

## 20.3 | Christianity

The seminal quotations here are, of course, those drawn from the New Testament, depicting events in the life of Jesus Christ and reporting his deeds and utterances. However, the reader should be aware that many passages from the Gospels, from the Acts of the Apostles, and from the epistles of St. Paul—passages that might have been included here—have been placed in other sections of this chapter. Here, as in the case of Judaism, the secular view of Christianity, and especially of its first impact on a pagan world, is given us by the historians.

Intimations and expositions of Christian doctrine will be found in quotations from the great theologians, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. Here again the reader must be advised that, since other sections of this chapter deal with specific aspects of Christian doctrine, many passages from the theo-

logians that might have been placed here have been allocated elsewhere. Special attention should be called to the observations on Christianity by Pascal, who is certainly one of the most brilliant and stalwart defenders of Christianity. He argues eloquently and persuasively for the proposition that Christianity is the one true religion, a proposition that is also affirmed, but defended differently, by Montesquieu and Hegel.

Adverse views of Christianity are presented by Spinoza, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Marx among others. Less hostile is the approach of those who distinguish between the ideals of Christianity and their inadequate approximation in reality, suggesting that Christianity has been infrequently practiced and that few is the number of those who have called themselves Christians who have followed in the footsteps of Christ.

---

1 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

*Isaiah 9:6-7*

2 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his

mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

*Isaiah 11:1-5*

3 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

*Isaiah 52:7-8*

4 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of

our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

*Isaiah 53:3–12*

- 5 Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*: for he shall save his people from their sins.

*Matthew 1:21*

- 6 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

*Matthew 5:13–16*

- 7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

*Matthew 7:7*

- 8 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

*Matthew 8:20–22*

- 9 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

*Matthew 11:28–30*

- 10 As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

*Matthew 26:26–28*

- 11 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

(And this taxing was first made when Cÿ-rē-nī-ūs was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said

one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called *Jesus*, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

*Luke 2:1-21*

12 As the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

But Herod the tē-trārch, being reproved by him for Hē-rō-dī-ās his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

*Luke 3:15-22*

13 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

*John 3:3-9*

14 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

I am that bread of life.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

*John 6:47-58*

15 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

*John 9:1-5*

16 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

*John 14:6*

17 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

*Philippians 4:7*

18 Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

*I Timothy 3:16*

19 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

*I John 5:7*

20 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

Saying, I am Alpha and Ō-mēg-ā, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pēr-gā-mōs, and unto Thŷ-ā-tī-rā, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Lā-ōd-ī-cē-ā.

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.

*Revelation 1:10-18*

21 All human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil,

but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.

*Tacitus, Annals, XV, 44*

22 There are, to be sure, other things also quite as "foolish" [as the birth of Christ], which have reference to the humiliations and sufferings of God. Or else, let them call a crucified God "wisdom." But Marcion will apply the knife to this [doctrine] also, and even with greater reason. For which is more unworthy of God, which is more likely to raise a blush of shame, that [God] should be born, or that He should die? that He should bear the flesh, or the cross? be circumcised, or be crucified? be cradled, or be coffined? be laid in a manger, or in a tomb? [Talk of "wisdom!"] You will show more of that if you refuse to believe this also. But, after all, you will not be "wise" unless you become a "fool" to the world, by believing "the foolish things of God." . . . And He was buried, and rose again; the fact is certain, because it is impossible.

*Tertullian, De Carne Christi, 5*

23 The sermon which Our Lord delivered on the mountain contains the whole process of forming the life of a Christian. Therein man's interior movements are ordered perfectly. For after declaring that his end is Happiness, and after commending the authority of the apostles, through whom the teaching of the Gospel was to be promulgated, He orders man's interior movements, first in regard to man himself, secondly in regard to his neighbour.

