

# Oriental Religions and Christianity eBook

## Oriental Religions and Christianity

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### ORIENTAL RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY

*Lecture I.*

## THE NEED OF UNDERSTANDING THE FALSE RELIGIONS

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It is said that the very latest among the sciences is the Science of Religion. Without pausing to inquire how far it admits of scientific treatment, certain reasons which may be urged for the study of the existing religions of the world will be considered in this lecture. It must be admitted in the outset that those who have been the pioneers in this field of research have not, as a rule, been advocates of the Christian faith. The anti-Christian theory that all religions may be traced to common causes, that common wants and aspirations of mankind have led to the development of various systems according to environment, has until recently been the chief spur to this class of studies. Accordingly, the religions of the world have been submitted to some preconceived philosophy of language, or ethnology, or evolution, with the emphasis placed upon such facts as seemed to comport with this theory. Meanwhile there has been an air of broad-minded charity in the manner in which the apologists of Oriental systems have treated the subject. They have included Christ in the same category with Plato and Confucius, and have generally placed Him at the head; and this supposed breadth of sentiment has given them a degree of influence with dubious and wavering Christians, as well as with multitudes who are without faith of any kind.

In this country the study of comparative religion has been almost entirely in the hands of non-evangelical writers. We have had "The Ten Great Religions," from the pen of Rev. James Freeman Clarke; "The Oriental Religions," written with great labor by the late Samuel Johnson; and Mr. Moncure D. Conway's "Anthology," with its flowers, gathered from the sacred books of all systems, and so chosen as to carry the implication that they all are equally inspired. Many other works designed to show that Christianity was developed from ancient sun myths, or was only a plagiarism upon the old mythologies of India, have been current among us. But strangely enough, the Christian Church has seemed to regard this subject as scarcely worthy of serious consideration. With the exception of a very able work on Buddhism,[1] and several review articles on Hinduism, written by Professor S.H. Kellogg, very little has been published from the Christian standpoint.[2] The term "heathenism" has been used as an expression of contempt, and has been applied with too little discrimination.

There is a reason, perhaps, why these systems have been underestimated. It so happened that the races among whom the modern missionary enterprise has carried on its earlier work were mostly simple types of pagans, found in the wilds of America, in Greenland and Labrador, in the West Indies, on the African coast, or in the islands of the Pacific; and these worshippers of nature or of spirits gave a very different impression from that which the Apostles and the Early Church gained from their intercourse with the conquering Romans or the polished and philosophic Greeks. Our missionary work has been symbolized, as Sir William W. Hunter puts it, by a band of half-naked savages listening to a missionary seated under a palm-tree, and receiving his message with child-like and unquestioning faith.

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But in the opening of free access to the great Asiatic nations, higher grades of men have been found, and with these we now have chiefly to do. The pioneer of India's missions, the devoted Ziegenbalg, had not been long in his field before he learned the mistake which the churches in Europe had made in regard to the religion and philosophy of the Hindus. He laid aside all his old notions when he came to encounter the metaphysical subtleties of Hindu thought, when he learned something of the immense Hindu literature, the voluminous ethics, the mystical and weird mythologies, the tremendous power of tradition and social customs—when, in short, he found his way hedged up by habits of thought wholly different from his own; and he resolved to know something of the religion which the people of India already possessed.

For the benefit of others who might follow him he wrote a book on Hinduism and its relations to Christianity, and sent it to Europe for publication. But so strong were the preconceived notions which prevailed among his brethren at home, that his manuscript, instead of being published, was suppressed. "You were not sent to India to study Hinduism," wrote Franke, "but to preach the Gospel." But Ziegenbalg certainly was not wanting in his estimate of the chief end in view, and his success was undoubtedly far greater for the intelligent plan upon which he labored. The time came when a change had passed over the society which had sent him forth. Others, less friendly than he to the Gospel of Christ, had studied Hinduism, and had paraded it as a rival of Christianity; and in self-defence against this flank movement, the long-neglected work of Ziegenbalg was brought forth from obscurity and published.

It is partly in self-defence against similar influences, that the Christian Church everywhere is now turning increased attention to the study of Comparative Religion. In Great Britain a wider interest has been felt in the subject than in this country. And yet, even there the Church has been far behind the enemies of evangelical truth in comparing Christianity with false systems. Dr. James Stalker, of Glasgow, said a few months since that, whereas it might be expected that the advocates of the true faith would be the first to compare and contrast it with the false systems of the world, the work had been left rather to those who were chiefly interested in disparaging the truth and exalting error. Yet something has been done. Such men as Sir Monier Williams, Sir William Muir, Professors Rawlinson, Fairbairn, and Legge, Bishop Carpenter, Canon Hardwick, Doctors Caird, Dodds, Mitchell, and others, have given the false systems of the East a thorough and candid treatment from the Christian standpoint. The Church Missionary Society holds a lectureship devoted to the study of the non-Christian religions as a preparation for missionary work. And the representatives of that Society in the Punjab have instituted a course of study on these lines for missionaries recently arrived, and have offered prizes for the best attainments therein. Though we are later in this field of investigation, yet here also there is springing up a new interest, and it is safe to predict that within another decade the real character of the false religions will be more generally understood.

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The prejudice which has existed in regard to this subject has taken two different forms: First, there has been the broad assumption upon which Franke wrote to Ziegenbalg, that all knowledge of heathenism is worse than useless. Good men are asking, "Is not such a study a waste of energy, when we are charged with proclaiming the only saving truth? Is not downright earnestness better than any possible knowledge of philosophies and superstitions?" And we answer, "Yes: by all means, if only the one is possible." Another view of the subject is more serious. May there not, after all, be danger in the study of false systems? Will there not be found perplexing parallels which will shake our trust in the positive and exclusive supremacy of the Christian faith?

Now, even if there were at first some risks to a simple, child-like confidence, yet a timid attitude involves far greater risks: it amounts to a half surrender, and it is wholly out of place in this age of fearless and aggressive discussion, when all truth is challenged, and every form of error must be met. Moreover, in a thorough study there is no danger. Sir Monier Williams tells us that at first he was surprised and a little troubled, but in the end he was more than ever impressed with the transcendent truths of the Christian faith. Professor S.H. Kellogg assures us that the result of his careful researches in the Oriental systems is a profounder conviction of the great truths of the Gospel as divine. And even Max Mueller testifies that, while making every allowance for whatever is good in the ethnic faiths, he has been the more fully convinced of the great superiority of Christianity. Really, those are in danger who receive only the superficial and misleading representations of heathenism which one is sure to meet in our magazine literature, or in works like "Robert Elsmere" and "The Light of Asia."

One cannot fail to mark the different light in which we view the mythologies of the Greeks and Romans. If their religious beliefs and speculations had remained a secret until our time, if the high ethical precepts of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius had only now been proclaimed, and Socrates had just been celebrated in glowing verse as the "Light of Greece," there would be no little commotion in the religious world, and thousands with only weak and troubled faith might be disturbed. But simply because we thoroughly understand the mythology of Greece and Rome, we have no fear. We welcome all that it can teach us. We cordially acknowledge the virtues of Socrates and assign him his true place. We enrich the fancy and awaken the intellectual energies of our youth by classical studies, and Christianity shines forth with new lustre by contrast with the heathen systems which it encountered in the Roman Empire ages ago.

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And yet that was no easy conquest. The early church, when brought face to face with the culture of Greece and the self-assertion of Roman power, when confronted with profound philosophies like those of Plato and Aristotle, with the subtleties of the Stoics, and with countless admixtures of Persian mysticism, had, humanly speaking, quite as formidable a task as those that are presented in the heathen systems of to-day. Very few of the champions of modern heathenism can compare with Celsus, and there are no more subtle philosophies than those of ancient Greece. Evidently, the one thing needed to disenchant the false systems of our time is a clear and accurate knowledge of their merits and demerits, and of their true relation to Christianity.

It will be of advantage, for one thing, if we learn to give credit to the non-Christian religions for the good which they may fairly claim. There has existed a feeling that they had no rights which Christian men were bound to respect. They have been looked upon as systems of unmixed evil, whose enormities it were impossible to exaggerate. And all such misconceptions and exaggerations have only led to serious reactions. Anti-Christian writers have made great capital of the alleged misrepresentations which zealous friends of missions have put upon heathenism; and there is always great force in any appeal for fair play, on whichever side the truth may lie. Where the popular Christian idea has presented a low view of some system, scarcely rising above the grade of fetichism, the apologists have triumphantly displayed a profound philosophy. Where the masses of Christian people have credited whole nations with no higher notions of worship than a supreme trust in senseless stocks and stones, some skilful defender has claimed that the idols were only the outward symbols of an indwelling conception of deity, and has proceeded with keen relish to point out a similar use of symbols in the pictures and images of the Christian Church.

From one extreme many people have passed to another, and in the end have credited heathen systems with greater merit than they possess. A marked illustration of this fact is found in the influence which was produced by Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia." Sentimental readers, passing from surprise to credulity, were ready to invest the "gentle Indian Saint" with Christian conceptions which no real Buddhist ever thought of. Mr. Arnold himself is said to have expressed surprise that people should have given to his poem so serious an interpretation, or should have imagined for a moment that he intended to compare Buddhism with the higher and purer teachings of the New Testament.

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In considering some of the reasons which may be urged for the study of false systems, we will first proceed from the standpoint of the candidate for the work of missions. And here there is a broad and general reason which seems too obvious to require much argument. The skilful general or the civil engineer is supposed, of course, to survey the field of contemplated operations ere he enters upon his work. The late Dr. Duff, in urging the importance of a thorough understanding of the systems which a missionary expects to encounter, illustrated his point by a reference to the great Akbar, who before entering upon the conquest of India, twice visited the country in disguise, that he might gain a complete knowledge of its topography, its strongholds, and its points of weakness, and the best methods of attack.

While all religious teachers must understand their tasks, the need of special preparation is particularly urgent in the foreign missionary, owing to his change of environment. Many ideas and methods to which he has been trained, and which would serve him well among a people of his own race, might be wholly out of place in India or China, Ram Chandra Bose, M.A.—himself a converted Brahman—has treated with great discrimination the argument frequently used, that the missionary “need only to proclaim the Glad Tidings.” He says: “That the simple story of Christ and him crucified is, after all, the truth on which the regeneration of the Christian and the non-Christian lands must hang, no one will deny. This story, ever fresh, is inherently fitted to touch the dead heart into life, and to infuse vitality into effete nationalities and dead civilizations. But a great deal of rubbish has to be removed in heathen lands, ere its legitimate consequences can be realized. And a patient, persistent study of the false religions, and the complicated systems of philosophy associated with them, enables the missionary to throw out of the way those heaps of prejudices and errors which make it impossible for the story of the cross to reach and influence the heart.”[3] It has been very wisely said that “any fragment of truth which lies in a heathen mind unacknowledged is an insuperable barrier against conviction: recognized and used, it might prove a help; neglected and ignored, it is insurmountable.”[4]

The late Dr. Mullens learned by careful observation, that the intellectual power of the Hindus had been so warped by false reasoning, that “they could scarcely understand how, when two principles are contradictory, one must be given up as false. They are prepared to receive both sides of a contradiction as true, and they feel at liberty to adopt that which seems the most comfortable. And nothing but a full exposure of evil, with a clear statement of the antagonistic truth, will suffice to awaken so perverted an intellect.”[5]

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The missionary has often been surprised to find that the idea which he supposed was clearly understood, was wholly warped by the medium of Hindu thought, as a rod is apparently warped when plunged into a stream, or as a beautiful countenance is distorted by the waves and irregularities of an imperfect mirror. To the preacher, sin, for example, is an enormity in the sight of God; but to his Hindu listener it may be only a breach of custom, or a ceremonial uncleanness. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as it is set forth in Paul's Epistles, is to the missionary a union in which his personality is still maintained in blest fellowship with God, while to his audience it may be only that out and out pantheism in which the deity within us supplants all individual personality, and not only excludes all joy, but all responsibility.

Professor W.G.T. Shedd has clearly pointed out the fact that the modern missionary has a harder task in dealing with the perversions of the heathen mind than that to which the Apostles of the Early Church were called, owing to the prevalence in India and elsewhere of that pantheism which destroys the sense of moral responsibility. He says: "The Greek and Roman theism left the human will free and responsible, and thus the doctrine of sin could be taught. But the pantheistic systems of the East destroy free will, by identifying God and man; and hence it is impossible to construct the doctrine of sin and atonement except by first refuting the pantheistic ethics. The missionary can get no help from *conscience* in his preaching, when this theory of God and the world has the ground. But St. Paul appealed confidently 'to every man's conscience in the sight of God,' and called upon the ethics and theology of the Greek and Roman philosophers for a corroboration. The early Apologists, Tertullian and others, did the same thing."

The testimonies which have been given within the last few years, by the most intelligent and observing missionaries in Eastern lands, are of such peculiar significance and force, that I shall be justified in quoting a few at some length. Rev. George William Knox, D.D., of Tokio, Japan, in accepting an election to an honorary membership of the American Society of Comparative Religion, wrote, December 17, 1890: "I am deeply in sympathy with the objects of the Society, as indeed every missionary must be. We have practical demonstrations of the value of research into the ethnic religions. Even at home the value of such research has already been great, but in these non-Christian lands it is indispensable. It is true that non-Christian systems, as found among the people, rarely exhibit the forms or the doctrines which we learn from books, but I presume the same would be said by an intelligent Asiatic, were he to study our sacred books and then compare results with much of the religion which calls itself Christian in the West. And yet for the study even of the most debased forms of Christianity in South America or

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Mexico, let us say, we must needs begin with our sacred books. And so it is with debased Buddhism in Japan. The Buddhism of Ceylon and of the books is unknown to this people, and when it is used as the basis of argument or exposition we do not hit the mark. Yet, after all, our debt is immeasurable to the societies and scholars that have made accessible the sources that have yielded at last such systems as are dominant here.

“The study of non-Christian systems is essential to the missionary, even though he does not refer to them in his preaching, but contents himself with delivering the Gospel message. And that is the rule with missionaries, so far as I know. But a knowledge of the native systems is imperative, that we may properly present our own. Otherwise we waste time in teaching over again that which is already fully known, or we so speak that our truth takes on the form of error, or we so underestimate the thought of those whom we address, that the preaching of the wisdom of God sounds in their ears the preaching of foolishness. The adaptation of preaching to the hearers of Asiatic lands is a task that may well make us thankful for every help that may be furnished us.... The missionary is far too apt to come from the West with exalted notions of his own superiority, and with a feeling of condescending pity for men who, perhaps, have pondered the deep things of the universe far more than he. Let him really master a philosophy like the Confucian, and he will better illustrate the Christian grace of humility, and be so much the better prepared for his work. His study will show him how astonishing is the light that has shone upon those men whom he has thought of as wholly in darkness. It will thus show him the true way of approach, and enable him to follow the lines of least resistance. It will also reveal to him what is the essential character of the divine message which he himself bears. He will separate that peculiar and spiritual truth which is the Word of Life, and will bring it as glad tidings of great joy. Surely no man can study these ethnic faiths, no matter with what appreciation of their measure of truth, and rejoicing in it, without a constantly growing conviction that the one power that converts men and establishes God’s kingdom on earth is the Word that is eternal, the Son of God. He gathers in Himself all the truth of all the religions, and He adds that divine Salvation and Life for which all the nations have waited, and without which the highest and deepest thought remains unable to bring men into living communion with the God and Father of us all.”



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Rev. Martyn Clark, D.D., Missionary of the Church Missionary Society at Umritsur, India, has given thorough study to the Sanscrit, and has thereby been enabled to expose the fallacies and misrepresentations which the Arya Somaj, in its bitter controversy with the Gospel, has put forth as to the real character of the Vedic literature. No man is better able to judge of the importance of a correct understanding of the errors of the non-Christian systems than he. In a letter accepting an honorary membership of the above-named Society he says: "The object of the Society is one in which I am deeply interested, and I shall at all times do what I can to further its aims. I am convinced that there is much that is helpful to the cause of Christ to be learned in this field of research."

Rev. H. Blodgett, D.D., veteran Missionary of the American Board in Peking, in accepting a similar honor, says: "My interest in these studies has been deep and growing. It is high time that such a society as you represent should be formed. The study of Comparative Religion has long enough been in the hands of those who hold all religions to be the outcome of the natural powers of the human mind, unaided by a revelation from God. It is time that those who believe in the revelation from God in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament founded upon the Old, should study the great ethnic religions in the light derived from the Bible."

Rev. James S. Dennis, D.D., long a Missionary of the Presbyterian Mission in Beyrout, Syria, says in the same connection: "The great missionary movement of our age has brought us face to face with problems and conflicts which are far more deep and serious than those which confront evangelistic efforts in our own land, and it is of the highest importance that the Church at home should know as fully as possible the peculiar and profound difficulties of work in foreign fields. These ancient religions of the East are behind intrenchments, and they are prepared to make a desperate resistance. Those who have never come into close contact with their adherents, and discovered by experience the difficulty of dislodging them and convincing them of the truth of the Gospel, may very properly misunderstand the work of the foreign missionary and wonder at his apparent failure, or at least his slow progress. But I wonder at the success attained in the foreign field, and consider it far more glorious and remarkable than it is generally accounted to be. A fuller acquaintance with the strength, and resources, and local eclat, and worldly advantages of these false religions, will give the Church at home greater patience and faith in the great work of evangelizing the nations." [6]

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A specific reason for the study of the non-Christian religions is found in the changes which our intercourse with Eastern nations has already wrought. With our present means of intercommunication we are brought face to face with them, and the contact of our higher vitality has aroused them from the comparative slumber of ages. Even our missionary efforts have given new vigor to the resistance which must be encountered. We have trained up a generation of men to a higher intellectual activity, and to a more earnest spirit of inquiry, and they are by no means all won over to the Christian faith. And there are thousands in India whom a Government education has left with no real faith of any kind, but whose pride of race and venerable customs is raised to a higher degree than ever. They have learned something of Christianity; they have also studied their own national systems; they have become especially familiar with all that our own sceptics have written against Christianity; still further, they have added to their intellectual equipment all that Western apologists have said of the superiority of the Oriental faiths. They are thus armed at every point, and they are using our own English tongue and all our facilities for publication. How is the young missionary, who knows nothing of their systems or the real points of comparison, to deal with such men? It is very true that not all ranks of Hindus are educated; there are millions who know nothing of any religion beyond the lowest forms of superstition, and to these we owe the duty of a simple and plain presentation of Christ and Him crucified; but in every community where the missionary is likely to live there are men of the higher class just named; and besides, professional critics and opposers are now employed to harass the bazaar preacher with perplexing questions, which are soon heard from the lips of the common people. A young missionary recently wrote of the surprise which he felt when a low caste man, almost without clothing, met him with arguments from Professor Huxley.

Missionary Boards have sometimes sent out a specialist, and in some sense a champion, who should deal with the more intelligent classes of the heathen. But such a plan is fraught with disadvantages. What is needed is a thorough preparation in all missionaries, and that involves an indispensable knowledge of the forces to be met. The power of the press is no longer a monopoly of Christian lands. The Arya Somaj, of India, is now using it, both in the vernacular and in the English, in its bitter and often scurrilous attacks. One of its tracts recently sent to me contained an English epitome of the arguments of Thomas Paine. The secular papers of Japan present in almost every issue some discussion on the comparative merits of Christianity, Buddhism, Evolution, and Theosophy, and many of the young native ministry who at first received the truth unquestioningly as a child receives it from his mother, are now calling for men whom they can follow as leaders in their struggle with manifold error.[7]



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Even Mohammedans are at last employing the press instead of the sword. Newspapers in Constantinople are exhorting the faithful to send forth missionaries to “fortify Africa against the whiskey and gunpowder of Christian commerce, by proclaiming the higher ethical principles of the Koran.” Great institutions of learning are also maintained as the special propaganda of the Oriental religions. El Azar, established at Cairo centuries ago, now numbers ten thousand students, and these when trained go forth to all Arabic speaking countries.[8] The Sanskrit colleges and monasteries of Benares number scarcely less than four thousand students,[9] who are being trained in the Sankhyan or the Vedanta philosophy, that they may go back to their different provinces and maintain with new vigor the old faiths against the aggressions of Christianity. And in Kioto, the great religious centre of Japan, we find over against the Christian college of the American Board of Missions, a Buddhist university with a Japanese graduate of Oxford as its president. In a great school at Tokio, also, Buddhist teachers, aided by New England Unitarians, are maintaining the superiority of Buddhism over Western Christianity as a religion for Japan.[10]

Another reason why the missionary should study the false systems is found in the greatly diversified forms which these systems present in different lands and different ages. And just here it will be seen that a partial knowledge will not meet the demand. It might be even misleading. Buddhism, for example, has assumed an endless variety of forms—now appearing as a system of the baldest atheism, and now presenting an approximate theism. Gautama was certainly atheistic, and he virtually denied the existence of the human soul. But in the northern development of his system, theistic conceptions sprang up. A sort of trinity had appeared by the seventh century A.D., and by the tenth century a supreme and celestial Buddha had been discovered, from whom all other Buddhas were emanations. To-day there are at least twelve Buddhist sects in Japan, of which some are mystical, others pantheistic, while two hold a veritable doctrine of salvation by faith.[11]

China has several types of Buddhism, and Mongolia, Thibet, Nepaul, Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam present each some special features of the system. How important that one should understand these differences in order to avoid blundering, and to wisely adapt his efforts! In India, under the common generic name of Hinduism, there are also many sects: worshippers of Vishnu, worshippers of Siva, worshippers of Krishna. There are Sikhs, and Jains, and devil worshippers; among the Dravidian and other pre-Aryan tribes there are victims of every conceivable superstition.



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Now, a missionary must know something of these faiths if he would fight with “weapons of precision.” Paul, in becoming all things to all men, knew at least the differences between them. He preached the gospel with a studied adaptation. He tells us that he so strove as to win, and “not as those who beat the air.” How alert were the combatants in the arena from which his simile is borrowed! How closely each athlete scanned his man, watched his every motion, knew if possible his every thought and impulse! Much more, in winning the souls of darkened and misguided men, should we learn the inmost workings of their minds, their habits of thought, and the nature of the errors which are to be dislodged.

But how shall the false systems of religions be studied? First, there should be a spirit of entire candor. Truth is to be sought always, and at any cost; but in this case there is everything to be gained and nothing to be lost by the Christian teacher, and he can well afford to be just. Our divine Exemplar never hesitated to acknowledge that which was good in men of whatever nationality or creed. He could appreciate the faith of Roman or Syro-Phoenician. He could see merit in a Samaritan as well as in a Jew, and could raise even a penitent publican to the place of honor. It was only the Pharisees who hesitated to admit the truth, until they could calculate the probable effect of their admissions.

The very best experience of missionaries has been found in the line of Christ’s example. “The surest way to bring a man to acknowledge his errors,” says Bishop Bloomfield, “is to give him full credit for whatever he had learned of the truth.”[12] “What should we think,” says a keen observer of the work of missions—“what should we think of an engineer who, in attempting to rear a light-house on a sandbar, should fail to acknowledge as a godsend any chance outcropping of solid rock to which he might fasten his stays?”[13]

But in urging the duty of candor, I assume that an absolute freedom from bias is impossible on either side. It is sometimes amusing to witness the assurance with which professed agnostics assume that they, and they alone, look upon questions of comparative religion with an unbiased and judicial mind. They have no belief, they say, in any religion, and are therefore entirely without prejudice. But are they? Has the man who has forsaken the faith of his fathers and is deeply sensible of an antagonism between him and the great majority of those about him—has he no interest in trying to substantiate his position, and justify his hostility to the popular faith? Of all men he is generally the most prejudiced and the most bitter. We freely admit that we set out with a decided preference for one religious system above all others, but we insist that candor is possible, though an absolutely indifferent judgment is out of the question. Paul, who quoted to the Athenians their own poet, was fair-minded, and yet no man ever arraigned heathenism so terribly as he, and none was so intensely interested in the faith which he preached.

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Archbishop Trench, in discussing the exaggerations from which a careful study of the Oriental religions would doubtless save us, says, "There is one against which we are almost unwilling to say a word. I mean the exaggeration of those who, in a deep devotion to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, count themselves bound, by their allegiance to Him, to take up a hostile attitude to everything not distinctly and avowedly Christian, as though any other position were a treachery to his cause, and a surrender of his exclusive right to the authorship of all the good which is in the world. In this temper we may dwell only on the guilt and misery and defilements, the wounds and bruises and putrefying sores of the heathen world; or if aught better is brought under our eye, we may look askant and suspiciously upon it, as though all recognition of it were a disparagement of something better. And so we may come to regard the fairest deeds of unbaptized men as only more splendid sins. We may have a short but decisive formula by which to try and by which to condemn them. These deeds, we may say, were not of faith, and therefore they could not please God; the men that wrought them knew not Christ, and therefore their work was worthless—hay, straw, and stubble, to be utterly burned up in the day of the trial of every man's work.

"Yet there is indeed a certain narrowness of view, out of which alone the language of so sweeping a condemnation could proceed. Our allegiance to Christ, as the one fountain of light and life for the world, demands that we affirm none to be good but Him, allow no goodness save that which has proceeded from Him; but it does not demand that we deny goodness, because of the place where we find it, because we meet it, a garden tree, in the wilderness. It only requires that we claim this for Him who planted, and was willing that it should grow there; whom it would itself have gladly owned as its author, if, belonging to a happier time, it could have known Him by his name, whom in part it knew by his power.

"We do not make much of a light of nature when we admit a righteousness in those to whom in the days of their flesh the Gospel had not come. We only affirm that the Word, though not as yet dwelling among us, yet being the 'light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' had also lighted them. Some glimpses of his beams gilded their countenances, and gave to these whatever brightness they wore; and in recognizing this brightness we are ascribing honor to Him, and not to them; glorifying the grace of God, and not the virtues of man." [14]

In marked contrast with this, and tending to an extreme, is the following, from the pen of Bishop Beveridge. It is quoted by Max Mueller, in the opening volume of "The Sacred Books of the East," as a model of candor.



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"The general inclinations which are naturally implanted in my soul to some religion, it is impossible for me to shift off; but there being such a multiplicity of religions in the world, I desire now seriously to consider with myself which of them all to restrain these my general inclinations to. And the reason of this my inquiry is not, that I am in the least dissatisfied with that religion I have already embraced; but because 'tis natural for all men to have an overbearing opinion and esteem for that particular religion they are born and bred-up in. That, therefore, I may not seem biased by the prejudice of education, I am resolved to prove and examine them all; that I may see and hold fast to that which is best.... Indeed, there was never any religion so barbarous and diabolical, but it was preferred above all other religions whatsoever by them that did profess it; otherwise they would not have professed it.... And why, say they, may you not be mistaken as well as we? Especially when there are, at least, six to one against your Christian religion; all of which think they serve God aright; and expect happiness thereby as well as you.... And hence it is that in my looking out for the truest religion, being conscious to myself how great an ascendancy Christianity holds over me beyond the rest, as being that religion whereunto I was born and baptized; that the supreme authority has enjoined and my parents educated me in; that which everyone I meet withal highly approves of, and which I myself have, by a long-continued profession, made almost natural to me; I am resolved to be more jealous and suspicious of this religion than of the rest, and be sure not to entertain it any longer without being convinced by solid and substantial arguments of the truth and certainty of it. That, therefore, I may make diligent and impartial inquiry into all religions and so be sure to find out the best, I shall for a time look upon myself as one not at all interested in any particular religion whatsoever, much less in the Christian religion; but only as one who desires, in general, to serve and obey Him that made me in a right manner, and thereby to be made partaker of that happiness my nature is capable of." [15]

Second, in studying the false systems it is important to distinguish between religion and ethics. In the sphere of ethics the different faiths of men may find much common ground, while in their religious elements they may be entirely true or utterly false. The teachings of Confucius, though agnostic, presented a moral code which places the relations of the family and state on a very firm basis. And the very highest precepts of Buddhism belong to the period in which it was virtually atheistic. Many great and noble truths have been revealed to mankind through the conscience and the understanding, and these truths have found expression in the proverbs or ethical maxims of all races. To this extent God has nowhere left himself without witness. But all this is



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quite apart from a divinely revealed religion which may be cherished or be wholly lost. The golden rule is found not only in the New Testament, but negatively at least in the Confucian classics;<sup>[16]</sup> and the Shastras of the Hindus present it in both the positive and the negative form. And the still higher grace of doing good to those who injure us, was proclaimed by Laotze, five hundred years before Christ preached the Sermon on the Mount.

The immense superiority of the ethical standard in Christianity, lies in its harmony and completeness. Confucius taught the active virtues of life, Laotze those of a passive kind; Christianity inculcates both. In heathenism ethical truths exist in fragments—mere half truths, like the broken and scattered remains of a temple once beautiful but now destroyed. They hold no relation to any high religious purpose, because they have no intelligent relation to God. Christian ethics begin with our relations to God as supreme, and they embrace the present life and the world to come. The symmetry of the divine precept, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself,” finds no counterpart in the false religions of the world. Nowhere else, not even in Buddhism, is found the perfect law of love. The great secret of power in Christianity is God’s unspeakable love to men in Christ; and the reflex of that love is the highest and purest ever realized in human hearts.

Thirdly, the false systems should be studied by the Christian missionary, not for their own sakes so much as for an ulterior purpose, and they should be studied in constant comparison with the religion which it is his business to proclaim. His aim is not that of a savant. Let us not disguise it: he is mainly endeavoring to gain a more thorough preparation for his own great work. The professional scholar at Oxford or Leipsic might condemn this acknowledged bias—this pursuit of truth as a means and not as an end—but if he would be entirely frank, he would often find himself working in the interest of a linguistic theory, or a pet hypothesis of social science. It was in this spirit that Spencer and Darwin have searched the world for facts to support their systems.<sup>[17]</sup>

I repeat, it is enough for the missionary that he shall be thoroughly candid. He may exercise the burning zeal of Paul for the Gospel which he proclaims, if he will also exercise his clear discrimination, his scrupulous fairness, his courtesy, and his tact. Let him not forget that he is studying religions comparatively; he should proceed with the Bible in one hand, and should examine the true and the false together. Contrasts will appear step by step as he advances, and the great truths of Christianity will stand out in brighter radiance, for the shadows of the background. If the question be asked, when and where shall the missionary candidate study the false systems, I answer at once; before he leaves his native land; and I assign

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three principal reasons. First: The study of a new and difficult language should engross his attention when he reaches his field. This will prove one of the most formidable tasks of his life, and it will demand resolute, concentrated, and prolonged effort. Second: In gaining access to the people, studying their ways and winning their confidence, the missionary will find great advantage in having gained some previous knowledge of their habits of thought and the intricacies of their beliefs. Third: The means and appliances of study are far greater here at home than on the mission fields. A very serious difficulty with most missionaries is the want of books on special topics; they have no access to libraries, and if one has imagined that he can best understand the faiths of the people by personal contact with them, he will soon learn with surprise how little he can gain from them, and how little they themselves know of their own systems. Those who do know have learned for the purpose of baffling the missionary instead of helping him. The accumulation and the arrangement of anything like a systematic knowledge of heathen systems has cost the combined effort of many missionaries and many Oriental scholars; and now, after three generations have pursued these studies, it is still felt that very much is to be learned from literatures yet to be translated. Such as there are, are best found in the home libraries.

Let us for a few moments consider the question how far those who are not to become missionaries may be profited by a study of false systems. To a large extent, the considerations already urged will apply to them also, but there are still others which are specially important to public teachers here at home. Dean Murray, in an able article published in the "Homiletic Review" of September, 1890, recommended to active and careworn pastors a continued study of the Greek classics, as calculated to refresh and invigorate the mind, and increase its capacity for the duties of whatever sphere. All that he said of the Greek may also be said of the Hindu classics, with the added consideration that in the latter we are dealing with the living issues of the day. Sir Monier Williams, in comparing the two great Epics of the Hindus with those of Homer, names many points of superiority in the former.[18] It is safe to say that no poems of any other land have ever exercised so great a spell over so many millions of mankind as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, of India, and no other production is listened to with such delight as the story of Rama as it is still publicly read at the Hindu festivals.



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Of philosophies, no system of India has approached so near to veritable divine revelation as that of Plato, but in variety and subtlety, and in their far-reaching influence upon human life, the Indian schools, especially the Vedanta, are scarcely excelled to this day. And they are *applied* philosophies; they constitute the religion of the people. Max Mueller has said truly that no other line of investigation is so fascinating as that which deals with the long and universal struggle of mankind to find out God, and to solve the mystery of their relations to him. Unfortunately, human history has dealt mainly with wars and intrigues, and the rise and fall of dynasties; but compared with these coarse and superficial elements, how much more interesting and instructive to trace in all races of men the common and ceaseless yearnings after some solution of life's mysteries! One is stirred with a deeper, broader sympathy for mankind when he witnesses this universal sense of dependence, this fear and trembling before the powers of an unseen world, this pitiful procession of unblest millions ever trooping on toward the goal of death and oblivion. And from this standpoint, as from no other, may one measure the greatness and glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

To my mind there is nothing more pathetic than the spectacle of world-wide fetichism. It is not to be contemplated with derision, but with profoundest sympathy. We all remember the pathos of Scott's picture of his Highland heroine, with brain disordered by unspeakable grief, beguiling her woes with childish ornaments of "gaudy broom" and plumes from the eagle's wing. But sadder far is the spectacle of millions of men made for fellowship with God, building their hopes on the divinity dwelling in an amulet of tiger's teeth or serpent's fangs or curious shells. And it ought to enlarge our natures with a Christ-like sympathy when we contemplate those dark and desperate faiths which are but nightmares of the soul, which see in all the universe only malevolent spirits to be appeased, which, looking heavenward for a father's face, see, as Richter expressed it, "only a death's head with bottomless, empty sockets" instead of a loving smile.[19]

And what a field do the greater but equally false systems present for the study of the human mind and heart! How was it that the simple nature worship of the Indo-Aryans grew into the vast deposit of modern Hinduism, and developed those social customs which have become walls of adamant? How could Buddhism grow out of such a soil and finally cast its spell over so many peoples? What were the elements of power which enabled the great sage of China to rear a social and political fabric which has survived for so many centuries? How was it that Islam gained its conquests, and what is the secret of that dominion which it still holds? These surely are questions worthy of those who are called to deal with human thought and human destiny. And when by comparison we find the grand differentials which raise Christianity infinitely above them all, we shall have gained the power of presenting its truths more clearly and more convincingly to the minds and hearts of men.

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There are some specific advantages flowing from the study of other religions of which I will give little more than an enumeration.

1. It impresses us with the universality of some more or less distinct conception of God. I am aware that from time to time explorers imagine that they have found a race of men who have no notion of God, but in almost every instance subsequent investigation has found a religious belief. Such mistakes were made concerning the aborigines of Australia, the Dyaks of Borneo, the Papuans, the Patagonians, and even the American Indians. The unity of the race finds a new and striking proof in the universality of religion.
2. The study of false systems brings to light an almost unanimous testimony for the existence of a vague primeval monotheism, and thus affords a strong presumptive corroboration of the Scriptural doctrine of man's apostasy from the worship of the true God.
3. The clearest vindication of the severities of the Old Testament Theocracy, in its wars of extermination against the Canaanites and Phoenicians, is to be found in a careful study of the foul and cruel types of heathenism which those nations carried with them wherever their colonies extended. A religion which enjoined universal prostitution, and led thus to sodomy and the burning of young children in the fires of Moloch, far exceeded the worst heathenism of Africa or the islands of the Pacific. The Phoenician settlements on the Mediterranean have not even yet recovered from the moral blight of that religion; and had such a cultus been allowed to spread over all Europe and the world, not even a second Deluge could have cleansed the earth of its defilement. The extermination of the Canaanites, when considered as a part of one great scheme for establishing in that same Palestine a purer and nobler faith, and sending forth thence, not Phoenician corruption, but the Gospel of Peace to all lands, becomes a work of mercy to the human race.
4. The ethics of the heathen will be found to vindicate the doctrines of the Bible. This is a point which should be more thoroughly understood. It has been common to parade the high moral maxims of heathen systems as proofs against the exclusive claims of Christianity. But when carefully considered, the lofty ethical truths found in all sacred books and traditions, corroborate the doctrines of the Scriptures. They condemn the nations "who hold the truth in unrighteousness." They enforce the great doctrine that by their own consciences all mankind are convicted of sin, and are in need of a vicarious righteousness,—a full and free salvation by a divine power. My own experience has been, and it is corroborated by that of many others, that very many truths of the Gospel, when seen from the stand-point of heathenism, stand out with a clearness never seen before.



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Many prudential reasons like those which we have given for the study of false systems by missionaries, pertain also to those who remain at home. Both are concerned in the same cause, and both encounter the same assailments of our common faith. We are all missionaries in an important sense: we watch the conflict from afar, but we are concerned in all its issues. The bulletins of its battle-fields are no longer confined to missionary literature; they are found in the daily secular press, and they are discussed with favorable or unfavorable comments in the monthly magazines. The missionary enterprise has come to attract great attention: it has many friends, and also many foes, here at home; it is misrepresented by scoffers at our doors. The high merits of heathen systems, set forth with every degree of exaggeration, pass into the hands of Christian families, in books and magazines and secular papers. Apostles of infidelity are sent out to heathen countries to gather weapons against the truth. Natives of various Oriental lands, once taught in our mission schools perhaps, but still heathen, are paraded on our lecture platforms, where they entertain us with English and American arguments in support of their heathen systems and against Christianity. Young pastors, in the literary clubs of their various communities, are surprised by being called to discuss plausible papers on Buddhism, which some fellow-member has contributed, and they are expected to defend the truth. Or some young parishioner has been fascinated by a plausible Theosophist, or has learned from Robert Elsmere that there are other religions quite as pure and sacred as our own. Or some chance lecturer has disturbed the community with a discourse on the history of religious myths. And when some anxious member of a church learns that his religious instructor has no help for him on such subjects, that they lie wholly outside of his range, there is apt to be something more than disappointment: there is a loss of confidence.

It is an unfortunate element in the case that error is more welcome in some of our professedly neutral papers than the truth: an article designed to show that Christianity was borrowed from Buddhism or was developed from fetichism will sometimes be welcomed as new sensation, while a reply of half the length may be rejected.

There is something ominous in these facts. Whether the secular press (not all papers are thus unfair) are influenced by partisan hatred of the truth or simply by a reckless regard for whatever is most popular, the facts are equally portentous. And if it be true that such publications are what the people most desire, the outlook for our country is dark indeed. The saddest consideration is that the power of the secular press is so vast and far reaching. When Celsus wrote, books were few. When Voltaire, Hume, and Thomas Paine made their assailments on the Christian faith, the means of spreading the blight of error were comparatively few. But now the accumulated arguments of German infidels for the last half-century may be thrown into a five-cent Sunday paper, whose issue will reach a quarter of a million of copies, which perhaps a million of men and women may read. These articles are copied into a hundred other papers, and they are read in the villages and hamlets; they are read on the ranches and in the mining camps where no sermon is ever heard.



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It is perfectly evident that in an age like this we cannot propagate Christianity under glass. It must grow in the open field where the free winds of heaven shall smite and dissipate every cloud of error that may pass over it, and where its roots shall only strike the deeper for the questionings and conflicts that may often befall it. Error cannot be overcome either by ignoring it or by the cheap but imbecile scolding of an ignorant pulpit.

I cannot express the truth on this point more forcibly than by quoting the trenchant words of Professor Ernest Naville, in his lectures on "Modern Atheism." After having admitted that one, who can keep himself far from the strifes and struggles of modern thought, will find solitude, prayer, and calm activity, pursued under the guidance of conscience, most conducive to unquestioning faith and religious peace, he says: "But we are not masters of our own ways, and the circumstances of the present times impose on us special duties. The barriers which separate the school and the world are everywhere thrown down; everywhere shreds of philosophy, and very often of very bad philosophy, scattered fragments of theological science, and very often of a deplorable theological science, are insinuating themselves into the current literature. There is not a literary review, there is scarcely a political journal, which does not speak on occasion, or without occasion, of the problems relating to our eternal interests. The most sacred beliefs are attacked every day in the organs of public opinion. At such a juncture can men, who preserve faith in their own souls, remain like dumb dogs, or keep themselves shut up in the narrow limits of the schools? Assuredly not. We must descend to the common ground and fight with equal weapons the great battles of thought. For this purpose it is necessary to state questions which run the risk of startling sincerely religious persons. But there is no help for it if we are to combat the adversaries on their own ground; and because it is thus only that we can prove to all that the torrent of negations is but a passing rush of waters, which, fret as they may in their channels, shall be found to have left not so much as a trace of their passage upon the Rock of Ages." The fact that Professor Naville's lectures were delivered in Geneva and Lausanne, to audiences which together numbered over two thousand five hundred people, affords abundant proof that the people are prepared to welcome the relief afforded by a clear and really able discussion of these burning questions. In the ordinary teaching of the pulpit they would be out of place, but every public teacher should be able to deal with them on suitable occasions.

In a single concluding word, the struggle of truth and error has become world-wide. There are no ethnic religions now. There is Christianity in Calcutta, and there is Buddhism in Boston. The line of battle is the parallel that belts the globe. It is not a time for slumber or for mere pious denunciation. There must be no blundering: the warfare must be waged with weapons of precision, and then victory is sure. It is well if our missionary effort of a century has drawn the fire of the enemy; it is well if the time has come to hold up the truth face to face with error, and to fight out and over again the conflict of Elijah and the Priests of Baal.



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### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World*. Macmillan & Co.]

[Footnote 2: The late Professor Moffat, of Princeton Theological Seminary, published a *Comparative History of Religions*, but its field was too broad for a thorough treatment.]

[Footnote 3: *Methodist Quarterly*.]

[Footnote 4: Quoted in *Manual of India Missions*.]

[Footnote 5: *Manual of India Missions*.]

[Footnote 6: Similar views, though in briefer terms, have been presented by Rev. William A.P. Martin, D.D., of Peking; Rev. John L. Nevins, D.D., of Chefoo; Rev. A.P. Happer, D.D., and Rev. B.C. Henry, D.D., of Canton; Professor John Wortabet, M.D., of Beyrout; Rev. Jacob Chamberlain, D.D., Missionary of the Reformed Church in Madras; Rev. Z.J. Jones, D.D., Missionary of the American M.E. Church at Bareilly, India; Rev. K.C. Chatterjee and Ram Chandra Bose, both converts from high caste Hinduism and both eminent ministers of the Gospel in India; and Rev. E.W. Blyden, D.D., the accomplished African scholar of Liberia.]

[Footnote 7: The *Japan Mail* of September 30, 1891, in reviewing the progress of religious and philosophic discussion as carried on by the native press of the Empire, says: "The Buddhist literature of the season shows plainly the extent to which the educated members of the (Buddhist) priesthood are seeking to enlarge their grasp by contact with Western philosophy and religious thought. We happen to know that a prominent priest of the Shinsu sect is deeply immersed in Comte's humanitarianism. In *Kyogaku-roushu* (a native paper) are published instalments of Spencer's philosophy. Another paper, the *Hauseikwai*, has an article urging the desirability of a general union of all the (Buddhist) sects, such as Colonel Olcott brought about in India between the northern and the southern Buddhists."]

[Footnote 8: *Leaves from an Egyptian Note-book*.]

[Footnote 9: Papers of Rev. Mr. Hewlett in the *Indian Evangelical Review*.]

[Footnote 10: In an address given in Tokio, by Rev. Mr. Knapp, of Boston, Buddhists in Japan were advised to build their religion of the future upon their own foundations, and not upon the teachings of Western propagandists.]

[Footnote 11: *The Twelve Buddhist Sects of Japan*, by Bunyiu Nanjio, Oxon.]

[Footnote 12: Quoted in *Manual of India Missions*.]



[Footnote 13: Quoted in *Manual of India Missions*.]

[Footnote 14: *Hulsean Lectures*, 1846.]

[Footnote 15: *Private Thoughts on Religion*, Part I., Article 2.]

[Footnote 16: Confucius not only taught that men should not do to others what they would not have done to them, but when one of his disciples asked him to name one word which should represent the whole duty of man, he replied "Reciprocity."]



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[Footnote 17: Whoever will read the Preface of Mr. Spencer's work on Sociology will be surprised at the means which have been used in collecting and verifying supposed facts; a careful perusal of the book will show that all classes of testimony have been accepted, so far as they were favorable. Adventurers, reporters, sailors, and that upon the briefest and most casual observation, have been deemed capable of interpreting the religious beliefs of men. Even Peschel doubts many of their conclusions.]

[Footnote 18: See *Indian Wisdom*.]

[Footnote 19: Archbishop Trench, after speaking in his Hulsean lectures of the advantages which we may gain from an earnest study of the struggles of thoughtful men, who amid heathen darkness have groped after a knowledge of the true God, and of the gratitude which we ought to feel who have received a more sure word of prophecy, adds in words of rare beauty: "And perhaps it shall seem to us as if that star in the natural heavens which guided those Eastern sages from their distant home, was but the symbol of many a star which, in the world's mystical night, such as, being faithfully followed, availed to lead humble and devout hearts from far-off regions of superstition and error, till they knelt beside the cradle of the Babe of Bethlehem, and saw all their weary wanderings repaid in a moment, and all their desires finding a perfect fulfilment in Him."]

## LECTURE II.

### THE METHODS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN DEALING WITH HEATHENISM

The coincidences of our present conquest of the non-Christian races with that to which the Apostolic Church was called are numerous and striking. Not even one hundred years ago was the struggle with heathen error so similar to that of the early Church.

To a great extent the missionary efforts of the mediaeval centuries encountered only crude systems, which it was comparatively easy to overcome. The rude tribes of Northern Europe were converted by the Christianity of the later Roman Empire, even though they were conquerors. Their gods of war and brute force did not meet all the demands of life. As a source of hope and comfort, their religion had little to be compared with the Christian faith, and as to philosophy they had none. They had inherited the simple nature worship which was common to all branches of the Aryan race, and they had expanded it into various ramifications of polytheism; but they had not fortified it with subtle speculations like those of the Indo-Aryans, nor had their mythologies become intrenched in inveterate custom, and the national pride which attends an advanced civilization.

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At a later day Christian missionaries in Britain found the Norse religion of the Saxons, Jutes, and Angles, scarcely holding the confidence of either rulers or subjects. They had valued their gods chiefly for the purposes of war, and they had not always proved reliable. The king of Northumbria, like Clovis of France, had vowed to exchange his deities for the God of the Christians if victory should be given him on a certain battle-field; and when he had assembled his thanes to listen to a discussion between the missionary Paulinus and the priests of Woden on the comparative merits of their respective faiths, the high priest frankly admitted his dissatisfaction with a religion which he had found utterly disappointing and useless; and when other chief counsellors had given the same testimony, and a unanimous vote had been taken to adopt the Christian faith, he was the first to commence the destruction of the idols.[20]

The still earlier missionaries among the Druid Celts of Britain and France, though they found in Druidism a more elaborate faith than that of the Norsemen, encountered no such resistance as we find in the great religious systems of our day. Where can we point to so easy a conquest as that of Patrick in Ireland, or that of the Monks of Iona among the Picts and Scots?

The Druids claimed that they already had many things in common with the Christian doctrines,[21] and what was a still stronger element in the case, they made common cause with the Christians against the wrongs inflicted on both by pagan Rome. The Roman emperors were not more determined to extirpate the hated and, as they thought, dangerous influences of Christianity, than they were to destroy every vestige of Druidism as their only hope of conquering the invincible armies of Boadicea. And thus the mutual experience of common sufferings opened a wide door for the advancement of Christian truth.

The conquests of Welsh and Irish missionaries in Burgundy, Switzerland, and *Germany*, encountered no elaborate book religions, and no profound philosophies. They had to deal with races of men who were formidable only with weapons of warfare, and who, intent chiefly on conquest and migration, had few institutions and no written historic records. The peaceful sceptre of the truth was a new force in their experience, and the sympathetic and self-denying labors of a few missionaries tamed the fierce Vikings to whom Britain had become a prey, and whose incursions even the armies of Charlemagne could not resist.

How different is our struggle with the races now under the sceptre of Islam, for example—inflated as they are with the pride of wide conquest, and looking contemptuously upon that Christian faith which it was their early mission to sweep away as a form of idolatry! How different is our task in India, which boasts the antiquity of the noble Sanskrit and its sacred literature, and claims, as the true representative of the Aryan race, to have given to western nations



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their philosophy, their religion, and their civilization! How much more difficult is our encounter with Confucianism, which claims to have laid the foundations of the most stable structure of social and political institutions that the world has ever known, and which to-day, after twenty-five centuries of trial, appeals to the intellectual pride of all intelligent classes in a great empire of four hundred millions! And finally, how different is our task with Buddhism, so mystical and abstruse, so lofty in many of its precepts, and yet so cold and thin, so flexible and easily adapted, and therefore so varied and many sided! The religious systems with which we are now confronted find their counterparts only in the heathenism with which the early Church had to deal many centuries ago; and for this reason the history of those early struggles is full of practical instruction for us now. How did the early Church succeed in its great conquest? What methods were adopted, and with what measures of success?

In one respect there is a wide difference in the two cases. The Apostles were attempting to convert their conquerors. They belonged to the vanquished race; they were of a despised nationality. The early fathers also were subjects of Pagan powers. Inasmuch as the Roman emperors claimed divine honors, there was an element of treason in their propagandism. The terrible persecutions which so long devastated the early Church found their supposed justification in the plea of self-defence against a system which threatened to subvert cherished and time-honored institutions. Candid writers, like Archdeacon Farrar, admit that Christianity did hasten the overthrow of the Roman Empire.

But we find no conquering powers in our pathway. Christianity and Christian civilization have become dominant in the earth. The weakness of the Christian Church in its conquests now is not in being baffled and crippled by tyranny and persecution, but rather in the temptation to arrogance and the abuse of superior power, in the overbearing spirit shown in the diplomacy of Christian nations and the unscrupulous aggressions of their commerce. There is also a further contrast in the fact that in the early days the advantages of frugality and simple habits of life were on the side of the missionaries. Roman society especially was beginning to suffer that decay which is the inevitable consequence of long-continued luxury, while the Church observed temperance in all things and excelled in the virtues which always tend to moral and social victory.[22]

On the other hand, we who are the ambassadors to the heathen of to-day, are ourselves exposed to the dangers which result from wealth and excessive luxury. Our grade of life, our scale of expenditure, even the style in which our missionaries live, excites the amazement of the frugal heathen to whom they preach. And as for the Church at home, it is hardly safe for a Persian or a Chinaman to see it. Everyone who



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visits this wonderful eldorado carries back such romantic impressions as excite in others, not so much the love of the Gospel as the love of mammon. When the Church went forth in comparative poverty, and with an intense moral earnestness, to preach righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come; when those who were wealthy gave all to the poor—like Anthony of Egypt, Jerome, Ambrose, and Francis of Assisi—and in simple garments bore the Gospel to those who were surfeited with luxuries and pleasures, and were sick of a life of mere indulgence, then the truth of the Gospel conquered heathenism with all that the world could give. But whether a Church in the advanced civilization of our land and time, possessed of enormous wealth, enjoying every luxury, and ever anxious to gain more and more of this present world, can convert heathen races who deem themselves more frugal, more temperate, and less worldly than we, is a problem which remains to be solved. We have rare facilities, but we have great drawbacks. God's grace can overcome even our defects, and He has promised success.

But in the proud intellectual character of the systems encountered respectively by the ancient and by the modern Church, there are remarkable parallels. The supercilious pride of Brahminism, or the lofty scorn of Mohammedanism, is quite equal to that self-sufficient Greek philosophy in whose eyes the Gospel was the merest foolishness. And the immovable self-righteousness of the Stoics has its counterpart in the Confucianism of the Chinese literati. A careful comparison of the six schools of Hindu philosophy with the various systems of Greece and Rome, will fill the mind with surprise at the numerous correspondences—one might almost say identities. And that surprise is the greater from the fact that no proof exists that either has been borrowed from the other.

The atomic theory of creation advanced by Lucretius is found also in the Nyaya philosophy of the Hindus. The pessimism of Pliny and Marcus Aurelius was much more elaborately worked out by Gautama. The Hindus had their categories and their syllogisms as well as Aristotle. The conception of a dual principle in deity which the early Church traced in all the religious systems of Egypt, Phoenicia, and Assyria, and whose influence poisoned the life of the Phoenician colonies, and was so corrupting to the morals of Greece and Rome, was also elaborated by the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila, and it has plunged Hindu society into as deep a degradation as could be found in Pompeii or Herculaneum.[23] The Indian philosophy partook far more of the pantheistic element than that of Greece. Plato and Aristotle had clearer conceptions of the personality of the deity and of the distinct and responsible character of the human soul than any school of Hindu philosophers—certainly clearer than the Vedantists, and their ethics involved a stronger sense of sin.

German philosophy has borrowed its pantheism from India rather than from Greece, and in its most shadowy developments it has never transcended the ancient Vedantism of Vyasa.



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As in the early centuries, so in our time, different systems of religion have been commingled and interwoven into protean forms of error more difficult to understand and dislodge than any one of the faiths and philosophies of which they were combined. As the Alexandrian Jews intertwined the teachings of Judaism and Platonism; as Manichaeans and Gnostics corrupted the truths of the Old and New Testaments with ideas borrowed from Persian mysticism; as various eclectic systems gathered up all types of thought which the wide conquests of the Roman Empire brought together, and mingled them with Christian teachings; so now the increased intercommunication, and the quickened intellectual activity of our age have led to the fusion of different systems, ancient and modern, in a negative and nerveless religion of humanity. We now have in the East not only Indian, but Anglo-Indian, speculations. The unbelieving Calcutta graduate has Hegel and Spinoza interwoven with his Vedantism, and the eclectic leader of the Brahmo Somaj, while placing Christ at the head of the prophets and recognizing the authority of all sacred bibles of the races, called on Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Mohammedans to unite in one theistic church of the New Dispensation in India. Not even the old Gnostics could present so striking an admixture as that of the Arya Somaj. It has appropriated many of those Christian ethics which have been learned from a century of contact with missionaries and other Christian residents. It has approved the more humane customs and reforms of Christendom, denouncing caste, and the degradation of woman. It has repudiated the corrupt rites and the degrading superstitions of Hinduism. At the same time its hatred of the Christian faith is most bitter and intense.

And there are other alliances, not a few, between the East and the West. In India and Japan the old Buddhism is compounded with American Spiritualism and with modern Evolution, under a new application of the ancient name of Theosophy. In Japan representatives of advanced Unitarianism are exhorting the Japanese Buddhists to build the religion of the future on their old foundations, and to avoid the propagandists of western Christianity.

The bland and easy-going catholicity which professes so much in our day, which embraces all faiths and unfaiths in one sweet emulsion of meaningless negations, which patronizes the Christ and His doctrines, and applies the nomenclature of Christianity to doctrines the very opposite of its teachings, finds a counterpart in the smooth and vapid compromises of the old Gnostics. "Gnosticism," says Uhlhorn, "combined Greek philosophies, Jewish theology, and ancient Oriental theosophy, thus forming great systems of speculative thought, all with the object of displaying the world's development. From a pantheistic First Cause, Gnosticism traced the emanation of a series of aeons—beings of Light. The source of evil was supposed to be matter, which in this material world holds light



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in captivity. To liberate the light and thus redeem the world, Christ came, and thus Christianity was added as the crowning and victorious element in this many-sided system of speculation. But Christ was regarded not so much as a Saviour of individual souls as an emancipator of a disordered kosmos, and the system which seemed to accord great honor to Christianity threatened to destroy its life and power." So, according to some of our Modern Systems, men are to find their future salvation in the grander future of the race.[24]

Not only do we encounter mixtures of truth and error, but we witness similar attempts to prove that whatever is best in Christianity was borrowed from heathenism. Porphyry and others maintained that Pythagoras and Theosebius had anticipated many of the attributes and deeds of Christ, and Philostratus was prompted by the wife of Severus to write a history of Appolonius of Tyana which should match the life of Christ. And in precisely the same way it has been variously claimed in our time that the story of Christ's birth, childhood, and ministry were borrowed from Buddha and from Krishna, and that the whole conception of his vicarious suffering for the good of men is a clever imitation of Prometheus Bound. Now, in the earlier conflict it was important to know the facts on both sides in order to meet these allegations of Porphyry, Marinus, and others, and it is equally important to understand the precise ground on which similar charges are made with equal assurance now.[25] The very same old battles are to be fought over again, both with philosophy and with legend.

And it is very evident that, with so many points of similarity between the early struggle of Christianity with heathenism and that of our own time, it is quite worth our labor to inquire what were the general methods then pursued. Then victory crowned the efforts of the Church. That which humanly speaking seemed impossible, was actually accomplished. From our finite standpoint, no more preposterous command was ever given than that which Christ gave to his little company of disciples gathered in the mountains of Galilee, or that last word before his ascension on Mt. Olivet, in which He placed under their responsible stewardship, not only Jerusalem, but all Judea and Samaria, and the "uttermost parts of the earth." The disciples were without learning or social influence, or political power. They had no wealth and few facilities, and so far as they knew there were no open doors. They were hated by their Jewish countrymen, ridiculed by the ubiquitous and cultured Greeks, and frowned upon by the conquering powers of Rome. How then did they succeed? How was it that in three or four centuries they had virtually emptied the Roman Pantheon of its heathen deities, and had gained the sceptre of the empire and the world?

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It is easy to misapprehend the forces which won the victory. The disciples first chosen to found the Church were fishermen, but that affords no warrant for the belief that only untutored men were employed in the early Church, or for the inference that the Salvation Army are to gain the conquest now. They were inspired; these are not; and a few only were chosen, with the very aim of setting at naught the intolerant wisdom of the Pharisees. But when the Gospel was to be borne to heathen races, to the great nations whose arrogance was proportionate to their learning and their power, a very different man was selected. Saul of Tarsus had almost every needed qualification seen from a human point of view. Standing, as he must, between the stiff bigotry of Judaism and the subtleties of Greek philosophy, he was fortunately familiar with both. He was a man of rare courtesy, and yet of matchless courage. Whether addressing a Jewish governor or the assembled philosophers and counsellors of Athens, he evinced an unflinching tact. He knew how to conciliate even a common mob of heathen idolators and when to defy a high priest, or plead the immunities of his Roman citizenship before a Roman proconsul.

In tracing the methods of the early Church in dealing with heathenism, we begin, therefore, with Paul; for although he was differentiated from all modern parallels by the fact that he was inspired and endowed with miraculous power, yet that does not invalidate the force of those general principles of action which he illustrated. He was the first and greatest of all missionaries, and through all time it will be safe and profitable to study his characteristics and his methods. He showed the value of thorough training in his own faith, and of a full understanding of all the errors he was to contend with. He could reason with Jews out of their own Scriptures, or substantiate his position with Greeks by citing their own poets. He was certainly uncompromising in maintaining the sovereignty of the one God, Jehovah, but he was not afraid to admit that in their blind way the heathen were also groping after the same supreme Father of all. The unknown God at Athens he accepted as an adumbration of Him whom he proclaimed, and every candid reader must admit that in quoting the words of Aratus, which represent Zeus as the supreme creator whose offspring we are, he conveys the impression of a real resemblance, if not a partial and obscured identity.

