

## Was Jesus a Perfect Man?

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[Page 3] Was Jesus a perfect man ? has been asked and answered by so many writers who refused to take into account that which alone can explain his whole nature and spirituality, that the question ought to be asked by one who accepts his spirituality as the sole key to the nature of the man, without accepting any of the tenets of Christian belief. Jesus can only be measured by his own measure — the spirit. That the assumption of divinity can give no result satisfactory to human reason (and the highest human reason must always be enlightened by the spirit), the endless controversies among Christians themselves, and among those judging outside the realm of free reason, have made so plain, that the question of placing Jesus in a rational light has become *the* question of modern religious controversy. Whether I am capable of dealing with this question in a final, or even satisfactory way, is a mere detail. May others, more capable, bestow their best thought upon it, for the subject richly deserves it.

All men are divine. Every human being is divine to me. If I offend a costermonger I offend that which is divine in the costermonger. I offend that which is divine in me, and I am punished in regret and sorrow. Therefore, to a spiritually-minded man, it is almost impossible to offend any man — that is, to give true offence. In this sense, Jesus was divine, only more so than most other men. If he had been God in the flesh, his example would be worthless to me. If he overcame temptations by Godlike powers, I, who have no such powers, cannot look to him as my moral explanation. If the Matterhorn, with its 14,000 feet of rock uplifted above the level of the sea, were a pyramid with almost perpendicular smooth sides, no man would think of climbing to its summit. If some man with supernatural powers could climb up to the very top, the Matterhorn would still be inaccessible to any mortal climber. The Matterhorn of moral perfection would be unassailable. But when we take Jesus as a man, overcoming temptations by the powers of a divinely-gifted nature, he becomes at once our great brother. I can then imitate [Page 4] him as thousands have done, and it is an open question with me whether or not thousands have not been as good as he was. But perfection is only with the spirit.

Whence comes it that every Christian regards Jesus as a perfect man ? The explanation is easy. Every Christian, as every other man, possesses something which in itself is perfect; that is, the spirit. The spirit is above criticism, being itself the criterion of criticism, and of everything else besides. Looking, therefore, at Jesus only with the spiritual eye, seeing him only in the spirit, the Christian can see in him no shortcomings. He is even forbidden to perceive them; and if, by a free use of common-sense, he should happen to find some glaring defects, he would excuse them on the ground that spirit is above every law. Spirit is allowed to contravene every human consideration. But, clearly, humanity cannot allow that. If humanity once granted an exception to one of its units, there would be no end to exceptions, and it would become impossible to establish any law, human or divine, as binding on everybody. The Christian is debarred from judging Jesus in any other than a spiritual sense, and such a judgment leaves nothing whatever which the other human faculties could seize upon. The brook does not criticise the spring;

cloud does not criticise the ocean; odour does not criticise the rose; beauty does not criticise the landscape; light does not criticise the sun; the sun does not criticise his maker. But suppose that there are men who, having also drank from this eternal fountain, had also received, without Jesus, and outside Jesus, the assurance of the divine spirit, what then ? Will such men bow down before Jesus as God, knowing that they owe nothing to him ? Can they see anything more in him than a vessel like themselves, into which the same spirit was poured ? Will they not be allowed to sift out, in the life of Jesus, that which was of earth, earthy, from that which was heaven-born ? Especially when they see millions of men born blind, who, in their blindness, are barring the way to those who can see; when they surround with deep trenches the temple of truth and allow no one to enter who will not sacrifice his common-sense to an illusion. Is it not time that this should cease ? Shall the Carlyles and the Emersons remain forever the Johns in the wilderness ? Is it not time that some one should come baptising, not in the murky waters of Christian theology, but in the spirit of truth and common-sense ? I know there are thousands waiting in every church, bishops among others, for some one to utter the first bold word. Millions are waiting outside the churches, of those united long ago to their God by common-sense.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*, a man whose whole mind-life centred in his spirit; who never wrote and taught anything that was not in strict keeping with the spirit; who knew the human heart, the laws of thought, the relations between spirit and matter, better than any man living, states in the most unequivocal language that Jesus was a man, open to criticism, and who [Page 5] fell short, as such, from the perfection which blind belief credits him with. In one of his incomparable Essays, he says: "Each exaggeration of all fine characters arises from the fact that we identify each in turn with the soul. But there are no such men as we fable; no Jesus, nor Pericles, nor Caesar, nor Angelo, nor Washington, such as we have made. We consecrate a good deal of nonsense, because it was allowed by great men. There is none without his foibles".

