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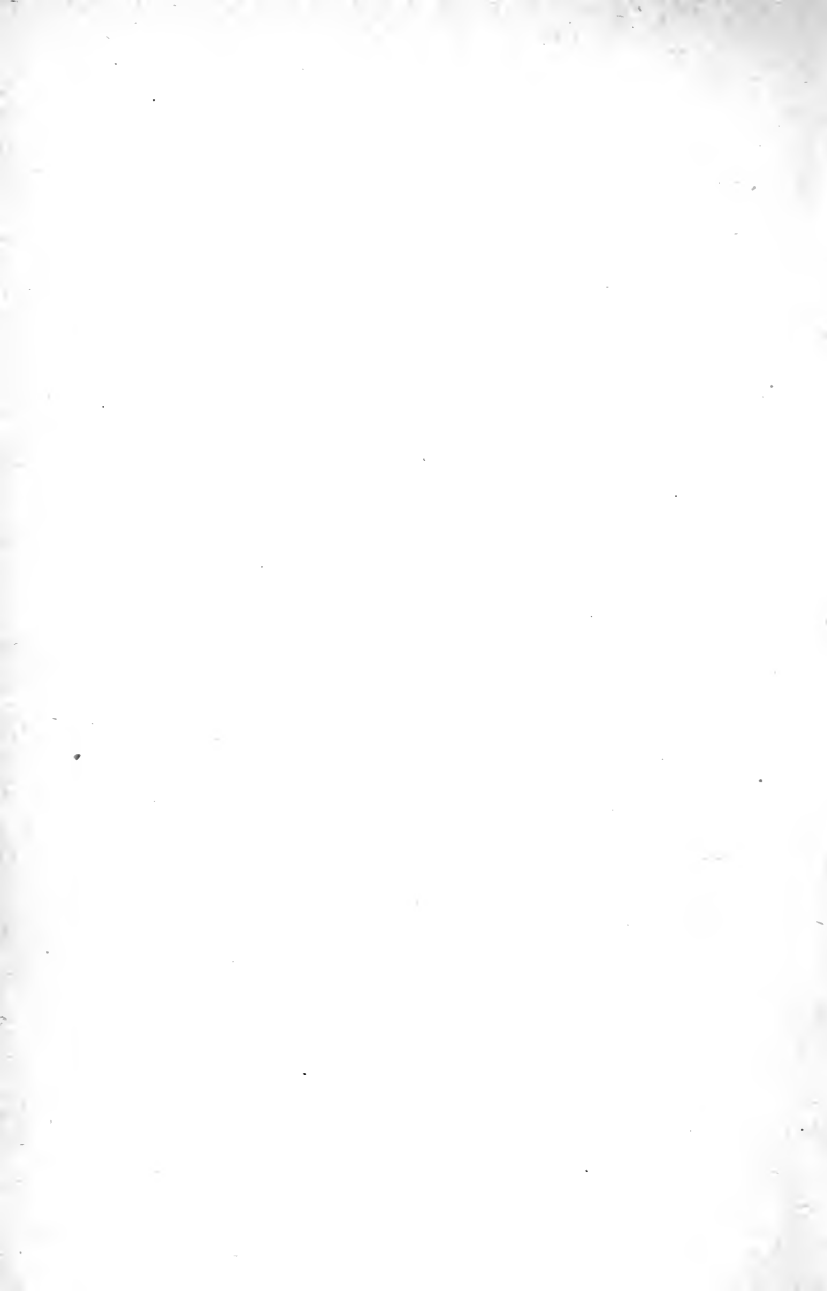
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A COMPARATIVE  
HISTORY OF RELIGIONS:

BY  
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Part II.  
LATER SCRIPTURES  
PROGRESS, AND REVOLUTIONS OF FAITH.

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# COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

## PROGRESS AND REVOLUTIONS OF FAITH.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### I.

##### AIM OF THIS PART.

WERE there no common principles pervading all religions; or were men, as religious beings, severally so different from one another, that knowledge of one man's religious nature could be no guide to that of other men, a scientific treatment of religion would be impossible. The first thing to be done in taking a comparative view is to ascertain whether or not there are such common principles in human nature, and in the conditions of human life, and if there are, what they amount to. Having reached the conclusion, as touching the most ancient historic religions, that they were, in their primary elements, one, and that they all address the same principles in human nature, we have as far as they are concerned, a clearly defined subject. On the broad field of the world that subject moves

before the eye of history ; and its progress in the lapse of ages, though going on continually, is especially to be noticed at certain great junctures.

Of such junctures five, at least, have entered so deeply into the life of mankind that general history cannot be recorded intelligibly without them. These are, first, the change whereby, out of the simple patriarchal religion, there was gradually constructed a legal system of religious observances : secondly, that whereby the legal observances were, in some quarters, adopted and inspired by a monotheistic reformation ; thirdly, that whereby in the extremity of legal bondage and degradation, a reaction of reason was created against it ; fourthly, that whereby, in the hopelessness of rational unbelief, men threw themselves back into legal bondage, or sustained a rational faith by a philosophic system ; and fifthly ; that which was effected by the introduction of Christianity.

Revolutions in religion have sometimes been productive of evil, but also frequently of good. Corruption proceeds most successfully, and to the greatest extremes by quiet development of some originally imperceptible error. A revolution of faith, in order to be successful, needs to turn upon the rectifying of some extensively recognized defect or abuse in the existing state of things. The periods of quiet progress intervening between such great junctures are of as much historical importance as the junctures themselves, but provoke the pen of the recorder less.

From one common starting point, or from a starting point as near common as is to be found, to follow

the progress of the ancient book religions, through their respective developments and revolutions, will enable us to determine whether in that progress there are principles common to all, and proper to religion alone.

## II.

### PRIMITIVE FAITH.

Religion in the oldest scriptures makes no show of philosophy. It is not presented as a system of doctrines. Nor is it limited by definitions, or burdened by ceremonies minutely prescribed and enforced. It knows nothing of a sacerdotal caste. The father is the priest of the family, the chief of the tribe, the king of the nation. Alike among the Hebrews, the Hindus and the Chinese, its expression is that of simple faith, its ordinances few, and admitting of considerable freedom, not liable to be nullified by neglect of some punctilio. The religion of the book of Genesis, of the oldest Vedic hymns, and of the Chinese records of the pious monarchs Yaou and Shun, referred by the common Chinese chronology to a date corresponding to that of the immediate predecessors of Abraham, pertain to the same common patriarchal type. Egypt's only remaining canonical book, in the successive forms in which it exists, on monuments and on papyrus, represents a similar comparative simplicity in its most ancient existing form.

So much we have already endeavored to demonstrate; but in view of succeeding changes, it is impor-

tant also to consider what account, if any, those ancient books give of the causes with which they are concerned.

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### III.

#### CREATION, AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

All history of human affairs is concerned, more or less, with the conflict of good and evil; religious history entirely. The records of faith are those of a warfare between truth and goodness, on one side, and the manifold forces of error, and wickedness, often defeated, but never exterminated, on the other. Both have their seat in the human mind; and the stake for which they contend is the field of human convictions.

As the most ancient scriptures make little or no pretention to philosophy, so neither do they all attempt to recount the order of preceding causes, and the origin of evil. Some of the ancient stories of creation and of the primitive state of man do not appear in the oldest books, but are the product of later times, or have been carried down by unwritten tradition. In the Hebrew alone is such an account given explicitly at the beginning.

Substantially, that account imports that man is not an ancient denizen of earth. He has been called into existence since earth assumed its present geological condition. And that condition on the geological scale is comparatively recent. The creation of the universe it refers to an almighty and intelligent cause existing from all eternity. The order of creation is recounted



as it pertains to the earthly and astronomical conditions of human life. The creation of man himself is then mentioned, and his state of holiness and happiness in Paradise. Then is narrated the introduction of sin and evil; not their origin. It is presumed that sin existed in another creation before it biased the heart of man. Man is tempted. From that source all the subsequent Hebrew narrative flows. And all its doctrines and observances are related to a method of removing that superinduced evil.

The Avesta is not a primitive religion; but in its oldest parts a similar origin is assigned to the universe, and an equally broad distinction made between the Creator and the creation, and a similar origin of sin in mankind. A process of creation is also recounted; but not in the oldest book, and only as far as respects the countries known to the Aryan people. And whereas the tempting of man to sin is in the Hebrew referred to the serpent, in the Avesta it is an act of the prime spirit of evil, under whom the serpent is one of many agents. In the first Fargard, or chapter, of the Vendidad, which is the Avestan book of sacred law and not the oldest of the canon, we find that history of creation and of the introduction of evil, side by side.

I. 1. "Ahura-Mazda spake to the holy Zarathustra,  
2. I created, O holy Zarathustra, a place, a creation of delight."

That paradise is called, in the 6th verse,

6. "The Airyana-vaêja of the good creation."

7. "Then Anra-mainyus, who is full of death, created an opposition to the same;

8. A great serpent and winter, which the Dævas have created."

In that evil creation of Anra-mainyus there were ten winter months, and only two of summer, a region of prolonged and dismal cold.

13. "The second and best of regions and places have I created, I who am Ahura-Mazda :

14. Gaû, the dwelling place of Sughdha.

15. Then Anra-mainyus, who is full of death, created an opposition to the same."

Thus, Ahura-Mazda goes on creating countries, beautiful and happy, of which some epithet of praise is generally given, to the number of sixteen countries, all in that quarter of the world with which the Aryan people were acquainted. Of these the fifteenth is the Hapta-Hendu, that is, the India of the seven rivers.

In the second chapter of the same book we find an account of the primal state of happiness in the reign of Yima, the golden age of Avestan tradition. Yima, the first of mankind, declines being a lawgiver. Whereupon Ahura-Mazda says to him, "Then enlarge my world, make my world fruitful, obey me as protector, nourisher and overseer of the world." This commission Yima accepts: and adds, "During my rule there shall be no cold wind, nor heat, no disease, no death." So Ahura-Mazda gave him a happy dominion, rich in good men, in flocks and herds of cattle, a productive soil and cheerful, ruddy fires; and the Creator, Ahura-Mazda, dwelt among them. Yima's blessed kingdom was upon earth, the fabulous Airyana-vaêja, the Eden of Persian Scripture. He rules over a lim-

ited number, who dwell in happiness, “exempted from all the curses of Anra-mainyus.”

These two chapters of the Vendidad are recognized by the best Avestan critics as not properly parts of the book to which they are prefixed. They are probably fragments of some more ancient one of which the rest has perished.

In the historical classic of China, there is no mention of creation, nor of anything prior to the reign of king Yaou. And as respects the origin of evil, men are only presumed to be so created that, without wise direction, they will fall into all manner of evil; that “the mind of man is restless,—prone to error, its affinity for the right way is small.”\*

Later traditions on the subject, as they do not belong to Chinese scripture, do not come under this head. The cosmological theories of mythologers and philosophers have no right to be assigned to the credit of the original national faith.

Neither do the oldest Hindu scriptures present a history of creation. They do not profess to be history at all. Yet among their oldest hymns there is something that sounds like the remnant of an ancient tradition. In the one hundred and twenty-first hymn of the tenth book of the Rig-Veda, it is said:

“In the beginning arose the source of golden light. He was the only born Lord of all that is. He established the earth and sky.” Here, however, we find not the idea of an eternal intelligence; but of a God coming into existence. In another from the same book,

\*Shoo-king, counsels of the Great Yu.

there is an account of creation, which seems like a distant echo of that given in Genesis.

“ Then there was no entity nor nonentity ; no world, no sky, nor aught above it ; nothing anywhere, involving or involved ; nor water deep and dangerous. Death was not, and therefore no immortality, nor distinction of day or night. But that one breathed calmly alone with nature, her who is sustained within him. Other than him nothing existed (which) since (has been). Darkness there was ; for this universe was enveloped with darkness, and was indistinguishable waters ; but that mass which was covered by the husk, and was (at length) produced by the power of contemplation. First desire was formed in his mind ; and that became the original productive seed, which the wise, recognizing it by the intellect in their hearts, distinguish as the bond of nonentity with entity.

Did the luminous ray of those (creative acts) expand in the middle, or above or below ? That productive energy became Providence (or sentient souls) and matter (or the elements). Nature, who is sustained within, was inferior ; and he who sustains was above.

Who knows exactly, and who shall in this world declare whence and why this creation took place ? The gods are subsequent to the production of this world : then who can know from whence it proceeded, or whence this varied world arose ; or whether it upholds (itself) or not ? He who in the highest heaven is the ruler of this universe,—he knows or does not know.”

Hindu cosmogony is abundant, but belongs to later

and speculative works, fabrications of the theoretic fancy.

The extant book of the Egyptian canon does not pertain to that subject. And the fragment of the Phenician preserved by Sanchoniathon has passed through a process of transfusion into Greek, and then of ignorant handling in the Greek, which leaves it doubtful whether it is a true representation of the original.

Sanchoniathon took his cosmogony from the Egyptian, and mentions that it was found written in the commentaries of Thoth, which "were drawn from his observations and the natural signs, which by his penetration he perceived and discovered." It seems, accordingly, to be substantially the account of creation contained in the ancient Egyptian canon, of which Thoth was held to be the principal author. That Sanchoniathon adopted it, is evidence that the writings and traditions of his own country had nothing on the subject which he deemed preferable. He claims for it no authority of revelation. It is only like some other things in the books of Thoth, inferred from "observations and natural signs." If Sanchoniathon and his Greek translator are correct, it was only an ancient geological theory. And yet there is something in it which suggests the idea of a tradition having a common origin with the Hebrew account.

"The beginning of all things was a dark and condensed windy air, or a breeze of thick air and a chaos turbid and black as Erebus, and that these were unbounded, and for a long series of ages destitute of

form. But when this wind became enamored of its own first principles, (the chaos) and an intimate union took place, that connection was called Pothos; and it was the beginning of the creation of all things. But it (the chaos) knew not its own production; but from its embrace with the Wind was generated Môt; which some call Ilus (Mud), but others the putrefaction of a watery mixture. And from this sprung all the seed of the creation, and the generation of the Universe."

"And there were certain animals without sensation, from which intelligent animals were produced, and these were called Zophasemin, that is the overseers of the heavens; and they were formed in the shape of an egg; and from Môt shone forth the sun, and the moon, the less and the greater stars."

"And when the air began to send forth light, by its fiery influence on the sea and earth, winds were produced, and clouds, and very great defluxions and torrents of the heavenly waters. And when they were thus separated, and carried out of their proper places by the heat of the sun, and all met again in the air, and were dashed against each other, thunder and lightning were the result: and at the sound of the thunder, the before mentioned intelligent animals were aroused and startled by the noise, and moved upon the earth and in the sea, male and female." He then speaks of these as the first men. A little further on, a briefer process is mentioned. Of the wind Colpias and his wife Baau, which is interpreted Night, were begotten mortal children, whose names were Phôs, Pûr and Phlox.