The essential principle here is that Paul frankly acknowledged whatever glimpses of truth he found in heathen systems, and made free use of them in presenting the fuller and clearer knowledge revealed in the Gospel. No man ever presented a more terrible arraignment of heathenism than that which he makes in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, and yet, with marvellous discrimination he proceeds, in the second chapter, to show how much of truth God has imparted to the understandings and the consciences of all men.



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And he seems to imply the Holy Spirit's regenerative work through Christ's atonement, when he maintains that whoever shall, "by patient continuance in well doing, seek glory and immortality," to him shall "eternal life" be given; but "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." Peter was not prepared to be a missionary till he had been divested of his Jewish narrowness by witnessing the power of grace in the Roman centurion at Cesarea. That widened out his horizon immensely. He saw that God in his ultimate plan was no respecter of persons or of races.

There has been great difference of opinion as to whether the annual worship of the supreme God of Heaven in the great imperial temple at Peking is in any degree a relic of the worship of the true God once revealed to mankind. Such Chinese scholars as Martin and Legge and Douglass think that it is; others deny it. Some men raise a question whether the Allah of the Mohammedan faith is identical with the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Sales, the profoundest expositor of Islam, considers him the same. Moslems themselves have no doubt of it: the intent of the Koran is that and nothing else; Old Testament teachings are interwoven with almost every sura of its pages. I think that Paul would have conceded this point at once, and would the more successfully have urged the claims of Jesus, whom the Koran presents as the only sinless prophet. Of course Mohammedans do not recognize the Triune God as we now apprehend Him, from the New Testament standpoint; neither did ancient believers of Israel fully conceive of God as He has since been more fully revealed in the person and the sacrifice of his Son—Jesus Christ.

Both the teachings and the example of Paul seem to recognize the fact that conceptions of God, sometimes clear and sometimes dim, may exist among heathen nations; and many of the great Christian fathers evidently took the same view. They admitted that Plato's noble teachings were calculated to draw the soul toward God, though they revealed no real access to Him such as is found in Christ. Archbishop Trench, in his Hulsean lectures on "Christ the Desire of the Nations," dwells approvingly upon Augustine's well-known statement, that he had been turned from vice to an inspiring conception of God by reading the "Hortensius" of Cicero. Augustine's own reference to the fact is found in the fourth book of his "Confessions," where he says: "In the ordinary course of study I fell upon a certain book of Cicero whose speech almost all admire—not so his heart. This book contains an exhortation to philosophy, and is called 'Hortensius.' But this book altered my affections and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord, and made me have other purposes and desires. Every vain hope at once became worthless to me, and I longed with an incredible burning desire for an immortality of wisdom, and began now to arise that I might return to Thee. For not to sharpen my tongue did I employ that book: nor did it infuse into me its style, but its matter."



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The “Hortensius” of Cicero has not survived till our time, and we know not what it contained; but we cannot fail to notice this testimony of a mature and eminent saint to the spiritual benefit which he had received at the age of thirty-one, from reading the works of a heathen philosopher. And a most interesting proof is here furnished for the freedom with which the Spirit of God works upon the hearts of men, and the great variety of means and agencies which He employs,—and that beyond the pale of the Christian Church, and even beyond the actual knowledge of the historic Christ. It would be interesting to know whether the regeneration of Augustine occurred just then, when he says in such strong language, that this book altered his affections and turned his prayers unto God, and made him “long with an indescribable burning desire for an immortality of wisdom.” All men are saved, if at all, by the blood of Christ through the renewing of the Holy Ghost; but what was the position of such men as Augustine and Cornelius of Cesarea before they fully and clearly saw Jesus as the actual Messiah, and as the personal representative of that Grace of God in which they had already reposed a general faith, is at least an interesting question.

Not less positive is the acknowledgment which Augustine makes of the benefits which he had received from Plato. And he mentions many others, as Virgininus, Lactantius, Hilary, and Cyprian, who, like himself, having once been heathen and students of heathen philosophy, had, as he expresses it, “spoiled the Egyptians, bringing away with them rich treasures from the land of bondage, that they might adorn therewith the true tabernacle of the Christian faith.” Augustine seems to have been fond of repeating both this argument and this his favorite illustration. In his “Doctrine of Christ” he expands it more fully than in his “Confessions.” He says: “Whatever those called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, may have said conformable to our faith, is not only not to be dreaded, but is to be claimed from them as unlawful possessors, to our use. For, as the Egyptians not only had idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel were to abhor and avoid, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver and apparel which that people at its departure from Egypt privily assumed for a better use, not on its own authority but at the command of God, the very Egyptians unwittingly furnishing the things which themselves used not well; so all the teaching of the Gentiles not only hath feigned and superstitious devices, and heavy burdens of a useless toil, which we severally, as under the leading of Christ we go forth out of the fellowship of the Gentiles, ought to abhor and avoid, but it also containeth liberal arts, fitter for the service of truth, and some most useful moral precepts; as also there are found among them some truths concerning the worship of the One God Himself, as it were their gold and silver which they did not themselves form,



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but drew from certain veins of Divine Providence running throughout, and which they perversely and wrongfully abuse to the service of demons. These, the Christian, when he severs himself from their wretched fellowship, ought to take from them for the right use of preaching of the Gospel. For what else have many excellent members of our faith done? See we not how richly laden with gold and silver and apparel that most persuasive teacher and most blessed martyr, Cyprian, departed out of Egypt? Or Lactantius, or Victorinus, Optatus, Hilary, not to speak of the living, and Greeks innumerable? And this, Moses himself, that most faithful servant of God, first did, of whom it is written, that ‘he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.’”

Let us for a moment pause and see of what these treasures of Egypt consisted, and especially what Plato taught concerning God. Like Socrates, he ridiculed the absurd but popular notion that the gods could be full of human imperfections, could make war upon each other, could engage in intrigues, and be guilty of base passions. And he earnestly maintained that it was demoralizing to children and youth to hold up such beings as objects of worship. Such was his condemnation of what he considered false gods. He was equally opposed to the idea that there is no God. “All things,” he says, “are from God, and not from some spontaneous and unintelligent cause.” “Now, that which is created,” he adds, “must of necessity be created by some cause—but how can we find out the Father and maker of all this universe? If the world indeed be fair, and the artificer good, then He must have looked to that which is external—for the world is the fairest of creatures, as He is the best of causes.”

Plato’s representation of the mercy of God, of his providential care, of his unmixed goodness, of his eternal beauty and holiness—are well-nigh up to the New Testament standard. So is also his doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The fatal deficiency is that he does not *know*. He has received no divine revelation. “We will wait,” he said in another passage, “for one, be it a god or a god-inspired man, to teach us our religious duties, and as Athene in Homer says to Diomedes, to take away the darkness from our eyes.” And in still another place he adds: “We must lay hold of the best human opinion in order that, borne by it as on a raft, we may sail over the dangerous sea of life, unless we can find a stronger boat, *or some word of God which will more surely and safely carry us.*”[26]

There is a deep pathos in the question which I have just quoted, “How can we find out the Father and maker of all this universe?” And in the last sentence quoted, Plato seems to have felt his way to the very threshold of the revelation of Christ.[27]

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Augustine shows a discrimination on this subject too important to be overlooked, when he declares that while the noble philosophy of the Platonists turned his thoughts away from his low gratifications to the contemplation of an infinite God, it left him helpless. He was profited both by what philosophy taught him and by what it could not teach: it created wants which it could not satisfy. In short, he was prepared by its very deficiencies to see in stronger contrast the all-satisfying fulness of the Gospel of Eternal Life. Plato could tell him nothing of any real plan of redemption, and he confesses with tender pathos that he found no Revealer, no divine sacrifice for sin, no uplifted Cross, no gift of the transforming Spirit, no invitation to the weary, no light of the Resurrection. [28] Now, just here is the exact truth; and Augustine has conferred a lasting benefit upon the Christian Church by this grand lesson of just discrimination. He and other Christian fathers knew where to draw the lines carefully and wisely with respect to heathen errors.

We often have occasion to complain of the sharpness of the controversies of the early Church, but it could scarcely be otherwise in an age like that. It was a period of transitions and of rude convulsions. The foundations of the great deep of human error were being broken up. It was no time for flabby, jelly-fish convictions. The training which the great leaders had received in philosophy and rhetoric had made them keen dialectics. They had something of Paul's abhorrence of heathen abominations, for they saw them on every hand. They saw also the specious admixtures of Gnosticism, and they met them squarely. Tertullian's controversy with Marcion, Augustine's sharp issue with Pelagius, Ambrose's bold and uncompromising resistance to Arianism, Origen's able reply to Celsus, all show that the great leaders of the Church were not men of weak opinions. The discriminating concessions which they made, therefore, were not born of an easy-going indifferentism and the soft and nerveless charity that regards all religions alike. They found a medium between this pretentious extreme and the opposite evil of ignorant and narrow prejudice; and nothing is more needed in the missionary work of our day than that intelligent and well-poised wisdom which considers all the facts and then draws just distinctions; which will not compensate for conscious ignorance with cheap misrepresentation or wholesale denunciation.

1. Now, first of all, in considering the methods of the early Church and its secret of power in overcoming the errors of heathenism, it must be borne in mind that the victory was mainly due to the *moral earnestness* which characterized that period. In this category we must place the influence which sprang from the martyrdom of thousands who surrendered life rather than relinquish their faith. That this martyr spirit did not always produce a true symmetry of Christian



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character cannot be denied. The tide of fanaticism swept in, sometimes, with the current of true religious zeal, and inconsistencies and blemishes marred even the saintliest self-sacrifice; but there was no resisting the mighty logic of the spirit of martyrdom as a whole. The high and the low, the wise and the unlettered, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, strong men and delicate women, surrendered themselves to the most cruel tortures for the love of Christ. This spectacle, while it may have served only to enrage a Nero and urge him on to even more Satanic cruelty, could not be wholly lost upon the more thoughtful Marcus Aurelius and others like him. It was impossible to resist the moral force of so calm and resolute a surrender unto torture and death. Moreover, an age which produced such relinquishment of earthly possessions as was shown by men like Anthony and Ambrose, who were ready to lay down the emoluments of high political position and distribute their large fortunes for the relief of the poor; and such women as Paula and others of high position, who were ready to sacrifice all for Christ and retire into seclusion and voluntary poverty—an age which could produce such characters and could show their steady perseverance unto the end, could not fail to be an age of resistless moral power; and it would be safe to say that no heathen system could long stand against the sustained and persistent force of such influences. Were the Christian Church of to-day moved by even a tithe of that high self-renunciation, to say nothing of braving the fires of martyrdom, if it possessed in even partial degree the same sacrifice of luxury and ease, and the same consecration of effort and of influence, the conquest of benighted nations would be easy and rapid.

The frugality of the early Christians, the simplicity of life which the great body of the Church observed, and to which even wealthy converts more or less conformed, was also, doubtless, a strong factor in the great problem of winning the heathen to Christ. Probably in no age could Christian simplicity find stronger contrasts than were presented by the luxury and extravagance, the unbridled indulgence and profligacy, which characterized the later periods of the Roman Empire. Universal conquest of surrounding nations had brought untold wealth. The Government had hastened the process of decay by lavish distribution to the people of those resources which obviated the necessity of unremitting toil. It had devoted large expenditures to popular amusements, and demagogues had squandered the public funds for the purpose of securing their own preferment. Over against the moral earnestness of the persecuted Christian Church, there was in the nation itself and the heathenism which belonged to it, an utter want of character or conviction. These conditions of the conquest, as I have already indicated, do not find an exact counterpart with us now. There is more of refined Christian culture than existed

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in the early Church; probably there is also more of organized Christian effort. In many points the comparison is in our favor, but earnestness, and the spiritual power which attends it, are on a lower grade. There is no escape from the conviction that just here lies the reason why the Christian Church, with all her numbers, her vast material resources, and her unlimited opportunities, cannot achieve a greater success.

2. But, on the intellectual side, and as relating to the methods of direct effort, there are many points in which imitation of the early example is entirely practicable. And first, the wise discrimination which was exercised by Augustine and other Christian leaders is entirely practicable now. There has prevailed in our time an indiscriminate carelessness in the use of terms in dealing with this subject. The strong language which the Old Testament employed against the abominations of Baalism, we have seemed to regard as having equal force against the ethics of Confucius or Gautama. "Heathenism" is the one brand which we have put upon all the non-Christian religions. I wish it were possible to exchange the term for a better.[29] Baalism was undoubtedly the most besotted, cruel, and diabolical religion that has ever existed on the earth. When we carefully study it we are not surprised at the strong language of denunciation which the Old Testament employs. But as I have already shown, we find in the New Testament a different spirit exercised toward the types of error which our Saviour and his disciples were called to meet. There is only gentleness in our Lord's dealings with those who were without the Jewish Church. His strongest denunciations were reserved for hypocrites who knew the truth and obeyed it not. He declared that the men of Nineveh would rise up in judgment against those who rejected the clear message of God's own Son. The man who goes forth to the great mission fields with the feeling that it is his province to assail as strongly as possible the deeply-rooted convictions of men, instead of winning them to a more excellent way, is worse than one who beats the air; he is doing positive harm; he is trifling with precious souls. He does not illustrate the spirit of Christ.

The wisest of the early Fathers sometimes differed widely from each other in their methods; some were denunciatory, others were even too ready to excuse. The great African controversialist, Tertullian, was unsparing in his anathemas, not only against heathen customs, which were vile indeed, but against the teachings of the noblest philosophy. He had witnessed the former; he had not candidly studied the latter. With a blind zeal, which has too often been witnessed in the history of good causes, he denounced Plato, Aristotle, and even Socrates with a violence which marred the character of so great a man. On the other hand, Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria were perhaps excessively broad. Of two noted Alexandrines, Archdeacon Farrar says: "They



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were philosophers in spirit; they could enforce respect by their learning and their large, rounded sympathy, where rhetorical denunciation and ecclesiastical anathemas would only have been listened to with a frown of anger, or a look of disdain. Pagan youths would have listened to Clement when he spoke of Plato as 'the truly noble and half-inspired,' while they would have looked on Tertullian as an ignorant railer, who could say nothing better of Socrates than to call him the 'Attic buffoon,' and of Aristotle than to characterize him as the 'miserable Aristotle.'"

Tatian and Hermes also looked upon Greek philosophy as an invention of the devil. Irenaeus was more discriminating. He opposed the broad and lax charity of the Alexandrines, but he read the Greek philosophy, and when called to the bishopric of Lyons, he set himself to the study of the Gallic Druidism, believing that a special adaptation would be called for in that remote mission field.[30] Basil was an earnest advocate of the Greek philosophy as giving a broader character to Christian education.

There were among the Fathers many different types of men, some philosophically inclined, others better able to use practical arguments. Some were more successful in appealing to the signs of the times, the clear evidences of that corruption and decay to which heathenism had led. They pointed to the degradation of women, the prevalence of vice, the inordinate indulgence in pleasures, the love of excitement, the cruel frenzy of the gladiatorial shows, the unrest and pessimism and despair of all society. One of the most remarkable appeals of this kind is found in a letter of Cyprian to his friend Donatus. "He bids him seat himself in fancy on some mountain top and gaze down upon what he has abandoned (for he is a Christian), on the roads blocked by brigands, the sea beset by pirates, the camps desolated by the horrors of many wars, on the world reeking with bloodshed, and the guilt which, in proportion to its magnitude, was extolled as a glory. Then, if he would turn his gaze to the cities, he would behold a sight more gloomy than all solitudes. In the gladiatorial games men were fattened for mutual slaughter, and publicly murdered to delight the mob. Even innocent men were urged to fight in public with wild beasts, while their mothers and sisters paid large sums to witness the spectacle. In the theatres parricide and infanticide were dealt with before mixed audiences, and all pollution and crimes were made to claim reverence because presented under the guise of religious mythology. In the homes was equal corruption; in the forum bribery and intrigue ran rife; justice was subverted, and innocence was condemned to prison, torture, and death. Luxury destroyed character, and wealth became an idol and a curse." [31] Arguments of this kind were ready enough to hand whenever Christian teachers were disposed to use them, and their descriptions found a real corroboration in society as it actually appeared on every hand. None could question the counts in the indictment.



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3. While the Christian Fathers and the missionaries differed in their estimates of heathenism, and in their methods of dealing with it, one thing was recognized by all whom we designate as the great leaders, namely, the imperative necessity of a thorough knowledge of it. They understood both the low superstition of the masses and the loftier teaching of the philosophers. On the other hand, they had the same estimate of the incomparable Gospel of Christ that we have; they realized that it was the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation as clearly as the best of us, but they did not claim that it was to be preached blindly and without adaptation. The verities of the New Testament teachings, the transforming power of the Holy Ghost, the necessity for a new birth and for the preternatural influence of grace, both in regeneration and in sanctification, were as strongly maintained as they have ever been in any age of the Church; but the Fathers were careful to know whether they were casting the good seed upon stony places, or into good ground where it would spring up and bear fruit. The liberal education of that day was, in fact, an education along the old lines of heathen philosophy, poetry, history, and rhetoric; and a broad training was valued as highly as it has been in any subsequent period. It was thoroughly understood that disciplined intellect, other things being equal, may expect a degree of influence which can never fall to the lot of ignorance, however sanctified its spirit. There has never been a stronger type of men than the Christian Fathers. They were learned men, for the age in which they lived, and their learning had special adaptations to the work assigned them. Many of them, like Cyprian, Clement, Hilary, Martin of Tours, had been born and educated in heathenism; while others, like Basil, Gregory, Origen, Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine, though born under Gospel influences, studied heathen philosophy and poetry at the instance of their Christian parents.

4. Some of the leaders familiarized themselves with the speculations of the day, not merely for the sake of a wider range of knowledge, but that they might the more successfully refute the assailants of the faith, many of whom were men of great power. They were fully aware that it behooved them to know their ground, for their opponents studied the points of comparison carefully. The infidel Celsus studied Christianity and its relation to the Old Testament histories and prophecies, and he armed himself with equal assiduity with all the choicest weapons drawn from Greek philosophy. How was such a man to be met? His able attack on Christianity remained fifty years unanswered. To reply adequately was not an easy task. Doubtless there were many, then as now, who thought that the most comfortable way of dealing with such things was to let them alone. But a wiser policy prevailed. Origen was requested to prepare an answer, and, although such work was not congenial to him, he did so because he felt that the cause of the truth demanded it. His reply outlived the attack which it was designed to meet, and in all subsequent ages it has been a bulwark of defence.[32]

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Origen was not of a pugnacious spirit—it was well that he was not—but with wide and thorough preparation he summoned all his energies to meet the foe. Archdeacon Farrar says of him, that he had been trained in the whole circle of science. He could argue with the pupils of Plato, or those of Zeno, on equal terms, and he deems it fortunate that one who was called, as he was, to be a teacher at Alexandria, where men of all nations and all creeds met, had a cosmopolitan training and a cosmopolitan spirit.

No less resolute was the effort of Ambrose in resisting the errors of Arianism, and he also adapted himself to the work in hand. He had not been afraid of Platonism. On the other hand, we are told that Plato, next to his Bible, constituted a part of his daily reading, and that, too, in the period of his ripest Christian experience, and when he carried his studies and his prayers far into the hours of the night. But in dealing with Arianism he needed a special understanding of all its intricacies, and when among its advocates and supporters he encountered a powerful empress as well as her ablest advocates, he had need of all the powers within him—that power of moral earnestness which had led him to give all his property to the poor—that power of strong faith, which prepared him, if need be, to lay down his life—the power of a disciplined intellect, and a thorough knowledge of the whole issue.

5. The early Fathers not only studied the heathen philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, but they learned to employ them, and their successors continued to employ them, even to the Middle Ages, and the period of the Reformation. As an intellectual framework, under which truth should be presented in logical order, it became a strong resource of the early Christian teachers. Let me refer you on this point to the clear statements of Professor Shedd.[33] He has well said that “when Christianity was revealed in its last and beautiful form by the incarnation of the Eternal Word, it found the human mind already occupied by human philosophy. Educated men were Platonists, or Stoics, or Epicureans. During the age of Apologetics, which extended from the end of the apostolic age to the death of Origen, the Church was called to grapple with these systems, to know as far as possible what they contained, and to discriminately treat their contents, rejecting some things, utilizing others.” “We shall see,” he continues, “that Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero exerted more influence than all other philosophic minds united upon the greatest of Christian Fathers, upon the greatest of the School men, and upon the greatest of the theologians of the Reformation, Calvin and Melancthon; and if we look at European philosophy, as it has been unfolded in England, Germany, and France, we can perceive that all the modern philosophic schools have discussed the principles of human reason in very much the same manner in which Plato and Aristotle discussed them twenty-two centuries ago.”



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I need hardly say, in closing, that it is not necessary to borrow from the heathen systems of to-day as extensively as the Fathers did from the systems of Greece and Rome, and it would be discordant with good taste to illustrate our sermons with quotations from the Hindu poets as lavishly as good Jeremy Taylor graced his discourses with gems from the poets of Greece. But I think that we may so far heed the wise examples furnished by Church history as to face the false systems of our time with a candid and discriminating spirit, and by a more adequate knowledge to disenchant the bugbears with which their apologists would alarm the Church.

We are entering upon the broadest and most momentous struggle with heathen error that the world has ever witnessed. Again, in this later age, philosophy and multiform speculation are becoming the handmaids of Hindu pantheism and Buddhist occultism, as well as of Christian truth. The resources of the East and the West are combined and subsidized by the enemy as well as by the Church. As in old Rome and Alexandria, so now in London and Calcutta all currents of human thought flow together, and truth is in full grapple with error. It is no time to be idle or to take refuge in pious ignorance, much less to fear heathen systems as so many haunted houses which superstitious people dare not enter—as if the Gospel were not as potent a talisman now as it was ages ago. Let us fearlessly enter these abodes of darkness, throw open the shutters, and let in the light of day, and the hobgoblins will flee. Let us explore every dark recess, winnow out the miasma and the mildew with the pure air of heaven, and the Sun of Righteousness shall fill the world.

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 20: *The Norsemen*, Maclear.]

[Footnote 21: The Druid bard Taliesen says: “Christ, the Word from the beginning, was from the beginning our teacher, and we never lost His teaching. Christianity was a new thing in Asia, but there never was a time when the Druids of Britain held not its doctrines.”—*St. Paul in Britain*, p. 86.]

[Footnote 22: Uhlhorn’s *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*.]

[Footnote 23: The same dualism of the male and the female principle is found in the Shinto of Japan. See Chamberlain’s translation of the *Kojiki*.]

[Footnote 24: The late George Eliot has given expression to this grim solace, and Mr. John Fiske, in his *Destiny of Man*, claims that the goal of all life, from the first development of the primordial cell, is the perfected future man.]

[Footnote 25: Voltaire found great delight in the so-called *Ezour Veda*, a work which claimed to be an ancient Veda containing the essential truths of the Bible. The

distinguished French infidel was humbled, however, when it turned out that the book was the pious fraud of a Jesuit missionary who has hoped thus to win the Hindus to Christianity.]



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[Footnote 26: Quoted by Uhlhorn in *The Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*, p. 70. He also quotes Seneca as saying: "Oh, if one only might have a guide to truth!"]

[Footnote 27: Plato showed by his writings and his whole life that he was a true seeker after the knowledge of God, whom he identified with the highest good. Though he believed in an efficient creatorship, he held that matter is eternal. Ideas are also eternal, but the world is generated. He was not a Pantheist, as he clearly placed God outside of, or above, the universe. He regarded the soul of man as possessed of reason, moral sensibility, and appetite.

On the doctrine of future immortality Plato was most emphatic.

He also believed that the soul in a previous state had been pure and sinless, but had fallen. He taught that recovery from this fallen condition is to be accomplished by the pursuit of philosophy and the practice of virtue (not as merit but as discipline), by contemplating the highest ideal which is the character of God, and by thinking of eternity. Plato regarded suffering as disciplinary when properly improved. True philosophy may raise the soul above the fear of death. This was proved by Socrates. Both Socrates and Plato seemed to believe in a good demon (spirit) whose voice was a salutary and beneficent guide. As to eschatology, Plato looked forward to a heaven where the virtuous soul shall dwell in the presence of God, and in the enjoyment of pure delights.

Aristotle's idea of God was scarcely less exalted than that of Plato. He expressed it thus: "The principle of life is in God; for energy of mind constitutes life, and God is this energy. He, the first mover, imparts motion and pursues the work of creation as something that is loved. His course of life must be similar to what is most excellent in our own short career. But he exists forever in this excellence, whereas this is impossible for us. His pleasure consists in the exercise of his essential energy, and on this account vigilance, wakefulness, and perception are most agreeable to him. Again, the more we examine God's nature the more wonderful does it appear to us. He is an eternal and most excellent being. He is indivisible, devoid of parts, and having no magnitude, for God imparts motion through infinite time, and nothing finite, as magnitude is, can have an infinite capacity. He is a being devoid of passions and unalterable."—Quoted in *Indian Wisdom*, p. 125.]

[Footnote 28: "Those pages present not the image of this piety, the tears of confession, Thy sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, the salvation of the people, the Bridal city, the earnest of the Holy Ghost, the cup of our redemption. No man sings there, 'Shall not my soul be submitted unto God? for of Him cometh my salvation, for He is my God and my salvation, my guardian, I shall no more be grieved.' No one there hears Him call



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'Come unto me all ye that labor.'"—*Confessions*, Bk. vii., xxi. "But having then read those books of the Platonists, and thence being taught to search for incorporeal truth, I saw Thy invisible things, understood by the things which are made; and though cast back, I perceived what that was which, through the darkness of my mind, I was hindered from contemplating, being assured 'that Thou wert and wert infinite, and yet not diffused in space, finite or infinite, and that Thou truly art who art the same ever, in no part nor motion varying; and that all other things are from Thee.... Of these things I was assured, yet too insecure to enjoy Thee. I prated as one skilled, but I had not sought Thy way in Christ our Saviour; I had proved to be not skilled but killed.'"—*Confessions*, Bk. vii., xx.]

[Footnote 29: We may judge of the bearing of the common term heathen as applied to non-Christian nations, when we consider that the Greeks and Romans characterized all foreigners as "barbarians," that Mohammedans call all Christians "infidels," and the Chinese greet them as "foreign devils." The missionary enterprise as a work of conciliation should illustrate a broader spirit.]

[Footnote 30: *The Celts*, Maclear.]

[Footnote 31: *Lives of the Fathers*, Farrar.]

[Footnote 32: "Christianity," says Max Mueller, "enjoyed no privileges and claimed no immunities when it boldly confronted and confounded the most ancient and the most powerful religions of the world. Even at present it craves no mercy and it receives no mercy from those whom our missionaries have to meet face to face in every part of the world; and unless our religion has ceased to be what it was, its defenders should not shrink from this new trial of its strength, but should encourage rather than depreciate the study of comparative theology."—*Science of Religion*, p. 22.]

[Footnote 33: *History of Christian Theology*, Vol. I., p. 52.]

## LECTURE III.

### THE SUCCESSIVE DEVELOPMENTS OF HINDUISM

The religious systems of India, like its flora, display luxuriant variety and confusion. Hinduism is only another banyan-tree whose branches have become trunks, and whose trunks have produced new branches, until the whole has become an intellectual and moral jungle of vast extent. The original stock was a monotheistic nature worship, which the Hindu ancestors held in common with other branches of the Aryan family when dwelling together on the high table-lands of Central Asia, or, as some are now

claiming, in Eastern Russia. Wherever may have been that historic “cradle” in which the infancy of our race was passed, it seems certain from similarities of language, that this Aryan family once dwelt together, and had a common worship, and called the supreme deity by a common name. It was a worship of the sky, and at length of various

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powers of nature, *Surya*, the sun: *Agni*, fire: *Indra*, rain, *etc.* It is maintained by many authors, in India as well as in Europe, that these designations were only applied as names of one and the same potential deity. This is the ground held by the various branches of the modern Somaj of India. Yet we must not suppose that the monotheism of the early Aryans was all that we understand by that term; it is enough that the power addressed was *one* and personal. Even henotheism, the last name which Professor Max Mueller applies to the early Aryan faith, denotes oneness in this sense. The process of differentiation and corruption advanced more rapidly among the Indo-Aryans than in the Iranian branch of the same race, and in all lands changes were wrought to some extent by differences of climate and by environment.[34] The Norsemen, for example, struggling with the wilder and sterner forces of storm and wintry tempest, would naturally differ in custom, and finally in faith, from the gentle Hindu under his Indian sky; yet there were common elements traceable in the earliest traditions of these races, and the fact that religions are not wholly dependent upon local conditions is shown by both Christianity and Buddhism, which have flourished most conspicuously and permanently in lands where they were not indigenous.

“In the Vedas,” says Sir Monier Williams, “unity in the conception of deity soon diverged into various ramifications. Only a few of the hymns appear to contain the simple conception of one divine, self-existent, omnipresent Being, and even in these, the idea of one God, present in all nature, is somewhat nebulous and undefined.” One of the earliest deifications that we can trace was that of *Varuna*, who represented the overhanging sky. The hymns addressed to Varuna are not only the earliest, but they are the loftiest and most spiritual in their aspirations. They find in him an element of holiness before which sin is an offence; and in some vague sense he is the father of all things, like the Zeus whom Paul recognized in the poetry of Greece.

But, as already stated, this vague conception of God as one, was already in a transition toward separate impressions of the different powers of nature. If the idea of God was without any very clear personality and more or less obscure, it is not strange that it should come to be thus specialized as men thought of objects having a manifestly benign influence—as the life-quickening sun or the reviving rain. It is not strange that, without a knowledge of the true God, they should have been filled with awe when gazing upon the dark vault of night, and should have rendered adoration to the moon and her countless retinue of stars. If there must be idolatry, let it be that sublime nature worship of the early Aryans, though even that was sure to degenerate into baser forms. One might suppose that the worship of the heavenly bodies would remain the purest and noblest; and yet the sun-worship of the Assyrians and the Phoenicians became unspeakably vile in its sensuousness, and finally the most wicked and abominable of all heathen systems. India in her darkest days never sank so low, and when her degradation came it was through other conceptions than those of nature worship.



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In the early Vedic hymns are to be found many sublime passages which seem to suggest traces of those common traditions concerning the creation—the Fall of man and the Deluge, which we believe to have been the earliest religious heritage of mankind. They contrast strongly with the later and degrading cosmogonies of degenerate heathen systems, and especially with the grotesque fancies of the subsequent Hindu mythology. In the Xth Mandala of the Rig Veda we find the following account of primeval chaos, which reminds one of the Mosaic Genesis:

“In the beginning there was neither aught nor naught,  
There was neither sky nor atmosphere above.  
What then enshrouded all the teeming universe?  
In the receptacle of what was it contained?  
Was it enveloped in the gulph profound of water?  
There was then neither death nor immortality.  
There was then neither day nor night, nor light nor darkness.  
Only the *Existing One* breathed calmly self-contained,  
Naught else but him there was, naught else above, beyond;  
Then first came darkness hid in darkness, gloom in gloom,  
Next all was water, chaos indiscreet  
In which the *One* lay void, shrouded in nothingness,  
Then turning inward by self-developed force  
Of inner fervor and intense abstraction grew.”

In the early Vedic period many of the corruptions of later times were unknown. There was no distinct doctrine of caste, no transmigration, no mist of pantheism, no idol-worship, no widow-burning, and no authorized infanticide. The abominable tyranny which was subsequently imposed upon woman was unknown; the low superstitions of the aboriginal tribes had not been adopted; nor, on the other hand, had philosophy and speculation taken possession of the Hindu mind. The doctrine of the Trimurti and the incarnations had not appeared.[35]

The faith of the Hindus in that early period may be called *Aryanism*, or *Vedism*. It bore sway from the Aryan migration, somewhere about one thousand five hundred, or two thousand, years before Christ, to about eight hundred years before Christ.[36] By that time the priestly class had gained great power over all other ranks. They had begun to work over the Vedas to suit their own purposes, selecting from them such portions as could be framed into an elaborate ritual—known as the Brahmanas. The period during which they continued this ritualistic development is known as the Brahmana period. This extended from about eight hundred to five hundred B.C.[37] These, however, are only the approximate estimates of modern scholarship: such a thing as ancient history is unknown to the Hindu race. This Brahmana period was marked by the intense and overbearing sacerdotalism of the Brahmans, and by an extreme development of the doctrine of caste. Never was priestly tyranny carried to greater length than by these

lordly Brahmans of India. One of the chief abuses of their system was their depravation of sacrifice.



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The earliest conception of sacrifice represented in the Vedas is that of a vicarious offering of Parusha, a Divine being. Very obscure references to this are found in the oldest of the four Vedas, dating probably not later than 1200 B.C. It is brought out still more clearly in a Brahmana which was probably composed in the seventh century B.C. It is there said that the "Lord of creatures offered himself a sacrifice for the Gods." Principal Fairbairn finds Vedic authority for the idea that the creation of the world was accomplished by the self-sacrifice of deity; and Manu ascribes the creation of mankind to the austerities of the gods. Sir Monier Williams, the late Professor Banerjea, and many others, have regarded these references to a Divine sacrifice for the benefit of gods and men as dim traces of a revelation once made to mankind of a promised atonement for the sins of the world.[38]

But so far as the actual observances of the early Hindus were concerned, they seem to have made their offerings rather in the spirit of Cain than in the faith of Abel. They simply fed the gods with their gifts, and regaled them with soma juice, poured forth in libations; the savor of melted butter also was supposed to be specially grateful. Still there is reason to believe that the peculiar idea of sacrifice was never wholly lost, but that the Hindus, in common with all other races, found occasion—especially when great calamities befell them—to appease the gods with the blood of sacrifice. In the early days human sacrifices were offered, and occasionally at least down to a late period.[39] It was a convenient policy of the priesthood, however, to hypothecate the claim for a human victim by accepting the substitution of a goodly number of horses or cows. A famous tradition is given, in the Aitareya Brahmana, of a prince[40] who had been doomed to sacrifice by a vow of his father, but who bought as a substitute the son of a holy Brahman—paying the price of a hundred cows. When none could be found to bind the lad on the altar, the pious father offered to perform the task for another hundred cows. Then there was no one found to slay the victim, and the father offered for still another hundred to do even that. As the victim was of high caste the gods interposed, and the Brahman was still the possessor of a son plus the cattle. The incident will illustrate the greed of the priesthood and the depravation of sacrifice. It had become a system of bargaining and extortion. The sacrifices fed the priesthood more substantially than the gods. There was great advantage in starting with the human victim as the unit of value, and it is easy to see how substitution of animals became immensely profitable. The people were taught that it was possible, if one were rich enough in victims, even to bankrupt heaven. Even demons by the value of their offerings might demand the sceptre of Indra.[41]



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Hand in hand with this growth of the sacrificial system was the development of caste; the former was done away by the subsequent protest of Buddhism and the philosophic schools; but the latter has remained through all the stages of Hindu history.[42] Such was *Brahmanism*. Its thralldom has never been equalled. The land was deluged with the blood of slain beasts. All industries were paralyzed with discouragement. Social aspiration was blighted, patriotism and national spirit were weakened, and India was prepared for those disastrous invasions which made her the prey of all northern races.

It was in protest against these evils that Gautama and many able philosophers arose about 500 B.C. Already the intellectual classes had matched the Brahmans by drawing upon Vedic authority for their philosophy. As the Brahmans had produced a ritual from the Vedas, so the philosophers framed a sort of philosophic Veda in the *Upanishads*. Men had begun to ask themselves the great questions of human life and destiny, "Whence am I? What is this mysterious being of which I am conscious?" They had begun to reason about nature, the origin of matter, the relation of mortals to the Infinite. The school of the Upanishads regarded themselves as an aristocracy of intellect, and held philosophy as their esoteric and peculiar prerogative. It was maintained that two distinct kinds of revelation had been made to men. First, that simple kind which was designed for priests and the common masses, for all those who regarded only effects and were satisfied with sacerdotal assumption and merit-making. But, secondly, there was a higher knowledge which concerned itself with the origin of the world and the hidden causes of things. Even to this day the Upanishads are the Vedas of the thinking classes of India.[43]

As the Brahmanas gave first expression to the doctrine of caste, so in the Upanishads we find the first development of pantheism and the doctrine of transmigration. The conclusion had already been reached that "There is only one Being who exists: He is within this universe and yet outside this universe: who'er beholds all living creatures as in Him, and Him the universal spirit, as in all, thenceforth regards no creature with contempt."

The language of Hindu speculation exhausts its resources in similes by which to represent personal annihilation. Man's origin and relations are accounted for very tersely by such illustrations as these: "As the web issues from the spider, as little sparks proceed from fire, so from the One Soul proceed all breathing animals, all worlds, all the gods, all beings." Then as to destiny: "These rivers proceed from the east toward the west, thence from the ocean they rise in the form of vapor, and dropping again, they flow toward the south and merge into the ocean. And as the flowing rivers are merged into the sea, losing their names and forms, so the wise, freed from name and form, pass into the Divine spirit, which is greater than the great." [44] Another favorite illustration is that of the moon's reflection in the water-jar, which disappears the moment the moon itself is hidden. "If the image in the water has no existence separate from that of the moon," says the Hindu, "how can it be shown that the human soul exists apart from God?"



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The Mundaka Upanishad, based upon the Atharva Veda (one of the latest,—the Upanishad being later still), contains this account of the universe: “As the spider spins and gathers back (its thread); as plants sprout on the earth; as hairs grow on a living person; so is this universe here produced from the imperishable nature. By contemplation the vast one germinates; from him food (or body) is produced; and thence successively, breath, mind, real (elements) worlds, and immortality resulting from (good) deeds.

“The Omniscient is profound contemplation consisting in the knowledge of him who knows all; and from that, the (manifested) vast one, as well as names, forms, and food proceed; and this is truth.”[45]

It is a great blemish upon the Upanishads, that while there are subtle, and in some respects sublime, utterances to be found here and there, the great mass is fanciful and often puerile, and in many instances too low and prurient to bear translation into the English language. This is clearly alleged by Mr. Bose, and frankly admitted by Max Mueller.[46]

In the common protest which finally broke down the system of Brahmanical sacrifice, and for a time relaxed the rigors of caste tyranny, Buddhism then just appearing (say 500 B.C.), joined hand in hand with the philosophies. Men were tired of priestcraft, and by a natural reaction they went to an opposite extreme; they were tired of religion itself. Buddha became an undoubted atheist or agnostic, and six distinct schools of philosophy arose on the basis of the Upanishads—some of which were purely rationalistic, some were conservative, others radical. Some resembled the Greek “Atomists” in their theory,[47] and others fought for the authority, and even the supreme divinity, of the Vedas.[48] All believed in the eternity of matter, and the past eternity of the soul; all accepted the doctrine of transmigration, and maintained that the spiritual nature can only act through a material body. All were pessimistic, and looked for relief only in absorption.

But the progress of Hindu thought was marked by checks and counter-checks. As the tyranny of the priesthood had led to the protest of philosophy, so the extreme and conflicting speculations of philosophic rationalism probably gave rise to the conservatism of the Code of Manu. No adequate idea of the drift of Hindu thought can be gained without assigning due influence to this all-important body of laws. They accomplished more in holding fast the power of the Brahmans, and enabling them to stem the tide of intellectual rebellion, and finally to regain the sceptre from the hand of Buddhism, than all other literatures combined. Their date cannot be definitely known. They were composed by different men and at different times. They probably followed the Upanishads, but antedated the full development of the philosophic schools.



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Many of the principles of Manu's Code had probably been uttered as early as the seventh century B.C.[49] The ferment of rationalistic thought was even then active, and demanded restraint. The one phrase which expresses the whole spirit of the laws of Manu is intense conservatism. They stand for the definite authority of dogma; they reassert in strong terms the authority of the Vedas; they establish and fortify by all possible influences, the institution of caste. They enclose as in an iron framework, all domestic, social, civil, and religious institutions. They embrace not only the destiny of men upon the earth, but also the rewards and punishments of the future life. Whatever they touched was petrified. Abuses which had crept in through the natural development of human depravity—for example, the oppression of woman—the laws of Manu stamped with inflexible and irreversible authority. The evils which grow up in savage tribes are bad enough, the tyranny of mere brute force is to be deplored, but worst of all is that which is sanctioned by statute, and made the very corner-stone of a great civilization. Probably no other system of laws ever did so much to rivet the chains of domestic tyranny.[50]

The Code of Manu has been classified as, 1st, sacred knowledge and religion; 2d, philosophy; 3d, social rules and caste organization; 4th, criminal and civil laws; 5th, systems of penance; 6th, eschatology, or the doctrine of future rewards. No uninspired or non-Vedic production has equal authority in India. We can only judge of its date by its relative place among other books. It applies Vedic names to the gods, though it mentions Brahma and Vishnu, but it makes no reference to the Trimurti. Pantheism was evidently in existence and was made prominent in the code. The influence of Manu over the jurisprudence of India was a matter of growth. At first the code appears to have been a guide in customs and observances, but as it gained currency it acquired the force of law, and extended its sway over all the tribes of India. It was not, however, maintained as a uniform code throughout the land, but its principles were found underlying the laws of all the provinces. Its very merits were finally fruitful of evil. Human weal was sacrificed to the over-shadowing power of a system of customs cunningly wrought and established by Brahmanical influence. The author was evidently a Brahman, and the whole work was prepared and promulgated in the interests of Brahmanism as against all freedom of thought. Its support of the Vedas was fanatical. Thus: "A Brahman by retaining the Rig Veda in his memory incurs no guilt, though he should destroy the three worlds." Again: "When there is contradiction of two precepts in the Veda, both are declared to be law; both have been justly promulgated by known sages as valid law."

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The laws of Manu make no mention of the doctrine of *Bakti* or faith, and there is no reference to the worship of the *Sakti*; both of these were of later date. The doctrine of transmigration, however, is fully stated, and as a consequence of this the hells described in the code, though places of torture, resolve themselves into merely temporary purgatories, while the heavens become only the steps on the road to a union with deity. There is reason to believe that the practice of employing idols to represent deity was unknown at the time the code was compiled. There is no allusion to public services or to teaching in the temples, the chief rites of religion were of a domestic kind, and the priests of that age were nothing more than domestic chaplains.

Manu's theory of creation was this: "The Self-Existent, having willed to produce various beings from his own substance, first with a thought created the waters and placed on them a productive seed or egg. Then he himself was born in that egg in the form of Brahma. Next he caused the egg to divide itself, and out of its two divisions there came the heaven above and the earth beneath. Afterward, having divided his own substance he became half male, half female. From that female was produced Viraj, from whom was created the secondary progenitor of all beings. Then from the Supreme Soul he drew forth Manu's intellect." This mixed cosmogony is supposed to indicate a diversity of authorship.

It will be seen that this is much less philosophical than the theory of creation quoted above from the Mundaka Upanishad.[51] If we compare Manu's account with the description of the "Beginning" found in one of the hymns of the Rig Veda,[52] we shall see that there has been a downward trend of Hinduism from the simple and sublime conceptions of the early poets to that which is grotesque, and which has probably been worked over to suit the purposes of the Brahmans. No mythological legend was too absurd if it promoted the notion of the divine origin of the Manus (sages) and the Brahmans.

Manu makes much of the Vedic passage which refers to the origin of caste.[53] He maintained that this distinction of caste was as much a law of nature and divine appointment as the separation of different classes of animals. The prominence accorded to the Brahmans was nothing short of divine. "Even when Brahmans employ themselves in all sorts of inferior occupations (as poverty often compels them to do) they must under all circumstances be honored, for they are to be regarded as supreme divinities." "A Brahman's own power is stronger than the power of the king, therefore by his own might he may chastise his foes." "He who merely assails a Brahman with intent to kill him, will continue in hell for a hundred years, and he who actually strikes him must endure a thousand years."

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It is always the truth that is mingled with the errors of any system which constitutes its life and gives it perpetuity, and there is much in the Code of Manu to be admired. Like the Confucian ethics, it laid its foundations in the respect due from childhood to parents, and in guarding the sanctities of the home. It aimed at fairness between ruler and subject, in an age when over most of the Asiatic continent the wildest caprice of rulers was the law of their respective realms. Manu taught the duty of kings toward their subjects in most emphatic terms. They were to regard themselves as servants, or rather as fathers, of the people; and rules were prescribed for their entire conduct. They were the representatives of deity in administering the affairs of mortals, and must realize their solemn responsibility.[54] It must ever be acknowledged that the Hindu laws respecting property were characterized by wisdom and equity. Taxation was not subject to caprice or injustice; where discriminations occurred they were in favor of the poor, and the heaviest burdens were laid where they should be laid, upon the rich. There were wise adaptations, calculated to develop the industry and self-help of the weakest classes, and care was taken that they never should become oppressive. No political or civic tyranny could be allowed; but that of the priesthood in its relations to all ranks, and that of the householder toward his wife and toward all women, were quite sufficient. In this last regard we scarcely know which was the greater—the heartless wickedness of the Code, or its blind and bigoted folly. How it was that laws could be framed which indicated such rare sagacity, which in many other respects were calculated to build up the very highest civilization, and which, at the same time, failed to foresee that this oppression of woman must result in the inevitable degeneracy of succeeding generations of men, must ever remain a mystery.[55]

We have glanced at the purer and simpler Aryanism of the early period, at the bigoted, tyrannical Brahmanism, with its ritual, its sacrifices, its caste. We have merely alluded to the rationalistic reaction of the philosophers and the Buddhists. We shall now see that the Brahman power is not broken, but that it will regain all and more than it has lost, that it will prove elastic enough to embrace all that has gone before; that while Buddhism will be banished, many of its elements will be retained, and the whole woven into one marvellous texture which we will call *Hinduism*. [56] Even during the period of Buddhism's greatest triumphs, say, two or three centuries before Christ, changes of great moment were going on in the Brahmanical faith. The old sacrificial system had lost its power, but the flexible and inexhaustible resources of Brahmanical cunning were by no means dormant. In the border wars of the Aryans, with rival invaders on the one hand, and with the conquered but ever restless aborigines on the other, great and popular heroes had sprung up. The exploits of these heroes had been celebrated in two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the popularity of these poems was immense. The heroes were of the soldier caste, and gave to that caste a prestige which seemed to the Brahmans formidable and dangerous.[57] The divine prerogatives of their order were all in jeopardy.

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The remedy chosen by the Brahmans was a bold and desperate one. These heroes must be raised out of the soldier caste by making them divine. As such they would hold a nearer relation to the divine Brahmans than to the soldiers. The legends were therefore worked over—Brahmanized—so to speak.[58] Rama, who had overcome certain chieftains of Ceylon, and Krishna, who had won great battles in Rajputana, were raised to the rank of gods and demi-gods. By an equal exaggeration the hostile chiefs of rival invaders were transformed to demons, and the black, repulsive hill tribes, who were involved as allies in these conflicts, were represented as apes. As a part of this same Brahmanizing process, the doctrine of the Trimurti was developed, and also the doctrine of incarnation. Most conspicuous were the incarnations of Vishnu; Rama and Krishna were finally placed among the ten incarnations of that deity. This was a skilful stroke of policy, for it was now no longer the heroes of the soldier caste who had won victory for the Aryans; it was Vishnu, the preserver, the care-taker, and sympathizer with all the interests of mankind. The development of the doctrines of the Trimurti and of incarnation undoubtedly followed both the rise of Buddhism and the promulgation of the Laws of Manu.

Meanwhile the Brahmans were shrewd enough to adapt themselves to certain other necessities. The influence of Buddhism was still a force which was not to be disregarded. It had demonstrated one thing which had never been recognized before, and that was the need of a more human and sympathetic element in the divine objects of worship. Men were weary of worshipping gods who had no kindly interest in humanity. They were weary of a religion which had no other element than that of fear or of bargaining with costly sacrifices. They longed for something which had the quality of mercy. Buddha had demonstrated the value of this element, and by an adroit stroke of policy the Brahmans adopted Gautama as the ninth avatar of Vishnu. Meanwhile they adopted the heroic Krishna as the god of sympathy—the favorite of the lower masses who were not too critical toward his vices.

We have now reached the fully developed form of *Hinduism*. [59] The Brahmans had embraced every element that could give strength to their broad, eclectic, and all-embracing system. [60] The doctrine of the Trimurti had become a strong factor, as it furnished a sort of framework, and gave stability. As compared with the early Aryanism, it removed the idea of deity from merely natural forces to that of abstract thoughts, principles, and emotions, as active and potent in the world. At the same time it retained the old Vedic deities under new names and with new functions, and it did not abate its professed regard for Vedic authority. The Brahmans had rendered their system popular in a sense with the intellectual classes by adopting all the philosophies. They had stopped the mouth



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of Buddhist protest by embracing the Buddha among their incarnations. They had shown an advance in the succession of incarnations from the early embodiments of brute force, the fish, the tortoise, the boar, up to heroes, and from these to the ninth avatar, the Buddha, as a moralist and philosopher.[61] They left on record the prediction that a tenth should come—and he is yet to come—who, in a still higher range of moral and spiritual power, should redeem and renovate the earth, and establish a kingdom of righteousness.

Meanwhile, in this renaissance of the Hindu faith, this wide, politic, self-adapting system, we find not only Buddhism, Philosophy, the early Aryanism, and the stiff cultus of Brahmanism, but there is also a large infusion of the original superstitions of the Dravidians, Kohls, Santals, and other nature worshippers of the hill tribes. Much of the polytheism of the modern Hindus—the worship of hills, trees, apes, cattle, the sun, the moon, unseen spirits, serpents, *etc.*—has been adopted from these simple tribes, so that the present system embraces all that has ever appeared on the soil of India—even Mohammedanism to some extent; and as some contend, very much also has been incorporated from the early teachings of the so-called St. Thomas Christians of Malabar. Such is the immense composite which is called Hinduism. It continued its development through the early centuries of the Christian era, and down even to the Middle Ages. Since then there has been disintegration instead of growth. The Brahmans have not only retained the Aryan deities, and extended Vishnu's incarnate nature over the epic heroes, but in the Puranas they have woven into the alleged lives of the incarnate gods the most grotesque mythologies and many revolting vices.

It may be interesting to trace for a moment the influence of the different lines of Hindu literature upon the general development of national character. Of course, the early Vedic literature has never lost its influence as the holy and inspired source of all knowledge to the Hindu race; but we have seen how much more potential were the Brahmanas and the Upanishad philosophy drawn from the Vedas, than were those sacred oracles themselves; how the Brahmanas riveted the chains of priestcraft and caste, and how the philosophies invigorated the intellect of the people at a time when they were most in danger of sinking into the torpor of ignorance and base subserviency to ritual and sacrifice; how it gave to the better classes the courage to rise up in rebellion and throw off every yoke, and think for themselves. We have seen how Buddhism by its protest against sacerdotalism crippled for a time the power of the Brahmans and raised a representative of the soldier caste to the chief place as a teacher of men; how its inculcation of pity to man and beast banished the slaughter and cruelty of wholesale and meaningless sacrifice, and how its example of sympathy changed Hinduism itself, and brought it



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into nearer relations with humanity. Driven from India, though it was, it left an immense deposit of influence and of power. We have seen how, as a counter-check to philosophy and Buddhism, the Code of Manu reasserted the authority of the Vedas, and riveted anew the chains of caste, and how it compensated for its oppressiveness by many wholesome and benign regulations—accomplishing more, perhaps, than all other literatures combined to maintain the stability of Hinduism, through its many vicissitudes, and in spite of the heterogeneous elements which it received and incorporated.

Scarcely less important was the influence of the great epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—with their doctrine of Trimurti and the incarnations of Vishnu in the national heroes. This conciliated the soldier caste, subsidized the most popular characters in Hindu tradition, at the same time that it made them tenfold more glorious than before. The Epics widened out the field of Hindu mythology immensely. Never before had there been such a boundless range for the imagination. The early Brahmans had cramped all intellectual growth, and held mankind by the leash of priestly ritual. The philosophies had been too strait and lofty for any but the higher class; Manu's laws had been a stern school-master to keep the people under curbs and restraints; even the Brahmans themselves were the slaves of their own ritual. But all the people could understand and admire Rama's wonderful victories over the demon Ravana. All could appreciate the devotion of the lovely Sita, and weep when she was kidnapped and borne away, like Grecian Helen, to the demon court in Ceylon; and they could be thrilled with unbounded joy when she was restored—the truest and loveliest of wives—to be the sharer of a throne.

The Epics took such hold of the popular heart that any fact, any theory, any myth that could be attached to them found ready credence. The Mahabharata especially became a general texture upon which any philosophy, or all the philosophies, might be woven at will. And for a long period, extending from three or four centuries B.C. onward far into the Christian era, it was ever ready to receive modifications from the fertile brain and skilful hand of any devout Brahman. A striking example of this was the introduction of the Bhagavad Gita. When this was composed, somewhere about the second or third century of our era, there was no little conflict between the different schools of philosophy; and its unknown author attempted to unite them all in a poem which should harmonize their contradictions and exalt the virtues of each, and at the same time reiterate all the best maxims of Hinduism. Some centuries later, the pronounced Vedantist Sancararkarya revamped the poem and gave its philosophy a more pantheistic character; later still the demigod Krishna was raised to full rank as the supreme Vishnu—the Creator and Upholder of all things.[62]



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It is important to notice that in the trend of Hindu literature through so many ages there has been no upward movement, but rather a decline. Nowhere do we find hymns of so pure and lofty a tone as in the early Vedas. No philosophy of the later times has equalled that of the Upanishads and the six Darśanas. No law-giver like Manu has appeared for twenty-four centuries. No Sanskrit scholarship has equalled that of the great grammarian Panini, who lived in the fourth century B.C. And although no end of poetry has succeeded the great Epics, it has shown deterioration. The Puranas, written at a later day, reveal only a reckless zeal to exalt the incarnate deities. They may properly be called histories of the incarnations of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, and glorifications of Krishna. And the very nature of the subjects with which they deal gives free scope to an unbridled imagination and to the most reckless exaggeration.

If anything more were wanting to insure their extravagance, it may be found in the fact that they were inspired by the rivalry of the respective worshippers of different gods. The Puranas mark the development of separate sects, each of which regarded its particular deity as the supreme and only god. The worshippers of Vishnu and the worshippers of Siva were in sharp rivalry, and they have continued their separation to this day.[63] Those who came to worship Vishnu as incarnate in Krishna, gained an advantage in the popular element associated with a favorite hero. Yet this was matched by the influence of the Sankhya philosophy, which assigned to Siva a male and female dualism, a doctrine which finally plunged Hinduism into deepest degradation. It brought about a new development known as Saktism, and the still later and grosser literature of the Tantras. In these, Hinduism reached its lowest depths. The modern "Aryas" discard both the Tantras and the Puranas, and assert that the popular incarnations of Vishnu were only good men. They take refuge from the corruptions of modern Hinduism in the purer teachings of the early Vedas.

### *The Contrasts of Hinduism and Christianity.*

Hinduism has some elements in common with Christianity which it is well to recognize. It is theistic; it is a religion, as distinguished from the agnostic and ethical systems of India and China.[64] Hinduism always recognized a direct divine revelation which it regards with profound reverence; and through all its variations and corruptions it has inculcated in the minds of the Indian races a deeply religious feeling. It has been claimed that it has made the Hindus the most devotional people in the world. Like Christianity, Hinduism appeals to man's intellectual nature, and it is inwrought with profound philosophy. It does not, however, like some modern systems, teach that divine truth has been revealed to man by natural processes; rather it regards the early revelation as having suffered obscuration.[65] It also has its



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trinity, its incarnations, and its predictions of a Messiah who shall restore the truth and establish righteousness. The Hindu traditions maintain that mankind descended from a single pair;[66] that the first estate of the race was one of innocence; that man was one of the last products of creation; that in the first ages he was upright, and consequently happy. "The beings who were thus created by Brahma are said to have been endowed with righteousness and perfect faith; they abode wherever they pleased, unchecked by any impediment; their hearts were free from guile; they were pure, made exempt from toil by observance of sacred institutes. In their sanctified minds Hari dwelt; they were filled with perfect wisdom by which they contemplated the glory of Vishnu." Hartwell has pointed out the fact that the early Hindu traditions here unite with the Scriptural account in virtually denying all those theories of evolution which trace the development of man from lower animals.[67]

But compared with Christianity, its contrasts are far greater than its resemblances. First, as to the nature of God, there is an infinite difference between the cold and unconscious Brahman, slumbering for ages without thought or emotion or any moral attribute, and the God of Israel, whose power and wisdom and goodness, whose mercy and truth and tender compassion, are so constantly set forth in the Bible. The latter compares Himself to a Father who cares for his children, and who has redeemed the world by an infinite sacrifice. Even in the most popular emanation of Brahman—even in Vishnu—there is nothing of a fatherly spirit, no appeal as to children, no kindly remonstrance against sin, no moral instruction, or effort to encourage and establish character, no promise of reward, no enkindling of immortal hope.

Second, there is a striking contrast in the comparative estimates which Hinduism and Christianity place upon the human soul. Unlike Buddhism, Hinduism does recognize the existence of a soul, but it is only a temporary emanation, like the moon's reflection in the water. It resembles its source as does the moon's image, but coldly and in a most unsatisfactory sense; there is no capacity for fellowship, and the end is absorption.[68] On the other hand, Christianity teaches us that we are created in God's image, but not that we *are* his image. We are separate, though dependent, and if reunited to him through Christ we shall dwell in his presence forever.

Third, the two systems are in strong contrast in the comparative hopes which they hold out for the future. The doctrine of transmigration casts a gloom over all conscious being; it presents an outlook so depressing as to make life a burden, and the acme of all possible attainment is individual extinction, or what amounts to the same thing, absorption into deity. The logic of it is that it would be better still not to have been born at all. Christianity promises an immediate transfer to a life of unalloyed blessedness,



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and an endless growth of all our powers and capacities; but why should Hinduism urge the cultivation of that whose real destiny is “effacement?” Hinduism finds the explanation of life’s mysteries and inscrutable trials in the theory of sins committed in a previous existence. Christianity, while recognizing the same trials, relieves them with the hope of solutions in a future life of compensating joy. The one turns to that which is past, unchangeable and hopeless, and finds only sullen despair; the other anticipates an inheritance richer than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived.

Fourth, Hinduism has no Saviour and no salvation. It is not a religion in the highest sense of *rescue* and reconciliation. It avails us of no saving power higher than our own unaided effort. It implies the ruin of sin, but provides no remedy. It presents no omnipotent arm stretched forth to save.