I don't care a straw whether Emerson's dictum is accepted as absolute truth or not, but I know this, that it is accepted as such by almost every thinking man in the land, and will be so accepted by steadily growing numbers of men. I could cite hundreds of passages in the writings of Emerson (the above being rather a "mild" one), and Emerson will be, for ages to come, the deepest, the truest, the most divinely gifted of all modern moral philosophers or mind-readers. What Carlyle objectively taught in his grand delineations of historical characters and in the unfolding of universal laws in contemporary and past history, Emerson treated subjectively as coming fresh from the pure source of all life, the spiritual revelation. Whether even a Carlyle would have been equal to such a task is extremely doubtful. Carlyle would not emancipate himself from the necessity of colouring his pictures. They never left the creating mind without the shadows of a troubled soul. Emerson's pictures are light itself, colourless, with just such outlines as the necessity of articulation imposes upon every writer. Even Goethe is below Emerson in this respect. Goethe wandered far and wide, and placed his mind in almost every focus from which human brains have sent forth their ideas of life; nor was the spirit unknown to Goethe; but he dealt with it as an artist, for the production of his master-pieces, but not as the starting-point of all life; and certainly it cannot be said of Goethe that his own life rose above a mere acquiescence in this, the first and last appeal in all human endeavour.

A perfect man is an impossibility. If we dissect man, if we look at every man noted in any department of life, whether in religion, philosophy poetry, language, science, war, teaching, art, handicraft, civil office, we never find man perfect in any of these branches, no matter how high his excellency may be. There never has been a perfect religious teacher (even Buddha seems to overshoot the mark by making too