Such apparent narrative, in as far as it is not nonsense, is only figurative language for certain operations of nature. Thoth was one of the oldest of ancients; but this cosmogony of his would pass muster very fairly with geological theories of our own day. Berosus, an author of the time of Alexander the Great, wrote a history of Babylon. In his first book, he mentions that there were written accounts, preserved at Babylon with the greatest care, comprehending a period of above one hundred and fifty thousand years; and that these writings contained histories of the heaven and of the sea, and of the birth of mankind, as well as of the kings and their memorable actions. He adds in another place that "there was a time in which there existed nothing but darkness and an abyss of waters, wherein resided most hideous beings, which were produced of a twofold principle. There appeared men, some of whom were furnished with two wings, others with four, and with two faces. They had one body, but two heads; the one that of a man, the other of a woman." He then mentions various other monstrous creatures, of all of which, he says, were preserved delineations in the temple of Bel at Babylon. "The person who presided over them was a woman named Omoroqa, which in the Chaldean language is the sea; but which might equally be interpreted the Moon. All things being in this situation, Bel came and cut the woman asunder: and of one half of her he formed the earth, and of the other half, the heavens, and at the same time destroyed the animals within her." "All this," says Berosus, "was an allegorical

description of nature. For the whole universe consisting of moisture and animals being continually generated therein, the deity above mentioned took off his own head: upon which the other gods mixed the blood, as it gushed out, with the earth, from whence were formed men. On this account it is that they are rational, and partake of divine knowledge." But when Bel had separated the heavens from the earth, and reduced the universe to order, the living creatures unable "to bear the prevalence of light, died. Bel thereupon, seeing a vast space unoccupied, though by nature fruitful, commanded one of the gods to take off his head, and to mix the blood with the earth; and from thence to form other men and animals, which should be capable of bearing the air."

Creation out of nothing does not appear in the religion of Greece. In it the work of creation is only the shaping or producing of one thing out of another. According to Hesiod,\* the beginning was with elements in confusion and darkness. No idea is presented of a Creator, or even of an original generator of life and its forms. The nearest approach to the latter is Love, who himself comes into existence out of Chaos and Night, but without a cause. By Apollodorus† the old myths are neatly recorded and arranged. The first of all things are Heaven and Earth. To Heaven, as the father, Earth, as the mother, bore the hundred-handed, the Cyclops, and the Titans. Of the Titans the youngest was Time, who married his sister Rhea, and became ruler instead of his father. His youngest

\* Theogony, line 116 etc. † Book I. first seven chapters.



son, Zeus, by aid of Wisdom, daughter of Ocean, became ruler of the universe by the exclusion of his father, and so continued king over the third generation of gods.

One of the Titans, the more powerful class of the second generation of gods, was Iapetus, a son of Heaven and Earth. He married Asia, a daughter of Ocean, and had, among other children, Prometheus. And Prometheus, by mixing water and earth, created men. He then, beholding the uncomfortable condition of the creatures he had made, procured for them fire, which he brought down from heaven, without consent of Zeus. Prometheus is, according to this myth, both the Creator of the human race, and their Savior from suffering and wretchedness. It also represents fire as the element indispensable to the arts, and to the profitable exercise of skill and wisdom. For that benefaction to man Prometheus is punished by the most cruel tortures, being fastened to a lofty rock, while a vulture preys upon his vitals.

Other myths represent certain families of mankind as descended from the youngest generation of gods and mortal women.

The Greek was thus taught that men were made of earth by the hand of a son of a god, and also that certain families of men were descended from some of the younger generation of gods.

It would not be fair dealing with canonical books, now dead and gone, to impute to them all the nonsense of their later reporters; especially as, in some cases, only fragments of even the latter have reached us, and

that through hands which may not have done them justice ; but we are constrained to say that, from all we have of the other books of ancient scripture, there is not an account of creation which, for sobriety and scientific form, as well as for majesty, is to be paralleled with that of Genesis.

“ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

So far as to the primitive condition of matter, and the operation of an intelligent ruler in unrecorded changes.

“ And God said, Let there be light : and there was light.” “ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters ; and let it divide the waters from the waters.” “ And God called the firmament Heaven.”

So far in regard to the stellar universe.

“ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so.”

“ And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth : and it was so.”

“ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night.” “ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and the night, and to divide the light from the dark-

ness." Here we have earlier and later geological periods, with the relations of the stellar universe to the earth.

"God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, after his kind: and it was so."

"And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness." "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

God gave him to eat freely of all the trees of the garden except one. "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Only one man was made immediately of the dust of the ground. Woman was made from a rib taken out of Adam's side.

Thus man was not evolved out of something else, but, with all his proper powers, called into being by the fiat of God.

His Maker makes him in his own image, and treats him at once as a reasonable being.

He is designed for work in cultivating the earth and ruling over the creatures.

The Hebrew scriptures have an advantage above all others in this: they begin with an intelligent and

adequate cause. The Greek begins, like the Egyptian, Phenician and Babylonian, with an effect without a cause. The former begins by saying that God created; then adds that the materials called into being were, in the first instance, in a state of confusion and darkness. The Greek begins with confusion and darkness. The Hebrew says that out of that confusion and darkness God made the sun, moon and stars with the earth and all that is in it. The Greek says that Earth, Erebus and Love grew out of the confusion and darkness without any cause; and that from them all other things, even the gods, proceeded by generation. In the Hebrew view all things have an intelligent cause; in the Greek the original elements have no cause; and the first which arise are non-intelligent, namely matter and appetite. Earth in marriage with Erebus united by Love, should Love be taken, as in this myth it must needs be, for the attractive principle through whose agency matter unites and moves in masses, it is a non-intelligent cause. In the Hebrew, God creates matter; in the Greek, matter generates the gods. The Hebrew asserts the prior eternity of God; the Greek, the eternity of matter in confusion. Whatever may be said of the historical value of either, it is very clear that the logical advantage is on the side of the Hebrew. One *can* believe the Hebrew; the Greek is inconceivable. Viewed in the light of theories, the former is admissible; the latter absurd. If they are both allegories, their comparative value is not altered. If the Hebrew is defended as historical, there is nothing in the order of cause and effect to

controvert it. The cause is fully adequate to the effect ; and the effect is worthy of the cause. That the Greek should be historical is impossible. We can believe that an eternal and almighty mind shaped, or created all things according to a purpose ; we cannot believe that matter gave spontaneous birth to mind. We have no independent knowledge of either one or the other ; but the former falls in with our thinking capacity ; the latter does not. It has to be taken in some other than its apparent meaning to be consistent with its acceptance by an intelligent people.

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## SUMMARY.

1. Most is said about creation in the ancient books, and fragments of ancient books, of which the origin is referred to Babylonia and Syria.

2. The subject is touched, but more mythically, in those produced at a distance from that region of country, as in Persia, or Bactria and India, on one side, and in Greece, on the other. At the distance of China tradition about it is very childish, while the old historic classic makes no mention of it at all.

3. Clearest, simplest, and most reasonable is the account contained in Genesis.

4. The various books and fragments agree in teaching, first, that before the formation of existing things, there was a period of indefinite length, in which matter existed in a state of chaos ; second, that certain classes of animals came into being before man ; third, that man was made by a special act of a Maker ; fourth,

that he was made by uniting something of Deity with the dust of the earth ; fifth, that he is one of the latest works of creation ; and sixth, that although made holy, he soon became sinful.

Traditions of the same general purport, or of the purport of some of these heads, are to be found in some more widely dispersed branches of mankind. "In the cosmogony of Peru the first man created by the Divine power was called Alpa Camasca, animated earth." The Mandans of North America believed that the Great Spirit formed two figures of clay, which He dried and animated by the breath of his mouth, the one received the name of the 'first man,' the other that of 'companion.' A similar belief was found existing among the aborigines of Tahiti and the Dyacks of Borneo.\*

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#### IV.

##### ANTIQUITY OF MAN.

As to the number of years, which have elapsed since the creation, opinions vary ; and to expect exactitude and certainty seems hardly reasonable. Dates are given in the book of Genesis, but no chronology of the whole period it covers. No definition is given of what is meant by a year, nor in the genealogies by "begat," whether it refers to the relation between father and son, or between an ancestor and a more distant descendant, which latter is demonstrably its meaning in some Biblical genealogies, according to a

\* Lenormant, *Ancient Hist. of the East*, i., 9.

custom preserved among the Arabs, whereby direct affiliation is established "by enumeration of the most remarkable personages, omitting many intermediate steps;" nor, thirdly, are we certain that in all cases the true numbers have been preserved, as the difference between the Hebrew and Samaritan texts is, in respect to some of them, very considerable. Nor is the Septuagint, although a version, to be summarily set aside with all the weight of New Testament sanction upon it. In short, Genesis does not pretend to a scientific chronology, but simply to give the order of events, and succession of great patriarchs, with their respective years, in the history of its single theme, the divine promise. Egyptian monumental chronology does not really begin until the end of the eleventh dynasty of kings, and is not only defective, but disconnected. That of China is connected from its beginning down to the present; but it begins with 2356 or 2145 years before Christ. No other heathen nation gives a veritable date of higher antiquity. India has no ancient chronology. But the broader date in terms of geological periods need occasion little difficulty. Man certainly did not live until the earth was in a state fit for him to live upon it. If when compared with the lifetime of its individual members, the human race may seem to be very old, the fewness of its recorded steps in general progress, and its obviously expanding powers declare it still young. History knows of only three periods of progressive civilization, rounded respectively by a general maturity and decline, and is now in the progress of a fourth. And although the

area of civilization has become wider in each successive period, it does not yet cover one-fifth of earth's habitable surface, nor extend to a greater proportion of its population. Civilization, hitherto confined to a few favored lands, and colored by their peculiarities, has only within the present generation begun to grapple with the larger divisions of the globe, and rise towards universality. In the time when universal dominion has become too hopeless for ambition, the progress of the race first aims at universal refinement. Particular nations have become superannuated, and have passed away, as roses drop from the still productive stem, but the race has yet given no signs of decay. Everything pertaining to it speaks a young and growing vitality. Its dominion in nature is now greater, its knowledge broader, and its hopes more buoyant than at any previous time.

Traditional interpretation of the Hebrew scripture on creation takes the meaning to be that Adam was the first of human beings, and that from him all the rest are descended. Some interpreters have argued that other races of mankind were in existence before Adam, and adduce, as probably pre-Adamite, the Negro and Mongolian. Adam they think was created to be the father of a new race, more highly gifted than any of the preceding, and designed to be the ruler and civilizer of the rest, and teacher of the true doctrine of God. Others urge, on what they think scientific ground, that the various nations, or ethnic groups, have had their origin in separate creations.

Until science demonstrates some such theory as a



fact, it cannot be accepted as an element in history. All the phenomena of the human race can be accounted for by one creation. And ethnology in its progress, exhibits every new stage of certified attainment as a step towards proving the unity of human origin.

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## V.

## THE FALL.

According to the narrative of Hebrew scripture, when earth was prepared for their habitation, God created one pair of human beings, and placed them on a part of it most completely matured, and adapted to subserve the wants of their nature. They were created of the dust of the ground, but also made living spirits, moulded after the image of God, and honored with dominion over the earth, and its creatures. Morally they were constituted capable of enjoying the pleasures of the true and good, and of the power of dominion, or of sinking to the degradation and deformity of vice. From this original state, which was not one of barbarity, but of simple delicacy, educating industry, and communion with God, it was at their option to rise or sink. They might rise above that beginning by infinite progression in skill, in dominion, in glory and in blessedness; or they might fall unspeakably beneath it. That they remained holy and enjoyed the corresponding blessedness for a time, is the belief expressed in most of the ancient sacred books. A time when men lived on friendly terms with gods, and freely held con-

verse with them occupies a place among the incongruities of Greek tradition. The same thing appears in the Roman myth of the golden reign of Saturn; and in the clearest and fullest proportions in the Avestan scripture touching the blessed region of Airyana-vaêja, under the reign of Yima. All these assign to the period a long duration; but a belief of the contrary is indicated also. For when Prometheus had stolen fire from heaven, Zeus in revenge, ordered woman to be made out of the earth, and endowed with beauty and subtilty to work the ruin of man. Pandora, the first woman, was the first agent of evil upon earth. And that Greek myth sounds like a confused echo of the more definite statement in Genesis of the creation of Eve and of

“The fruit

Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,”

and like that, recognizes the period of man's natural holiness as very brief.

Although the fact of that spiritual fall is not recorded in sacred literature or traditions of all nations, its effects are. And subsequently to it, all man's efforts for good, if made at all, were to be commenced from a lower level. According to the Hebrew narrative, the original sinners were expelled from the Paradise, in which they were created, and driven abroad upon ruder lands, to earn their bread by toil, which was now to be painful. Their lives and those of their earliest descendants were extended to

great length. At the age of nine hundred years the first pair saw themselves surrounded by a large population.

Men increasing in vice, in proportion to that duration of life, became, in the course of a few generations, so corrupt that God is said to have repented that he had made them. In that first period of their history, men followed recklessly the dictates of their passions. The force of life was strong within them, and its long duration gave large range to their propensities, and upon the whole, though some rose to righteousness, the prevalent and final result was hopeless depravity. Much was done towards growth in knowledge and external polish, much that retains its place among the accumulated treasures of civilization; but as touching the true end of human life, and the mass of the population, we are informed of that period that it failed ignominiously.

Yet some enjoyed the Divine favor. Abel offered a worship, which seems to have expressed his faith in atonement by the shedding of blood: and to him and his offering God had respect. After the death of Abel, Cain and his descendants were the only, or principal inhabitants of the earth, until the family of Seth became numerous enough to divide the dominion with them. A godless race, the Cainites retained of the religious instruction of Adam's household perhaps only enough for the purposes of civilization, among a few who are put on record as inventors of some of the arts. The next mention of religion is made in connection with Seth, succeeding antediluvian history is only a genealogy in his family, including a brief record of the singular piety of Enoch, and terminating in Noah.

From Seth the whole existing race of mankind is descended, and only from that branch of it which found grace in the eyes of the Lord. All the other children of Adam went down under the judgment of God extinguished in the waters of the flood. And the inheritance of sinfulness continues even in the family which is saved.

Iniquity unchecked in its prevalence in that long period of perhaps not less than two thousand years, must have been productive of great misery. The tendency of sin being downwards into subserviency to brute forces, the great mass of population must have become mere savages. The language of Hebrew scripture about it is that the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence. So deeply was the writer of the original record impressed with the degree and extent of human degradation, that he repeats more than once the strong statement that "the earth was filled with violence," and adds that "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."

In the Avesta, the work of Anra-mainyus, following the good work of Ahura-Mazda, is everywhere productive of wretchedness: and the Eden of the good creation becomes, under his blasting influence, a cold wintry place of poverty and woe. The God-given warmth of the original clime had ultimately to be supplied by the discovery of ruddy fire.

Prometheus created man in happiness, but after Pandora introduced sin, all kinds of sufferings flew abroad over the world. And Prometheus was distressed to behold his creatures sunk in poverty and

disease and all the woes of savagism. And fire, and with it art, is introduced to remedy the ills. Ancient tradition in every direction, as surely as it speaks of the primal golden age, bears its vague but persistent testimony to the succeeding declension into sin and misery.

Science, which of course could not possibly discover embalmed in the soil or rocks, any remains of a brief and simple horticultural paradise, finds abundant witnesses to the long protracted state of degeneracy, when man, having lost the power of holiness, had not yet attained to that of art, and when his native dominion over the lower animals having ceased, he had to maintain the brutal struggle with them by the rudest material means. On this point there is a perfect concurrence of testimony among all the scriptures and traditions which touch the subject and the discoveries of science relating to the life of primitive man.

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## VI.

### LIFE AND DEATH, THE PENALTY AND REWARD.

The origin of sin in all mankind is thus referred to abused freedom of action in the first man. The test of obedience in the newly created pair was one addressed at once, to their sensuous, intellectual and spiritual nature. And their fall was not the beginning of evil, which is presumed to have been pre-existent; but the result of compliance with a tempter. On this last point, the Greek, Avestan, and Hebrew authorities agree.