This he does in regard to man himself, in two ways, corresponding to man's two interior movements in respect of any prospective action namely, volition of what has to be done, and intention of the end. Therefore, in the first place, He directs man's will in respect of the various precepts of the Law by prescribing that man should refrain not merely from those external works that are evil in themselves, but also from internal acts, and from

the occasions of evil deeds. In the second place He directs man's intention, by teaching that in our good works we should seek neither human praise, nor worldly riches, which is to lay up treasures on earth.

Afterwards He directs man's interior movement in respect of his neighbour, by forbidding us, on the one hand, to judge him rashly, unjustly, or presumptuously, and, on the other, to entrust him too readily with sacred things if he be unworthy.

Lastly, He teaches us how to fulfil the teaching of the Gospel; namely, by imploring the help of God, by striving to enter by the narrow door of perfect virtue, and by being wary lest we be led astray by evil influences. Moreover He declares that we must observe His commandments, and that it is not enough to make profession of faith, or to work miracles, or merely to hear His words.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, 108, 3

- 24 I admonish every pious Christian that he take not offence at the plain, unvarnished manner of speech of the Bible. Let him reflect that what may seem trivial and vulgar to him, emanates from the high majesty, power, and wisdom of God. The Bible is the book that makes fools of the wise of this world; it is understood only of the plain and simple hearted. Esteem this book as the precious fountain that can never be exhausted. In it thou findest the swaddling-clothes and the manger whither the angels directed the poor, simple shepherds; they seem poor and mean, but dear and precious is the treasure that lies therein.

Luther, *Table Talk*, H57

- 25 All the wisdom of the world is childish foolishness in comparison with the acknowledgment of Christ. For what is more wonderful than the unspeakable mystery, that the Son of God, the image of the eternal Father, took upon him the nature of man. Doubtless, he helped his supposed father, Joseph, to build houses; for Joseph was a carpenter. What will they of Nazareth think at the day of judgment, when they shall see Christ sitting in his divine majesty; surely they will be astonished, and say: Lord, thou helpest build my house, how comest thou now to this high honour?

When Jesus was born, doubtless, he cried and wept like other children, and his mother tended him as other mothers tend their children. As he grew up, he was submissive to his parents, and waited on them, and carried his supposed father's dinner to him, and when he came back, Mary, no doubt, often said: "My dear little Jesus, where hast thou been?" He that takes not offence at the simple, lowly, and mean course of the life of Christ, is endued with high divine art and wisdom; yea, has a special gift of God in the Holy Ghost. Let us ever bear in mind, that our blessed Saviour thus humbled and abased himself, yielding even to the contumelious death of the cross,

for the comfort of us poor miserable, and damned creatures.

Luther, *Table Talk*, H187

- 26 The operative cause of the sacrament is the word and institution of Christ, who ordained it. The substance is bread and wine, prefiguring the true body and blood of Christ, which is spiritually received by faith. The final cause of instituting the same, is the benefit and the fruit, the strengthening of our faith, not doubting that Christ's body and blood were given and shed for us, and that our sins by Christ's death certainly are forgiven.

Luther, *Table Talk*, H363

- 27 *Shylock*. O father Abram, what these Christians are,  
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect  
The thoughts of others!  
Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, I, iii, 161

- 28 *Marcellus*. Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:  
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;  
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.  
Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, I, i, 158

- 29 Baptism is the sacrament of allegiance of them that are to be received into the kingdom of God; that is to say, into eternal life; that is to say, to remission of sin: for as eternal life was lost by the committing, so it is recovered by the remitting of men's sins.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, III, 42

- 30 Religions, as the pagan, are . . . popular, for they consist in externals. But they are not for educated people. A purely intellectual religion would be more suited to the learned, but it would be of no use to the common people. The Christian religion alone is adapted to all, being composed of externals and internals. It raises the common people to the internal, and humbles the proud to the external; it is not perfect without the two, for the people must understand the spirit of the letter, and the learned must submit their spirit to the letter.