little of this world). [“Seems” is the right word to use; such overshooting of the mark being made apparent only in Buddha’s exoteric teachings [T.P.S.] Perfectibility was always possible, and every one attaining excellency in any branch of art, science, or ethics, which nature led him to cultivate, has always been found wanting in some, or in all the other, developments of human capacity. Men have never been more than excellent in one, or two, perhaps three, different [Page 6] directions, and this excellency always was attained at the cost of other faculties. Buddha, whom I hold to be the ideal moral philosopher, not as much as tried his hand in other fields of human endeavour; Alexander was a great general, and a ruler of men, in none of these the best, and lamentably deficient in moral soundness; Caesar was both, and an author to boot, but overshot the mark in his contempt for men; the saints neglected everything except the salvation of their own souls, which was in itself sublime egoism; Martin Luther was a staunch German *bourgeois* reformer; yet far from any originality, he borrowed his religious views from other men, and coloured them in the Teutonic light, which is not a universal light; Calvin carried into perfection a jaundiced reading of the dead letter, and overlooked the spirit. The greatest philosophers could never do anything more than carry the human thought a little further than usual, leaving it to their successors to do no more than they had done. Napoleon was beaten by raw Prussian recruits and the fishings of the English press gang. Shakespeare is not so great that a greater one is not possible, and his works are full of mistakes, small ones, it is true. Richelieu had only the cunning of genius, and imagined the earth was revolving around France. Pitt, a greater man than Richelieu, sacrificed to his ideal, England and the happiness of England’s sons. Bismarck suppresses the just aspirations of large classes of his countrymen; Gladstone seeks the Divine spirit in Acts of Parliament and Articles of Convocation. Thus it will be seen that the greatest men are not even perfect in their specialities, in those developments of human nature forced on the individual through the whole bent of his being; that is to say, man is imperfect even in those things which he can do best. But what would any of these men have been in some other field of human activity ? What would Gladstone be as a railway conductor, Bismarck as a citizen, with just one vote; what would Napoleon have been as a lieutenant, Carlyle as a bank clerk, Emerson as an hotel-keeper, Pitt as a letter carrier, Richelieu as a curate in a little village, Luther as a large proprietor with plenty of wine and music, the saints as farm labourers and factory hands, Alexander as a groom, or the strong man among a troupe of acrobats, Buddha as an English parish minister, and Jesus as a member of the Board of Poor Law Guardians? Each and all would have been complete failures, and their biographers would have been compelled to admit that A B or C were great in X, but very small in K, that is to say, they were not perfect men. They could only be great in some things in order to be small in some other thing. But a perfect man is perfect in everything; he is perfect in every relation of life. Especially are we disposed to look for something very near perfection in men pretending to be the true guides of humanity in moral conduct. A man assuming such an office must disarm criticism at the outset and keep before his mind not only the temper and inclinations and [Page 7] knowledge of the men composing a small and insignificant nation, but he must be able to overlook all contemporary and all future nations. Jesus ought to have understood the influences shaping human dispositions and establishing mental conditions, not only of a handful of simple-minded Jews, but of all the Jews, the Syrians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Teutons, the Celts, the Hindus, the Chinese, etc., of his own time, as well as the mental development of the later French, Italians, Germans, Russians, English, Americans, and of all nations whatever which shall fill this earth. That this is utterly impossible needs no demonstration, and that Jesus could, therefore, be no trustworthy guide for man in *all* his legitimate moral expansion is plain enough. But as no man could have this universal knowledge, a universal moral teacher should have at least a complete knowledge of the human heart, which at the time of Jesus had certainly attained such a growth that it could serve as a model for an immeasurable future. Did Jesus possess this knowledge ? By no means. His teaching denies it. He fell far short of the knowledge common among the Greek philosophers, the wise men among the Hindus and Chinese; and the later philosophers, those of the Middle Ages and our own time, have one and all followed paths independent of the concept of Jesus, and have in the heart of their hearts always looked upon Jesus as a