Its fatalism places man under endless disabilities, and then bids him to escape from the nexus if he can; but it reveals no divine helper, no sacrifice, no mediator, no regenerating Spirit. It has no glad tidings to proclaim, no comfort in sorrow, no victory over the sting of death, no resurrection unto Life. Though at a period subsequent to the preaching of the Gospel in India—perhaps the seventh or eighth century A.D.—a doctrine of faith (*Bakti*) was engrafted upon Hinduism, yet it had no hint of a Saviour from sin and death.[69]

Fifth, in Hinduism there is no liberty for the free action of the human spirit. Though the life of a Brahman is intensely religious, yet it is cramped with exactions which are not only abortive but positively belittling. The code of Brahmanism never deals with general principles in the regulation of conduct, but fills the whole course of life with punctilious minutiae of observances. Instead of prescribing, as Christ did, an all-comprehensive law of supreme love to God and love to our neighbor as ourselves, it loads the mind with petty exactions, puerile precepts, inane prohibitions. “Unlike Christianity, which is all spirit and life,” says Dr. Duff, “Hinduism is all letter and death.” Repression takes the place of inspiration and the encouragement of hope.

There are a thousand subtle principles in Hinduism whose influence is felt in society and in the state, and to which the faith and power of the Gospel present the very strongest contrasts. For example, while Christianity has raised woman to a position of respect and honor, and made her influence felt as something sacred and potential in the family and in all society, Hinduism has brought her down even from the place which she occupied among the primitive Aryans, to an ever-deepening degradation. It has made her life a burden and a curse. Pundita Ramabai, in her plea for high-caste Hindu women, quotes a prayer of a child widow in which she asks, “O Father of the world, hast Thou not created us? or has perchance some other God made us? Dost Thou only care for men? O Almighty One, hast Thou not power to make us other than we are, that we too may have some part in the blessings of life?” Even in this last decade of the



nineteenth century the priesthood of Bengal are defending against all humane legislation those old customs which render the girlhood of Hindu women a living death.  
[70]



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In its broad influence Christianity has raised the once savage tribes of Europe to the highest degree of culture, and made them leaders and rulers of the world; but Hinduism has so weakened and humbled the once conquering Aryans that they have long been an easy prey to every invading race. Christianity shows in its sacred Book a manifest progress from lower to higher moral standards—from the letter to the spirit, from the former sins that were winked at to the perfect example of Christ, from the narrow exclusiveness of Judaism to the broad and all-embracing spirit of the Gospel, from prophecy to fulfilment, from types and shadows to the full light of Redemption; the sacred books of Hinduism have degenerated from the lofty aspirations of the Vedic nature-worship to the vileness of Saktism, from the noble praises of Varuna to the low sensuality of the Tantras, from Vedic conceptions of the creation, sublime as the opening of St. John's Gospel, to the myths of the divine turtle or the boar, or the escapades of the supreme and "adorable Krishna." [71]

Christianity breaks down all barriers which divide and alienate mankind, and establishes a universal brotherhood in Christ; Hinduism has raised the most insurmountable barriers and developed the most inexorable social tyranny ever inflicted on the human race. The Hebrew economy also recognized a priestly class, but they were chosen from among their brethren and were only a distinct family; they made no claim to divine lineage, and they were guiltless of social tyranny.

Christianity enjoins a higher and purer ethic than it has ever found in the natural moral standards of any people; it aims at perfection; it treats the least infraction as a violation of the whole law; it regards even corrupt thoughts as sins; it bids us be holy even as He is holy in whose sight the heavens are unclean. Hinduism, on the other hand, is below the ethical standard of respectable Hindu society. The better classes are compelled to apologize for it by asserting that that which is debasing in men may be sinless in the gods. The offences of Krishna and Arjuna would not be condoned in mortals; the vile orgies of the "left-handed worshippers" of Siva would not be tolerated but for their religious character. The murders committed by the Thugs in honor of Kali were winked at only because a goddess demanded them. The naked processions of Chaitanya's followers would be dispersed by the police anywhere but in India.

It is the peculiar distinction of India that it has been the theatre of nearly all the great religions. Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism have all made trial of their social and political power and have failed. Last of all came Christianity. The systems which preceded it had had centuries of opportunity; and yet Christianity has done more for the elevation of Hindu society in the last fifty years than they had accomplished in all the ages of their dominion. Neither Buddhism nor Mohammedanism had made any serious



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impression on caste; neither had been able to mitigate the wrongs which Brahmanism had heaped upon woman—Mohammedanism had rather increased them. The horrors of the satti and the murder of female infants—those bitterest fruits of priestly tyranny—were left unchecked until the British Government, inspired by missionary influence and a general Christian sentiment, branded them as infamous and made them crimes. But now even the native sentiment of the better classes in India is greatly changed by these higher influences, and the conventional morality is rising above the teachings of the national religion. Widow-burning and infanticide belong almost wholly to the past. Child-marriage is coming into disrepute, and caste, though not destroyed, is crippled, and its preposterous assumptions are falling before the march of social progress.

Perhaps the very highest tribute which Hinduism has paid to Christianity is seen in the fact that the modern Arya Somaj has borrowed its ethics and some of its religious doctrines, and is promulgating them under Vedic labels and upon Vedic authority.[72] It has renounced those corruptions of Hinduism which can no longer bear the light—such as enforced widowhood and the general oppression of woman. It denounces the incarnations of Vishnu as mere inventions, and therefore cuts up by the roots the whole Krishna cult and dissipates the glory of the Bhagavad Gita. It abhors polytheism, and not only proclaims the supremacy of one only true God, self-existent, the creator and upholder of all things, but it maintains that such was the teaching of the Vedas. But although this modern eclectic system adopts the whole ethical outcome of Christian civilization in India for its own purposes, it shows a most uncompromising hostility to Christianity. Though it claims to be positively theistic, it seems ready to enter into alliance with any form of atheism or agnosticism, Eastern or Western, against the spread of Christian influence in India.

In speaking of the movement of revived Aryanism I assume that with the more intelligent and progressive classes of India the old Hinduism is dead. Of course, millions of men still adhere to the old corruptions. Millions in the remoter districts would retain the festival of Juggernaut, the hook-swinging, even infanticide and widow-burning, if they dared. The revolting orgies of Kali and Doorga, and the vilest forms of Siva worship, even the murderous rites of the Thugs, might be revived by the fanatical, if foreign influence were withdrawn; but, taking India as a whole, these things are coming to be discarded. The people are ashamed of them; they dare not undertake to defend them in the open day of the present civilization. All intelligent Hindus are persuaded to accept the situation, and look to the future instead of the past. The country is full of new influences which must be counted as factors. British rule is there, and is there to stay. Education has come—good,



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bad, and indifferent. English University training is bringing forward a host of acute thinkers of native blood. But the forces of Western infidelity are also there, grappling with Western Christianity on Indian soil, and before the eyes of the conquered and still sullen people. The vilest of English books and the worst of French novels in English translations are in the markets. All the worst phases of European commerce are exhibited. The opium monopoly, the liquor traffic, and all the means and methods of unscrupulous money-getting, with the wide-spread example of drinking habits, and unbounded luxury and extravagance.

And, in opinions, the war of aggression is no longer on one side only. While the foreigner speaks and writes of superstition, of heathenism, of abominable rites now passing away, the native Hindu press is equally emphatic in its condemnation of what it calls the swinish indulgence of the Anglo-Saxon, his beer-drinking and his gluttony, his craze for money and material power, his disgust at philosophy and all intellectual aspiration, his half-savage love for the chase and the destruction of animal life. Educated Hindus throw back against the charge of idolatry our idolatry of pelf, which, as they claim, eclipses every other thought and aspiration, leads to dishonesty, over-reaching, and manifold crime, and sinks noble ethics to the low level of expediency or self-interest; the conquest is not yet won.

A hundred varieties of creed have sprung up beneath this banyan-tree which I have called Hinduism. There are worshippers of Vishnu, of Siva, of Kali, of Krishna as Bacchus, and of Krishna as the supreme and adorable God. There are Sikhs, and Jains, and Buddhists; Theosophists, Vedantic Philosophers, Mohammedans, Brahmos, Parsees, Evolutionists, and Agnostics; Devil-worshippers, and worshippers of ghosts and serpents; but in considering these as forces to be met by Christian influence, we must regard them all as in virtual alliance with each other. They are all one in pride of race and of venerable custom. They are all one in their hatred of foreign dominion, and of the arrogance and overbearing assumption of the European.[73]

The Hindu religions, therefore, however divided, and however weak and moribund they may be taken singly, find a real vitality in the union of common interests, in the sentiments of patriotism, in the pride of their philosophy, in the glory of their ancient history as the true and original Aryans, compared with whom Western nations are mere offshoots.

Their religious faith is mixed and involved with patriotism, politics, and race prejudice, and on the other hand Christianity in India is handicapped by political and commercial interest and a hated domination. On both sides these combined influences must be considered in estimating the future issues of the great conflict. The question is not how Christianity and Hinduism would fare in a conflict pure and simple, unembarrassed by

complications, but how Christianity with its drawbacks is likely to succeed against Hinduism with its manifold intrenchments.

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But, while weighing well the obstacles, how great are the encouragements! What an auspicious fact that even a hostile organization has appropriated the Christian cultus bodily, and can find no better weapons than its blessed truths. Christianity is felt as a silent power, even though under other names. It is, after all, the leaven that is working all-powerfully in India to-day.

There was a period in the process of creation when light beamed dimly upon the earth, though the sun, its source, had not yet appeared. So through the present Hinduism there is a haze of Christian truth, though the Sun of Righteousness is not yet acknowledged as its source.

But the Spirit of God broods over the waters, and the true Light of the world will break on India.

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 34: The fact that environment has to a certain extent affected the religions of mankind is entirely overworked, when men like Buckle make it formative and controlling.]

[Footnote 35: Instead of the later and universal pessimism, there was in the Vedic religion a simple but joyous sense of life.]

[Footnote 36: *Hinduism*, p. 31.]

[Footnote 37: *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i., p. 15.]

[Footnote 38: *Aryan Witness*, p. 204; also *Hinduism*, p. 36.]

[Footnote 39: *Ibid.*, p. 37.]

[Footnote 40: A son of Hariscandra. *Hinduism*, p. 37.]

[Footnote 41: This is in strong contrast with the Old Testament precepts, which everywhere had greater respect to the heart of the offerer than to the gifts.]

[Footnote 42: The Brahmans had found certain grades of population marked by color lines, shaded off from the negroid aborigines to the Dravidians, and from them to the more recent and nobler Aryans, and they were prompt also to seize upon a mere poetic and fanciful expression found in the Rig Veda, which seemed to give countenance to their fourfold caste distinction by representing one class as having sprung from the head of Brahma, another from the shoulders, the third from his thighs, and a fourth from his feet. Altogether they founded a social system which has been the wonder of the ages, and which has given to the *Brahmans* the prestige of celestial descent. The *Kshatreych*



or soldier caste stands next, and as it has furnished many military leaders and monarchs who disputed the arrogant claims of the Brahmans, conflicts of the upper castes have not been infrequent.

The *Vaishya*, or farmer caste, has furnished the principal groundwork of many admixtures and subdivisions, until at the present time there are endless subcastes, to each of which a particular kind of employment is assigned. The *Sudras* are still the menials, but there are different grades of degradation even among them.]

[Footnote 43: *Hindu Philosophy*, Bose, p. 47.]



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[Footnote 44: *Indian Wisdom* on the Brahmanas and Upanishads. Also *Hindu Philosophy*, Bose.]

[Footnote 45: *Colebrook's Essays*, foot-note, p. 85.]

[Footnote 46: See *Introduction to the Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i.]

[Footnote 47: Vaiseshika Philosophy, in *Indian Wisdom*.]

[Footnote 48: Mimansa Philosophy. Ibid.]

[Footnote 49: Sir Monier Williams assigns the Code of Manu *in its present form* to the sixth century B.C. *Indian Wisdom*, p. 215. Other Oriental scholars consider it older.]

[Footnote 50: These tendencies were more intensely emphasized in some of the later codes, which, however, were only variations of the greater one of Manu.]

[Footnote 51: See p. 82.]

[Footnote 52: Quoted on p. 76.]

[Footnote 53: See note, p. 80.]

[Footnote 54: Sir Monier Williams declares that some of Mann's precepts are worthy of Christianity. *Indian Wisdom*, p. 212.]

[Footnote 55: It should be set down to the credit of the Code of Manu that with all its relentless cruelty toward woman it nowhere gives countenance to the atrocious custom of widow-burning which soon afterward became an important factor in the Hindu system and desolated the homes of India for more than two thousand years.

There would seem to be some dispute as to whether or not widow-burning is sanctioned in the Rig Veda. Colebrooke, in his *Essays* (Vol. I., p. 135), quotes one or two passages which authorize the rite, but Sir Monier Williams (*Indian Wisdom*, p. 259, note) has shown that changes were made in this text at a much later day for the purpose of gaining Vedic authority for a cruel system, of which even so late a work as the Code of Manu makes no mention, and (page 205 Ibid.) he quotes another passage from the Rig Veda which directs a widow to ascend the pyre of her husband as a token of attachment, but to leave it before the burning is begun.]

[Footnote 56: As the spread of Buddhism had owed much to the political triumph of King Ashoka, so the revival of Hinduism was greatly indebted to the influence of a new dynasty about a century B.C.]

[Footnote 57: *Indian Wisdom*, p. 314.]



[Footnote 58: Ibid., p. 317.]

[Footnote 59: Brahmanism and Hinduism are often used interchangeably, but all confusion will be avoided by confining the former to that intense sacerdotalism which prevailed during the Brahmana period, while the latter is used more comprehensively, or is referred particularly to the later and fully developed system.]

[Footnote 60: *Hinduism*, pp. 12, 13.]

[Footnote 61: The Brahmans were careful, however, to brand the Buddha, while admitting him as an avatar. Their theory was that Vishnu appeared in Gautama for the purpose of deluding certain demons into despising the worship of the gods, and thus securing their destruction. This affords an incidental proof that Gautama was regarded as an atheist.—See *Indian Wisdom*, p. 335.]



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[Footnote 62: See *Aryan Witness*, closing chapter; also *Christ and Other Masters*, p. 198, notes 1, 2, and 3.]

[Footnote 63: See *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, Monier Williams.]

[Footnote 64: Hardwick traces similarities between Hindu traditions and Christianity in such points as these: 1, The primitive state of man; 2, his fall by transgression; 3, his punishment in the Deluge; 4, the rite of sacrifice; 5, the primitive hope of restoration.—*Christ and Other Masters*, p. 209.]

[Footnote 65: The Hindus hold that “truth was originally deposited with men, but gradually slumbered and was forgotten; the knowledge of it returns like a recollection.”—*Humboldt’s Kosmos*, ii., p. 112.]

[Footnote 66: *Professor Wilson’s Lectures*, p. 52.]

[Footnote 67: *Vishnu Puranas*, p. 45, note 4.]

[Footnote 68: Buddhism is still more disheartening, since it denies the separate conscious existence of the ego. There cannot be divine fellowship, therefore, but only the current of thoughts and emotions like the continuous flame of a burning candle. Not our souls will survive, but our Karma.]

[Footnote 69: *Christ and Other Masters*, p. 182.]

[Footnote 70: Yet in spite of Manu and the inveteracy of old custom, there gleams here and there in Hindu literature and history a bright ideal of woman’s character and rank; while the *Ramayana* has its model Sita, the *Mahabharata*, i., 3028, has this peerless sketch:

“A wife is half the man, his truest friend;  
A loving wife is a perpetual spring  
Of virtue, pleasure, wealth; a faithful wife  
Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;  
A sweetly-speaking wife is a companion  
In solitude; a father in advice;  
A mother in all seasons of distress;  
A rest in passing through life’s wilderness.”

This, however, is a pathetic outburst: the tyranny of the ages remains.]

[Footnote 71: Even in the later development of the doctrine of faith (Bakti) Hinduism fails to connect with it any moral purification or elevation. See quotations from Elphinstone and Wilson in *Christ and Other Masters*, p. 234.]



[Footnote 72: See a recent *Catechism* published by the Arya Somaj.]

[Footnote 73: The following hymn, quoted from the *Arya Catechism*, reveals the proud spirit of revived Aryanism:

“We are the sons of brave Aryas of yore,  
Those sages in learning, those heroes in war.  
They were the lights of great nations before,  
And shone in that darkness like morning’s bright star,  
A beacon of warning, a herald from far.  
Have we forgotten our Rama and Arjun,  
Yudistar or Bishma or Drona the Wise?  
Are not we sons of the mighty Duryodani?  
Where did Shankar and great Dayananda arise?  
‘In India, in India!’



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the echo replies.

Ours the glory of giving the world  
Its science, religion, its poetry and art.  
We were the first of the men who unfurled  
The banner of freedom on earth's every part,  
Brought tidings of peace and of love to each heart."]

### LECTURE IV.

#### THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

No other portion of Hindu literature has made so great an impression on Western minds as the Bhagavad Gita, "The Lord's Lay," or the "Song of the Adorable." It has derived its special importance from its supposed resemblance to the New Testament. And as it claims to be much older than the oldest of the Gospels or the Epistles, it carries the inference that the latter may have borrowed something from it.

A plausible translation has been published in Boston by Mr. Mohini M. Chatterji, who devoutly believes this to be the revealed word of the Supreme Creator and Upholder of the universe.[74] He admits that at a later day "the same God, worshipped alike by Hindus and Christians, appeared again in the person of Jesus Christ," and that "in the Bible He revealed Himself to Western nations, as the Bhagavad Gita had proclaimed Him to the people of the East." And he draws the inference that "If the Scriptures of the Brahmans and the Scriptures of the Jews and Christians, widely separated as they are by age and nationality, are but different names for one and the same truth, who can then say that the Scriptures contradict each other? A careful and reverent collation of the two sets of Scriptures will show forth the conscious and intelligent design of revelation." The fact that the Bhagavad Gita is thoroughly pantheistic, while the Bible emphasizes the personality of God in fellowship with the distinct personality of human souls, seems to interpose no serious difficulty in Mr. Chatterji's view, since he says "'The Lord's Lay' is for philosophic minds, and therefore deals more at length with the mysteries of the being of God." "In the Bhagavad Gita," he says, "consisting of seven hundred and seventy verses, the principal topic is the being of God, while scarcely the same amount of exposition is given to it in the whole Bible;" and he adds, "The explanation of this remarkable fact is found in the difference between the genius of the Hebrew and the Brahman race, and also in the fact that the teachings of Jesus Christ were addressed to 'the common people.'"[75]

The air of intellectual superiority which is couched in these words is conspicuous. Mr. Chatterji also finds an inner satisfaction in what he considers the broad charity of the Brahmanical Scriptures. He quotes a passage from the Narada Pancharata which

speaks of the Buddha as “the preserver of revelation for those outside of the Vedic authority.” And he concludes that when one such revealer is admitted there can be no reason for excluding others; therefore Christianity also should be allowed a place.

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He declares on Vedic authority that whosoever receives the true knowledge of God, however revealed, attains eternal life. And for a parallel to this he quotes the saying of Christ, that “this is eternal life that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” “The Brahmanical Scriptures,” he says, “are of one accord in teaching that when the heart is purified God is seen; so also Jesus Christ declares that the pure in heart are blessed, for they shall see God.”

Our translator discards the often-repeated theory that the Christian Scriptures have copied the wise sayings of Krishna; and it is very significant that an argument to which superficial apologists constantly resort is discarded by this real Hindu, as he supports the theory that as both were direct revelations from Vishnu, there was in his view no need of borrowing. His contention is that God, who “at sundry times and in divers manners” has spoken to men in different ages, made known his truth, and essentially the same truth, both on the plains of India and in Judea. And he reminds Hindus and Christians alike, that this knowledge of truth carries with itself an increased responsibility. He says: “The man who sees the wonderful workings of the Spirit among the nations of the earth, bringing each people to God by ways unknown to others, is thereby charged with a duty. To him with terrible precision applies the warning given by Gamaliel to the Pharisees, ‘Take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do ... lest ye be found to fight even against God.’ If one be a Brahman, let him reflect when opposing the religion of Jesus what it is that he fights. The truths of Christianity are the same as those on which his own salvation depends. How can he be a lover of truth, which is God, if he knows not his beloved under such a disguise? And if he penetrates behind the veil, which should tend only to increase the ardor of his love, he cannot hate those who in obedience to the same truth are preaching the Gospel of Christ to all nations. Indeed he ought to rejoice at his brothers’ devotion to the self-same God, and to see that he is rendering service to Him by helping others to carry out the behests given to them by the Divine Master. If, on the other hand, he be a Christian, let him remember that while he is commanded to preach repentance and remission of sins in the Saviour Jesus, he is also warned against ‘teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’” All this seems like charity, but really it is laxity.

And here is the very essence of Hinduism. Its chief characteristic, that which renders it so hard to combat, is its easy indifference to all distinctions. To reason with it is like grasping a jelly-fish. Its pantheism, which embraces all things, covers all sides of all questions. It sees no difficulties even between things which are morally opposites. Contradictions are not obstacles, and both sides of a dilemma may be harmonized. And to a great extent



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this same vagueness of conviction characterizes all the heathen systems of the East. The Buddhists and the Shintoists in Japan justify their easy-going partnership by the favorite maxim that, while “there are many paths by which men climb the sides of Fussyama, yet upon reaching the summit they all behold the same glorious moon.” The question whether all do in fact reach the summit is one which does not occur to an Oriental to ask.

This same pantheistic charity is seen in the well-known appeal of the late Chunder Sen, which as an illustration is worth repeating here: “Cheshub Chunder Sen, servant of God, called to be an apostle of the Church of the New Dispensation, which is in the holy city of Calcutta; to all the great nations of the world and to the chief religious sects in the East and West, to the followers of Moses and of Jesus, of Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Nanak, and of the various Hindu sects; grace be to you and peace everlasting. Whereas sects, discords, and strange schisms prevail in our father’s family; and whereas this setting of brother against brother has proved the prolific source of evil, it has pleased God to send into the world a message of peace and reconciliation. This New Dispensation He has vouchsafed to us in the East, and we have been commanded to bear witness to the nations of the earth ... Thus saith the Lord: ‘I abominate sects and desire love and concord ... I have at sundry times spoken through my prophets and my many dispensations. There is unity. There is one music but many instruments, one body but many members, one spirit but many gifts, one blood but many nations, one Church but many churches. Let Asia and Europe and America and all nations prove this New Dispensation and the true fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men.’”

This remarkable production—so Pauline in style and so far from Paul in doctrine—seems to possess everything except definite and robust conviction. And its limp philosophy was not sufficient to withhold even Chunder Sen himself from the abandonment of his principles not long afterward. This sweet perfume of false charity, with which he thus gently sprayed the sects and nations of mankind, lost its flavor ere the ink of his message was fairly dry; while he who in similar language announced his call to an Apostleship eighteen centuries ago, is still turning the world upside down.

“Charity” is the watchword of indifferentism in the West as well as in the East; and the East and the West are joining hands in their effort to soothe the world into slumber with all its sins and woes unhealed. Some months ago an advanced Unitarian from Boston delivered a farewell address to the Buddhists of Japan, in which he presented three great Unitarians of New England—Channing, Emerson, and Parker—in a sort of transfiguration of gentleness and charity. He maintained that the lives of these men had been an unconscious prophecy of that mild and gentle Buddhism which he had found in Japan, but of which they had died without the sight.[76]



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Thus the transcendentalism of New England joins hands with the Buddhism and the Shintoism of Japan, and the Brahmanism of Calcutta, and all are in accord with Mr. Chatterji and the Bhagavad Gita. Even the Theosophists profess their sympathy with the Sermon on the Mount, and claim Christ as an earlier prophet. The one refrain of all is "Charity." All great teachers are avatars of Vishnu. The globe is belted with this multiform indifferentism, and I am sorry to say that it is largely the gospel of the current literature and of the daily press. In it all there is no Saviour and no salvation. Religions are all ethnic and local, while the *ignis fatuus* of a mystic pantheism pervades the world.

Mr. Chatterji's preface closes with a prayer to the "merciful Father of humanity to remove from all races of men every unbrotherly feeling in the sacred name of religion, which is but one." The prayer were touching and beautiful on the assumption that there were no differences between truth and error. And there are thousands, even among us, who are asking, "Why may not Christians respond to this broad charity, and admit this Hindu eclectic poem to an equal place with the New Testament?" More or less indifferent to all religions, and failing to understand the real principles on which they severally rest, they are ready to applaud a challenge like that which we are considering, and to contrast it with the alleged narrowness and intolerance of Christian Theism.

I have dwelt thus at length upon Mr. Chatterji's introduction, and have illustrated it by references to similar specious claims of other faiths, in order that I might bring into clearer view the main issue which this book now presents to the American public. It is the softest, sweetest voice yet given to that gospel of false charity which is the fashion of our times. Emerson and others caught it from afar and discoursed to a generation now mostly gone of the gentle maxims of Confucius, Krishna, and Gautama. But now Krishna is among us in the person of his most devout apostle, and a strange hand of fellowship is stretched out toward us from the land of the Vedas.

It behooves us to inquire, first, into the pantheistic philosophy which underlies these sayings, and to ask for their meaning as applied in real life; and second, we shall need to know something of Krishna, and whether he speaks as one having authority. It should be borne in mind that pantheism sacrifices nothing whatever by embracing all religions, since even false religions are a worship of Vishnu in their way, while Christianity by its very nature would sacrifice everything. According to pantheism all things that exist, and all events that transpire, are expressions of the Divine will. The one only existent Being embraces all causes and all effects, all truth and all falsehood. He is no more the source of good than of evil. "I am immortality," says Krishna. "I am also death." Man with all his thoughts and acts is but the shadow of God, and moves as he is moved upon. Arjuna's divine counsellor says to him: "The soul, existing from eternity, devoid of qualities, imperishable, abiding in the body, yet supreme, acts not nor is by any act polluted. He who perceives that actions are performed by Prakriti alone, and that the soul is not an actor, sees the truth aright."

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Now, if this reasoning be correct, it is not we that sin; not we that worship; and in the last analysis all religions are alike; they are only the varied expressions of the thought of God. As He manifests his power in nature in a thousand forms, producing some objects that are beautiful to the eye and others that are repulsive, so in his spiritual manifestations He displays a like variety. The ignorance and degradation of fetichism are His, as well as the highest revelations of spiritual truth. A certain class of evolutionists tell us that God contrived the serpent's poison-fang and the mother's tender instinct with "the same creative indifference." And the broad pantheism which overrides the distinctions of eternal right and wrong, and divests God of all moral discriminations, puts Vedantism and Fetichism, Christianity and Witchcraft, upon the same basis. The Bhagavad Gita and the Gospel both enjoin the brotherhood of men, but what are the meanings which they give to this term? What are their aims, respectively? One is endeavoring to enforce the rigid and insurmountable barriers of caste; the other commends a mission of love which shall regard neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. It will become apparent, I think, that there may be parallels or similarities which relate to mere phrases while their meanings are wide apart.

Judging from Mr. Chatterji's own stand-point, his work has been well done. He has shown a careful study not only of his own literatures and philosophies, but also of the scriptures of the Old and New Testament—in this respect setting us an example worthy to be followed by Christian scholars. Such a man has in the outset an immense advantage over those who know nothing of the enemies' positions, but regard them only with disdain. Before the high court of public opinion, as represented by our current literature, mere ex-parte assumption will go to the wall, even though it has the better cause, while adroit error, intelligently put and courteously commended, will win the day. This is a lesson which the Christian Church greatly needs to learn. Mr. Chatterji's work is the more formidable for its charming graces of style. He has that same facility and elegance in the use of the English language for which so many of his countrymen, Sheshadri, Bose, Banergea, Chunder Sen, Mozoomdar, and others have been distinguished. He is a model of courtesy, and he seems sincere.

But turning from the translator to the book itself, we shall now inquire who was Krishna, Arjuna's friend, what was the origin of the "Lord's Lay," and what are its real merits as compared with the New Testament? Krishna and Arjuna—like Rama Chandra—were real human heroes who distinguished themselves in the wars of the Indo-Aryans with rival tribes who contested the dominion of Northern India. They did not live three thousand years before Christ, as our translator declares, for they belonged to the soldier caste, and according to the

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consensus of Oriental scholarship the system of caste did not exist till about the beginning of the Brahmanic period—say eight hundred years before Christ. Krishna was born in the Punjab, near Merut, and it was near there that his chief exploits were performed. The legends represent him as a genial but a reckless forester, brave on the battle-field, but leading a life of low indulgence. The secret of his power lay in his sympathy. His worship, even as a heroic demi-god, brought a new and welcome element into Hinduism as contrasted with the remorselessness of Siva or the cold indifference of Brahma. It was the dawn of a doctrine of faith, and in this character it was probably of later date than the rise of Buddhism. Indeed, the Brahmans learned this lesson of the value of Divine sympathy from the Buddha. The supernatural element ascribed to Krishna, as well as to Rama, was a growth, and had its origin in the jealousy of the Brahmans toward the warrior caste. His exaltation as the Supreme was an after-thought of the inventive Brahmans. As stated in a former lecture, these heroes had acquired great renown; and their exploits were the glory and delight of the dazzled populace. In raising them to the rank of deities, and as such appropriating them as kindred to the divine Brahmans, the shrewd priesthood saved the prestige of their caste and aggrandized their system by a fully developed doctrine of incarnations. Thus, by a growth of centuries, the Krishna cult finally crowned the Hindu system.

The Mahabharata, in which the Bhagavad Gita was incorporated by some author whose name is unknown, is an immense literary mosaic of two hundred and twenty thousand lines. It is heterogeneous, grotesque, inconsistent, and often contradictory—qualities which are scarcely considered blemishes in Hindu literature.

The Bhagavad Gita was incorporated as a part of this great epic probably as late as the second or third century of our era, and by that time Krishna had come to be regarded as divine, though his full and extravagant deification as the “Adorable One” probably did not appear till the author of “Narada Pancharata” of the eighth century had added whatever he thought the original author should have said five centuries before. As it now stands the poem very cleverly weaves into one fabric many lofty aphorisms borrowed from the Upanishads and the later philosophic schools, upon the groundwork of a popular story of which Arjuna is the hero. Arjuna and his four brothers are about to engage in a great battle with their cousins for the possession of an hereditary throne. The divine Krishna, once himself a hero, becomes Arjuna’s charioteer, that in that capacity he may act as his counsellor. As the battle array is formed, Arjuna is seized with misgivings at the thought of slaughtering his kindred for the glory of a sceptre. “I cannot—will not fight,” he says; “I seek not victory, I seek no kingdom; what shall we do with regal pomp and power? what with enjoyments, or with life itself, when we have slaughtered all our kindred here?”



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Krishna then enters upon a long discourse upon the duties of caste and the indwelling of the Infinite, showing that the soul, which is a part of deity, cannot be slain though the body may be hewn to pieces. "The wise," he says, "grieve not for the departed nor for those who yet survive. Never was the time when I was not, nor thou, nor yonder chiefs, and never shall be the time when all of us shall not be. As the embodied soul in this corporeal frame moves swiftly on through boyhood, youth, and age, so will it pass through other forms hereafter; be not grieved thereat.... As men abandon old and threadbare clothes to put on others new, so casts the embodied soul its worn-out frame to enter other forms. No dart can pierce it; flame cannot consume it, water wet it not, nor scorching breezes dry it—indestructible, eternal, all-pervading, deathless." [77]

It may seem absurd to Western minds that a long discourse, which constitutes a volume of intricate pantheistic philosophy, should be given to a great commander just at the moment when he is planning his attack and is absorbed with the most momentous responsibilities; it seems to us strangely inconsistent also to expatiate elaborately upon the merits of the Yoga philosophy, with its asceticism and its holy torpor, when the real aim is to arouse the soul to ardor for the hour of battle. But these infelicities are no obstacle to the Hindu mind, and the consistency of the plot is entirely secondary to the doctrine of caste and of philosophy which the author makes Krishna proclaim. Gentle as many of its precepts are, the Bhagavad Gita, or the "Lord's Lay," is a battle-song uttered by the Supreme Being while the contending hosts awaited the signal for fratricidal carnage.

The grotesqueness which characterizes all Hindu literature is not wanting in this story of Krishna and Arjuna, as given in the great poem of which the Bhagavad Gita forms a part. The five sons of Pandu are representatives of the principle of righteousness, while the hundred brothers of the rival branch are embodiments of evil. Yet, when the victory had been gained and the sceptre was given to the sons of Pandu, they despised it and courted death, though the "Adorable One" had urged them on to strife.

Bishma, the leader of the hostile force, in a personal encounter with Arjuna, had been filled so full of darts that he could neither stand nor lie down. Every part of his body was bristling with arrows, and for fifty-eight days he lingered, leaning on their sharp points. Meanwhile the eldest of the victors, finding his throne only a "delusion and a snare," and being filled with remorse, was urged by Krishna to visit his unfortunate adversary and receive instruction and comfort. Bishma, lying upon his bed of spikes, edified him with a series of long and tedious discourses on pantheistic philosophy, after which he asked the tender-hearted Krishna for permission to depart. He is no longer the embodiment of evil: the cruel arrows with which the ideal of goodness had pierced him fall away, the top of his head opens, and his spirit soars to heaven shining like a meteor. How strange a reversal is here! How strange that he who had been the representative of all evil should have been transformed by his suffering, and should have been made to instruct and comfort the man of success.



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Mr. Chatterji falls into a fatal inconsistency when, in spite of his assumption that this poem is the very word of Krishna spoken at a particular time, in a particular place, he informs us that “all Indian authorities agree in pronouncing it to be the essence of all sacred writings. They call it an Upanishad—a term applied to the wisdom, as distinguished from the ceremonial, part of the Vedas, and to no book less sacred.” More accurately he might have said that it is a compend of all Hindu literatures, the traditional as well as the inspired, and with a much larger share of the former than of the latter. Pantheism, which is its quintessence, did not exist in the early Vedic times. Krishna was not known as a god even in the period of the Buddha.[78] And the Epics, which are so largely drawn upon, are later still. And it is upon the basis of the Epics, and the still later Puranas, that the common people of India still worship him as the god of good-fellowship and of lust. The masses longed for a god of human sympathies, even though he were a Bacchus.

In the Bhagavad Gita as we now have it, with its many changes, Krishna has become the supreme God, though according to Lassen his actual worship as such was not rendered earlier than the sixth century; and Professor Banergea claims that it “was not at its zenith till the eighth century, and that it then borrowed much from Christian, or at least Hebrew, sources.” Webber and Lorinser have maintained a similar view. Krishna as the Supreme and Adorable One has never found favor except with the pantheists, and to this day the worship of the real Krishna as a Bacchus is the most popular of all Hindu festivals, and naturally it is the most demoralizing.

We are now prepared to assume that the pantheistic groundwork of the poem on the one hand, and its borrowed Christian conceptions and Christian nomenclature on the other, will explain its principal alleged parallels with the New Testament. With his great familiarity with our Bible, and his rare ability in adjusting shades of thought and expression, Mr. Chatterji has presented no less than two hundred and fourteen passages which he matches with texts from the Bible. Many of these are so adroitly worded that one not familiar with the peculiarities of Hindu philosophy might be stumbled by the comparisons. Mr. R.C. Bose tells us that this poem has wrought much evil among the foreign population of India; and in this country there are thousands of even cultivated people with whom this new translation will have great influence. Men with unsettled minds who have turned away with contempt from the crudities of spiritualism, who are disgusted with the rough assailments of Ingersoll, and who find only homesickness and desolation on the bleak and wintry moor of agnostic science, may yet be attracted by a book which is so elevated and often sublime in its philosophy, and so chaste in its ethical precepts, and which, like Christianity, has bridged the awful chasm between unapproachable deity and our human conditions and wants by giving to the world a God-man.

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If the original author and the various expositors of the Bhagavad Gita have not borrowed from the Christian revelation, they have rendered an undesigned tribute to the great Christian doctrine of a divine and human mediator: they have given striking evidence of a felt want in all humanity of a *God with men*. If it was a deeply conscious want of the human heart which led the heathen of distant India to grope their way from the cheerless service of remorseless deities to one who could be touched with a feeling of their infirmities, and could walk these earthly paths as a counsellor by their side, how striking is the analogy to essential Christian truth!

Let us examine some of the alleged parallels. They may be divided into three classes:

1. Those which are merely fanciful. Nine-tenths of the whole number are of this class. They are such as would never occur to a Hindu on hearing the gospel truth. Only one who had examined the two records in the keen search for parallels, and whose wish had been the father of his thought, would have seen any resemblance. I shall not occupy much time with these.
2. Those resemblances which are only accidental. It may be an accident of similar circumstances or similar causes; it may be a chance resemblance in the words employed, while there is no resemblance in the thoughts expressed.
3. Those coincidences which spring from natural causes. For an example of these, the closing chapter of the Apocalypse speaks of Christ as "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." It is a natural expression to indicate his supreme power and glory as Creator and final Judge of all things. In a similar manner Krishna is made to say, "I am Beginning, Middle, End, Eternal Time, the Birth and the Death of all. I am the symbol A among the characters. I have created all things out of one portion of myself." There are two meanings in Krishna's words. He is in all things pantheistically, and he is the first and best of all things. In the tenth chapter he names with great particularity sixty-six classes of things in which he is always the first: the first of elephants, horses, trees, kings, heroes, etc. "Among letters I am the vowel A." "Among seasons I am spring." "Of the deceitful I am the dice."

The late Dr. Mullens calls attention to the fact that the Orphic Hymns declare "Zeus to be the first and Zeus the last. Zeus is the head and Zeus the centre." In these three similar forms of description one common principle of supremacy rules. The difference is that in the Christian revelation and in the Orphic Hymns there is dignity, while in Krishna's discourse there is frivolous and vulgar particularity. Let us notice a few examples of the alleged parallels more particularly.

In Chapter IX. Krishna says: "Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, etc., commit that to me." This is compared with 1 Corinthians x. 31: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of

God.” Also to Colossians x. 17: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”



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Even if there were no pantheistic differential at the foundation of these utterances, it would not be at all strange if exhortations to an all-embracing devotion should thus in each case be made to cover all the daily acts of life. But aside from this there is a wide difference in the fundamental ideas which these passages express. Paul's thought is that of loving devotion to an infinite Friend and Saviour; it is such an offering of loyalty and love as one conscious being can make to another and a higher. But Krishna identifies the giver with the receiver, and Arjuna is taught to regard the gift itself as an act of God. The phrase "commit that to me" is equivalent to "ascribe that to me." In the context we read: "Of those men, who thinking of me in identity (with themselves), worship me, for them always resting in me, I bear the burden of acquisition and preservation of possessions. Even those the devotees of other gods, who worship in faith, they worship me in ignorance." In other words, the worshipper is to make no difference between himself and the Infinite. He is to refer all his daily acts to the Infinite as the real actor, his own personal ego being ignored. This is not Paul's idea; it is the very reverse of it. It could give comfort only to the evil-doer who desired to shift his personal responsibility.

Let us consider another alleged resemblance. In the fifth chapter Krishna declares that whoever knows him "attains rest." This is presented as a parallel to the words in Christ's prayer: "This is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

In both passages the knowledge of God is made the chief blessing to be sought, but in the one case knowledge means only a recognition of the Infinite Ego as existing in one's personal ego: it is a mere acceptance of that philosophic theory of life. Thus one of the Upanishads declares that "whoever sees all things in God, and God in all things, sees the truth aright;" his philosophy is correct. On the other hand, what Christ meant was not the recognition of a pantheistic theory, but a real heart-knowledge of the Father's character, a loving experience of his divine mercy, his fatherly love, his ineffable glory. The one was cold philosophy, the other was experience, fellowship, gratitude, filial love.

What pantheism taught was that God cannot be known practically—that He is without limitations or conditions that we can distinguish Him from our finiteness only by divesting our conception of Him of all that we are wont to predicate of ourselves. He is subject to no such limitations as good or evil. In Chapter IX., Krishna says: "As air existing in space goes everywhere and is unlimited, so are all things in me.... I am the Vedic rite, I am the sacrifice, I am food, I am sacred formula, I am immortality, I am also death; also the latent cause and the manifest effect." To know the God of the Bhagavad Gita is to know that he cannot be known. "God is infinite in attributes," says Mr. Chatterji, "and yet devoid of attributes. This is the God whom the Bhagavad Gita proclaims."



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By a similar contradiction the more the devout worshipper knows of God the less he knows, because the process of knowledge is a process of “effacement;” the closer the gradual union becomes the fainter is the self-personality, till at length it fades away entirely, and is merged and lost as a drop in the illimitable sea. This is the so-called “rest” which Krishna promises as the reward of knowing him. It is rest in the sense of extinction; it is death; while that which Christ promises is eternal Life with unending and rapturous activity, with ever-growing powers of fellowship and of love.

Take another alleged parallel. Chapter VI. commends the man who has reached such a measure of indifference that “his heart is *even* in regard to friends and to foes, to the righteous and to evil-doers;” and this is held up as a parallel to the Sermon on the Mount, which commends love to enemies that we may be children of the heavenly Father who sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust. In the one case the apathy of the ascetic, the extinction of susceptibility, the ignoring of moral distinctions, the crippling and deadening of our noblest powers; in the other the use of these powers in all ways of beneficence toward those who injure us, even as God, though his heart is by no means “even” as between the righteous and the wicked, stills shows kindness to both. Now, in view of the great plausibility of the parallels which are thus presented to the public—parallels whose subtle fallacy the mass of readers are almost sure to overlook—one can hardly exaggerate the importance of thoroughly sifting the philosophy that underlies them, and especially on the part of those who are, or are to become, the defenders of the truth.[79]

But turning from particular parallels to a broader comparison, there is a general use of expressions in the New Testament in regard to which every Christian teacher should aim at clear views and careful discriminations; for example, when we are said to be “temples of the Holy Ghost,” or when Christ is said to be “formed in us the hope of glory,” or it is “no longer we that live, but Christ that liveth in us.” It cannot be denied that defenders of the Bhagavad Gita, and of the whole Indo-pantheistic philosophy, might make out a somewhat plausible case along these lines. I recall an instance in which an honored pastor had made such extravagant use of these New Testament expressions that some of his co-presbyters raised the question of a trial for pantheism. But it is one thing to employ strong terms of devotional feeling, as is often done, especially in prayer, and quite another to frame theories and philosophies, and present them as accurate statements of truth. The New Testament nowhere speaks of the indwelling Spirit in such a sense as implies an obliteration or absorption of the conscious individual ego, while “effacement” instead of fellowship is a favorite expression in the Bhagavad Gita. Paul in his most ecstatic language never gives any hint of extinction, but, on the contrary, he magnifies the conception of a separate, conscious, ever-growing personality, living and rejoicing in Divine fellowship for evermore.



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In the New Testament the expressions of our union with Christ are often reversed: instead of speaking of Christ as abiding in the hearts and lives of his people, they are sometimes said to abide in Him, and that not in the sense of absorption. Paul speaks of the “saints in Christ,” of his own “bonds in Christ,” of being “baptized in Christ,” of becoming “a new creature in Christ,” of true Christians as being one body in Christ, of their lives being “hid with Christ in God.” Believers are spoken of as being “buried with Christ,” “dead with Christ.” Every form of expression is used to represent fellowship, intimacy, spiritual union with Him, but always in a rational and practical sense, and with full implication of our distinct and separate personality. The essential hope of the Gospel is that those who believe in Christ shall never die, that even their mortal bodies shall be raised in his image, and that they shall be like Him and shall abide in his presence. On the other hand, “The essence of this pantheistic system,” says Mr. Chatterji, “is the denial of real existence to the individual spirit, and the insistence upon its true identity with God” (Chapter IV.).

It only remains to be said that, whatever may be the similarities of expression between this Bible of pantheism and that of Christianity, however they may agree in the utterance of worthy ethical maxims, that which most broadly differentiates the Christian faith from Hindu philosophy is the salient presentation of great fundamental truths which are found in the Word of God alone.

1. The doctrine that God in Christ is “made sin” for the redemption of sinful man—that He is “the end of the law for righteousness” for them that believe; this is indeed Divine help: this is salvation. Divinity does not here become the mere charioteer of human effort, for the purpose of coaching it in the duties of caste and prompting it to fight out its destiny by its own valor. Christ is our expiation, takes our place, for our sakes becomes poor that we through his poverty may become rich. What a boon to all fakirs and merit-makers of the world if they could feel that that law of righteousness which they are striving to work out by mortifications and self-tortures had been achieved for them by the Son of God, and that salvation is a free gift! This is something that can be apprehended alike by the philosopher and by the unlettered masses of men.

2. Another great truth found in our Scriptures is that the pathway by which the human soul returns to God is not the way of knowledge in the sense of philosophy, but the way of intelligent confidence and loving trust. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made.” Man by wisdom has never known God. This has been the vain effort of Hindu speculation for ages. The author of the Nyaya philosophy assumed that all evil springs from misapprehension, and that the remedy is to be found in correct methods of investigation, guided by skilfully arranged syllogisms. This has been in all ages the chief characteristic of speculative Hinduism. And the Bhagavad Gita furnishes one of its very best illustrations. Of its eighteen chapters, fifteen are devoted to “Eight Knowledge.” And by knowledge is meant abstract speculation. It is a reaching after oneness with the deity by introspection and metaphysical analysis.



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“Even if thou wert the greatest evil-doer among all the unrighteous,” says Krishna, “thou shalt cross over all sins even by the ark of knowledge.” “Oh, Arjuna, as blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge turns all action into ashes.” But in the first place a knowledge of the infinite within us is unattainable, and in the second place it could not avail us even if attainable. It is not practical knowledge; it is not a belief unto righteousness. Faith is not an act of the brain merely, but of the whole moral nature. The wisdom of self must be laid aside, self-righteousness cast into the dust, the pride and rebellion of the will surrendered, and the whole man become as a little child. This is the way of knowledge that can be made experimental; this is the knowledge that is unto eternal life.

3. Another great differential of the New Testament is found in its true doctrine of divine co-operation with the human will. Our personality is not destroyed that the absolute may take its place, but the two act together. “For men of renunciation,” says the Bhagavad Gita, “whose hearts are at rest from desire and anger, and knowing the only self, there is on both sides of death effacement (of the individual) in the supreme spirit.” In such a person, therefore, even on this side of death, there is a cessation of the individual in the supreme. Over against this the Gospel presents the doctrine of co-operative grace, which instead of crippling our human energies arouses them to their highest and best exertion. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” The divine acts with and through the human, but does not destroy it. It imparts the greatest encouragement, the truest inspiration.

4. We notice but one more out of many points of contrast between the doctrines of the Hindu and the Christian Bibles, *viz.*, the difference between ascetic inaction and the life of Christian activity as means of religious growth. I am aware that in the earlier chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna urges Arjuna to valiant activity on the battle-field, but that is for a special purpose, *viz.*, the establishment of caste distinctions. It is wholly foreign to Hindu philosophy; it is even contradictory. The author of the poem, who seems to be aware of the inconsistency of arousing Arjuna to the mighty activities of the battle-field, and at the same time indoctrinating him in the spirit of a dead and nerveless asceticism, struggles hard with the awkward task of bridging the illogical chasm with three chapters of mystification.



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But we take the different chapters as they stand, and in their obvious meaning. "The man of meditation is superior to the man of action," says Chapter I., 46, "therefore, Arjuna, become a man of meditation." How the man of meditation is to proceed is told in Chapter VI., 10-14. "Let him who has attained to meditation always strive to reduce his heart to rest in the Supreme, dwelling in a secret place alone, with body and mind under control, devoid of expectation as well as of acceptance. Having placed in a clean spot one's seat, firm, not very high nor very low, formed of the skins of animals, placed upon cloth and cusa grass upon that, sitting on that seat, strive for meditation, for the purification of the heart, making the mind one-pointed, and reducing to rest the action of the thinking principle as well as that of the senses and organs. Holding the body, neck, and head straight and unmoved, perfectly determined, and not working in any direction, but as if beholding the end of his own nose, with his heart in supreme peace, devoid of fear, with thought controlled and heart in me as the supreme goal, he remains."

How different from all this is that prayer of Christ, "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Or those various words spoken to his disciples: "Let your light so shine before men that others seeing your good works shall glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Work while the day lasts, for the night cometh in which no man can work."

Who can imagine Paul spending all those years of opportunity in sitting on a leopard skin, watching the end of his nose instead of turning the world upside down! In that true sense in which Christ lived within him, He filled every avenue of his being with the aggressive spirit of God's own love for dying men. The same spirit which brought Christ from heaven to earth sent Paul out over the earth. He was not even content to work on old foundations, but regarding himself as under sentence of death he longed to make the most of his votive life, to bear the torch of the truth into all realms of darkness. He was none the less a philosopher because he preferred the simple logic of God's love, nor did he hesitate to confront the philosophy of Athens or the threatenings of Roman tyrants. He was ready for chains and imprisonment, for perils of tempests or shipwreck, or robbers, or infuriate mobs, or death itself.

No Hindu fakir was ever more conscious of the struggle with inward corruption than he, and at times he could cry out, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but he did not seek relief in idleness and inanity, but in what Dr. Chalmers called "the expulsive power of new affections," in new measures of Christlike devotion to the cause of truth and humanity. In a word, Christ and his kingdom displaced the power of evil. He could do all things through Christ who strengthened him.



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Nor was the peace which he felt and which he commended to others the peace of mere negative placidity and indifference. It was loving confidence and trust. "Be careful for nothing"—we hear him saying to his friends at Philippi—"be careful for nothing; but in all things by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make known your requests unto God: and the peace of God, which passeth understanding, shall keep your minds and hearts through Christ Jesus." And yet to show how this consists with devout activity, he commends, in immediate connection with it, the cultivation of every active virtue known to men. Thus, "*Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.*"

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 74: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1889.]

[Footnote 75: The author seems to overlook the fact that the chief excellence of an evangel to lost men is that it appeals to the masses.]

[Footnote 76: Address published in the *Japan Mail*, 1890.]

[Footnote 77: There is scarcely another passage in all Hindu literature which is so full of half-truths as this, or which turns the sublime powers of the human soul to so unworthy a purpose.]

[Footnote 78: In an enumeration of Hindu gods made in Buddha's time Krishna does not appear.]

[Footnote 79: Never before has there been so much danger as now that the lines of truth will be washed out by the flood-tides of sentimental and semi Christian substitutes and makeshifts. As with commodities, so with religion, dilution and adulteration are the order of the day and a little Christianity is made to flavor a thousand shams.]

## LECTURE V.

### BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

New interest has recently been awakened in old controversies concerning the relations of Christianity and Buddhism. The so-called Theosophists and Esoteric Buddhists are reviving exploded arguments against Christianity as means of supporting their crude theories. The charge of German sceptics, that Christianity borrowed largely from Buddhism, is made once more the special stock in trade of these new and fanatical



organizations. To this end books, tracts, and leaflets are scattered broadcast, and especially in the United States and Great Britain.

Professor Max Mueller says, in a recent article published in *Longman's New Review*: "Who has not suffered lately from Theosophy and Esoteric Buddhism? Journals are full of it, novels overflow with it, and one is flooded with private and confidential letters to ask what it all really means. Many people, no doubt, are much distressed in their minds when they are told that Christianity is but a second



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edition of Buddhism. 'Is it really true?' they ask. 'Why did you not tell us all this before? Surely, you must have known it, and were only afraid to tell it.' Then follow other questions: 'Does Buddhism really count more believers than any other religion?' 'Is Buddhism really older than Christianity, and does it really contain many things which are found in the Bible?'" And the learned professor proceeds to show that there is no evidence that Christianity has borrowed from Buddhism. In this country these same ideas are perhaps more widely circulated than in England. They are subsidizing the powerful agency of the secular press, particularly the Sunday newspapers, and thousands of the people are confronting these puzzling questions. There is occasion, therefore, for a careful and candid review of Buddhism by all leaders of thought and defenders of truth.

In the brief time allotted me, I can only call attention to a few salient points of a general character. In the outset, a distinction should be drawn between Buddhist history and Buddhist legend, for just at this point the danger of misrepresentation lies. It is true that the Buddha lived before the time of Christ, and therefore anything of the nature of real biography must be of an earlier date than the teachings of Jesus; but whether the *legends* antedate His life and doctrines is quite another question. The Buddhist apologists all assume that they do, and it is upon the legends that most of the alleged parallelisms in the two records are based. How, then, shall we draw the line between history and legend? The consensus of the best scholarship accepts those traditions in which the northern and southern Buddhist records agree, which the Council of Patna, B.C. 242, adopted as canonical, and which are in themselves credible and consistent with the teachings of Gautama himself. According to this standard of authority Gautama was born about the sixth century B.C., as the son and heir of a rajah of the Sakya tribe of Aryans, living about eighty miles north by northwest of Benares. His mother, the principal wife of Kajah Suddhodana, had lived many years without offspring, and she died not long after the birth of this her only son, Siddartha. In his youth he was married and surrounded by all the allurements and pleasures of an Oriental court. He, too, appears to have remained without an heir till he was twenty-nine years of age, when, upon the birth of a son, certain morbid tendencies came to a climax, and he left his palace secretly and sought true comfort in a life of asceticism. For six years he tried diligently the resources of Hindu self-mortification, but becoming exhausted by his austerities, almost unto death, he abandoned that mode of life, having apparently become atheistic. He renounced the idea of merit-making as a means of spiritual attainment, and he was sorely tempted, no doubt, to return to his former life of ease. But he withstood the temptation and resolved to forego



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earthly pleasure, and teach mankind what he conceived to be the way of life, through self-control. He had tried pleasure; next he had tried extreme asceticism; he now struck out what he called "The Middle Path," as between self-indulgence on the one hand, and extreme bodily mortification as a thing of merit on the other. This middle ground still demanded abstinence as favorable to the highest mental and moral conditions, but it was not carried to such extremes as to weaken the body or the mind, or impair the fullest operation of every faculty.[80]

There can be no doubt that Gautama's relinquishment of Hinduism marked a great and most trying crisis. It involved the loss of all confidence in him on the part of his disciples, for when he began again to take necessary food they all forsook him as a failure. It was while sitting under the shade of an Indian fig-tree (Bodhi-tree) that this struggle occurred and his victory was gained. There his future course was resolved upon; there was the real birth-place of Buddhism as a system. He thenceforth began to preach the law, or what he regarded as the way of self-emancipation, and therefore the way of life. He first sought his five followers, who had abandoned him, and succeeded in winning them back. He gathered at length a company of about sixty disciples, whom he trained and sent forth as teachers of his new doctrines. Yet, still influenced by the old Hindu notions of the religious life, he formed his disciples into an order of mendicants, and in due time he established an order of nuns.

It was when Gautama rose up from his meditation and his high resolve under the Bodhi-tree, that he began his career as "The Enlightened." He was now a Buddha, and claimed to have attained Nirvana. All that has been written of his having left his palace with the purpose of becoming a saviour of mankind, is the sheer assumption of the later legends and their apologists. Buddhism was an after-thought, only reached after six years of bootless asceticism. There is no evidence that when Siddhartha left his palace he had any thought of benefiting anybody but himself. He entered upon the life of the recluse with the same motives and aims that have influenced thousands of other monks and anchorites of all lands and ages—some of them princes like himself. Nevertheless, for the noble decision which was finally reached we give him high credit. It seems to have been one of the noblest victories ever gained by man over lower impulses and desires. The passions of youth were not yet dead within him; worldly ambition may be supposed to have been still in force; but he chose the part of a missionary to his fellow-men, and there is no evidence that he ever swerved from his purpose. He had won a great victory over himself, and that fact constituted a secret of great power. Gautama was about thirty-five years of age when he became a Buddha, and for forty-five years after that he lived to preach his doctrines and to establish the monastic institution which has survived to our time. He died a natural death from indigestion at the age of eighty—greatly venerated by his disciples, and the centre of what had already become a wide-spread system in a large district of India.

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The legends of Buddhism are a very different thing from the brief sketch which I have given, and which is based upon the earlier Buddhist literature. These sprang up after Gautama's death, and their growth extended through many centuries—many centuries even of the Christian era. The legends divide the life of the Buddha into three periods: 1. That of his pre-existent states. 2. That part of his life which extended from his birth to his enlightenment under the Bo-tree. 3. The forty-five years of his Buddhaship. The legends have no more difficulty in dealing with the particular experiences of the pre-existent states than in enriching and adorning the incidents of his earthly life; and both are doubtless about equally authentic.

Gautama discarded the idea of a divine revelation; he rejected the authority of the Vedas totally. He denied that he was divine, but distinctly claimed to be a plain and earnest man. All that he knew, he had discovered by insight and self-conquest. To assume that he was pre-existently divine and omniscient subverts the whole theory of his so-called "discovery," and is at variance with the idea of a personal conquest. The chief emphasis and force of his teachings lay in the assumption that he did simply what other men might do; for his mission was that of a teacher and exemplar merely. He was a saviour only in that he taught men how to save themselves.

The pre-existent states are set forth in the "Jatakas," or Birth Stories of Ceylon, which represent him as having been born five hundred and thirty times after he became a Bodisat (a predestined Buddha). As a specimen of his varied experience while becoming fitted for Buddhaship, we read that he was born eighty-three times as an ascetic, fifty-eight as a monarch, forty-three as a deva, twenty-four as a Brahman, eighteen as an ape; as a deer ten, an elephant six, a lion ten; at least once each as a thief, a gambler, a frog, a hare, a snipe. He was also embodied in a tree. But as a Bodisat he could not be born in hell, nor as vermin, nor as a woman! Says Spence Hardy, with a touch of irony: "He could descend no lower than a snipe."

Northern legends represent Buddha as having "incarnated" for the purpose of bringing relief to a distressed world. He was miraculously conceived—his mother's side in the form of a white elephant. All nature manifested its joy on the occasion. The ocean bloomed with flowers; all beings from many worlds showed their wonder and sympathy. Many miracles were wrought even during his childhood, and every part of his career was filled with marvels. At his temptation under the Bo-tree, Mara (Satan) came to him mounted on an elephant sixteen miles high and surrounded by an encircling army of demons eleven miles deep.[81] Finding him proof against his blandishments, he hurled mountains of rocks against him, and assailed him with fire and smoke and ashes and filth—all of which became as zephyrs on his cheek or as presents of fragrant flowers. Last of all, he sent his three daughters to seduce him. Their blandishments are set forth at great length in the "Romantic Legend."



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In the Northern Buddhist literature—embracing both the “Romantic Legend”[82] and the “Lalita Vistara”—many incidents of Buddha’s childhood are given which show a seeming coincidence with the life of Christ. It is claimed that his birth was heralded by angelic hosts, that an aged sage received him into his arms and blessed him, that he was taken to the temple for consecration, that a jealous ruler sought to destroy him, that in his boyhood he astonished the doctors by his wisdom, that he was baptized, or at least took a bath, that he was tempted, transfigured, and finally received up into heaven. These will be noticed farther on; it is only necessary to say here that the legends giving these details are first at variance with the early canonical history, and second, that they are of such later dates as to place most of them probably within the Christian era.