Pascal, *Pensées*, IV, 251

- 31 The Christian religion . . . teaches men these two truths; that there is a God whom men can know, and that there is a corruption in their nature which renders them unworthy of Him. It is equally important to men to know both these points; and it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own wretchedness, and to know his own wretchedness without knowing the Redeemer who can free him from it. The knowl-

edge of only one of these points gives rise either to the pride of philosophers, who have known God, and not their own wretchedness, or to the despair of atheists, who know their own wretchedness, but not the Redeemer.

And, as it is alike necessary to man to know these two points, so is it alike merciful of God to have made us know them. The Christian religion does this; it is in this that it consists.

Let us herein examine the order of the world and see if all things do not tend to establish these two chief points of this religion: Jesus Christ is the end of all, and the centre to which all tends. Whoever knows Him knows the reason of everything.

Those who fall into error err only through failure to see one of these two things. We can, then, have an excellent knowledge of God without that of our own wretchedness and of our own wretchedness without that of God. But we cannot know Jesus Christ without knowing at the same time both God and our own wretchedness.

Therefore I shall not undertake here to prove by natural reasons either the existence of God, or the Trinity, or the immortality of the soul, or anything of that nature; not only because I should not feel myself sufficiently able to find in nature arguments to convince hardened atheists, but also because such knowledge without Jesus Christ is useless and barren. Though a man should be convinced that numerical proportions are immaterial truths, eternal and dependent on a first truth, in which they subsist and which is called God, I should not think him far advanced towards his own salvation.

The God of Christians is not a God who is simply the author of mathematical truths, or of the order of the elements; that is the view of heathens and Epicureans. He is not merely a God who exercises His providence over the life and fortunes of men, to bestow on those who worship Him a long and happy life. That was the portion of the Jews. But the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of Christians, is a God of love and of comfort, a God who fills the soul and heart of those whom He possesses, a God who makes them conscious of their inward wretchedness, and His infinite mercy, who unites Himself to their inmost soul, who fills it with humility and joy, with confidence and love, who renders them incapable of any other end than Himself.

All who seek God without Jesus Christ, and who rest in nature, either find no light to satisfy them, or come to form for themselves a means of knowing God and serving Him without a mediator. Thereby they fall either into atheism, or into deism, two things which the Christian religion abhors almost equally.

Without Jesus Christ the world would not exist; for it should needs be either that it would be destroyed or be a hell.

If the world existed to instruct man of God, His divinity would shine through every part in it in an indisputable manner; but as it exists only by Jesus Christ, and for Jesus Christ, and to teach men both their corruption and their redemption, all displays the proofs of these two truths.

All appearance indicates neither a total exclusion nor a manifest presence of divinity, but the presence of a God who hides Himself. Everything bears this character.

Pascal, *Pensées*, VIII, 556

- 32 That religion has always existed on earth which consists in believing that man has fallen from a state of glory and of communion with God into a state of sorrow, penitence, and estrangement from God, but that after this life we shall be restored by a Messiah who should have come. All things have passed away, and this has endured, for which all things are.

Men have in the first age of the world been carried away into every kind of debauchery, and yet there were saints, as Enoch, Lamech, and others, who waited patiently for the Christ promised from the beginning of the world. Noah saw the wickedness of men at its height; and he was held worthy to save the world in his person, by the hope of the Messiah of whom he was the type. Abraham was surrounded by idolaters, when God made known to him the mystery of the Messiah, whom he welcomed from afar. In the time of Isaac and Jacob, abomination was spread over all the earth; but these saints lived in faith; and Jacob, dying and blessing his children, cried in a transport which made him break off his discourse, "I await, O my God, the Saviour whom Thou hast promised. . . ." The Egyptians were infected both with idolatry and magic; the very people of God were led astray by their example. Yet Moses and others believed Him whom they saw not, and worshipped Him, looking to the eternal gifts which He was preparing for them.

The Greeks and Latins then set up false deities; the poets made a hundred different theologies, while the philosophers separated into a thousand different sects; and yet in the heart of Judæa there were always chosen men who foretold the coming of this Messiah, which was known to them alone.