man bereft of the gift of very high reason, as a man swayed wholly and solely by *one* idea, which would, if carried out, unpeopled this earth within the space of 100 years, and frustrate the aim of creation itself. The spirit in such a volume would be much too powerful for this earth, which demands millions of years of slow development, of an exceedingly slow ripening towards greater spiritual development. To this overpowering might of the spirit in the heart of Jesus must be ascribed his unmeasured, illogical denunciation of the Pharisees and Sadducees, of the rich, of the Jews in general, of his anger in driving out the money-changers from the temple, his unnecessary harshness towards his family, and it was the cause of all his suffering and his cruel death. This death, the death of a martyr, is altogether unnecessary for the stamping of a truth. Truth of every kind must have a mathematical certainty, and the *death* of the discoverer of such a truth *proves absolutely nothing*. If a hundred-thousand men had died for the truths in the multiplication table, the multiplication table would not be truer than it is. Buddha had no need to die for the truth he found; the truth did not kill him, but he died of old age. It is in the nature of truth that it prolongs life, and a truth which kills is always only a truth allied to human self-will and stubbornness. To consider this self-will necessary to the safety and vitality of an eternal truth is sheer nonsense. Truth is independent of all such helps; they are at the best only miserable crutches. If Emerson had, at one time of his life, denied everything he wrote, it would still have remained true; Galileo was found to deny the [Page 8] truth; and the truth was not in the least affected by such a denial, and only branded its tormentors with eternal infamy. If Socrates met with something of a similar fate as Jesus, he also was one of those one-sided men who take their views of things as heaven-sent gospels, and neglect the nearest obligations of blood for the one idea which possesses them. In this, they are certainly not perfect, and cannot serve as examples. They are always law-breakers, and the eternal law finally brings them to grief. Jesus acted as if he held this Universe in his hand, and the Divine Silence crushed his body. With the temper and knowledge of a Plato, he would have remained unmolested; he would have expostulated with the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes; he would have gathered a few learned meditative men around him instead of ignorant, obscure individuals, who, without the help of scholars, would never have done anything for the spread of Christianity. They were only superior in the capacity of unquestioned belief, and this capacity has in our own time told rather heavily against the religion of masonry, gothic windows, and high steeples. It is no more than befitting that a religion founded for little children and the simple-minded should be rejected by men, by the Rousseaus and Voltaires, by the Fredericks and Goethes, the Carlyles and Emersons, and should be accepted by the churches *cum grano salis*; being unserviceable in its raw state and useful only after due plastering and doctoring to suit "the ever-growing requirements of the age". In the frantic Salvationist, who gives his heart to Jesus, we have an object lesson of what first Christianity must have been. These attempts to convert the world by doing violence to the unchangeable, immutable laws of the universe have all come to naught, and while there still flow out from the seas of eternity such wavelets of spirit as man can hold (more would kill him) it is mere madness to hasten the reign of the spirit by human cunning, as if the sun needed this or that ray of light, or as if eternity needed "General" Booth and brass buttons for its helpers.