But in the Hebrew scriptures the issue of the temptation is a matter of much higher import than in any of the rest. It gives the key-note to all the succeeding history. In that remarkable series of books, mankind is viewed as an organic whole, and the fall of the original progenitor as extending its effects to all his descendants. The first man was in his primitive state the moral and religious representative of the race, a doctrine rather implied than declared at the beginning, but unfolded in the course of the subsequent books, and brought out conspicuously in the Christian part of the series. As in Adam's persistent holiness, it is presumed, all would have partaken, so in his fall all suffered, as he himself, something called death.

Life eludes our analysis, but demonstrates itself as an activity in a peculiar, and unmistakable way. No intelligent observer confounds it with the activity of waters, winds or chemical forces. The necessary activities of life are those whereby nourishment is selected and taken in, assimilation effected, and the ends of self-perpetuation, growth and fruit are produced. Without those three there can be no life in creatures. Animal life manifests itself in an organism which selects and takes in nourishment from the materials of earth and air, and which digests and assimilates those materials, and in the building up and maintaining of the bodily frame and constitution. The separate vitality of intellect appears in observation and learning, in reflection and appropriation, and in producing the fruits of thinking, as they appear in feeling, purpose of mind and otherwise. And if we carry observation

into spiritual experience, we shall there also discover similar appearances of vital action. For that experience testifies to drawing aliment from communion with God, and the provisions of his grace; to the appropriating of these provisions; and the world beholds the fruits of growth in holiness and consistent action, the fruit of holy living.

The same series repeats itself in the different systems of which the body is composed, and in the various faculties of the mind, being the same in the minute details as in the gross. In all functions of the body, its nervous system, its circulating system, and digestive system, it is the same animal life; and in all powers of the mind, the rational, moral, æsthetic, it is the same mental life. The co-operation of both constitute the one peculiar life of the natural man; and the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, true to the analogy, represent holy men as enjoying a separable spiritual life.

Death accordingly is not dissolution, which is only a consequence of it, but simply the stopping of vital action. When, in their appropriate conditions, all the vital functions cease to act, the particular life to which they pertain, is done. When sinful man is said in scripture to be dead in sin, there is great force in the expression. He is really dead, as respects that life which sin primarily affects. He does not seek the communications of divine favor, nor care to retain God in his knowledge; that is, he does not take in the aliment of holy life; he does not appropriate to himself that whereby a soul grows in godliness, and he does not produce the actions of holy living. He presents

none of the signs of life in the region of spiritual things. Both positively and negatively the language of scripture is abundantly justified by the analogy.

Not now to be found in any man by birth or hereditary descent, those spiritual activities are still necessary to the complete man ; and their lack leaves a defect in human nature, which is felt as such by the moral and intellectual being, a defect which men in general feel needs to be made up, in order that a man's character be all that it should be. And every one in whom that lack is supplied, in however feeble degree the new activity is experienced, is constrained by his consciousness to refer it not to a native growth in himself, but to the interposition of a higher power.

Each of those vital series acts through, or coöperates with its inferior ; the mental actions through those of the body ; and the spiritual through the natural powers of the mind ; each higher grade of life retaining the service of that which is beneath it.

The first parents of mankind, we are informed in Hebrew scripture, were condemned to die on the very day in which they committed their first sin. That was a practical reality, the most melancholy of all historical facts. Something occurred in man's nature at that time which can be properly called death, and which manifested itself in the functions of his spiritual life ceasing to act. And the evil descended and could not but descend to all his posterity. For he could not transmit to them what he no longer had in himself. Any kind of life can propagate only itself. The vegetable contains no higher life than that of the vegetable.



The animal life cannot propagate the mental ; nor can either of them give birth to the spiritual. A fig tree cannot bear olive berries, nor a vine figs. By natural generation men cannot be other than discordant within themselves. They inherit a nature of which holiness is demanded by its original constitution, but in which the functions producing holy action have ceased to act. However accounted for, it is undeniable that there is found in man that defect which his nature does not seem to have originally been designed to present, but which by natural generation belongs to all the race, and which society and legislation everywhere recognize. In Hebrew scripture alone is there a full account given of its origin : and that presenting man as created holy, and with power to remain holy, but as having fallen, is a reasonable account. Anything short of what that scripture makes it will not meet all the conditions of the case.

The action of the mental and bodily life, are also distorted by this stupendous defect, and many of the feelings and aims and aspirations of the intellectual life, belonging to its original connection with the spiritual, are unintelligible to itself, or misdirected, or utterly unemployed. And such are the faculties through which iniquity works its positive effects ; and such, in their sense of want, are those upon which the mercy of God can take hold.

At the same time the moral and spiritual law under which perfect man was created, is not changed by his falling from it. Belonging to the nature of God, it cannot change. That law still demands holy

living of all moral beings. Nor does it follow that a man thus degenerate will be ignorant of God, or insensible that he is under duty to God. For these are matters belonging to intellectual and moral perception and positive instruction. But certainly a frequently recurring sense of condemnation, and of inability to be what he ought to be, must belong to the hereditary condition of man. In fact, the universal judgment of mankind upon themselves is that, by some superinduced disability, they never have, of their own effort, attained to that moral position which their nature demands; and that they need something to save them from some awful fate due to wrong-doing and wrong-being:—a most singular position among creatures.

The unity of the race is evinced in the fact that all nations have this defect, as well as the same essential features of mental and bodily nature, and that a sense of the defect pervades all national religion and legislation. It runs through all history, sacred and profane, creating the shadows which darken the page in all generations.

Moral history, from the first, bears one testimony. Knowledge of right is not so deficient as is the ability to conform to it. Barbarism is a degeneracy of knowledge, as well as of heart and practice; but even the barbarian knows that he ought to be better than he is. The knowledge of moral principle among ancient civilized heathen had a closer correspondence to the revealed standard than the forms of their religion had; and yet the practices of daily life among them were exceedingly vile, and many ceremonies of their religion

partook of the pollution. Nor is there much improvement, in respect of purity, in christian countries, among those who are not christian, except in as far as the force of christian society may constrain to greater decency. Although the fundamental principles of morals have been known all down the history of the civilized world, and additions have been made to the stores of moral instruction from time to time, there has really been no advance in practical morals, except as affected by the spirit of God upon the hearts of believers in revelation, to the renewal of them in the spiritual life.

If holiness was ever to be restored to human nature it must be by a new gift of the Creator. But a new act of creation extended to the whole race and entering into natural generation, would have been the extinction of the race as it was. The Divine plan retains the race as fallen, and provides a means of engrafting the new life into such individual souls as accept the gracious gift. Spiritual life in man, ever since the fall, has been an engrafted life, which draws its vital currents from the heart of a Saviour.

Such is the doctrine which gives its peculiar features to the Hebrao-Christian religion. The Hebrew scriptures present it as a scheme, working towards completeness, the vision and hope of prophecy; the Christian, as one completed.

A religion holding to such a fundamental principle, though it may for a time, by external circumstances, be confined to a nation or family, has no peculiar affinities to any one nation or branch of man-

kind. It addresses the universal want of all men, and will take effect upon any who believe in it. And the society of those who believe in it, wherever any number of them are congregated, constitute a community separated thereby from all the populations among whom they reside. It is a religion competent to exist in any nation, as connected with the national government, or separate from it. Firmly self-balanced, it stands by itself anywhere. The fundamental distinction which it establishes among men is that between the righteous and the wicked; the former being those who truly and spiritually belong to the society. This distinction between the righteous and the wicked, the divine call of the one and rejection of the other, is the grand theme of Hebrew and Christian scriptures, and is more strongly and broadly drawn as the history goes on.

Heathen scriptures also recognize sin, and man as guilty and liable to punishment. They contain much that coincides with Hebrew scripture in moral and religious observance, and the duty under which man is to live holily. But the point whereon they differ essentially is the doctrine of a savior. Hebrew scripture is throughout characterized by that promise of divine mercy, which has a view to the restoration of fallen man to the state of holiness. According to heathen scriptures, every man will be treated by God, or the gods, on his own merits. Sacrifice and ceremonies accurately performed, it is thought, will propitiate God. But a man must take care that he does all in the right way, and if not well enough informed for that, he

must get some better informed person to do it for him ; but the merit of the service belongs to himself, whether he does it or pays for its being done. The transaction is entirely between himself and the god whom he worships. The service may be called a mediation, but the priest who ministers in it is not a mediator. In all the oldest scriptures, the head of the family is also the minister of worship for himself and his household. And for him and them everything depends on how the god accepts their offering. A savior or the promise of a savior does not belong to their creed.

In Hebrew scripture everything turns on that promise. It is the principal object set before the mind of the believer, as it was first announced, with the occasion which led to it, its progressive enlargement, and increasing explicitness, the forms given to it, the types and ceremonies whereby it was kept before the people, and impressed upon their attention, the occasional neglect which it suffered, the miracles wrought to sustain it, the evils, which fell upon its enemies, the blessings upon those who trusted in and defended it, and its final fulfilment. In the Christian scriptures, the chief object is the present Saviour, as revealed in the flesh, his words, his works, his sufferings, the apostles whom he sent out, and the instructions he gave them to communicate to the world, and the powers with which he endowed them. In the sequel of that history, the great object has been the Gospel of the Saviour, in itself, in its achievements, adversities, conflicts, temporary checks, obstructions and victories, its advocates and enemies ; what has been said to defend, and what

to malign it, the opinions which have been formed about it, and the effect it has wrought upon the face of society, and in the hearts of men.

The characteristic of religious life in man was accordingly under the Hebrew scriptures, faith in the promise of the Saviour to be revealed; under the christian, first, faith in the Saviour as revealed in the flesh, and after his removal from earth, faith in the Saviour as revealed in the Gospel; together, in all cases, with obedience to the form of work required by the existing dispensation.

The subject is marked by perfect unity and also by onward progress in successive stages, and its attitude towards the sin that is in the world has at all times been that of antagonism. Its history from age to age is marked by its own positions in the warfare; at one time, as a single family moving with circumspection in the midst of a world fast sinking into corruption, at another, as a brave and victorious people, raising the banner of the Lord of Hosts before idolatrous and profligate nations; again as a multitude of far and widely dispersed captives, testifying before the heathen by much long-suffering and practical piety their faith in the God of Promise, and then, as a continually increasing army of confessors, contending for the faith in a Saviour revealed, it has all along been one, but progressive in fullness, in clearness, and in the extent of its influence over men.

Yet that difference between the Hebrew and other ancient religions is but little apparent in their earlier stages.

## VII.

## THE DELUGE.

In the Hebrew scriptures a large place is occupied with the account of a general Deluge, in which all mankind are destroyed, except one family. They are destroyed for their wickedness. Noah with his three sons are saved for their piety towards God. And the means whereby they are saved is an ark prepared by Noah, at God's command. By the same means, the breeds of land animals and of birds were also preserved. The flood rose above all the hills, and lasted one year and ten days, from its beginning until the earth was dried sufficiently for the imprisoned family to leave the ark.

A similar catastrophe is mentioned in some other ancient records, but not in all the oldest scriptures. Next to the Hebrew narrative, the fullest under this head is the Babylonian, as it appears in the fragments of Berossus, now enlarged by the discoveries of recent antiquarian research.

The reigns of the first ten kings of the Chaldeans collectively amounted to an hundred and twenty sari, or four hundred and thirty-two thousand years. The tenth, called Xisthrus, or Sisithrus, reigned eighteen sari.\* “In his time happened a great deluge; the history of which is thus described. The Deity Cronus appeared to him in a vision, and warned him that upon the fifteenth day of the month Dæsius there would be

\* A Sarus is three thousand six hundred years.

a flood, by which mankind would be destroyed. He therefore enjoined him to write a history of the beginning, procedure, and conclusion of all things; and to bury it in the city of the sun at Sippara; and to build a vessel, and take with him into it his friends and relations, and to convey on board everything necessary to sustain life, together with all the different animals, both birds and quadrupeds, and trust himself fearlessly to the deep. Having asked whither he was to sail, he was answered "To the gods;" upon which he offered up a prayer for the good of mankind. Then not failing in obedience, he built a vessel five stadia in length and two in breadth. Into this he put everything he had prepared; and last of all conveyed into it his wife, his children, and his friends.

After the flood had been upon the earth, and was in time abated, Xisthrus sent out birds from the vessel; which not finding any food, nor any place whereon to rest, returned to him again. After an interval of some days, he sent them forth a second time; and they now returned with their feet tinged with mud. He made a trial a third time with the birds; but they returned to him no more; whence he judged that the surface of the earth had appeared above the waters. He therefore made an opening in the vessel, and upon looking out found that it was stranded upon the side of some mountain; upon which he immediately quitted it with his wife, his daughter and the pilot. Xisthrus then paid his adoration to the earth; and having constructed an altar, offered sacrifices to the gods,



and, with those who had come out of the vessel with him, disappeared.

They who remained within, finding that their companions did not return, quitted the vessel with many lamentations, and called continually on the name of Xisthrus. Him they saw no more; but they could distinguish his voice in the air, and could hear him admonish them to pay due regard to religion; and likewise inform them that it was on account of his piety that he was translated to live with the gods; that his wife and daughter and the pilot had obtained the same honor. To this he added that they should return to Babylonia; and, as it was ordained, search for the writings at Sippara, which they were to make known to all mankind: moreover, that the place wherein they then were, was the land of Armenia. The rest having heard these words, offered sacrifices to the gods; and taking a circuit, journeyed towards Babylonia.

The vessel being thus stranded in Armenia, some part of it yet remains in the Coreyraean mountains of Armenia; and the people scrape off the bitumen, with which it had been outwardly coated, and make use of it by way of an alexipharmic and amulet. And when they had returned to Babylon, and had found the writings at Sippara, they built cities and erected temples; and Babylon was thus inhabited again.\*

Another version of the story is given by Abydenus, and quoted also by Syncellus and Eusebius. In both

\* Syncel. Chron. 28. Euseb. Chron. 5. 8.—Cory's Ancient Fragments, 29.

copies it is obviously colored by contact with Greek ideas and mythology. Nor is it certain how much of its substance is due to the knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures on the part of Berosus himself, or of the sources from which he drew, or what it may have received from the Christian authors among whose quotations we find it.

In Greece the story of Deucalion presents some of the same features. When Zeus had resolved to destroy the degenerate race of men who inhabited the earth, Deucalion, on the advice of his father, Prometheus, built a ship, and carried into it stores of provisions; and when Zeus poured rain from heaven, and "sent a flood all over Hellas, which destroyed all its inhabitants, Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha alone were saved. After their ship had been floating about for nine days, it landed, according to the common tradition, on Mount Parnassus." Other versions refer the scene of the landing to other mountains, and by a reckless inconsistency represent some people as saved by climbing various mountains. "When the waters had subsided, Deucalion offered up a sacrifice to Zeus, the helper of fugitives." Through Deucalion and Pyrrha the human race was restored, not in a natural but supernatural way, by throwing stones behind them. That last part of the story is nothing but a play upon the Greek word *laas*, a stone, in its resemblance to *laos*, people, the fancy of an ignorant etymology. The substantial story is ancient, part of it being cited by Pindar.\* It

\* Olympics ix. 64. etc.

is mentioned more fully by Apollodorus,\* and the Scholiast on Pindar. And its resemblance to the flood of Noah is obvious. Its inconsistencies mark it as having existed in several local traditions.