He came at length in the fullness of time, and time has since witnessed the birth of so many schisms and heresies, so many political revolutions, so many changes in all things; yet this Church, which worships Him who has always been worshipped, has endured uninterruptedly. It is a wonderful, incomparable, and altogether divine fact that this religion, which has always endured, has always been attacked. It has been a thousand times on the eve of universal destruction, and every time it has been in that state, God has restored it by extraordinary acts of His power.

Pascal, *Pensées*, IX, 613

33 *Michael*. Nor after resurrection shall he stay  
 Longer on Earth then certaine times to appeer  
 To his Disciples, Men who in his Life  
 Still follow'd him; to them shall leave in charge  
 To teach all nations what of him they learn'd  
 And his Salvation, them who shall beleev  
 Baptizing in the profluent streame, the signe  
 Of washing them from guilt of sin to Life  
 Pure, and in mind prepar'd, if so befall,  
 For death, like that which the redeemer dy'd.  
 Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII, 436

34 I have often wondered, that persons who make a  
 boast of professing the Christian religion, namely,  
 love, joy, peace, temperance, and charity to all  
 men, should quarrel with such rancorous animosity,  
 and display daily towards one another such  
 bitter hatred, that this, rather than the virtues  
 they claim, is the readiest criterion of their faith.  
 Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, Pref.

35 Christians are distinguished from the rest of the  
 world, not by faith, nor by charity, nor by the  
 other fruits of the Holy Spirit, but solely by their  
 opinions, inasmuch as they defend their cause,  
 like everyone else, by miracles, that is by igno-  
 rance, which is the source of all malice; thus they  
 turn a faith, which may be true, into superstition.  
 Spinoza, *Letter to Henry Oldenburg*  
 (Nov. 1675)

36 Now I saw in my Dream, that the highway up  
 which *Christian* was to go, was fenced on either  
 side with a Wall, and that Wall is called *Salvation*.  
 Up this way therefore did burdened *Christian* run,  
 but not without great difficulty, because of the  
 load on his back.

He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat  
 ascending; and upon that place stood a *Cross*, and  
 a little below in the bottom, a *Sepulchre*. So I saw  
 in my Dream, that just as *Christian* came up with  
 the *Cross*, his burden loosed from off his Shoulders,  
 and fell from off his back, and began to tumble;  
 and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth  
 of the *Sepulchre*, where it fell in, and I saw it no  
 more.

Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, I

37 The System of the Gospel, after the Fate of other  
 Systems, is generally antiquated and exploded;  
 and the Mass or Body of the common People,  
 among whom it seems to have had its latest Credit,  
 are now grown as much ashamed of it as their  
 Betters; Opinions, like Fashions, always, descending  
 from those of Quality to the middle Sort,  
 and thence to the Vulgar, where at length they  
 are dropp'd and vanish.

Swift, *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*

38 The Christian religion, which ordains that men  
 should love each other, would, without doubt,

have every nation blest with the best civil, the best  
 political laws; because these, next to this religion,  
 are the greatest good that men can give and receive.

Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*, XXIV, 1

39 The principles of Christianity, deeply engraved  
 on the heart, would be infinitely more powerful  
 than the false honour of monarchies, than the humane  
 virtues of republics, or the servile fear of despotic  
 states.

Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws*, XXIV, 6

40 Christianity as a religion is entirely spiritual, occupied  
 solely with heavenly things; the country of the  
 Christian is not of this world. He does his duty,  
 indeed, but does it with profound indifference to  
 the good or ill success of his cares. Provided he  
 has nothing to reproach himself with, it matters  
 little to him whether things go well or ill here  
 on earth. If the State is prosperous, he hardly  
 dares to share in the public happiness, for fear he  
 may grow proud of his country's glory; if the State  
 is languishing, he blesses the hand of God that is  
 hard upon His people.

Rousseau, *Social Contract*, IV, 8

41 Christianity preaches only servitude and dependence.  
 Its spirit is so favourable to tyranny that it  
 always profits by such a régime. True Christians  
 are made to be slaves, and they know it and do  
 not much mind: this short life counts for too little  
 in their eyes.

