, or he never heard of it. You can take your choice. In Matthew, we find that heaven is promised, first, to the poor in spirit. Second, to the merciful. Third, to the pure in heart. Fourth, to the peacemakers. Fifth, to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Sixth, to those who keep and teach the commandments. Seventh, to those who forgive men that trespass against them. Eighth, that we will be judged as we judge others. Ninth, that they who receive prophets and righteous men shall receive a prophet's reward. Tenth, to those who do the will of God. Eleventh, that every man shall be rewarded according to his works. Twelfth, to those who become as little children. Thirteenth, to those who forgive the trespasses of others. Fourteenth, to the perfect: they who sell all that they have and give to the poor. Fifteenth, to them who forsake houses, and brethren, and sisters, and father, and mother, and wife, and children, and lands for the sake of Christ's name. Sixteenth, to those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter to the stranger, clothes to the naked, comfort to the sick, and who visit the prisoner. Nothing else is said with regard to salvation in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Not one word about believing the Old Testament to have been inspired; not one word about being baptized or joining a church; not one word about believing in any miracle; not even a hint that it was necessary to believe that Christ was the son of God, or that he did any wonderful or miraculous things, or that he was born of a virgin, or that his coming had been foretold by the Jewish prophets. Not one word about believing in the Trinity, or in foreordination or predestination. Matthew had not understood from Christ that any such things were necessary to ensure the salvation of the soul.

According to the testimony, Matthew had been in the company of Christ, some say three years and some say one, but at least he had been with him long enough to find out some of his ideas upon this great subject. And yet Matthew never got the impression that it was necessary to believe something in order to get to heaven. He supposed that if a man forgave others God would forgive him; he believed that God would show mercy to the merciful; that he would not allow those who fed the hungry to starve; that he would not put in the flames of hell those who had given cold water to the thirsty; that he would not cast into the eternal dungeon of his wrath those who

had visited the imprisoned; and that he would not damn men who forgave others. Matthew had it in his mind that God would treat us very much as we treated other people; and that in the next world he would treat with kindness those who had been loving and gentle in their lives. It may be the apostle was mistaken; but evidently that was his opinion.

#### THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

LET US now see what Mark thought it necessary for a man to do to save his soul. In the fourth chapter, after Jesus had given to the multitude by the sea the parable of the sower, his disciples, when they were again alone, asked him the meaning of the parable. Jesus replied: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing, they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand: lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." It is a little hard to understand why he should have preached to people that he did not intend should know his meaning. Neither is it quite clear why he objected to their being converted. This, I suppose, is one of the mysteries that we should simply believe without endeavoring to comprehend. With the above exception, and one other that I will mention hereafter, Mark substantially agrees with Matthew, and says that God will be merciful to the merciful, that he will be kind to the kind, that he will pity the pitying, and love the loving. Mark upholds the religion of Matthew until we come to the sixteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter, and then I strike an interpolation put in by hypocrisy, put in by priest who longed to grasp with bloody hands the sceptre of universal power. Let me read it to you. It is the most infamous passage in the Bible. Christ never said it. No sensible man ever said it.

"And He said unto them (that is unto his disciples), go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." That passage was written so that fear would give alms to hypocrisy. Now, I propose to you that this is an interpolation. How will I do it? In the first place, not one word is said about belief in Matthew. In the next place, not one word about belief in Mark until I come to that verse, and where is that said to have been spoken? According to Mark, it is a part of that last conversation of Jesus Christ—just before, according to the account, he ascended bodily before their eyes. If there ever was any important thing happened in this world that was it. If there is any conversation that people would be apt to recollect, it would be the last conversation with a God before he



rose visibly through the air and seated himself upon the throne of the infinite. We have in this Testament five accounts of the last conversation happening between Jesus Christ and his apostles. Matthew gives it, and yet Matthew does not state that in that conversation Christ said: "Whoso believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and whoso believeth not shall be damned." And if he did say those words they were the most important that ever fell from lips. Matthew did not hear it, or did not believe it, or forgot it. Then I turn to Luke, and he gives an account of this last conversation, and not one word does he say upon that subject. Luke does not pretend that Christ said that whoso believeth not shall be damned. Luke certainly did not hear it. Maybe he forgot it. Perhaps he did not think it worth recording. Now, it is the most important thing, if Christ said it, that he ever said. Then I turn to John, and he gives an account of the last conversation, but not one solitary word on the subject of belief or unbelief. Not one solitary word on the subject of damnation. Not one. John might not have been listening.