*The Four Peculiar and Characteristic Doctrines of Buddhism.*

1. Its peculiar conception of the soul. 2. Its doctrine of Trishna and Upadana. 3. Its theory of Karma. 4. Its doctrine of Nirvana.

1. The Skandas, five in number, constitute in their interaction what all others than Buddhists regard as the soul. They consist of material properties; the senses; abstract ideas; tendencies or propensities; and the mental powers. The soul is the result of the combined action of these, as the flame of a candle proceeds from the combustion of its constituent elements. The flame is never the same for two consecutive moments. It seems to have a perpetuated identity, but that is only an illusion, and the same unreality pertains to the soul. It is only a succession of thoughts, emotions, and conscious experiences. We are not the same that we were an hour ago. In fact, there is no such thing as being—there is only a constant *becoming*. We are ever passing from one point to another throughout our life; and this is true of all beings and all things in the universe. How it is that the succession of experiences is treasured up in memory is not made clear. This is a most subtle doctrine, and it has many points of contact with various speculations of modern times. It has also a plausible side when viewed in the light of experience, but its gaps and inconsistencies are fatal, as must be seen when it is thoroughly examined.

2. The second of the cardinal doctrines is that of Trishna. Trishna is that inborn element of desire whose tendency is to lead men into evil. So far, it is a misfortune or a form of original sin. Whatever it may have of the nature of guilt hangs upon the issues of a previous life. Upadana is a further stage in the same development. It is Trishna ripened into intense craving by our own choice and our own action. It then becomes uncontrollable and is clearly a matter of guilt. Now, the momentum of this Upadana is such that it cannot be arrested by death. Like the demons of Gadara it must again become incarnate, even though it should enter the body of a brute. And this transitional something, this restless moral or immoral force which must work out its natural results somehow and somewhere, and that in embodied form projects into future being a residuum which is known as Karma.



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3. What, then, is Karma? Literally it means "the doing." It is a man's record, involving the consequences and liabilities of his acts. It is a score which must be settled. A question naturally arises, how the record of a soul can survive when the soul itself has been "blown out." The illustration of the candle does not quite meet the case. If the flame were something which when blown out immediately seized upon some other substance in which the work of combustion proceeded, it would come nearer to a parallel. One candle may light another before itself is extinguished, but it does not do it by an inherent necessity. But this flame of the soul, this Karma, must enter some other body of god, or man, or beast.

Again, the question arises, How can responsibility be transferred from one to another? How can the heavy load of a man's sin be laid upon some new-born infant, while the departing sinner has himself no further concern in his evil Karma, but sinks into non-existence the moment his "conformations" are touched with dissolution? Buddhism acknowledges a mystery here; no real explanation can be given, and none seems to have been attempted by Buddhist writers. To be consistent, Gautama, in denying the existence of God and of the soul as an entity, should have taught the materialistic doctrine of annihilation. This, however, he could not do in the face of that deep-rooted idea of transmigration which had taken entire possession of the Hindu mind. Gautama was compelled therefore to bridge a most illogical chasm as best he could. Karma without a soul to cling to is something in the air. It alights like some winged seed upon a new-born set of Skandas with its luckless boon of ill desert, and it involves the fatal inconsistency of investing with permanent character that which is itself impermanent.

But the question may be asked, "Do we not admit a similar principle when we speak of a man's influence as something that survives him?" We answer, "No." Influence is a simple radiation of impressions. A man may leave an influence which men are free to accept or not, but it is quite a different thing if he leaves upon a successor the moral liabilities of a bankrupt character. Gautama's own Karma, for example, ceased to exist upon his entering Nirvana; there was no re-birth; but his influence lives forever, and has extended to millions of his fellow-men.

The injustice involved in the doctrine of Karma is startling. The new-born soul that inherits its unsettled score has no memory or consciousness that connects it with himself; it is not heredity; it is not his father's character that invests him. This Karma may have crossed the ocean from the death-bed of some unknown man of another race. The doctrine is the more astonishing when we consider that no Supreme Being is recognized as claiming this retribution. There is no God; it is a vague law of eternal justice, a law without a law-giver or a judge. There can therefore be no pardon, no commutation of sentence, no such thing as divine pity or help. The only way in which one can disentangle himself is by breaking forever the connection between spirit and matter which binds him with the shackles of conscious being.



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4. Nirvana. No doctrine of Buddhism has been so much in dispute as this. It has been widely maintained that Nirvana means extinction. But T.W. Rhys Davids and others have held that it is "the destruction of malice, passion, and delusion," and that it may be attained in this life. The definition is quoted from comparatively recent Pali translations. [83] Gautama, therefore, reached Nirvana forty-five years before his death. It is claimed, however, that insomuch as it cuts off Karma, or re-birth, it involves entire extinction of being upon the dissolution of the body.[84] It is held by still others that Nirvana is a return to the original and all-pervading Bodhi-essence. This theory, which is really a concession to the Brahmanical doctrine of absorption into the infinite Brahma, has a wide following among the modern Buddhists in China and Japan. It is a form of Buddhist pantheism.

As to the teaching of Gautama on this subject, Professor Max Mueller, while admitting that the meta-physicians who followed the great teacher plainly taught that the entire personal entity of an arhat (an enlightened one) would become extinct upon the death of the body, yet reasons, in his lecture on Buddhistic Nihilism, that the Buddha himself could not have taught a doctrine so disheartening. At the same time he quotes the learned and judicial Bishop Bigandet as declaring, after years of study and observation in Burmah, that such is the doctrine ascribed to the great teacher by his own disciples. Gautama is quoted as closing one of his sermons in these words: "Mendicants, that which binds the teacher to existence is cut off, but his body still remains. While his body still remains he shall be seen by gods and men, but after the termination of life, upon the dissolution of the body, neither gods nor men shall see him." T.W. Rhys Davids expresses the doctrine of Nirvana tersely and correctly when he says: "Utter death, with no new life to follow, is, then, a result of, but it is not, Nirvana." [85] Professor Oldenberg suggests, with much plausibility, that the Buddha was more reticent in regard to the doctrine of final extinction in the later periods of his life; that the depressing doctrine had been found a stumbling-block, and that he came to assume an agnostic position on the question. In his "Buddha," [86] Professor Oldenberg, partly in answer to the grounds taken by Professor Max Mueller in his lecture on Buddhistic Nihilism, has very fully discussed the question whether the ego survives in Nirvana in any sense. He claims that certain new translations of Pali texts have given important evidence on the subject, and he sums up with the apparent conclusion that the Buddha, moved by the depressing influence which the grim doctrine of Nirvana, in the sense of extinction, was producing upon his disciples, assumed a position of reticence as to whether the ego survives or not. The venerable Malukya (see p. 275) is said to have plied the Master with questions.



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“Does the perfect Buddha live on beyond death, or does he not? It pleases me not that all this should remain unanswered, and I do not think it right. May it please the Master to answer me if he can. But when anyone does not understand a matter, then a straightforward man says, ‘I do not know that.’” The Buddha replies somewhat evasively that he has not undertaken to decide such questions, because they are not for spiritual edification.

The question, What is Nirvana? has been the object of more extensive discussion than its importance demands. Practically, the millions of Buddhists are not concerned with the question. They find no attraction in either view. They desire neither extinction nor unconscious absorption into the Boddhi essence (or Brahm). What they anticipate is an improved transmigration, a better birth. The more devout may indulge the hope that their next life will be spent in one of the Buddhist heavens; others may aspire to be men of high position and influence. The real heaven to which the average Buddhist looks forward is apt to be something very much after his own heart, or at least something indicated by the estimate which he himself places upon his own character and life. There may be many transmigrations awaiting him, but he is chiefly concerned for the next in order. The very last object to excite his interest is that far-off shadow called Nirvana.

In estimating the conflict of Christianity with Buddhism we must not take counsel merely of our own sense of the absurdity of Gautama’s teachings; we are to remember that in Christian lands society is made up of all kinds of people; that outside of the Christian Church there are thousands, and even millions, who, with respect to faith, are in utter chaos and darkness. The Church therefore cannot view this subject from its own standpoint merely. Let us glance at certain features of Buddhism which render it welcome to various classes of men who dwell among us in Western lands. First of all, the system commends itself to many by its intense individualism. Paul’s figure of the various parts of the human frame as illustrating the body of Christ, mutual in the interdependence of all its members, would be wholly out of place in Buddhism. Even the Buddhist monks are so many units of introverted self-righteousness. And individualism differently applied is the characteristic of our age, and therefore a bond of sympathy is supplied. “Every man for himself,” appeals to modern society in many ways.

Again, Gautama magnified the human intellect and the power of the human will. “O Ananda,” he said, “be lamps unto yourselves; depend upon no other.” He claimed to have thought out, and thought through every problem of existence, to have penetrated every secret of human nature in the present, and in the life to come, and his example was commended to all, that they might follow in their measure. So also our transcendental philosophers have glorified the powers and possibilities of humanity, and have made genius superior to saintliness.[87] There are tens of thousands who in this

respect believe in a religion of humanity, and who worship, if they worship at all, the goddess of reason. All such have a natural affinity for Buddhism.



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Another point in common between this system and the spirit of our age is its broad humanitarianism—beneficence to the lower grades of life. When love transcends the bounds of the human family it does not rise up toward God, it descends toward the lower orders of the animal world. “Show pity toward everything that exists,” is its motto, and the insect and the worm hold a larger relative place in the Buddhist than in the Christian view. The question “Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?” might be doubtful in the Buddhist estimate, for the teacher himself, in his pre-existent states, had often been incarnate in inferior creatures. It is by no means conceded that Jesus, in asking his disciples this question, had less pity for the sparrows than the Buddha, or that his beneficence was less thoughtful of the meanest thing that glides through the air or creeps upon the earth; but the spirit of Christianity is more discriminating, and its love rises up to heaven, where, beginning with God, it descends through every grade of being.

Yet it is quite in accordance with the spirit and aim of thousands to magnify the charity that confines itself to bodily wants and distresses, to sneer at the relief which religion may bring to the far greater anguish of the spirit, and to look upon love and loyalty to God as superstition. Is it any wonder that such persons have a warm side toward Buddhism? Again, this system has certain points in common with our modern evolution theories. It is unscientific enough certainly in its speculations, but it gets on without creatorship or divine superintendence, and believes in the inflexible reign of law, though without a law-giver. It assigns long ages to the process of creation, if we may call it creation, and in development through cycles it sees little necessity for the work of God.

It can also join hands cordially with many social theories of the day. The pessimism of Buddhists, ancient or modern, finds great sympathy in the crowded populations of the Western as well as the Eastern world. And, almost as a rule, Esoteric Buddhism, American Buddhism, Neo-Buddhism, or whatever we may call it, is a cave of Adullam to which all types of religious apostates and social malcontents resort. The thousands who have made shipwreck of faith, who have become soured at the unequal allotments of Providence, who have learned to hate all who are above them and more prosperous than they, are just in the state of mind to take delight in Buddha’s sermon at Kapilavastu, as rehearsed by Sir Edwin Arnold. There all beings met—gods, devas, men, beasts of the field, and fowls of the air—to make common cause against the relentless fate that rules the world, and to bewail the sufferings and death which fill the great charnel-house of existence, while Buddha voiced their common complaint and stood before them as the only pitying friend that the universe had found. It was the first great Communist meeting of which we have any record.[88] The wronged and suffering universe was there, and all



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“took the promise of his piteous speech,  
So that their lives, prisoned in the shape of ape,  
Tiger or deer, shagged bear, jackal or wolf,  
Foul-feeding kite, pearled dove or peacock gemmed,  
Squat toad or speckled serpent, lizard, bat,  
Yea, or fish fanning the river waves,  
Touched meekly at the skirts of brotherhood  
With man, who hath less innocence than these:  
And in mute gladness knew their bondage broke  
Whilst Buddha spoke these things before the king.”

There was no mention of sin, but only of universal misfortune!

In contrast with the deep shadows of a brooding and all-embracing pessimism like this, we need only to hint at that glow of hope and joy with which the Sun of Righteousness has flooded the world, and the fatherly love and compassion with which the Old Testament and the New are replete, the divine plan of redemption, the psalms of praise and thanksgiving, the pity of Christ's words and acts, and his invitations to the weary and heavy-laden. In one view it is strange that pessimism should have comfort in the fellowship of pessimism, but so it is; there is luxury even in the sympathy of hate, and so Buddhist pessimism is a welcome guest among us, though our Communistic querulousness is more bitter.

Once more, Buddhist occultism has found congenial fellowship in American spiritualism. Of late we hear less of spirit-rappings and far more of Theosophy. But this is only the same crude system with other names, and rendered more respectable by the cast-off garments of old Indian philosophy. There is a disposition in the more intellectual circles to assume a degree of disdain toward the crudeness of spiritualism and its vulgar familiarity with departed spirits, who must ever be disturbed by its beck and call; but it is confidently expected that the thousands, nay, as some say, millions, of American spiritualists will gladly welcome the name and the creed of Buddha.[89] It will be idle therefore to assume that the old sleepy system of Gautama has no chance in this wide-awake republic of the West.[90]

I have already called attention to the special tactics of Buddhists just now in claiming that Christianity, having been of later origin, has borrowed its principal facts and its teachings. Let us examine the charge. It is a real tribute to the character of Christ that so many sects of false religionists have in all ages claimed Him either as a follower or as an incarnation of their respective deities. Others have acknowledged his teachings as belonging to their particular style and grade. The bitter and scathing calumny of Celsus, in the first centuries of our era, did not prevent numerous attempts to prove the identity of Christ's teachings with some of the most popular philosophies of the heathen world. Porphyry claimed that many of Christ's virtues were copied from Pythagoras.

With like concession Mohammedanism included Jesus as one of the six great prophets,  
and

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confessedly the only sinless one among them all. Many a fanatic in the successive centuries has claimed to be a new incarnation of the Son of God. Hindus have named Him as an incarnation of Vishnu for the Western, as was Krishna for the Eastern World. As was indicated in the opening of this lecture, the Theosophists are making special claim to Him,[91] and are reviving the threadbare theory that He was a follower of Buddha.

So strong an effort is made to prove that Christianity has borrowed both its divine leader and its essential doctrines from India, that a moment's attention may well be given to the question here. One allegation is that the Evangelists copied the Buddhist history and legends in their account of Christ's early life. Another is that the leaders of the Alexandrian Church worked over the gospel story at a later day, having felt more fully the influence of India at that great commercial centre. The two theories are inconsistent with each other, and both are inconsistent with the assumption that Christ Himself was a Buddhist, and taught the Buddhist doctrines, since this supposition would have obviated the need of any manipulation or fraud at any point.

In replying as briefly as possible I shall endeavor to cover both allegations. In strong contrast with these cheap assertions of Alexandrian corruption and plagiarism is the frank admission of such keen critics as Renan, Weiss, Volkmar, Schenkel, and Hitzig, [92] that the gospel record as we have it, was written during a generation in which some of the companions of Jesus still lived. Renan says of Mark's Gospel that "it is full of minute observations, coming doubtless from an eye-witness," and he asserts that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written "in substantially their present form by the men whose names they bear." These Gospels were the work of men who knew Jesus. Matthew was one of the Twelve; John in his Epistle speaks of himself as an eye-witness. They were written in a historic age and were open to challenge. They were nowhere contradicted in contemporary history. They fit their environment.

How is it with the authenticity of Buddhist literature? Oldenberg says, "For the *when* of things men of India have never had a proper organ," and Max Mueller declares to the same effect, that "the idea of a faithful, literal translation seems altogether foreign to Oriental minds." He also informs us that there is not a single manuscript in India which is a thousand years old, and scarcely one that can claim five hundred years. For centuries after Gautama's time nothing was written; all was transmitted by word of mouth. Buddhists themselves say that the Pali canonical texts were written about 88 B.C.[93]

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Any fair comparison of the two histories should confine itself to the writings which are regarded as canonical respectively, and whose dates can be fixed. No more importance should be attached to the later Buddhist legends than to the “Apocryphal Gospels,” or to the absurd “Christian Legends” which appeared in the middle ages. The Buddhist Canon was adopted by the Council of Patna 242 B.C. The legends which are generally compared with the canonical story of Christ are not included in that Canon, or at most very few of them. They are drawn from certain poetical books written much later, and holding about the same relation to the Buddhist Canon that the “Paradise Lost” and “Paradise Regained” of Milton bear to the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Who would think of quoting “Paradise Lost” in any sober comparison of Biblical truth with the teachings of other religions?[94]

Even the canonical literature, that which is supposed to contain the true history and teachings of Buddha, is far from authoritative, owing to the acknowledged habit—acknowledged even by the author of the “Dhammapada” of adding commentaries, notes, *etc.*, to original teachings. Not only was this common among Buddhist writers, but even more surprising liberties were taken with the narrative. For example: The legend describing Buddha’s leave-taking of his harem is clearly borrowed from an earlier story of Yasa, a wealthy young householder of Benares, who, becoming disgusted with his harem, left his sleeping dancing girls and fled to the Buddha for instruction. Davids and Oldenberg, in translating this legend from the “Mahavagga,” say in a note, “A well-known incident in the life of Buddha has evidently been shaped after the model of this story;” and they declare that *“nowhere in the ‘Pali Pitakas’ is this scene of Buddha’s leave-taking mentioned.”*

As another evidence of the way in which fact and fiction have been mixed and manipulated for a purpose, one of the legends, which has often been presented as a parallel to the story of Christ, represents the Buddha as repelling the temptation of Mara by quoting texts of “scripture,” and the scripture referred to was the “Dhammapada.” But the “Dhammapada” was compiled hundreds of years after Buddha’s death. Besides, there were no “scriptures” of any kind in his day, for nothing was written till two or three centuries later; and worse still, Buddha is made to quote his own subsequent teachings; for the “Dhammapada” claims to consist of the sacred words of the “enlightened one.” Most of the legends of Buddhism were wholly written after the beginning of the Christian era, and it cannot be shown that any were written in their present form until two or three centuries of that era had elapsed. T.W. Rhys Davids says of the “Lalita Vistara” which contains a very large proportion of them, and one form of which is said to have been translated into Chinese in the first century A.D., “that

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there is no real proof that it existed in its present form before the year 600 A.D.” The “Romantic Legend” cannot be traced farther back than the third century A.D. Oldenberg says: “No biography of Buddha has come down to us from ancient times, from the age of the Pali texts, and we can safely say that no such biography was in existence then.” Beal declares that the Buddhist legend, as found in the various Epics of Nepaul, Thibet, and China, “is not framed after *any* Indian model of any date, but is to be found worked out, so to speak, among northern peoples, who were ignorant of, or indifferent to, the pedantic stories of the Brahmins. In the southern and primitive records the terms of the legend are wanting. *Buddha is not born of a royal family; he is not tempted before his enlightenment; he works no miracles, and he is not a Universal Saviour.*”

The chances are decidedly that if any borrowing has been done it was on the side of Buddhism. It has been asserted that thirty thousand Buddhist monks from Alexandria once visited Ceylon on the occasion of a great festival. This is absurd on the face of it; but that a Christian colony settled in Malabar at a very early period is attested by the presence of thousands of their followers even to this day.

In discussing the specific charge of copying Buddhist legends in the gospel narratives, we are met at the threshold by insurmountable improbabilities. To some of these I ask a moment's attention. I shall not take the time to discuss in detail the alleged parallels which are paraded as proofs. To anyone who understands the spirit of Judaism and its attitude toward heathenism of all kinds, it is simply inconceivable that the Christian disciples, whose aim it was to propagate the faith of their Master in a Jewish community, should have borrowed old Indian legends, which, by the terms of the supposition, must have been widely known as such. And Buddhist apologists must admit that it is a little strange that the Scribes and Pharisees, who were intelligent, and as alert as they were bitter, should never have exposed this transparent plagiarism. The great concern of the Apostles was to prove to Jews and Gentiles that Jesus was the Christ of Old Testament prophecy. The whole drift of their preaching and their epistles went to show that the gospel history rested squarely and uncompromisingly on a Jewish basis. Peter and John, Stephen and Paul, constantly “reasoned with the Jews out of their own Scriptures.” How unspeakably absurd is the notion that they were trying to palm off on those keen Pharisees a Messiah who, though in the outset at Nazareth he publicly traced his commission to Old Testament prophecy, was all the while copying an atheistic philosopher of India!

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It is equally inconceivable that the Christian fathers should have copied Buddhism. They resisted Persian mysticism as the work of the Devil, and it was in that mysticism, if anywhere, that Buddhist influence existed in the Levant. Whoever has read Tertullian's withering condemnation of Marcion may judge how far the fathers of the Church favored the heresies of the East. Augustine had himself been a Manichean mystic, and when after his conversion he became the great theologian of the Church, he must have known whether the teachings of the Buddha were being palmed off on the Christian world. The great leaders of that age were men of thorough scholarship and of the deepest moral earnestness. Many of them gave up their possessions and devoted their lives to the promotion of the truths which they professed. Scores of them sealed their faith by martyr deaths.

But even if we were to accept the flippant allegation that they were all impostors, yet we should be met by an equally insurmountable difficulty in the utter silence of the able and bitter assailants of Christianity in the first two or three centuries. Celsus prepared himself for his well-known attack on Christianity with the utmost care, searching history, philosophy, and every known religion from which he could derive an argument against the Christian faith.

Why did he not strike at the very root of the matter by exposing those stupid plagiarists who were attempting to play off upon the intelligence of the Roman world a clumsy imitation of the far-famed Buddha? It was the very kind of thing that the enemies of Christianity wanted. Why should the adroit Porphyry attempt to work up a few mere scraps of resemblance from the life of Pythagoras, when all he had to do was to lay his hand upon familiar legends which afforded an abundance of the very thing in demand?

Again, it is to be remembered that Christianity has always been restrictive and opposed to admixtures with other systems. It repelled the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria, and it fought for two or three centuries against Gnosticism, Manichaeism, and similar heresies: and the assumption, in the face of all this, that the Christian Church went out of its way to copy Indian Buddhism, must be due either to gross ignorance or to reckless misrepresentation. On the other hand, it is in accordance with the very genius of Buddhism to borrow. It has absorbed every indigenous superstition and entered into partnership with every local religious system, from the Devil Worship of Burmah and Ceylon to the Taouism of China and the Shinto of Japan. In its long-continued contact with Christianity it has changed from the original atheism of Gautama to various forms of theism, and in some of its sects, at least, from a stanch insistence on self-help alone to an out-and-out doctrine of salvation by faith. This is true of the Shin and Yodo sects of Japan. From recognizing no God at all at first, Buddhism had, by the seventh century A.D., a veritable Trinity,



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with attributes resembling those of the Triune God of the Christians, and by the tenth century it had five trinities with One Supreme Adi-Buddha over them all. Everyone may judge for himself whether these later interpolations of the system were borrowed from the New Testament Trinity, which had been proclaimed through all the East ten centuries before. Buddhism is still absorbing foreign elements through the aid of its various apologists. Sir Edwin Arnold has greatly added to the force of its legend by the Christian phrases and Christian conceptions which he has read into it. Toward the close of the "Light of Asia" he also introduces into the Buddha's sermon at Kapilavastu the teachings of Herbert Spencer and others of our own time.

But altogether the most stupendous improbability lies against the whole assumption that Christ and his followers based their "essential doctrines" on the teachings of the Buddha. The early Buddhism was atheistic: this is the common verdict of Davids, Childers, Sir Monier Williams, Kellogg, and many others. The Buddha declared that "without cause and unknown is the life of man in this world," and he recognized no higher being to whom he owed reverence. "The Buddhist Catechism," by Subhadra, shows that modern Buddhism has no recognition of God.

It says (page 58): "Buddhism teaches the reign of perfect goodness and wisdom *without a personal God*, continuance of individuality *without an immortal soul*, eternal happiness without a local heaven, the way of salvation without a vicarious saviour, redemption worked out by each one himself without any prayers, sacrifices, and penances, without the ministry of ordained priests, without the intercession of saints, *without divine mercy*." And then, by way of authentication, it adds: "These, and many others which have become the fundamental doctrines of the Buddhist religion, were recognized by the Buddha in the night of his enlightenment under the Boddhi-tree." And yet we are told that this is the system which Christ and his followers copied. Compare this passage with the Lord's Prayer, or with the discourse upon the lilies, and its lesson of trust in God the Father of all! I appeal not merely to Christian men, but to *any* man who has brains and common-sense, was there ever so preposterous an attempt to establish an identity of doctrines?

But what is the evidence found in the legends themselves? Several leading Oriental scholars, and men not at all biased in favor of Christianity, have carefully examined the subject, and have decided that there is no connection whatever. Professor Seydel, of Leipsic, who has given the most scientific plea for the so-called coincidences, of which he claims there are fifty-one, has classified them as: 1, Those which may have been merely accidental, having arisen from similar causes, and not necessarily implying any borrowing on either side; 2, those which seem to have been borrowed from the one narrative or the other; and 3, those which he thinks were clearly copied by the Christian writers. In this last class he names but five out of fifty-one.



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Kuennen, who has little bias in favor of Christianity, and who has made a very thorough examination of Seydel's parallels, has completely refuted these five.[95] And speaking of the whole question he says: "I think we may safely affirm that we must abstain from assigning to Buddhism the smallest direct influence on the origin of Christianity." He also says of similar theories of de Bunsen: "A single instance is enough to teach us that inventive fancy plays the chief part in them." [96]

Rhys Davids, whom Subhadra's "Buddhist Catechism" approves as the chief exponent of Buddhism, says on the same subject: "I can find no evidence of any actual or direct communication of these ideas common to Buddhism and Christianity from the East to the West." Oldenberg denies their early date, and Beal denies them an Indian origin of any date.

### *Contrasts between Buddhism and Christianity.*

Rhys Davids has pointed out the fact that, while Buddhism in some points is more nearly allied to Christianity than any other system, yet in others it is the farthest possible from it in its spirit and its tendency. If we strike out those ethical principles which, to a large extent, are the common heritage of mankind, revealed in the understanding and the conscience, we shall find in what remains an almost total contrariety to the Christian faith. To give a few examples only.

1. Christ taught the existence and glory of God as Supreme, the Creator and Father, the righteous Judge. His supreme mission to reconcile all men to God was the key-note of all His ministry. By His teaching the hearts of men are lifted up above all earthly conceptions to the worship of infinite purity, and to the comforting assurance of more than a father's care and love. Buddhism, on the contrary, knows nothing of God, offers no heavenly incentive, no divine help. Leading scholars are agreed that, whatever it may be now, the original orthodox Buddhism was essentially atheistic. It despised the idea of divine help, and taught men to rely upon themselves. While, therefore, Buddhism never rose above the level of earthly resources, and contemplated only lower orders of being, Christianity begins with God as supreme, to be worshipped and loved with all the heart, mind, and strength, while our neighbors are to be loved as ourselves.

2. Christ represented Himself as having pre-existed from the foundation of the world, as having been equal with God in the glory of heaven, all of which He resigned that He might enter upon the humiliation of our earthly state, and raise us up to eternal life. He distinctly claimed oneness and equality with the Father. Buddha claimed no such antecedent glory; he spoke of himself as a man merely; the whole aim of his teaching was to show in himself what every man might accomplish. Later legends ascribe to him a sort of pre-existence, in which five hundred and thirty successive lives were passed, sometimes as a man, sometimes as a god, many times as an animal. But even these claims were not made by Buddha himself—except so far as was implied by the common doctrine of transmigration.



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Furthermore, in relation to the alleged pre-existences, according to strict Buddhist doctrine it was not really he who had gone before, it was only a Karma or character that had exchanged hands many times before it could be taken up by the real and conscious Buddha born upon the earth. Still further, even after the beginning of his earthly life he lived for many years in what, according to his own teaching, was heinous sin, all of which is fatal to the theory of pre-existent holiness.

3. Christ is a real Saviour; His atonement claimed to be a complete ransom from the penalty of sin, and by His teaching and example, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, He overcomes the power of sin itself, transforming the soul into His own image. Buddha, on the other hand, did not claim to achieve salvation for any except himself, though Mr. Arnold and others constantly use such terms as "help" and "salvation." Nothing of the kind is claimed by the early Buddhist doctrines; they plainly declare that purity and impurity belong to one's self, and that no one can purify another.

4. Christ emphatically declared Himself a helper, even in this life: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He promised also to send his Spirit as a comforter, as a supporter of his disciples' faith, as a guide and teacher, at all times caring for their need; in whatever exigency his grace would be sufficient for them. On the contrary, Buddha taught his followers that no power in heaven or earth could help them; the victory must be their own. "How can we hope to amend a life," says Bishop Carpenter, "which is radically bad, by the aid of a system which teaches that man's highest aim should be to escape from life? All that has been said against the ascetic and non-worldly attitude of Christianity might be urged with additional force against Buddhism. It is full of the strong, sweet, pathetic compassion which looks upon life with eyes full of tears, but only to turn them away from it again, as from an unsolved and insoluble riddle." And he substantiates his position by quoting Reville and Oldenberg. Reville reaches this similar conclusion: "Buddhism, born on the domain of polytheism, has fought against it, not by rising above nature in subordinating it to a single sovereign spirit, but by reproving nature in principle, and condemning life itself as an evil and a misfortune. Buddhism does not measure itself against this or that abuse, does not further the development or reformation of society, either directly or indirectly, for the very simple reason that it turns away from the world on principle."

Oldenberg, one of the most thorough of Pali scholars, says: "For the lower order of the people, for those born to toil in manual labor, hardened by the struggle for existence, the announcement of the connection of misery with all forms of existence was not made, nor was the dialectic of the law of the painful concatenation of causes and effects calculated to satisfy 'the poor in spirit.' 'To the wise belongeth this law,' it is said, 'not to the foolish.' Very unlike the work of that Man who 'suffered little children to come unto Him, for of such is the kingdom of God.' For children, and those who are like children, the arms of Buddha are not opened."



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5. Christ and his disciples set before men the highest motives of life. The great end of man was to love God supremely, and one's neighbor as himself. Every true disciple was to consider himself an almoner and dispenser of the divine goodness to his race. It was this that inspired the sublime devotion of Paul and of thousands since his time. It is the secret principle of all the noblest deeds of men. Gautama had no such high and unselfish aim. He found no inspiring motive above the level of humanity. His system concentrates all thought and effort on one's own life—virtually on the attainment of utter indifference to all things else. The early zeal of Gautama and his followers in preaching to their fellow-men was inconsistent with the plain doctrines taught at a later day. If in any case there were those who, like Paul, burned with desire to save their fellow-men, all we can say is, they were better than their creed. Such was the spirit of the Gospel, rather than the idle and useless torpor of the Buddhist order. "Here, according to Buddhists," says Spence Hardy, "is a mere code of proprieties, an occasional opiate, a plan for being free from discomfort, a system for personal profit." Buddhism certainly taught the repression of human activity and influence. Instead of saying, "Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven," or "Work while the day lasts," it said, "If thou keepest thyself silent as a broken gong, thou hast attained Nirvana." "To wander about like the rhinoceros alone," was enjoined as the pathway of true wisdom.

6. Christ taught that life, though attended with fearful alternatives, is a glorious birthright, with boundless possibilities and promise of good to ourselves and others. Buddhism makes life an evil which it is the supreme end of man to conquer and cut off from the disaster of re-birth. Christianity opens a path of usefulness, holiness, and happiness in this life, and a career of triumph and glory in the endless ages to come. Both Buddhism and Hinduism are worse than other pessimistic systems in their fearful law of entailment through countless transmigrations, each of which must be a struggle.

7. Christ, according to the New Testament, "ever liveth to make intercession for us," and the Holy Spirit represents Him constantly as an ever-living power in the world, to regenerate, save, and bless. But Buddha is dead, and his very existence is a thing of the past. Only traditions and the influence of his example can help men in the struggle of life. Said Buddha to his disciples: "As a flame blown by violence goes out and cannot be reckoned, even so a Buddha delivered from name and body disappears and cannot be reckoned as existing." Again, he said to his Order, "Mendicants, that which binds the Teacher (himself) is cut off, but his body still remains. While this body shall remain he will be seen by gods and men, but after the termination of life, upon the dissolution of the body, neither gods nor men shall see him."



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8. Christ taught the sacredness of the human body. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" said His great Apostle. But Buddhism says: "As men deposit filth upon a dungheap and depart regretting nothing, wanting nothing, so will I depart leaving this body filled with vile vapors." Christ and His disciples taught the triumphant resurrection of the body in spiritual form and purity after His own image. The Buddhist forsakes utterly and forever the deserted, cast-off mortality, while still he looks only for another habitation equally mortal and corruptible, and possibly that of a lower animal. Thus, through all these lines of contrast, and many others that might be named, there appear light and life and blessedness on the one hand, and gloom and desolation on the other.

The gloomy nature of Buddhism is well expressed in Hardy's "Legends and Theories of Buddhism" as follows: "The system of Buddhism is humiliating, cheerless, man-marring, soul-crushing. It tells me that I am not a reality, that I have no soul. It tells me that there is no unalloyed happiness, no plenitude of enjoyment, no perfect unbroken peace in the possession of any being whatever, from the highest to the lowest, in any world. It tells me that I may live myriads of millions of ages, and that not in any of those ages, nor in any portion of any age, can I be free from apprehension as to the future, until I attain to a state of unconsciousness; and that in order to arrive at this consummation I must turn away from all that is pleasant, or lovely, or instructive, or elevating, or sublime. It tells me by voices ever repeated, like the ceaseless sound of the sea-wave on the shore, that I shall be subject to sorrow, impermanence, and unreality so long as I exist, and yet that I cannot cease to exist, nor for countless ages to come, as I can only attain nirvana in the time of a Supreme Buddha. In my distress I ask for the sympathy of an all-wise and all-powerful friend. But I am mocked instead by the semblance of relief, and am told to look to Buddha, who has ceased to exist; to the Dharma that never was in existence, and to the Sangha, the members of which are real existences, but like myself are partakers of sorrow and sin."

How shall we measure the contrast between all this and the ecstasies of Christian hope, which in various forms are expressed in the Epistles of Paul; the expected crown of righteousness, the eternal weight of glory; heirship with Christ in an endless inheritance; the house not made with hands; the General Assembly of the first born? Even in the midst of earthly sorrows and persecutions he could say, "Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord."



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### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 80: It is by no means certain that Buddha's followers, in carrying out his system, have not lapsed into the old notions of merit-making asceticism to greater or less extent, and have become virtually very much like the torpid and useless fakirs of the old Hinduism.]

[Footnote 81: The *Jataka* legends of Ceylon, dating in their present form about 500 A.D., greatly enlarge the proportions of this Northern legend, making the elephant over seven thousand miles high, and widening out the surrounding army to one hundred and sixty four miles.]

[Footnote 82: Of the *Romantic Legend* found in Nepal, Beall's translation is probably the best.]

[Footnote 83: See Appendix of *Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated in Buddhism*.]

[Footnote 84: See *Buddhism*, pp. 110-115.]

[Footnote 85: *Buddhism*, p. 114.]

[Footnote 86: Pp. 265-285.]

[Footnote 87: It is the boast of the author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, that strange mixture of Western spiritualism with Oriental mysticism, that his system despises the tame "goody, goody" spirit of Christianity, and deals with the endless growth of mind.]

[Footnote 88: *Light of Asia*.]

[Footnote 89: Mr. Sinnett, in his *Esoteric Buddhism*, expressed the idea that it was high time that the crudities of spiritualism should be corrected by the more philosophic occultism of the East.]

[Footnote 90: The points of contact between Buddhism and certain forms of Western thought have been ably treated by Professor S.H. Kellogg, in the *Light of Asia and Light of the World*.]

[Footnote 91: A recent tract has appeared, entitled *Theosophy the Religion of Jesus*.]

[Footnote 92: Cited by Professor Kellogg.]

[Footnote 93: Professor T.W. Rhys Davids, in his introduction to *Buddhism*, enumerates the following sources of knowledge concerning the early Buddhism:



1. The *Lalita Vistara*, a Sanscrit work of the Northern Buddhists “full of extravagant fictions” concerning the early portion of Gautama’s life. Davids compares it to Milton’s *Paradise Regained*, as a source of history, and claims that although parts of it were translated into Chinese in the first century of our era, there is no proof of its existence in its present form earlier than the sixth century A.D.
2. Two Thibetan versions, based chiefly on the *Lalita Vistara*.
3. The *Romantic Legend*, from the Sanscrit of the Northern Buddhists, translated into Chinese in the sixth century A.D.; English version by Beal published in 1875. This also is an extravagant poem. This and the *Lalita Vistara* embrace most of the alleged parallels to the Life of Christ.
4. The original Pali text of the *Commentary on the Jatakas*, written in Ceylon probably about the fifth century of our era. Davids considers its account down to the time of Gautama’s return to Kapilavastu, “the best authority we have.” It contains word for word almost the whole of the life of Gautama given by Turnour, from a commentary on the *Buddhavansa*, “which is the account of the Buddhas contained in the second Pitaka.”



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5. An account taken by Spence Hardy from Cingalese books of a comparatively modern date.
6. An English translation by Bigandet of a Burmese account, which was itself a translation of unknown date made from a Pali version.
7. An account of the death of Gautama, given in Pali and said to be the oldest of all the sources. It is full of wonders created by the fancy of the unknown author, but differs widely from the fancy sketches of the *Lalita Vistara* of the North.
8. A translation by Mr. Alabaster of a Siamese account. It does not claim to be exact.]

[Footnote 94: T.W. Rhys Davids illustrates the worthlessness of poetic narrations as grounds of argument by quoting from Milton's *Paradise Regained* this mere fancy sketch of the accompaniments of Christ's temptation:

"And either tropic now  
 'Gan thunder and both ends of heaven; the clouds  
 From many a horrid rift abortive poured  
 Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire  
 In ruin reconciled; nor slept the winds  
 Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad  
 From the four hinges of the world, and fell  
 On the vex'd wilderness; whose tallest pines  
 Tho' rooted deep as high and sturdiest oaks,  
 Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts  
 Or torn up sheer. Ill wast Thou shrouded then,  
 O patient Son of God, yet stood'st alone  
 Unshaken! nor yet staid the terror there;  
 Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round  
 Environed Thee; some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd,  
 Some bent at Thee their fiery darts, while Thou  
 Sat'st unappall'd in calm and sinless peace."

Book iv.]

[Footnote 95: See *National Religion and Universal Religion*, p. 362.]

[Footnote 96: *Hibbert Lectures*, 1882.]

## LECTURE VI.

### MOHAMMEDANISM PAST AND PRESENT



It has been the fate of every great religious teacher to have his memory enveloped in a haze of posthumous myths. Even the Gospel history was embellished with marvellous apocryphal legends of the childhood of Christ. Buddhism very soon began to be overgrown with a truly Indian luxuriance of fables, miracles, and pre-existent histories extending through five hundred past transmigrations. In like manner, the followers of Mohammed traced the history of their prophet and of their sacred city back to the time of Adam. And Mohammedan legends were not a slow and natural growth, as in the case of most other faiths. There was a set purpose in producing them without much delay. The conquests of Islam over the Eastern empires had been very rapid. The success of Mohammed's cause and creed had exceeded the expectations of his most sanguine followers. In the first half of the seventh century—nay, between the years 630 and 638 A.D.—Jerusalem, Damascus, and Aleppo had fallen before the arms of Omar and his lieutenant "Khaled the Invincible," and in 639 Egypt was added to the realm of the Khalifs. Persia was conquered in A.D. 640.



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It seemed scarcely possible that achievements so brilliant could have been the work of a mere unlettered Arab and his brave but unpretentious successors. The personnel of the prophet must be raised to an adequate proportion to such a history. Special requisition was made therefore for incidents. The devout fancy of the faithful was taxed for the picturesque and marvellous; and the system which Mohammed taught, and the very place in which he was born, must needs be raised to a supernatural dignity and importance. Accordingly, the history of the prophet was traced back to the creation of the world, when God was said to have imparted to a certain small portion of earthy dust a mysterious spark of light. When Adam was formed this particular luminous dust appeared in his forehead, and from him it passed in a direct line to Abraham. From Abraham it descended, not to Isaac, but to Ishmael; and this was the cause of Sarah's jealousy and the secret of all Abraham's domestic troubles. Of course, this bright spark of heavenly effulgence reappearing on the brow of each lineal progenitor, was designed ultimately for Mohammed, in whom it shone forth with tenfold brightness.

There is real historic evidence of the fact that the Vale of Mecca had for a long time been regarded as sacred ground. It was a sort of forest or extensive grove, a place for holding treaties among the tribes, a common ground of truce and a refuge from the avenger. It was also a place for holding annual fairs, for public harangues, and the competitive recitation of ballads and other poems. But all this, however creditable to the culture of the Arab tribes, was not sufficient for the purposes of Islam. The Kaaba, which had been a rude heathen temple, was raised to the dignity of a shrine of the true God, or rather it was restored, for it was said to have been built by Adam after a divine pattern. The story was this: At the time of the Fall, Adam and Eve had somehow become separated. Adam had wandered away to Ceylon, where a mountain peak still bears his name. But having been divinely summoned to Mecca to erect this first of earthly temples, he unexpectedly found Eve residing upon a hill near the city, and thenceforward the Valley of Mecca became their paradise regained. At the time of the Deluge the Kaaba was buried in mud, and for centuries afterward it was overgrown with trees.

When Hagar and her son Ishmael were driven out from the household of Abraham, they wandered by chance to this very spot, desolate and forsaken. While Hagar was diligently searching for water, more anxious to save the life of her son than her own, Ishmael, boy-like, sat poking the sand with his heel; when, behold, a spring of water bubbled up in his footprint. And this was none other than the sacred well Zemzem, whose brackish waters are still eagerly sought by every Moslem pilgrim. As Ishmael grew to manhood and established his home in the sacred city, Abraham was summoned to join him, that they together might rebuild the Kaaba. But in the succeeding generations apostacy again brought ruin upon the place, although the heathen Koreish still performed sacred rites there—especially that of sevenfold processions around the sacred stone. This blackened object, supposed to be an aerolite which fell ages ago, is still regarded as sacred, and the sevenfold circuits of Mohammedan pilgrims take the place of the ancient heathen rites.



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Laying aside these crude legends, and confining our attention to probable history, I can only hope, in the compass of a single lecture, to barely touch upon a series of prominent points without any very careful regard to logical order. This will perhaps insure the greatest clearness as well as the best economy of time. And first, we will glance at the personal history of Mohammed—a history, it should be remembered, which was not committed to writing till two hundred years after the prophet's death, and which depends wholly on the enthusiastic traditions of his followers. Born in the year 561 A.D., of a recently widowed mother, he appears to have been from the first a victim of epilepsy, or some kindred affection whose paroxysms had much to do with his subsequent experiences and his success. The various tribes of Arabia were mostly given to a form of polytheistic idolatry in which, however, the conception of a monotheistic supremacy was still recognized. Most scholars, including Renan, insist on ascribing to the Arabians, in common with all other Shemitic races, a worship of one God as Supreme, though the Arabian Allah, like the Baal of Canaan and Phoenicia, was supposed to be attended by numerous inferior deities. Though Islam undoubtedly borrowed the staple of its truths from the Old Testament, yet there was a short confession strikingly resembling the modern creed of to-day, which had been upon the lips of many generations of Arabians before Mohammed's time. Thus it ran: "I dedicate myself to thy service, O Allah. Thou hast no companion except the companion of whom thou art master and of whatever is his."

A society known as the "Hanifs" existed at the time of Mohammed's early manhood, and we know not how long before, whose aim was to bring back their countrymen from the degrading worship and cruel practices of heathenism to the purity of monotheistic worship. The old faith had been reinforced in the minds of the more intelligent Arabs by the truths learned from Jewish exiles, who, as early as the Babylonish captivity, had found refuge in Arabia; and it is a striking fact that the four Hanif leaders whom the young Mohammed found on joining their society, were pleading for the restoration of the faith of Abraham. All these leaders refused to follow his standard when he began to claim supremacy as a prophet; three of them were finally led to Christianity, and the fourth died in a sort of quandary between the Christian faith and Islam. The first two, Waraka and Othman, were cousins of Mohammed's wife, and the third, Obadulla, was his own cousin. Zaid, the last of the four, presents to us a very pathetic picture. He lived and died in perplexity. Banished from Mecca by those who feared his conscientious censorship, he lived by himself on a neighboring hillside, an earnest seeker after truth to the last; and he died with the prayer on his lips, "O God, if I knew what form of worship is most pleasing to thee, so would I serve thee, but I know it not." It is to the credit of Mohammed that he cherished a profound respect for this man. "I will pray for him," he said; "in the Resurrection he also will gather a church around him." [97]



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In spite of his maladies and the general delicacy of his nervous organization, Mohammed evinced in early youth a degree of energy and intellectual capacity which augured well for his future success in some important sphere. Fortune also favored him in many ways. His success as manager of the commercial caravans of a wealthy widow led to his acceptance as her husband. She was fourteen years his senior, but she seems to have entirely won his affections and to have proved indispensable, not only as a patroness, but as a wise and faithful counsellor. So long as she lived she was the good spirit who called forth his better nature, and kept him from those low impulses which subsequently wrought the ruin of his character, even in the midst of his successes. On the one hand, it is an argument in favor of the sincerity of Mohammed's prophetic claims, that this good and true woman was the first to believe in him as a prophet of God; but, on the other hand, we must remember that she was a loving wife, and that that charity which thinketh no evil is sometimes utterly blind to evil when found in this tender relation.

We have no reason to doubt that Mohammed was a sincere "Hanif." Having means and leisure for study, and being of a bright and thoughtful mind, he doubtless entered with enthusiasm into the work of reforming the idolatrous customs of his countrymen. From this high standpoint, and free from superstitious fear of a heathen priesthood, he was prepared to estimate in their true enormity the degrading rites which he everywhere witnessed under the abused name of religion. That hatred of idolatry which became the main spring of his subsequent success, was thus nourished and strengthened as an honest and abiding sentiment. He was, moreover, of a contemplative—we may say, of a religious—turn of mind. His maladies gave him a tinge of melancholy, and, like the Buddha, he showed a characteristic thoughtfulness bordering upon the morbid. Becoming more and more a reformer, he followed the example of many other reformers by withdrawing at stated times to a place of solitude for meditation; at least such is the statement of his followers, though there are evidences that he took his family with him, and that he may have been seeking refuge from the heat. However this may have been, the place chosen was a neighboring cave, in whose cool shade he not only spent the heated hours of the day, but sometimes a succession of days and nights.

Perhaps the confinement increased the violence of his convulsions, and the vividness and power of the strange phantasmagorias which during his paroxysms passed through his mind. It was from one of these terrible attacks that his alleged call to the prophetic office was dated. The prevailing theories of his time ascribed all such experiences to the influence of supernatural spirits, either good or evil, and the sufferer was left to the alternative of assuming either that he had received messages from heaven, or that he had been a victim of the devil. After a night of greater suffering and more thrilling visions than he had ever experienced before, Mohammed chose the more favorable interpretation, and announced to his sympathizing wife Kadijah that he had received from Gabriel a solemn call to become the Prophet of God.



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There has been endless discussion as to how far he may have been self-deceived in making this claim, and how far he may have been guilty of conscious imposture. Speculation is useless, since on the one hand we cannot judge a man of that age and that race by the rigid standards of our own times; and on the other, we are forbidden to form a too favorable judgment by the subsequent developments of Mohammed's character and life, in regard to which no other interpretation than that of conscious fraud seems possible.[98]

Aside from the previous development and influence of a monotheistic reform, and the favoring circumstance of a fortunate marriage, he found his way prepared by the truths which had been made known in Arabia by both Jews and Christians. The Jews had fled to the Arabian Peninsula from the various conquerors who had laid waste Jerusalem and overrun the territories of the Ten Tribes. At a later day, many Christians had also found an asylum there from the persecutions of hostile bishops and emperors. Sir William Muir has shown how largely the teachings of the Koran are grounded upon those of the Old and New Testaments.[99] All that is best in Mohammedanism is clearly borrowed from Judaism and Christianity. Mohammed was illiterate and never claimed originality. Indeed, he plead his illiteracy as a proof of direct inspiration. A far better explanation would be found in the knowledge derived from inspired records, penned long before and under different names.

The prophet was fortunate not only in the possession of truths thus indirectly received, but in the fact that both Jews and Christians had lapsed from a fair representation of the creeds which they professed. The Jews in Arabia had lost the true spirit of their sacred scriptures, and were following their own perverted traditions rather than the oracles of God. They had lost the vitality and power of the truths revealed to their fathers, and were destitute of moral earnestness and all spiritual life. On the other hand, the Christian sects had fallen into low superstitions and virtual idolatry. The Trinity, as they represented it, gave to Mohammed the impression that the Virgin Mary, "Mother of God," was one of the three persons of the Trinity, and that the promise of the coming Paraclete might very plausibly be appropriated by himself.[100] The prevailing worship of pictures, images, and relics appeared in his vision as truly idolatrous as the polytheism of the heathen Koreish. It was clear to him that there was a call for some zealous iconoclast to rise up and deliver his country from idolatry. The whole situation seemed auspicious. Arabia was ripe for a sweeping reformation. It appears strange to us, at this late day, that the churches of Christendom, even down to the seventh century, should have failed to christianize Arabia, though they had carried the Gospel even to Spain and to Britain on the west, and to India and China on the east. If they had imagined that the deserts of the Peninsula were not sufficiently important to demand attention, they certainly learned their mistake; for now the sad day of reckoning had come, when swarms of fanatics should issue from those deserts like locusts, and overrun their Christian communities, humble their bishops, appropriate their sacred temples, and reduce their despairing people to the alternatives of apostacy, tribute, slavery, or the sword.



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It seems equally strange that the great empires which had carried their conquests so far on every hand had neglected to conquer Arabia. It was, indeed, comparatively isolated; it certainly did not lie in the common paths of the conquerors; doubtless it appeared barren, and by no means a tempting prize; and withal it was a difficult field for a successful campaign. But from whatever reason, the tribes of Arabia had never been conquered. Various expeditions had won temporary successes, but the proud Arab could boast that his country had never been brought into permanent subjection.[101] Meanwhile the heredity of a thousand years had strengthened the valor of the Arab warrior. He was accustomed to the saddle from his very infancy; he was almost a part of his horse. He was trained to the use of arms as a robber, when not engaged in tribal wars. His whole activity, his all-absorbing interest, was in hostile forays. He knew no fear; he had no scruples. He had been taught to feel that, as a son of Ishmael every man's hand was turned against him, and of simple right his hand might be turned against every man.

Nor was this all. The surrounding nations, east and west, had long been accustomed to employ these sons of the desert as mercenary soldiers. They had all had a hand in training them for their terrible work, by imparting to them a knowledge of their respective countries, their resources, their modes of warfare, and their points of weakness. How many nations have thus paved the way to their own destruction by calling in allies, who finally became their masters![102]

On Mohammed's part, there is no evidence that at the outset he contemplated a military career. At first a reformer, then a prophet, he was driven to arms in self-defence against his persecutors, and he was fortunate in being able to profit by a certain jealousy which existed between the rival cities of Mecca and Medina. Fleeing from Mecca with only one follower, Abu Bekr, leaving the faithful Ali to arrange his affairs while he and his companion were hidden in a cave, he found on reaching Medina a more favorable reception. He soon gathered a following, which enabled him to gain a truce from the Meccans for ten years; and when they on their part violated the truce, he was able to march upon their city with a force which defied all possible resistance, and he entered Mecca in triumph. Medina had been won partly by the supposed credentials of the prophet, but mainly by jealousy of the rival city. Mecca yielded to a superior force of arms, but in the end became the honored capital and shrine of Islam.



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From this time the career of Mohammed was wholly changed. He was now an ambitious conqueror, and here as before, the question how far he may have sincerely interpreted his remarkable fortune as a call of God to subdue the idolatrous nations, must remain for the present unsettled. Possibly further light may be thrown upon it as we proceed. Let us consider some of the changes which appear in the development of this man's character. If we set out with that high ideal which would seem to be demanded as a characteristic of a great religious teacher, and certainly of one claiming to be a prophet of God, we ought to expect that his character would steadily improve in all purity, humanity, truthfulness, charity, and godlikeness. The test of character lies in its trend. If the founder of a religion has not grown nobler and better under the operation of his own system, that fact is the strongest possible condemnation of the system. A good man generally feels that he can afford to be magnanimous and pitiful in proportion to his victories and his success. But Mohammed became relentless as his power increased. He had at first endeavored to win the Arabian Jews to his standard. He had adopted their prophets and much of the Old Testament teachings; he had insisted upon the virtual identity of the two religions. But having failed in his overtures, and meanwhile having gained superior power, he waged against them the most savage persecution. On one occasion he ordered the massacre of a surrendered garrison of six hundred Jewish soldiers. At another time he put to the most inhuman torture a leader who had opposed his cause; in repeated instances he instigated the crime of assassination.[103] In early life he had been engaged in a peaceful caravan trade, and all his influence had been cast in favor of universal security as against the predatory habits of the heathen Arabs; but on coming to power he himself resorted to robbery to enrich his exchequer. Sales mentions twenty-seven of these predatory expeditions against caravans, in which Mohammed was personally present.[104]

The biographers of his early life represent him as a man of a natural kindness of disposition, and a sensitive temperament almost bordering on timidity. Though not particularly genial, he was fond of children, and had at first, as his recorded utterances show, frequent impulses of pity and magnanimity. But he became hardened as success crowned his career. The temperateness which characterized his early pleadings and remonstrances with those who differed from him, gave place to bitter anathemas; and there was rooted in his personal character that relentless bigotry which has been the key-note of the most intolerant system known upon the earth.

A still more marked change occurred in the increasing sensuality of Mohammed. Such lenient apologists as E. Bosworth Smith and Canon Taylor have applied their most skilful upholstery to the defects of his scandalous morals. Mr. Smith has even undertaken to palliate his appropriation of another man's wife, and the blasphemy of his pretended revelation in which he made God justify his passion.[105] These authors base their chief apologies upon comparisons between Mohammed and the worse depravity of the heathen Arabs, or they balance accounts with some of his acknowledged virtues.



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But the case baffles all such advocacy. The real question is, what was the *drift* of the prophet's character? What was the influence of his professed principles on his own life? It cannot be denied that his moral trend was downward. If we credit the traditions of his own followers, he had lived a virtuous life as the husband of one wife,[106] and that for many years. But after the death of Kadijah he entered upon a career of polygamy in violation of his own law. He had fixed the limit for all Moslems at four lawful wives; and in spite of the arguments of R. Bosworth Smith, we must regard it as a most damning after-thought that made the first and only exception to accommodate his own weakness. By that act he placed himself beyond the help of all sophistry, and took his true place in the sober judgment of mankind. And by a law which is as unerring as the law of gravitation, he became more and more sensual as age advanced. At the time of his death he was the husband of eleven wives. We are not favored with a list of his concubines:[107] we only know that his system placed no limit upon the number.[108] Now, if a prophet claiming direct inspiration could break his own inspired laws for his personal accommodation; if, when found guilty of adultery, he could compel his friend and follower to divorce his wife that he might take her; if upon each violation of purity and decency he did not shrink from the blasphemy of claiming a special revelation which made God the abettor of his vices, and even represented Him as reproving and threatening his wives for their just complaints—if all this does not stamp a man as a reckless impostor, what further turpitude is required?

At the same time it is evident that constant discrimination is demanded in judging of the character of Mohammed. It is not necessary to assume that he was wholly depraved at first, or to deny that for a time he was the good husband that he is represented to have been, or that he was a sincere and enthusiastic reformer, or even that he may have interpreted some of his *early* hallucinations as mysterious messages from heaven. At various times in his life he doubtless displayed noble sentiments and performed generous acts. But when we find him dictating divine communications with deliberate purpose for the most villainous objects, when we find the messages of Gabriel timed and graded to suit the exigencies of his growing ambition, or the demands of his worst passions, we are forced to a preponderating condemnation. The Mohammed of the later years is a remorseless tyrant when occasion requires, and at all times the slave of unbridled lust. Refined and cultivated Mohammedan ladies—I speak from testimony that is very direct—do not hesitate to condemn the degrading morals of their prophet, and to contrast him with the spotless purity of Jesus; “but then,” they add, “God used him for a great purpose, and gave him the most exalted honor among men.” Alas! it is the old argument so often employed in many lands. Success, great intellect, grand achievements gild all moral deformity, and win the connivance of dazzled minds. In this case, however, it is not a hero or a statesman, but an alleged prophet of God, that is on trial.



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It is a question difficult to decide, how far Mohammed made Mohammedanism, and how far the system moulded him. The action of cause and effect was mutual, and under this interaction both the character and the system were slow growths. The Koran was composed in detached fragments suited to different stages of development, different degrees and kinds of success, different demands of personal impulse or changes of conduct. The Suras, without any claim to logical connection, were written down by an amanuensis on bits of parchment, or pieces of wood or leather, and even on the shoulder-bones of sheep. And they were each the expression of Mohammed's particular mood at the time, and each entered in some degree into his character from that time forth. The man and the book grew together, the system, through all its history, fairly represents the example of the man and the teaching of the book.

Let us next consider the historic character and influence of the system of Islam. In forming just conclusions as to the real influence of Mohammedanism, a judicial fairness is necessary. In the first place, we must guard against the hasty and sweeping judgments which are too often indulged in by zealous Christians; and on the other hand, we must certainly challenge the exaggerated statements of enthusiastic apologists. It is erroneous to assert that Islam has never encouraged education, that it has invariably been adverse to all progress, that it knows nothing but the Koran, or that Omar, in ordering the destruction of the Alexandrian library, is the only historical exponent of the system. Such statements are full of partial truths, but they are also mingled with patent errors.

The Arab races in their original home were naturally inclined to the encouragement of letters, particularly of poetry, and Mohammed himself, though he had never been taught even to read, much less to write, took special pains to encourage learning. "Teach your children poetry," he said; "it opens the mind, lends grace to wisdom, and makes the heroic virtues hereditary."<sup>[109]</sup> According to Sprenger, he gave liberty to every prisoner who taught twelve boys of Mecca to write. The Abbasside princes of a later day offered most generous prizes for superior excellence in poetry, and Bagdad, Damascus, Alexandria, Bassora, and Samarcand were noted for their universities.<sup>[110]</sup> Cordova and Seville were able to lend their light to the infant university of Oxford. The fine arts of sculpture and painting were condemned by the early caliphs, doubtless on account of the idolatrous tendencies which they were supposed to foster; but medicine, philosophy, mathematics, chemistry, and astronomy were especially developed, and that at a time when the nations of Europe were mostly in darkness.<sup>[111]</sup> Yet it cannot be denied that on the whole the influence of Islam has been hostile to learning and to civilization.<sup>[112]</sup> The world will never forget that by the burning of the great library of Alexandria the rich legacy which the old world had bequeathed to the new was destroyed. By its occupation of Egypt and Constantinople, and thus cutting off the most important channels of communication, the Mohammedan power became largely responsible for the long eclipse of Europe during the Middle Ages.