Rousseau, *Social Contract*, IV, 8

42 *Johnson*. As to the Christian religion, Sir, besides  
 the strong evidence which we have for it, there is  
 a balance in its favour from the number of great  
 men who have been convinced of its truth, after a  
 serious consideration of the question. Grotius was  
 an acute man, a lawyer, a man accustomed to  
 examine evidence, and he was convinced. Grotius  
 was not a recluse, but a man of the world, who  
 certainly had no bias to the side of religion. Sir  
 Isaac Newton set out an infidel, and came to be a  
 very firm believer.

Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (July 28, 1763)

43 On Sunday, June 3, we all went to Southill  
 church, which is very near to Mr. Dilly's house. It  
 being the first Sunday of the month, the holy sac-  
 rament was administered, and I staid to partake  
 of it. When I came afterwards into Dr. Johnson's  
 room, he said, "You did right to stay and receive  
 the communion; I had not thought of it." This  
 seemed to imply that he did not choose to ap-  
 proach the altar without a previous preparation,  
 as to which good men entertain different opinions,  
 some holding that it is irreverent to partake of  
 that ordinance without considerable premeditation;  
 others, that whoever is a sincere Christian,

and in a proper frame of mind to discharge any other ritual duty of our religion, may, without scruple, discharge this most solemn one. A middle notion I believe to be the just one, which is, that communicants need not think a long train of preparatory forms indispensably necessary; but neither should they rashly and lightly venture upon so awful and mysterious an institution. Christians must judge each for himself, what degree of retirement and self-examination is necessary upon each occasion.

Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (June 3, 1781)

- 44 The Christians were not less adverse to the business than to the pleasures of this world. The defence of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine which enjoined an unlimited forgiveness of past injuries, and commanded them to invite the repetition of fresh insults. Their simplicity was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life; nor could their humane ignorance be convinced that it was lawful on any occasion to shed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice or by that of war, even though their criminal or hostile attempts should threaten the peace and safety of the whole community. . . . This indolent, or even criminal disregard to the public welfare, exposed them to the contempt and reproaches of the Pagans, who very frequently asked, what must be the fate of the empire, attacked on every side by the barbarians, if all mankind should adopt the pusillanimous sentiments of the new sect? To this insulting question the Christian apologists returned obscure and ambiguous answers, as they were unwilling to reveal the secret cause of their security; the expectation that, before the conversion of mankind was accomplished, war, government, the Roman empire, and the world itself, would be no more. It may be observed that, in this instance likewise, the situation of the first Christians coincided very happily with their religious scruples, and that their aversion to an active life contributed rather to excuse them from the service than to exclude them from the honours of the state and army.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, XV

- 45 It is not easy to extract any distinct ideas from the vague though eloquent declamations of the Fathers, or to ascertain the degree of immortal glory and happiness which they confidently promised to those who were so fortunate as to shed their blood in the cause of religion. They inculcated with becoming diligence that the fire of martyrdom supplied every defect and expiated every sin; that, while the souls of ordinary Christians were obliged to pass through a slow and painful purification, the triumphant sufferers entered into the

immediate fruition of eternal bliss, where, in the society of the patriarchs, the apostles, and the prophets, they reigned with Christ, and acted as his assessors in the universal judgment of mankind.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, XVI

- 46 A quiet conscience makes one so serene! Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded That all the Apostles would have done as they did.

Byron, *Don Juan*, I, 83

- 47 Christianity has this peculiar disadvantage, that unlike other religions, it is not a pure system of doctrine: its chief and essential feature is that it is a history, a series of events, a collection of facts, a statement of the actions and sufferings of individuals: it is this history which constitutes dogma, and belief in it is salvation.

