

The Secrets Of Happy Living

when for 1000,000 sterling raised by public subscription throughout Great Britain, plus a government grant-it was purchased for the British Museum. This manuscript is also written on vellum sheets, 131 x 145 inches, with usually four columns to each page. It is dated by scholars about the middle of the fourth century, and this makes it about the same age as the Codex Vaticanus. A Third Manuscript

A third important manuscript, known as the Codex Alexandrinus, also in the British Museum, dates back to the first half of the fifth century after Christ. Originally it contained the entire Bible, but today it lacks almost all of Matthew, much of Psalms, and 2 Corinthians 4:13 to 12:6.

Besides these three great volumes which have come down to us from the earlier centuries, hundreds of other smaller but vitally important fragments of the New Testament have also been preserved. Many have come to light in recent years. Each one when found is critically studied by New Testament scholars, whose prime objective is to prepare a Greek text which shall bear the closest possible resemblance to the true but lost original.

Consequently, although there do not exist today any of the actual writings of Moses, David, Isaiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, or Paul, it can nevertheless be truthfully said that the present Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament are as accurate as men of the highest skill, integrity, and devotion can make them. What has this to do with how to read the Bible?

Just this: No one need entertain the slightest doubt concerning the essential accuracy of the original text. In the words of the late Sir Frederic Kenyon, one-time director of the British Museum and an authority on Biblical manuscripts: "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

Faith and Reason

A NOW nearly forgotten author, John William Draper, wrote a book about ninety years ago entitled "History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science," in which he described the "conflict of two contending powers, the expansive force of the human intellect on one side, and the compression arising from traditional faith and human interests on the other." Page vi. In these words he summarizes what is now a commonly held belief, namely, that these, two great disciplines, science and religion, are incompatible that the one is slowly but surely forcing the other into a corner.

Misunderstandings

At the outset let us make this affirmation, endorsing the statement made in Sydney by Cardinal Gilroy, that science and religion are sisters, and that they have one author, God, who does not contradict Himself. Draper's book could perhaps better have been called a "History of the conflict between false religion and science," or more strictly, "The conflict between the interpretation of the Scriptures and the interpretations of scientific facts."

One unfortunate corollary of the fallacy that there is a division between science and religion is the derived idea that reason, on which science allegedly is based, is contradictory to faith, which is the bulwark of religion. It is assumed that reasoning by logical thought processes is a tool exclusive to the domain of science, whereas faith, or authority, or tradition pertains only to matters of religion. Nothing could be further from the truth, for science is full of tacit assumptions taken by faith, some of which are incapable of proof; and religion properly practiced, requires the exercise of a clear thinking mind, in addition to its demands on the participant's faith.

The Reign of Superstition

Perhaps some reasons for the supposed cleavage between science and religion, and between reason and faith, are (1) the historical legacy we have received from earlier times; (2) the powerful advance of the scientific tool of experimentation during, say, the last four centuries; and (3) our present introduction to a technological age as a result of the application of new discoveries in the scientific world. Side by side with this remarkable progress in the realm of science, there has been very little comparative progress in the field of religion, thus putting the latter in a somewhat unfavorable light.

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It is quite true that as we take a backward look into history, we do find in the Middle Ages an era of ignorance and of superstition, of blind obedience to the teachings of the church, which teachings we must say, were not always to be found in the Word of God. Knowledge of natural science was very limited, and even then consisted of stories and legends handed down from previous generations, the sole purpose of this knowledge being to draw a spiritual lesson, much after the manner of the parables of the Gospels. Observation of natural phenomena was not considered relevant. To take a simple example of this attitude, if it was necessary to know how many teeth a horse possessed, it was sufficient to look up the writings of Aristotle, rather than to look in the horse's mouth! Out of this unsatisfactory state of affairs we get such expressions as "crocodile's tears, and licking into shape," which have passed into the idiom of the language, though the bases for these legends are the supposed facts that the crocodile is sorry for its victim, and that the mother bear licks (which she does) her new-horn cubs, who are born shapeless masses (which they are not).

The Advance of Science

The revival of learning from AD 1453 brought a refreshing breeze which blew away many of the musty traditions, and introduced a challenging spirit of enquiry. Men who freed themselves from centuries of tradition often found themselves in conflict with the authorities of the ruling church, but this was not because science and religion, in their true sense, are repugnant one to the other. Nicolas Copernicus, by astronomical observations which could not be disputed, established the incontrovertible fact that the sun, and not the earth, was the center of the solar system. But his book was withheld from distribution until he was on his death-bed, because he feared the consequences of opposing a dictum of the church which claimed that the earth was the center-although this is nowhere stated in Scripture. In like manner, Galileo came into conflict with ecclesiastical authority, when he offered to demonstrate objectively and scientifically his claim that the earth was not a unique center of revolution, but that the planet Jupiter, for example, had satellites revolving around it.