I shall now proceed to a closer examination of the differences between Jesus and the Pharisees. Who were the Pharisees? According to the best sources we have, they were, like everything else under the sun, the necessary evolution of thought (taking the name as representing ideas) in a certain direction. Given the Mosaic law with its innumerable prescriptions of forms of worship, and of observances even in ordinary life, tying man to his Jehovah, it would follow as certainly as the fungus follows certain atmospheric conditions, that a set of men should lay particular stress upon such formalities, and should finally consider them as all-important. Man always wants a visible object to handle in order to fulfil his spiritual obligation, and forgets the latter in an amazingly short time. But is it right to anathematise this fungus of the human mind? Is there any other way left than the removal of the conditions under which the [Page 9] fungus grows? Is there any sense in anathematising the fungus? Was there any sense in

anathematising the Pharisees ? They were still a great deal better than those who denied altogether that there was a God in Israel, that there had been a divinely-gifted law-giver, that man needed a better guide than the whisperings of animal nature. Even Jesus found true disciples among the Pharisees, and one of them, Paul, afterwards did more for the spread of the Gospels than all the other Apostles combined. But we of our own time, we Aryans who refuse altogether the Semitic concepts of man and God, of sin, sacrifice, and redemption — we can go a step further and explain the whole hollowness of Pharisaical and Messianic presumption. They all have their reason, and being in that fatal, fundamental error of putting the whole Universe on a wrong plane, an inclined plane upon which they are found gliding down into nothingness, into the seas of time. This Universe was not created on the Mosaic idea, with no foresight worth speaking of; it was not created in obedience to a whim, followed by the regret and destructive rage of a blind God; we even blaspheme when we speak of any intention at all. What the wisest men have ever known about it, and what they ever will know about it, leaves them nothing but silent adoration and unspeakable love! It leaves them with a childlike trust that it is all for the best. No more does a child encircling with its tender arms the mother's neck establish any belief or philosophy about the wisdom and foresight of his mother, and her terrible punitive power, than the true man, the Aryan, childlike and brave, pesters the Universe with impertinent questions! He takes in childlike faith what he gets, and he asks no more. It was left to the apocryphal Moses and the non-apocryphal Pharisees to explain the riddle of the Sphinx in the childhood of the human race. It now remains to be seen whether the grown man will accept the solution of this riddle from the baby's mouth. A baby may well say: "Mama, I seen Dod". The sensible mother kisses the child and says nothing. No doubt the child has "seen Dod", just in the same way as everyone sees God in innumerable ways. But if the baby were to establish it as the never-changing law that all human beings were to look upon his "Dod" as the true God, baby would find very few listeners. Yet the same thing is constantly attempted by theologians. The Pharisees saw their "Dod", which was not the God of Jesus, and so they fell foul of each other. No doubt the God of Jesus had more of vitality in it than the Dod of the Pharisees, but, as the best of all Gods has always been a God of love and mercy, he would not have used such harsh language to the Dod of the baby-Pharisees, nor would he have called them vipers, whitened sepulchres, nor would he have threatened them with eternal damnation, but would have tried to reason with those babes, who were rather large, wide-awake babes, and had considerable reasoning power in them. Socrates was somewhat wiser in this, but not [Page 16] much, and Plato, I think, wiser than all (Buddha excepted, who would never have spoken to a fool), because he would not have spoken to babes of things they could not understand. To sum up, the Pharisees produced a God with the Mosaic law, as the lantern sending its rays of grossly coloured light through the minds of law-and-order men — men who reasoned about the unknown things in the same way as a London cheesemonger reasons on his stock and customers. Jesus was different from them, for he was moved by the spirit, which human language always fails to interpret in an objective sense, and he was driven to use symbolical language. He could not get over this; he entirely failed, as everyone since has failed, to convince the poor man that he is a rich man, that he has got something which the poor man knows he has not; and instead of getting angry about it and calling the Pharisees bad names, he ought to have tried to find a dozen such men as John, spiritual men, who could understand him. The Christianity which the emotional masons and shoemakers founded has all along been a sort of Donnybrook fair, and only here and there could be found a spiritually-minded man who prevented this mad humanity from going to wreck altogether. Jesus had the true spirit, but unfortunately he was a Jew. Feeling possessed of a power which he could see was foreign to nearly all around him, a power which always leaves the possessor with a sense of superhuman strength, he, as a Jew, conceived the fatal idea that he was the promised Messiah, the son of God, that God was his father in every sense of the term (I wish to leave the question of bodily descent open), he cast in this self-created mould a whole system of salvation, bliss and damnation; started to prophesy, in all of which he has appeared since as a deluded mortal. His prophecies, couched in the most positive terms, have not been fulfilled; salvation and redemption have not come; the millennium can only come in the natural way of evolution,

which is an exceedingly slow process; but this is true, and in this Jesus has been right, that some kind of a millennium is coming — a millennium with better physical health and sanitary arrangements; with extended knowledge; with railways, telegraphs and telephones; with man's increased and finally almost complete power over nature; with more wisdom, and a wider diffusion and knowledge of the spirit eternal which will enlighten man's understanding, and remove from him the temptations of the flesh, as belonging to beasts, and not to the divinely gifted man. In this sense, that of moral purity, Jesus will always be the glory of the human race; and it will come to pass then when men shall feel tempted to cry over his fate, they will embrace in the same wide sweep of sympathy all his enemies, the Pharisees and Sadducees, Pilate and the mob, because they all ate also our brothers, and any individual man always is and always has been the whole universe in himself. The spirit is always right, even in such a dangerous field as prophecy; and it is always safe to prophesy the downfall of nations who [Page 11] live only after the lusts of the flesh. But, clearly, Jesus was only a partial, and not a perfect man.

