

absolute religion. Not a religion, but the religion of the world.

Now came the higher critics and said, "No," to all of these my beliefs in the Bible. In the first place they said, "the Bible is not the word of God, given through the Holy Spirit in any such sense as you have believed. The Bible is a book written by men, just as all other books are written. Therefore the words contained in it are not the words of God himself, but the words of men. The Bible does not contain truth only, but it contains error also. In fact, the Bible is a mixture of truth and error, good and bad, wise and unwise. It contains myths, legends, and fables, just as all the so-called sacred books of the world religions contain a mixture."

According to my orthodox faith I had looked upon the Bible as the perfectly revealed word of God, and as a supreme judge sitting on the bench giving an infallible judgment upon all matters pertaining to the spiritual as well as the moral welfare of man. This judgment I had looked upon as final, with no one to dispute it.

Now came Higher Criticism and turned everything upside down, and said, "No, you are not the petitioner, you yourself are the judge. You must sit upon the bench as supreme judge and pronounce your judgment upon the contents of the Bible as to whether it is true or untrue, good or bad, applicable or inapplicable. The Bible, as all other books, must become a petitioner before you, and your reason." So you see the Bible was in this way dragged down from the seat of the supreme judge to the place of the petitioner, and man with

his reason and common sense was exalted to the seat of the judge.

The New Theology says, "Oh, don't bother about the Bible too much. Christianity does not stand on the inspiration of the Bible. It stands on the unique personality of Christ. As long as we hold on to Christ there is no danger for Christianity."

Very well; it may be so. Christ is our sure foundation. Christianity must stand on this rock of ages. But may I ask a question here? Who is this Christ? Who is this unique personality on which you try to stand as on the sure foundation? Is he the second person of the Trinity co-equal and co-eternal with the Father himself? In a word, is Christ the Creator, or a creature infinite or finite?

To these blunt questions New Theology has no other answer than "No!" Christ, according to New Theology, is not God but man. He is not the Creator, but a creature. He is not infinite, not finite.

But here comes another exhortation from the camp of New Theology. "Don't trouble yourself too much about the nature of Christ, whether he is God or man. The supreme love and absolute allegiance to our Lord are the only essentials which we should always hold up as the life of our Christian faith. If we hold fast to these truths then we can safely let go such non-essentials as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection."

In the first place, to speak plainly, do you think that we can love Jesus Christ supremely if he is not God, but man? What is that supreme love which true Christians cherish toward their Saviour? Is it a loving memory or true personal, living love? To the true Christian, is not Jesus the ever-living and ever-present personal Saviour? Surely we love him as a person, and not as a beautiful character who once lived upon this earth, and who is pictured for us by his biographers. True and supreme love comes from the living and direct touch of heart with heart, as a fire flashes by the friction of steel and flint.

Thus by the study of New Theology and Higher Criticism all beliefs in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity were destroyed one after another, and I was again left to my former self. I was introduced into the Christian religion by the front gate of orthodoxy, and led out of it by the back gate of New Theology into my old heathen unbelief.

By this time my vision of the future world and eternal life became very vague and obscure, and I was shut up to this world. I thought, "Let the future take care of itself; my concern is in this world alone." Thus I became a man of the world. Now my philosophy was to be healthy, happy and good. To have a strong body, a comfortable living, a happy home, and a good reputation in this world is enough for any man. It was not my theory only, but I put it into practise as much as I could and I attained my objects pretty well, except for the second one.

I had a good wife and nine children, all well and good, and a happy home. I was strong and healthy, was quite popular, and was regarded as one of the most successful social reformers in the country. I was not so selfish as to think only of my own happiness, but I tried to make other people happy also. I became a preacher of thrift and economy; and during twenty years I was engaged in teaching the gospel of saving, not souls but money. I was quite satisfied with my worldly success, not knowing that such satisfaction is the most dangerous menace to a man's spiritual life.

But all this was simply the outward appearance. If you look a little deeper into the matter you will soon find out what a dreadful state

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a backsliding man can come into. At first it was a matter of intellectual doubt and unbelief. I was shaken in my mind by the arguments of New Theology. But the work of the devil did not stop here. I was now shaken morally and spiritually. This moral shaking made most dreadful havoc in my spiritual life. Sin crept in, and I was made a captive again. Oh, what a wretched man I was in those days of backsliding!

Even to think of those days gives me unendurable pain. I strayed so far away that even my friends lost their hope of my returning. Yet there were two women, one an American and the other a Japanese, who, I was afterward told, were praying for me without ceasing during those twenty years of my prodigal life. God in his faithfulness watched over me during all those years, and finally brought me back to fellowship with himself once more. He will never forsake those he has once redeemed.

### HALL CAINE'S "THE MASTER OF MAN"

The central subject of The Master of Man, by Sir Hall Caine, which was published on August 29th, the strong conflict between public duty or religious principle and private interest, has had a great fascination for some of the foremost novelists, as in the cases of Mrs. Barhauld (Art and Nature), Scott (The Heart of Midlothian), Lockhart (Adam Blair), Hawthorne (The Scarlet Letter), Lytton (Paul Clifford), Karl Emil Franzos (The Chief Justice), Stevenson (Wier of Hermiston), Tolstoy (Resurrection), and others.

There have often been great differences in their treatment of the subject or often important resemblances. In some cases the person in whose soul the conflict takes place is a clergyman; in other cases he is a judge; in one case an advocate, in another a jurymen and in yet another a sister who holds the fate of the sinner in the palm of her hand. The spiritual responsibility has sometimes been the immediate consequence of a sin, while sometimes it has been the indirect result of it. The foundation has nearly always been laid on actual occurrences, though the authors have generally departed from the facts as they found them. In nearly every instance the sequel has been the triumph of public duty or religious principle over private interest, but it has differed widely in incident, the victim of the struggle frequently dying in the act of achieving the victory of conscience

and less frequently being saved through love (usually the love of a noble-hearted woman) and the hope of a great resurrection.

Hall Caine in The Master of Man will probably be judged by the measure in which his imagination has brought new values, new questions and new meanings to a subject of universal and enduring interest—a great human subject (sin and its consequences) that has perhaps never been new and can certainly never be old.—Contributed.

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