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Moreover, when zealous advocates of the system contrast the barbarism of Richard Coeur de Lion with the culture and humanity of Saladin, they seem to forget that the race of Richard had but just emerged from the savagery of the Northmen, while Saladin and his race had not only inherited the high moral culture of Judaism and Christianity, but had virtually monopolized it. It was chiefly by the wars of the Crusaders that Western Europe became acquainted with the civilization of the Orient.

Instead of ignoring the advantages which the East had over the West at that period, it would be more just to inquire what comparative improvements of their respective opportunities have been made by Western Christianity and Eastern Mohammedanism since that time. It would be an interesting task, for example, to start with the period of Saladin and Coeur de Lion, and impartially trace on the one hand the influence of Christianity as it moulded the savage conquerors of the Roman Empire, and from such rude materials built up the great Christian nations of the nineteenth century; and on the other hand, follow the banner of the Crescent through all the lands where it has borne sway: Persia, Arabia, Northern India, Egypt, the Barbary States, East Africa, and the Soudan, and then draw an unbiased conclusion as to which system, as a system, has done more to spread general enlightenment, foster the sentiments of kindness and philanthropy, promote human liberty, advance civilization, increase and elevate populations, promote the purity and happiness of the family and the home, and raise the standards of ethics and true religion among mankind.[113]

One of the brilliant dynasties of Mohammedan history was that of the Moors of Spain. We can never cease to admire their encouragement of arts and their beautiful architecture, but is it quite certain that all this was a direct fruit of Islam? The suggestion that it may have been partly due to contact with the Gothic elements which the Moors vanquished, finds support in the fact that nothing of the kind appeared on the opposite coast of Africa. And while the Mohammedan Empire in India has left the most exquisite architectural structures in the world, it is well known that they were the work of European architects.

But in considering the influence which Islam has exerted on the whole, lack of time compels me to limit our survey to Africa, except as other lands may be referred to incidentally.[114] That the first African conquests, extending from Egypt to Morocco, were simple warlike invasions in which the sword was the only instrument of propagandism, no one will deny. But it is contended that in later centuries a great work has been accomplished in Western Soudan, and is still being accomplished, by missionary effort and the general advance of a wholesome civilization.



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Any fair estimate of Mohammedan influence must take account of the elements which it found in Northern Africa at the time of its conquests. The states which border on the Mediterranean had once been powerful and comparatively enlightened. They had been populous and prosperous. The Phoenician colony in Carthage had grown to be no mean rival of Rome's military power. Egypt had been a great centre of learning, not only in the most ancient times, but especially after the building of Alexandria. More western lands, like Numidia and Mauritania, had been peopled by noble races.

After the introduction of Christianity, Alexandria became the bright focus into which the religions and philosophies of the world poured their concentrated light. Some of the greatest of the Christian fathers, like Augustine, Tertullian, and Cyprian, were Africans. The foundations of Latin Christianity were laid by these men. The Bishopric of Hippo was a model for all time in deep and intelligent devotion. The grace and strength, the sublime and all-conquering faith of Monica, and others like her, furnished a pattern for all Christian womanhood and motherhood.

I do not forget that before the time of the Mohammedan invasion the Vandals had done their work of devastation, or that the African Church had been woefully weakened and rent by wild heresies and schisms, or that the defection of the Monophysite or Coptic Church of Egypt was one of the influences which facilitated the Mohammedan success. But making due allowance for all this, vandalism and schism could not have destroyed so soon the ancient civilization or sapped the strength of the North African races. The process which has permanently reduced so many once populous cities and villages to deserts, and left large portions of the Barbary States with only the moldering ruins of their former greatness, has been a gradual one. For centuries after the Arab conquest those states were virtually shut off from communication with Europe, and for at least three centuries more, say from 1500 down to the generation which immediately preceded our own, they were known chiefly by the piracies which they carried on against the commerce of all maritime nations. Even the Government of the United States was compelled to pay a million of dollars for the ransom of captured American seamen, and it paid it not to private corsairs, but to the Mohammedan governments by which those piracies were subsidized, as a means of supplying the public exchequer. These large amounts were recovered only when our navy, in co-operation with that of England, extirpated the Riff piracies by bombarding the Moslem ports. The vaunted civilizations of the North African states would have been supported by wholesale marauding to this day, had not their piratical fleets been thus summarily swept from the seas by other powers.



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If Egypt has shown a higher degree of advancement it has been due to her peculiar geographical position, to the inexhaustible fertility of the Delta, and, most of all, to the infusion of foreign life and energy into the management of her affairs. Ambitious adventurers, like the Albanian Mehamet Ali, have risen to power and have made Egypt what she is, or rather what she was before the more recent intervention of the European powers. Even Canon Taylor admits that for centuries it has been necessary to import more vigorous foreign blood for the administration of Egyptian affairs.[115]

It will be admitted that Mohammedan conquests have been made in mediaeval times, and down to our own age, in Central Africa, and that along the southern borders of Sahara a cordon of more or less prosperous states has been established; also, that the civilization of those states contrasts favorably with the savagery of the cannibal tribes with which they have come in contact. Probably the best—that is to say, the least objectionable—exemplifications of Islam now to be found in the world are seen in some of the older states of Western Soudan. The Mandingo of the central uplands furnished a better material than the “unspeakable Turk,” and it would not be quite fair to ascribe all his present virtues to the Moslem rule.

But *how* have these conquests in Central Africa been made? The contention of the apologists for Islam is that recently, at least, and probably more or less in the past, a quiet missionary work has greatly extended monotheism, temperance, education, and general comfort, and that it has done more than all other influences for the permanent extinction of the slave trade! Dr. E.W. Blyden, in answer to the charge that Mohammedan Arabs are now, and long have been, chiefly responsible for the horrors of that trade, and that even when Americans bought slaves for their plantations, Moslem raiders in the interior instigated the tribal quarrels which supplied the markets on the coast, contends that the Moslem conquests do most effectually destroy the trade, since tribes which have become Moslem can no longer be enslaved by Moslems.[116] It is a curious argument, especially as it seems to ignore the fact that at the present time both the supply and the demand depend on Mohammedan influence.

As to the means by which the Soudanese States are now extending their power we may content ourselves with a mere reference to the operations of the late “El Mahdi” in the East and the notorious Samadu in the West. Their methods may be accepted as illustrations of a kind of tactics which have been employed for ages. The career of El Mahdi is already well known. Samadu was originally a prisoner, captured while yet a boy in one of the tribal wars near the headwaters of the Niger. Partly by intrigue and partly by the aid of his religious fanaticism he at length became sufficiently powerful to enslave his master. Soon afterward he proclaimed his



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divine mission, and declared a *Jehad* or holy war against all infidels. Thousands flocked to his banner, influenced largely by the hope of booty; and ere long, to quote the language of a lay correspondent of the London *Standard*, written in Sierra Leone September 18, 1888, "he became the scourge of all the peaceable states on the right bank of the Upper Niger." Since 1882 he has attempted to dispute the territorial claims of the French on the upper, and of the English on the lower Niger, though without success. But he has seemed to avenge his disappointment the more terribly on the native tribes.

The letter published in the *Standard* gives an account of an official commission sent by the Governor of Sierra Leone to the headquarters of Samadu in 1888, and in describing the track of this Western Mahdi in his approaches to the French territories it says: "The messengers report that every town and village through which they passed was in ruins, and that the road, from the borders of Sulimania to Herimakono, was lined with human skeletons, the remains of unfortunates who had been slain by Samadu's fanatical soldiery, or had perished from starvation through the devastation of the surrounding country. Some of these poor wretches, to judge from the horrible contortions of the skeletons, had been attacked by vultures and beasts of prey while yet alive, and when too near their lingering death to have sufficient strength to beat them off. Around the ruined towns were hundreds of doubled-up skeletons, the remains of prisoners who, bound hand and foot, had been forced upon their knees, and their heads struck off. Keba, the heroic Bambara king, is still resisting bravely, but he has only one stronghold (Siaso) left, and the end cannot now be far off."

Samadu's career in this direction having been arrested, he next turned his attention toward the tribes under English protection on the southeast, "where, unfortunately, there was no power to take up the cause of humanity and arrest his progress. Before long he entirely overran and subjected Kouranko, Limbah, Sulimania, Kono, and Kissi. The most horrible atrocities were committed; peaceable agriculturists were slaughtered in thousands, and their women and children carried off into slavery. Falaba, the celebrated capital of Sulimania, and the great emporium for trade between Sierra Leone and the Niger, was captured and destroyed; and all the inhabitants of that district, whom every traveller, from Winwood Reade down to Dr. Blyden, has mentioned with praise for their industry and docility, have been exterminated or carried off. Sulimania, which was the garden of West Africa, has now become a howling wilderness."



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And the writer adds: "The people of the States to the south of Futa Djallon are pagans, and Samadu makes their religion a pretext for his outrages. He is desirous, he says, of converting them to the 'True Faith,' and his modes of persuasion are murder and slavery. What could be more horrible than the story just brought down by the messengers who were with Major Festing? Miles of road strewn with human bones; blackened ruins where were peaceful hamlets; desolation and emptiness where were smiling plantations. What has become of the tens of thousands of peaceful agriculturists, their wives and their innocent children? Gone; converted, after Samadu's manner, to the 'True Faith.' And thus the conversion of West Africa to Islamism goes merrily on, while *dilettante* scholars at home complacently discuss the question as to whether that faith or Christianity is the more suitable for the Negro; and the British people, dead to their generous instincts of old, make no demand that such deeds of cruelty and horror shall be arrested with a strong hand." [117]

Similar accounts of the African *propagandism* of Islam might be given in the very words of numerous travellers and explorers, but one or two witnesses only shall be summoned to speak of the Mohammedan dominion and civilization in East Africa. Professor Drummond, in giving his impressions of Zanzibar, says: "Oriental in its appearance, Mohammedan in its religion, Arabian in its morals, a cesspool of wickedness, it is a fit capital to the Dark Continent." And it is the great emporium—not an obscure settlement, but the consummate flower of East African civilization and boasting in the late Sultan Bargash, an unusually enlightened Moslem ruler. Of the interior and the ivory-slave trade pursued under the auspices of Arab dominion the same author says: "Arab encampments for carrying on a wholesale trade in this terrible commodity are now established all over the heart of Africa. They are usually connected with wealthy Arab traders at Zanzibar and other places on the coast, and communication is kept up by caravans, which pass at long intervals from one to the other. Being always large and well-supplied with the material of war, these caravans have at their mercy the feeble and divided native tribes through which they pass, and their trail across the continent is darkened with every aggravation of tyranny and crime. They come upon the scene suddenly; they stay only long enough to secure their end, and disappear only to return when a new crop has arisen which is worth the reaping. Sometimes these Arab traders will actually settle for a year or two in the heart of some quiet community in the remote interior. They pretend perfect friendship; they molest no one; they barter honestly. They plant the seeds of their favorite vegetables and fruits—the Arab always carries seeds with him—as if they meant to stay forever. Meantime they buy ivory, tusk after tusk, until great piles of it are



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buried beneath their huts, and all their barter goods are gone. Then one day suddenly the inevitable quarrel is picked. And then follows a wholesale massacre. Enough only are spared from the slaughter to carry the ivory to the coast; the grass huts of the village are set on fire; the Arabs strike camp; and the slave march, worse than death, begins. The last act in the drama, the slave march, is the aspect of slavery which in the past has chiefly aroused the passions and the sympathy of the outside world, but the greater evil is the demoralization and disintegration of communities by which it is necessarily preceded. It is essential to the traffic that the region drained by the slaver should be kept in perpetual political ferment; that, in order to prevent combination, chief should be pitted against chief, and that the moment any tribe threatens to assume a dominating strength it should either be broken up by the instigation of rebellion among its dependencies or made a tool of at their expense. The inter-relation of tribes is so intricate that it is impossible to exaggerate the effect of disturbing the equilibrium at even a single centre. But, like a river, a slave caravan has to be fed by innumerable tributaries all along its course, at first in order to gather a sufficient volume of human bodies for the start, and afterward to replace the frightful loss by desertion, disablement, and death.”

Next to Livingstone, whose last pathetic appeal to the civilized world to “heal the open sore of Africa” stands engraved in marble in Westminster Abbey, no better witness can be summoned in regard to the slave trade and the influence of Islam generally in Eastern and Central Africa than Henry M. Stanley. From the time when he encountered the Mohammedan propagandists at the Court of Uganda he has seen how intimately and vitally the faith and the traffic are everywhere united. I give but a single passage from his “Congo Free State,” page 144.

“We discovered that this horde of banditti—for in reality and without disguise they were nothing else—was under the leadership of several chiefs, but principally under Karema and Kibunga. They had started sixteen months previously from Wane-Kirundu, about thirty miles below Vinya Njara. For eleven months the band had been raiding successfully between the Congo and the Lubiranzi, on the left bank. They had then undertaken to perform the same cruel work between the Biyerre and Wane-Kirundu. On looking at my map I find that such a territory within the area described would cover superficially 16,200 square geographical miles on the left bank, and 10,500 miles on the right, all of which in statute mileage would be equal to 34,700 square miles, just 2,000 square miles greater than the island of Ireland, inhabited by about 1,000,000 people.



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“The band when it set out from Kirundu numbered 300 fighting men, armed with flintlocks, double-barrelled percussion guns, and a few breech-loaders; their followers, or domestic slaves and women, doubled this force.... Within the enclosure was a series of low sheds extending many lines deep from the immediate edge of the clay bank inland, 100 yards; in length the camp was about 300 yards. At the landing-place below were 54 long canoes, varying in carrying capacity. Each might convey from 10 to 100 people.... The first general impressions are that the camp is much too densely peopled for comfort. There are rows upon rows of dark nakedness, relieved here and there by the white dresses of the captors. There are lines or groups of naked forms—upright, standing, or moving about listlessly; naked bodies are stretched under the sheds in all positions; naked legs innumerable are seen in the perspective of prostrate sleepers; there are countless naked children—many mere infants—forms of boyhood and girlhood, and occasionally a drove of absolutely naked old women bending under a basket of fuel, or cassava tubers, or bananas, who are driven through the moving groups by two or three musketeers. On paying more attention to details, I observe that mostly all are fettered; youths with iron rings around their necks, through which a chain, like one of our boat anchor-chains, is rove, securing the captives by twenties. The children over ten are secured by these copper rings, each ringed leg brought together by the central ring.”

By a careful examination of statistics Mr. Stanley estimates that counting the men killed in the raids and those who perish on the march or are slain because supposed to be worthless, every 5,000 slaves actually sold cost over 30,000 lives.

But there are Arabs and Arabs we are told. The slave-dealers of East Africa and the barbarous chieftains who push their bloody conquests in Western Soudan are bad enough, it is admitted, but they are “exceptions.” Yet we insist that they illustrate the very spirit of Mohammed himself, who authorized the taking of prisoners of war as slaves. Their plea is that they save the souls of those they capture; many of these traders are Mollahs—Pharisees of the Pharisees. Canon Taylor, Dr. Blyden, and others have given us glowing accounts of “Arab missionaries going about without purse or scrip, and disseminating their religion by quietly teaching the Koran;” but the venerable Bishop Crowther, who has spent his whole life in that part of Africa where these conquests are supposed to be made, declares that the real vocation of the quiet apostles of the Koran is that of fetish peddlers.[118] If it be objected that this is the biased testimony of a Christian missionary, it may be backed by the explorer Lander, who, in speaking of this same class of men, says: “These Mollahs procure an easy subsistence by making fetishes or writing charms on bits of wood which are washed off carefully into a basin of water, and drunk with



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avidity by the credulous multitude.” And he adds: “Those who profess the Mohammedan faith among the negroes are as ignorant and superstitious as their idolatrous brethren; nor does it appear that their having adopted a new creed has either improved their manners or bettered their condition in life.” Dr. Schweinfurth also describes the Mohammedan missionaries whom he found at Khartoum as “polluted with every abominable vice which the imagination of man can conceive of.” In answer to various statements which had been published in regard to the rapid missionary progress made by Mohammedans in West Central Africa, Bishop Crowther wrote a letter to the Church Missionary Society at the beginning of 1888, giving the results of his own prolonged observation. He describes the methods used as:

1. War upon the heathen tribes. “If the Chief of a heathen tribe accepts the Koran his people are at once counted as converts and he is received into favor, and is thus prepared to become an instrument in conquering other tribes. But on the refusal to accept the Koran war is declared, the destruction of their country is the consequence, and horrible bloodshed. The aged, male and female, are massacred, while the salable are led away as slaves. One half of the slaves are reserved by the chief, the other half is divided among the soldiers to encourage them to future raids.”
2. Another cause of large increase is polygamy. “For although but four lawful wives are allowed, there is unlimited license for concubinage.”
3. The sale of charms is so conducted as to prove not only a means of profit but a shrewd propaganda. “When childless women are furnished with these, they are pledged, if successful, to dedicate their children to Islam.”

And Bishop Crowther verifies the statement made by others in reference to East Africa, that the priests “besides being charm-makers are traders both in general articles and more largely in slaves.”[119]

We have only time to consider one question more, *viz.*, What is the character of Islam as we find it to-day, and what are its prospects of development? It is a characteristic of our age that no religion stands wholly alone and uninfluenced by others. It is especially true that the systems of the East are all deeply affected by the higher ethics and purer religious conceptions borrowed from Christianity. Thus many Mohammedans of our day, and especially those living in close contact with our Christian civilization, are rising to higher conceptions of God and of religious truth than have been entertained by Moslems hitherto. Canon Taylor, in a little volume entitled “Leaves from an Egyptian Note-Book,” has drawn a picture of Islam which Omar and Othman would hardly have recognized. In the first place it should be remembered that, as he confesses, his reputation as a defender of Mohammed and his system had gone before him to Cairo, and that he was understood to be a seeker after facts favorable



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to his known views. This opened the hearts of friendly Pashas and served to bring out all the praises that they could bestow upon their own faith. It appears accordingly that he was assured by them that polygamy is widely discarded and condemned by prominent Moslems in such cities as Cairo and Alexandria, that many leading men are highly intelligent and widely read, that they profess belief in most of the doctrines held by the Christian Church, that they receive the inspired testimony of the Old and New Testaments—except in so far as they have been corrupted by Christian manipulation. This exception, however, includes all that is at variance with the Koran. They advocate temperance and condemn the slave trade. They encourage the general promotion of education, and what seems to the credulous Canon most remarkable of all is that they express deep regret that Christians do not feel the same charity and fellowship toward Moslems that they feel toward Christians!

Now, making all due abatement for the *couleur de rose* which these easy-going and politic Pashas may have employed with their English champion, it is undoubtedly true that a class of Mohammedans are found in the great cosmopolitan cities of the Levant who have come to recognize the spirit of the age in which they live. Many of them have been educated in Europe; they speak several languages; they read the current literature; they are ashamed of the old fanatical Mohammedanism. Though they cherish a partisan interest in the recognized religion of their country, their faith is really eclectic; it comes not from Old Mecca, but is in part a product of the awakened thought of the nineteenth century. But Canon Taylor's great fallacy lies in trying to persuade himself and an intelligent Christian public that this is Islam. He wearies himself in his attempts to square the modern Cairo with the old, and to trace the modern gentlemanly Pasha, whose faith at least sits lightly upon his soul, as a legitimate descendant of the fanatical and licentious prophet of Arabia. When he strives to convince the world that because these courteous Pashas feel kindly enough toward the Canon of York and others like him, therefore Islam is and always has been a charitable and highly tolerant system, he simply stultifies the whole testimony of history. He tells us that his Egyptian friends complain that "whereas they regard us as brother-believers and accept our scriptures, they are nevertheless denounced as infidels. And they ask why should an eternal coldness reign in our hearts."

Probably they are not acquainted with Samadu of Western Soudan and his methods of propagandism. They have forgotten the career of El Mahdi; they are not familiar with the terrible oppression of the Jews in Morocco—with which even that in Russia cannot compare; they have not read the dark accounts of the extortion practised by the Wahabees of Arabia, even upon Moslems of another sect on their pilgrimages to Mecca, [120] nor do they seem to know that Syrian converts from Islam are now hiding in Egypt from the bloodthirsty Moslems of Beyrut. Finally, he forgets that the very "children are taught formulas of prayer in which they may compendiously curse Jews and Christians and all unbelievers." [121]



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A more plausible case is made out by Canon Taylor, Dr. Blyden, and others on the question of temperance. It is true that Moslems, as a rule, are not hard drinkers. Men and races of men have their besetting sins. Drinking was not the special vice of the Arabs. Their country was too arid; but they had another vice of which Mohammed was the chief exemplar. Canon Taylor is doubtless correct also in the statement that the English protectorate in Egypt has greatly increased the degree of intemperance, and that in this respect the presence of European races generally has been a curse. Certainly too much cannot be said in condemnation of the wholesale liquor trade carried on in Africa by unscrupulous subjects of Christian nations. But it should be remembered that the whiskey of Cairo and of the West Coast does not represent Christianity any more than the Greek assassin or the Italian pickpocket in Cairo represents Islam. Christian philanthropists in Europe and America are seeking to suppress the evil. If Christian missionaries in West Africa were selling rum as Moslem Mollahs are buying and selling slaves in Uganda, if the Bible authorized the system as the Koran encourages slavery and concubinage, as means of propagandism, a parallel might be presented; but the very reverse is true.

As a rule Nomadic races are not as greatly inclined to the use of ardent spirits as are the descendants of the ancient tribes of Northern Europe. The difference is due to climate, temperament, heredity, and the amount of supply. The Koran discourages intemperance and so does the Bible; both are disregarded when the means of gratification are abundant.

The Moguls of India were sots almost as a rule. Wealthy Persian Moslems are the chief purchasers of the native wines. Lander, Schweinfurth, and even Mungo Parke all speak of communities in Central Africa as wholly given to intemperance.[122] Egyptians even, according to Canon Taylor, find the abundant supplies afforded by Europeans too tempting for the restraints of the Koran.

One of the most significant indications that the sober judgment of all enlightened men favors the immense superiority of the Christian faith over all ethnic systems is the fact that even those zealous apologists who have most plausibly defended the non-Christian religions have subsequently evinced some misgivings and have even become advocates of the superior light of Christianity. Sir Edwin Arnold, seeing how seriously some ill-grounded Christian people had interpreted "The Light of Asia," has since made amends by writing "The Light of the World." And E. Bosworth Smith, on reading the extravagant glorification given to Islam by Canon Isaac Taylor, whom he accuses of plagiarism and absurd exaggeration, has come to the stand as a witness against his extreme views. Without acknowledging any important modification of his own former views he has greatly changed the place of emphasis. He has not only recorded his



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condemnation of Canon Taylor's extravagance but he has made a strong appeal for the transcendent superiority of the Christian faith as that alone which must finally regenerate Africa and the world. He has called public attention to the following pointed criticism of Canon Taylor's plea for Islam, made by a gentleman long resident in Algeria, and he has given it his own endorsement: "Canon Isaac Taylor," says the writer, "has constructed at the expense of Christianity a rose-colored picture of Islam, by a process of comparison in which Christianity is arraigned for failures in practice, of which Christendom is deeply and penitently conscious, no account being taken of Christian precept; while Islam is judged by its better precepts only, no account being taken of the frightful shortcomings in Mohammedan practice, even from the standard of the Koran." [123] No indictment ever carried its proofs more conspicuously on its face than this.

E. Bosworth Smith's subsequent tribute to the relative superiority of the Christian faith was given in an address before the Fellows of Zion's College, February 21, 1888. I give his closing comparison entire; also his eloquent appeal for Christian Missions in Africa. "The resemblances between the two Creeds are indeed many and striking, as I have implied throughout; but, if I may, once more, quote a few words which I have used elsewhere in dealing with this question, the contrasts are even more striking than the resemblances. The religion of Christ contains whole fields of morality and whole realms of thought which are all but outside the religion of Mohammed. It opens humility, purity of heart, forgiveness of injuries, sacrifice of self, to man's moral nature; it gives scope for toleration, development, boundless progress to his mind; its motive power is stronger even as a friend is better than a king, and love higher than obedience. Its realized ideals in the various paths of human greatness have been more commanding, more many-sided, more holy, as Averroes is below Newton, Harun below Alfred, and Ali below St. Paul. Finally, the ideal life of all is far more elevating, far more majestic, far more inspiring, even as the life of the founder of Mohammedanism is below the life of the Founder of Christianity.

"If, then, we believe Christianity to be truer and purer in itself than Islam, and than any other religion, we must needs wish others to be partakers of it; and the effort to propagate it is thrice blessed—it blesses him that offers, no less than him who accepts it; nay, it often blesses him who accepts it not. The last words of a dying friend are apt to linger in the chambers of the heart till the heart itself has ceased to beat; and the last recorded words of the Founder of Christianity are not likely to pass from the memory of His Church till that Church has done its work. They are the marching orders of the Christian army; the consolation for every past and present failure; the earnest and the warrant,



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in some shape or other, of ultimate success. The value of a Christian mission is not, therefore, to be measured by the number of its converts. The presence in a heathen or a Muslim district of a single man who, filled with the missionary spirit, exhibits in his preaching and, so far as may be, in his life, the self-denying and the Christian virtues, who is charged with sympathy for those among whom his lot is cast, who is patient of disappointment and of failure, and of the sneers of the ignorant or the irreligious, and who works steadily on with a single eye to the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men, is, of itself, an influence for good, and a centre from which it radiates, wholly independent of the number of converts he is able to enlist. There is a vast number of such men engaged in mission work all over the world, and our best Indian statesmen, some of whom, for obvious reasons, have been hostile to direct proselytizing efforts, are unanimous as to the quantity and quality of the services they render.

“Nothing, therefore, can be more shallow, or more disingenuous, or more misleading, than to attempt to disparage Christian missions by pitting the bare number of converts whom they claim against the number of converts claimed by Islam. The numbers are, of course, enormously in favor of Islam. But does conversion mean the same, or anything like the same, thing in each? Is it *in pari materia*, and if not, is the comparison worth the paper on which it is written? The submission to the rite of circumcision and the repetition of a confession of faith, however noble and however elevating in its ultimate effect, do not necessitate, they do not even necessarily tend toward what a Christian means by a change of heart. It is the characteristic of Mohammedanism to deal with batches and with masses. It is the characteristic of Christianity to speak straight to the individual conscience.

“The conversion of a whole Pagan community to Islam need not imply more effort, more sincerity, or more vital change, than the conversion of a single individual to Christianity. The Christianity accepted wholesale by Clovis and his fierce warriors, in the flush of victory, on the field of battle, or by the Russian peasants, when they were driven by the Cossack whips into the Dnieper, and baptized there by force—these are truer parallels to the tribal conversions to Mohammedanism in Africa at the present day. And, whatever may have been their beneficial effects in the march of the centuries, they are not the Christianity of Christ, nor are they the methods or the objects at which a Christian missionary of the present day would dream of aiming.



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“A Christian missionary could not thus bring over a Pagan or a Muslim tribe to Christianity, even if he would; he ought not to try thus to bring them over, even if he could. ‘Missionary work,’ as remarked by an able writer in the *Spectator* the other day, ‘is sowing, not reaping, and the sowing of a plant which is slow to bear.’ At times, the difficulties and discouragements may daunt the stoutest heart and the most living faith. But God is greater than our hearts and wider than our thoughts, and, if we are able to believe in Him at all, we must also believe that the ultimate triumph of Christianity—and by Christianity I mean not the comparatively narrow creed of this or that particular Church, but the Divine Spirit of its Founder, that Spirit which, exactly in proportion as they are true to their name, informs, and animates, and underlies, and overlies them all—is not problematical, but certain, and in His good time, across the lapse of ages, will prove to be, not local but universal, not partial but complete, not evanescent but eternal.”[124]

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 97: Sprenger’s *Life of Mohammed*, pp. 40, 41.]

[Footnote 98: It is a suspicious fact that the first chapter of the *Koran* begins with protestations that it is a true revelation, and with most terrible anathemas against all who doubt it. This seems significant, and contrasts strongly with the conscious truthfulness and simplicity of the Gospel narrators.]

[Footnote 99: Nor have later defenders of the system failed to derive alleged proofs of their system from Biblical sources. Mohammedan controversialists have urged some very specious and plausible arguments; for example, Deut. xviii. 15-18, promises that the Lord shall raise up unto Israel a prophet from *among their brethren*. But Israel had no brethren but the sons of Ishmael. There was also promised a prophet like unto Moses; but Deut. xxxiv. declares that “*There arose no Prophet in Israel like unto Moses.*”

When John the Baptist was asked whether he were the Christ, or Elijah, or “*that prophet,*” no other than Mohammed could have been meant by “*that prophet.*”]

[Footnote 100: Rev. Mr. Bruce, missionary in Persia, states that pictures of the Father, the Son, and Mary are still seen in Eastern churches.—*Church Missionary Intelligencer*, January, 1882.]

[Footnote 101: Sales, in his *Preliminary Discourse*, Section 1st, enumerates the great nations which have vainly attempted the conquest of Arabia, from the Assyrians down to the Romans, and he asserts that even the Turks have held only a nominal sway.]

[Footnote 102: China owes her present dynasty to the fact that the hardy Manchus were called in as mercenaries or as allies.]

[Footnote 103: Dr. Koelle: quoted in *Church Missionary Intelligencer*.]



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[Footnote 104: Sales: *Koran and Preliminary Discourse*, Wherry's edition, p. 89. One of the chief religious duties under the *Koran* was the giving of alms (Zakat), and under this euphonious name was included the tax by which Mohammed maintained the force that enabled him to keep up his predatory raids on the caravans of his enemies.]

[Footnote 105: *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, p. 123.]

[Footnote 106: Dr. Koelle gravely questions this.]

[Footnote 107: One of the most wicked and disastrous of all Mohammed's laws was that which allowed the free practice of capturing women and girls in war, and retaining them as lawful chattels in the capacity of concubines. It has been in all ages a base stimulus to the raids of the slave-hunter. Sir William Muir has justly said, that so long as a free sanction to this great evil stands recorded on the pages of the *Koran*, Mohammedans will never of their own accord cease to prosecute the slave-trade.]

[Footnote 108: According to Dr. Koelle, the number of women and children who fell to the prophet's share of captives at the time of his great slaughter of the surrendered Jewish soldiers, was two hundred.]

[Footnote 109: *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, p. 112.]

[Footnote 110: *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*.]

[Footnote 111: *Ibid*, p. 112.]

[Footnote 112: Says Sir William Muir: "Three radical evils flow from the faith, in all ages and in every country, and must continue to flow *so long as the Koran is the standard of belief*. *First*, polygamy, divorce, and slavery are maintained and perpetuated, striking at the root of public morals, poisoning domestic life, and disorganizing society. *Second*, freedom of thought and private judgment in religion is crushed and annihilated. The sword still is, and must remain, the inevitable penalty for the denial of Islam. Toleration is unknown. *Third*, a barrier has been interposed against the reception of Christianity. They labor under a miserable delusion who suppose that Mohammedanism paves the way for a purer faith. No system could have been devised with more consummate skill for shutting out the nations over which it has sway from the light of truth. *Idolatrous Arabia* (judging from the analogy of other nations) might have been aroused to spiritual life and to the adoption of the faith of Jesus. *Mohammedan Arabia* is to the human eye sealed against the benign influences of the Gospel.... The sword of Mohammed and the *Koran* are the most stubborn enemies of civilization, liberty, and truth which the world has yet known."—*Church Missionary Intelligencer*, November, 1885.]

[Footnote 113: Osborne, in his *Islam under the Arabs*, and Marcus Dodds, in *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, have emphasized the fact that Islam, however



favorably it might compare with the Arabian heathenism which it overthrew, was wholly out of place in forcing its semi-barbarous cultus upon civilizations which were far above it. It might be an advance upon the rudeness and cruelty of the Koreish, but the misfortune was that it stamped its stereotyped and unchanging principles and customs upon nations which were in advance of it even then, and which, but for its deadening influence, might have made far greater progress in the centuries which followed.



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Its bigoted founder gave the *Koran* as the sufficient guide for all time. It arrested the world's progress as far as its power extended. Very different was the spirit of Judaism. "It distinctly disclaimed both finality and completeness. Every part of the Mosaic religion had a forward look, and was designed to leave the mind in an attitude of expectation."

Mohammedanism, in claiming to be the one religion for all men and all time, is convicted of absurdity and imposture by its failures; by the retrograde which marks its whole history in Western Asia. As a universal religion it has been tried and found wanting.]

[Footnote 114: It has been claimed that the spread of Mohammedanism in India is far more rapid than that of Christianity. If this were true in point of fact, it would be significant; for India under British rule furnishes a fair field for such a contest. But it so happens that there, where Islam holds no sword of conquest, and no arbitrary power to compel the faith of men, its growth is very slow, it only keeps pace with the general increase of the population. It cannot compare with the advancement of Christianity. I subjoin an extract from Sir W. Hunter's paper in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1888:

"The official census, notwithstanding its obscurities of classification and the disturbing effects of the famine of 1877, attests the rapid increase of the Christian population. So far as these disturbing influences allow of an inference for all British India, the normal rate of increase among the general population was about 8 per cent, from 1872 to 1881, while the actual rate of the Christian population was over 30 per cent. But, taking the lieutenant-governorship of Bengal as the greatest province outside the famine area of 1877, and for whose population, amounting to one-third of the whole of British India, really comparable statistics exist, the census results are clear. The general population increased in the nine years preceding 1881 at the rate of 10.89 per cent., the Mohammedans at the rate of 10.96 per cent., the Hindus at some undetermined rate below 13.64 per cent., Christians of all races at the rate of 40.71 per cent., and the native Christians at the rate of 64.07 per cent."]

[Footnote 115: *Leaves from an Egyptian Note-book.*]

[Footnote 116: *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race*, p. 241.]

[Footnote 117: For the full text of the letter to the *Standard*, see *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, December, 1888.]

[Footnote 118: *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1887, p. 653.]

[Footnote 119: See *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, April, 1888.]

[Footnote 120: Over against Canon Taylor's glowing accounts of this broad and gentle charity we may place the testimony of Palgrave in regard to the remorseless rapacity practised by the Wahabees upon the Shiyaees of Persia while passing through their



territory in their pilgrimages to a common shrine. He tells us that “forty gold tomans were fixed as the claim of the Wahabee treasury on every Persian pilgrim for his passage through R’ad, and forty more for a safe conduct through the rest of the empire—eighty in all....



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“Every local governor on the way would naturally enough take the hint, and strive not to let the ‘enemies of God’ (for this is the sole title given by Wahabees to all except themselves) go by without spoiling them more or less....

“So that, all counted up, the legal and necessary dues levied on every Persian Shiyae while traversing Central Arabia, and under Wahabee guidance and protection, amounted, I found, to about one hundred and fifty gold tomans, equalling nearly sixty pounds sterling, English, no light expenditure for a Persian, and no despicable gain to an Arab.”—Palgrave’s *Central and Eastern Africa*, p. 161.]

[Footnote 121: Dodds: *Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ*, p. 118.]

[Footnote 122: *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, November, 1887.]

[Footnote 123: *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, February, 1888, p. 66.]

[Footnote 124: *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, April, 1888.]

## LECTURE VII.

### THE TRACES OF A PRIMITIVE MONOTHEISM

There are two conflicting theories now in vogue in regard to the origin of religion. The first is that of Christian theists as taught in the Old and New Testament Scriptures, viz., that the human race in its first ancestry, and again in the few survivors of the Deluge, possessed the knowledge of the true God. It is not necessary to suppose that they had a full and mature conception of Him, or that that conception excluded the idea of other gods. No one would maintain that Adam or Noah comprehended the nature of the Infinite as it has been revealed in the history of God’s dealings with men in later times. But from their simple worship of one God their descendants came gradually to worship various visible objects with which they associated their blessings—the sun as the source of warmth and vitality, the rain as imparting a quickening power to the earth, the spirits of ancestors to whom they looked with a special awe, and finally a great variety of created things instead of the invisible Creator. The other theory is that man, as we now behold him, has been developed from lower forms of animal life, rising first to the state of a mere human animal, but gradually acquiring intellect, conscience, and finally a soul;—that ethics and religion have been developed from instinct by social contact, especially by ties of family and the tribal relation; that altruism which began with the instinctive care of parents for their offspring, rose to the higher domain of religion and began to recognize the claims of deity; that God, if there be a God, never revealed himself to man by any preternatural means, but that great souls, like Moses, Isaiah, and Plato, by their higher and clearer insight, have gained loftier views of deity than others, and as prophets and teachers have made known their inspirations to their fellow-men.

Gradually they have formed rituals and elaborated philosophies, adding such supernatural elements as the ignorant fancy of the masses was supposed to demand.



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According to this theory, religions, like everything else, have grown up from simple germs: and it is only in the later stages of his development that man can be said to be a religious being. While an animal merely, and for a time even after he had attained to a rude and savage manhood, a life of selfish passion and marauding was justifiable, since only thus could the survival of the fittest be secured and the advancement of the race attained.[125] It is fair to say that there are various shades of the theory here presented—some materialistic, some theistic, others having a qualified theism, and still others practically agnostic. Some even who claim to be Christians regard the various religions of men as so many stages in the divine education of the race—all being under the direct guidance of God, and all designed to lead ultimately to Christianity which is the goal.

That God has overruled all things, even the errors and wickedness of men, for some wise object will not be denied; that He has implanted in the human understanding many correct conceptions of ethical truth, so that noble principles are found in the teachings of all religious systems; that God is the author of all truth and all right impulses, even in heathen minds, is readily admitted. But that He has directly planned and chosen the non-Christian religions on the principle that half-truths and perverted truths and the direct opposites of the truth, were best adapted to certain stages of development—in other words, that He has causatively led any nation into error and consequent destruction as a means of preparing for subsequent generations something higher and better, we cannot admit. The logic of such a conclusion would lead to a remorseless fatalism. Everything would depend on the age and the environment in which one's lot were cast. We cannot believe that fetishism and idolatry have been God's kindergarten method of training the human race for the higher and more spiritual service of His kingdom.

Turning from the testimony of the Scriptures on the one hand and the *a priori* assumptions of evolution on the other, what is the witness of the actual history of religions? Have they shown an upward or a downward development? Do they appear to have risen from polytheism toward simpler and more spiritual forms, or have simple forms been ramified into polytheism?[126] If we shall be able to establish clear evidence that monotheistic or even henotheistic types of faith existed among all, or nearly all, the races at the dawn of history, a very important point will have been gained. The late Dr. Henry B. Smith, after a careful perusal of Ebrard's elaborate presentation of the religions of the ancient and the modern world, and his clear proofs that they had at first been invariably monotheistic and had gradually lapsed into ramified forms of polytheism, says in his review of Ebrard's work: "We do not know where to find a more weighty reply to the



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assumptions and theories of those writers who persist in claiming, according to the approved hypothesis of a merely naturalistic evolution, that the primitive state of mankind was the lowest and most debased form of polytheistic idolatry, and that the higher religions have been developed out of these base rudiments. Dr. Ebrard shows conclusively that the facts all lead to another conclusion, that gross idolatry is a degeneration of mankind from antecedent and purer forms of religious worship.... He first treats of the civilized nations of antiquity, the Aryan and Indian religions, the Vedas, the Indra period of Brahmanism and Buddhism; then of the religion of the Iranians, the Avesta of the Parsees; next of the Greeks and Romans, the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and the heathen Semitic forms of worship, including the Phoenicians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. His second division is devoted to the half-civilized and savage races in the North and West of Europe, in Asia and Polynesia (Tartars, Mongols, Malays, and Cushites); then the races of America, including a minute examination of the relations of the different races here to the Mongols, Japanese, and old Chinese immigrations." [127]

Ebrard himself, in summing up the results of these prolonged investigations, says: "We have nowhere been able to discover the least trace of any forward and upward movement from fetichism to polytheism, and from that again to a gradually advancing knowledge of the one God; but, on the contrary, we have found among all the peoples of the heathen world a most decided tendency to sink from an earlier and relatively purer knowledge of God toward something lower." [128]

If these conclusions, reached by Ebrard and endorsed by the scholarly Dr. Henry B. Smith, are correct, they are of great importance; they bring to the stand the witness of the false religions themselves upon an issue in which historic testimony as distinguished from mere theories is in special demand in our time. Of similar import are the well-considered words of Professor Naville, in the first of his lectures on modern atheism. [129] He says: "Almost all pagans seem to have had a glimpse of the divine unity over the multiplicity of their idols, and of the rays of the divine holiness across the saturnalia of their Olympi. It was a Greek (Cleanthus) who wrote these words: 'Nothing is accomplished on the earth without Thee, O God, save the deeds which the wicked perpetrate in their folly.' It was in a theatre at Athens, that the chorus of a tragedy sang, more than two thousand years ago: 'May destiny aid me to preserve, unsullied, the purity of my words, and of all my actions, according to those sublime laws which, brought forth in the celestial heights, have the raven alone for their father, to which the race of mortals did not give birth and which oblivion shall never entomb. In them is a supreme God, and one who waxes not old.' It would be easy to multiply quotations of this order and to show, in the documents of Grecian and Roman civilization, numerous traces of the knowledge of the only and holy God."



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With much careful discrimination, Dr. William A.P. Martin, of the Peking University, has said: "It is customary with a certain school to represent religion as altogether the fruit of an intellectual process. It had its birth, say they, in ignorance, is modified by every stage in the progress of knowledge, and expires when the light of philosophy reaches its noon-day. The fetish gives place to a personification of the powers of nature, and this poetic pantheon is, in time, superseded by the high idea of unity in nature expressed by monotheism. This theory has the merit of verisimilitude. It indicates what might be the process if man were left to make his own religion; but it has the misfortune to be at variance with facts. A wide survey of the history of civilized nations (and the history of others is beyond reach) shows that the actual process undergone by the human mind in its religious development is precisely opposite to that which this theory supposes; in a word, that man was not left to construct his own creed, but that his blundering logic has always been active in its attempts to corrupt and obscure a divine original. The connection subsisting between the religious systems of ancient and distant countries presents many a problem difficult of solution. Indeed, their mythologies and religious rites are generally so distinct as to admit the hypothesis of an independent origin; but the simplicity of their earliest beliefs exhibits an unmistakable resemblance, suggestive of a common source.

"China, India, Egypt, and Greece all agree in the monotheistic type of their early religion. The Orphic hymns, long before the advent of the popular divinities, celebrated the Pantheos, the Universal God. The odes compiled by Confucius testify to the early worship of Shangte, the Supreme Euler. The Vedas speak of 'one unknown true Being, all-present, all-powerful; the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe.' And in Egypt, as late as the time of Plutarch, there were still vestiges of a monotheistic worship. 'The other Egyptians,' he says, 'all made offerings at the tombs of the sacred beasts; but the inhabitants of the Thebaid stood alone in making no such offerings, not regarding as a god anything that can die, and acknowledging no god but one, whom they call Kneph, who had no birth, and can have no death. Abraham, in his wanderings, found the God of his fathers known and honored in Salem, in Gerar, and in Memphis; while at a later day Jethro, in Midian, and Balaam, in Mesopotamia, were witnesses that the knowledge of Jehovah was not yet extinct in those countries.'"[130]



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Professor Max Mueller speaks in a similar strain of the lapse of mankind from earlier and simpler types of faith to low and manifold superstitions: "Whenever we can trace back a religion to its first beginning," says the distinguished Oxford professor, "we find it free from many of the blemishes that offend us in its later phases. The founders of the ancient religions of the world, as far as we can judge, were minds of a high stamp, full of noble aspirations, yearning for truth, devoted to the welfare of their neighbors, examples of purity and unselfishness. What they desired to found upon earth was but seldom realized, and their sayings, if preserved in their original form, offered often a strange contrast to the practice of those who profess to be their disciples. As soon as a religion is established, and more particularly when it has become the religion of a powerful state, the foreign and worldly elements encroach more and more on the original foundation, and human interests mar the simplicity and purity of the plan which the founder had conceived in his own heart and matured in his communings with his God." [131]

But in pursuing our subject we should clearly determine the real question before us. How much may we expect to prove from the early history of the non-Christian systems? Not certainly that all nations once received a knowledge of the Old Testament revelation, as some have claimed, nor that all races possessed at the beginning of their several historic periods one and the same monotheistic faith. We cannot prove from non-scriptural sources that their varying monotheistic conceptions sprang from a common belief. We cannot prove either the supernatural revelation which Professor Max Mueller emphatically rejects, nor the identity of the well-nigh universal henotheisms which he professes to believe. We cannot prove that the worship of one God as supreme did not coexist with a sort of worship of inferior deities or ministering spirits. Almost as a rule, the worship of ancestors, or spirits, or rulers, or the powers of nature, or even totems and fetishes has been rendered as subordinate to the worship of the one supreme deity who created and upholds all things. Even the monotheism of Judaism and of Christianity has been attended with the belief in angels and the worship of intercessory saints, to say nothing of the many superstitions which prevail among the more ignorant classes. We shall only attempt to show that monotheism, in the sense of worshipping *one God as supreme*, is found in nearly all the early teachings of the world. That these crude faiths are one in the origin is only presumable, if we leave the testimony of the Bible out of the account.

When on a summer afternoon we see great shafts of light arising and spreading fan-shaped from behind a cloud which lies along the western horizon, we have a strong presumption that they all spring from one great luminary toward which they converge, although that luminary is hidden from our view. So tracing the convergence of heathen faiths with respect to one original monotheism, back to the point where the prehistoric obscurity begins, we may on the same principle say that all the evidence in the case, and it is not small, points toward a common origin for the early religious conceptions of mankind.



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Professor Robert Flint, in his scholarly article on theism in "The Britannica," seems to discard the idea that the first religion of mankind was monotheism; but a careful study of his position will show that he has in view those conceptions of monotheism which are common to us, or, as he expresses it, "monotheism in the ordinary or proper sense of the term," "monotheism properly so called," "monotheism which excludes polytheism," *etc.* Moreover, he maintains that we cannot, from historical sources, learn what conceptions men first had of God. Even when speaking of the Old Testament record, he says: "These chapters (of Genesis), although they plainly teach monotheism and represent the God whose words and acts are recorded in the Bible as no mere national God, but the only true God, they do not teach what is alone in the question—that there was a primitive monotheism, a monotheism revealed and known from the beginning. They give no warrant to the common assumption that God revealed monotheism to Adam, Noah, and others before the Flood, and that the traces of monotheistic beliefs and tendencies in heathendom are derivable from the tradition of this primitive and antediluvian monotheism. The one true God is represented as making himself known by particular words and in particular ways to Adam, but is nowhere said to have taught him that He only was God." It is plain that Professor Flint is here dealing with a conception of monotheism which is exclusive of all other gods. And his view is undoubtedly correct, so far as Adam was concerned. There was no more need of teaching him that his God was the only God, than that Eve was the only woman. With Noah the case is not so plain. He doubtless worshipped God amid the surroundings of polytheistic heathenism. Enoch probably had a similar environment, and there is no good reason for supposing that their monotheism may not have been as exclusive as that of Abraham. But with respect to the Gentile nations, the dim traces of this monism or henotheism which Professor Flint seems to accord to Adam and to Noah, is all that we are contending for, and all that is necessary to the argument of this lecture. We may even admit that heathen deities may sometimes have been called by different names while the one source of power was intended. Different names seem to have been employed to represent different manifestations of the one God of the Old Testament according to His varied relations toward His people. There are those who deny this polyonymy, as Max Mueller has called it, and who maintain that the names in the earliest Veda represented distinct deities; but, by similar reasoning, Professor Tiele and others insist that three different Hebrew Gods, according to their respective names, were worshipped in successive periods of the Jewish history. It seems quite possible, therefore, that a too restrictive definition of monotheism may prove too much, by opening the way for a claim that even the Jewish and Christian faith, with its old Testament names of God, its angels, its theophanies, and its fully developed trinity, is not strictly monotheistic. For our present purpose, traces of the worship of one supreme God—call it monotheism or henotheism—is all that is required.



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With these limitations and qualifications in view, let us turn to the history of some of the leading non-Christian faiths. Looking first to India, we find in the 129th hymn of the Rig Veda, a passage which not only presents the conception of one only supreme and self-existing Being, but at the same time bears significant resemblance to our own account of the creation from chaos. It reads thus:

"In the beginning there was neither naught nor aught,  
Then there was neither atmosphere nor sky above,  
There was neither death nor immortality,  
There was neither day nor night, nor light, nor darkness,  
Only the EXISTENT ONE breathed calmly self-contained.  
Naught else but He was there, naught else above, beyond.  
Then first came darkness hid in darkness, gloom in gloom;  
Next all was water, chaos indiscrete,  
In which ONE lay void, shrouded in nothingness." [132]

In the 121st hymn of the same Veda occurs a passage which seems to resemble the opening of the Gospel of St. John. It reads thus, as translated by Sir Monier Williams:

"Him let us praise, the golden child that was In the beginning, who  
was born the Lord, Who made the earth and formed the sky."

"The one born Lord" reminds us of the New Testament expression, "the only begotten Son." Both were "in the beginning;" both were the creators of the world. While there is much that is mysterious in these references, the idea of oneness and supremacy is too plain to be mistaken. Professor Max Mueller has well expressed this fact when he said: "There is a monotheism which precedes polytheism in the Veda; and even in the invocation of their (inferior) gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds." [133] These monotheistic conceptions appear to have been common to the Aryans before their removal from their early home near the sources of the Oxus, and we shall see further on that in one form or another they survived among all branches of the migrating race. The same distinguished scholar traces the early existence of monotheism in a series of brief and rapid references to nearly all the scattered Aryans not only, but also to the Turanians on the North and East, to the Tungusic, Mongolic, Tartaric, and Finnic tribes. "Everywhere," he says, "we find a worship of nature, and the spirits of the departed, but behind it all there rises a belief in some higher power called by different names, who is Maker and Protector of the world, and who always resides in heaven." [134] He also speaks of an ancient African faith which, together with its worship of reptiles and of ancestors, showed a vague hope of a future life, "and a not altogether faded reminiscence of a supreme God," which certainly implies a previous knowledge. [135]



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The same prevalence of one supreme worship rising above all idolatry he traces among the various tribes of the Pacific Islands. His generalizations are only second to those of Ebrard. Although he rejects the theory of a supernatural revelation, yet stronger language could hardly be used than that which he employs in proof of a universal monotheistic faith.[136] "Nowhere," he says, "do we find stronger arguments against idolatry, nowhere has the unity of God been upheld more strenuously against the errors of polytheism, than by some of the ancient sages of India. Even in the oldest of the sacred books, the Rig Veda, composed three or four thousand years ago, where we find hymns addressed to the different deities of the sky, the air, the earth, the rivers, the protest of the human heart against many gods breaks forth from time to time with no uncertain sound." Professor Mueller's whole position is pretty clearly stated in his first lecture on "The Science of Religion," in which he protests against the idea that God once gave to man "a *preternatural* revelation" concerning Himself; and yet he gives in this same lecture this striking testimony to the doctrine of an early and prevailing monotheistic faith:

"Is it not something worth knowing," he says, "worth knowing even to us after the lapse of four or five thousand years, that before the separation of the Aryan race, before the existence of Sanskrit, Greek, or Latin, before the gods of the Veda had been worshipped, and before there was a sanctuary of Zeus among the sacred oaks of Dodona, one Supreme deity had been found, had been named, had been invoked by the ancestors of our race, and had been invoked by a name which has never been excelled by any other name?" And again, on the same subject, he says: "If a critical examination of the ancient language of the Jews leads to no worse results than those which have followed from a careful interpretation of the petrified language of ancient India and Greece, we need not fear; we shall be gainers, not losers. Like an old precious medal, the ancient religion, after the rust of ages has been removed, will come out in all its purity and brightness; and the image which it discloses will be the image of the Father, the Father of all the nations upon earth; and the superscription, when we can read it again, will be, not only in Judea, but in the languages of all the races of the world, the Word of God, revealed where alone it can be revealed—revealed in the heart of man." [137]

The late Professor Banerjea, of Calcutta, in a publication entitled "The Aryan Witness," not only maintained the existence of monotheism in the early Vedas, but with his rare knowledge of Sanskrit and kindred tongues, he gathered from Iranian as well as Hindu sources many evidences of a monotheism common to all Aryans. His conclusions derive special value from the fact that he was a high caste Hindu, and was not only well versed in the sacred language,



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but was perfectly familiar with Hindu traditions and modes of thought. He was as well qualified to judge of early Hinduism as Paul was of Judaism, and for the same reason. And from his Hindu standpoint, as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, though afterward a Christian convert, he did not hesitate to declare his belief, not only that the early Vedic faith was monotheistic, but that it contained traces of that true revelation, once made to men.[138]

In the same line we find the testimony of the various types of revived Aryanism of our own times. The Brahmo Somaj, the Arya Somaj, and other similar organizations, are not only all monotheistic, but they declare that monotheism was the religion of the early Vedas. And many other Hindu reforms, some of them going as far back as the twelfth century, have been so many returns to monotheism. A recent Arya catechism published by Ganeshi, asserts in its first article that there is one only God, omnipotent, infinite, and eternal. It proceeds to show that the Vedas present but one, and that when hymns were addressed to Agni, Vayu, Indra, *etc.*, it was only a use of different names for one and the same Being.[139]

It represents God as having all the attributes of supreme Deity. He created the world by His direct power and for the revelation of His glory to His creatures. Man, according to the Aryas, came not by evolution nor by any of the processes known to Hindu philosophy, but by direct creation from existing atoms.

In all this it is easy to see that much has been borrowed from the Christian conception of God's character and attributes, but the value of this Aryan testimony lies in the fact that it claims for the ancient Vedas a clear and positive monotheism.

If we consult the sacred books of China, we shall find there also many traces of an ancient faith which antedates both Confucianism and Taouism. The golden age of the past to which all Chinese sages look with reverence, was the dynasty of Yao and Shun, which was eighteen centuries earlier than the period of Confucius and Laotze. The records of the Shu-king which Confucius compiled, and from which unfortunately his agnosticism excluded nearly all its original references to religion, nevertheless retain a full account of certain sacred rites performed by Shun on his accession to the full imperial power. In those rites the worship of One God as supreme is distinctly set forth as a "customary service," thereby implying that it was already long established. Separate mention is also made of offerings to inferior deities, as if these were honored at his own special instance. It is unquestionably true that in China, and indeed in all lands, there sprang up almost from the first a tendency to worship, or at least to fear, unseen spirits. This tendency has coexisted with all religions of the world—even with the Old Testament cult—even with Christianity. To the excited imaginations of men, especially the



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ignorant classes, the world has always been a haunted world, and just in proportion as the light of true religion has become dim, countless hordes of ghosts and demons have appeared. When Confucius arose this gross animism had almost monopolized the worship of his countrymen, and universal corruption bore sway. He was not an original thinker, but only a compiler of the ancient wisdom, and in his selections from the traditions of the ancients, he compiled those things only which served his great purpose of building up, from the relations of family and kindred, the complete pyramid of a well-ordered state in which the Emperor should hold to his subjects the place of deity. If such honor to a mortal seemed extravagant, yet in his view a wise emperor was far worthier of reverence than the imaginary ghosts of the popular superstitions. Yet, even Confucius could not quite succeed in banishing the idea of divine help, nor could he destroy that higher and most venerable worship which has ever survived amid all the corruptions of polytheism. Professor Legge, of Oxford, has claimed, from what he regards as valid linguistic proofs, that at a still earlier period than the dynasty of Yao and Shun there existed in China the worship of one God. He says: "Five thousand years ago the Chinese were monotheists—not henotheists, but monotheists"—though he adds that even then there was a constant struggle with nature-worship and divination. [140]

The same high authority cites a remarkable prayer of an Emperor of the Ming dynasty (1538 A.D.) to show that in spite of the agnosticism and reticence of Confucius, Shangte has been worshipped in the centuries which have followed his time. The prayer is very significant as showing how the One Supreme God stands related to the subordinate gods which polytheism has introduced. The Emperor was about to decree a slight change in the name of Shangte to be used in the imperial worship. He first addressed the spirits of the hills, the rivers, and the seas, asking them to intercede for him with Shangte. "We will trouble you," said he, "on our behalf to exert your spiritual power and to display your vigorous efficacy, communicating our poor desires to Shangte, and praying him graciously to grant us his acceptance and regard, and to be pleased with the title which we shall reverently present." But very different was the language used when he came to address Shangte himself. "Of old, in the beginning," he began,—“Of old in the beginning, there was the great chaos without form, and dark. The five elements had not begun to revolve nor the sun and moon to shine. In the midst thereof there presented itself neither form nor sound. Thou, O spiritual Sovereign! earnest forth in thy presidency, and first didst divide the grosser parts from the purer. Thou madest heaven: Thou madest earth: Thou madest man. All things got their being with their producing power. O Te! when Thou hadst opened the course for the inactive



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and active forces of matter to operate, thy making work went on. Thou didst produce, O Spirit! the sun and moon and five planets, and pure and beautiful was their light. The vault of heaven was spread out like a curtain, and the square earth supported all on it, and all creatures were happy. I, thy servant, presume reverently to thank Thee." Farther on he says: "All the numerous tribes of animated beings are indebted to Thy favor for their being. Men and creatures are emparadised in Thy love. All living things are indebted to Thy goodness. But who knows whence his blessings come to him? It is Thou, O Lord! who art the parent of all things." [141]

Surely this prayer humbly offered by a monarch would not be greatly out of place among the Psalms of David. Its description of the primeval chaos strikingly resembles that which I have quoted from the Rig Veda, and both resemble that of the Mosaic record. If the language used does not present the clear conception of one God, the Creator and the Upholder of all things, and a supreme and personal Sovereign over kings and even "gods," then language has no meaning. The monotheistic conception of the second petition is as distinct from the polytheism of the first, as any prayer to Jehovah is from a Roman Catholic's prayer for the intercession of the saints; and there is no stronger argument in the one case against monotheism than in the other. Dr. Legge asserts that both in the Shu-king and in the Shiking, "Te," or "Shangte," appears as a personal being ruling in heaven and in earth, the author of man's moral nature, the governor among the nations, the rewarder of the good and the punisher of the evil. [142] There are proofs that Confucius, though in his position with respect to God he fell short of the doctrine of the ancient sages, yet believed in the existence of Shangte as a personal being. When in old age he had finished his writings, he laid them on an altar upon a certain hill-top, and kneeling before the altar he returned thanks that he had been spared to complete his work. [143] Max Mueller says of him: "It is clear from many passages that with Confucius, Tien, or the Spirit of Heaven, was the supreme deity, and that he looked upon the other gods of the people—the spirits of the air, the mountains, and the rivers, [144] and the spirits of the departed, very much with the same feeling with which Socrates regarded the mythological deities of Greece." [145]

But there remains to this day a remarkable evidence of the worship of the supreme God, Shangte, as he was worshipped in the days of the Emperor Shun, 2356 B.C. It is found in the great Temple of Heaven at Peking. Dr. Martin and Professors Legge and Douglas all insist that the sacrifices there celebrated are relics of the ancient worship of a supreme God. China is full of the traces of polytheism; the land swarms with Taouist deities of all names and functions, with Confucian and ancestral tablets, and with Buddhist



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temples and dagobas; but within the sacred enclosure of this temple no symbol of heathenism appears. Of the August Imperial service Dr. Martin thus eloquently speaks: [146] "Within the gates of the southern division of the capital, and surrounded by a sacred grove so extensive that the silence of its deep shades is never broken by the noise of the busy world around it, stands the Temple of Heaven. It consists of a single tower, whose tiling of resplendent azure is intended to represent the form and color of the aerial vault. It contains no image; but on a marble altar a bullock is offered once a year as a burnt sacrifice, while the monarch of the empire prostrates himself in adoration of the Spirit of the Universe. This is the high place of Chinese devotion, and the thoughtful visitor feels that he ought to tread its courts with unsandalled feet, for no vulgar idolatry has entered here. This mountain-top still stands above the waves of corruption, and on this solitary altar there still rests a faint ray of its primeval faith. The tablet which represents the invisible deity is inscribed with the name Shangte, the Supreme Ruler, and as we contemplate the Majesty of the Empire before it, while the smoke ascends from his burning sacrifice, our thoughts are irresistably carried back to the time when the King of Salem officiated as priest of the Most High God. There is," he adds, "no need of extended argument to establish the fact that the early Chinese were by no means destitute of the knowledge of the true God." Dr. Legge, the learned translator of the Chinese classics, shares so fully the views here expressed, that he actually put his shoes from off his feet before ascending the great altar, feeling that amidst all the mists and darkness of the national superstition, a trace of the glory of the Infinite Jehovah still lingered there. And in many a discussion since he has firmly maintained that that is in a dim way an altar of the true and living God.

