

WOULD JESUS MISLEAD?

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There comes to me this morning a letter from Robert Rodwell of Baraboo Wis. Here, in part, is what this good man says:- "My sister wrote you concerning your philosophy and we have been receiving your letters--the last one dealt with the saviors down through time. Now, regardless of how many people claimed that distinction, in my opinion Christ based his preaching and statements on laws of the universe and they stand without refutation. This being true, would He deliberately mislead us concerning salvation and everlasting life?"

I want to spend some time answering that letter. I shall be as fair as I know how to be. I shall deal only with facts. Let me say here, to all my Students, that it would be far easier for me to believe the story of Jesus as God, than it is to take issue with the story. I do not take issue with that story because I like to, but because it has been very abundantly demonstrated, not only by own experience, but by the experience of countless thousands of our Students, that the truths of God do not lie in that story. Unless I were absolutely convinced, both of the existence of the Spirit of God ENTIRELY OUTSIDE OF THAT STORY, and unless I could absolutely prove by the laws of evidence that the story is not true, believe you me, my pen would never be ## lifted against the story.

If, however, I know that the truths of God exist entirely away from that story, and if I know the story is NOT true, then, regardless of the cost or the trouble entailed, I shall very fearlessly tell this world that the story is not true, in spite of how many say they believe it is true, for I have investigated---they have not. So then, in answering this letter, let me be as true and as fair as I can be. You will never find me writing any other way. I WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH. SO FAR AS GOD IS CONCERNED, IF WE HAD NOT THE TRUTHS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THIS MOVEMENT NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY GOD TO BRING THOSE TRUTHS TO THE WORLD. FOR THOSE TRUTHS OF GOD WHICH ARE REDEEMING AND HELPING SO MANY PEOPLE, DO NOT INCLUDE THE STORY OF JESUS CHRIST, NOR THE STORY OF ANY OTHER "CRUCIFIED GOD".

Our correspondent states that the teachings and statements of Jesus were based on laws of the universe. I have studied rather carefully the whole story of Jesus Christ, and from many angles, and I have yet to find in that story, one single statement which is based on "the laws of the universe". If the story were based on those laws, I should never have any quarrel with it I promise you. But let us see. There are three subjects Jesus Christ never mentioned---philosophy---science---and natural law. How our correspondent can state that the teachings of Jesus are based on natural law, is quite beyond me. He probably does not realize what he is saying when he makes such a statement. I only wish those teachings were based either on science, philosophy, or natural law. But they are not, for Jesus never assigned a natural cause for anything.

The fact that he never even used the three words quoted, makes it plain that he was totally ignorant of these important branches of knowledge, the cultivation of which is known to be essential to civilization. Everything to Jesus was---miracle; everything was produced and controlled by ## the arbitrary power of an irascible god. He evidently had no idea# of a ruling principle in nature or of the existence of natural law, as controlling any event he witnessed. Hence, he set no bounds to anything, and recognized no limits to the possible. He believed God to be a supernatural PERSONAL BEING, who possessed unlimited power,

age to age unnoticed, because his pious and awe-stricken followers, having been taught that he was a divine teacher, have assumed that his teachings must *all* be true; and hence, too, have instituted no scrutiny to *determine* their truth or falsity. But we will now proceed to show that the progress of science and general intelligence has brought to light many errors, not only in his teachings, but in his practical life also. In enumerating them, we will arrange them under the head

~~*Moral and Religious Errors.*~~

1. The first moral precept in the teachings of Christ, which we will bring to notice, is one of a numerous class, which may very properly be arranged under the head of *Moral Extremism*. We find many of his admonitions of this character. Nearly everything that is said is *oversaid*, carried to extremes—thus constituting an overwrought, extravagant system of morality, impracticable in its requisitions; as, for example, "Take no thought for the morrow." (Matt. v.) If the spirit of this injunction were carried out in practical life, there would be no grain sown and no seed planted in spring, no reaping done in harvest and no crop garnered in autumn; and the result would be universal starvation in less than twelve months. But, fortunately for society the Christian world has laid this positive injunction upon the table under the rule of "indefinite postponement."