The story of the deluge with several of its peculiar features was found among the aboriginal Mexicans and Peruvians, though varying somewhat as told by their different nations. The tradition of the Mechoacaneses, a Mexican people, was that in the termination of the first age of the world by a universal deluge, "Tezpi embarked in a spacious vessel, with his wife, his children, and many animals, and such seeds as were necessary for the subsistence of mankind. When the Great Spirit ordered the waters to subside, Tezpi sent out of the ark a vulture. That bird, which lived on dead bodies, did not come back, on account of the great number of corpses scattered on the recently dried earth. Tezpi sent other birds, among whom the humming bird alone returned, holding in its mouth a branch with leaves. Then Tezpi seeing that the soil was beginning to be covered with new verdure, came out of his ship, on the mountain Colhuacan." †

Similar traditions, though less definite and complete, are to be found among Celtic and Slavonian antiquities, among Phrygians and Kalmucks, and were even met with by early visitors to this country among some of the barbarous aborigines.

In Egypt and other countries of Africa the case is

\* Lib. i. 7.

† Humboldt *Monuments of the indigenous people of America*, vol. ii. p. 77. as quoted by Lenormant.

different. Egypt, in her own monuments and in the royal lists of Manetho, gives no intimation that she knew of any flood, save that of her annual blessing from the Nile. In the Chinese historic classic there is much recorded about floods, destructive and far spreading; but they are due merely to the swelling of the great rivers, and are checked by the efforts of skilful and laborious engineering.

Records, or traditions of a universal deluge, are not retained in all nations, but are so widely spread among those lying near the original homestead of the race, and even by some of the furthest removed, and present, in so many places, the same peculiar features, that, whatever difficulties may exist in the case, the only reasonable explanation of them is that they all take their rise from one and the same great fact.

As to explanation of the flood, by what means it was brought about, how far it extended, how it rose, and what changes it wrought upon the upper strata of the earth, it belongs to physical geography. There are various classes of opinion about it.

First are the theories which identify it with some geological revolution, such as the immense irruption of waters, with icebergs and boulders, from the north, which closed the tertiary period.

Second, the opinion that it was a local catastrophe, limited to the part of the earth which was then the residence of the human race; but extending to all that.

Third, the opinion that it consisted of different local floods occurring in different countries at different periods, and in some countries not at all.

Fourth, those who hold to the existence of pre-Adamite races argue that the flood extended to only the settlements of the Adamite. Because the writer of that part of Genesis, speaking of the people who were "swallowed up by the deluge, calls them Haadam, Adamite mankind." The *Ish* was the earlier created physical man. The Adamite was created a nobler race to govern and civilize, and be as a god upon the earth. When it sunk into sin, it did not answer the purpose of its being, and was destroyed, to give place to the better part of it alone, which should be a ruler, but on a lower level. The Adam, not the *Ish*, suffered in the flood.

And fifth, is the traditional interpretation of Hebrew scripture, that the flood covered the whole earth, and involved in its calamity all the inhabitants of the dry land with exception of only those saved in the ark.

## CHAPTER II.

### I.

#### RELIGION AMONG THE NEW POPULATION.

WHEN the family of Noah descended from the ark, it was to find the earth changed in appearance, ploughed and furrowed by the action of the flood, and in many places still saturated with its slowly receding waters. Although the surface of the ground, as it met the eye from the resting-place of the ark, was comparatively dry, numerous lakes still glistened in the bosom of the valleys, and on the concavities of the plains, and the low country, to a large extent, was deep and uninhabitable marsh. Only upon the slopes of the uplands was the soil yet prepared for the comfortable and healthful residence of man.

Providence had accordingly assigned as the landing place, not the summit of an inaccessible and snow-covered peak, as asserted in a most absurd tradition, but some part of a mountainous country, upon the declivities of which the soil was fast taking its covering of green and tender herbage for the long-imprisoned cattle, and was already fitted for culture at the hands of man. That country is in the primitive record called Ararat. But the boundaries of Ararat, as understood when the eighth chapter of Genesis was written,

are not stated. No passage of scripture goes further than the eighth chapter of Genesis to determine its locality. The Septuagint version leaves the name unchanged; the Chaldee and Syriac render it Kardu, and the Latin Vulgate, Armenia. In the renderings, most weight is to be attached to the Chaldee. It is plain that in the Hebrew, the name Ararat was applied to the mountainous country lying on, and to the east of the Tigris, and constituting, in that quarter, the-western frontiers of the great plateau of Iran. It was as they journeyed "from the east," that the new population subsequently came to the plain of Shinar; a statement which stands in conflict with no other passage of the sacred record, and can create difficulty only to the advocates of a fable.

The tradition that the ark rested upon the summit of Mount Massis in Armenia is not difficult to account for, were it not so absurd in itself. In that mountain land to some part of which the scripture narrative undoubtedly refers, Armenia contains the highest mountains, and of these the most elevated peak is the Massis. Now as the flood was over all the earth, and the highest mountains were covered, it was assumed that the place for the ark to land must be the part which was first dry,—the top of the highest mountain in the then known world. But those who framed the tradition overlooked some serious objections, among others the difficulty of descending that particular mountain, especially for some of the animals, as horses, cows, elephants, hogs, and others not very sure-footed on steep and slippery places. Mount Massis is more than

seventeen thousand feet high,—two thousand feet higher than Mont Blanc,—covered with perpetual ice, and snow, for three miles from the summit downward by the least arduous steep, and so difficult to traverse, that until 1829, when it was ascended by Prof. Parrot, the top had never been reached within the memory of man. At that altitude, the cold would have been fatal to many of the animals contained in the ark, and without abundant fuel, every liquid would have been frozen solid. But the ark, according to the story, remained with all its cargo in that position about half a year. One would think that Noah must have regretted the departure of the flood. His easiest way of getting down would have been on the bosom of its subsiding waters.

Scripture makes no mention of a mountain called Ararat, nor of any other mountain, on which the ark rested. Ararat is always in scripture the name of a country, over the mountains of which the ark first came to rest, or on some one of which it finally landed.

Neither is the Massis called Ararat by the people of the country where it stands. That name is given it only by believers in the tradition. Prof. Parrot taking it to be scripture, admits that “an Armenian, though from the holy mountain himself, if asked about Ararat, would appear as ignorant as a European interrogated respecting Massis.” \* All traditions of the flood mention the landing of the ark on a mountain, some of them reasonably, and some of them unreasonably high; but this which has been palmed upon

\* Parrot's Journey to Ararat, Chapter vii.



Armenia, and founded upon a blunder in the reading of scripture, transcends to a degree which is ludicrous.

Noah, upon descending from the ark, built an altar, and offered a burnt offering thereon: and the Lord accepted it as worship; another feature which the traditions have retained. So much, and doubtless more, was brought from the antediluvian world. It implied the fundamental elements of all religion; namely, confession of sin, and trust for salvation in the meaning of sacrifice, and approach to God in prayer thereby. But in addition thereto, and on that basis, God now entered into a new covenant with man, the terms of which comprehended grants, commands and promises.

I. The first head pertained to man's use of the earth and inferior creatures. First the grant of dominion in the earth was renewed; but was henceforth to be exercised over animals by inspiring them with fear; second, permission was given to use animal food, but not with the blood.

II. The commands pertained to the preservation of the human race.

First, the command to multiply and replenish the earth was renewed.

Second, a special declaration was issued that every man should be held under obligation to care for the life of his neighbor, and defend it against violence.

Third, sentence was pronounced against the shedder of human blood, that by man should his blood be shed.

III. The promises were such as to give confidence in the order of nature.

First, God promised not to curse the ground any more for man's sake :

Second, not to smite again all living creatures, as had been done in the flood : and

Third, that the order of the seasons should continue undisturbed.

IV. And finally, God pointed to the rainbow as a pledge, declaring that as sure as that inevitable sign appeared in the cloud, so sure was the promise that a flood of water should not again destroy all the inhabitants of earth.

God made known his will by revealing himself to the patriarch, who thereby became the depositary of divine truth, and its prophet. In offering sacrifice Noah performed duties which were acceptable to God. He was therefore also its legitimate priest. And being the head of the race descended from him, as to its civil government, the patriarch united in himself all the three offices of religion, instruction and government, at once priest, prophet and king.

The covenant was one in which the long suffering of God was more fully manifested as added to the promise made to Adam after the fall ; and for man it introduced a state of larger toleration and privilege ; and it was made with Noah for all the world of its day. The circumstances, in which the new history opens, are more favorable for another reason, that the abandoned race of Cain exist no more. Mankind recommenced with one pious family brought up in the knowledge of the Lord God of heaven and earth. There was no plurality of gods, nor diversity of creed

or of worship in the family of Noah. The curse pronounced upon Canaan was not for any dissent from the faith of his grandfather recorded against him, though why upon him rather than upon his father or any other of his father's children is not mentioned. The occasion which led to it was a moral not a religious fault.

As appears from the language of the ancient record, the first residence of man, after the flood was to the eastward more or less directly, of Babylon, and in a mountainous country. And it would seem that they had remained there for a considerable time. For upon the migration into Shinar, they are mentioned in terms which imply a large population. Inhabitants of the dry countries had no motive to tempt the unhealthy marshes until their numbers became inconveniently great. Scripture states explicitly that the settlers of Shinar, that is of the two rivers in Babylonia, and who were both Hamitic and Semitic, came there from the east. And otherwise it is determined that the Japhetic settlements set off from the same quarter, namely, the highlands, or tableland of Iran. In this respect, the Hebrew narrative is entirely consistent with itself, with primitive traditions of other countries and with ethnological science.

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## II.

### THE DISPERSION.

From the words applied to the journeyings of the family of Noah, it appears that the state of society, in the period which intervened between their

descending from the ark and their settling in Shinar, was nomadic. Upon the pastures of the uplands they had pursued that kind of life, which is almost unavoidable there. But when in the course of their removals, they came upon the broad and fertile plains of the lower Euphrates and Tigris, they determined to migrate no more. Still, in such a low country, the fear of another deluge rose before them, and in building their city they conceived also the design of erecting a mountainous tower, whose top should reach to heaven, and by which they should also make themselves a name. The original bond of society had not yet been broken; they were still one family of one language and one dialect. Nor was that original unity dissolved, that original tongue divided, until the opening of the fourth or fifth generation, if not later.

Most of the colonies, by which that unity was broken up, either took the names of the patriarchs who respectively headed them, or at a later time reflected their own names back upon their founders. In some cases the names thus given, remain with little change to the present. Asshur is still known in history as Assyria; the country chosen by Canaan and his followers long retained his name, or that which he derived from it, and the founder of Egypt was remembered only by that under which his country rose to fame.

The dispersion was occasioned as well as attended by a growing diversity of languages. Unity of purpose was thereby broken up, and people grouped themselves into parties, according as they understood one

another most readily. In the first embarrassment and alarm created by diverging languages, men could not conceive of the devices, which since have been adopted for obviating the difficulty. They could see in it only the purpose of an angry God to separate them and break up their common designs. Under the impulse of that mysterious dread, most of them withdrew from the place marked by divine wrath, and that in different directions, grouping themselves according to their dialects. Some, in pursuit of arable lands, followed the rivers into northern Assyria, Mesopotamia and Armenia; others, seeking pasture for their cattle, spread more extensively over the country eastward and westward, into Persia and Media, and central Asia on one hand, and into Syria and Arabia, on the other, while various groups pursued the coasts of the adjoining seas. As to the three great branches of mankind and the line of their dispersion, the meaning of the sacred writer is put beyond doubt by some of the names. That the Hamitic went chiefly to the south, south-east, and south-west, appears from the names Cush (Ethiopia) Canaan, and Mizraim (Egypt), being classed among the countries settled by sons of Ham. And that the writer refers the Japhetic to the east, north and north-west is equally plain from names of subsequent historical nations, Madai, Gomer, (Kumr, otherwise, Kimber), Meshech, (Mosc) and Javan, (Ion); that is, the people among whom the Medes were anciently the most conspicuous, the group, namely on the plateau of Iran, the Celtic races, among whom the Kimbri were anciently eponymous, the people who gave their name to Moscovia, and Mos-

cow, and the Ionians, by which name the Greeks were known in the east.

The two larger divisions of the race were those of Ham and Japhet. The former retained possession of Babylonia, occupied Syria and Egypt, with the intervening deserts of Arabia, and pushed on towards Ethiopia and the interior of Africa. The latter held the broad original homestead of Iran, and extended gradually northward and eastward, on one hand towards India and China, and on the other, by way of the northwest into Europe. Comparatively small, the Semitic branch of the race had its abode chiefly within the settlements of Ham and regions lying between those of Ham and Japhet. But for at least a thousand years, the Shemites were of little note among the powers of the time. It was by the sons of Ham that the earliest civilization of the post-diluvian world,—that which had its origin in the religion of Noah—was conducted.\* The family of Japhet wandered far away, lost many of the features of civilized life, and remained unrecorded for long succeeding centuries. Many subdivisions of the race are lost to the eye of history entirely; others re-appear at a great distance of time; but whenever an historical view of the world, or of any part of it, is obtained, its ethnological character and traditions of migration correspond in the main to the record of dispersion in the tenth chapter of

\* When the tenth chapter of Genesis was written, they were the most important branch of mankind. The author of that treatise gives as much room to his account of their settlements as to those of all the rest of mankind.

Genesis, the most valuable ethnological treatise of ancient times.

Such, in brief, is the Hebrew outline of primitive patriarchal history. None of the other sacred books brings a narrative down from so early a date.

Of ancient testimonies, next after the Hebrew, the historic classic of China is the clearest. It does not extend to an antiquity equal to the tenth chapter of Genesis; but there is about it, as well as in it, something which challenges comparison at this point.

According to the Hebrew, the dispersion of mankind took place immediately after the diversity in languages began. Those groups which remained on the plains of the Tigris and Euphrates, and those which removed to the west and southwest, formed their new languages on a trilateral basis. The colonies which went to the east, and afterwards branched off in various directions to the northeast and northwest, are found in the use of languages constructed of monosyllables. Many of them became polysyllabic to a high degree, and differed among themselves in that some combined their syllables more organically than others, but whatever the structure, loose or compact, it is built up entirely with monosyllables, which in the meanings they retain bear more or less distinct traces of having once been in use as separate words. It would appear, accordingly, that the languages of that class have at one time been entirely monosyllabic, or that they have grown out of a more ancient monosyllabic tongue. The Chinese retained, at the date of its earliest books, as it still retains, a monosyllabic vo-

cabulary and grammar, such as must have belonged also to the rest of the eastward lying nations, until after the process of confusion had made some progress among them.

If soon after the confusion of languages, the Chinese emigration had moved off on their long march through central Asia, they would have carried with them a language certainly nearer the purely monosyllabic than many of their eastern neighbors afterwards constructed, in fact, a language just such as they have always had and have to this day.

Secondly, from the oldest parts of the historic classic it appears that the Chinese people entered the land they occupy by coming from the northwest, and descending the valley of the Whang-Ho; on the north side of which their strength still rested until a date later than that of the first events recounted in the classic. If they did come from that original home of nations speaking languages on the monosyllabic basis, namely the hill country of Western Persia, by successive removals through the great gateway of the Oxus and Jaxartes, and thence across the central plateau of Asia, their entrance into China would have been by the route on which they actually first appear in that land. There the Chinese people, to whom the classics belong, found a race of earlier settlers whose language, if not the same, was of the same structure. For that people subsequently blended with the Chinese, without in the least degree altering the monosyllabic structure of their language.