The Sadducees, who likewise could not please Jesus, interest me chiefly on account of their numerous disciples in our own time. Jesus, who was a thorough sceptic in almost everything pertaining to Mosaic form traditions, used milder language in opposition to the sceptics of his time, the Sadducees. When I wish to enter a restaurant to appease my hunger, the man who blocks the door is always a greater nuisance to me than the man who merely stands in the street. Him I can avoid, but the man standing in the door I must politely ask to let me pass. If he should not let me pass, and there were no other way left to satisfy my hunger than to enter this particular restaurant, I should have to call a policeman or use violence. Jesus used violence in regard to this man blocking the door to paradise, but to those merely standing in the street he appealed with more reason and not so much “denunciation”. He felt more of pity for them than hatred — the hatred born of truth opposed to falsehood. I fully sympathise with the Sadducees. Having nothing before them save an array of senseless forms, seeing no earthly reason in the whole supernatural arrangements, they were compelled to disbelieve — or to abandon human reason. It was not their fault that they could not see with our eyes. They lived 2,000 years ago, among a religious people whose religious ideals never left the domain of book-keeping and double entry, with whom it was a matter of credit and debit, and their God was not altogether a creditor but also a debtor, bound to pay his debts, only he was permitted to have his own way of doing so. A Sadducee, thinking of such subjects as the resurrection, judged of it in the same matter-of-fact way as a modern teamster or street lecturer, and their mental status must be considered as on a par with these our living fellow men. I think most Christians ought to have some higher concepts than these, as Jesus certainly has not failed to treat the question in a spiritual sense. If he is not understood by the Christians themselves it is not his fault. Not being a Christian, I have no trouble in understanding it, and all the objections of freethinkers fall flat. At the same time I hold with Emerson that the question of immortality is not susceptible of popular treatment. Nothing is so certain as a certain aspect of immortality — that is, its reality; but the spirit does not like to deal with it. It is like the sunbeam deserting the sun. The Sadducees, the knowing ones in their own estimation, were the worst babies of the Jewish family. The Pharisee baby tried at least to please his mother, but the Sadducee baby simply said: “It is no use. Had he gone a step further he might have arrived at a more spiritual conception of man's relation to the unseen, and would have become a disciple. This possibility had something to do with the milder treatment they received from Jesus. The modern Sadducee stands just in the same predicament. [Page 12] By diving a little deeper, by studying more earnestly the Carlyles and Emersons, he might catch a glimpse of a world which does not at present exist for him. In the writings of the Apostles we find the name Sadducee mentioned merely as a melancholy echo; there is always a tinge of sadness in it; a conviction that they are only blind, but not bad children, shines through everything connected with the name and substance of unbelief.