Laotze, like Confucius, was agnostic; yet he could not wholly rid himself of the influence of the ancient faith. His conception of Taou, or Reason, was rationalistic, certainly, yet he invested it with all the attributes of personality, as the word "Wisdom" is sometimes used in the Old Testament. He spoke of it as "The Infinite Supreme," "The First Beginning," and "The Great Original." Dr. Medhurst has translated from the "Taou Teh King" this striking Taouist prayer: "O thou perfectly honored One of heaven and earth, the rock, the origin of myriad energies, the great manager of boundless kalpas, do Thou enlighten my spiritual conceptions. Within and without the three worlds, the Logos, or divine Taou, is alone honorable, embodying in himself a golden light. May he overspread and illumine my person. He whom we cannot see with the eye, or hear with the ear, who embraces and includes heaven and earth, may he nourish and support the multitudes of living beings."



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If we turn to the religion of the Iranian or Persian branch of the Aryan family, we find among them also the traces of a primitive monotheism; and that it was not borrowed from Semitic sources, through the descendants of Abraham or others, Ebrard has shown clearly in the second volume of his "Apologetics." Max Mueller also maintains the identity of the Iranian faith with that of the Indo-Aryans. The very first notices of the religion of the Avesta represent it as monotheistic. Ahura Mazda, even when opposed by Ahriman, is supreme, and in the oldest hymns or gathas of the Yasna, Ahriman does not appear; there are references to evil beings, but they have no formidable head; Persian dualism, therefore, was of later growth. Zoroaster, whom Monier Williams assigns to the close of the sixth century B.C., [147] speaks of himself as a reformer sent to re-establish the pure worship of Ahura, and Haug considers the conception of Ahura identical with that of Jehovah. High on a rocky precipice at Behistun, Rawlinson has deciphered an inscription claiming to have been ordered by Darius Hystaspes, who lived 500 B.C., which is as clearly monotheistic as the Song of Moses. The Vendidad, which Rawlinson supposes to have been composed 800 years B.C., is full of references to minor gods, but Ahura is always supreme. The modern Parsees of Bombay claim to be monotheistic, and declare that such has been the faith of their fathers from the beginning.

A Parsee catechism published in Bombay twenty-five years ago reads thus: "We believe in only one God, and do not believe in any besides Him.... He is the God who created the heavens, the earth, the angels, the stars, the sun, the moon, the fire, the water, ... and all things of the worlds; that God we believe in, Him we invoke, Him we adore." And lest this should be supposed to be a modern faith, the confession further declares that "This is the religion which the true prophet Zurthust, or Zoroaster, brought from God."

The Shintoists of Japan, according to their sacred book, the "Kojiki," believe in one self-existent and supreme God, from whom others emanated. From two of these, male and female, sprang the Goddess of the Sun, and from her the royal line of the Mikados. There was no creation, but the two active emanations stirred up the eternally existing chaos, till from it came forth the teeming world of animal and vegetable life.

It has often been asserted that tribes of men are found who have no conception of God. The author of "Two Years in the Jungle" declares that the Hill Dyaks of Borneo are without the slightest notion of a divine being. But a Government officer, who for two years was the guest of Rajah Brooke, succeeded after long delay in gaining a key to the religion of these Dyaks. He gives the name of one Supreme being among subordinate gods, and describes minutely the forms of worship. Professor Max Mueller, while referring to this same often-repeated allegation



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as having been applied to the aborigines of Australia, cites one of Sir Hercules Robinson's Reports on New South Wales, which contains this description of the singular faith of one of the lowest of the interior tribes:[148] First a being is mentioned who is supreme and whose name signifies the "maker or cutter-out," and who is therefore worshipped as the great author of all things. But as this supreme god is supposed to be inscrutable and far removed, a second deity is named, who is the *revealer* of the first and his mediator in all the affairs of men.[149]

Rev. A.C. Good, now a missionary among the cannibal tribes of West Africa, stated in the Presbyterian General Assembly at Saratoga in May, 1890, that with all the fetishes and superstitions known among the tribes on the Ogovie, if a man is asked who made him, he points to the sky and utters the name of an unknown being who created all things.[150] When Tschoop, the stalwart Mohican chief, came to the Moravians to ask that a missionary might be sent to his people, he said: "Do not send us a man to tell us that there is a God—we all know that; or that we are sinners—we all know that; but send one to tell us about salvation." [151] Even Buddhism has not remained true to the atheism of its founder. A Thibetan Lama said to Abbe Huc: "You must not confound religious truths with the superstitions of the vulgar. The Tartars prostrate themselves before whatever they see, but there is one only Sovereign of the universe, the creator of all things, alike without beginning and without end."

But what is the testimony of the great dead religions of the past with respect to a primitive monotheism? It is admitted that the later developments of the old Egyptian faith were polytheistic. But it has generally been conceded that as we approach the earliest notices of that faith, monotheistic features more and more prevail. This position is contested by Miss Amelia B. Edwards and others, who lean toward the development theory. Miss Edwards declares that the earliest faith of Egypt was mere totemism, while on the other hand Ebrard, gathering up the results of the researches of Lepsius, Ebers, Brugsch, and Emanuel de Rouge, deduces what seem to be clear evidences of an early Egyptian monotheism. He quotes Manetho, who declares that "for the first nine thousand years the god Ptah ruled alone; there was no other." According to inscriptions quoted by De Rouge, the Egyptians in the primitive period worshipped "the one being who truly lives, who has made all things, and who alone has not been made." This one God was known in different parts of Egypt under different names, which only in later times came to stand for distinct beings. A text which belongs to a period fifteen hundred years before Moses says:



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“He has made all that is; thou alone art, the millions owe their being to thee; he is the Lord of all that which is, and of that which is not.” A papyrus now in Paris, dating 2300 B.C., contains quotations from two much older records, one a writing of the time of King Sufferen, about 3500 B.C., which says: “The operation of God is a thing which cannot be understood.” The other, from a writing of Ptah Hotep, about 3000 B.C., reads: “This is the command of the God of creation, the peaceable may come and issue orders.... The eating of bread is in conformity with the ordinance of God; can one forget that his blessing rests thereupon?... If thou art a prudent man teach thy son the love of God.”[152]

Professor Ernest Naville, in speaking of this same subject in a course of popular lectures in Geneva, said: “Listen now to a voice which has come forth actually from the recesses of the sepulchre: it reaches us from ancient Egypt.

“In Egypt, as you know, the degradation of the religious idea was in popular practice complete. But under the confused accents of superstition the science of our age is succeeding in catching from afar the vibrations of a sublime utterance. In the coffins of a large number of mummies have been discovered rolls of papyrus containing a sacred text which is called ‘The Book of the Dead.’ Here is the translation of some fragments which appear to date from a very remote epoch. It is God who speaks thus: ‘I am the Most Holy, the Creator of all that replenishes the earth, and of the earth itself, the habitation of mortals. I am the Prince of the infinite ages. I am the Great and Mighty God, the Most High, shining in the midst of the careering stars and of the armies which praise me above thy head.... It is I who chastise the evil-doers and the persecutors of Godly men. I discover and confound the liars. I am the all-seeing Avenger, ... the Guardian of my laws in the land of the righteous.’ These words are found mingled in the text, from which I extract them, with allusions to inferior deities; and it must be acknowledged that the translation of the ancient documents of Egypt is uncertain enough; still this uncertainty does not appear to extend to the general sense and bearing of the recent discoveries of our *savans*.”[153]

Professor Flint as against Cudworth, Ebrard, Gladstone, and others, maintains that the Egyptian religion at the very dawn of its history had “certain great gods,” though he adds that “there were not so many as in later times.” “Ancestor worship, but not so developed as in later times, and animal worship, but very little of it compared with later times.” On the other hand, as against Professor Tiele, Miss Amelia B. Edwards, and others, he says: “For the opinion that its lower elements were older than the higher there is not a particle of properly historical evidence, not a trace in the inscriptions of mere propitiation of ancestors or of belief in the absolute divinity of kings or animals; on the contrary ancestors are always found propitiated through prayer to some of the great gods; kings worshipped as emanations and images of the sun god and the divine animals adored as divine symbols and incarnations.”



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Among the Greeks there are few traces of monotheism, but we have reason for this in the fact that their earliest literature dates from so late a period. It began with Homer not earlier than 600 B.C., and direct accounts of the religion of the Greeks are not traced beyond 560 B.C. But Welcker, whose examinations have been exhaustive, has, in the opinion of Max Mueller, fairly established the primitive monotheism of the Greeks. Mueller says: "When we ascend with him to the most distant heights of Greek history the idea of God as the supreme being stands before us as a simple fact. Next to this adoration of One God the father of men we find in Greece a worship of nature. The powers of nature, originally worshipped as such, were afterward changed into a family of gods, of which Zeus became the king and father. The third phase is what is generally called Greek mythology; but it was preceded in time, or at least rendered possible in thought, by the two prior conceptions, a belief in a supreme God and a worship of the powers of nature.... The divine character of Zeus, as distinguished from his mythological character, is most carefully brought out by Welcker. He avails himself of all the discoveries of comparative philology in order to show more clearly how the same idea which found expression in the ancient religions of the Brahmans, the Slavs, and the Germans had been preserved under the same simple, clear, and sublime name by the original settlers of Hellas." [154]

The same high authority traces in his own linguistic studies the important fact that all branches of the Aryan race preserve the same name for the Supreme Being, while they show great ramification and variation in the names of their subordinate gods. If, therefore, the Indo-Aryans give evidence of a monotheistic faith at the time of their dispersion, there is an *a priori* presumption for the monotheism of the Greeks. "Herodotus," says Professor Rawlinson, "speaks of God as if he had never heard of polytheism." The testimony of the Greek poets shows that beneath the prevailing polytheism there remained an underlying conception of monotheistic supremacy. Professor Rawlinson quotes from an Orphic poem the words:

"Ares is war, peace  
Soft Aphrodite, wine that God has made  
Is Dionysius, Themis is the right  
Men render to each. Apollo, too,  
And Phoebus and AEschlepius, who doth heal  
Diseases, are the sun. All these are one."

Max Mueller traces to this same element of monotheism the real greatness and power of the Hellenic race when he says: "What was it, then, that preserved in their hearts (the Greeks), in spite even of the feuds of tribes and the jealousies of states, the deep feeling of that ideal unity which constitutes a people? It was their primitive religion; it was a dim recollection of the common allegiance they owed from time immemorial to the great father of gods and men; it was their belief in the old Zeus of Dodona



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in the Pan-Hellenic Zeus.”[155] “There is, in truth, but one,” says Sophocles, “one only God, who made both heaven and long-extended earth and bright-faced swell of seas and force of winds.” Xenophanes says: “Amongst gods and men there is one mightiest God not mortal or in form or thought. Entire he sees and understands, and without labor governs all by mind.” Aratus, whom Paul quotes,[156] says: “With Zeus began we; let no mortal voice of men leave Zeus unpraised. Zeus fills the heavens, the streets, the marts. Everywhere we live in Zeus. Zeus fills the sea, the shores, the harbors. *We are his offspring, too.*” The reference made by Paul evidently implies that this Zeus was a dim conception of the one true God.

That all branches of the Semitic race were monotheistic we may call not only Ebrard and Mueller, but Renan, to witness. According to Renan, evidences that the monotheism of the Semitic races was of a very early origin, appears in the fact that all their names for deity—El, Elohim, Ilu, Baal, Bel, Adonai, Shaddai, and Allah—denote one being and that supreme. These names have resisted all changes, and doubtless extend as far back as the Semitic language or the Semitic race. Max Mueller, in speaking of the early faith of the Arabs, says: “Long before Mohammed the primitive intuition of God made itself felt in Arabia;” and he quotes this ancient Arabian prayer: “I dedicate myself to thy service, O Allah. Thou hast no companion, except the companion of whom thou art master absolute, and of whatever is his.” The book of Job and the story of Balaam indicate the prevalence of an early monotheism beyond the pale of the Abrahamic church. In the records of the kings of Assyria and Babylonia there is a conspicuous polytheism, yet it is significant that each king worshipped *one God only*. And this fact suggests, as a wide generalization, that political and dynastic jealousies had their influence in multiplying the names and differentiating the attributes of ancient deities. This was notably the case in ancient Egypt, where each invasion and each change of dynasty led to a new adjustment of the Egyptian Pantheon.

Rome had many gods, but Jupiter was supreme. Herodotus says of the Scythians, that they had eight gods, but one was supreme, like Zeus. The Northmen, according to Dr. Dascent, had one supreme god known as the “All-fader.” The Druids, though worshipping various subordinate deities, believed in One who was supreme—the creator of all things and the soul of all things. Though conceived of in a Pantheistic sense, He was personal and exerted a moral control, as is shown by the famous triad: “Fear God; be just to all men; die for your country.” In the highest and purest period of the old Mexican faith we read of the Tezcucan monarch Nezahualcoyotl, who said: “These idols of wood and stone can neither hear nor feel; much less could they make the heavens and the earth, and man who is the lord



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of it. These must be the work of the all-powerful unknown God, the Creator of the universe, on whom alone I must rely for consolation and support." [157] The Incas of Peru also, though sun-worshippers, believed in a supreme creator who made the sun. The oldest of their temples was reared to the supreme god "Virachoca." And one of the greatest Incas has left his declared belief that "there must be above the sun a greater and more powerful ruler, at whose behest the sun pursues his daily and untiring round." [158]

It has been assumed throughout this lecture, that instead of an advance in the religions of men, there has everywhere been decline. Our proofs of this are not theoretic but historic. As an example, all writers are agreed, I believe, that during the historic period the religion of the Egyptians steadily deteriorated until Christianity and Mohammedanism superseded it. In strong contrast with the lofty and ennobling prayer which we have quoted from an ancient Egyptian record, is the degradation of the later worship. On a column at Heliopolis, belonging to the fourth century before Christ, is inscribed this petition: "O thou white cat, thy head is the head of the sun god, thy nose is the nose of Thoth, of the exceeding great love of Hemopolis." The whole prayer is on this low level. Clement, of Alexandria, after describing the great beauty of an Egyptian temple, proceeds to say: "The innermost sanctuary is concealed by a curtain wrought in gold, which the priest draws aside, and there is seen a cat, or a crocodile, or a serpent, which wriggles on a purple cover." [159]

That the religions of India have degenerated is equally clear. The fact that all the medieval and modern reforms look back for their ideals to the earlier and purer Aryan faith, might of itself afford sufficient proof of this, but we have also abundant evidence which is direct. In the Rig Veda there is little polytheism, and no idolatry. There is no doctrine of caste, no base worship of Siva with the foul enormities of Saktism. [160] In the most ancient times there was no doctrine of transmigration, nor any notion that human life is an evil to be overcome by self-mortification. Woman was comparatively free from the oppressions which she suffered in the later periods. Infanticide had not then been sanctioned and enjoined by religious authority, and widow burning and the religious murders of the Thugs were unknown. And yet so deeply were these evils rooted at the beginning of the British rule in India, that the joint influence of Christian instruction and Governmental authority for a whole century has not been sufficient to overcome them.



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Buddhism in the first two or three centuries had much to commend it. King Ashoka left monuments of practical beneficence and philanthropy which have survived to this day. But countless legends soon sprang up to mar the simplicity of Gautama's ethics. Corruptions crept in. Compromises were made with popular superstitions and with Hindu Saktism.[161] The monastic orders sank into corruption, and by the ninth century of our era the system had been wholly swept from India. The Buddhism of Ceylon was planted first by the devout son and daughter of a king, and for a time was characterized by great purity and devotion. But now it exists only in name, and a prominent missionary of the country declared, in the London Missionary Conference of 1888, that nine-tenths of the Cingalese were worshippers of serpents or of spirits.[162] The prevailing Buddhism in Thibet, from the eighth to the tenth century, was an admixture with Saktism and superstition. Where the system has survived in any good degree of strength, it has been due either to government support or to an alliance with other religions. The history of Taouism has shown a still worse deterioration. Laotze, though impracticable as a reformer, was a profound philosopher. His teachings set forth a lofty moral code. Superstition he abominated. His ideas of deity were cold and rationalistic, but they were pure and lofty. But the modern Taouism is a medley of wild and degrading superstitions. According to its theodicy all nature is haunted. The ignorant masses are enthralled by the fear of ghosts, and all progress is paralyzed by the nightmare of "fung shuay." Had not Taouism been balanced by the sturdy common-sense ethics of Confucianism, the Chinese might have become a race of savages.[163]

The decline of Mohammedanism from the sublime fanaticism of Abu Bekr and the intellectual aspirations of Haroun Al Raschid, to the senseless imbecility of the modern Turk, is too patent to need argument. The worm of destruction was left in the system by the vices of Mohammed himself; and from the higher level of his early followers it has not only deteriorated, but it has dragged down everything else with it. It has destroyed the family, because it has degraded woman. It has separated her immeasurably from the status of dignity and honor which she enjoyed under the influence of the early Christian church, and it has robbed her of even that freedom which was accorded to her by heathen Rome. One need only look at Northern Africa, the land of Cyprian and Origen, of Augustine and the saintly Monica, to see what Islam has done. And even the later centuries have brought no relief. Prosperous lands have been rendered desolate and sterile, and all progress has been paralyzed.

In the history of the Greek religion it is granted that there were periods of advancement. The times of the fully developed Apollo worship showed vast improvement over previous periods, but even Professor Tiele virtually admits that this was owing to the importation of foreign influences. It was not due to any natural process of evolution; and it was followed by hopeless corruption and decline. The last days of both Greece and Rome were degenerate and full of depression and despair.



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It is not contended that no revivals or reforms are possible in heathenism. There have been many of these, but with all allowance for spasmodic efforts, the general drift has been always downward.[164] There is a natural disposition among men to multiply objects of worship. Herbert Spencer's principle, that development proceeds from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, is certainly true of the religions of the world; but his other principle, that development proceeds from the incoherent to the coherent, does not apply. Incoherency and moral chaos mark the trend of all man-made faiths. The universal tendency to deterioration is well summed up as follows by Professor Naville:

"Traces are found almost everywhere in the midst of idolatrous superstitions, of a religion comparatively pure and often stamped with a lofty morality. Paganism is not a simple fact; it offers to view in the same bed two currents (like the Arve and the Arveiron)—the one pure, the other impure. What is the relation between these two currents? ... Did humanity begin with a coarse fetishism, and thence rise by slow degrees to higher conceptions? Do the traces of a comparatively pure monotheism first show themselves in the recent periods of idolatry? Contemporary science inclines more and more to answer in the negative. It is in the most ancient historical ground that the laborious investigators of the past meet with the most elevated ideas of religion. Cut to the ground a young and vigorous beech-tree, and come back a few years afterward. In place of the tree cut down you will find coppice-wood; the sap which nourished a single trunk has been divided among a multitude of shoots. This comparison expresses well enough the opinion which tends to prevail among our savants on the subject of the historical development of religions. The idea of one God is at the roots—it is primitive; polytheism is derivative."[165]

We have thus far drawn our proofs of man's polytheistic tendencies from the history of the non-Christian religions. In proof of the same general tendency we now turn to the history of the Israelites, the chosen people of God. We may properly appeal to the Bible as history, especially when showing idolatrous tendencies even under the full blaze of the truth. In spite of the supernatural revelation which they claimed to possess—notwithstanding all their instructions, warnings, promises, deliverances, divinely aided conquests—they relapsed into idolatry again and again. Ere they had reached the land of promise they had begun to make images of the gods of Egypt. They made constant compromises and alliances with the Canaanites, and not even severe judgments could withhold them from this downward drift. Their wisest king was demoralized by heathen marriages, and his successors openly patronized the heathen shrines. The abominations of Baal worship and the nameless vices of Sodom were practised under the very shadow of the Temple.[166] Judgments followed upon this miserable degeneracy. Prophets were sent with repeated warnings, and many were slain for their faithful messages. Tribe after tribe was borne into captivity, the Temple was destroyed, and at last the nation was virtually broken up and scattered abroad.



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There was indeed a true development in the church of God from the Abrahamic period to the Apostolic day. There was a rising from a narrow national spirit to one which embraced the whole brotherhood of man, from type and prophecy to fulfilment, from the sins that were winked at, to a purer ethic and the perfect law of love; but these results came not by natural evolution—far enough from it. They were wrought out not by man, but we might almost say, in spite of man. Divine interpositions were all that saved Judaism from a total wreck, even as the national unity was destroyed. A new Dispensation was introduced, a Divine Redeemer and an Omnipotent Spirit were the forces which saved the world from a second universal apostasy.

We come nearer still to the church of God for proofs of man's inherent tendency to polytheism. Even under the new Dispensation we have seen the church sink into virtual idolatry. Within six centuries from the time of Christ and His apostles there had been a sad lapse into what seemed the worship of images, pictures, and relics, and a faith in holy places and the bones of saints. What Mohammed saw, or thought he saw, was a Christian idolatry scarcely better than that of the Arabian Koreish. And, as if by the judgment of God, the churches of the East were swept with a destruction like that which had been visited upon the Ten Tribes. In the Christianity of to-day, viewed as a whole, how strong is the tendency to turn from the pure spiritual conception of God to some more objective trust—a saint, a relic, a ritual, an ordinance. In the old churches of the East or on the Continent of Europe, how much of virtual idolatry is there even now? It is only another form of the tendency in man to seek out many devices—to find visible objects of trust—to try new panaceas for the ailments of the soul—to multiply unto himself gods to help his weakness. This is just what has been done in all ages and among all races of the world. This explains polytheism. Man's religious nature is a vine, and God is its only proper support. Once fallen from that support, it creeps and grovels in all directions and over all false supports.

We have not resorted to Divine revelation for proofs except as history. But our conclusions drawn from heathen sources bring us directly, as one face answereth to another face in a glass, to the plain teachings of Paul and other inspired writers, who tell us that the human race was once possessed of the knowledge of One Supreme God, but that men apostatized from Him, preferring to worship the creature rather than the Creator. There are no traces of an upward evolution toward clearer knowledge and purer lives, except by the operation of outward causes, but there are many proofs that men's hearts have become darkened and their moral nature more and more depraved. In all lands there have been those who seemed to gain some glimpses of truth, and whose teachings were far above the average sentiment and character of their times, but they have either been discarded like Socrates and the prophets of Israel, or they have obtained a following only for a time and their precepts have fallen into neglect. It has been well said that no race of men live up to their religion, however imperfect it may be. They first disregard it, and then at length degrade it, to suit their apostate character.



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Paul's estimate of heathen character was that of a man who, aside from his direct inspiration, spoke from a wide range of observation. He was a philosopher by education, and he lived in an age and amid national surroundings which afforded the broadest knowledge of men, of customs, of religious faiths, of institutions. Trained as a Jew, dealing constantly with the most enlightened heathen, persecuting the Christians, and then espousing their cause, his preparation for a broad, calm, and unerring judgment of the character of the Gentile nations was complete; and his one emphatic verdict was *apostasy*.

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 125: Fiske: *The Destiny of Man*, pp. 78-80.]

[Footnote 126: We do not care to enter the field of pre-historic speculation where the evolution of religion from totemism or fetishism claims to find its chief support. We are considering only the traditional development of the ancient faiths of man.]

[Footnote 127: *Introduction to Christian Theology*, Appendix, pp. 166, 167.]

[Footnote 128: Ebrard's *Apologetics*, vols. ii. and iii.]

[Footnote 129: *Modern Atheism*, p. 13.]

[Footnote 130: *The Chinese*, pp. 163, 164.]

[Footnote 131: *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i., p. 23.]

[Footnote 132: Professor Banergea (see *Indian Antiquary*, February, 1875) thinks that this Hindu account of creation shows traces of the common revelation made to mankind.]

[Footnote 133: *Science of Religion*, p. 99.]

[Footnote 134: *Science of Religion*, p. 88.]

[Footnote 135: "The ancient relics of African faith are rapidly disappearing at the approach of Mohammedan and Christian missionaries; but what has been preserved of it, chiefly through the exertions of learned missionaries, is full of interest to the student of religion, with its strange worship of snakes and ancestors, its vague hope of a future life, and its not altogether faded reminiscence of a Supreme God, the Father of the black as well as of the white man."—*Science of Religion*, p. 39.]

[Footnote 136: While he maintains that the idea of God must have preceded that of *gods*, as the plural always implies the singular, he yet claims very justly that the



exclusive conception of monotheism as against polytheism could hardly have existed. Men simply thought of God as God, as a child thinks of its father, and does not even raise the question of a second.—See *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i., p. 349.]

[Footnote 137: St. Augustine, in quoting Cyprian, shows that the fathers of the Church looked upon Plato as a monotheist. The passage is as follows: “For when he (Cyprian) speaks of the Magians, he says that the chief among them, Hostanes, maintains that the true God is invisible, and that true angels sit at His throne; and that Plato agrees with this and believes in one God, considering the others to be demons; and that Hermes Trismegistus also speaks of one God, and confesses that He is incomprehensible.” Angus., *De Baptismo contra Donat.*, Lib. VI., Cap. XLIV.]



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[Footnote 138: *The Aryan Witness*, passim.]

[Footnote 139: Aristotle said, "God, though He is one, has many names, because He is called according to the states into which He always enters anew."]

[Footnote 140: *The Religions of China*, p. 16.]

[Footnote 141: *The Religions of China*, p. 49.]

[Footnote 142: "In the year 1600 the Emperor of China declared in an edict that the Chinese should adore, not the material heavens, but the *Master of heaven*."—Cardinal Gibbons: *Our Christian Heritage*.]

[Footnote 143: Martin: *The Chinese*, p. 106.]

[Footnote 144: It has been related by Rev. Hudson Taylor that the fishermen of the Fukien Province, when a storm arises, pray to the goddess of the sea; but when that does not avail they throw all the idols aside and pray to the "Great-grandfather in Heaven." Father is a great conception to the Chinese mind. Great-grandfather is higher still, and stands to them for the Supreme.]

[Footnote 145: *Science of Religion*, p. 86.]

[Footnote 146: *The Chinese*, p. 99.]

[Footnote 147: Other writers contend that he was probably contemporaneous with Abraham. Still others think Zoroaster a general name for great prophets. Darmestetter inclines to this view.]

[Footnote 148: *Chips from a German Workshop*.]

[Footnote 149: Archbishop Vaughn, of Sydney, emphatically declares that the aborigines of Australia believe in a Supreme Being.]

[Footnote 150: Rev. Mr. Johnson, of Lagos, has expressed a belief that the pagan tribes of West Africa were monotheists before the incursion of the Mohammedans. Rev. Alfred Marling, of Gaboon, bears the same testimony of the Fans.]

[Footnote 151: Rev. A.C. Thompson, D.D. *The Moravians*.

One of the early converts from among the Ojibwas, said to the missionary, Rev. S.G. Wright: "A great deal of your preaching I readily understand, especially what you say about our real characters. We Indians all know that it is wrong to lie, to steal, to be dishonest, to slander, to be covetous, and we always know that the Great Spirit hates all these things. All this we knew before we ever saw the white man. I knew these things



when I was a little boy. We did not, however, know the way of pardon for these sins. In our religion there is nothing said by the wise men about pardon. We knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour.”]

[Footnote 152: Professor Tiele, of Leyden, asserts that “It is altogether erroneous to regard the Egyptian religion as the polytheistic degeneration of a prehistoric monotheism. It was polytheistic from the beginning.” But on one of the oldest of Egyptian monuments is found this hymn, which is quoted by Cardinal Gibbons in *Our Christian Inheritance*:



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“Hail to thee, say all creatures; ...  
The gods adore thy majesty,  
The spirits thou has made exalt thee,  
Rejoicing before the feet of their begetter.  
They cry out welcome to thee,  
Father of the fathers of all the gods,  
Who raises the heavens, who fixes the earth;  
We worship thy spirit who alone hast made us,  
We whom thou hast made thank thee that thou hast given us birth,  
We give to thee praises for thy mercy toward us.”]

[Footnote 153: *Modern Atheism*, p. 13.]

[Footnote 154: *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii., pp. 146, 147.]

[Footnote 155: *Science of Religion*, Lecture III., p. 57.]

[Footnote 156: Acts xvii. 28.]

[Footnote 157: Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*.]

[Footnote 158: Reville in his *Hibbert Lectures* on Mexican and Peruvian religions asserts that polytheism existed from the beginning, but our contention is that One God was supreme and created the sun.]

[Footnote 159: De Pressense: *The Ancient World and Christianity*.]

[Footnote 160: Bournouf found the Tantras so obscene that he refused to translate them.]

[Footnote 161: T. Rhys Davids: *Buddhism*, p. 208.]

[Footnote 162: *Report of Missionary Conference*, vol. i, p. 70.]

[Footnote 163: Buddhism, in the *Britannica*.]

[Footnote 164: Rev. S.G. Wright, long a missionary among the American Indians, says: “During the forty-six years in which I have been laboring among the Ojibway Indians, I have been more and more impressed with the evidence, showing itself in their language, that at some former time they have been in possession of much higher ideas of God’s attributes, and of what constitutes true happiness, immortality, and virtue, as well as of the nature of the Devil and his influence in the world, than those which they now possess. The thing which early in our experience surprised us, and which has not ceased to impress us, is, that, with their present low conceptions of spiritual things, they could have chosen so lofty and spiritual a word for the Deity. The only satisfactory



explanation seems to be that, at an early period of their history, they had higher and more correct ideas concerning God than those which they now possess, and that these have become, as the geologists would say, *fossilized* in their forms of speech, and so preserved.”—*Bibliotheca Sacra*, October, 1889.]

[Footnote 165: *Modern Atheism*, p. 10.]

[Footnote 166: I. Kings, xiv., and II. Kings, xxiii.]

## **LECTURE VIII.**

### **INDIRECT TRIBUTES OF HEATHEN SYSTEMS TO THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE**



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I am to speak of certain indirect tributes borne by the non-Christian religions to the doctrines of Christianity. One such tribute of great value we have already considered in the prevalence of early monotheism, so far corroborating the scriptural account of man's first estate, and affording many proofs which corroborate the scriptural doctrine of human apostasy. Others of the same general bearing will now be considered. The history of man's origin, the strange traditions of his fall by transgression and his banishment from Eden, of the conflict of good with evil represented by a serpent, of the Deluge and the dispersion of the human race, have all been the subjects of ridicule by anti-Christian writers:—though by turns they have recognized these same facts and have used them as proofs that Christianity had borrowed them from old myths. The idea of sacrifice, or atonement, of Divine incarnation, of a trinity, of mediation, of a salvation by faith instead of one's own merits, have been represented as unphilosophical, and therefore improbable in the nature of the case.

It becomes an important question, therefore, whether other religions of mankind show similar traditions, however widely they have dwelt apart, and however diversified their languages, literatures, and institutions may have been in other respects. And it is also an important question, whether even under heathen systems, the consciousness of sin and the deepest moral yearnings of men have found expression along the very lines which are represented by the Christian doctrines of grace. To these questions we now address ourselves. What are the lessons of the various ethnic traditions? And how are we to account for their striking similarities? The most obvious theory is, that a common origin must be assigned to them, that they are dim reminiscences of a real knowledge once clear and distinct. The fact that with their essential unity they differ from each other and differ from our Scriptural record, seems to rather strengthen the theory that all—our own included—have been handed down from the pre-Mosaic times—ours being divinely edited by an inspired and infallible author. Their differences are such as might have been expected from separate transmissions, independently made.

We have, first of all, the various traditions of the Creation. In most heathen races there have appeared, in their later stages, grave and grotesque cosmogonies; and a too common impression is, that these represent the real teachings of their sacred books or their earliest traditions. But when one enters upon a careful study of the non-Christian religions, and traces them back to their sources, he finds more rational accounts of the Creation and the order of nature, and sees striking points of resemblance to the Mosaic record. The story of Genesis represents the "Beginning" as formless, chaotic, and dark. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. The heavens and the earth were separated. Light appeared



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long before the sun and moon were visible, and the day and night were clearly defined. Creation proceeded in a certain order from vegetable to animal life, and from lower animals to higher, and last of all man appeared. In heathen systems we find fragments of this traditional account, and, as a rule, they are more or less clear in proportion to their nearness to, or departure from, the great cradle of the human race.[167] Thus Professor Rawlinson quotes from an Assyrian account of the creation, as found upon the clay tablets discovered in the palace of Assur-bani-pal, a description of formlessness, emptiness, and darkness on the deep—of a separation between the earth and sky—and of the light as preceding the appearance of the sun. That account also places the creation of animals before that of man, whom it represents as being formed of the dust of the earth, and as receiving a divine effluence from the Creator. [168] According to an Etruscan saga quoted by Suidas, God created the world in six periods of 1,000 years each. In the first, the heavens and the earth; in the second, the firmament; in the third, the seas; in the fourth, the sun, moon, and stars; in the fifth, the beasts of the land, the air, and the sea; in the sixth, man. According to a passage in the Persian Avesta, the supreme Ormazd created the visible world by his word in six periods or thousands of years: in the first, the heavens with the stars; in the second, the water and the clouds; in the third, the earth and the mountains; in the fourth, the trees and the plants; in the fifth, the beasts which sprang from the primeval beast; in the sixth, man.[169]

As we get farther away from the supposed early home of the race, the traditions become more fragmentary and indistinct. The Rig Veda, Mandala, x., 129, tells us that:

“In the beginning there was neither naught nor aught; There was neither day nor night nor light nor darkness; Only the EXISTENT ONE breathed calmly. Next came darkness, gloom on gloom. Next all was water—chaos indiscrete.”[170]

Strikingly similar is the language quoted in a former lecture from the prayer of a Chinese emperor of the Ming Dynasty. It runs thus: “Of old, in the beginning, there was the great chaos without form and dark. The five elements had not begun to revolve, nor the sun and moon to shine. In the midst thereof there presented itself neither form nor sound. Thou, O Spiritual Sovereign, didst divide the grosser parts from the purer. Thou madest heaven: Thou madest earth: Thou madest man.”

There is a possibility that these conceptions may have come from Christian sources instead of primitive Chinese traditions, possibly from early Nestorian missionaries, though this is scarcely probable, as Chinese emperors have been slow to introduce foreign conceptions into their august temple service to Shangte; its chief glory lies in its antiquity and its purely national character. Buddhism had already been in China more than a thousand years, and these prayers are far enough from its teachings. May we not believe that the ideas here expressed had always existed in the minds of the more

devout rulers of the empire? In similar language, the Edda of the Icelandic Northmen describes the primeval chaos.



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Thus:

“’Twas the morning of time  
When yet naught was,  
Nor sand nor sea was there,  
Nor cooling streams.  
Earth was not formed  
Nor heaven above.  
A yawning gap was there  
And grass nowhere.”

Not unlike these conceptions of the “Beginning” is that which Morenhout found in a song of the Tahitans, and which ran thus:

“He was; Toaroa was his name,  
He existed in space; no earth, no heaven, no men.”

M. Goussin adds the further translation: “Toaroa, the Great Orderer, is the origin of the earth: he has no father, no posterity.”[171] The tradition of the Odshis, a negro tribe on the African Gold Coast, represents the creation as having been completed in six days. God created first the woman; then the man; then the animals; then the trees and plants; and lastly the rocks. God created nothing on the seventh day. He only gave men His commandments. The reversal of the order here only confirms the supposition that it is an original tradition. We find everywhere on the Western Hemisphere, north and south, plain recognition of the creation of the world by one Supreme God, though the order is not given. How shall we account for the similarities above indicated, except on the supposition of a common and a very ancient source?

Still more striking are the various traditions of the Fall of man by sin. In the British Museum there is a very old Babylonian seal which bears the figures of a man and a woman stretching out their hands toward a fruit-tree, while behind the woman lurks a serpent. A fragment bearing an inscription represents a tree of life as guarded on all sides by a sword. Another inscription describes a delectable region surrounded by four rivers. Professors Rawlinson and Delitzsch both regard this as a reference to the Garden of Eden.

“The Hindu legends,” says Hardwick, “are agreed in representing man as one of the last products of creative wisdom, as the master-work of God; and also in extolling the first race of men as pure and upright, innocent and happy. The beings who were thus created by Brahma are all said to have been endowed with righteousness and perfect faith; they abode wherever they pleased, unchecked by any impediment; their hearts were free from guile; they were pure, made free from toil by observance of sacred institutes. In their sanctified minds Hari dwelt; and they were filled with perfect wisdom by which they contemplated the glory of Vishnu.



“The first men were, accordingly, the best. The Krita age, the 'age of truth,' the reign of purity, in which mankind, as it came forth from the Creator, was not divided into numerous conflicting orders, and in which the different faculties of man all worked harmoniously together, was a thought that lay too near the human heart to be uprooted by the ills and inequalities of actual life. In this the Hindu sided altogether with the Hebrew, and as flatly contradicted the unworthy speculations of the modern philosopher, who would fain persuade us that human beings have not issued from one single pair, and also, that the primitive type of men is scarcely separable from that of ordinary animals....”[172]



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Spence Hardy, in speaking on this subject, describes a Buddhist legend of Ceylon which represents the original inhabitants of the world as having been once spotlessly pure, and as dwelling in ethereal bodies which moved at will through space. They had no need of sun or moon. They lived in perfect happiness and peace till, at last, one of their number tasted of a strange substance which he found lying on the surface of the earth. He induced others to eat also, whereupon all knew good and evil, and their high estate was lost. They now had perpetual need of food, which only made them more gross and earthly. Wickedness abounded, and they were in darkness. Assembling together, they fashioned for themselves a sun, but after a few hours it fell below the horizon, and they were compelled to create a moon.[173] An old Mongolian legend represents the first man as having transgressed by eating a pistache nut. As a punishment, he and all his posterity came under the power of sin and death, and were subjected to toil and suffering.[174] A tradition of the African Odshis, already named, relates that formerly God was very near to men. But a woman, who had been pounding banana fruit in a mortar, inadvertently entering His presence with a pestle in her hands, aroused His anger, and He withdrew into the high heavens and listened to men no more. Six rainless years brought famine and distress, whereupon they besought Him to send one of His counsellors who should be their daysman, and should undertake their cause and care for them. God sent his chief minister, with a promise that He would give rain and sunshine, and He directed that His rainbow should appear in the sky.[175] The inhabitants of Tahiti have a tradition of a fall which is very striking; and Humboldt, after careful study, reached the conclusion that it had not been derived through any communication with Christian lands, but was an old native legend. The Karens of Burmah had a story of an early temptation of their ancestors by an evil being and their consequent apostasy. Many other races who have no definite tradition of this kind have still some vague notion of a golden age in the past. There has been everywhere a mournful and pathetic sense of something lost, of degeneracy from better days gone by, of Divine displeasure and forfeited favor. The baffled gropings of all false religions seem to have been so many devices to regain some squandered heritage of the past. All this is strikingly true of China.

Still more clear and wellnigh universal are the traditions of a flood. The Hindu Brahmanas and the Mahabharata of a later age present legends of a deluge which strikingly resemble the story of Genesis. Vishnu incarnate in a fish warned a great sage of a coming flood and directed him to build an ark. A ship was built and the sage with seven others entered. Attached to the horn of the fish the ship was towed over the waters to a high mountain top.[176] The Chinese also have a story of a flood, though it is not given in



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much detail. The Iranian tradition is very fragmentary and seems to confound the survivor with the first man of the creation. Yima, the Noah of the story, was warned by the beginning of a great winter rain, by which the waters were raised 19,000 feet. Yima was commanded to prepare a place of safety for a number of chosen men, birds, and beasts. It was to be three stories high, and to be furnished with a high door and window, but whether it was a ship or a refuge on the mountain top does not appear. The same tradition speaks of Eden and of a serpent, but the account is suddenly cut short.[177]

The Greek traditions of a flood varied according to the different branches of the Greek nation. The Arcadians traced their origin to Dardanus, who was preserved from the great flood in a skin-covered boat. The Pelasgians held the tradition of Deucalion and his wife, who were saved in a ship which was grounded on the summit of Pindus. As the water receded they sent out a dove to search for land. The Assyrian account, which was found a few years ago on a tablet in the palace of Assur-bani-pal, claims to have been related as a matter of personal experience by Sisit, the Chaldean Noah, who was commanded to construct a ship 600 cubits long, into which he should enter with his family and his goods. At the time appointed the earth became a waste. The very gods in heaven fled from the fury of the tempest and "huddled down in their refuge like affrighted dogs." The race of men was swept away. On the seventh day Sisit opened a window and saw that the rain was stayed, but the water was covered with floating corpses; all men had become as clay. The ship rested on a mountain top, and Sisit sent forth a dove, a swallow, and a raven. The dove and the swallow returned, but the raven was satisfied with the floating carcasses. Sisit went forth and offered sacrifice, around which "the gods hovered like flies."

Professor Rawlinson thinks that these accounts and those given in Genesis were both derived from the earlier traditions, the Assyrian version having been greatly corrupted. The Chaldean tradition is slightly different. The Noah of the Chaldeans was commanded in a dream not only to build a ship, but to bury all important documents and so preserve the antediluvian history. As the flood subsided he, his family, and his pilot were transferred to heaven, but certain friends who were saved with them remained and peopled the earth. Among the ancient Peruvians we find a tradition of a great deluge which swept the earth. After it had passed, the aged man Wiracotscha rose out of Lake Titicaca and his three sons issued from a cave and peopled the earth.[178] Hugh Miller and others have named many similar traditions.



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The fact that in nearly every case those who were rescued from the flood immediately offered piacular sacrifices suggests the recognition in all human history of still another fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the universal sense of sin. This conviction was especially strong when the survivors of a Divine judgment beheld the spectacle of a race swept away for their transgressions; but there are abundant traces of it in all ages of the world. The exceptions are found in those instances where false systems of philosophy have sophisticated the natural sense of guilt by destroying the consciousness of personality. All races of men have shown a feeling of moral delinquency and a corresponding fear. The late C. Loring Brace, in his work entitled "The Unknown God," quotes some striking penitential psalms or prayers offered by the Akkadians of Northern Assyria four thousand years ago.

The deep-seated conviction of guilt which is indicated by the old religion of the Egyptians is well set forth by Dr. John Wortabet, of Beyrut, in a pamphlet entitled "The Temples and Tombs of Thebes." He says: "The immortality of the soul, its rewards and punishments in the next world, and its final salvation and return into the essence of the divinity were among the most cherished articles of the Egyptian creed. Here (in the tombs), as on the papyri which contain the 'Ritual of the Dead,' are represented the passage of the soul through the nether world and its introduction into the Judgment Hall, where Osiris, the god of benevolence, sits on a throne, and with the assistance of forty-two assessors proceeds to examine the deceased. His actions are weighed in a balance against truth in the presence of Thoth, the ibis-headed god of wisdom, and if found wanting he is hounded out in the shape of an unclean animal by Anubis, the jackal-headed god of the infernal regions. The soul then proceeds in a series of transmigrations into the bodies of animals and human beings and thus passes through a purgatorial process which entitles it to appear again before the judgment-seat of Osiris. If found pure it is conveyed to Aalu, the Elysian fields, or the 'Pools of Peace.' After three thousand years of sowing and reaping by cool waters it returns to its old body (the preserved mummy), suffers another period of probation, and is ultimately absorbed into the godhead. One of the most impressive scenes in the whole series is that where the soul, in the form of a mummified body, stands before Osiris and the forty-two judges to be examined on the forty-two commandments of the Egyptian religion. Bearing on its face the signs of solemnity and fear, and carrying in its hand a feather, the symbol of veracity, it says among other things: 'I have not blasphemed the gods, I have defrauded no man, I have not changed the measures of Egypt, I have not prevaricated at the courts of justice, I have not lied, I have not stolen, I have not committed adultery, I have done no murder,



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I have not been idle, I have not been drunk, I have not been cruel, I have not famished my family, I have not been a hypocrite, I have not defiled my conscience for the sake of my superiors, I have not smitten privily, I have lived on truth, I have made it my delight to do what men command and the gods approve, I have given bread to the hungry and drink to the thirsty and clothes to the naked, my mouth and hands are pure.' Now what strikes one with great force in this remarkable passage from the walls of the old sand-covered tombs is the wonderful scope and fulness with which the laws of right and wrong were stamped upon the Egyptian conscience. There is here a recognition, not only of the great evils which man shall not commit, but also of many of those positive duties which his moral nature requires. It matters not that these words are wholly exculpatory; they nevertheless recognize sin."

But perhaps no one has depicted man's sense of guilt and fear more eloquently than Dean Stanley when speaking of the Egyptian Sphinx. Proceeding upon the theory that that time-worn and mysterious relic is a couchant lion whose projecting paws were long since buried in the desert sands, and following the tradition that an altar once stood before that mighty embodiment of power, he graphically pictures the transient generations of men, in all the sin and weakness of their frail humanity, coming up with their offerings and their prayers "between the paws of deity." It is a grim spectacle, but it emphasizes the sense of human guilt. Only the Revealed Word of God affords a complete and satisfactory explanation of the remarkable fact that the human race universally stand self-convicted of sin.

There is also a tribute to the truth of Christianity in certain traces of a conception of Divine sacrifice for sin found in some of the early religious faiths of men. All are familiar with the difference between the offerings of Abel and those of Cain—the former disclosing a faith in a higher expiation. In like manner there appear mysterious references to a divine and vicarious sacrifice in the early Vedas of India. In the Parusha Sukta of the Rig Veda occurs this passage: "From him called Parusha was born Viraj, and from Viraj was Parusha produced, whom gods made their oblation. With Parusha as a victim they performed a sacrifice." Manu says that Parusha, "the first man," was called Brahma, and was produced by emanation from the "self-existent spirit." Brahma thus emanating, was "the first male," or, as elsewhere called, "the born lord." By him the world was made. The idea is brought out still more strikingly in one of the Brahmanas where the sacrifice is represented as voluntary and all availing. "Surely," says Sir Monier Williams, "in these mysterious allusions to the sacrifice of a representative man we may perceive traces of the original institution of sacrifice as a divinely appointed ordinance, typical of the one great offering of the Son of God for the sins of the



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world.” The late Professor Banergea, of Calcutta, reaching the same conclusion, says: “It is not easy to account for the genesis of these ideas in the Veda, of ‘one born in the beginning Lord of creatures,’ offering himself a sacrifice for the benefit of deified mortals, except on the assumption that it is based upon the tradition of the ‘Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’”

No doubt modern scepticism might be slow to acknowledge any such inference as this; but as Professor Banergea was a high-caste Hindu of great learning, and was well acquainted with the subtleties of Hindu thought, his opinion should have great weight. And when we remember how easily scientific scepticism is satisfied with the faintest traces of whatever strengthens its theories—how thin are some of the generalizations of Herbert Spencer—how very slight and fanciful are the resemblances of words which philologists often accept as indisputable proofs—how far-fetched are the inferences sometimes drawn from the appearance of half-decayed fossils as proofs and even demonstrations of the law of evolution—we need not be over-modest in setting forth these traces of an original divine element in the institution of typical sacrifices among men.

It is never safe to assume positively this or that meaning for a mysterious passage found in the sacred books of non-Christian systems, but there are many things which seem at least to illustrate important precepts of the Christian faith. Thus the slain Osiris of the Egyptians was said to enter into the sufferings of mortals. “Having suffered the great wound,” so the record runs, “he was wounded in every other wound.” And we read in “The Book of the Dead” that “when the Lord of truth cleanses away defilement, evil is joined to the deity that the truth may expel the evil.”[179] This seems to denote an idea of vicarious righteousness.

The Onondaga Indians had a tradition that the celestial Hiawatha descended from heaven and dwelt among their ancestors, and that upon the establishment of the League of the Iroquois he was called by the Great Spirit to sanctify that League by self-sacrifice. As the Indian council was about to open, Hiawatha was bowed with intense suffering, which faintly reminds one of Christ’s agony in Gethsemane. He foresaw that his innocent and only child would be taken from him. Soon after a messenger from heaven smote her to the earth by his side. Then, having drunk this cup of sorrow, he entered the council and guided its deliberations with superhuman wisdom.[180] In citing this incident nothing more is intended than to call attention to some of the mysterious conceptions which seem to float dimly through the minds of the most savage races, and which show at the very least that the idea of vicarious sacrifice is not strange to mankind, but is often mysteriously connected with their greatest blessings. The legend of “Prometheus Bound,” as we find it in the tragedies of AEschylus,



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is so graphic in its picture of vicarious suffering for the good of men that infidel writers have charged the story of the Cross with plagiarism, and have applied to Prometheus some of the expressions used in the fifty-third chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah. We are often told that there is injustice in the very idea of vicarious suffering, as involved in the Christian doctrine of salvation, or that the best instincts of a reasonable humanity revolt against it. But such criticisms are sufficiently met by these analogies which we find among all nations.

Let me next call attention to some of the predicted deliverers for whom the nations have been looking. Nothing found in the study of the religious history of mankind is more striking than the universality of a vague expectation of coming messiahs. According to the teachings of Hinduism there have been nine incarnations of Vishnu, of whom Buddha was admitted to be one. But there is to be a tenth avatar who shall yet come at a time of great and universal wickedness, and shall establish a kingdom of righteousness on the earth. Some years ago the Rev. Dr. John Newton, of Lahore, took advantage of this prediction and wrote a tract showing that the true deliverer and king of righteousness had already come in the person of Jesus Christ. So striking seemed the fulfilment viewed from the Hindu standpoint, that some hundreds in the city of Rampore were led to a faith in Christ as an avatar of Vishnu.

A remarkable illustration of a felt want of something brighter and more hopeful is seen in the legends and predictions of the Teutonic and Norse religions. The faiths of all the Teutonic races were of the sternest character, and it was such a cultus that made them the terror of Europe. They worshipped their grim deities in the congenial darkness of deep forest shades. There was no joy, no sense of divine pity, no peace. They were conscious of deep and unutterable wants which were never met. They yearned for a golden age and the coming of a deliverer. Baldr, one of the sons of Woden, had passed away, but prophecy promised that he should return to deliver mankind from sorrow and from death. "When the twilight of the gods should have passed away, then amid prodigies and the crash and decay of a wicked world, in glory and joy he should return, and a glorious kingdom should be renewed." Or, in the words of one of their own poets:

"Then unsown the swath shall flourish and back come Baldr;  
With him Hoder shall dwell in Hropter's palace,  
Shrines of gods the great and holy,  
There the just shall joy forever,  
And in pleasure pass the ages."



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The well-known prediction of the Sibyl of Cumae bears testimony to the same expectation of mankind. The genuine Sibylline Oracles were in existence anterior to the birth of Christ. Virgil died forty years before that event, and the well-known eclogue *Pollio* is stated by him to be a transcript of the prophetic carmen of the Sibyl of Cumae. But for the fact that it has a Roman instead of a Jewish coloring, it might almost seem Messianic. The oracle speaks thus: "The last era, the subject of the Sibyl song of Cumae, has now arrived; the great series of ages begins anew. The virgin returns—returns the reign of Saturn. The progeny from heaven now descends. Be thou propitious to the Infant Boy by whom first the Iron Age shall expire, and the Golden Age over the whole world shall commence. Whilst thou, O Pollio, art consul, this glory of our age shall be made manifest, and the celestial months begin their revolutions. Under thy auspices whatever vestiges of our guilt remain, shall, by being atoned for, redeem the earth from fear forever. He shall partake of the life of the gods. He shall reign over a world in peace with his father's virtues. The earth, sweet boy, as her first-fruits, shall pour thee forth spontaneous flowers. The serpent shall die: the poisonous and deceptive tree shall die. All things, heavens and earth and the regions of the sea, rejoice at the advent of this age. The time is now at hand." [181] Forty years later the Christ appeared. Whether Virgil had been influenced by Hebrew prophecy it is impossible to say. It may be that the so-called Sibyl had caught something of the same hope which led the Magi of the East to the cradle of the infant Messiah, but in any case the eclogue voiced a vague expectation which prevailed throughout the Roman Empire.

In modern as well as in ancient times nations and races have looked for deliverers or for some brighter hope. Missionaries found the Hawaiians dissatisfied and hopeless; their idols had been thrown away. The Karens were waiting for the arrival of the messengers of the truth. The Mexicans, at the time of the Spanish conquest, were looking for a celestial benefactor. The very last instance of an anxious looking for a deliverer is that which quite recently has so sadly misled our Sioux Indians.

Mankind have longed not only for deliverers, but also for *mediators*. The central truth of the Christian faith is its divine sympathy and help brought down into our human nature. In other words, mediation—God with man. The faith of the Hindus, lacking this element, was cold and remorseless. Siva, the god of destruction, and his hideous and blood-thirsty wives, had become chief objects of worship, only because destruction and death led to life again. But there was no divine help. The gods were plied with sharp bargains in sacrifice and merit; they were appeased; they were cajoled; but there was no love. But the time came when the felt want of men for something



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nearer and more sympathetic led to the doctrine of Vishnu's incarnations: first grotesque deliverers in animal shapes, but at length the genial and sympathetic Krishna. He was not the highest model of character, but he was human. He had associated with the rustics and frolicked around their camp-fires. He became Arjuna's charioteer and rendered him counsel and help in that low disguise. He was a sharer of burdens—a counsellor and friend. And he became the most popular of all Hindu deities.

The important point in all this is that this old system, so self-sufficient and self-satisfied, should have groped its way toward a divine sympathizer in human form, a living and helpful god among men. Hinduism had not been wanting in anthropomorphisms: it had imagined the presence of God in a thousand visible objects which rude men could appreciate. Trees, apes, cattle, crocodiles, and serpents had been invested with an indwelling spirit, but it had found no mediator. Men had been trying by all manner of devices to sublimate their souls, and climb Godward by their own self-mortification; but they had realized no divine help. To meet this want they developed a veritable doctrine of faith. They had learned from Buddhism the great influence and power of one who could instruct and counsel and encourage. Some Oriental scholars think that they had also learned many things from Christian sources.[182]

However that may be—from whatever source they had gained this suggestion—they found it to accord with the deepest wants of the human heart. And the splendid tribute which that peculiar development bears to the great fundamental principles of the Christian faith, is all the more striking for the fact that it grew up in spite of the adamant conservatism of a system, all of whose teachings had been in a precisely opposite direction. It was old Hinduism coming out of its intrenchments to pay honor to the true way of eternal life. Probably the doctrine first sprang from a felt want, but was subsequently reinforced by Christian influences.

The late Professor Banerjea, in his "Aryan Witness," gives what must be regarded as at least a very plausible account of the last development of the so-called Krishna cult, and of this doctrine of faith. He thinks that it borrowed very much from western monotheists. He quotes a passage from the Narada Pancharata, which represents a pious Brahman of the eighth century A.D., as having been sent to the far northwest, where "white-faced monotheists" would teach him a pure faith in the Supreme Vishnu or Krishna. He quotes also, from another and later authority, a dialogue in which this same Brahman reproved Vyasa for not having celebrated the praises of Krishna as supreme. This Professor Banerjea regarded as proof that previously to the eighth century Krishna has been worshipped only as a demigod. But the whole drift of the old Brahmanical doctrines had been toward sacrifice as a debt and credit system, and that plan had failed. It had impoverished the land and ruined the people, and had brought no spiritual comfort. Men had found that they could not buy salvation.



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Moreover, Buddhism and other forms of rationalistic philosophy, after prolonged and thorough experiment, had also failed. The Hindu race had found that as salvation could not be purchased with sacrifices, neither could it be reasoned out by philosophy, nor worked out by austerities. It must come from a Divine helper. Thus, when Narada had wearied himself with austerities—so we read in the Narada Pancharata—he heard a voice from heaven saying: “If Krishna is worshipped, what is the use of austerities? If Krishna is *not* worshipped, what is the use of austerities? If Krishna is within and without, what is the use of austerities? If Krishna is *not* within and without, what is the use of austerities? Stop, O Brahman; why do you engage in austerities? Go quickly and get matured faith in Krishna, as described by the sect of Vishnu who snaps the fetters of the world.” “We are thus led,” says Professor Banergea, “to the very genesis of the doctrine of faith in connection with Hinduism. And it was admittedly not an excogitation of the Brahmanical mind itself. Narada had brought it from the land of ‘the whites,’ where he got an insight into Vishnu as the Saviour which was not attainable elsewhere.” And he then persuaded the author of one of the Puranas to recount the “Lord’s acts”—in other words, the history of Krishna, with the enforcement of faith in his divinity: “Change the name,” says Banergea, “and it is almost Christian doctrine.”[183]

It is an interesting fact that Buddhism, in its progress through the centuries, has also wrought out a doctrine of faith by a similar process. It began as a form of atheistic rationalism. Its most salient feature was staunch and avowed independence of all help from gods or men. It emphasized in every way the self-sufficiency of one’s own mind and will to work out emancipation. But when Buddha died no enlightened counsellor was left, and another Buddha could not be expected for four thousand years. The multitudes of his disciples felt that, theory or no theory, there was an awful void. The bald and bleak system could not stand on such a basis. The human heart cried out for some divine helper, some one to whom man could pray. Fortunately there were supposed to be predestined Buddhas.—“Bodisats”—then living in some of the heavens, and as they were preparing themselves to become incarnate Buddhas, they must already be interested in human affairs, and especially the Maitreyeh, who would appear on earth next in order.