Thirdly, the patriarchal government and style of



worship are as like those recorded in the eleventh and some of the succeeding chapters of Genesis, as if they had both sprung from a common origin, at a very near remove. The ancient religion of China, as it appears in the earlier parts of the Shoo-King, was of the same type with that observed among the descendants of Noah on the banks of the Euphrates; but has no trace of acquaintance with the call of Abraham, nor of the type of language which by that latter date had arisen in Western Asia. There is reasonable probability that the Chinese were among the earliest to set out from the original community of the whole, carrying with them the Noachic style of worship, of government, and of instruction, and a language very near to the original type of human speech among the eastward emigrating tribes.

Of the Aryan race in the earlier time, when they all lived on the plateau of Iran, we have no history, no literature, but in the languages spoken by their descendants there have been discovered monuments more enduring and more reliable than those inscribed upon granite. Among many other things touching their way of life, arts and occupations, we learn that "they worshipped the heaven and the earth, the sun, fire, water, wind; but there are also plain traces of an earlier monotheism, from which this nature-worship proceeded."

If the comparative tables in Bunsen's fifth volume of Egypt's place in general history are correct, and one third of the old Egyptian words in Coptic literature are Semitic, and a tenth part Indo-European, that is

Aryan, there is a probability that the Egyptian people who were Hamites, had continued to be members of the one community in which the Semitic, Hamitic and Aryan still lived in each other's neighborhood, for some time after the division of languages began.

We have no knowledge of Greece at so early a date. But her language is Aryan, and her religion, when it does appear, consists of elements both Aryan and Egyptian.

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### III.

#### NOACHIC TYPE OF WORSHIP.

With a full knowledge of the foregoing religion did the sons of Noah begin the new history of the world. So much was implied in the terms of the covenant then made. In as far as they were pious men, they shunned the vices, to the sight or knowledge of which they had been accustomed; but all the elements of social culture, with which they began the new world they of course brought with them from the old.

In terms of the Hebrew scriptures the period which falls under the covenant with Noah was marked by certain features belonging to all nations from China to Egypt, as far as we know about them. Its religious services were sacrifice and prayer, observed in the utmost simplicity. The duty of conducting the religious exercises rested with the head of the family, the chief of the tribe, or the king of the nation; and the same person received the expression of the divine will and

made it known to others. He was at once the priest, the prophet and the ruler of his people. On the basis of monotheism it presents everywhere a more or less advanced belief that God exists in many persons. It had some variation of meaning, no doubt, to different minds, but in all its principal elements the same worship was observed in the same way, addressed to the same object, and mediately to some of the same divine persons, and by men of the same rank in society, among the Chinese while yet on the upper Whang-Ho; among the Aryan race before they had separated or sent out their European or Indian colonies, among the herdsmen of Mesopotamia and Canaan, among the farmers of Shinar and Egypt, and among the tradesmen and merchants of Sidon. It is the patriarchal style of religion and culture as it is presented by the Hebrew scriptures in the family of Noah.

The subsequent course of ancient religious history divides itself into three periods: first, that of which we are now speaking, under the covenant with Noah, marked everywhere by such features as in Genesis are assigned to the Noachic society and religion. In Hebrew history this period is subdivided by the call of Abraham, with whom a new and special covenant is made, forming the starting point of Hebrew history proper.

The second period is characterized by the development of the patriarchal worship into a legal ritual, and more definitely marked by the uprising in certain quarters of reformers whose aim was to reclaim religion from its increasing errors and bring men back to more

intimate communion with God. Without being able to assign a precise date to that reformation, it may be enough to say that it occurred somewhere about fifteen hundred years before Christ.

The third period commenced in Western Asia in the downfall of the Hamitic and Semitic monarchies and the rise of the Japhetic, and in China and India with great religious revolutions not less momentous.

As far as patriarchal history is the history of the human race, the Hebrew narrative pursues it no further than the dispersion. Its proper subject being the history of the promise, and the progressive unfolding of the promise, it abandons everything which becomes disconnected with that line of progress. Maintaining its own connection by a genealogical list, it passes rapidly over a long series of ages, to dwell fully upon the family to which the next revelation of promise is made. Hebrew history furnishes in the main the best guide to universal history and chronology, but only incidentally. In its genealogies, not chronology, but connection of family descent is the object in view: and when events in the history of the promise do not require it, nothing is said of the state of the world. During those periods when error reigned to such an extent as to almost extinguish purity of worship, Hebrew narrative is silent, and satisfies its own conditions in simply keeping up the connection by a list of the more important names in the ancestry of him in whom the next stage of its progress opens. Thus, from Seth to Noah, the first great declension; from the dispersion to Abraham, the declension under the

Noachic covenant ; from Joseph to Moses, that under the Abrahamic, and from Malachi to Christ, the depth of declension under the Mosaic, are all gaps in the history, bridged over by their respective genealogical lists ; the lists regularly standing at the head of the succeeding epoch of revelation and revival of promise. Every people which alienated itself from the interests of that promise was dropped from the record. The family of Cain, after Lamech, the descendants of Ishmael, and of Abraham's sons by Keturah, the ten tribes when they had become irretrievably corrupt, and the captives of Judah, who preferred a heathen prosperity to a restoration of their nationality and the hope of its promise, all disappear from the narrative, which follows faithfully and safely the footsteps of its own invariable theme.

Natural knowledge Hebrew scripture leaves to be acquired by natural means. Addressing itself to the common understanding of men in the common diction of men, it never turns aside from its subject into either antiquarian or scientific digression.

## CHAPTER III.

### INNOVATION.

#### I.

##### POWER OF EXTERNAL NATURE OVER MAN.

THE first dispensation of Divine mercy, after the flood, was committed to all mankind. In the order of nature, one can see no reason why it should not have been preserved in its integrity among the Aryan nations and the Chinese, as well as among the people of Palestine. As matter of fact, we have testimony that it did maintain its identity, in all those quarters, up to the verge of the earliest heathen scriptures. That testimony is the scriptures themselves. The truth of the Hebrew statement is abundantly sustained by the type of religion, which those ancient books present by the more or less advanced innovations upon it, and in the nature of these changes.

Innovation made its way among all, but among some with greater rapidity, and to greater length than among others. About the time of Abraham, all nations of whom we read had, without altering the type of religion, introduced more or less variation upon it, not in the way of diminishing ceremonial, but of adding. At the nearest remove were the nations of Canaan and the Chinese; further off were the Aryans,

especially the Hindus; and most advanced were the Egyptians and Babylonians.

Debasement of the primitive idea of God was first brought about by the disposition of man to yield to the influences of nature upon him, and to pay extravagant honors to the memory of the great and powerful of his own kind. The most generally pervading, and continually present was the former; the latter gradually increased in process of time.

Before man had become sensible of his own control over much of the material world, its effect upon his imagination, and consequently upon his style of life, must have added largely to the bounds of its necessary dominion over him. Everything, as it still is to childhood, was wonderful, the working of the presence of a hidden intelligence. Life and death, vegetation and decay, day and night, mountains, rivers, groves, and the vast and ever restless sea, the moon, the stars, and above all, the great and glorious sun, rising every morning from beneath the earth like the conflagration of a world, and spreading day around him, in his career through the sky, until he went down in the blaze of a splendor like that in which he rose, inspiring life by his presence and seeming half to withdraw it at his departure, affected the early ages of mankind with amazement and admiration. And fire, in its miraculous springing into intense and resplendent existence and destructive activity from apparent nothing, and its equally wonderful vanishing, when its food was devoured, appeared to them like a visitor from an unseen world. It impressed them with gratitude by the com-

fort it conferred, in the absence of the sun, by its power to soften the hardest metal, and become their servant in the arts; and with terror, by its desolating and maniac fury, when transcending their control, it avenged itself of the servitude. So natural must it have been for unscientific man to fall into the worship of such objects, that nothing but the actual theophany of a spiritual Creator, to whom all belonged, as the workmanship of his own hands, would seem to have been able to lift the adoration of man above the wonders of the world in which he was placed. And if we find, as we do, that many centuries after the flood some still worshipped the Creator in truth, we may infer that primitive revelation had been very deeply impressed upon their faith, and that they had been quite as tenacious of it as later generations proved to be of the Gospel of Jesus. But notwithstanding every precaution, it necessarily occurred that the language in which man spoke of God was largely drawn from imagery of the natural world. And, from the very lack of other words, such figures retained their place as expressing simple ideas in his speech.

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## II.

### INCIPIENT MYTHOLOGY.

Of all natural objects, the earliest to be accepted, and the most extensively used to express the conception of Divine glory was the Sun. Into that practice all the ancient historical nations of the Orient seem to



have fallen, earlier or later, for a longer or a shorter time. So prevalent was the practice in the second millennium before Christ that all the education and national institutions of the Jews, expressly designed to counteract it, were only partially successful.

Such a figurative representation of God once adopted, the course of degeneracy was inevitable, when men were left to follow their natural bent. The symbol, in the course of time, took the place of the thing signified and became God in the belief of the common worshipper.

That last step when firmly taken, rendered inevitable in the progress of thought, the conception of a duality of eternal powers, or a plurality of subordinate deities. The sun is not always in the heavens. He divides the time with darkness. And the association of darkness with evil, is as natural to the mind of man as that of light with good. Thus the doctrine of a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness, being respectively also those of good and evil, took its place in the theology of some countries. Others went further and to the sun added the moon and stars, or some of the stars, as inferior gods, ruling the heaven during his absence, and conceiving of the moon as feminine. Thus the ancient Syrians had their king and queen of heaven and the Greeks their Helius and Selene.

It was entirely in accordance with this turn of mind to add also certain objects upon earth, as representing the Deity there. Of all things upon earth the most wonderful, most like the work of a present crea-

tor were fire, generation, and vegetable growth : and symbols were chosen accordingly.

As to hero worship, it does not appear that men were, in the days of ancient simplicity, deified during their life-time. Only when great benefits were thought to have accrued from their labors or their wisdom, and a long lapse of years had removed their weaknesses and errors from view, could men be so elevated in the opinions of their fellow-men. The servile adulation, which in long subsequent ages could confer apotheosis upon a living monarch, belongs to an entirely different category. The proto-patriarchs, heads of the great branches of the race, were the first to enjoy that questionable honor, whereby their historical identity was merged in mythological fable. For many ages honored as the founders of their respective ethnic groups, as their actual place in tradition became less clearly understood, and the ideas of Deity more mixed with those of its created representatives, they were gradually assigned to a place among objects of worship. Thus Ham, Phut, Japhet and Asshur, in after times, were almost entirely lost sight of in the array of divine attributes ascribed to them by their respective descendants. Deification of men was not a large element of ancient polytheism, and the belief that it was such belongs to a date when mythology was much degraded. In the Oriental world the greatest of the gods were throughout the whole of what we have defined as the ancient period, taken from the great objects of nature ; but latterly disguised by combination with meaner things.

In some cases hero worship merged in nature worship. While the name of the hero was retained, the symbols were natural objects, and his attributes were drawn from nature. Asshur the proto-patriarch of Assyria, was regarded in that country with the highest religious veneration, but his common symbol was the circle, or sign of the sun.

In this process, the earlier part of the transition from pure monotheism is marked by bold figurative language touching objects of nature; much of it not more than a vivid poetic imagination might indulge in without blame, but also sometimes carrying the personification so far as to amount to idolatry; the two being often so combined in the same production, that it is difficult to say which was uppermost in the poet's thought.

To this first stage many of the early hymns of the Veda belong. Others present the features of a more matured mythology. The latter stage is that which appears on the monuments of Nineveh, with the addition of an array of subordinate mythological beings. The oldest monuments of Egypt testify to a still further progress in the same march of idolatry. And the ancient Chinese classic identifies the one only God, whom it recognizes, with the heaven in which he was thought to dwell.

Civilization has its effect upon the degree of faith in a creed, but is no security for truth in its doctrines, or for purity in its practice. The noblest religion has been found in a nomadic family, and the basest superstition established by law in the seats of fashionable

culture. Herdsmen of Mesopotamia and of Iran worship the unseen God with sacrifice and song and prayer, the learned Chaldeans seek him through images and multiplication of rites, while the boasted wisdom of Egypt sinks the lowest into a degrading polytheism. And yet the history of religion is bound up in the heart of the best society. The history of the best religion is the history of the highest and truest civilization.

The settlers on the Nile, those in Syria, on the Euphrates and Tigris, and in China, the herdsmen of Arabia and of Iran, all alike at one time, adored one God, whom they believed to be resident in heaven, and thence to exercise his sovereignty over all. But the Aryan branch contemplated him as manifesting himself in nature, and described natural objects as present Deity; the Chinese thought of him as a paternal power in heaven, and associated his worship with the duty of veneration for parents; while the nations of western civilization conceived of deity as embodied in human nature, and through human nature as extending to the rest of the animate and to the inanimate creation. The original error of the Aryan was almost pure nature worship; of the Chinese, an idolatrous veneration tending to worship of ancestors, not without some elements of nature worship; while in the west of Asia it was the tendency to pay divine honors to the proto-patriarchs, and to ascribe to them as gods, all the various operations of nature. The Aryan finding God everywhere in the natural world, imperceptibly merged into a pantheism which in its

early history is hardly distinguishable from the doctrine of divine omnipresence, and is the fountain of much fascinating poetry; the Chinese sank into a prosaic worship of their deceased parents, and the identification of God with the visible heaven, while the Egyptian instituted a process of religious thought which, from blending the divine with the human, and holding to the community of human souls with the brute, led down not only to polytheism, but also directly to the basest idolatry.

In the history of Greek religion there are several stages. The earliest on record was a pure nature worship, in which the divine beings were all symbolical of things in nature; and their actions were simple allegory. Thus, Chaos and Night were half personifications of the confusion and darkness, in which it was believed that the materials of the universe lay before the earth came into shape. Such also were Heaven, Earth, Erebus, Love, Æther, Day, Sky, Mountains, Sea, Ocean, Helius (the Sun), Selene (the Moon), Aurora (the dawn), and their offspring, streams, woods, seasons and various products of the soil. In that stage, the mythology of Greece was of the same class with that of the Hindu, in the Rig-Veda. Its gods were the same, and some of the names were identical. During their long migration from the home of their Aryan forefathers, the Hellenic people had retained at least the substance of their Aryan religion. Something had been added, and something had been lost, before they settled on the shores of the Ægean; but the system was still the same, and tradition, as late as

the time of Hesiod, retained the true Vedic pantheon, with little change, except in some of the names. Varuna and Ouranus are identical, so Eös and Ushas differ little in sound, and nothing in meaning, the supreme name Dyaus is one with Zeus, and the compound Dyaus-Pitar with Zeus-pater, the Latin Jupiter. And in both systems alike it is clear that powers of nature are regarded as manifestations of divine attributes; that in or behind all natural things resides the efficiency of godhead.

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### III.

#### RITUALISM.

The figurative language used of God and the symbols of his attributes, in process of time, took the place of their proper meaning in the minds of worshippers. Sacrifice became a ceremonial effectual in itself, and prayer and praise, acts of piety, esteemed as good works, acceptable with God, and making the offerer acceptable, if rightly performed. Accordingly, the utmost importance came to attach to rightly composed prayer, and to the right pronounciation of every word of the prayers, which had been accepted as the best for each occasion, to the right attitudes of body, the right kind of offering, and the right juncture of time, until everything became fixed in a sacred and immovable formula, in regard to which the slightest mistake might be fatal to the whole service.)

