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"THE CHRISTIAN FAITH"

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You will have read in the daily papers that the Pope has removed the famous theologian, Hans Kung, from his position as a teacher while an equally famous Belgian theologian has been summoned before the Inquisition at Rome. Both theologians have been accused of theological liberalism. The problem is a complex one. The first thing to remember is that the Christian religion is a supernatural religion and in this it is quite unique among the religions of the world which are more or less naturalistic. The Christian religion teaches that God our creator has taken our nature, been born of the Virgin Mary, lived the life of a man, being one with us while remaining true God. He accepted a death inflicted by unjust humanity, in order to take away from us the penalty of our sins and He rose from death because He bore those sins perfectly. It is a remarkable truth but one which can be well established from the facts of history as well as of experience. Jesus lived a perfect life and yet mankind could not tolerate Him and crucified Him on trumped up charges, yet even on the cross Jesus was perfect in His kindness towards his enemies and so has given us the pattern of perfect living as well as winning the victory over selfishness which drags us down to hell. Those who put faith in Jesus as Lord and God are received by Him and forgiven and changed from being selfish into being more and more Christlike till we reach our eternal inheritance in His presence forever.

This is a supernatural religion and we believe it because it is so plainly taught in that supernatural book the Bible. The Bible has God as its author, through His Spirit. But when people leave the Bible for their own ideas as so many do today, the supernatural character of Christianity,

which is its essence, is soon lost. The trouble about the Pope's position is that the Roman church adds to the Bible a great deal which is not to be found there; in particular it adds the worship of the Virgin Mary who plays such an important part in Catholic devotion, of which the present pope is a great devotee, but of which there is not a word to be found in the Bible or in the early church; again the infallibility and jurisdiction of the pope is not mentioned in scripture, nor is the doctrine of purgatory which is in fact contradicted by the Bible.

The true path in the Christian religion is to believe all that the Bible teaches because it is the word of God, but to believe nothing more. So that what is not in the Bible is not to be regarded as part of the Christian faith. At present there is a tug of war going on in the Catholic church between those who believe more than what is in the Bible and those who believe less. We who are Protestants ought to renew our faith in the Bible, that supernatural book which God has given us, and read it for ourselves prayerfully, so that God can teach us what we should believe, neither believing too much and so smothering the truth with error, or believing too little and losing the essence of our faith. The Bible is God's word and so, of course, it is infallible. We should read it and believe it and seek God's face who speaks to us through it.

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