

In nothing is the generation after him so prone to be unjust to a fresh thinker as with regard to his originality. A physical discovery, as Newton's, remains to ninety-nine out of a hundred a mental miracle; but a great moral teacher "labours to make himself forgotten." When he begins to speak he is suspected of insanity; when he has won his way he receives a Royal Commission to appoint the judges; as a veteran he is shelved for platitude. So Horace is regarded as a mere jewelry store of the Latin, Bacon in his *Essays*, of the English, wisdom, which they each in fact helped to create. Carlyle's paradoxes have been exaggerated, his partialities intensified, in his followers; his critical readers, not his disciples, have learnt most from him; he has helped across the Slough of Despond only those who have also helped themselves. When all is said of his dogmatism, his petulance, his "evil behaviour," he remains the master spirit of his time, its Censor, as Macaulay is its Panegyrist, and Tennyson its Mirror. He has saturated his nation with a wholesome tonic, and the practice of any one of his precepts for the conduct of life is ennobling. More intense than Wordsworth, more intelligible than Browning, more fervid than Mill, he has indicated the pitfalls in our civilisation. His works have done much to mould the best thinkers in two continents, in both of which he has been the Greatheart to many pilgrims. Not a few could speak in the words of the friend whose memory he has so affectionately preserved, "Towards me it is still more true than towards England that no one has been and done like you." A champion of ancient virtue, he appeared in his own phrase applied to Fichte, as "a Cato Major among degenerate men." Carlyle had more than the shortcomings of a Cato; he had all the inconsistent vehemence of an imperfectly balanced mind; but he had a far wider range and deeper sympathies. The message of the

modern preacher transcended all mere applications of the text *delenda est*. He denounced, but at the same time nobly exhorted, his age. A storm-tossed spirit, "tempest-buffed," he was "citadel-crowned" in his unflinching purpose and the might of an invincible will.

## APPENDIX

### CARLYLE'S RELIGION

THE *St. James' Gazette*, February 11, 1881, writes :—

“It is obvious that from an early age he entirely ceased to believe, in its only true sense, the creed he had been taught. He never affected to believe it in any other sense, for he was far too manly and simple-hearted to care to frame any of those semi-honest transmutations of the old doctrines into new-fangled mysticism which had so great a charm for many of his weaker contemporaries. On the other hand, it is equally true that he never plainly avowed his unbelief. The line he took up was that Christianity, though not true in fact, had a right to be regarded as the noblest aspiration after a theory of the Universe and of human life ever formed : and that the Calvinistic version of Christianity was on the whole the best it ever assumed ; and the one which represented the largest proportion of truth and the least amount of error. He also thought that the truths which Calvinism tried to express, and succeeded in expressing in an imperfect or partially mistaken manner, were the ultimate governing principles of morals and politics, of whose systematic neglect in this age nothing but evil could come.

“Unwilling to take up the position of a rebel or revolutionist by stating his views plainly—indeed if he had done so sixty years ago he might have starved—the only resource left to him was that of approaching all the great subjects of life from the point of view of grim humour, irony, and pathos. This

was the real origin of his unique style ; though no doubt its special peculiarities were due to the wonderful power of his imagination, and to some extent—to a less extent we think than has been usually supposed—to his familiarity with German.

“What then was his creed? What were the doctrines which in his view Calvinism shadowed forth and which were so infinitely true, so ennobling to human life? First, he believed in God; secondly, he believed in an absolute opposition between good and evil; thirdly, he believed that all men do, in fact, take sides more or less decisively in this great struggle, and ultimately turn out to be either good or bad; fourthly, he believed that good is stronger than evil, and by infinitely slow degrees gets the better of it, but that this process is so slow as to be continually obscured and thrown back by evil influences of various kinds—one of which he believed to be specially powerful in the present day.

“God in his view was not indeed a personal Being, like the Christian God—still less was He in any sense identified with Jesus Christ; who, though always spoken of with rather conventional reverence in his writings, does not appear to have specially influenced him. The God in which Mr. Carlyle believed is, as far as can be ascertained, a Being possessing in some sense or other will and consciousness, and personifying the elementary principles of morals—Justice, Benevolence (towards good people), Fortitude, and Temperance—to such a pitch that they may be regarded, so to speak, as forming collectively the will of God. . . . That there is some one who—whether by the earthquake, or the fire, or the still small voice—is continually saying to mankind—‘*Discite justitiam moniti*’; and that this Being is the ultimate fact at which we can arrive . . . is what Mr. Carlyle seems to have meant by believing in God. And if any one will take the trouble to refer to the first few sentences of the Westminster Confession, and to divest them of their references to Christianity and to the Bible, he will find that between the God of Calvin and of Carlyle there is the closest possible similarity. . . . The great fact about each particular

man is the relation, whether of friendship or enmity, in which he stands to God. In the one case he is on the side which must ultimately prevail, . . . in the other . . . he will, in due time, be crushed and destroyed. . . . Our relation to the universe can be ascertained only by experiment. We all have to live out our lives. . . . One man is a Cromwell, another a Frederick, a third a Goethe, a fourth a Louis XV. God hates Louis XV. and loves Cromwell. Why, if so, He made Louis XV., and indeed whether He made him or not, are idle questions which cannot be answered and should not be asked. There are good men and bad men, all pass alike through this mysterious hall of doom called life: most show themselves in their true colours under pressure. The good are blessed here and hereafter; the bad are accursed. Let us bring out as far as may be possible such good as a man has had in him since his origin. Let us strike down the bad to the hell that gapes for him. This, we think, or something like this, was Mr. Carlyle's translation of election and predestination into politics and morals. . . . There is not much pity and no salvation worth speaking of in either body of doctrine; but there is a strange, and what some might regard as a terrible parallelism between these doctrines and the inferences that may be drawn from physical science. The survival of the fittest has much in common with the doctrine of election, and philosophical necessity, as summed up in what we now call evolution, comes practically to much the same result as predestination."

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