The regularly ordained formalities of the liturgical

Vedas, compared with the simpler family sacrifices of some of the ancient hymns, will mark a step in that progress : and still more fully the informal sacrifices in the open air observed by Abraham and by Jacob, as compared with the elaborately prescribed ceremonial of a later period, in both Canaanite and Hebrew history. The same kind of progress will be perceived upon comparing the religious services, mentioned in the early part of the Shoo-king, with the subsequent state ceremonial ; or the simple out-door service of an ancient Greek chief with the sacerdotal ceremonies afterwards indispensable at a Greek temple.

Ritual precision multiplied the duties of worship by conferring vital importance upon every particular. Such carefully composed prayer, and adoration, whether committed to writing or to memory, laid the foundation of a sacred literature. The worshipper who felt himself unequal to the task of making his prayers, and performing the ceremonies of worship, as the ritual demanded, was constrained to employ the services of one better instructed than himself. And such were really the circumstances in which many of the Rig-Veda hymns were composed, and which gave rise to the fact that, in most cases, the oldest scriptures of a nation were prayer-hymns. A person eminently gifted in preparing such, had many applications. In some cases that gift was continued from father to son, or to grandson ; thus giving rise to the idea of a prophetic class of persons peculiarly near to God, and enjoying access to his favor, and to a knowledge of his will.

In course of the same progress, a sacerdotal class

became necessary, a body of men who were accurately versed in every punctilio of the service, and could perform every ceremony in its proper place and way, and recite the words aright. Accordingly as all the older scriptures are simply devotional, or historical so the next oldest are ceremonial. Thus the Yajur-Veda and Sama-Veda as compared with the Rig-Veda; the Yasna and Vispered as compared with the Gathas; the Shoo-king as compared with the Le-Ke, the book of Genesis, as compared with Leviticus. And with the growth of a sacrificial liturgy, a sacerdotal class became indispensable.

In the more remote antiquity there were no temples. Men, who believed in God, believed in his presence everywhere, offered their worship at their own residences, and erected their altars on the open ground, or on a journey, wherever they happened to spend the night. An increasing sense of being under the wrath of God, and of distance from God, an impression that earth and time, as connected with man, are unholy, in course of time, wrought the belief that God will not come near to listen to the solicitations of man, except in times set apart as holy, and upon consecrated ground. An area designated by some consecrating ceremonies, constituted the first temple. It was merely a sacred spot in the field, and in the air about it. To surround that spot with a cord, or some other visible boundary, then to erect a tent within its limits for convenience of the person conducting the worship, were historical steps in the history. Thus the Hebrew patriarchs built altars at various places, but we nowhere read of



them consecrating temples of any kind. Temples first come before the eye of history in heathen not Hebrew records, among the monuments of Egypt and Assyria. Men who walked with God everywhere as did Abraham, and received manifestations of his presence by ministry of angels, and visions of the night, were not likely to be the first to conceive of that compromise with a distant Deity, which is the idea of the temple.

The same feeling which led to the multiplication of gods from the symbols of divine attributes, suggested the propriety of sacrificing different animals to those different gods, according to their respective characters; and, in the next place, to look upon the victims themselves as sacred, and entitled to share in the divine honors. The bull and the horse were in several countries held sacred to the sun; the sacrifice of the latter was the highest of all solemnities; but that of the former was the most commonly offered. As the sun-god was the chief object of worship, so the ox became in all countries, from China to Ethiopia, the most sacred of animals in himself, a symbol of Deity, and in some places an object of adoration.

## CHAPTER IV.

### FURTHER PROGRESS OF ETHNIC RELIGIONS.

#### I.

##### IN CHINA.

WHEN the black-haired people first wended their way down the valley of the Whang-Ho, they brought with them a religion and customs remarkably similar to those presented in the book of Genesis. That religion, as it appears in their own most ancient literature, taught belief in the God of heaven, whose worship, in prayer and sacrifice, was elevating and purifying to the affections. And those who observed it best were the wisest and the best of men. It was higher than mere morality, but comprehended good morals, as holiness comprehends righteousness. Question may be raised about the coloring or details of the earliest parts of the historic classic, which treat of the reigns of Yaou and Shun, but not of the principal facts; to which head the type of their religion belongs. The identity of that religion, in its obvious features, with that of the Hebrew patriarchs, goes far to establish the correspondent antiquity of both.

Religious history in China from that period down to Confucius exhibits fewer changes than the corresponding history in western Asia, within the same

time; and yet the changes which are recorded manifest the same general tendency of mind. The decline which occurred in and under the Hea dynasty, who were the successors of King Yu, about 2180 B. C., was in practical morals and neglect of religion, rather than in perversion of doctrine or observance. And yet such iniquity in high places, and so long continued through several reigns, at different periods, during the more than four hundred years of that dynasty which succeeded its second King, could not fail to work an injurious effect upon the people. And religion must have suffered in the corruption of morals. Such is the evil distinctly implied in the Song of the Five Sons, already in the first of those wicked reigns.

“ There was the prince of T'aou and T'ang,  
 Who possessed this country of K'e,  
 Now we have fallen from his ways,  
 And thrown into confusion his rules and laws.”

Again in the same song of lamentation :

“ Brightly intelligent was our ancestor,  
 Sovereign of the myriad states.  
 He had canons, he had rules,  
 Which he transmitted to his posterity.  
 The standard stone, and the equalizing quarter  
 Were in the imperial treasuries.  
 Wildly have we dropt the clue he gave us,  
 Overturning our family and extinguishing our sacrifices.”

The same thing is implied in Chung-hwuy's announcement to the reformer T'ang by whom the degenerated dynasty was overthrown, when he says that “ Heaven gives birth to the people with such desires

that without a ruler they must fall into all disorders," and that "the sovereign of Hea had his virtue all-obscured, and the people were as if they were fallen amid mire and charcoal." And yet it appears that part of the people disapproved of the disorders proceeding from the example of their monarch. In the Hebrew narrative most mention is made of the effect of error upon the state of religious observances; in the Chinese upon practical morals. But the two are always in their very nature connected. Throughout the Chinese historical classic the observances of worship occupy small space, as compared with moral rectitude. Religion is generally adduced as it shows itself in the conduct of men. "He who would take care for his end, must be attentive to his beginning. There is establishment for the observers of propriety, and overthrow for the blinded, and wantonly indifferent. To revere and honor the way of Heaven is the way ever to preserve the favoring regard of Heaven."

Nevertheless, the work of the reforming monarch, T'ang, who overthrew the corrupt Hea dynasty, and set in operation the means of rectifying the many abuses it had introduced, was one that concerned religion as well as moral conduct and wise government. The sacrifices of the national religion had been neglected, and disregard of the will of God had entered largely into the conduct of men. There is no sign that the style of the national religion was altered, but the observation of it was neglected.

There was an ancient Chinese mythology, but it existed subordinate to their monotheistic faith, as the

Hebrew belief in angels might have co-existed with the worship of Jehovah, had sacrifice to them been practiced. It occupies but small place in the historic classic. The worship of ancestors is of more common occurrence, belonged from the earliest date to the national religion, and was the style of error into which it was most prone to decline.

The emblematic figures of the ancients, the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the dragon, and the flowery fowl, which are depicted on the upper garment, the temple-cup, the aquatic grass, the flames, the grains of rice, the hatchet, and the symbol of distinction, which are embroidered on the lower garment, which with the five colors, were painted or embroidered on the sacrificial robes of the emperor, had no doubt symbolical meanings in relation to religion; but they were also signs of rank, and were not used as objects to be worshipped.

The directions concerning music, given in the fourth of the books of Yu, had probably something to do with temple service, but they are mentioned in relation to the civil government. The disorder, into which these observances fell, belongs probably to the common head of neglected religion, with which the later kings of the Hea dynasty are charged.

Whatever may have been the nature and extent of religious declension in that time, the work of the reformer T'ang was as much a religious as a political reformation. It consisted first of all in restoring the spiritual and moral service of the one God; secondly, in setting the example of supreme and humble regard

to his will in all things; and thirdly in punishing the evil-doers. Outside of that revealed promise which brought its believers peculiarly near to God, I find no more spiritually-minded man than the emperor T'ang. The thoroughness of his reformation he signified by calling it a new life, as expressed in the Announcement, "Throughout all the states that enter on a new life under me, do not, ye princes, follow lawless ways; make no approach to insolent dissoluteness; let every one observe to keep his statutes:—that so we may receive the favor of Heaven." The expression "new life," has not of course, its christian meaning, but it does imply that under the rule of T'ang the states were to begin anew, on a higher and purer principle of conduct. He speaks of the people as in their distress, under previous bad government, appealing to the spirits of heaven and earth; but he reverences only one God, and makes no mention of any other.

It appears, however, that the worship of ancestors and of the spirits had been continued under him, and with greater regularity than before. For it is mentioned by the wisest and best man of the time, who set up and sustained his successor on the throne that he "kept his eye continually upon the bright requirements of Heaven, and served and obeyed the spirits of heaven and earth, of the land and the grain, and of the ancestral temple—all with reverent veneration."

The reign of T'ang fell between the years 1765 and 1752 B. C. by the common Chinese chronology, or between 1557 and 1544 B. C. by the shorter canon.

## II.

## PROGRESS OF RELIGION IN EGYPT.

In Egypt, the religion which covered and controlled all things, bore clear marks of the early Noachic revelation, possessing all the great features of it without its purity. By the time of Abraham it had been expanded by the multiplication of symbols and ceremonies into a complicated system of idolatry, which still contained within its bosom the original elements of the patriarchal system.

To the common mind their religion seems to have become entirely material and sensual. Rigid conservatism never retains anything but forms, unless accompanied by careful instruction, and some freedom of discussion; and the more severely its rules are enforced, the more shallow it becomes. Spiritual meaning evaporates insensibly from the best definitions of a creed, unless their discussion is ever renewed, and their exposition insisted on. Much more are rites and ceremonies, formal and sensible things, prone to separate from the meaning which they were designed to embody. When men attempt to retain all by mere force of repetition, they will soon be left with nothing but a body from which the soul has departed. A vague but oppressive sense of spiritual domination pervading the whole life of society appears to have been the only apprehension retained by the Egyptian people of the unseen God. The order of their government was to them like that of nature, mysterious, sacred,

and unchangeable in itself. Its authority, whoever might be the reigning king, was recognized as divine. Their religion was a dark and awful mystery; but all that was addressed by it to their understanding were myths, and rites and ceremonies, and material symbols, and temples of oppressive gloom; and their notions of the future existence of the soul were confounded with preservation of the body, and their ideas of a place of blessedness with sepulture in a securely protected tomb.

But in these very ritual observances which could not have been introduced without a consistent meaning, we perceive that their religion had at one time taught, and to the better instructed perhaps still taught, the doctrine of one everywhere present and Almighty God, with some conception of revelation by theophany, and of a Providence overruling all things, defending the faithful worshipper, and inflicting punishment upon the wicked. It had taught the immortality of the human soul, and the resurrection of the body; that there is a future judgment with rewards and punishments beyond the grave; that an atonement is needed for the sinner, and intercession with God by a superior being or beings. Their worship consisted of offerings upon an altar, of fruit, flowers, bread, animals slain, libations of oil, wine, or some other liquid, of incense burning, of prayer, and ascriptions of praise and of adoration. Those services were connected with solemn processions, and music, and the persons who ministered in them were robed in a peculiar manner, and the king, the head of the whole system,



when in his place at the altar, appeared also clothed in the sacerdotal vestments.

In the time of the twelfth dynasty of their kings, more than two thousand years before Christ, and before the days of Abraham, the unity of God was still not so far obscured but that each district or great city of Egypt had only its one great object of worship. The union of all the districts into one kingdom constituted the primitive polytheism of Egypt. Thus Phtah was God as worshipped in Memphis, Ra, in the holy city of On; Khem in Khemmis in the Thebaid, and Amun in the city of Thebes. Phtah was regarded as the creator of the world; Khem as the father of men; Ra was the God of light, represented by the sun, and Amun, as the almighty and inscrutable power of Deity. The commonest symbol of God in all parts of Egypt was the sun. It seems to have been conceived of as a sign of the governing power of God. The kings of Egypt always bore an image of the sun's disk upon their seal; and the name of the sun-god, Ra, entered as an element into their royal title, and they were all sons of Ra.

Amun was at first the name of God as worshipped in Thebes; but after the Theban dynasty secured the throne of Egypt, he was accepted over the whole land, in addition to the local deities. For the smaller cities had also their respective gods, who did not so much give place to those of the capital cities and of a more general veneration, as partake with them, or become subjoined to them, under the idea of unity in plurality.

Among the gods of inferior rank the most gener-

ally worshipped were Hes and Hesiri, rendered into Greek and Latin as Isis and Osiris. All these were variously combined in later Egyptian mythology, and many additions were made to their number. But they had all assumed their distinctive features before the time of Abraham. Amun appears in the simplicity of his name upon the royal seals of the twelfth dynasty. The obelisk of On, a work of the twelfth dynasty, is sacred to Ra; the original Khem appears upon some of the oldest monuments in Egypt; and Phtah, as the god of Memphis, the old capital, necessarily enjoyed the superior honor at an earlier date than Amun.

Perhaps enough has now been said to serve the end in view, namely, to show that there was a progress in the multiplication of gods and accumulation of rites in Egypt, and that Egypt, as early as two thousand years before Christ, and in the prime of her civilization, although retaining the fundamental elements of an earlier and better religion, had already sunk them deeply in the corruptions of idolatry. The testimony is depicted by men of that day upon monuments erected by themselves to their own honor.

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### III.

#### A MONOTHEISTIC REVIVAL.

It was at that stage of innovation that the earliest recorded testimony against idolatry and polytheism was borne. Not a revolution, in the first instance, but

simply the truthful return of one man, with his family, to the original creed and observances, with an earnest obedience to what he learned of the will of God, it was quiet, unostentatious, and entirely void of proselytism. Abraham recommended his faith to the world only by good works, by the generous courtesy which attracted the respect of his neighbors, and by the corresponding spirit which prevailed in his numerous household.

At this point the Hebrew narrative is possessed of a special importance in relation not more to the subsequent history of the Hebrews themselves than to that of the powerful nations, whose religion is inherited from them. In giving the narrative of the Hebrew scriptures substantially as they stand, I assume nothing for them which I do not for the other scriptures, my purpose in both being to take their own account of themselves and of their religion.

The narrative of Genesis which, after the record of dispersion, had contracted to the dimensions of a genealogical list, now expands into a broader channel, not of general history, as before, but of biography. A new dispensation was opening. Both the two preceding had been addressed to all mankind. This was on a new plan. It was not made with all men, nor committed equally to all; but with one man and his chosen descendants, for himself and his posterity, with a view to all of the race, who therein should repose their hopes of reconciliation with God. Moreover, it was not made with one of the Hamitic race. They had already enjoyed every facility. The best of the

world, and the best means of maintaining and defending the religion of the world in its purity, had been committed to their hands, and they were proving unfaithful to the trust. It was made with one man in the descent from Shem, who was called away from the connection of kindred, and set apart to be the father of a new nation. And from the rest of his descendants that future nation was to be separated by the singular birth of its founder. It was to spring from that son alone who was given according to promise—born out of the course of nature—that the hand of God might not fail to be seen in it.