2. Christ's assumed-to-be most important requisition is found in the injunction, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all else shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.) His early followers understood by this injunction, and doubtless understood it correctly, that they were to spend their lives in religious devotion, and neglect the practical duties of life, leaving "Providence" to take care of their families—a course of life which reduced many of them to the point of starvation.

3. The disciple of Christ is required, "when smitten on one cheek, to turn the other also;" that is, when one cheek is pommelled into a jelly by some vile miscreant or drunken wretch, turn the other, to be smashed up in like manner. This is an extravagant requisition, which none of his *modern* disciples even attempt to observe.

4. "Resist not evil" (Matt. v. 34) breathes forth a kindred spirit. This injunction requires you to stand with your

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hands in your pockets while being maltreated so cruelly and unmercifully that the forfeiture of your life may be the consequence—at least Christ's early followers so understood it.

5. The disciple of Christ is required, when his cloak is formally wrested from him, to give up his coat also. (See Matt. 5.) And to carry out the principle, if the marauder demands it, he must next give up his boots, then his shirt, and thus strip himself of all his garments, and go naked. This looks like an invitation and bribe to robbery.

6. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." (Matt. vi. 19.) This is another positive command of Christ, which the modern Christian world, by common consent, has laid on the table under the rule of "indefinite postponement," under the conviction that the wants of their families and the exigencies of sickness and old age cannot be served if they should live up to such an injunction.

7. "Sell all that thou hast, . . . and come and follow me," is another command which bespeaks more piety than wisdom, as all who have attempted to comply with it have reduced their families to beggary and want.

8. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Then he must hate it, as there are but the two principles, and "from hate proceed envy, strife, evil surmisings, and persecution." Evidently the remedy in this case for "worldly-mindedness" is worse than the disease.

9. "He that cometh to me, and hateth not father, mother, brother, and sister, etc., cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 26). This breathes forth the same spirit as the last text quoted above. Many learned expositions have been penned by Christian writers to make it appear that *hate* in this case does not mean *hate*. But certainly it would be a slander upon infinite wisdom to leave it to be inferred that he could not say or "inspire" his disciples to say *exactly* what he meant, and to say it so *plainly* as to leave no *possibility* of being misunderstood, or leave any ground for dispute about the meaning.

10. "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad" when persecuted. (Matt. v. 4.) Now, as a state of rejoicing is the highest condition of happiness that can be realized, such advice must naturally prompt the religious zealot to court persecution, in order to obtain complete happiness, and consequently to pursue a dare-devil life to provoke persecution.

11. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it,"

etc. (Luke xvii. 33.) Here is displayed the spirit of martyrdom which has made millions reckless of life, and goaded on the frenzied bigot to seek the fiery fagot and the halter. We regard it as another display of religious fanaticism.

12. "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." (Matt. x. 12.) How repulsive must have been their doctrines or their conduct! No *sensible* religion could excite the universal hatred of mankind. For it would contain *something* adapted to the moral, religious or spiritual taste of *some* class or portion of society, and hence make it and its disciples loved instead of hated. And then how could they be "hated of all men," when not one man in a thousand ever heard of them? Here is more of the extravagance of religious enthusiasm.

13. "Shake off the dust of your feet" against those who cannot see the truth or utility of your doctrines. (Matt. x. 14.) Here Christ encourages in his disciples a spirit of contempt for the opinions of others calculated to *make them* "hated." A proper regard for the rules of good-breeding would have forbidden such rudeness toward strangers for a mere honest difference of opinion.