So Buddhism, in spite of its own most pronounced dogmas, began to pray to an unseen being, began to depend and trust, began to lay hold on divine sympathy, and look to heaven for help. By the seventh century of our era the northern Buddhists, whether influenced in part by the contact of Christianity, or not, had subsidized more than one of these coming Buddhas. They had a complete Trinity. One person of this Trinity, the everywhere present Avolokitesvara, became



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the chief object of worship, the divine helper on whom all dependence was placed. This mythical being was really the God of northern Buddhism in the Middle Ages, and is the popular sympathizer of all Mongolian races to the present day. In Thibet he is supposed to be incarnate in the Grand Lama. In China he is incarnate in Quanyen, the goddess of mercy. With sailors she is the goddess of the sea. In many temples she is invoked by the sick, the halt, the blind, the impoverished. Her images are sometimes represented with a hundred arms to symbolize her omnipotence to save. Beal says of this, as Banergea says of the faith element of the Krishna cult, that it is wholly alien to the religion whose name it bears: it is not Buddhism. He thinks that it has been greatly affected by Christian influences.

Another mythical being who is worshipped as God in China and Japan, is Amitabba, a Dhyana or celestial Buddha, who in long kalpas of Time has acquired merit enough for the whole world. Two of the twelve Buddhist sects of Japan have abandoned every principle taught by Gautama, except his ethics, and have cast themselves upon the free grace of Amitabba. They have exchanged the old atheism for theism. They have given up all dependence on merit-making and self-help; they now rely wholly on the infinite merit of another. Their religious duties are performed out of gratitude for a free salvation wrought out for them, and no longer as the means of gaining heaven. They live by a faith which works by love. They expect at death an immediate transfer to a permanent heaven, instead of a series of transmigrations. Their Buddha is not dead, but he ever liveth to receive into his heavenly realm all who accept his grace, and to admit them to his divine fellowship forever. By a direct and complete imputation they are made sharers in his righteousness, and become joint heirs in his heavenly inheritance. Whatever the genesis of these strange cults which now prevail as the chief religious beliefs among the Mongolian races, they are marvellously significant. They have come almost to the very threshold of Christianity. What they need is the true Saviour and not a myth, a living faith and not an empty delusion. Nevertheless, they prove that faith in a divine salvation is the only religion that can meet the wants of the human soul.

There is something very encouraging in these approaches toward the great doctrines of salvation. I do not believe that these sects have come so near to the true Messiah without the influence of the Spirit of God, and without more or less light from Christian sources. But partly they have been moved by those wants which Hinduism and Buddhism could not satisfy. The principle of their faith is worthy of recognition, and the missionary should say as Paul said: "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."



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It is a very significant fact that most of the Brahmo Somajes of India have adopted Jesus Christ as the greatest of the world's prophets. Chunder Sen sometimes spoke of him as a devout Christian would speak. The Arya Somaj would not own His name, but it has graced its Hindu creed with many of His essential doctrines. Quite recently a new organ of the Brahmo Somaj, published at Hyderabad, has announced as its leading object, "to harmonize pure Hinduism and pure Christianity, with Christ as the chief corner-stone." In the exact words of this paper, called *The Harmony*, its aim is "to preach Christ as the eternal Son of God, as the Logos in all prophets and saints before and after the incarnation, as the incarnate, perfect righteousness by whose obedience man is made righteous.... Christ is the reconciliation of man with man, and of all men with God, the harmony of humanity with humanity, and of all humanity with Divinity." This prospectus condemns the average Christianity of foreigners in India—the over-reaching, "beef-eating, beer-drinking" Anglo-Saxon type, "which despises the Hindu Scriptures and yet belies its own;" but it exalts the spotless and exalted Christ and builds all the hopes of humanity upon Him. How will the mere philosopher explain this wonderful power of personality over men of all races, if it be not Divine?

But perhaps the most remarkable tribute to the transcendent character of Christ is seen in the fact that *all* sects of religionists, the most fanatical and irrational, seem to claim Him as in some sense their own. Mormonism, even when plunging into the lowest depths of degradation, has always claimed to rest on the redemption of Jesus Christ. Mohammedanism—even the Koran itself—has always acknowledged Christ as the only sinless prophet. All the others, from Adam to Mohammed, stand convicted of heinous offences, and they will not reappear on earth; while He who knew no sin shall, according to Mohammedan prophecy, yet come again to judge the earth. The worshippers of Krishna, some of whom are found among us in this land, claim Christ as one of the true avatars of Vishnu, and heartily commend His character and His teachings. Our western Buddhists are just now emphasizing the idea that Christ was the sacred Buddha of Palestine, that he studied and taught "the eight-fold path," became an arahat, and attained Nirvana, and that the Christian Church has only misrepresented His transcendent wisdom and purity. The ablest tract on Theosophy that I have yet seen is entitled "Theosophy the Religion of Jesus."

How marvellous is all this—that Theosophists, Aryas, Brahmos, Buddhists, Moslems, though they hate Christianity and fight it to the death—still bow before the mild sceptre of Christ. As the central light of the diamond shines alike through every facet and angle, so His doctrine and character are claimed as the glory of every creed. Many types of heathen faiths honor Him, and many schools



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of philosophic scepticism. Some of the noblest tributes to His unearthly purity have been given by men who rejected His divinity. In spite of itself the most earnest thought of many races, many systems, many creeds, has crystallized around Him. History has made Him its moral centre, the calendar of the nations begins with Him, and the anniversary of His birth is the festival of the civilized world. The prediction that all nations should call Him blessed is already fulfilled.

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 167: It is worthy of note that both the Pentateuch and most heathen traditions agree, as to the order or stages of creation, with the geological record of modern science.]

[Footnote 168: Rawlinson: *Ancient Monarchies*.]

[Footnote 169: Ebrard: *Apologetics*, vol. ii.]

[Footnote 170: Williams: *Indian Wisdom*, p. 22.]

[Footnote 171: De Quatrefages: *The Human Species*, p. 490.]

[Footnote 172: *Christ and Other Masters*, p. 281.]

[Footnote 173: *Manual of Buddhism*, p. 66.]

[Footnote 174: Ebrard: *Apologetics*, vol. ii.]

[Footnote 175: *Ibid.*]

[Footnote 176: *Indian Wisdom*, pp. 32, 393.]

[Footnote 177: Ebrard: *Apologetics*, vol. ii.]

[Footnote 178: Ebrard: *Apologetics*, vol. iii.]

[Footnote 179: De Pressense: *The Ancient World and Christianity*, p. 87.]

[Footnote 180: Schoolcraft: *Notes on the Iroquois*.]

[Footnote 181: Quoted by Morgan in *St. Paul in Britain*, p. 23.]

[Footnote 182: The full development of the doctrine was not reached till far on in the Christian centuries. Hardwick: *Christ and Other Masters*, p. 204.]



[Footnote 183: *Aryan Witness*, closing chapter.]

## **LECTURE IX.**

### **ETHICAL TENDENCIES OF THE EASTERN AND THE WESTERN PHILOSOPHIES**

It is not my purpose to discuss the comparative merits of philosophic systems, but only to consider some practical bearings of philosophy, ancient and modern, upon vital questions of morals and religion. There has been no lack of speculation in the world. For ages the most gifted minds have labored and struggled to solve the mysteries of the Universe and of its Author. But they have missed the all-important fact that with the heart, as well as with the intellect, men are to be learners of the highest wisdom, and that they are to listen to the voice of God not only in nature, but in the soul.



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So the old questions, still unsolved, are ever asked anew. The same wearying researches and the same confident assertions, to be replaced by others equally confident, are found both in the ancient and in the modern history of mankind. By wisdom the present generation has come no nearer to finding out God than men of the remotest times. The cheerless conclusion of agnosticism was reached in India twenty-four centuries ago, and Confucius expressed it exactly when he said, with reference to the future, "We do not know life; how can we know death?" This same dubious negation probably has the largest following of all types of unbelief in our time. It is not atheism: that, to the great mass of men, is unthinkable; it is easier to assume simply that "we do not know." Yet almost every form of agnosticism, ancient or modern, claims to possess a vast amount of very positive knowledge. Speculative hypothesis never employed the language of dogmatic assurance so confidently as now. Even theosophic occultism speaks of itself as "science."

That which strikes one first of all in the history of philosophy is the similarity between ancient and modern speculations upon the great mysteries of the world.

1. Notice with what accord various earlier and later theories dispense with real and personal creatorship in the origin of the universe. The atomic theory of creation is by no means a modern invention, and so far as evolution is connected with that hypothesis, evolution is very old. Mr. Herbert Spencer states his theory thus: "First in the order of evolution is the formation of simple mechanical aggregates of atoms, *e.g.*, molecules, spheres, systems; then the evolution of more complex aggregations or organisms: then the evolution of the highest product of organization, thought; and lastly, the evolution of the complex relations which exist between thinking organisms, or society with its regulative laws, both civil and moral." Between these stages, he tells us, "there is no fixed line of demarcation.... The passage from one to the other is continuous, the transition from organization to thought being mediated by the nerve-system, in the molecular changes of which are to be found the mechanical correlates and equivalents of all conscious processes." It will be seen that this comprehensive statement is designed to cover, if not the creation, at least the creative processes of all things in the universe of matter and in the universe of thought.

Mr. Spencer does not allude here to the question of a First Cause back of the molecules and their movements, though he is generally understood to admit that such a Cause may exist. He does not in express terms deny that at some stage in this development there may have been introduced a divine spark of immortal life direct from the Creator's hand. He even maintains that "the conscious soul is not the product of a collocation of material particles, but is in the deepest sense a Divine effluence." [184] Yet he seems to get on without any very necessary reliance upon such an intervention, since the development from the atom to the civilized man is "a continuous process," and throughout the whole course from molecule to thought and moral and social law, "there are no lines of demarcation." He leaves it for the believer in theistic evolution to show when and where and how the Divine effluence is introduced.



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Similar to this was the theory which the Hindu Kanada propounded more than two thousand years ago. As translated and interpreted by Colebrook, Kanada taught that two earthly atoms concurring by an unseen and peculiar virtue called “adrishta,” or by the will of God, or by time, or by competent cause, constitute a double atom of earth; and by concurrence of three binary atoms a tertiary atom is produced, and by concurrence of four triple atoms a quaternary, and so on.[185] Thus the great earth is produced. The system of Lucretius was much the same, though neither Lucretius nor Spencer has recognized any such force as adrishta.[186]

What seems to distinguish Mr. Spencer’s theory is the extension of this evolutionary process to mind and spirit in the development of thought and feeling. He does not say that mind resides in the molecules, but that their movements attend (if they do not originate and control) the operation of the mind. Professor Leconte seems to go farther when he says that “in animals brain-changes are in all cases the cause of psychical phenomena; in man alone, and only in his higher activities, psychic changes precede and determine brain changes.”[187] We shall see farther on that Mr. Spencer, in his theory of intuition, admits this same principle by logical inference, and traces even man’s highest faculties to brain or nerve changes in our ancestors. Kanada also held that mind, instead of being a purely spiritual power, is atomic or molecular, and by logical deduction the mental activities must depend on the condition of the molecules.

Ram Chandra Bose, in expounding Kanada’s theory, says: “The general idea of mind is that *which is subordinate to substance*, being also found in intimate relations in an atom, and it is itself material.” The early Buddhist philosophers also taught that physical elements are among the five “skandas” which constitute the phenomenal soul. Democritus and Lucretius regarded the mind as atomic, and the primal “monad” of Leibnitz was the living germ—smallest of things—which enters into all visible and invisible creations, and which is itself all-potential; it is a living microcosm; it is an immortal soul. These various theories are not parallels, but they have striking similarities. And I believe that Professor Tyndall, in his famous Belfast Address, virtually acknowledges Lucretius as the father of the modern atomic theories. Whether Lucretius borrowed them from India, we shall not stop to inquire, but we may safely assert that modern philosophers, German, French or English, have borrowed them from one or both.

It is not my purpose to discuss the truth or falsity of the atomic theory, or the relation of mind to the movements of molecules in the brain; I simply point out the fact that this is virtually an old hypothesis; and I leave each one to judge how great a degree of light it has shed upon the path of human life in the ages of the past, how far it availed to check the decline of Greece and Rome, and how much of real moral or intellectual force it has imparted to the Hindu race. The credulous masses of men should not be left to suppose that these are new speculations, nor to imagine that that which has been so barren in the past can become a gospel of hope in the present and the future.



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The constant tendency with young students of philosophy, is to conclude that the hypotheses which they espouse with so much enthusiasm are new revelations in metaphysics and ethics as well as in physical science—compared with which the Christian cultus of eighteen centuries is now effete and doomed. It is well, therefore, to know that so far from these speculations having risen upon the ruins of Christianity, Christianity rose upon the ruins of these speculations as, in modified forms, they had been profoundly elaborated in the philosophies of Greece and Rome. Lucretius was born a century before the Christian era, and Democritus, whose disciple he became, lived earlier still. Kanada, the atomist philosopher of India, lived three centuries before Democritus. The early Christian fathers were perfectly familiar with the theories of Lucretius. We are indebted to Jerome for many of the facts which we possess concerning him. Nearly all the great leaders of the church, from Origen to Ambrose, had studied Greek philosophy, some of them had been its devotees before their conversion to the Christian faith. There is at least incidental evidence that the Apostle Paul was versed in the current philosophy as well as in the poetry of Greece.

These great men—great in natural powers and in philosophic training—had seen just what the speculations of Democritus, Lucretius, Zeno, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle could do; they had indeed undermined the low superstitions of their time, but they had proved powerless to regenerate society, or even relieve the individual pessimism and despair of men like Seneca, Pliny, or Marcus Aurelius. Lucretius, wholly or partially insane, died by his own hand. The light of philosophy left the Roman Empire, as Uhlhorn and others have clearly shown, under the shadow of a general despair. And it was in the midst of that gloom that the light of Christianity shone forth. Augustine, who had fathomed various systems and believed in them, tells us that it was the philosophy which appeared in the writings and in the life of the Apostle Paul which finally wrought the great change in his career. Plato had done much; Paul and the Cross of Christ did infinitely more.

The development of higher forms of life from lower by natural selection, as set forth by the late Charles Darwin, has been supposed to be an entirely new system. Yet the Chinese claim to have held a theory of development which represents the mountains as having once been covered by the sea. When the waters subsided small herbs sprang up, which in the course of ages developed into trees. Worms and insects also appeared spontaneously, like lice upon a living body; and these after a long period became larger animals—beetles became tortoises; worms, serpents. The mantis was developed into an ape, and certain apes became at length hairless. One of these by accident struck fire with a flint. The cooking of food at length followed the use of fire, and the apes, by

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being better nourished, were finally changed into men. Whether this theory is ancient or modern, it is eminently Chinese, and it shows the natural tendency of men to ascribe the germs of life to spontaneous generation, because they fail to see the Great First Cause who produces them. The one thing which is noticeable in nearly all human systems of religion and philosophy, is that they have no clear and distinct idea of creatorship. They are systems of evolution; in one way or another they represent the world as having *grown*. Generally they assume the eternity of matter, and often they are found to regard the present cosmos as only a certain stage in an endless circle of changes from life to death and from death to life. The world rebuilds itself from the wreck and debris of former worlds. It is quite consistent with many of these systems that there should be gods, but as a rule they recognize no God. While all races of men have shown traces of a belief in a Supreme Creator and Ruler far above their inferior deities, yet their philosophers, if they had any, have sooner or later bowed Him out.

2. Most systems of philosophic speculation, ancient and modern, tend to weaken the sense of moral accountability. First, the atomic theory, which we have just considered, leads to this result by the molecular, and therefore purely physical, origin which it assigns to moral acts and conditions. We have already alluded to Herbert Spencer's theory of intuition. In the "Data of Ethics," page 123, he says: "I believe that the experiences of utility, organized and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which by continued transmission and accumulation *have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition*, certain emotions corresponding to right and wrong conduct which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility."

It appears from this statement that, so far as we are concerned, our moral intuitions are the results of "nervous modifications," if not in ourselves, at least in our ancestors, so that the controlling influence which rules, and which ought to rule, our conduct is a nervous, and therefore a physical, condition which we have inherited. It follows, therefore, that every man's conscience or inherited moral sense is bound by a necessity of his physical constitution. And if this be so, why is there not a wide door here opened for theories of moral insanity, which might come at length to cast their shield over all forms and grades of crime? It is easy to see that, whatever theory of creation may be admitted as to the origin of the human soul, this hypothesis rules out the idea of an original moral likeness of the human spirit to a Supreme Moral Ruler of the universe, in whom righteousness dwells as an eternal principle; and it finds no higher source for what we call conscience than the accumulated experience of our ancestors.



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The materialistic view recently presented by Dr. Henry Maudsley, in an article entitled, "The Physical Basis of Mind"—an article which seems to follow Mr. Spencer very closely—would break down all moral responsibility. His theory that true character depends upon what he calls the reflex action of the nerve-cells; that acts of reason or conscience which have been put forth so many times that, in a sense, they perform themselves without any exercise of consciousness, are the best; that a man is an instinctive thief or liar, or a born poet, because the proper nervous structure has been fixed in his constitution by his ancestors; that any moral act, so long as it is conscious, is not ingrained in character, and the more conscious it is, the more dubious it is; and that "virtue itself is not safely lodged until it has become a habit"—in other words, till it has become an automatic and unconscious operation of the nerve-cells, such a doctrine, in its extreme logical results, destroys all voluntary and conscious loyalty to principle, and renders man a mere automatic machine.

On the other hand Mr. A.R. Wallace, in combating the theory that the moral sense in man is based on the utility experienced by our ancestors, relates the following incident: "A number of prisoners taken during the Santal insurrection were allowed to go free on parole, to work at a certain spot for wages. After some time cholera attacked them and they were obliged to leave, but everyone of them returned and gave up his earnings to the guard. Two hundred savages with money in their girdles walked thirty miles back to prison rather than break their word. My own experience with savages has furnished me with similar, although less severely tested, instances; and we cannot avoid asking how it is that, in these few cases 'experience of utility' have left such an overpowering impression, while in others they have left none.... The intuitional theory which I am now advocating explains this by the supposition that there is a feeling—a sense of right and wrong—in our nature antecedent to, and independent of, experiences of utility." [188]

3. Theories which confound the origin of man with that of brutes, whether in the old doctrine of transmigration or in at least some of the theories of evolution, involve a contradiction in man's ethical history. The confusion shown in the Buddhist Jatakas, wherein Buddha, in the previous existences which prepared him for his great and holy mission, was sometimes a saint and sometimes a gambler and a thief, is scarcely greater, from an ethical point of view, than that which evolution encounters in bridging the chasm between brute instinct and the lofty ethics of the perfected man.



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The lower grades of animal life know no other law than the instinct which prompts them to devour the types which are lower still. This destruction of the weaker by the stronger pervades the whole brute creation; it is a life of violence throughout. On the other hand, all weaker creatures, exposed to such ravages, protect themselves universally by deception. The grouse shields her young from hawks or other carnivora by running in the opposite direction, with the assumed appearance of a broken wing. The flat fish, to escape its mortal enemies, lies upon the bottom of the stream, scarcely distinguishable in color or appearance from the sand which constitutes its bed. Nature seems to aid and abet its falsehood by the very form which has been assigned to it. And so also the gift of transparency helps the chameleon in seeming to be a part of the green plant, or the brown bark, upon which it lies. And Professor Drummond, in his interesting account of his African travels, describes certain insects which render themselves indistinguishable either in color or in form from the branchings and exfoliation of certain grasses upon which they feed. Deception therefore becomes a chief resource of the weak, while violence is that of the strong. And those which are in the middle of the scale practise both. There are still other animals which are invested with attributes of all that is meanest and most contemptible in character. The sly and insinuating snake gliding noiselessly toward the victim of its envenomed sting—the spider which spreads forth its beautiful and alluring net, sparkling with morning dew, while it lurks in a secret corner, ready to fall upon its luckless prey—the sneaking and repulsive hyena, too cowardly to attack the strong and vigorous, but waiting for the crippled, the helpless, the sick, and dying—if all these are in the school of preparation for that noble stage of manhood when truth and righteousness shall be its crown of glory, then, where is the turning-point? Where do violence, meanness, and deception gradually beam forth into benevolence and truth?

“The spider kills the fly. The wiser sphinx  
Stings the poor spider in the centre nerve,  
Which paralyzes only; lays her eggs,  
And buries with them with a loving care  
The spider, powerless but still alive,  
To warm them unto life, and afterward  
To serve as food among the little ones.  
This is the lesson nature has to teach,  
‘Woe to the conquered, victory to the strong.’  
And so through all the ages, step by step,  
The stronger and the craftier replaced  
The weaker, and increased and multiplied.  
And in the end the outcome of the strife  
Was man, who had dominion over all,  
And preyed on all things, and the stronger man  
Trampled his weaker brother under foot.”



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Mr. John Fiske maintains that mankind, during the previous bestial period, were compelled like all other animals to maraud and destroy, as a part of the plan of natural selection in securing the survival of the fittest; the victories of the strong over the weak were the steps and stages of the animal creation in its general advancement. And he further states that, even after man had entered upon the heritage of his manhood, it was still for a time the true end of his being to maraud as before and to despoil all men whose weakness placed them in his power. It was only thus that the steady improvement of the race could be secured; and in that view it was man's duty to consult the dictates of selfishness and cruelty rather than those of kindness. To use Mr. Fiske's own words, "If we could put a moral interpretation upon events which antedated morality as we understand it, we should say it was their duty to fight; and the reverence accorded to the chieftain who murdered most successfully in behalf of his clansmen was well deserved." [189]

Much to the same effect writes Professor Leconte. "In organic evolution the weak, the sick, the helpless, the unfit in anyway, perish, *and ought to perish*, because this is the most efficient way of strengthening the *blood or physical nature* of the species, and thus of carrying forward evolution. In human evolution (which occurs at an advanced stage) the weak, the helpless, the sick, the old, the unfit in anyway, are sustained, *and ought to be sustained*, because sympathy, love, pity, strengthen the *spirit and moral nature* of the race." [190] There is this difference, however, between this statement and that of Mr. Fiske, that it does not indicate at what point "human evolution" begins; it does not expressly declare that the subject of evolution, even after he has become a man, is still for a time in duty bound to fight in the interest of selfishness and natural selection. Still he reverses the "ought" as he advances from organic to human evolution.

According to both authors, when, in view of new environments and new social requirements, it became more advantageous to each individual man that he should cease to maraud, should learn to regard the rights of others, should respect the family relation, and subordinate his selfish interest to the general good; then altruism dawned upon the world, moral principle appeared, and the angel of benevolence and love became enshrined in the human breast. Step by step this favored being, the ideal of natural selection in all her plans, advanced to a stage in which it became incumbent to even subordinate self to the good of others, not only to spare the weak but to tenderly care for them, and even to love those who have treated him with unkindness and abuse. While in the early stages the law of life and progress had been the sacrifice of others for selfish good; now the crowning glory consists in self-sacrifice for the good of all but self.



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The logical result of this reasoning cannot escape the notice of any who carefully consider it. If, for any reason, any community of human beings should decline in moral and intellectual character until they should finally reach the original state of savagery, it would again become their duty to lay aside all high ethical claims as no longer suited to their condition. The extraneous complications which had grown out of mere social order having passed away, rectitude also would pass away; benevolence, philanthropy, humanity, would be wholly out of place, and however lovely Christian charity might appear from a sentimental point of view, it would be ill adapted to that condition of society. In such a state of things the strong and vigorous, if sacrificing themselves to the weak, would only perpetuate weakness, and it would be their duty rather to extirpate them, and by the survival only of the fittest to regain the higher civilization. I state the case in all its naked deformity, because it shows the confusion and darkness of a world in which God is not the moral centre.

And here, as already stated, modern speculation joins hands with the old heathen systems. According to Hindu as well as Buddhist philosophy, this retrograde process might not only carry civilized man back to savagery, but might place him again in the category of brutes. If tendencies control all things and have no limit, why might they not remand the human being to lower and lower forms, until he should reach again the status of the mollusk?

Now, over against all the systems which make mind either a product or a phenomenon of matter, we have the Scriptural doctrine that man was created in the image of God. This fact explains the differences which distinguish him from the beasts of the field; for even in his lowest estate he is amenable to the principle of right and wrong. Paul taught, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, that when men descend to the grade of beasts—and he shows that they may descend even below the dignity of beasts—so far from becoming exempt from moral claims, they fall under increased condemnation. The old Hindu systems taught that there can be no release from the consequences of evil acts. They traced them from one rebirth to another in karma, as modern speculation traces them physically in heredity. The one saw no relief except in the changes of endless transmigrations, the other finds it only in the gradual readjustment of the nerve-cells. But we know by observation and experience that the spiritual power of the Holy Ghost can transform character at once. No fact in the history of Christianity is more firmly or more widely established than this. The nerve-tissues to the contrary notwithstanding, the human soul may be born again. The persecuting Saul may become at once a chief apostle. The blasphemer, the sot, the debauchee, the murderer, may be transformed to a meek and sincere Christian. Millions of the heathen, with thousands of years of savage and bestial heredity behind them, have become pure and loyal disciples of the spotless Redeemer. The fierce heathen Africaner, as well as the dissolute Jerry McCauley, have illustrated this transforming power.



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Professor Huxley and others, in our time, are trying to elaborate some basis of ethics independently of religion. But, as a matter of fact, these very men are living on conventional moral promptings and restraints derived from the Bible. The best basis of morals yet known is that of Christianity, and it is from its high and ennobling cultus that even the enemies of the truth are deriving their highest inspiration. Mr. Goldwin Smith, in an able article published in the *Forum* of April, 1891, on the question, "Will Morality Survive Faith?" shows at least that the best ethics which the world now has are the outcome of religious belief and of Christian belief, and he leads the minds of his readers to gravely doubt whether a gospel of agnostic evolution could ever produce those forces of moral prompting and restraint which the centuries of Christianity have developed. He does not hesitate to assert that those who hold and advocate the modern anti-theistic speculations are themselves living upon the influence of a Christian cultus which has survived their faith. A true test of their principles could only be made when a generation should appear upon which no influence of Christian parents still remained, and in a society in which Christian sentiment no longer survived.[191] It may be said that the *truth* must be received without regard to the results which may follow. This is admitted, but the same cannot be said of *theories*. If there is perfect harmony between all truths in the physical and the moral world, then all these should have their influence in reaching final conclusions.

4. The philosophies, ancient and modern, have agreed in lowering the common estimate of man as man; they have exerted an influence the opposite of that in which the New Testament pleads for a common and an exalted brotherhood of the race.

Hinduism raised the Brahman almost to the dignity of the gods, and debased the Sudra to a grade but a little higher than the brute. Buddha declared that his teachings were for the wise, and not for the simple. The philosophers of Greece and Rome, even the best of them, regarded the helot and the slave as of an inferior grade of beings—even though occasionally a slave by his superior force rose to a high degree. In like manner the whole tendency of modern evolution is to degrade the dignity and sacredness of humanity. It is searching for "missing links;" it measures the skulls of degraded races for proofs of its theories. It has travellers and adventurers on the lookout for tribes who have no conception of God, and no religious rites; it searches caves and dredges lakes for historical traces of man when he had but recently learned to "stand upright upon his hind legs." The lower the types that can be found, the more valuable are they for the purposes required. All this tends to the dishonoring of the inferior types of men. Wherever Christianity had changed the old estimates of the philosophers, and had led to the nobler sentiment

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that God had made of one blood all nations and races, and had stamped His own image on them all, and even redeemed them all by the sacrifice of His Son, the speculations of sceptical biology have in a measure counteracted its benign influence. They have fostered the contempt of various classes for a dark skin or an inferior civilization. They indirectly encourage those who, with little merit of their own, speak contemptuously of the “Buck Indian,” “the Nigger,” the “Heathen Chinee.” They encourage the “hoodlum,” and so far as they have any influence, give an implied sanction to much unrighteous legislation.

Even Peschel, who will not be suspected of any bias toward Christianity, has said on this subject: “This dark side of the life of uncivilized nations has induced barbarous and inhuman settlers in transoceanic regions to assume as their own a right to cultivate as their own the inheritance of the aborigines, and to extol the murder of races as a triumph of civilization. Other writers, led away by Darwinian dogmas, fancied that they had discovered populations which had, as it were, remained in a former animal condition for the instruction of our times.” And he adds: “Thus in the words of a ‘History of Creation,’ in the taste now prevalent, ‘in Southern Asia and the East of Africa men live in hordes, mostly climbing trees and eating fruit, unacquainted with fire, and using no weapons but stones and clubs, after the manner of the higher apes.’ It can be shown,” he continues, “that these statements are derived from the writings of a learned scholar of Bonn on the condition of savage nations, the facts of which are based either on the depositions of an African slave of the Doko tribe, a dwarfish people in the south of Shoa, or on the assertions of Bengalese planters, or perhaps on the observations of a sporting adventurer, that a mother and daughter, and at another time a man and woman, were found in India in a semi-animal condition. On the other hand, not only have neither nations, nor even hordes, in an ape-like condition ever been encountered by any trustworthy traveller of modern times, but even those races which in the first superficial descriptions were ranked far below our grade of civilization have, on nearer acquaintance, been placed much nearer the civilized nations. No portion of the human race has yet been discovered which does not possess a more or less rich vocabulary, rules of language, artificially pointed weapons, and various implements, as well as the art of kindling fire.[192]”

The assertion has been made again and again that races are found which are possessed of no knowledge or conception of Deity, but this assumption has been thoroughly refuted by Max Mueller and many others.



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There is a very general assumption abroad in the world that bigotry and even bias of judgment belong exclusively to the advocates of religious truth, and that the teachers of agnostic science are, in the nature of the case, impartial and therefore authoritative. But the generalizations which have been massed by non-Christian anthropologists and sociologists are often gleaned and culled under the strongest subserviency to some favorite hypothesis, and that on the most superficial observation and from the most unreliable authorities. De Quatrefages, an anthropologist of profound learning, and certainly with no predilections for Christian theism, in speaking of the alleged evidences given by Sir John Lubbock and Saint-Hilaire to show that many races of men have been found destitute of any conception of Deity, says: "When the writers against whom I am now arguing have to choose between two evidences, the one attesting, and the other denying, the existence of religious belief in a population, it is always the latter which they seem to think should be accepted. More often than not, they do not even mention the contrary evidences, however definite, however authentic they may be. Now, it is evidently much *easier not to see* than to *discover* that which may be in so many ways rendered inappreciable to our eyes. When a traveller states that he has proved the existence of religious sentiments in a population which by others has been declared destitute of them, when he gives precise details upon such a delicate question, he has unquestionably at least probability in his favor. I see nothing to authorize this rejection of *positive evidence* and unconditional acceptance of *negative evidence*. This, however, is too often the case. I might justify this imputation by taking one by one almost all the examples of so-called atheist populations pointed out by different authors." [193] De Quatrefages then proceeds to show how, with respect to American tribes, Robertson is quoted while D'Orbigny is passed in silence, even though he has by the testimony of many authors disproved the statements of Robertson; how Baegert's negative and sweeping statements in regard to the California tribes are accepted, while the very specific testimony of De Mofras in regard both to the fact and to the nature of their worship is rejected. In relation to the Mincopies, Mouat (negative) is adopted against Symes and Day. The Hottentots are adjudged atheistic on the testimony of Le Vaillant, in spite of the united witness of Kolben, Saar, Tachard, Boeving, and Campbell. The Kaffirs are declared to be destitute of religion on the statements of Burchel, while Livingstone and Cazalis have given clear accounts of the religion of the different Kaffir tribes.



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In a similar manner Professor Flint, of Edinburgh, arraigns Sir John Lubbock and certain other advocates of the atheistic theory concerning savage tribes, for the partiality of their selection of testimony and for the superficial evidence which they accept when favorable to their theories. After reviewing Lubbock's wholesale quotations concerning the Indian tribes of Brazil, he says, "These are Sir John Lubbock's instances from South American tribes. But I find that they are all either erroneous or insufficiently established." And he gives many counter-proofs. "It will never do," he says, "to believe such sweeping statements—sweeping negatives—merely because they happen to be printed." Farther on he adds: "But I think that he (Lubbock) might have told us that Humboldt, whose travels in South America were so extensive, whose explorations were so varied, scientific, and successful, and who certainly was uninfluenced by traditional theological beliefs, *found no tribes and peoples without a religion*; and that Prince Max von Neuwied tells us that in all his many and wide wanderings in Brazil he had found no tribes the members of which did not give manifest signs of religious feelings."

In the appendix of the book from which these extracts are made, Professor Flint says: "No one, I think, who has not a theory to maintain can consider the circumstances in which most of the Brazilian Indian tribes are placed without coming to the conclusion that they must have sunk from a higher intellectual and religious level."

I have dwelt at length upon these arraignments of the careless and biased utterances of supposed scientists, because it is so much the fashion of our times to support certain theories of anthropology by massing the supposed evidences of man's degradation found, even now, in the environments of savage life. Many readers, apparently dazed by the vast accumulation of indiscriminate and heterogeneous statements which they have no time to examine, yield an easy and blind assent, based either on the supposed wisdom of the writer or upon the fact that so many others believe, and they imagine that no little courage is required on their part to risk the loss of intellectual caste. A vast amount of the thinking of our age, although it claims to be scientific, is really a matter of simple faith—faith in the opinions and dicta of distinguished leaders. And under such circumstances, is it not our privilege and our duty as Christian men to at least challenge and cross-question those theories which depress and dishonor our common humanity before we yield them our assent?

The majority of scientists now so confidently assume the certain derivation of man from lower orders of life, that, as Max Mueller has expressed it, their intolerance greets "with a perfect howl of derision a man like Virchow," who dares to declare that proof of man's derivation from animals is still wanting. Nevertheless Virchow, himself an evolutionist, maintains his ground, as the following passage quoted some months since from *The London Tablet* will show:



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“Some sensation has been caused at the recent Anthropological Congress in Vienna by the speech of the great Berlin biologist, Professor Virchow. About a year ago Virchow, on a similar occasion, made a severe attack on the Darwinian position, and this year he is similarly outspoken. We make the following extracts from his long address to the Congress:

“Twenty years ago, when we met at Innsbruck, it was precisely the moment when the Darwinian theory had made its first victorious mark throughout the world. My friend Vogt at once rushed into the ranks of the champions of this doctrine. We have since sought in vain for the intermediate stages which were supposed to connect man with the apes; the proto-man, the pro-anthropos is not yet discovered. For anthropological science the pro-anthropos is not even a subject of discussion. The anthropologist may, perhaps, see him in a dream, but as soon as he awakes he cannot say that he has made any approach toward him. At that time in Innsbruck the prospect was, apparently, that the course of descent from ape to man would be reconstructed all at once, but now we cannot even prove the descent of the separate races from one another.[194] At this moment we are able to say that among the peoples of antiquity no single one was any nearer to the apes than we are. At this moment I can affirm that there is not upon earth any absolutely unknown race of men. The least known of all are the peoples of the central mountainous districts of the Malay peninsula, but otherwise we know the people of Terra del Fuego quite as well as the Eskimo, Bashkirs, Polynesians, and Lapps. Nay! we know more of many of these races than we do of certain European tribes. I need only mention the Albanians. Every living race is still human; no single one has yet been found that we can designate as Simian or quasi-Simian. Even when in certain ones phenomena appear which are characteristic of the apes—e.g., the peculiar ape-like projections of the skull in certain races—still we cannot on that account alone say that these men are ape-like. As regards the Lake dwellings, I have been able to submit to comparative examination nearly every single skull that has been found. The result has been that we have certainly met with opposite characteristics among various races; but of all these there is not one that lies outside of the boundaries of our present population. It can thus be positively demonstrated that in the course of five thousand years no change of type worthy of mention has taken place. If you ask me whether the first man were white or black, I can only say I don't know.’

“Professor Virchow thus summed up the question as to what anthropological science during the last forty years has gained, and whether, as many contend, it has gone forward or backward.



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“Twenty years ago the leaders of our science asserted that they knew many things which, as a matter of fact, they did not know. Nowadays we know what we know. I can only reckon up our account in so far as to say that we have made no debts; that is, we have made no loan from hypotheses; we are in no danger of seeing that which we know over-turned in the course of the next moment. We have levelled the ground so that the coming generation may make abundant use of the material at their disposition. As an attainable objective of the next twenty years, we must look to the anthropology of the European nationalities.”

5. Another demoralizing type of speculation which has exerted a wide influence in many ages and on many nations is pantheism. By abdicating the place and function of the conscious ego, by making all things mere specialized expressions of infinite Deity, and yet failing to grasp any clear conception of what is meant by Deity, men have gradually destroyed that sense of moral responsibility which the most savage show to have been a common heritage. It is not among the lowest and most simple races that missionaries find the greatest degree of obtuseness and insensibility with respect to sin; it is among populations like those of India, where the natural promptings of conscience have been sophisticated by philosophic theories. The old Vedantism, by representing all things as mere phenomenal expressions of infinite Brahm, tended necessarily to destroy all sense of personal responsibility. The abdication of the personal ego is an easy way of shifting the burden of guilt. The late Naryan Sheshadri declared that one thing which led him to renounce Hinduism was the fact that, when he came to trace its underlying principles to their last logical result he saw no ground of moral responsibility left. It plunged him into an abyss of intellectual and moral darkness without chart or compass. It paralyzed conscience and moral sensibility.

It is equally impossible to reason ourselves into any consciousness of merit or demerit, if we are moved only by some vague law of nature whose behest, as described by Mr. Buckle, we cannot resist, whose operations within us we cannot discern, and whose drift or tendency we cannot foresee. It makes little difference whether we build our faith upon the god of pantheism or upon the unknowable but impersonal force which is supposed to move the world, which operates in the same ways upon all grades of existence from the archangel to the mote in the sunbeam, which moves the molecules of the human brain only as it stirs the globules of sap in the tree or plant. It is difficult to see how, upon any such hypothesis, we are any more responsible for our volitions and affections than we are for our heart-beats or respirations. And yet we are conscious of responsibility in the one case and not in the other. Consciousness comes in with tremendous force at just this point, all theories and speculations to the contrary notwithstanding. And we dare not disregard its testimony or its claims. We know that we are morally responsible.

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6. Many philosophic systems, ancient and modern, have tended to fill the world with gloomy pessimism. Pessimism is very old and very widespread. Schopenhauer acknowledges his indebtedness to Gautama for much of the philosophy which is known by his name. In Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as in the teachings of the German pessimists, the natural complainings of the human heart are organized into philosophical systems. There is in all human nature quite enough of querulousness against the unequal allotments of Providence, but all these systems inculcate and foster that discontent by the sanctions of philosophy. The whole assumption of "The Light of Asia" is that the power that upholds and governs the world is a hard master, from whose leash we should escape if we can by annihilating our powers and faculties, and abdicating our conscious being; that the world and the entire constitution of things are all wrong; that misery is everywhere in the ascendant, and that man and beast can only make common cause against the tyranny of a reckless fate, and cry out with common voice for some sympathizing benefactor who can pity and deliver. There is no hint that sin has wrought the evil. Man is not so much a sinner as the victim of a hard lot; he is unfortunate, and it is the world that is wrong. Therefore the true end of life is to get rid of the recurrence of life.

In much of our modern agnosticism there is the same dark outlook, and agnosticism naturally joins hands with pessimism. Dr. Noah Porter, in one of the series of "Present-Day Tracts," has shown it to be a doctrine of despair. A well-known lecturer who has loudly declaimed against what he considers the remorseless character of the Old Testament, has acknowledged that it is not more cruel than nature; that in the actual world about us we find the same dark mystery, the weak perishing before the strong, the wicked prosperous, the just oppressed, and the innocent given as a prey to the guilty; and his conclusion is that deism is no more defensible than Christianity. His pessimistic estimate of the actual world drives him to a disbelief in a personal God.

We do not ignore the sad facts of life; even the Christian is often saddened by the mysteries which he cannot explain. Bishop J. Boyd Carpenter, in speaking of the sad and cheerless spirit of Buddhism, has said: "There are moments in which we are all Buddhists; when life has disappointed us, when weariness is upon us, when the keen anguish born of the sight of human suffering appals and benumbs us, when we are frozen to terror, and our manhood flies at the sight of the Medusa-like head of the world's unappeased and unappeasable agony; then we too are torn by the paroxysm of anguish; we would flee to the Nirvana of oblivion and unconsciousness, turning our back upon what we cannot alleviate, and longing to lay down the burden of life, and to escape from that which has become insupportable."<sup>[195]</sup> But these are only the dark and



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seemingly forsaken hours in which men sit in despair beneath the juniper-tree and imagine that all the world has gone wrong. The juniper-tree in Christianity is the exception; the Bo-tree of Buddhism, with the same despondent estimate, is the rule. No divine message came to show the Buddha a brighter side. And the agnostic stops his ears that no voice of cheer may be heard. The whole philosophy of Buddhism and of modern agnosticism is pessimistic. The word and Spirit of God do not deny the sad facts of human life in a world of sin, but they enable the Christian to triumph over them, and even to rejoice in tribulation.

7. And this leads to one more common feature of all false systems, their fatalism. Among the exaggerated claims which are made for heathen religions in our day, it is alleged that they rest upon a more humane philosophy than appears in the grim fatalism of our Christian theology, especially that of the Calvinistic type. Without entering upon any defence of Christian doctrines of one type or another, it would be easy to show that fatalism, complete and unmitigated, is at the foundation of all Oriental religion and philosophy, all ancient or modern pantheism, and most of the various types of agnosticism. While this has been the point at which all infidel systems have assailed the Christian faith, it has nevertheless been the goal which they have all reached by their own speculations. They have differed from Christianity in that their predestinating, determining force, instead of being qualified by any play of free-will, or any feasible plan of ultimate and superabounding good, has been a real fatalism, changeless, hopeless, remorseless. That the distaff of the Fates, and the ruthless sceptre of the Erinnys, entered in full force into all the religions of the Greeks and Romans, scarcely needs to be affirmed. They controlled all human affairs, and even the gods were subject to them. The Sagas of the Northmen also were full of fatalism, and that principle still survives in the folk-lore and common superstitions of all Scandinavian, Teutonic, and Celtic races.

The fatalism of the Hindus is plainly stated in the "Code of Manu," which declares that, "in order to distinguish actions, he (the creator) separated merit from demerit. To whatever course of action the Lord appointed each kind of being, that alone it has spontaneously adopted in each succeeding creation. Whatever he has assigned to each at the first creation, noxiousness or harmlessness, gentleness or ferocity, virtue or sin, truth or falsehood, that clings to it." [196] The same doctrine is put in still more offensive form when it is declared that "Manu (here used in the sense of creator) allotted to woman a love of her bed, of her seat, of ornament, also impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, and bad conduct." [197] There would be some relief from this horrible doctrine if in subsequent chapters of Manu there were kindly tokens of grace, or sympathy for woman, or any light of hope here or

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hereafter; but the whole teaching and spirit of the “Code” rests as an iron yoke upon womanhood, and it is largely a result of this high authority that the female sex has for ages been subjected to the most cruel tyranny and degradation. It might well be said that, in spite of the horrors of infanticide, the most merciful element of Hinduism with respect to woman is the custom by which so large a proportion of female children have been destroyed at birth. The same fatalistic principles affect all ranks and conditions of Hindu society. The poor Sudra is not only low-born and degraded, but he is immovably fixed in his degradation. He is cut off from all hope or aspiration; he cannot rise from the thralldom of his fate. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna declares to Arjuna that it is

“Better to do the duty of one’s caste  
Though bad or ill performed, and fraught with evil,  
Than undertake the business of another,  
However good it be.”

Thus even the laws of right and wrong are subordinate to the fatality of caste, and all aspiration is paralyzed.

On the other hand, it has been acknowledged repeatedly that the sternest type of Puritan theology, as a moral and political force, is full of inspiration; it does not deaden the soul; it stimulates the action of free-will; its moral earnestness has been a great power in molding national destinies. Mr. Bancroft has not hesitated to declare that the great charters of human liberty are largely due to its strong conception of a divine and all-controlling purpose. Even Matthew Arnold admitted that its stern “Hebraic” culture, as he called it, had wrought some of the grandest achievements of history. But Hindu fatalists, noble Aryans as they were at first, have been conquered by every race of invaders that has chosen to assail them. And no better result could have been expected from a philosophy whose *summum bonum* is the renunciation of life as not worth living, and the loss of all personality by absorption into the One supreme existence.

Buddhism does not present the same fatalistic theory of creation as Brahminism, but it introduces even a more aggravated fatalism into human life. Both alike load down the newly-born with burdens of guilt and consequent suffering transmitted from previous existences. But in the case of Buddhism there is no identity between the sinner, who incurred the guilt, and the recipient of the evil karma, which demands punishment. Every man comes into the world entangled in the moral bankruptcy of some one who has gone before, he knows not who nor where. There is no consciousness of identity, no remembrance, no possible sense of guilt, or notion of responsibility. It is not the same soul that suffers, for in either case there is no soul; there is only a bundle of so-called skandhas—certain faculties of mind and body newly combined whose interaction produces thought and emotion. Yet there is conscious suffering.



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Scoffers have long pointed with indignation at the Christian doctrine that a child inherits a moral bias from his parents, but nowadays evolutionists carry the law of heredity to an extreme which no hyper-Calvinist ever thought of, and many cavillers at "original sin" have become eloquent in their praises of Buddhism, which handicaps each child with the accumulated demerit of pre-existent beings with whom he had no connection whatever.[198] The Christian doctrine imputes punishable guilt only so far as each one's free choice makes the sin his own: the dying infant who has no choice is saved by grace; but upon every Buddhist, however short-lived, there rests an heir-loom of destiny which countless transmigrations cannot discharge.

In Mohammedanism the doctrine of fate—clear, express, and emphatic—is fully set forth. The Koran resorts to no euphemism or circumlocution in declaring it. Thus, in Sura lxxiv. 3, 4, we read: "Thus doth God cause to err whom he pleases, and directeth whom he pleases." Again, Sura xx. 4, says: "The fate of every man have we bound round his neck." As is well known, fatalism as a practical doctrine of life has passed into all Mohammedan society. "Kismet" (it is fated) is the exclamation of despair with which a Moslem succumbs to adversity and often dies without an effort to recover. In times of pestilence missionaries in Syria have sometimes found whole villages paralyzed with despair. Yielding to the fatalism of their creed, the poor mountaineers have abandoned all means of cure and resigned themselves to their fate. The same fatal paralysis has affected all liberty of thought, all inventiveness and enterprise, all reform of evils, all higher aspiration of the oppressed people.

With the lower forms of religious belief, fetishism, animism, serpent worship, demon worship, the case is still worse. The only deities that are practically recognized in these rude faiths are generally supposed to be malevolent beings, who have not only fixed an evil fate upon men, but whose active and continued function it is to torment them. Though there is a lingering belief in a Supreme Being who created all things, yet he is far off and incomprehensible. He has left his creatures in the hands of inferior deities, at whose mercy they pass a miserable existence. Looking at the dark facts of life and having no revelation of a merciful God they form their estimates of Deity from their trials, hardships, fears, and they are filled with dread; all their religious rites have been devised for appeasing the powers that dominate and distress the world. And yet a pronounced agnostic has asked us to believe that even this wide-spread horror, this universal nightmare of heathen superstition, is more humane than the Calvinistic creed.



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If we inquire into the tendency of all types of ancient or modern pantheism in this particular phase, we shall find them, without exception, fatalistic. They not merely make God the author of sin—they make Him the sinner. Our misdeeds are not our acts, but God's. Thus the vaunted Bhagavad Gita, uniting the Sankhyan and the Vedanta philosophies, makes Krishna say to Arjuna: "All actions are incessantly performed by operation of the qualities of Prakriti (the self-existing Essence). Deluded by the thought of individuality, the soul vainly believes itself to be the doer. The soul, existing from eternity, devoid of qualities, imperishable, abiding in the body, acts not, nor is by any act polluted. He who sees that actions are performed by Prakriti alone, and that the soul is not an actor, perceives the truth." [199] Such is Hindu pantheism. Yet this most inconsistent system charges man with guilt. It represents his inexorable fate as pursuing him through endless transmigrations, holding over him the lash of retribution, while it exacts the very last farthing. Still, from first to last, it is not he that acts, but some fractional part of the One only Existence which fills all space.

The philosophy of Spinoza was quite as fatalistic as the Hindu Vedanta. He taught, according to Schwegler, that "The finite has no independent existence in itself: it exists because the unrestrained productive energy of the (infinite) Substance spontaneously produced an infinite variety of particular forms. It has, however, no proper reality; it exists only in and through the Substance. Finite things are the most external, the last, the most subordinate forms of existence into which the universal life is specialized, and they manifest their finitude in that they are without resistance, subject to the infinite chain of causality which binds the world. The divine Substance works freely according to the inner essence of its own nature; individuals, however, are not free, but are subject to the influence of those things with which they come into contact. It follows from these metaphysical grounds," Schwegler continues, "that what is called free-will cannot be admitted. For, since man is only a mode, he, like any other mode, stands in an endless series of conditioning causes, and no free-will can, therefore, be predicated of him." Further on he adds: "Evil, or sin, is, therefore, only relative and not positive, for nothing happens against God's will. It is only a simple negation or deprivation, which only seems to be a reality in our representation." [200] The late Samuel Johnson, in his chapter on "The Morality and Piety of Pantheism," undertakes to defend both the Vedantic and the Spinozan philosophy by pointing out a distinction between an "external compulsion and an inner force which merges us in the Infinite. Though both are equally efficient as to the result, and both are inconsistent with individual freedom, yet real fate is only that which is external...."



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While destiny or fate in the sense of absolute external compulsion would certainly be destructive, not only of moral responsibility but of personality itself, yet religion or science without fate is radically unsound." Again he adds: "We cannot separate perfection and fate. Deity whose sway is not destiny is not venerable, nor even reliable. It would be a purpose that did not round the universe, a love that could not preserve it. Theism without fate is a kind of atheism, and a self-dominated atheism. But holding justice to be the true necessity or fate, is properly theism, though it refuses the name." [201]

The reasoning here reminds one of the conclusions of a still more recent writer, who while condemning what he considers the fatalism of Calvinistic theology, still asserts that its logic leaves no alternative but the denial of a personal God. And an early Buddhist philosopher has left a fragment which gives the very same reason for agnosticism. Thus he says: "If the world was made by God (Isvara) there should be no such thing as sorrow or calamity, nor doing wrong, nor doing right; for all, both pure and impure, deeds must come from Isvara.... If he makes without a purpose he is like a suckling child, or with a purpose, he is not complete. Sorrow and joy spring up in all that lives; these, at least, are not alike the works of Isvara, for if he causes love and joy he must himself have love and hate. But if he loves and hates, he is not rightly called self-existent. 'Twere equal, then, the doing right or doing wrong. There should be no reward of works; the works themselves being his, then all things are the same to him, the maker."

This was a Buddhist's answer to the Hindu pantheism, and there follows a reply also to the Oriental dualism which attempted to solve the difficulty by assigning two great first causes, one good and the other evil. "Nay," says this Buddhist philosopher, "if you say there is another cause beside this Isvara, then he is not the end or sum of all, and therefore all that lives may, after all, be uncreated, and so you see the thought of Isvara is overthrown." [202] Thus the same problems of existence have taxed human speculation in all lands and all ages. The same perplexities have arisen, and the same cavils and complaints.

There is an important sense in which all forms of materialism are fatalistic in their relation to moral responsibility. James Buechner assures us that "what is called man's soul or mind is now almost universally conceded as equivalent to a function of the substance of the brain." Walter Bagehot, like Maudsley, suggests that the newly born child has his destiny inscribed on his nervous tissues. [203] Mr. Buckle assures us that certain underlying but indefinable laws of society, as indicated by statistics, control human action irrespective of choice or moral responsibility. Even accidents, the averages of forgetfulness or neglect, are the subjects of computation. To support his position he cites the averages of suicides, or the number of letters deposited yearly in a given post-office, the superscription of which has been forgotten. Thus, underlying all

human activity there is an unknown force, a vague something—call it Deity, or call it Fate—which controls human affairs irresistibly.



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It would be amusing, if it were not sad, to see what devices and what names have been resorted to in order to get rid of a personal God. The Hindu Sankhyans ascribed all things to the "Eternally Existing Essence." The Greek Atomists called it an "Inconceivable Necessity;" Anaxagoras, "The World-forming Intelligence;" Hegel, "Absolute Idea;" Spinoza, "Absolute Substance;" Schopenhauer, "Unconscious Will." Spencer finds only "The Unknowable;" Darwin's virtual Creator is "Natural Selection;" Matthew Arnold recognize a "Stream of Tendency not our own which makes for righteousness." Nothing can be more melancholy than this dreary waste of human speculation, this weary and bootless search after the secret of the universe. At the same time a deaf ear is turned to those voices of nature and revelation which speak of a benevolent Creator. But the point to which I call particular attention in this connection is, that these vague terms, whatever else they may mean, imply in each case some law of necessity which moulds the world. They are only the names of the Fates whom all philosophies have set over us. If we have been correct in tracing an element of fatalism through all the heathen faiths, and all ancient and modern philosophies, how is it that the whole army of unbelief concentrate their assailments against divine sovereignty in the Word of God, and yet are ready to laud and approve these systems which exhibit the same things in greater degree and without mitigation?

That which differentiates Christianity is the fact that, while it does represent God as the originator and controller of all things, it yet respects the freedom of the human will, which Mohammedanism does not, which Hinduism does not, which ancient or modern Buddhism does not, which Materialism does not. Not only the Word of God but our own reason tells us that the Creator of this world must have proceeded upon a definite and all-embracing plan; and yet at the same time, not only the Word of God, but our own consciousness, tells us that we are free to act according to our own will. How these things are to be reconciled we know not, simply because we are finite and God is infinite. I once stood before the great snowy range of the Himalayas, whose lofty peaks rose twenty-five thousand feet above the sea. None could see how those gigantic masses stood related to each other, simply because no mortal ever has explored, or ever can explore, their awful and unapproachable recesses.

So with many great truths concerning the being, attributes, and works of God. One may say that God predetermined and then foresaw what He had ordained; another that He foresaw and then resolved to effect what he had foreseen. Neither is correct, or at least neither can know that he is correct. God is not subject to our conditions of time and space. It is impossible that He, whose knowledge and will encompass all things, should be affected by our notions of order and sequence; there is with Him no before and after. The whole



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universe, with all its farthest extended history, stood before Him from all eternity as one conception and as one purpose; and the conception and the purpose were one. The too frequent mistake of human formulas is that they undertake to reason out infinite mysteries on our low anthropomorphic lines, one in one extreme and another in another. We cannot fit the ways of God to the measure of our logic or our metaphysics. What we have to do with many things is simply to believe and trust and wait.[204] On the other hand, there are many things of a practical nature which God has made very plain. He has brought them down to us. The whole scheme of grace is an adaptation of the mysteries of the Godhead to our knowledge, faith, obedience, and love.

And this leads directly to the chief differential which Christianity presents in contrast with the fatalisms of false systems, *viz.*, that while sin and death abound, as all must see, the Gospel alone reveals a superabounding grace. It is enough for us that the whole scheme is one of Redemption, that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world—nay, that He made the world, and made it for an infinitely benevolent purpose. If dark mysteries appear in the Word or in the world, we are to view them in the light of Calvary, and wait till we can see as we are seen; for this world is Christ's, and will surely subserve His ends, which are those of infinite compassion.

Our position, therefore, as before the abettors of heathen or agnostic philosophy, is impregnable: the fatalism is all theirs, the union of sovereign power with infinite love is ours. We have reason as well as they. We realize the facts and mysteries of life as fully as they, but are not embittered by them. We see nothing to be gained by putting out the light we have. We prefer faith to pessimism, incarnate love to the tyranny of "unconscious will."

### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 184: Quoted in Fiske's *Destiny of Man*, p. 117.]

[Footnote 185: See *Indian Wisdom*, p. 82.]

[Footnote 186: What Kanada meant by *adrishta* was a sort of habit of matter derived from its past combinations in a previous cosmos, one or more. The rod which has been bent will bend again, and so matter which has once been combined will unite again.]

[Footnote 187: *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, p. 327.]

[Footnote 188: *On Natural Selection*, p. 353.]

[Footnote 189: *The Destiny of Man*, p. 80.]

[Footnote 190: *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, p. 88.]



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[Footnote 191: Some of Goldwin Smith's utterances are such as these: "If morality has been based on religion there must be reason to fear that the foundation being removed the superstructure will fall. That it has rested on religion so far as the great majority are concerned will hardly be doubted." ... "The presence of this theistic sanction has been especially apparent in all acts and lives of all heroic self-sacrifice and self-devotion." ... "All moral philosophers whose philosophy has been practically effective, from Socrates down, have been religious. Many have tried to find an independent basis but have not been successful—at least have not arrived at any agreement." ... "Thucydides ascribed the fall of Greece to the fall of religion. Machiavelianism followed the fall of the Catholic faith." ... "Into the void left by religion came spiritual charlatanry and physical superstition, such as the arts of the hierophant of Isis, the soothsayer, the astrologer—significant precursors of our modern mediums." ... "Conscience as a mere evolution of tribal experience may have importance, but it can have no authority, and 'Nature' is an unmeaning word without an Author of nature—or rather it is a philosophic name for God." ... "Evolution is not moral, nor can morality be educed from it. It proclaims as its law the survival of the fittest, and the only proof of fitness is survival." ... "We must remember that whatever may be our philosophic school we are still living under the influence of theism, and most of us under Christianity. There is no saying how much of Christianity still lingers in the theories of agnostics." ... "The generation after the next may perhaps see agnosticism, moral as well as religious, tried on a clear field." These utterances are weighty, though detached. We only raise a doubt whether "the generation after the next" will see agnosticism tried on a clear field. On the contrary, it will be surrounded as now, and more and more, by Christian influences, and will still depend on those influences to save it from the sad results of its own teachings.]

[Footnote 192: *The Races of Man*, pp. 137, 138.]

[Footnote 193: *The Human Species*, p. 478.]

[Footnote 194: Mr. John Fiske declares that man is descended from the catarrhine apes.—*Destiny of Man*, p. 19. Professor Le Conte maintains that no existing animal could ever be developed into man. He traces all existing species up from a common stock, of which man is the head. The common line of ancestors are all extinct.—*Evolution in Relation to Religious Thought*, p. 90.]

[Footnote 195: *The Permanent Elements in Religion*, p. 154]

[Footnote 196: Book II., 13.]

[Footnote 197: Book IX., 17.]

[Footnote 198: Development by "heredity" and the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration, though both fatalistic, reach that result in different ways; they are, in fact, contradictory.

Character, according to Buddhism, is inherited not from parents: it follows the line of affinity.]



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[Footnote 199: *Indian Wisdom*, p. 152.]

[Footnote 200: *History of Philosophy*, pp. 220, 221.]

[Footnote 201: *Oriental Religions—India*. Part II., p. 44.]

[Footnote 202: Beal, *Buddhism in China*, p. 180.]

[Footnote 203: *Physics and Politics*.]

[Footnote 204: “Probably no more significant change awaits the theology of the future than the recognition of this province of the unknown, and the cessation of controversy as to matters that come within it, and therefore admit of no dogmatic settlement.”—Tulloch’s *Religious Thought in Britain*, p. 24.]