This new covenant was a renovation of the patriarchal, as it was to operate upon a patriarchal state of society. But it contained some new elements of revelation; chiefly the prominence given to faith in the promise to Abraham; and the greater definiteness of that promise, in proffering special divine favor to the line of his descendants through Isaac, and ultimately through them great blessedness to all the families of the earth. In the first instance the example of Abraham and his household appears as a reformation addressed to the then existing world, before society and religion had become so corrupt as to render a peaceful reformation hopeless. It proposed no revolution in society, government, or worship; only the recognition of the one God in purity, as still known to the patriarchal princes then living, and as now made known in clearer revelation to Abraham. It testified against polytheism and idolatry, while true monotheism still had some hold upon the convictions of the better and wiser

of men. It stood alone in its time. Nothing of a like nature occurred elsewhere.

Melchizedek, the king of righteousness, is mentioned at this time as a priest-king under the Noachic religion, who observed it in its purity. He was king of Salem, or of peace, and priest of the Most High God, and evinced his character as a prophet in recognizing the Hebrew patriarch as the special servant of the Most High God. His meeting with Abraham is the most interesting fact of that epoch, as touching the juncture of the two economies. Melchizedek is a true representative of that which had existed from the time of Noah; Abraham was the first under one just opening. Abraham pays tithes to a legitimate priest of the time. Melchizedek blesses with prophetic foresight the proto-patriarch of a new economy. Melchizedek was a priest not by descent in a sacerdotal tribe; but because, according to existing institutions, universal in the world of his time, he discharged those duties as a prince. No mention is made of his parentage to show his right to exercise the office of priest. His right was declared in the mention of his rank as king. But he was distinguished above others of his day and neighborhood in being priest not of a polytheism nor of an idolatry, nor of a local or inferior deity, but of the Most High God. So far then he is a testimony that among the nations of Canaan some still maintained the knowledge of the Most High God in its grand simplicity.

The economy thus introduced received more light as it advanced, and before its close we might record the features of its Abrahamic type as follows;

First, as in the foregoing and co-existing dispensation, the mode of revelation is by theophany. The divine will was manifested in the method of calling Abraham and his descendants to their office; divine knowledge in the revelations committed to them, and divine power by miraculous intervention according to promise. Though prophecies were sometimes uttered, miracles were not wrought by men, but by the immediate power of God.

Second, the patriarchs believed God to be one, all powerful, holy and just, that all things were created by him and subject to him.

Third, that man created holy, had fallen, was sinful, and under condemnation; and that they who should obey God, by faith in his promise, should enjoy his favor.

Fourth, it does not appear in Genesis what the patriarchs knew, if they knew anything, about the personality of a Saviour, as in anyway different from that of the God whom they worshipped. Christ said that Abraham saw his day and was glad; but in that we cannot with certainty understand more than that Abraham had foresight of the time when the promised one should actually appear; nor is it clear that they knew of different personalities in the godhead whom they worshipped; nor of the resurrection of the body, of the doctrine of eternal life, or of a state of blessedness beyond the grave.

Fifth, their worship consisted in prayer and sacrifice. It is probable that they kept the Sabbath as a day of rest; but it does not appear that they had any religious exercises set apart for that day.

Sixth, Now, for the first time, we meet with circumcision, as a sacrament initiatory. Such could not belong to the foregoing economy, because in that all persons were members by right of birth. The only sacrament then was sacrifice. When the condition of faith in a promise to a particular people was established, then came the second sacrament, standing at the gate of the new economy.

Seventh, the head and priest of the family or tribe was to be, not as formerly, the first born son of his father, but the heir of the promise: Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau.

Eighth, In the families of the Hebrew patriarchs, the civilization proper to nomadic life existed in its highest excellence; and yet they regarded themselves as only in a transition state, and always looked forward to ultimate settlement of their posterity in the promised land.

Civilization, even in the midst of growing heathenism, retained enough of its divine origin to render valuable service to the new economy. The father of the faithful was saved from contamination of increasing errors, by residence in a country where they were comparatively few, and by repeated revelations and promises. So his family until they were fully indoctrinated in their proper mission; but before they became a nation, they were removed into Egypt, to learn all that existing civilization had to teach, which was needful for their new state of existence.

In its initiatory stage, the new economy took that form which coincided with the civil order and struct-

ure of society in that time. Accordingly, although that part of scripture which treats of it becomes biographical, it falls in with the advancing current of general history.

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#### IV.

##### SEMITIC MIGRATIONS.

While Egypt was yet in the prime of her early success, under the princes of the twelfth dynasty, and ere the nations of Canaan had reached their maturity, a movement of the Shemites of Mesopotamia and of Elam began to set in towards the West. It was an impulse of migration simultaneously actuating all those branches of mankind destined to become the principal leaders of the world. While the best colonies of Semitic kindred were successively advancing into Syria and Palestine, the ruling branches of the Aryan stock were taking possession of the islands and peninsulas of Greece, and crossing the Punjab into India; and the Chinese, after a longer series of migrations, commenced at a much earlier date, were establishing a regular government on the Eastward sloping plains of Asia. All were taking up their residence where they were destined to grow into power and do their respective work, about the same period, namely, from two thousand to two thousand and three hundred years before Christ. Meanwhile the Hamites of Babylon and Egypt were steadily educating themselves in that culture which ultimately was to carry its lessons out after the pioneer colonies, and become, wherever



accepted, the spirit of progressive civilization. Earlier migrations had proceeded in all those directions, as well as in others, but this period is marked by the earliest recorded movements of the great historical races of China, India, Syria, Arabia, and Greece into the countries they were afterwards to rule.

The king of Elam carried his conquests as far as Arabia Petraea and the plain of Jordan. Some emigrant companies penetrated to Mount Sinai and to Egypt, some in the capacity of merchants and artists, but more as herdsmen. From the hill country to the north or northeast, the Chaldees descended upon the plains of Babylon, and by some means secured to themselves the possession of that primitive seat of empire.

Among the first Semitic migrations was that of Abraham and Lot, from Ur of the Chaldees into the country of southern Palestine. But Terah, the father of Abraham, was also on his way westward with all his family, and had got as far as Haran, when he died. The patriarchs seem to have attracted but little attention at the time. Only wealthy herdsmen, their presence in Canaan created neither animosity nor fear. And yet the result proved that they constituted by far the most important branch of the Semitic migration.

The earliest seat of power belonging to that race, was Elam. But of its history little is known save what is mentioned of its monarch Chedorlaomer in the book of Genesis. It was originally a small territory lying east of the Persian gulf and lower Euphrates. But its king had at an early day made those of Shinar and some other neighboring countries dependent upon

him, or so allied with him as to use their forces for the execution of his designs. With their aid he carried his conquests over Northern Arabia to the valleys of Mount Seir, Moab, and the plain of Jordan. Other branches of the race, by immigration and rapid increase of numbers, prevailed over the inhabitants of Arabia, and reduced the Hamitic states on the borders of Canaan. Their immigration into Egypt, in which they were probably associated with some tribes of Hamitic blood, belonged to the same ethnic movement, and was made, like most of the rest of it, at that period, not with violence but by the gradual progress of a nomadic people in pursuit of broader lands, and richer pastures, combined, in some instances, with the enterprise of commerce. The earlier of these Semitic migrations westward fell in with the later Hamitic, which had been successively pursuing that direction for centuries.

Upon a monument of the twelfth Egyptian dynasty, a small colony of such Oriental immigrants is presented to Pharaoh, with their humble petition to be allowed to reside in the country. Succeeding colonies from the same quarter, and perhaps in the same peaceful spirit, continued to pour into Egypt, age after age, until in the end of the fourteenth dynasty, they had increased to such a degree, and secured such wealth and influence, as to raise one of their number to the throne. That power they held, for several generations, over all Egypt, and at least in the lower country, through three successive dynasties, covering a period of more than five hundred years.

In the days when those Shepherd kings were at the summit of their power, Abraham came down into Egypt from Canaan, where he had but recently arrived from Mesopotamia. His visit was confined to the eastern border, near Zoan (Tanis) the capital of the Shepherd kings. After a short residence there, he returned to Canaan, where he resided until his death, about one hundred years later. His descendants proceeding from Ishmael and the sons of Keturah spread themselves abroad to the eastward and southward, entering upon the possession of Arabia, while their kinsmen, descended of Lot, seized upon the hill country immediately to the east of the lower valley of the Jordan. His son Isaac continued to reside in Canaan.

Soon after Abraham's return from Egypt, he and Lot separated, Lot choosing residence in Sodom. Then followed the invasion of Chedorlaomer, the capture of Lot, and his rescue by Abraham and his Canaanitish neighbors; an enterprise which gave the elder patriarch great favor with the native population. Fifteen or sixteen years later followed the catastrophe which overthrew the cities of the plain.

About two hundred years after Abraham's visit to Egypt, Joseph his great grandson was carried thither as a slave, to rise ultimately by a singular series of events to the mightiest place at the same court of Zoan. He was soon followed by his father and brethren. And for all the time that the Hebrews were merely a kindred of tribes, that is four hundred and thirty years, they were residents of the land of Egypt.

## CHAPTER V.

### GROWTH OF LEGALISM UNTIL THE SECOND MONOTHEISTIC REFORMATION.

THE history of Israel was a discipline of faith. In the Patriarchs that grace was implanted, strengthened, and directed by special revelation, and successive promises of things, the gift of which was long delayed. That discipline appears in the call of Abraham, who was to go out from his father's house, not knowing whither he went, to a land that God would show him, with the promise of great favor to himself and his posterity, then in delaying the fulfilment of the promise of posterity until by the course of nature, it could no longer be expected; in the promise to Abraham that his posterity should possess the land of Canaan, but not until the lapse of many centuries, during which they should be oppressed, in a land which was not theirs, four hundred years; in the command to sacrifice the heir of the promise, upon whom all the hopes of the elder patriarch rested; in the fewness of the promised race for two hundred years, and in the long residence, and latterly bondage, in Egypt.

In the progressive unfolding of the plan of redemption, each new act sets some point of the subject in a new light, fulfilling something in the past, and pre-

senting a new feature for the exercise of faith, while making clearer something relating to the one great object of faith, the promise to Abraham.

There is a comprehensive symmetry in Hebrew history. Abraham is the paternal head of the economy through him introduced. As Adam was the head of all mankind by natural generation, and their representative, and as Noah stood to the new world after the flood, so Abraham stands to all who by like faith, shall be saved through the revelation made to him and his seed, to the end of time. Spiritually he is the father of the faithful ; that is, of all who through faith in the promised seed of Abraham shall be blessed. In this, which is the full meaning of the promise, the descendants of Abraham are practically innumerable. For the progress of that faith is still distinctly tending towards the fulfilment of the prophecy that the blessing in him shall extend to all nations of the earth.

Accordingly, in that quarter, however delayed, there is a progress and a hope of something better to come. In the other great religions of the time, we find no cheering hope, no line of promise, for progress to follow. In a world where polytheism and the rites of idolatrous worship were increasing and gradually solidifying into systems, the Hebrew family alone presents an example of pure family worship of the one God of heaven and earth, without division of divine honors with any other being.

## II.

## HEBREWS IN EGYPT.

The residence of the Hebrews in Egypt was chiefly if not solely, in the lower country : and the cities in which they beheld the regal splendor were Zoan, Memphis and On. Some of them continued to follow their pastoral occupations, as long as they enjoyed freedom of choice, and as the district in which they dwelt bordered upon the desert, they could freely extend the pasturing of their herds as far in that direction as any of them might be disposed to tempt the danger. Instances are mentioned of some of the Ephraimites coming into conflict with the Philistines of Gath, during the lifetime of their father Ephraim.

The land which the Egyptians, those most favored sons of Ham, had chosen for their residence, and which was so long and so intimately associated with the history of the Abrahamic people, is a beautiful, well-watered plain, stretching through the desert at the entrance of Africa, just beyond the isthmus which unites that continent to Asia. Lying along the Nile, it extended from the sea, on the south, as far north as navigation was unimpeded. The rapids of Syene were certainly not reached by the early settlers ; but when settlement did reach that point, it was assumed as the southern limit of Egypt. In other directions the boundaries of the country are assigned by nature, and its arable surface is still more narrowly confined to the limits of irrigation by the Nile. For

that land is truly, in the words of its earliest Greek historian, the gift of the river. Lying under a burning sun, in most of its length rarely visited by a shower, it is rendered habitable only by the regular recurrence of the overflowing waters.

It was called Mizraim by the Hebrews, who applied the same name to a son of Ham, by whom the settlement was made; but the Egyptians themselves preferred the name of their more ancient forefather, and called their country Khemi, or the land of Ham. Mizraim is a dual form, apparently referring to the twofold division of Egypt, and made from a singular, Miser, which is actually the Arabic name for that country. Khem has also a local etymology, but is determined as a person by the figures, which represent him on the monuments.

Another primitive colony had crossed the Nile valley to its western side, before the sons of Mizraim arrived, who perhaps drove them to the western side, and held them under government. An attempt at revolt on their part was reduced by the first king of the third Egyptian dynasty. On that side of the Nile, at the oldest seat of royalty, arose the worship of a god, whose name in Egyptian spelling, which omits short medial vowels, is written P. h. t. The Greeks in adopting it, consistently with their habits of pronunciation, wrote Phta, and translated by Hephaistos. Phta was the first king and first god of Egypt, and while he reigned as king was the only god. He preceded the sun as the object of worship, and then became identified with him. To Phta was

ascribed the honor of being the creator, and the god of fire, and the sun-god of Memphis. Although pronounced Phthah by the Greeks, it is probable that the three letters P. h. t. were originally Phut in the mouths of the founders of Egypt. If the sons of Phut were the first to enter Egypt by the Isthmus of Suez, and were soon afterwards constrained to cross to the western side of the Nile by the succeeding migration of Mizraim, and there building their city and temple, they were afterwards followed by the stronger colony, and consented for a long time to live on the west of the river together with them, and as subject to their kings, but finally in the beginning of the third dynasty, attempted to recover their independence, and were reduced more completely than before, so that while some of the Phutim thereupon retired further westward into the Oases and north coast of Africa, a great number, perhaps the greater number, of the inhabitants of Memphis consented to the government of Mizraite kings, and were allowed to remain in the enjoyment of their religion, and that in course of time they and their religion were comprehended in the common mass of Egypt, the history would have given true occasion to all that we know of the case.

On the list of those gods whom the Egyptians called their first kings, Phta (or Phut) is always first. It is not unlikely that the legend is true which presents certain gods as the first kings of Egypt. In other words, their patriarchs, according to the custom of the time, ruled over the settlements of those descended from them, both as kings and priests. Their



really long lives laid a foundation for the extravagant chronology subsequently assigned to them, and later veneration paid them divine honors. Accordingly not only is their common country named from Ham, the protopatriarch of their race, but Ham is also one of the great gods of their pantheon, whose chief attribute is that of father of mankind.

Early Egyptian history is arranged, after the manner adopted by its historian Manetho, according to its royal dynasties. His list of the dynasties is extant but without the history to which it belonged. Other royal lists are partially extant. In all alike the earliest kings are gods and demigods, who all terminate their reign by death. Of human dynasties Manetho counts thirty-one until the Macedonian conquest. In the course of these thirty-one dynasties, there are four periods of eminent distinction, well defined and largely illustrated by their own monuments respectively. Of the first three, little is known except what appears upon the lists. The first period, which stands forth boldly in a record of its own, is that of the fourth dynasty including also one king of the third and one or two of the fifth. It was then that the great pyramids arose, and that the oldest cavern tombs were constructed in the cemetery of Memphis. Inscriptions on those tombs delineate very extensively the manners, customs and occupations of their times. But no dates are given; and the length of the period they cover can therefore be judged of only approximately by genealogies, which can be traced on them to some length, and by comparison with the numbers on the lists of

Manetho. It could not be a brief period which executed so many monuments of such magnitude, and all that they bear witness to. Those works are executed in the perfection of Egyptian art. They bear no record of war, but in all respects testify to a state of primal prosperity and peace.

