

**THROUGH CONVERSION TO THE
CREED: BEING A BRIEF
ACCOUNT OF THE REASONABLE
CHARACTER OF RELIGIOUS
CONVICTION**

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Through Conversion to the Creed: Being a Brief Account of the Reasonable Character of Religious Conviction by W. H. Carnegie

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W. H. CARNEGIE

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Being a Brief Account of the Reasonable
Character of Religious Conviction.

BY

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P R E F A C E

THE following pages are intended to indicate a line of thought which the author has found satisfactory to himself, and which he hopes may prove useful to some others. They are an attempt to describe very briefly the origin and development of religious faith in the soul, and to show that there is nothing in them which reason cannot accept. Only the broadest outlines are touched upon; but if the account given of them is accurate so far as it goes, it may possibly supply a framework into which others, who have not time or opportunity for mental self-analysis, can fit their own religious experiences and their

own conceptions of truth, and thus aid them in arriving at a more connected and proportionate view of the different elements of their moral and spiritual life.

Such a result would have more than an intellectual importance: for a man's belief, if it is a real belief, is a summary of the principles and motives of his conduct; and it is of no small practical advantage for him to have a clear conception of the proportion which its different constituents bear to each other, and of the relations in which they stand to the intellectual life as a whole.

Without some such conception he is at the mercy of chance circumstances and sudden impulses: has no intellectual safeguard against extreme views or destructive criticisms: and is exposed to the danger on the one hand of losing his faith altogether, under the in-

fluence of tendencies apparently antagonistic to it; on the other of developing it in a one-sided and mutilated manner, and thus arriving at a chance combination of sentiments and prejudices, which is often little less than a caricature of the Catholic Creed.

This danger is by no means an imaginary one. Our own country, with its hundreds of hostile sects, each claiming to be the depository of the complete truth: with its widespread agnosticism and indifferentism: and with its resulting train of wasted lives and mutually destructive efforts, is a convincing commentary on its reality.

Such a state of things can hardly be looked upon as even an imperfect realization of the apostolic ideal of the Catholic Church: all-embracing, all-satisfying, all-complete; the source and home of harmonious belief and

well-balanced action: the great Body "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part."

How far the considerations brought forward by the author will commend themselves to other minds differently constituted, it is impossible for him to judge. But even if their rejection stimulates those minds to a different method of attaining the object at which they aim, the time and thought spent on them will not have been wasted.

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