## LECTURE X.

### THE DIVINE SUPREMACY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

We have in previous lectures instituted brief and partial comparisons between Christianity and particular faiths of the East, but I now propose a general comparative survey.

Never before has the Christian Faith been so boldly challenged to show cause for its supreme and exclusive claims as in our time. The early Christians encountered something of the same kind: it seemed very preposterous to the proud Roman that an obscure sect, coming out of despised Nazareth, should refuse to place a statue of its deified Founder within the Pantheon, in the goodly company of renowned gods from every part of the Roman Empire; but it did so refuse and gave its reasons, and it ultimately carried its point. It gained the Pantheon and Rome itself for Christ alone. He was proclaimed as the One Redeemer of the world, and this claim has been maintained from that day to this. “There can be no diversity,” said His followers, “for there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. The very genius of Christianity means supremacy and monopoly, for the reason that it is divine and God cannot be divided against Himself.” But in our time the whole world is brought very closely together. The religions of men, like their social customs and political institutions, are placed in contact and comparison. The enemies of the Christian faith here, in Western lands, naturally make the most of any possible alliances with other systems supposed to antagonize Christianity; while a multitude of others, having no particular interest in any religion, and rather priding themselves upon a broad charity which is but a courteous name for indifference, are demanding with a superior air that fair play shall be shown to all religions alike. The Church is therefore called upon to defend her unique position and the promulgation of her message to mankind. Why does she refuse to admit the validity of other religions, and why send her missionaries



over the earth to turn the non-Christian races from those faiths which are their heritage by birth, and in which they honestly put their trust? Why not respect everywhere that noblest of all man's instincts which prompts him to inquire after God, who hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the earth? If the old Hindu pantheism of the Bhagavad Gita taught that the worshippers of other gods were only worshipping the One Supreme Vishnu unawares; if Buddhism forbids its followers to assert that theirs is the only religion, or even that it is the best religion; [205] is it not time that Christians should emulate this noble charity?



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This plausible plea is urged with such force and volume, it is so backed by the current literature and the secular newspaper press that it cannot be ignored. The time has come when the Church must not only be able to give a reason for the faith she professes, but must assign reasons why her faith should supplant every other. I am aware that many are insisting that her true course is to be found in an intensive zeal in the promulgation of her own doctrines without regard to any other. "Preach the Gospel," it is said, "whether men will hear or whether they forbear." But it must be borne in mind that Paul's more intelligent method was to strive as one who would win, and not as they who beat the air. The Salvation Army will reach a certain class with their mere unlettered zeal. The men who purposely read only One Book, but read that on their knees, doubtless have an important work to do, but the Church as a whole cannot go back to the time when devout zealots sneered at the idea of an educated ministry. The conflict of truth and error must be waged intelligently. There are sufficient reasons for claiming a divine supremacy for the Gospel over all heathen faiths, and the sooner we thoroughly understand the difference, the more wisely and successfully shall we accomplish our work.

Wherein, then, consists the unique supremacy of the Christian faith?

1. It alone offers a real salvation. We are not speaking of ethics, or conceptions of God, or methods of race culture, but of that one element which heals the wounds of acknowledged sin and reconciles men to God. And this is found in Christianity alone. There is no divine help in any other. Systems of speculation, theories of the universe, and of our relation to the Infinite are found in all sacred books of the East. There are lofty ethical teachings gathered from the lips of many masters, and records of patient research, cheerful endurance of ascetic rigors, and the voluntary encounter of martyrs' deaths. And one cannot but be impressed by this spectacle of earnest struggles in men of every land and every age to find some way of peace. But in none of the ethnic religions has there been revealed a divine and heaven-wrought salvation. They have all begun and ended with human merit and human effort. Broken cisterns have everywhere taken the place of the One Fountain of Eternal Life. Though all these systems recognize the sin and misery of the world, and carry their estimate of them to the length of downright pessimism, they have discovered no eye that could pity and no arm that could bring salvation. In the silence and gloom of the world's history only one voice has said, "Lo, I come! in the volume of the Book it is written of me." And although men have in all ages striven to rid themselves of sin by self-mortification, and even mutilation, yet the ever-recurring question, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" was never answered till Paul answered it in his rapturous



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acknowledgment of victory through the righteousness of Christ. Mohammed never claimed to be a saviour or even an intercessor. He was the sword of God against idolators, and the ambassador of God to believers; but beyond the promise of a sensuous heaven, he offered no salvation. He had no remedy for sin—except that in his own case he claimed a special revelation of clemency and indulgence. Many a wholesome truth derived from the Old Testament scriptures was promulgated to the faithful, but self-righteousness, and especially valor in Mohammedan conquest, was offered as the key to paradise.[206]

Doubtless we should view the false systems with discrimination. Like the sublime philosophy of Plato, Mohammedanism does teach an exalted idea of God, and there is, accordingly, a dignity and reverence in its forms of worship. I once witnessed a very imposing spectacle in the great mosque at Delhi, on the Moslem Sabbath. Several hundred Indian Mohammedans were repeating their prayers in concert. They were in their best attire, and fresh from their ablutions, and their concerted genuflections, the subdued murmur of their many voices, and the general solemnity of their demeanor, rendered the whole service most impressive. It contrasted strongly with the spectacle which I witnessed a little later in the temple of Siva, in Benares. The unspeakable worship of the linga, the scattering of rice and flowers and the pouring of libations before this symbol; the hanging of garlands on the horns of sacred bulls, and that by women; the rushing to and fro, tracking the filth of the sacred stables into the trodden ooze of rice and flowers which covered the temple pavements; the drawing and sipping of water from the adjacent cesspool, known as the sacred well; the shouting and striking of bells, and the general frenzy of the people—all this could be considered as nothing short of wild and depraved orgies. If we must choose, give us Islam, whether in contrast with the Siva worship of India or with the tyranny of the witch doctors of interior Africa.

Yet, I repeat, Islam has no salvation, no scheme of grace, no great Physician. In visiting any Mohammedan country one is impressed with this one defect, the want of a Mediator. I once stood in the central hall of an imposing mansion in Damascus, around the frieze of which were described, in Arabic letters of gold, "The Hundred Names of Allah." They were interpreted to me by a friend as setting forth the lofty attributes of God—for example, "The Infinite," "The Eternal," "The Creator," "The All-Seeing," "The Merciful," "The Just." No one could help being impressed by these inspiring names. They were the common heritage of Judaism and Christianity before Islam adopted them, and they are well calculated to fill the soul with reverence and awe. But there is another class of names which were predicted by Judaism and rejoiced in by Christianity, but which Islam rejects; for example, "Messiah," "Immanuel," or



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God with us, "The Son of God," "The Son of Man," "The Redeemer," "The Elder Brother." In a word, Islam has nothing to fill the breach between a holy and just God and the conscience-smitten souls of men. These honored names of Allah are as sublime as the snow-peaks of the Himalayas and as inaccessible. How can we attain unto them? Without a Daysman how shall we bridge the abyss that lies between? Even Israel plead for Moses to speak to them in place of the Infinite, and they voiced a felt want of all human hearts.

Yet no religious system but Christianity reveals a Mediator. There is in other faiths no such conception as the fatherhood of God. Though such names as Dyauspater, Zeuspiter or Jupiter, and others bearing the import of father are sometimes found, yet they imply only a common source, as the sun is the source of life. They lack the elements of love and fostering care. There can be no real fatherhood and no spirit of adoption except through union with the Son of God. The idea that re-birth and remission of sin may be followed by adoption and heirship, and joint heirship with the Son of the Infinite, belongs to the Christian faith alone; and the hope and inspiration of such a heritage, seen in contrast with the endless and disheartening prospects of countless transmigrations, are beyond the power of language to describe. It was with infinite reason that Paul was taught to regard his work among the Gentiles as a rescue or a deliverance "from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God," and it was a priceless boon which enabled him to offer at once the full remission of sins and a part in the glorious inheritance revealed through faith in Christ.

Mere ethical knowledge cannot comfort the human soul. Contrast the gloom of Marcus Aurelius with the joy of David in Psalm cxix.; and Seneca, also, with all his discernment, and his eloquent presentation of beautiful precepts, was one of the saddest, darkest characters of Roman history. He was the man who schemed with Catiline, and who at the same time that he wrote epigrams urged Nero onward with flattery and encouragement to his most infamous vices and his boldest crimes. Knowledge of ethical maxims and the power of expressing them, therefore, is one thing, religion is another. Religion is a device, human or divine, for raising up men by a real or a supposed supernatural aid. It ought to reveal God as a helper and a Saviour. It ought to be a provision of grace by which the Just can yet be a justifier of them that are weak and wounded by sin. The ethical systems of the heathen world corroborate the Scriptural diagnosis of man's character and condition, but they fail as prescriptions. So far as divine help and regenerative power are concerned, they leave the race helpless still.



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Christianity is a system of faith in a moral as well as in an intellectual sense. It inculcates a spirit of loving, filial trust instead of a querulous self-righteousness which virtually chides the unknown Ruler of the universe. According to "The Light of Asia" when the Buddha preached at Kapilavastu there were assembled men and devils, beasts and birds, all victims alike of the cruel fate that ruled the world. Existence was an evil and only the Buddha could be found to pity. But that pity offered no hope except in the destruction of hope, and the destruction of all desire, all aspiration, even all feeling; while Christianity offers a hope which maketh not ashamed, even an immortal inheritance.[207] Hinduism also, like Islam and Buddhism, lacks every element of divine salvation. It is wholly a thing of merit. The infinite Brahm is said to be void of attributes of all kinds. No anthropomorphic conception can be predicated of him. The three Gods of the Trimurti are cold and distant—though for Vishnu in his alleged incarnation of Krishna, a sympathetic nature was claimed at a later day—borrowed, some say, from Buddhism, or, according to others, from Christianity. In the Hindu saint all spiritual power in this life is the merit power of ascetic austerities, all hope for the future world lies in the cleansing efficacy of endless transmigrations of which the goal is absorption into deity.

But the difficulty with both Buddhism and Hinduism is that transmigration cannot regenerate. It is only a vague postponement of the moral issues of the soul. There is recognized no future intervention that can effect a change in the downward drift, and why should a thousand existences prove better than one? According to a law of physics known as the persistence of force, a body once set in motion will never stop unless through the intervention of some other resisting force. And this is strikingly true of moral character and the well-known power and momentum of habit. Who shall change the leopard's spots or deflect the fatal drift of a human soul? Remorselessly these Oriental systems exact from Karma the uttermost farthing. They emphasize the fact that according to the sowing shall be the reaping, and that in no part of the universe can ill desert escape its awards. Even if change were possible, therefore, how shall the old score be settled? What help, what rescue can mere infinitude of time afford, though the transmigrations should number tens of thousands? There is no hint that any pitying eye of God or devil looks upon the struggle, or any arm is stretched forth to raise up the crippled and helpless soul. Time is the only Saviour—time so vast, so vague, so distant, that the mind cannot follow its cycles or trace the relations of cause and effect.



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In contrast with all this, Christianity bids the Hindu ascetic cease from his self-mortification and become himself a herald of Glad Tidings. It invites the hook-swinger to renounce his useless torture and accept the availing sacrifice of Him who hung upon the Cross. It relieves woman from the power of Satan, as exercised in those cruel disabilities which false systems have imposed upon her, and assigns her a place of honor in the kingdom of God. The world has not done scoffing at the idea of a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of men, and yet it has advanced so far that its best thinkers, even without any religious bias, are agreed that the principle of self-sacrifice is the very highest element of character that man can aspire to. And this is tantamount to an acknowledgment that the great principle which the Cross illustrates, and on which the salvation of the race is made to rest, is the crowning glory of all ethics and must be therefore the germinal principle of all true religion.

Christianity with its doctrine of voluntary Divine Sacrifice was no after-thought. Paul speaks of it as “the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations but now is made manifest.” It was the one great mystery which angels had desired to look into and for which the whole world had waited in travail and expectation. Christ was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” and the entire world-history has proceeded under an economy of grace. And I repeat, its fundamental principle of sacrifice, exemplified as it has been through the Christian centuries, has won the recognition even of those who were not themselves the followers of Christ. “The history of self-sacrifice during the last eighteen hundred years,” says Lecky, “has been mainly the history of the action of Christianity upon the world. Ignorance and error have no doubt often directed the heroic spirit into wrong channels, and sometimes even made it a cause of great evil to mankind; but it is the moral type and beauty, the enlarged conception and persuasive power of the Christian faith that have chiefly called it into being; and it is by their influence alone that it can be permanently maintained.”[208] Speaking of the same principle Carlyle says: “It is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin.... In a valiant suffering for others, not in a slothful making others suffer for us, did nobleness ever lie.” And George Sand in still stronger terms has said, “There is but one sole virtue in the world—the Eternal Sacrifice of self.”

While we ponder these testimonies coming from such witnesses we remember how the Great Apostle traces this wonder-working principle back to its Divine Source, and from that Source down into all the commonest walks of life when he says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” Or when he reminds the Corinthians that, though Christ was rich, yet for their sake He became poor, that they through His poverty might be rich.



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In all the Oriental systems there is nothing like this, either as a divine source of all-availing help and rescue, or as a celestial spring of human action. It is through this communicable grace that Christ becomes the Way, the Truth, the Life. Well might Augustine say that while the philosophy of Plato led him to lofty conceptions of God, it could not show him how to approach Him or be reconciled unto Him. "For it is one thing," he says, "from the mountain's shaggy top to see the land of peace and to find no way thither; and in vain to essay through ways impossible, opposed and beset by fugitives and deserters, under their captain the lion and the dragon; and another to keep on the way that leads thither guarded by the host of the heavenly General, where they spoil not that have deserted the heavenly army; for they avoid it as very torment. These things did wonderfully sink into my bowels when I read that *least of Thy Apostles*, and had meditated upon Thy works and trembled exceedingly." While Christianity is wholly unique in providing an objective Salvation instead of attempting to work out perfection from "beggarly elements" within the soul itself, as all heathen systems do, and as all our modern schemes of mere ethical culture do, it at the same time implants in the heart the most fruitful germs of subjective spiritual life. Its superior transformation of human character, as compared with all other cults, is not only a matter of doctrine but also a matter of history. It is acknowledged that Christianity has wrought most powerfully of all faiths in taming savage races as well as individual men, in moulding higher civilizations and inspiring sentiments of humanity and brotherly love. "Christ," says one of the Bampton Lecturers, "is the Light that broods over all history... All that there is upon earth of beauty, truth, and goodness, all that distinguishes the civilized man from the savage is this gift." And if it be asked how the leaven of Christ's influence has pervaded all society, the answer is that the work is presided over by a divine and omnipotent Spirit who represents Christ, who carries out what He began, who by a direct and transforming power renews and enlightens and prompts the soul.

Christianity, then, is not a record, a history of what was said and done eighteen centuries ago: it is not a body of doctrines and precepts: it is the living power of God in the soul of man. The written Word is the sword of this Divine Spirit. The renewed soul is begotten of the Spirit and it is instinct with the indwelling of the Spirit. No other system makes any claim to such an influence as that of the Holy Ghost. Sacred books, written systems of law or ethics would all prove a dead letter—the Bible itself, as well as the Veda, would be a dead letter but for the co-operation of this Divine Spirit. Sacred Scriptures might be venerated, they would not be obeyed. The dead heart must be quickened and renewed and only Christianity reveals the Transforming Power. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.*



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Instantaneous renewal of the character and the life is not even claimed by other faiths; there is in them nothing like the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, or that of thousands of others well known in the history of Christian experience. There are no such changes in men who, from having led lives of profligacy and irreligion, have turned at once into paths of righteousness—have tamed their wild propensities and submitted themselves to the gentle law of love. But under Christian influence we have seen Africaner the savage transformed to a tractable, humane, and loving disciple. We have seen the wild and bloodthirsty Koord subdued and made as a little child. We have seen the cannibal King Thokambo, of Fiji, turned from his cruelty to a simple, childlike faith, and made to prefer the good of his people to the glory of a powerless sceptre. Whole races, like the Northmen, have been tamed from savagery and made peaceable and earnest followers of Christ. In our own time it has been said of a missionary in the South Pacific Islands, “that when he arrived on his field there were no Christians, and when he closed his labors there were no heathen.”

The religion of Gautama has won whole tribes of men, Hinduism and Mohammedanism are even now winning converts from fetish-worshipping races, but, so far as I know, none of these faiths have ever made converts except either by war or by the presentation of such motives as might appeal to the natural heart of man; there has been no spiritual transformation. If it be said that the Buddhist Nirvana and the Hindu doctrine of final absorption cannot attract the natural heart, the ready answer is that Nirvana and absorption are not the real inspiration of their respective systems. They are so far removed into the dim future as to exert no practical influence on the great mass of men. The future estate that is really expected and desired is a happy ideal transmigration, and perhaps many of them; and the chief felicity of the Hindu is that no particular estate is prescribed. While the Christian is promised a heaven to which the natural heart does not aspire, the Hindu may imagine and prefigure his own heaven. His next life may be as carnal as the celestial hunting-ground of the Indian or the promised paradise of the Moslem. It may be only the air-castle of a day-dreamer. There is no moral transformation. There is no expulsive power of a new and higher aspiration. Old things have not passed away; nothing has become new.

But the grace of God in Christ claims to work an entire change in the desires and aspirations of the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. Paul found the men of Ephesus highly civilized in a sense, but “dead in trespasses and sins,” “walking according to the course of this world, and having their conversation in the lusts of the flesh.” But God by His Spirit so “quickened” them that they were able to understand and appreciate one of the most spiritual of all his Epistles. He addressed them as “new creatures,” as God’s “workmanship,” “*created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*”



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As has already been noticed, all theories of moral transformation found in heathen systems require time. The process is carried on by intensive and long-continued thought, or by gradual accumulations of merit. Only the Buddha was enlightened *per sallum*,[209] so to speak. And quite in accord with this view are those modern forms of materialism which maintain that mental and moral habits consist in gradual impressions made in the molecules of the nerve-tissues—that these impressions come at length to determine our acts without the necessity of either purpose or conscious recognition, and that only when right action becomes thus involuntary can character strictly be said to exist.[210] But such theories certainly do not harmonize with the known facts of Christian conversion already alluded to. We do not refuse to recognize a certain degree of truth hidden in these speculations. We are aware that continued thought or emotion promotes a certain habit, and that in the Christian life such habit becomes an element of strength. We also admit that high and pure thought and emotion stamp themselves at length upon our physical nature, and appear in the very expression of the countenance, but when we look for the transforming impulse that can begin and sustain such habitual exercises in spite of the natural sinfulness and corruption which all systems admit, we find it only in the Christian doctrine of the new birth by the power of the Holy Ghost.

On these two doctrines of a Divine Vicarious Sacrifice and of the transforming power of a Divine Spirit we might rest our case. It should be sufficient to show, first, that Christianity alone provides a divine salvation in which God is made sin for us; and second, that its power alone, though objective, works in us the only effectual subjective transformation by a direct influence from on high. But there are many other points of contrast in which the transcendent character of Christianity appears.

First, an important differential lies in the completeness of the Divine personality of Jesus. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Mohammedanism, were strongly supported by the personality of their founders. We also cheerfully accord to such men as Socrates and Plato great personal influence. They have impressed themselves upon the millions of mankind more deeply than statesmen, or potentates, or conquerors; but not one of these presents to us a complete and rounded character, judged even from a human stand-point. Mohammed utterly failed on the ethical side.[211] His life was so marred by coarse sensuality, weak effeminacy, heartless cruelty, unblushing hypocrisy, and heaven-defying blasphemy, that but for his stupendous achievements, and his sublime and persistent self-assertion, he would long since have been buried beneath the contempt of mankind.[212] Confucius appears to have been above reproach in morals, and that amid universal profligacy; but he was cold in temperament, unsympathetic, and



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slavishly utilitarian in his teachings. His ethics lacked symmetry and just proportion. The five relations which constituted his ethico-political system were everything. They were made the basis of inexorable social customs which sacrificed some of the tenderest and noblest promptings of the human heart. Confucius mourned the death of his mother, for filial respect was a part of his system, but for his dying wife there is no evidence of grief or regret, and when his son mourned the death of his wife the philosopher reproved him. In all things he reasoned upward toward the throne; his grand aim was to build up an ideal state. He therefore magnified reverence for parents and all ancestors even to the verge of idolatry, but he utterly failed in that symmetry in which Paul makes the duties of parents and children mutual. Under his system a father might exercise his caprice almost to the power of life or death, and a Chinese mother-in-law is proverbially a tyrant. The beautiful sympathy of Christ, shown in blessing little children and in drawing lessons from their simple trust, would have been utterly out of place in the great sage of China. Confucius seems to have troubled himself but slightly, if at all, about the wants of the poor and the suffering; he taught no doctrine of self-sacrifice for the ignorant and the unworthy. His ideal of the "superior man" would have been tarnished by that contact with the lowly and degraded which was the glory of the Christ. And when his cotemporary, Laotze, taught the duty of doing good, even to enemies, he repudiated the principle as uncalled for in the relative duties which should govern mankind.[213]

With respect to personality, probably a higher claim has been made for Gautama than for either of the characters who have been named. Sir Edwin Arnold, in his preface to the "Light of Asia," has assigned to him a virtual sinlessness, and such is doubtless the character which his followers would claim for him. But as a model for the great masses of men Gautama was very far from perfection. He had little of the genial sunlight of humanity; in every fibre of his nature he was a recluse; his views of life were pessimistic; he had no glad tidings for the sorrowing; no encouragement for the weary and the heavy laden.[214] His agnosticism was ill adapted to the irrepressible wants of mankind, for they must place their trust in a higher power, real or imagined.[215] But while he cast a cloud over the being of God he drove his despairing countrymen to the worship of serpents and evil spirits. In Ceylon, which is *par eminence* an orthodox Buddhist country, ninety per cent. of the population are said to be devil worshippers, and the devil jugglers are patronized even by the Buddhist monks.[216] As the philosophy of Gautama was above the comprehension of the common people, so his example was also above their reach. It utterly lacked the element of trust, and involved the very destruction of society. To "wander apart like a rhinoceros"



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and “be silent as a broken gong” might be practicable for a chosen few, if only self were to be considered, but silence and isolation are not worthy ideals in a world of mutual dependence and where all life’s blessings are enhanced by the ministries of the strong to the necessities of the weak. Infinitely higher was the example of Him who said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;” and who accordingly exhorted his disciples to work while the day lasts. Christ prayed not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil.

Again the Buddha’s life furnished but a poor example in the domestic duties. His abandonment of his wife and child cannot be justified upon any sound theory of life. Whatever may be said of the merits of celibacy in those who are under no marriage vows, the abandonment of sacred relations once formed must be considered a crime against all society. As Mohammed’s example of impurity has cast a blight over all Moslem lands, so Gautama’s withdrawal from his home has borne, and is still bearing, its evil fruit. In Burmah it is common for a Buddhist who desires a change of wives to abandon his family for the sacred life of a monastery, where, if he remains but a single month, he sunders the old relation and is at liberty to form a new one. Good men are disgusted, but there is the example of “the Blessed One!” It will be admitted that in comparison with Hinduism the Buddhist ethics advanced woman to a higher social condition, but when modern apologists compare Gautama with Christ there are many contrasts which cannot be disguised.

In some respects Socrates stands highest among great philosophers. Mohammed’s career cost him nothing but gained for him everything that man’s earthly nature could desire. Gautama made only a temporary sacrifice; he changed lower indulgences for honor and renown, and died at a ripe old age surrounded by loving friends. But Socrates resolutely and calmly suffered martyrdom for his principles. The sublime dignity and self-control of his dying hours will never cease to win the admiration of mankind; yet Socrates was by no means a complete character. He died unto himself merely. He left no gospel of peace to humanity. His influence, however pure, could not, and in fact did not, become a diffusive and transforming leaven, either in his own or in any subsequent generation. The late Matthew Arnold has said, “The radical difference between Jesus and Socrates is that such a conception as Paul’s (conception of faith) would, if applied to Socrates, be out of place and ineffective. Socrates inspired boundless friendship and esteem, but the inspiration of reason and conscience is the one inspiration which comes from him and which impels us to live righteously as he did. A penetrating enthusiasm of love, sympathy, pity, adoration, reinforcing the inspiration of reason and duty does not belong to Socrates. With Jesus it is different. On this point it is needless to argue: history has proved. In the midst of errors the most prosaic, the most immoral, the most unscriptural, concerning God, Christ, and righteousness, the immense emotion of love and sympathy inspired by the person and character of Jesus

has had to work almost by itself alone for righteousness, but it has worked wonders."[217]



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This tribute to the completeness and power of Christ's personality is calculated to remind one of a memorable chapter in the well-known work of the late Dr. Horace Bushnell, entitled, "Nature and the Supernatural." With a wonderful power it portrays Christ as rising above the plane of merely human characters—as belonging to no age or race or stage of civilization—as transcendent not in some of the virtues, but in them all—as never subject to prejudice, or the impulse of passion, never losing that perfect poise which it has been impossible for the greatest of men to achieve—as possessed of a mysterious magnetism which carried conviction to His hearers even when claiming to be one with the Infinite—as inspiring thousands with a love which has led them to give their lives for His cause.[218]

I have often thought that one of the most striking evidences of the divine reality of the Christian faith is found in the reflection of Christ's personality in the character and life of the apostle Paul.[219] No one can doubt that Paul was a real historic personage, that from having been a strict and influential Jew he became a follower of Jesus and gave himself to His service with a sublime devotion; that he sealed the sincerity of his belief by a life of marvellous self-denial. He had no motive for acting a false part at such cost; on the contrary, an unmistakable genuineness is stamped upon his whole career. How shall we explain that career? Where else in the world's history have we seen a gifted and experienced man, full of strong and repellent prejudices, so stamped and penetrated by the personality of another?

On what theory can we account for such a change in such a life, except that his own story of his conversion was strictly true, that he had felt in his inmost soul a power so overwhelming as to sweep away his prejudices, humble his pride, arm him against the derision of his former friends, and prepare him for inevitable persecution and for the martyr death of which he was forewarned? So vivid were his impressions of this divine personality that it seemed almost to absorb his own. Christ, though He had ascended, was still with him as a living presence. All his inspiration, all his strength came from Him. His plans and purposes centred in his Divine Master, and his only ambition was to be found well-pleasing in his sight. He saw all types and prophecies fulfilled in Him as the Son of God, the fulness of His glory, and the express image of His person. Paul never indulged in any similes by which to express the glory of heaven; it was enough that we should be like Christ and be with Him where He is.

The writings of all the apostles differ from the books of other religions in the fact that their doctrines, precepts, and exhortations are so centred in their divine Teacher and Saviour. Buddha's disciples continued to quote their Master, but Buddha was dead. Theoretically not even his immortal soul survived. He had declared that when his bodily life should cease there would be nothing left of which it could be said "I am."



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But to the vivid and realizing faith of Christ's followers He is still their living Head, their Intercessor, their Guide. His resurrection is the warrant of their future life. He has gone before and will come again to receive His own. Christianity is Christ: all believers are members of His mystic body: the Church is His bride. He is the Alpha and the Omega of the world's history. In the contemplation of His personality as the chief among ten thousand His people are changed into His image as from glory to glory. The ground of salvation in Christianity is not in a church, nor a body of doctrines, not even in the teachings of the Master: it is in Christ Himself as a humiliated sacrifice and a triumphant Saviour.

Second, the religion of the Bible differs from every other in its completeness and scope—its adaptation to all the duties and experiences of life and to all races and all conditions of men. It alone is able to meet all the deep and manifold wants of mankind. Hardwick has very aptly pointed out a contrast in this respect between the faith of Abraham and that of the early Indo-Aryan chiefs as portrayed in the Rig Veda. The pressing wants of humanity necessitate a faith that is of the nature of a heartfelt trust. No other can be regarded as strictly religious. Now Abraham's faith was something more than a speculation or a creed. It was an all-embracing confidence in God. He had an abiding sense of His presence and he confided in Him as his constant guide, defender, and friend. His family, his flocks, his relations to the hostile tribes who surrounded him, the promised possession of the land to which he journeyed—all these were matters which he left in the hands of an unseen but ever-faithful friend. His was a practical faith—a real and complete venture, and it involved gratitude and loyalty and love. Abraham's childhood had been spent in the home of an idolatrous father; for Shemite as well as Aryan had departed from the worship of the true God. In Chaldea, as in India, men had come to worship the sun and moon and the forces of nature. But while the Hindu wandered ever farther away from Jehovah, Abraham restored the faith which his ancestors had lost. He had no recourse to Indra or Varuna, he sought no help from devas or departed spirits. He looked to God alone, for he had heard a voice saying, "I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect." [220] Under the inspiration of such a summons Abraham became "the father of the faithful." He was the representative and exemplar of real and practical faith, not only to the Hebrew race but to all mankind. He staked his all upon a promise which he regarded as divine and therefore sure. He believed in the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness. He left home and country and ventured among hostile tribes in an assured confidence that he should gain a possession, though empty-handed, and a countless posterity, though yet childless, and that all this would be granted



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him not for his own glory, but that all nations might be blest in him. And this subordination of self and this uplifting of his soul to a sublime hope rendered him patient when fulfilment seemed postponed, and strong against temptation when spoils and emoluments were offered him; for in some sense, vague perhaps, he foresaw a Messiah and a Kingdom of Righteousness, and he was girded with confidence to the last, though he died without the sight.

We look in vain for anything to be compared with this in the Vedic literature, still less in that of the period of Brahmanical sacerdotalism, or in the still later speculations of the philosophic schools. Real Hinduism is wanting in the element of trust. Its only faith is a belief, a theory, a speculation. It receives nothing and expects nothing as a free gift of God. Sacrificial rites survived in the early Vedic period, but they had lost all prophetic significance. They terminated in themselves and rested upon their own value. There was no remembered promise and no expectation of any specific fulfilment. The Hindu gained simply what he bought with his merit or his offerings, and he had no greater sense of gratitude to deity than to the tradesman of whom he made a purchase in the bazaar. There are, indeed, traces in some of the earliest Vedic hymns of a feeling of dependence upon superior powers, yet the Brahmanical priesthood taught men that he who was rich enough to offer a sacrifice of a hundred horses might bankrupt heaven, and by his simple right of purchase even rob Indra of his throne.[221] As stated in a previous lecture, so far was this system from "the faith which works by love" that even demons, by costly sacrifices might dispute the supremacy of the universe.

There is an equally significant contrast between the legislation of Moses and that of Manu. The life and experience of the former are interwoven with his statutes. They are illustrated with references to actual events in the history of the people. The blessings, the trials, the punishments, the victories, the defeats of Israel enter into the texture of the whole Mosaic record: it is full of sympathetic feeling; it takes hold on the actual life of men and therefore is able to reform and elevate them. It brings not only Moses, but Jehovah Himself into personal sympathy with the people. But Manu presents statutes only. Many of these are wholesome as laws, but they are destitute of tenderness or compassion. No indication is given of the author's own experience, and we are left in doubt whether there were not many authors to whom the general name of Manu was applied. There is no inculcation of gratitude and love to God, or any hint of His love to men. No prayer, no song, no confession of dependence, no tribute of praise, no record of trembling, yet trustful, experience. It is all cold, lifeless precept and prohibition, with threats of punishment here and hereafter. Religious exaction is most strict, but there are few religious privileges except for Brahmans, and these they possess by divine birthright. No particular favor is asked from any being in heaven or on earth.



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With respect to this same element of personal trust, and real, heartfelt experience, contrast David also with any author whose name is given in Hindu literature. He was full of humanity, large-hearted, loving, grateful, and though stained by sin, yet he was so penitent and humble and tender that he was said to be a man after God's own heart. He was a successful warrior and a great king, but he held all his honor and his power as a divine gift and for the Divine glory. Compare the 119th Psalm with the Upanishads, or with any of the six schools of philosophy. The one deals with moral precepts and spiritual aspirations, all the others with subtle theories of creation or problems of the universe. The one is the outflowing of joyous experience found in obedience to God's moral law, and only out of the heart could such a psalm have been written. The law of God had become not a barrier or a hamper, but a delight. Evidently David had found a religion which filled every avenue and met every want of his whole being.

Again, only the religion of Christ brings man into his proper relation of penitence and humility before God. It is necessary to the very conception of reconciliation to a higher and purer being that wrong-doing shall be confessed. All the leading faiths of the world have traditions of the fall of man from a higher and holier estate, and most of them—notably Hinduism, Buddhism, ancient Druidism, and the Druse religion of Mount Lebanon—declare that the fall was the result of pride and rebellion of spirit. And of necessity the wrong, if it cannot be undone, must at least be confessed. Self-justification is perpetuation. The offender must lay aside his false estimate of self and admit the justice whose claims he has violated. Even in the ordinary intercourse of men this principle is universally recognized. There can be no reconciliation without either actual reparation or at least a frank acknowledgment. Governmental pardon always implies repentance and promised reform, and between individuals a due concession to violated principle is deemed the dictate of the truest honor. How can there be reconciliation to God, then, without repentance and humiliation? Of what value can heathen asceticism and merit-making be while the heart is still barred and buttressed with self-righteousness? The longer a man approaches the Holiness of Deity with the offerings of his own self-consequence the greater does the enormity of his offence become and the wider the breach which he attempts to close.

Even if he could render a perfect obedience and service for the future, he could never overtake the old unsettled score. The prodigal cannot recover the squandered estate or wipe out the record of folly and sin, and if there be no resource of free remission on the one hand, and no deep and genuine repentance on the other, there can be no possible adjustment. The universal judgment and conscience of men so decide. Philosophers



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may present this method and that of moral culture and assimilation to the character of the Infinite, but practically all men will approve the philosophy taught in Christ's touching parable of the Prodigal Son. The beauty, the force, the propriety of its principles strike the human understanding, whether of the sage or of the savage, like a flash of sunlight, and no human heart can fail to be touched by its lessons. Yet where in all the wide waste of heathen faiths or philosophies is there anything which even remotely resembles the story of the Prodigal? Where is the system in which such an incident and such a lesson would not be wholly out of place?

In that ancient book of the Egyptian religion known as "The Book of the Dead," the souls of the departed when arraigned before the throne of Osiris are represented as all joining in one refrain of self-exculpation, uttering such pleas as these: "I have not offended or caused others to offend." "I have not snared ducks illegally on the Nile." "I have not used false weights or measures." "I have not defrauded my neighbor by unjustly opening the sluices upon my own land!" Any sense of the inward character of sin or any conception of wrong attitudes of mind or heart toward God is utterly wanting. It is simply the plea of "not guilty," which even the most hardened culprit may make in court. In one of the Vedic hymns to Varuna there is something which looks like confession of sin, but it really ends in palliation. "It was not our doing, O Varuna, it was necessity; an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is there to mislead the young. Even sleep brings unrighteousness." And the remission sought for is not one involving a change of character but only release from an external bond. "Absolve us from the sins of our fathers and from those which we committed with our own bodies. Release Vasishtha, O King, like a thief who has feasted on stolen oxen. Release him like a calf from the rope." [222]

In the Penitential Psalms of the ancient Akkadians, who inhabited Northern Assyria in the times of Abraham, and who may have retained something of that true faith from which Abraham's father had declined, we find a nearer approach to true penitence, but that also lacks the inner sense of sin and seeks merely an exemption from punishments.

Only in the Old and New Testaments is sin recognized as of the nature of personal guilt. Accordingly, Christianity alone recognizes the fact that right thoughts and motives and a worthy character are the gifts of God. Cicero has truly remarked [223] that men justly thank God for external blessings, but never for virtue, or talent, or character. All that is regarded as their own. And such is the conceit of human self-righteousness in all man-made religions, whether Hindu or Greek, ancient or modern. Philosophy is in its very nature haughty and aristocratic. Even Plato betrays this element. It is only the Christian apostle that is heard to say, with heartfelt

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emotion, "By the grace of God I am what I am." The Buddha declared that he recognized no being in any world to whom he owed any special reverence; and especially in his later years, when his disciples had come to look upon him as in a sense divine, he regarded himself as the highest of all intelligences on the earth or in the various heavens. Such assumptions in both Buddha and Confucius will explain the fact that for ages both have been virtually worshipped. "At fifteen," said Confucius, "I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty I stood firm. At forty I had no doubt. At fifty I knew the decrees of Heaven. At sixty my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy I could follow what my heart desired without transgressing what was right." [224] Yet neither of these great teachers claimed to be a divine Saviour. They were simply exemplars; their self-righteousness was supposed to be attainable by all.

I cannot do better in this connection than point out a striking contrast in the recorded experiences of two well-known historic characters. Islam honors David, King of Israel, and accords him a place among its accredited prophets. Both David and Mohammed were guilty of adultery under circumstances of peculiar aggravation. Mohammed covered his offence by a blasphemous pretence of special revelations from God, justifying his crime and chiding him for such qualms of conscience as he had. David lay in dust and ashes while he bemoaned not only the consequences of his sin and the breach of justice toward his neighbor, but also the deep spiritual offence of his act. "Against Thee, and Thee only, O God, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." Profoundest penitence on the one hand and Heaven-daring blasphemy on the other, the Bible and the Koran being witnesses!

Another marked distinction is seen in the moral purity of the Christian Scriptures as contrasted with the so-called sacred books of all other religions. That which is simply human will naturally be expected to show the moral taint of lapsed humanity. The waters cannot rise higher than the fountain-head, nor can one gather figs from thistles. In our social intercourse with men we sooner or later find out their true moral level. And so in what is written, the exact grade of the author will surely appear. And it is by this very test that we can with tolerable accuracy distinguish the human from the divine in religious records. It is not difficult to determine what is from heaven and what is of the earth.

No enlightened reader of Greek mythology can proceed far without discovering that he is dealing with the prurient and often lascivious imaginings of semi-barbarous poets. He finds the poetry and the art of Greece both reflecting the character of a passionate people, bred under a southern sun and in an extremely sensuous age. If he ventures into the lowest depths of the popular religious literature of Greece or Rome, or ancient Egypt or Phoenicia, he finds unspeakable



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vice enshrined among the mysteries of religion, and corruptions which an age of refinement refuses to translate or depict abound on every hand. Or apply the same test to the literature of Hinduism, even in its earliest and purest stages. The sacred Vedas, which are supposed to have been breathed into the souls of ancient rishis by direct divine effluence, are tainted here and there by debasing human elements, and that not incidentally but as the very soul of the Hindu system. For example, when the Vedic hymns promise as future rewards the lowest sensual indulgences[225] none can doubt the earthly source of their inspiration. As for the Upanishads, which are regarded as *Sruti* or inspired, Professor Max Mueller, in his Introduction to the first volume of "The Sacred Books of the East," virtually admits the impropriety of translating them for English readers without expurgation. Mr. Ram Chandra Bose, of Lucknow, declares himself unable, for the same reason, to give a full and unabridged account of the ancient Hindu sacrifices.[226] The later literatures of the Puranas and the Tantras are lower still. Anti-Christian Orientalists have so generally conveyed the popular impression that their culled and expurgated translations were fair representations of Hindu literature that Wilson finally felt called upon in the interest of truth and honesty to lift the veil from some of the later revelations of the Puranas, and it is sufficient to say that the Greek mythology is fairly outdone by the alleged and repeated escapades of the chief Hindu deities.

The traditions of all ancient religions found on either hemisphere, and the usages observed among savage tribes of to-day all conform to the same low moral gauge. All are as deplorably human as the degraded peoples who devised them. In Mexico and Peru, as well as in Egypt and in Babylonia, base human passion was mingled with the highest teachings of religion.[227] Buddhism has generally been considered an exception to this general rule, and it will be confessed that its influence has been vastly higher than that of the old Hinduism, or the religions of Canaan, or Greece, or Rome, and immeasurably higher in morals than that of Islam; yet even Buddhism has been colored by its European advocates with far too roseate a hue. Sir Edwin Arnold was not the first biographer of Gautama to glorify incidentally the seductive influences of his Indian harem, and to leave on too many minds the impression that, after all, the luxurious palace of Sidartha was more attractive than the beggars' bowl of the enlightened "Tathagata." The Bishop of Colombo, in an able article on Buddhism, arraigns the apologetic translators of Buddhistic literature for having given to the world an altogether erroneous impression of the moral purity of the Sacred Books of Ceylon. [228]

The vaunted claim that the early Buddhist records, and especially the early rock inscriptions found in caves, are pure, whatever corruptions may have crept into more modern manuscripts, is well met by letters from a recent traveller, which speak of certain Buddhist inscriptions so questionable in character that they cannot be translated or described.[229]



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It is scarcely necessary for me to speak of the base appeal to man's low passions found in the Koran. It is only necessary to trace its unmistakable influence in the moral degeneracy of Mohammedan populations in all lands and all ages—destroying the sacredness of the home, degrading woman, engendering unnatural vices, and poisoning all society from generation to generation. It is indeed a hard task for its apologists, by any kind of literary veneering to cover the moral deformity and the blasphemous wickedness which, side by side with acknowledged excellences, mar the pages of the Koran. The soiled finger-marks of the sensual Arab everywhere defile them. Like the blood of Banquo, they defy all ocean's waters to wash them out. It was easy enough for Mohammed to copy many exalted truths from Judaism and Christianity, and no candid mind will deny that there are many noble precepts in the Koran; but after all has been said, its ruling spirit is base. Even its promised heaven is demoralizing. It is characteristically a human book, and very low in the ethical scale at that.

Let us now turn to the Bible; let us remember that the Old Testament represents those early centuries when the people of Israel were surrounded by the corruptions of Baal worship, which transcended the grovelling wickedness of all other heathen systems, ancient or modern. Let us bear in mind the kind of training which the nation had received amid the corruptions of Egypt, all rendered more effective for evil by their degrading bondage; and with all these disadvantages in view, let us search everywhere, from Genesis to Malachi, and see if there be one prurient utterance, one sanction for, or even connivance at, impurity in all those records, written by men in different lands and ages, men representing all social grades, all vocations in life, and chosen from among all varieties of association. Who will deny that these men appear to have been raised by some unaccountable power to a common level of moral purity which was above their age, their social standards, their natural impulses, or any of the highest human influences which could have been exerted upon them?

They were often called to deal plainly with moral evils. They record instances of grievous dereliction, in some cases the writers were themselves the offenders. But there is always reproof. The story always has a salutary moral. Sin is always shown to be a losing game, a sowing to the wind and a reaping of the whirlwind. It is either followed by severe judgments, or it is repented of with a contrition which bows even a great monarch in dust and ashes.



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The books of the New Testament were also written in an age of great moral corruption. Judaism was virtually dead; the current religion in the Holy City was “a sad perversion of the truth.” Hypocrisy sat in high places when John Baptist came with his protest and his rebukes. The Herods, who held the sceptres of provincial authority, were either base time-servers, or worse, they were monsters of lust and depravity. In the far-off capitals of the dominant heathen races vice had attained its full fruitage and was already going to seed and consequent decay. Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Antioch were steeped in iniquity, while the emperors who wielded the sceptre of the Roman empire were hastening the ruin of the existing civilization. It was in such an age and amid such surroundings that the Gospels and the Epistles came forth as the lotus springs, pure and radiant from the foul and fetid quagmire. What could have produced them? The widely accepted rule that religions are the products of their environments is surely at fault here. Neither in the natural impulses of a dozen Judean fishermen and peasants, nor in the bigoted breast of Saul of Tarsus, could these unique and sublime conceptions have found their genesis. They are manifestly divine. How exalted is the portraiture of the Christ! What human skill could have depicted a character which no ideal of our best modern culture can equal?

In all the New Testament there are none but the highest and purest ethical teachings, and even the most poetical descriptions of heaven are free from any faintest tinge of human folly. The Apocalypse is full of images which appeal to the senses, but there is nothing which does not minister to the most rigid purity; while the representations which Paul makes of eternal felicity are strictly and conspicuously spiritual and elevating. Everywhere, from Matthew to Revelations, it is the pure in heart who shall see God, and the inducement held out is to be pure because He is pure. And although the gift of eternal life is a free gift, yet it affords no excuse for laxity. The sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a remonstrance against all presumption in those that are “under grace.” “Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let not sin therefore rule in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead.”[230] The religion of the New Testament is a spiritual religion, the resurrection body is a spiritual body; heaven is not an Indian hunting-ground, nor a Vikings Valhalla of shield-clad warriors, nor a Moslem harem. It is a spiritual abode, and its companionships are with God and the Lamb, with the church of the first-born and of saints made perfect. Now, all that we can say of these lofty and pure conceptions is that flesh and blood never revealed them. They are divine. They are out of the range of our native humanity; they are not the things that human nature desires, and it is only by the high culture of transforming grace that human aspirations are raised to their level.



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In conclusion, there are many points in which Christianity asserts its unique supremacy over all other systems of which there is time but for the briefest mention. It presents to man the only cultus which can have universal adaptation. Christ only, belongs to all ages and all races. Buddha is but an Asiatic, Mohammed is an Arab and belongs only to the East. The religion or philosophy of Confucius has never found adaptation to any but Mongolian races; his social and political pyramid would crumble in contact with republican institutions. On the other hand, the religion of Christ is not only adapted to all races, but it aims at their union in one great brotherhood. Again, Christianity alone presents the true relation between Divine help and human effort. It does not invest marred and crippled human nature with a false and impossible independence, neither does it crush it. Whenever heathen systems have taught a salvation by faith they have lost sight of moral obligation. Weitbrecht and others state this as a fact with the Hindu doctrine of Bakti (faith) adopted in the later centuries; De Quatrefages asserts the same of the Tahitans. But the faith of the New Testament everywhere supposes a Divine and effectual co-operation. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." It bids men serve not as hirelings, but as sons and heirs; it stimulates hope without engendering pride; it administers discipline, but with a father's love; it teaches that trials are not judgments, but wholesome lessons. Of all religions it alone inculcates a rational and consoling doctrine of Providence. It declares that to the righteous death is not destruction, but a sleep in peace and hope. It bids the Christian lay off his cares and worries—in all things making his requests known unto God with thanksgivings; and yet it enjoins him not to rest in sloth, but to aspire after all that is pure and true and honorable and lovely and of good report in human life and conduct. It saves him from sin not by the stifling and atrophy of any God-given power, but by the expulsive influence of new affections; it bids him be pure even as God is pure.

There is in the brief epistle of Paul to Titus a passage which in a single sentence sets forth the way of salvation in its fulness. It traces redemption to the grace of God, and it makes it a free provision for all men; yet it insists upon carefulness and sobriety. Salvation is shown to begin *now* in the laying aside of all sin and the living of a godly life. Meanwhile it cheers the soul with expectation that Christ shall dwell with the redeemed in triumph, as He once came in humiliation, and it keeps ever in mind the great truth that His mission is not merely to secure for man future exemptions and possessions, but to build up character—character that shall continue to rise and expand forever.

*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*



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### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 205: *Holy Bible and Sacred Books of the East*, p. 12.]

[Footnote 206: Mohammed was once asked whether he trusted in his own merit or in the mercy of God, and he answered, "The mercy of God." But the whole drift of his teaching belied this one pious utterance.]

[Footnote 207: Of the terrible darkness and bewilderment into which benighted races are often found Schoolcraft furnishes this graphic and painful picture in the condition of the Iroquois:

"Their notions of a deity, founded apparently on some dreamy tradition of original truth, are so subtle and divisible, and establish so heterogeneous a connection between spirit and matter of all imaginable forms, that popular belief seems to have wholly confounded the possible with the impossible, the natural with the supernatural. Action, so far as respects cause and effect, takes the widest and wildest range, through the agency of good or evil influences, which are put in motion alike for noble or ignoble ends—alike by men, beasts, devils, or gods. Seeing something mysterious and wonderful, he believes all things mysterious and wonderful; and he is afloat without shore or compass, on the wildest sea of superstition and necromancy. He sees a god in every phenomenon, and fears a sorcerer in every enemy. Life, under such a system of polytheism and wild belief, is a constant scene of fears and alarms. Fear is the predominating passion, and he is ready, wherever he goes, to sacrifice at any altar, be the supposed deity ever so grotesque. He relates just what he believes, and unluckily he believes everything that can possibly be told. A beast, or a bird, or a man, or a god, or a devil, a stone, a serpent, or a wizard, a wind, or a sound, or a ray of light—these are so many causes of action, which the meanest and lowest of the series may put in motion, but which shall in his theology and philosophy vibrate along the mysterious chain through the uppermost, and life or death may at any moment be the reward or the penalty."—*Notes on the Iroquois*, p. 263.]

[Footnote 208: *History of Rationalism*.]

[Footnote 209: And even the Buddha had spent six years in self-mortification and in the diligent search for what he regarded as the true wisdom.]

[Footnote 210: Henry Maudsley, in *The Arena* of April, 1891.]

[Footnote 211: "Barren Mohammedanism has been in all the higher and more tender virtues, because its noble morality and its pure theism have been united with no living example."—Lecky, *History of Morals*, vol. ii., p. 10.]



[Footnote 212: The most intelligent Mohammedans, as we have shown in a former lecture, admit the moral blemishes of his character as compared with the purity of Jesus and only revere him as the instrument of a great Divine purpose. His only element of greatness was success. Even the Koran convicts him of what the world must regard as heinous sin, and presents Jesus as the only sinless prophet.]



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[Footnote 213: Douglass, *Confucianism and Taouism*.]

[Footnote 214: The apologists of Buddhism have made much of the story of a distressed young mother who came to the “Master” bearing in her arms the dead body of her first-born—hoping for some comfort or help. He bade her bring him some mustard seed found in a home where no child had died. After a wearisome but vain search he only reminded her of the universality of death. No hope of a future life and a glad recovery of the lost was given. As an illustration of Buddhism the example is a good one.]

[Footnote 215: “Men wanted a Father in heaven, who should take account of their efforts and assure them a recompense. Men wanted a future of righteousness, in which the earth should belong to the feeble and the poor; they wanted the assurance that human suffering is not all loss, but that beyond this sad horizon, dimmed by tears, are happy plains where sorrow shall one day find its consolation.”—Renan, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 42.]

[Footnote 216: See report of Missionary Conference, London, 1888, vol. i., p. 70.]

[Footnote 217: *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 79, quoted by Bishop Carpenter.]

[Footnote 218: It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the well-known tribute which Napoleon, in his conversations with his friends on the island of St. Helena, paid to the transcendent personality of Christ. He drew a graphic contrast between the so-called glory which had been won by great conquerors like Alexander, Caesar, and himself, and that mysterious and all-mastering power which in all lands and all ages continues to attach itself to the person, the name, the memory of Christ, for whom, after eighteen centuries of time, millions of men would sacrifice their lives.]

[Footnote 219: Augustine appears to have been greatly moved by the life as well as by the writings of Paul. In an account given of his conversion to his friend Romanianus, he says, “So then stumbling, hurrying, hesitating, I seized the apostle Paul, ‘for never,’ said I, ‘could they have wrought such things, or lived as it is plain they did live, if their writings and arguments were opposed to this so high a good.’”—*Confessions*, Bk. vii., xxi., note.]

[Footnote 220: Genesis, xvii. 1.]

[Footnote 221: The doctrine of human merit-making was carried to such an extreme under the Brahmanical system that the gods became afraid of its power. They sometimes found it necessary to send apsaras (nymphs), wives of genii, to tempt the most holy ascetics, lest their austerities and their merit should proceed too far.—See *Article Brahmanism, in the Britannica*.]



[Footnote 222: Mueller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i., p. 40.]

[Footnote 223: De Nat. Deorum, iii., 36.]

[Footnote 224: *Chips from a German Workshop*, p. 304.]

[Footnote 225: See Murdock's *Vedic Religion*, p. 57.]



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[Footnote 226: *Hindu Philosophy*.]

[Footnote 227: The most sacred of human victims offered by the Aztecs were prepared by a month of unbridled lust. See Prescott's *Conquest*.]

[Footnote 228: *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1888.]

[Footnote 229: Letters of Rev. Pentecost in *The Christian at Work*, 1891.]

[Footnote 230: The same principles are set forth with great emphasis in Isaiah, Chap. iii.]

## APPENDIX

### BOOKS OF REFERENCE

The books relating directly or indirectly to the wide range of topics discussed in the following lectures are too numerous for citation here; but there are some which are so essential to a thorough knowledge of comparative religion and comparative philosophy, that a special acknowledgment is due.

"The Sacred Books of the East" are indispensable to one who would catch the real spirit of the Oriental religions. The translations from Hindu, Buddhist, Mohammedan, Confucian, and Zoroastrian literatures, by Max Mueller, Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, Fausboll, Palmer, Darmesteter, Mills, Legge, Buhler, West, Beal, and other able scholars, are invaluable. The various other works of Max Mueller, "The Science of Religion," "Chips from a German Workshop," "The Origin and Growth of Religion," "Physical Religion," etc., fill an important place in all study of these subjects.

"Indian Wisdom," by Sir Monier Williams, is the most comprehensive, and in many ways the best, of all compends of Hindu religion and philosophy. His abridged work, "Hinduism," and the larger volume entitled "Brahmanism and Hinduism," are also valuable. R.C. Bose has given to the public an able treatise entitled "Hindu Philosophy." Other books on Hinduism to which more or less reference is made, are: "The Vedic Religion," by McDonald; "India and the Indians," by Duff; "The Life and Letters of Colbrooke;" "The Bhagavad Gita," as translated by Chatterji; "The Vishnu Puranas," by Wilson; "The Ramayana," by Griffiths; "Brahmoism," by Bose; "The Oriental Christ," by Mozoomdar; "Christianity and Hindu Philosophy," by Ballantyne.

Among the ablest books on Buddhism are: "Buddhism;" "The Growth of Religion as illustrated by Buddhism," and the able article on the same subject in the "Britannica"—all by Rhys Davids. "Buddha: His Life, Character, and Order," by Professor Oldenberg, is a scarcely less important contribution to Buddhist literature. "The Light of Asia," by Sir Edwin Arnold, has done more than any other work to interest Western nations in the



legends of Gautama; perhaps no other Oriental character has been more successfully popularized. Of the many efforts to correct the misleading impressions given by this fanciful but really poetic story, "The Light of Asia and the Light of the World," by Dr. S.H. Kellogg, is probably the ablest. Dr. Edkins, in "Chinese Buddhism," and Professor Beal,

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in "Buddhism in China," have very successfully shown the characteristics of the Chinese types of the system. Spence Hardy, in his "Manual of Buddhism," has rendered a similar service in relation to the Buddhism of Ceylon, while Bigandet has set forth that of Burmah, and Alabaster that of Siam. Sir Monier Williams, in his more recent work, "Buddhism," has done much to counteract the fashionable tendency of most Orientalists to idealize the Buddhist system.

Other works relating to Buddhism are, "Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ," by Dodds; "Buddhism (Modern)," by Subhadra; and "Esoteric Buddhism," by Sinnett. Maurice, Bishop Carpenter, Brace, the Bishop of Colombo, Martin, and many others have ably discussed the subject.

Of all works on Mohammedanism, Sale's translation of the Koran, with a "Preliminary Discourse," is the most comprehensive and important. Sprenger's "Life of Mohammed, from Original Sources," is perhaps next in rank. "Islam and Mahomet," by Samuel Johnson; "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," by E. Bosworth Smith; "Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race," by E.W. Blyden; and "Leaves from an Egyptian Notebook," by Canon Isaac Taylor, are among the principal apologies for Islam. Gibbon's fifth volume of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" has at least done ample justice to the glory of the Mohammedan conquest.

Of those who have ably controverted the claims of Islam, the late Dr. Pfander, of Northern India, will perhaps hold the first rank. Of the three Moulvies who were selected to meet him in public discussion, two are said to have been converted to Christianity by his arguments. The concessions of the Koran to the truths of the Old and New Testaments have been ably pointed out by Sir William Muir in "The Koran," and Dr. E.M. Wherry, in his "Commentary," has established the striking fact, that of all the prophets named in the Koran, including Mohammed, Jesus alone is represented as sinless. The modern apologists of Mohammed and his system have been well answered by Knox in current numbers of the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*. Other works upon the subject are "Islam," by Stobart; "Islam as a Missionary Religion," by Haines; "Essays on Eastern Questions," by Palgrave. Sir William Muir's "History of the Caliphate" is an important and recent work.

Confucianism and Taouism may be fairly understood, even by those who have not the time for a careful study of Legge's translations of the Chinese classics, by reference to the following works: "China and the Chinese," by Medhurst; "The Religions of China," by Legge; "The Chinese," by Martin; "Confucianism and Taouism," by Douglass; "Religion in China," by Edkins. The late Samuel Johnson, in his "Oriental Religions," has devoted a large volume to the religions of China, principally to the ethics and political economy of the Confucian system; and James Freeman Clark has given considerable attention to Confucianism as one of "The Ten Great Religions."



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Zoroastrianism is ably treated by Darmesteter in the Introduction to his translation of the "Zend Avesta." Instructive lectures on the religion and literature of Persia may be found in the first volume of Max Mueller's "Chips from a German Workshop;" also in "The Religion of the Iranians," found in Ebrard's "Apologetics," vol. ii. West's and Darmesteter's translations of "Pahlavi Texts," in the "Sacred Books of the East," are also suggestive.

In the following discussions, relating broadly to the ancient as well as the modern religions and philosophies of the world, and their contrasts to Christian truth, reference is made directly or indirectly to the following works: "Christ and Other Masters," by Hardwick; "The Ancient World and Christianity," by Edward de Pressense; "The Religions of the World," by Maurice; "The Aryan Witness," by Banergea; "The Unknown God," by Brace; "The Permanent Elements in Religion," by Boyd Carpenter; "Oriental and Linguistic Studies," by A.D. Whitney; "The Doomed Religions," by Reid; "The Idea of God," by Fiske; "The Destiny of Man," by Fiske; "The Races of Man," by Peschel; "Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion," by Caird; "National Religions and Universal Religions," by Kuenen; "Some Elements of Religion," by Liddon; "Outlines of the History of Ancient Religions," by Tiele; "The Philosophy of Religion," by Pfeleiderer; "Our Christian Heritage," by Cardinal Gibbons; "Hulsean Lectures, 1845-6," by Trench; "Hibbert Lectures, 1880," by Renan; "Origins of English History," by Elton; "St. Paul in Britain" (Druidism), by Morgan; "Fossil Men and their Modern Representatives," by Dawson; "Modern Ideas of Evolution," by Dawson; "Marcus Aurelius," by Renan; "Epictetus," Bonn's Library; "Confessions," by St. Augustine; "History of the Egyptian Religion," by Tiele; "Lucretius," Bonn's Library; "Lives of the Fathers," by Farrar; "The Vikings of Western Christendom," by Keary; "Principles of Sociology," by Spencer; "The Descent of Man," by Darwin; "Evolution and Its Relation to Christian Thought," by Le Conte; "History of European Morals," by Lecky; "The Kojiki" (Sacred Books of Shinto), Chamberlain's translation; "The Witness of History to Christ," by Farrar; "Anti-Theistic Theories," by Flint; "The Human Species," by De Quatrefages.