Schopenhauer, *Christian System*

- 48 This is the miracle of Christianity, more wonderful than that one of changing the water into wine; this miracle in all stillness, without any change of rulers, moreover without a hand being moved, of making every man, divinely understood, into a king, so easily, so smoothly, so miraculously, that the world in a certain sense does not need to know it. For in the world outside, there the king will and ought to be the only one who rules according to his conscience; but to obey—for conscience's sake will be permitted everyone; moreover, no one, no one can prevent it. And there within, there far within, where the Christian dwells in the conscience-relation, there is everything changed.

Lo, the world raises a tumult just to bring about a little change; it sets heaven and earth in motion for nothing, like the mountain which brought forth a mouse: Christianity in all stillness brings about the change of the infinite as if it were nothing. It is so quiet, quiet as nothing worldly can be; as quiet as only the dead and inwardness can be; and what else is Christianity but inwardness!

Thus Christianity transforms every relation between men into a conscience-relationship, and thus also into a love-relationship.

Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, I, 3B

- 49 The Christian world is always offended by the true Christian. Only now the passion of offense is not ordinarily so strong that it wishes to eradicate him; no, it will only continue to mock and insult him. This is easy to explain. At the time when the world was itself conscious of not being Christian, then there was something to fight about, then it was a fight to the death. But now, when the world is proudly and calmly certain that it is Christian, the true Christian insistence is merely something to laugh at. The confusion is even more distressing



than in the first period of Christianity. That was distressing, but there was meaning in it, since the world was fighting to the death against Christianity. But the world's present lofty calmness in its consciousness of being Christian, its cheap bit of mockery, if one wishes to call it that—of the real Christian: this almost borders on madness. For never in its first period was Christianity thus made the object of ridicule.

Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, I, 5

- 50 Official preaching has falsely represented religion, Christianity, as nothing but consolation, happiness etc. And consequently doubt has the advantage of being able to say in a *superior* way: I do not wish to be made happy by an illusion.

If Christianity were truthfully presented as suffering, ever greater as one advances further in it: doubt would have been disarmed, and in any case there would have been no opportunity for being superior—where it was a matter of avoiding—pain.

Kierkegaard, *Journals* (1851)

- 51 Every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

- 52 The modern Christian is a man who has consented to say all the prayers in the liturgy, provided you will let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with "Now I lay me down to sleep," and he is forever looking forward to the time when he shall go to his "long rest." He has consented to perform certain old, established charities, too, after a fashion, but he does not wish to hear of any new-fangled ones; he doesn't wish to have any supplementary articles added to the contract to fit it to the present time. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath, and the blacks all the rest of the week.

Thoreau, *Plea for Captain John Brown*

- 53 Christianity only hopes. It has hung its harp on the willows, and cannot sing a song in a strange land. It has dreamed a sad dream, and does not yet welcome the morning with joy.

Thoreau, *The Christian Fable*

- 54 The religious world is but the reflex of the real world. And for a society based upon the production of commodities, in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual private labour to the standard of homogeneous human labour—for such a society, Christianity with its *cultus* of abstract man, more especially in its bourgeois developments, Protestantism, Deism, etc., is the most fitting form of religion.

Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, I, 1

- 55 To pretend that Christianity was intended to stereotype existing forms of government and society, and protect them against change, is to reduce it to the level of Islamism or of Brahminism. It is precisely because Christianity has not done this, that it has been the religion of the progressive portion of mankind, and Islamism, Brahminism, etc. have been those of the stationary portions; or rather (for there is no such thing as a really stationary society) of the declining portions. There have been abundance of people, in all ages of Christianity, who tried to make it something of the same kind; to convert us into a sort of Christian Mussulmans, with the Bible for a Koran, prohibiting all improvement: and great has been their power, and many have had to sacrifice their lives in resisting them. But they have been resisted, and the resistance has made us what we are, and will yet make us what we are to be.