14. "Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor scrip, nor purse" (Mark vi. 8); that is "sponge on your friends, and force yourself on your enemies," the latter class of which seem to have been much of the most numerous. A preacher who should attempt to carry out this advice at the present day would be stopped at the first toll-gate, and compelled to return. Here is more violation of the rules of good-breeding, and the common courtesies of civilized life.

15. "Go and teach all nations," etc. Why issue an injunction that could not possibly be carried out? It never has been, and never will be, executed, for three-fourths of the human race have never yet heard of Christianity. It was not, therefore, a mark of wisdom, or a superior mind, to issue such an injunction.

16. "And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." What intolerance, bigotry, relentless cruelty, and ignorance of the science of mind are here displayed! No philosopher would give utterance to, or indorse such a sentiment. It assumes that belief is a creature of the will, and that a man can believe anything he chooses, which is wide of the truth. And the assumption has been followed by persecution, misery, and bloodshed.

17. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. xxi. 22.) Here is an entire negation of natural law in the necessity of physical labor as a means to procure the comforts of life. When anything is wanted in the shape of food or raiment, it is to be obtained, according to this text, by going down on your knees and asking God to bestow it. But no Christian ever realized "*all things whatsoever* asked for in prayer," though "*believing with all his heart*" he should obtain it. The author knows, by his own practical experience, that this declaration is not true. This promise has been falsified thousands of times by thousands of praying Christians.

18. "Be not called rabbi." "Call no man your father." (Matt. xxiii.) The Christian world assumes that much of what Christ taught is mere idle nonsense, or the incoherent utterings of a religious fanatic; for they pay no more practical attention to it than the barking of a dog. And here is one command treated in this manner: "Call no man father." Where is the Christian who refuses to call his earthly sire a father?

19. "Call no man master." (Matt. xxiii.) And yet mister, which is the same thing, is the most common title in Christendom.

20. "He who enunciates the two words, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matt. xxii.) Mercy! Who, then, can be saved? For there is probably not a live Christian in the world who has not called *somebody* a "fool," when he knew him to be such, and could not with truthfulness be called anything else. Here, then, is another command universally ignored and "indefinitely postponed."

21. "Swear not at all, neither by heaven nor earth." (Matt. v.) And yet no Christian refuses to indulge in legal, if not profane, swearing which the text evidently forbids.

22. "Men ought always to pray." (Luke xviii.) No time to be allowed for eating or sleeping. More religious fanaticism.

23. "Whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant" (Matt. xx. 27); that is, no Christian professor shall be a president, governor, major-general, deacon, or priest. Another command laid on the table.

24. "Love your enemies." (Matt. v. 44.) Then what kind of a feeling should we cultivate toward friends? And how much did *he love his enemies* when he called them "fools," "liars," "hypocrites," "generation of vipers," etc.? And yet

he is held up as "our" example in love, meekness, and forbearance. But no man ever did love an enemy. It is a moral impossibility, as much so as to love bitter or nauseating food. The advice of the Roman slave Syrus is indicative of more sense and wisdom—"Treat your enemy kindly, and thus make him a friend."

25. We are required to forgive an enemy four hundred and ninety times that is, "seventy times seven." (Matt. vii.) Another outburst of religious enthusiasm; another proof of an overheated imagination.

26. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.) Here is more of the religious extravagance of a mind uncultured by science. For it is self-evident that human beings can make no approximation to divine perfection. The distance between human imperfection and a perfect God is, and ever must be, infinite.

27. Christ commended those who "became eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. xix. 12)—a custom requiring a murderous, self-butchering process; destructive of the energies of life and the vigor of manhood, and rendering the subject weak, effeminate, and mopish, and unfit for the business of life. It is a low species of piety, and discloses a lamentable lack of a scientific knowledge of the true functions of the sexual organs on the part of Jesus.

28. Christ also encouraged his disciples to "pluck out the eye," and "cut off the hand," as a means of rendering it impossible to perpetrate evil with those members. And we would suggest, if such advice is consistent with sound reasoning, the head also should be cut off, as a means of *more effectually* carrying out the same principle. Such advice never came from the mouth of a philosopher. It is a part of human mind and the true science of life. It ranks with the Christ's extravagant piety.