But in nothing was Jesus so incomprehensible as in his opposition towards the rich. When I consider that the idea of property lies in the very core of the Mosaic idea of creation, the position of man as a moral factor or, better, victim, tilling his acre by divine ordinance and sacrificing a part of his acquired property; when I consider that the patriarchs were taught to look upon property, when it assumed the proportion of riches, as a blessing of Jehovah; when I consider that in the grandest poetic book of the Old Testament, the book of Job, the idea of property is the material hinge upon which the relation between God and Job turns; when I come to think of the Mosaic law, built upon the very sanctity of property, introducing indeed a few checks here and there to dangerous accumulations; when I see that in all the dealings of Jehovah with the chosen people, property is the never-snapping pivot, around which everything not of a strictly spiritual nature revolves, and sacrifice makes property the corner stone of the relation of man to God; when I consider that possession, to be rich, has been ingrained from the beginning in the Hebrew character and has been its stamp ever since, the science of getting rich being among the Jews much older than their religion: the hatred of riches as shown by Jesus is marvellous and leaves one in doubt as to his sanity of mind. It is only explicable on the theory that his belief in a near millennium had all the power of positive knowledge. Property would have been of no use in the millennium, and man's attachment to property was the greatest hindrance in converting him, even a greater hindrance than the cast-iron righteousness of the Pharisees. Jesus was thus led to look upon riches as the prime evil, and gave vent to opinions which the good sense of mankind, believing Christians included, utterly refused to make a law. The rich man of our time, if he is a Christian — and there are plenty such — simply denies the authority of his God, and I do not wish to put into plain language what the rich man thinks about him. At any rate it is the hugest compromise between matter and spirit in this world and deserves to be fairly treated. That the Jewish idea of property and riches is universal is evident. That the organisation of man into communities, into mutually dependent factors, would give to the stronger more property than to the weaker, is the experience of mankind and seems to be the universal rule. Being a universal rule, it must rest on a universal law. Wherever a philosopher has undertaken to think about property he never could [Page 13] arrive at any other conclusion than this: that the right of holding property was the very basis of all human society, and that it was impossible to prevent some from getting rich except by reducing man to a State-slave. The smallest amount of liberty would always bring property as naturally as a sponge will absorb water. Going further and studying the effects of property upon society, every thinker found that it was property which made everything possible that enlightens life. Property is the material mother of all science and arts, and, by their aid, of every higher religion. The Christian churches, one and all, have always accepted the universal verdict about property, and have acted upon it, paying not the slightest heed to the terrible warnings of their nominal founder. It is interesting to note the similarity of the doctrine of Jesus with the Buddhistic ideal. Buddha commanded his disciples, the mendicants, to disown all property except a few articles of clothing, and a wooden bowl for begging. This spiritual hierarchy of Buddhistic saints should have no material relation with this world other than the urgent needs of animal existence required. But such rules only applied to this body of teachers, who should show by their own examples — always the best mode of teaching — the shortest way to Nirvana. For the other classes of men Buddha only had his incomparable moral law, which placed every man in possession of the necessary knowledge to find his way to deliverance. Buddha did not curse, he did not close the gates of paradise to anybody. One rather concludes from his teaching that the salvation, the final purification of everything bearing the mark of man, and of a divine descent, was the universal law, and logical thinking can lead to no other conclusion. But, while Buddha only formulated a universal law upon the keenest philosophical reasoning, Jesus at once shut the gates of heaven upon the whole most worthy and advanced portion of mankind. The answer of mankind has been equivocation, contempt, and ridicule. In our time Jesus with his denunciation of the rich finds a willing echo only among those who understand the nature of universal laws as well as he did himself. It is clear that a moral teacher can never do more than deal with the “abuse of property”, and this he must do on the authority of a mathematically correct, *i.e.*, a spiritual and therefore for the evil-doer more terrible law. Such a law sanctions much that reformers

strive for, but it stops short of spoliation or of damming up the streams of human energy. The spirit is the natural antagonist of matter, but as the moral law would be objectless without matter, and property is this matter, the two antagonistic forces, spirit and property, make up the moral life of man. Each is as necessary to life as the rays of the sun, and life would be unthinkable without it. Attraction and repulsion is the mode of expression for all life, and property is as much of the divine order of things as the spirit. A man who denies this does not know the first law of all being; his [Page 14] God is no God at all, but a phantom, and the millennium he dreams of is the child of an overworked and heated brain.

The treatment the family of Jesus received at his hands is easily explained by his utter absorption in the Messianic idea. Whether or not a little more suavity of manner towards his mother and his brothers would have thrown a new lustre around his name is immaterial. A man like Jesus does not stand on ceremonies, nor does any spiritually-minded man treat his relations with very great consideration when they become a nuisance. Gentlemanly conduct is of this world, not of the children of light. They are above such things, just as the snow, the rain, and the light are above ground. On the same reason, Jesus' want of patriotism was a virtue. He might have used different ways with the Jews. Many worldly men have shown more patience. His was a stormy temper, and his gentleness was imposed upon him by the spirit. The spirit always tames a lion, but now and then the lion breaks through. Jesus had rather much of the blood of David in him.

Of his miracles little remains to be said. His whole life was a miracle. At his time everybody believed in miracles; his disciples strained their eyes to see miracles, and of course did see them. Those who needed miracles to keep their faith on sound legs, saw the most miracles. John, who knew Jesus best, saw the fewest miracles. It is true, he makes a great deal of the resurrection of Lazarus. But it is a most wondrous fact that this remarkable miracle had no appreciable effect upon the highly susceptible Jews. It was a complete failure, although preserved to the last as the *pièce de résistance*, as a godless Frenchman might say. It is an open question whether a man still more spiritual than John would have seen any miracle. The childhood of the human race was very much troubled by miracles, just as in some countries all children seem to catch the measles. When English and German Sanscrit scholars sift the Buddhistic literature they always find without any difficulty that which is of Buddha and that which is not of Buddha.