Mill, *Subjection of Women*, II

- 56 Sometimes an attempt is made to determine the "leading idea," as it has been called, of Christianity, an ambitious essay as employed on a supernatural work, when, even as regards the visible creation and the inventions of man, such a task is beyond us. Thus its one idea has been said by some to be the restoration of our fallen race, by others philanthropy, by others the tidings of immortality, or the spirituality of true religious service, or the salvation of the elect, or mental liberty, or the union of the soul with God. If, indeed, it is only thereby meant to use one or other of these as a central idea for convenience, in order to group others around it, no fault can be found with such a proceeding; and in this sense I should myself call the Incarnation the central aspect of Christianity, out of which the three main aspects of its teaching take their rise, the sacramental, the hierarchical, and the ascetic. But one aspect of Revelation must not be allowed to exclude or to obscure another; and Christianity is dogmatical, devotional, practical all at once; it is esoteric and exoteric; it is indulgent and strict; it is light and dark; it is love, and it is fear.

Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Pt. I, I, 1

- 57 Christianity is that which righteousness really is. Therefore, if something called Christianity prevails, and yet the promises are not satisfied, the inference is that this *something* is not that which righteousness really is, and therefore not really Christianity.

Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*, XII

- 58 *Father Païssy*. The science of this world, which has become a great power, has, especially in the last century, analysed everything divine handed down to us in the holy books. After this cruel analysis the learned of this world have nothing left of all

that was sacred of old. But they have only analysed the parts and overlooked the whole, and indeed their blindness is marvellous. Yet the whole still stands steadfast before their eyes, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Has it not lasted nineteen centuries, is it not still a living, a moving power in the individual soul and in the masses of people? It is still as strong and living even in the souls of atheists, who have destroyed everything! For even those who have renounced Christianity and attack it, in their inmost being still follow the Christian ideal, for hitherto neither their subtlety nor the ardour of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and of virtue than the ideal given by Christ of old. When it has been attempted, the result has been only grotesque.

Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, Pt. II, IV, 1

59 It is a basic tenet of Christianity that all men are equal, not only because of their equal relation to the infinite, but because they are brothers, they are all acknowledged as sons of God.

Tolstoy, *What Is Religion?*, VI

60 The Christian faith is a sacrifice: a sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of the spirit; at the same time, enslavement and self-mockery, self-mutilation.

Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, III, 46

61 Suppose we could contemplate the oddly painful and equally crude and subtle comedy of European Christianity with the mocking and aloof eyes of an Epicurean god, I think our amazement and laughter would never end: doesn't it seem that a single will dominated Europe for eighteen centuries—to turn man into a *sublime miscarriage*?

Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, III, 62

62 What is more harmful than any vice?—Active sympathy for the ill-constituted and weak—Christianity.

Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, II

63 One should not embellish or dress up Christianity: it has waged a *war to the death* against this *higher* type of man, it has excommunicated all the fundamental instincts of this type, it has distilled evil, the *Evil One*, out of these instincts—the strong human being as the type of reprehensibility, as the 'outcast'. Christianity has taken the side of everything weak, base, ill-constituted, it has made an ideal out of *opposition* to the preservative instincts of strong life; it has depraved the reason even of the intellectually strongest natures by teaching men to feel the supreme values of intellectuality as sinful, as misleading, as *temptations*. The most deplorable example: the depraving of Pascal, who believed his reason had been de-

praved by original sin while it had only been depraved by his Christianity!

Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, V

64 Why not give Christianity a trial? The question seems a hopeless one after 2000 years of resolute adherence to the old cry of "Not this man, but Barabbas." Yet it is beginning to look as if Barabbas was a failure, in spite of his strong right hand, his victories, his empires, his millions of money, and his moralities and churches and political constitutions. "This man" has not been a failure yet; for nobody has ever been sane enough to try his way.

Shaw, *Androcles and the Lion*, Pref.

65 The doctrines in which Jesus is thus confirmed are, roughly, the following:

1. The kingdom of heaven is within you. You are the son of God; and God is the son of man. God is a spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and not an elderly gentleman to be bribed and begged from. We are members one of another; so that you cannot injure or help your neighbor without injuring or helping yourself. God is your father: you are here to do God's work; and you and your father are one.

2. Get rid of property by throwing it into the common stock. Dissociate your work entirely from money payments. If you let a child starve you are letting God starve. Get rid of all anxiety about tomorrow's dinner and clothes, because you cannot serve two masters: God and Mammon.

