

Before I begin the actual writing of this essay, I want it clearly understood that I am a firm believer in ~~God~~ God, and the general teachings of the Christian faith. What I am about to write merely is my own ~~subject~~ theory on why non-believers do not believe in God as we Christians do. In this way, I hope to answer why I ~~xxxxxxx~~ have not yet been baptized.

This year, as in all preceding <sup>years</sup> ~~xxxxx~~ for ~~xxxxxxx~~ nearly two thousand, ~~xxxxx~~ Easter ~~xxxxxxx~~ came, and, as usual, the preceding weeks brought about the annual request that I become a member of the church that I attend through baptism. A year earlier, I would have accepted readily, but was told not to by my parents, both of whom are members of the church. This year, ~~xxxxx~~ the decision was left up to me and I refused.

Why did I turn down this year what I would have accepted last year?

My father and mother had told me that it would be best not to make such a serious move without first realizing ~~xxxxxxx~~ its importance and the obligation that would be placed on me as a consequence. Was my refusal to undergo baptism due to the fact that I did not feel that I could take the responsibility then; that I ~~xxxxx~~ did not feel worthy of the faith? I'm afraid not; it was a motive far more selfish than that---I ~~did not feel that~~ felt that Christianity had nothing to offer me.

How did I, who had been raised in a Christian environment, come to feel as ~~I did?~~ *do*

Just as atheists and non-believers of the Christian faith, I did not agree with the ~~findings of~~ claims of some of the so-called Christians. Christianity's greatest weakness lies, probably, in the narrow-mindedness of ~~xxxxx~~ of many of its advocates to whom I have referred ~~to~~ as "the so-called Christians." They read the Bible, ~~do not attempt~~ without attempting to study the other fellow's belief and then proclaim that Christianity is the only true religion. This in itself is all right, but on what basis can a

person lay such a claim without making a study of all the religions. *Only if a person were willing to listen to the other fellow's arguments can he convince the other.* These narrow-minded followers of the Word interpreted it very strictly



without attempting to analyze it; They do not realize that its teachings may ~~xxxx~~ not be infallible. As a result, they follow it blindly and expect thinking persons to be won over because of what the Bible says while ~~xxx~~ to persons who will not be led blindly find ~~xxxxxx~~ much of what the Bible says <sup>is</sup> hard to accept.

This is only natural. Much of the writings in the Bible are parables or allegories and may ~~xxx~~ mean ~~an~~ altogether different things from what they may say.

~~xxxxxxx~~ Most of the so-called Christians do not recognize this fact and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ hence have an altogether wrong idea of Christianity.

Indeed, often a non-believer has a more correct conception of Christianity than the followers of the faith. They ~~do~~ stories are acceptable to them <sup>believes</sup>

because they are like sheep and follow others without knowing why and without caring why. *attempting to know why. Seemingly they have holes drilled in the tops of their heads and have their faith poured in.*

Furthermore, what proof is there that the teachings of the Bible are absolutely true. After all, they were written by human hands which could have erred. The popular claim is that the human hands were guided by God.

What tommyrot!! Why ~~did they choose~~ the Bible and no other book?! Even I would be able to write a book <sup>wholly different from the Bible</sup> and call it ~~xxxx~~ the Bible ~~xxxx~~ claiming that I was guided by God. Would they believe me? Probably not.

Why, then, are they willing to stake their whole salvation on ~~xxxxxxx~~ literature written by man and just as liable to mistakes as the one I would write? Perhaps they would claim that God would strike me dead if I ever attempted to do such a thing. Again tommyrot! That claim is a contradiction of their own teachings; "God is love." Even though those who believe ~~in~~ Him are narrow-minded, I believe God is broad-minded and fair. That is what makes Him God. He has no petty code.

If one were to ~~xxxxxxx~~ give a strict interpretation of the Bible, he would find that only those who had complete faith in ~~Jesus~~ Christ and God would have their souls saved. That is all very well, <sup>as far as I'm concerned</sup> but what of my friends who are non-believers? Should they be cast into a fiery Hell while I, who deserve no better fate than they, tread the golden streets of heaven strumming my harp and flapping my wings above my halo'd head?



This is all right save that most of the non-believers live far better lives according to ~~the~~ Christian standards than I or other so-called Christians. If it is true that they will spend their life after death in Hell's furnace, I would much rather ~~join~~ be flung in with them than ~~join the crowd of hypocrites~~ sneak\*by Saint Peter to join a crowd of Hypocrites.

for a person to  
It is ~~not~~ a fine thing to have faith that will enable him to stand up ~~and~~ <sup>with</sup> holding the Bible <sup>and</sup> and proclaim, "This is the word; all else is false," but if he lives a life that belies the fact that he is a Christian, it will ~~not only~~ <sup>only</sup> create a wrong impression on those hearing he betrays his faith

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298  
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\*feeling that I do not belong there, I would feel that I am sneaking by.