Suppose some keen-witted Hindu philosopher were to do us the same service in regard to the New Testament (the Old Testament having lost caste altogether), to take everything out of it which is not of Jesus and without any moral bearing? I should be willing to accept such a revised version. It is no use to let English and American divines tinker it. They are just a little prejudiced and clumsy. Subtlety is not English. The Americans have a little more of it, and Emerson is very subtle. There are strange things scattered in his writings. The subtle Greek converted the coarser-grained Roman; some subtle minds seem to be working on the conversion of the robust English mind. People are apt to imagine because they have plenty of money, ships and gunboats, versatile statesmen, and pious party leaders they have also a hold on the subtle spirit. [Page 15] But this is a delusion of children who take a pantomime for dead earnest.

Besides an over-estimate of his mission, Jesus appears to me in every respect lovable, unique, divine. We are forced to see him through the glasses of his disciples. They saw no wrong. We can see no wrong either, only imperfections. If Jesus did not show in the garden of Gethsemane the brute courage of a soldier; if he seemed for a moment to doubt his mission, a different mission from what he conceived it to



be, it showed him to be a hyper-sensitive man, and I love him the more for it. The manner in which he faced his traducers, Pilate and the mob, the manner in which he died, stamped him a hero, the noblest son of his perverted although gifted race.

For the Jews, the murder of this man has had terrible consequences. It is hard to understand how any man can look at the relation of Jesus to the fate of the Jews without becoming a believer. He need not become Christian or a Jew, but he must acknowledge that the murder of Jesus did not simply violate a law running parallel with human life, but branched off into higher regions. The effect was terrible. With the history of the Jews before one's eyes it is difficult to remain a sceptic. I have been a sceptic all my life, but the Jew has always been the worst strain upon my unbelief. Carlyle, in his honest hatred, calls them "this terrible people". But who has suffered like the Jews ? Their fate might move a stone. It seems as if every human hand ought to be uplifted in supplication for this unfortunate people. They have been the victims of the grandest tragedy ever enacted on the world's stage. Then what a man this Jesus must have been ! ?

It is sad to think that any man should seemingly place himself under the suspicion of detracting from the merits of such a man. But when I see on the one hand the same man made the subject of vile jokes and viler caricatures disgracing the thoroughfares of this great city, and, on the other hand, the endeavour to transport him into the clouds as a useless phantom, serving as a kind of side reflector to illuminate with a much needed supernatural light a vaporous theology — it becomes a duty to put him before the human gaze as a man, sent by divine law into this world in due time and season to fill a gaping void. This void he filled like a man; other voids are created in their time and have to be filled by other men.

F. D.

IT must not be supposed that the T. P. S. [Theosophical Publishing Srvices] endorses every statement, or agrees with every argument of the foregoing. It is possible to feel much sympathy with the views expressed, but differ as to the conclusions [Page 16] and the method by which they are reached. The author can hardly be said to be right when arguing that Jesus was not perfect because he was not politic. He had work to do, and he did it in the best way possible to him. We have only a few accounts of the manner in which he did it, and there is the strongest ground for the belief that these accounts have passed through the hands of those who did not scruple to alter them as suited their own convenience.

The T. P. S. fully agrees with the author's idea as to the power of the spirit in man; but it strongly dissents from the statements as regards property being a necessary adjunct to spirituality. Why is it that all the "enlighteners" of the world have most strongly insisted that, as a rule, material prosperity is a barrier to spiritual advancement ?

Jesus, the Adept, had to die; therefore, Karmically he was not yet a perfect man.