29. He also taught the senseless, oriental tradition of "the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost"—a fabulous being who figured more anciently in the history of various countries. No philosopher or man of science could harbor such childish misconceptions as are embodied in this tradition, which neither describes the being nor explains the nature of the sin.

30. We find many proofs, in Christ's Gospel history, that he believed in the ancient heathen tradition which taught that disease is caused by demons and evil spirits. (See Luke vii. 21, and viii. 2.)

31. Many cases are reported of his relieving the *obsessed* by casting out the diabolical intruders, in imitation of the oriental custom long in vogue in various countries, by which he evinced a profound ignorance of the natural causes of disease.

32. Christ also taught the old pagan superstition that "God is a God of anger," while modern science teaches that it would be as impossible for a God of perfect and infinite attributes to experience the feeling of anger as to commit suicide; and recent discoveries in physiology prove that anger is a species of suicide, and that it is also a species of insanity. Hence an angry God would be an insane God—an omnipotent lunatic, "ruling the kingdom of heaven," which would make heaven a *lunatic asylum* and rather a dangerous place to live.

33. And Christ's injunction to "fear God" also implies that he is an angry being. (See Luke xxiii. 40.) But past history proves that "the fear of God" has always been the great lever of priestcraft, and the most paltry and pitiful motive that ever moved the human mind. It has paralyzed the noblest intellects, crushed the elasticity of youth, and augmented the hesitating indecision of old age, and finally filled the world with cowardly, trembling slaves. No philosopher will either love or worship a God he fears. "The fear of the Lord" is a very ancient heathen superstition.

34. The inducement Christ holds out for leading a virtuous life by the promise of "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," bespeaks a childish ignorance of the nature of the human mind and the true science of life. It ranks with the promise of the nurse of sugar-plums to the boy if he would keep his garments unsoiled.

and who ruled and controlled everything by his arbitrary will, without any law, or any limitation to its exercises. Hence, he told his disciples that they could have anything they wanted through faith; that by faith they could roll the billows of the sea mountains high, or bring them to a halt, at will. He evidently believed that forked-lightning, the outbursting thunder, and the roaring, heaving volcano were but pliant tools or obsequious servants to the faith of man or to the man of faith. And he displays no less ignorance of the laws of mind than the laws of nature; thus proving him to have been neither a natural, moral, nor mental philosopher. Certainly he was not God or any part of God. And there is one thing which more than anything else convinces me that he was not God, and that is the fact that he gave all credit for what he did TO THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, WHICH SPIRIT AND WHICH POWER WE ARE TEACHING HERE IN MOSCOW, IDAHO. Had he been God, he never would have done that. Had he been the Almighty God of this universe HE WOULD HAVE SAID SO--BUT HE NEVER DID.

He omitted to teach the great moral laws learned by human experience, of which he was evidently totally ignorant. Let us look at a few of the things he did teach, and then decide whether his teachings were based on natural laws or not. Our friend is mistaken in his letter.

I could give you articles and quotations by the hundred to prove to you that no "god" ever said or did what Jesus is suppose to have done. What Jesus Cjrist really was, in my opinion, was a religious teacher. His fame was not heard of until nearly 200 years after his death. Jesus never misled anyone. The misleading has been on the part of the ecclesiastical corporation which, in an attempt to establish on this earth a system of religion it could control, tried to make a God out of man. The effort failed--but it threw civilization back 2000 years. For the mind of man progresses ever, and with the progress, out goes all sorts of religious myth and superstition. As these myths go out--IN COMES THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. For God never was other than Spirit. God lived in Jesus Christ just as God lives in you and me. As for Jesus Christ ever being Almighty God---well--look at the world after 2000 years of that teaching, and the question answers itself.