

SCIENCE AND CHRISTIANITY

sition of a state religion, and founded Constantinople, though a worthless character, a false-hearted hypocrite, and a murderer. The success of the papacy in its conflict with independent scientific thought and inquiry is best seen in the distressing condition of science and its literature during the Middle Ages. Not only were the rich literary treasures that classical antiquity had bequeathed to the world destroyed for the most part, or withdrawn from circulation, but the rack and the stake insured the silence of every heretic—that is, every independent thinker. If he did not keep his thoughts to himself, he had to look forward to being burned alive, as was the fate of the great monistic philosopher, Giordano Bruno, the reformer, John Huss, and more than a hundred thousand other “witnesses to the truth.” The history of science in the Middle Ages teaches us on every page that independent thought and empirical research were completely buried for twelve sad centuries under the oppression of the omnipotent papacy.

All that we esteem in true Christianity, in the sense of its founder and of his noblest followers, and that we must endeavor to save from the inevitable wreck of this great world religion for our new monistic religion, lies on its ethical and social planes. The principles of true humanism, the golden rule, the spirit of tolerance, the love of man, in the best and highest sense of the word—all these true graces of Christianity were not, indeed, first discovered and given to the world by that religion, but were successfully developed in the critical period when classical antiquity was hastening to its doom. The papacy, however, has attempted to convert all those virtues into the direct contrary, and still to hang out the sign of the old firm. Instead of Christian char-