3. Get rid of judges and punishment and revenge. Love your neighbor as yourself, he being a part of yourself. And love your enemies: they are your neighbors.

4. Get rid of your family entanglements. Every mother you meet is as much your mother as the woman who bore you. Every man you meet is as much your brother as the man she bore after you. Don't waste your time at family funerals grieving for your relatives: attend to life, not to death: there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, and better. In the kingdom of heaven, which, as aforesaid, is within you, there is no marriage nor giving in marriage, because you cannot devote your life to two divinities: God and the person you are married to.

Shaw, *Androcles and the Lion*, Pref.

66 Christianity has two faces. Popular Christianity has for its emblem a gibbet, for its chief sensation a sanguinary execution after torture, for its central mystery an insane vengeance bought off by a trumpery expiation. But there is a nobler and profounder Christianity which affirms the sacred mystery of Equality, and forbids the glaring futility and folly of vengeance, often politely called punishment or justice. The gibbet part of Christianity is tolerated. The other is criminal felony.

Shaw, *Major Barbara*, Pref.

67 Surely some revelation is at hand;  
 Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
 The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out  
 When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*  
 Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
 Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
 The darkness drops again; but now I know  
 That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at  
 last,

Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Yeats, *The Second Coming*

68 Religious experience . . . may take other forms than the Christian, and within Christianity it may take other forms than the Catholic; but the Catholic form is as good as any intrinsically for the devotee himself, and it has immense advantages over its probable rivals in charm, in comprehensiveness, in maturity, in internal rationality, in external adaptability; so much so that a strong anticlerical government, like the French, cannot safely leave the church to be overwhelmed by the forces of science, good sense, ridicule, frivolity, and avarice (all strong forces in France), but must use violence as well to do it. In the English church, too, it is not those who accept the deluge, the resurrection, and the sacraments only as symbols that are the vital party, but those who accept them literally; for only these have anything to say to the poor, or to the rich, that can refresh them. In a frank supernaturalism, in a tight clericalism, not in a pleasant secularisation, lies the sole hope of the church. Its sole dignity also lies there. It will not convert the world; it never did and it never could. It will remain a voice crying in the wilderness; but it will believe what it cries, and there will be some to listen to it in the future, as there have been many in the past. As to modernism, it is suicide. It is the last of those concessions to the

spirit of the world which half-believers and double-minded prophets have always been found making; but it is a mortal concession. It concedes everything; for it concedes that everything in Christianity, as Christians hold it, is an illusion.

Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine*, II

69 Let the reader fill out this outline [of the Christian epic] for himself with its thousand details; let him remember the endless mysteries, arguments, martyrdoms, consecrations that carried out the sense and made vital the beauty of the whole. Let him pause before the phenomenon; he can ill afford, if he wishes to understand history or the human mind, to let the apparition float by unchallenged without delivering up its secret. What shall we say of this Christian dream?

Those who are still troubled by the fact that this dream is by many taken for a reality, and who are consequently obliged to defend themselves against it, as against some dangerous error in science or in philosophy, may be allowed to marshal arguments in its disproof. Such, however, is not my intention. Do we marshal arguments against the miraculous birth of Buddha, or the story of Cronos devouring his children? We seek rather to honour the piety and to understand the poetry embodied in those fables. If it be said that those fables are believed by no one, I reply that those fables are or have been believed just as unhesitatingly as the Christian theology, and by men no less reasonable or learned than the unhappy apologists of our own ancestral creeds. Matters of religion should never be matters of controversy. We neither argue with a lover about his taste, nor condemn him, if we are just, for knowing so human a passion. That he harbours it is no indication of a want of sanity on his part in other matters. But while we acquiesce in his experience, and are glad he has it, we need no arguments to dissuade us from sharing it. Each man may have his own loves, but the object in each case is different. And so it is, or should be, in religion.

Santayana, *Life of Reason*, III, 6