Then I turn to the first chapter of the Acts, and there I find an account of the last conversation; and in that conversation there is not one word upon this subject. This is a demonstration that the passage in Mark is an interpolation. What other reason have I got? There is not one particle of sense in it. Why? No man can control his belief. You hear evidence for and against, and the integrity of the soul stands at the scales and tells which side rises and which side falls. You can not believe as you wish. You must believe as you must. And he might as well have said: "Go into the world and preach the gospel, and whosoever has red hair shall be saved, and whosoever hath not shall be damned." I have another reason. I am much obliged to the gentleman who interpolated these passages. I am much obliged to him that he put in some more—two more. Now hear: "And these signs shall follow them that believe." Good! "In my name shall they cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues, and take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Bring on your believer! Let him cast out a devil. I do not ask for a large one. Just a little one for a cent. Let him take up serpents. "And if he drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt him." Let me mix up a dose for the believer, and if it does not hurt him I will join a church. Oh! but, they say, those things only lasted through the Apostolic age. Let us see. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel, and whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and these signs shall follow them that believe." How long? I think at least until they had gone into all the world. Certainly those signs should follow until all the world has been visited. And yet if that

declaration was in the mouth of Christ, he then knew that one-half of the world was unknown, and that he would be dead fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before his disciples would know that there was another continent. And yet he said: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel," and he knew then that it would be fourteen hundred and fifty-nine years before anybody could go. Well, if it was worth while to have signs follow believers in the Old World, surely it was worth while to have signs follow believers in the New. And the very reason that signs should follow would be to convince the unbeliever, and there are as many unbelievers now as ever, and the signs are as necessary today as they ever were. I would like a few myself. This frightful declaration: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," has filled the world with agony and crime. Every letter of this passage has been sword and faggot; every word has been dungeon and chain. That passage made the sword of persecution drip with innocent blood through centuries of agony and crime. That passage made the horizon of a thousand years lurid with the faggot's flames. That passage contradicts the sermon on the mount; travesties the Lord's prayer; turns the splendid religion of deed and duty into the superstition of creed and cruelty. I deny it. It is infamous! Christ never said it!

#### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

It is sufficient to say that Luke agrees substantially with Matthew and Mark. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is also merciful." Good! "Judge not and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not and ye shall not be condemned; forgive and ye shall be forgiven." Good! "Give and it shall be given unto you good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over." Good! I like it. "For the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

He agrees substantially with Mark; he agrees substantially with Matthew; and I come at last to the nineteenth chapter. "And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the one-half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.' And Jesus said unto him, 'This day is salvation come to this house.'" That is good doctrine. He did not ask Zaccheus what he believed. He did not ask him, "Do you believe in the Bible? Do you believe in the five points? Have you ever been baptised—sprinkled, or immersed?" "Half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. And Christ said, this day is salvation come to this house." Good! I read also in Luke



that Christ when upon the cross forgave his murderers, and that is considered the shining gem in the crown of his mercy. He forgave his murderers. He forgave the men who drove the nails in his hands, in his feet, that plunged a spear in his side; the soldier that in the hour of death offered him in mockery the bitterness to drink. He forgave them all freely, and yet, although he would forgive them, he will in the nineteenth century, as we are told by the orthodox Church, damn to eternal fire a noble man for the expression of his honest thoughts. That will not do. I find, too, in Luke, an account of two thieves that were crucified at the same time. The other gospels speak of them. One says they both railed upon him. Another says nothing about it. In Luke we are told that one railed upon him, but one of the thieves looked and pitied Christ, and Christ said to that thief: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Why did he say that? Because the thief pitied him. God cannot afford to trample beneath the feet of his infinite wrath the smallest blossom of pity that ever shed its perfume in the human heart!

Who was this thief? To what Church did he belong? I do not know. The fact that he was a thief throws no light on that question. Who was he? What did he believe? I do not know. Did he believe in the Old Testament? In the miracles? I do not know. Did he believe that Christ was God? I do not know. Why then was the promise made to him that he should meet Christ in paradise? Simply because he pitied suffering innocence upon the cross. God cannot afford to damn any man who is capable of pitying anybody.

(Continued in PART II.)

---