It cannot be doubted but that the age which saw the establishment of scientific academies in Italy and France, similar to the Royal Society in England, launched a scientific age which introduced the extremely potent scientific method as an agent of discovery. So much so, that in France, the hatred of clericalism, and the increasing knowledge of natural science, finally culminated in the French Revolution, which set up a new object of worship in place of God the Creator, namely the goddess of reason. This reign did not last very long, but it had its effect by emphasizing the apparent conflict between reason and faith, between science and religion. Throughout the development of science, however, honest scientists have always admitted that one new discovery does not strip the tree of knowledge bare, but rather opens up new fields of our hitherto unrecognized ignorance, and brings into sharper focus our former trustful acceptance by faith of things scientific.

Reason in Religion

From the religious angle it is worthy of note to read that the Bible encourages us to use our brains in the field of spiritual knowledge. "Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord." Isaiah 1:18. "Prove all things." 1 Thessalonians 5:21. "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy mind." Matthew 22:37. But we must beware lest we rely on reason alone, for can we "by searching find out God?" He "does great things past finding out." Job 11:7; 9:10.

By using the methods of science alone a vast area of religious knowledge will be denied to us. For example, the Hindus, who delighted and were expert in the study of mathematics, studied also the human body, but their contribution to biology was nil, for they applied mathematical methods, and obviously obtained only mathematical results such as the number of bones and the number of muscles. The physicist Borelli made a study of muscles, but he, too, knew nothing of the histology, or chemistry of muscle, because he was applying physical methods, and therefore obtained physical results, such as the law of the lever as applied to the power of the muscle, the joint, and the weight lifted.

Could we possibly learn anything about the chemistry of the blood unless we apply chemical methods? So in the same way, if we do not exercise our spiritual faculties we shall not discern spiritual things. "But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14. It is just as necessary therefore to exercise faith (Hebrews 11: 6) if we hope to know something of God and of His claims upon our religious devotion.

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Scientific Faith

Let no one think that our daily life is devoid of faith, even in the simplest things. I have never seen our milkman, but each night I put out empty bottles and some coins, and the next morning there appear the correct number of full bottles of milk. I journey into the city by train, and have authority to do this by reason of a small piece of cardboard, issued to me in exchange for coins, by a well nigh invisible person on the other side of the ticket office grille. The train I ride in presumably has a driver, but I have never seen or heard him, or even thought to inquire about him. To test scientifically every-day affairs would of course be utterly ludicrous, so we accept the opinions and discoveries of others.

Religious Faith

In the Scriptures God has given evidence of His authority, of His character, of His purposes, and 'this is evidence that is reasonable. He has not removed all possibility of doubt, maybe because He desires us to exercise faith as well as reason. It is not a sign of intellectual superiority to cavil or quibble because every last detail in the religious world is not explained and must be accepted by faith. It is even so in the scientific world where we constantly face wonders too mystifying for us.

A well balanced attitude will exercise faith and reason, one to supplement and to support the other. Faith with no reason degenerates into superstition and blind tradition, Reason with no faith degenerates into cynicism and agnosticism. The Christian must exercise faith to practice his religion fully, in sharp contrast to his opposite whom Lord Tweed defined as "an atheist who has no invisible means of support."

Is It Courage We Need!

TOWARD THE END of the Book of Revelation, God has set down a list of qualities that are not acceptable in the kingdom of heaven. Surprisingly enough it is cowardice that heads the list.

That must come as a jolt to many Christians. After all, some of us are apt to think that courage is a quality that belongs as a necessity to the tougher citizens of this world. In the Christian it seems incidental, but perhaps we place too much reliance on statements like: "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light; or, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me"; or, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." In any case, we tend very easily to the conviction that the Christian has no need of any particular qualities of his own, for everything is to be supplied. And surely courage is not one of the indispensables!

But that is what the Book says: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21:8. So we had better begin to equip ourselves with courage.

What Is Courage?

Courage is the quality that enables a man to move steadily forward to meet his fears. Jesus had superb courage. All His life He must have lived in the shadow of His last hours. We have evidence that He feared the darkness of His destiny. But He had the courage to face down these fears.

After three and a half years of ministry, He became acutely aware of a destiny that was waiting impatiently for Him on a hill outside Jerusalem. But He did not falter. Up to this time He had traveled from village to village as invitation or need directed. But now we read, "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." He did not panic or rush forward because the interval of waiting was unendurable. But He did not procrastinate either. There is something quite magnificent in that phrase, "He steadfastly set His face." It has become a motto for faltering humanity, a definition of courage, an historical inscription.

There is no doubt that Jesus experienced the urge to flee. It is probable that He suffered the anguish of all the soul-destroying emotions usually associated with fear. In the garden of Gethsemane the anguish of these emotions wrung from Him great drops of sweat like blood. He shrunk from the dreadful suffering that was waiting for Him just outside the gates of the garden, for He pleaded with God, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." But He made no backward step. It was the will of God that marked the road for Him to tread, and so, long as the sign said "Onward" He would go forward. So His prayer for deliverance destroyed itself in that magnificent final phrase, "Nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be