After the earlier kings of the fifth dynasty, the monumental testimony is comparatively obscure until the end of the eleventh. It seems that the country was divided among several rival dynasties, in different capitals, at war with one another, and sometimes one and sometimes another being superior. In the end, the royal house of Thebes, in upper Egypt, prevailed, and is counted the eleventh dynasty. Their successors, who formed the twelfth, established and held dominion over the whole country; and Thebes assumed that place, which had previously belonged to Memphis.

The first king of the twelfth dynasty was Sesortosen I., whose name appears upon the oldest part of the temple of Karnak. Five kings succeeded him, a second Amunemah, two other Sesortosens, and a third and fourth Amunemah, after whom the dynasty declined. The Sesortosens were its principal heroes, and Egypt's first great military leaders. On the walls of the temple of Amun, now called by the name of Karnak, they inscribed the records of their exploits. Nor had they neglected the arts of peace. The tomb of an officer of high rank under Sesortosen II., still remains at Beni Hassan, to bear testimony to the state of national prosperity, and the standard of art in that

reign. Upon it and adjoining tombs are delineated almost all the occupations of ordinary life. Other monuments belonging to the same dynasty are quite numerous, and in various parts of Egypt, from the Delta to the Southern border, as well as in Ethiopia and the desert of Sinai. Dates are given, and events distinctly assigned to the year of the king's reign in which they took place. Upon the decline of the twelfth dynasty and the feeble rule of the thirteenth and fourteenth, immigrants from the east, of Semitic descent, accumulated to such a number that, in course of time, they took to themselves the government of the country, and set up their own kings in Zoan. Of that period the monuments are scanty.

In the end of a usurpation, prolonged for several hundred years, a new branch of the Theban royal family obtained the ascendancy, and held it through two dynasties, counted the eighteenth and nineteenth, which together constitute the third great period of Egyptian history, illustrated chiefly by the exploits in war and peace of the kings bearing the names of Thothmes, in the eighteenth, and of Rameses in the nineteenth dynasties.

Another period of decline ran through the twentieth and twenty-first dynasties, from which the founder of the twenty-second revived the monarchy. That founder was the Shishak of Hebrew scripture, who was on the throne at the accession of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, to the throne of Judah, in or about the year 975 before Christ. Here we obtain the earliest positive synchronism with Hebrew History. For Shi-

shak is the first Pharaoh mentioned in the Hebrew books by his own name. And the identification is confirmed by the fact that his invasion of Judea recorded in the first book of Kings, he also recorded upon the great hall in the temple of Karnak, accompanied by his own name.

By counting back from that date, with the imperfect *data* we possess, we shall find that the nineteenth dynasty must have begun in the latter part of the fourteenth century before Christ, and the eighteenth at least two hundred years earlier. Then allowing five hundred years for the period of divided rule and Semitic occupation, and then taking in the twelfth dynasty to its beginning, we shall find ourselves twenty-two hundred years or more before the birth of Christ. In ascending further, we have a long period of scanty records to pass ere reaching the era of the great Pyramid-builders. During that interval, and beyond it no monumental dates aid the steps of research; genealogical facts are furnished in the fourth dynasty; but beyond the last king of the third dynasty, there are no contemporaneous records, and except the brief and unreliable hints in the lists, really no *data* at all.

Although far from able to assign exact dates to all these epochs, it seems most probable that the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first dynasties fell in the time of the Judges and united Kingdom of Israel, that the wandering in the desert fell in the early part of the nineteenth, that the Hebrews went out of Egypt in the eighteenth, and that their residence there com-

menced in the seventeenth dynasty, and that Abraham's visit was in the earlier part of the Shepherd rule. Consequently, the part of Egyptian history which preceded the call of Abraham, and fell under the time which scripture passes over in a genealogical list, was from the fifteenth or early part of the sixteenth dynasty back to the earliest settlement of the country. Within that period, although the chronology is very defective, the degree of attainment which had been made in the arts of civilized life, is vouched for abundantly by a great variety of contemporaneous testimonies. From which it appears that although manufactures and commerce flourished among those early Egyptians, the foundation of their national wealth was the produce of the farm. Their civilization was of the kind which grows up naturally upon a rich soil and by a navigable river.

In their government the civil and religious elements were completely blended. The source of authority over the Egyptian mind was one. The king centred all in himself. He was not a priest in the sense of being set apart specially to that office; but in his capacity as king he exercised sacerdotal functions, as the chief pontiff of his people. "A chief, surrounded by a numerous priesthood, governed each city in Egypt," as magistrates subordinate to the king, who in a similar manner governed the whole country. "They all alike held their rank by hereditary descent, and their power by the force of opinion founded on religion." Divine right transmitted through consecrated descent was the recognized claim to the throne.

Popular sovereignty was an idea foreign to all the thoughts of an Egyptian, perhaps never occurred, as an original conception, to any descendant of Ham. Alike in Babel, in Canaan, in Ethiopia, in Arabia and in Egypt, whenever we obtain a glimpse of their government, it is found to be a monarchy—a sacerdotal monarchy, the true development of the patriarchal system. In Egypt, where most fully exhibited, it was at once sustained and regulated by a sacerdotal aristocracy, itself regulated by pre-existing institutions regarded with the profoundest veneration. And it is a matter worthy of far more consideration than is commonly given to it, that even in the time of the Hebrew patriarchs, when degeneracy of religion had already far progressed, a genuine fear of the true God still existed in some of those priest-kings, as shown in the case of Abimelech of Gerar, Melchizedek, and the Pharaoh of Abraham's visit to the south. It was in Egypt that this, as well as most other elements of primitive civilization, reached its fullest development.

In the religion of the Egyptians, the genuineness of its original basis, the careful instruction of the priesthood therein, and the unfeigned faith of the people in what their mysteries revealed to them, secured the permanence of all institutions founded thereupon. In one sense, all Egypt was a sacerdotal system, inasmuch as all its institutions proceeded from and were controlled by the sacred statutes, which it was impious to violate. Most probably to this cause was owing the long duration of the same form of government, notwithstanding the changes of the seat

of power, and the conflicts of rival dynasties. The disposition of the hierarchy was necessarily conservative of interests so largely if not completely its own. The military class may be included under the same head. For it was, in a very practical sense, only a priesthood consecrated to defence of the country in war.

Under the same sacerdotal principle, and falling in with the habits natural to the land on which they lived, the whole population was grouped into orders for the effecting of given ends. And thereby those ends were achieved with a completeness and power which has seldom been paralleled. Hundreds of thousands laboring all their lives, and for long successive generations, upon the same work, and all submitting to the same authority, and following the same sacred models, produced external results of a magnitude and uniformity otherwise unattainable. Such in Egypt was the complete organization of the patriarchal style of government. Nations to whom such order and subordination of ranks is unknown look upon the works effected thereby with wonder.

At the same time, original enterprise was practically discouraged, and the steps of improvement confined within such narrow limits that their advance can scarcely be perceived in the course of centuries. Conservatism was the spirit of the nation, and manifested itself in all institutions, as if everything had been revealed directly from on high, or established by some primeval authority, which it would have been sacrilege to disobey. Art; as well as the occupations of indus-

try, belonged to hereditary orders. Possessing many features of a vast socialistic phalanx, Egypt aimed at maintaining the well-being of all her people by repressing the individuality of each, and merging it in that of a caste, or rank.

As compared with itself in the fourth dynasty, and later in the twelfth, Egyptian religion, in the eighteenth dynasty, has clearly made a progress. It is a progress from the worship of a few gods to that of a greatly increased number of gods; from a simpler ceremonial to a more complex, and from gods with simple names to gods with compound names, while the unseen God has also become the unknown. The Pharaoh of the time of Abraham's visit reverently recognizes the God whom the Patriarch worships; the Pharaoh of the exode insolently asks, "Who is Jehovah that I should obey him?"

In the land of Egypt the sons of Israel never forgot that they were a separate people. We have no account of any one of them being so affected by the favor which they experienced at first, as to transfer his nationality. Awaiting the time when God should command their return, they retained their own tribal government, whereby they were gradually prepared to assume the form of a nation, their own manners and customs, and the use among themselves of the dialect of Canaan; and the embalmed body of Joseph, kept by his own order, to be carried up with them when they should return to the promised land, was a constant admonition, as no doubt it was intended to be, of that expected event.



As the families of Israel increased in numbers, they expanded into tribes, and out of the increase of the tribes grew a subdivision into clans (*mishpahoth*), and out of these the still smaller division into houses (*battim*), or houses of fathers, and the next was that of individual men with their wives and children. Each tribe had its proper patriarchal head, called the Prince of the tribe. To the chiefs of the inferior divisions the common title of Head of the House of Fathers was given. The same title was sometimes applied to the chief of a tribe, as that of House of Fathers was sometimes used to signify a tribe. All those officers together constituted the elders of Israel, the patriarchal rulers, and representatives of their respective divisions of the people. The smaller sections of the tribes, especially of the more populous, must have ramified into a great number.

Those offices in the tribes, and subdivisions of tribes were held by persons to whom they descended by right of birth, consistently with the patriarchal state of society out of which they grew.

In so long a residence among an idolatrous people, the Israelites did not escape corruption of the faith received from their fathers. Nor were they altogether unprepared to accept the use of images as a help in worship. Rachel's gods, stolen from her father, seem to have been preserved among some of her descendants, down to the days of Joshua. In course of time, they lost the true conception of the God of Israel, and learned to believe that he was acceptably worshipped in objects and with services which they saw in Egypt. In

a religious point of view, that period was one of great darkness—a medieval degeneracy, issuing, as far as pertained to the Israelites, in the termination of the patriarchal economy.

In all the great seats of human culture, religious progress had resulted in the worship of many gods, with rites and ceremonies minutely prescribed and legally enforced, while the patriarchal ministry had either developed into a national hierarchy with a priest-king at its head, or given place to a powerful sacerdotal caste. And the distinctest testimony to that fact is contained in the revolutions against it.

Law was the outgrowth of religion, regulating in the first instance the duties of worship and extending, as these multiplied, further into the common life of man. In this way grew up the laws of Manu in India, the exceedingly minute and punctillious legal system of China, and the gloomier and more oppressive sacerdotalism of Egypt. Religion ceased to be spontaneous, and became entirely legal and obligatory, interwoven with the state, and subject to the very laws which had proceeded from itself.

Issuing from the national religion, law appeared, in those times, as divine revelation, as coming out from God and vested with all the authority of divine command. A sacerdotal class growing up simultaneously with such venerated law became, in the course of human nature, as absolute and domineering as the sanction under which they acted was held to be irresistible. In China that bondage was lightest, among the Aryans it constituted the fetters of a polytheistic

ritual becoming progressively more and more idolatrous ; but not yet seriously interfering with the practical business of life and enterprise ; in Egypt it was already crushing out the life of individual spontaneity ; but in all alike it was, or was becoming, an imperative mould in which the lives of men were to be shaped and confined.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EPOCH OF THE SECOND MONOTHEISTIC REFORMATION.

WHEN primitive religion had thus been obscured by similar progress of change in all directions, earnest and intelligent men, aware of the truth, from which the people and priesthood alike had departed, began an effort to roll back the tide, and return to what they thought to be the original belief, to revive the simpler forms of worship, and to put once more the idea of one spiritual God into the minds of worshippers. To that movement belong Moses, Zoroaster (Zarathustra), the fourth Amun-hotep of Egypt, perhaps, and the Chinese reformer T'ang, all probably not far from the same date, and all pertaining to similar stages in the history of their respective nations; far from equal in importance, but all alike concerned in efforts to restore the worship of one God.

That was a true religious revolution, not based upon human reason, but upon traditionary faith in divine instructions, revived and enlarged by new revelations or manifestations of Deity. If the Chinese monarch does not claim to have immediate revelation from God, he trusts to immediate direction from God, as to what he ought to do. The Egyptian reform failed; such was its defective nature, apparently, that

it had no right to succeed, but its purpose to restore the sole worship of the one ancient god of Egypt, as represented by the sun, is as plain as the hieroglyphics can make it. And yet it is not by the name *Ra* that the Deity is expressed, but by *Aten*, which seems to be rightly identified with the Semitic *Adon* (Hebrew *Adonai*). His own name the king changed from *Amun-hotep* to *Chu-en-Aten*, and otherwise removed from about him all trace of the religion which he rejected. In carrying out his purpose, he did not refrain from violence. The temples of other gods were closed, and their images, as well as names, effaced from the monuments, especially the name and image of *Amun*, "the supreme god of Thebes." He also abandoned Thebes, and "built another capital in upper Egypt, in a place now called Tel-el-Amarna. The ruins of this city, abandoned after his death, have preserved for us many monuments of his reign, displaying very advanced art, and where we see him presiding over the ceremonies of his new worship." Some interesting resemblances have been noticed between the external forms of Israelitish worship in the desert, and those revealed by the monuments of Tel-el-Amarna. Some of the sacred furniture, such as the 'Table of Shew Bread,' described in the book of Exodus, as belonging to the Tabernacle, is seen in the representations of the worship of *Aten*. Without the ceremonial of idolatry, *Amun-hotep* IV. worships the god, whom he represents by the sun, alone, as the immortal life-giving and protecting Deity, who orders all things according to his will. And the name by which

he addressed his god is almost, if not altogether, identical with that which the Israelites reverently substituted in reading for the name Jehovah.

Not much is known about the life of this remarkable King. For succeeding princes defaced many of his monuments. But his appearance upon those which remain, evinces intense earnestness, if not fanaticism. He was of the eighteenth dynasty, the fourth in succession from Thothmes III. and lived somewhat less than fifteen hundred years before Christ.

Touching the date of the great Bactrian teacher, Zarathustra, various opinions have been entertained, but of those who have examined the subject with the most careful attention, and with the aid of the most recent research, the greater number agree in that he lived about thirteen hundred years before Christ. Such is the conclusion reached by Döllinger, by Duncker and by Rapp; and Haug does not perhaps greatly differ from them in referring the production of the Gathas to about the time of Moses. The Chinese royal reform belongs to an earlier date and was not a revolution. Less change was needed in order to return to the ancient standard which the reformer regarded as his model.

In no case does it appear that the movement introduced a new god, although in most cases a new name of God. The pious Chinese king simply restores the state of things as it had been under his predecessors of some five hundred years earlier, with great reverence not presuming to go back beyond their example. But Amun-hotep, while he devotes himself to the worship

of God as represented by the sun, and in that introduces nothing new; only makes sole, what had from time immemorial been chief, in Egypt, but which had latterly been mixed up and obscured with the worship of Amun and other gods; yet for that ancient god of Egypt he uses a new name. Zarathustra professedly opposes error, and rescues religion from it; but the name of god, which he uses, appears to be different from any of those belonging to the religion out of which he comes. And Moses explicitly gives a newly revealed name of the same God, who under another name was known to the earlier patriarchs. In the latter alone is the authority and reason assigned for the change. It is that the idea of God may be completely separated once more from all association with the idolatry and mythology which had grown up around it. Moses declares unto his countrymen the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; but the name of God is not *el Shaddai* nor merely *Elohim*, but *I AM*; the God, whom the patriarchs worshipped without images is now, under a name suggestive of no image, and of only original existence, to be conspicuously distinguished from all the gods of Egypt.

All these leaders were men of exalted religious purpose, having a single aim to the defence or restoration of an earlier monotheism, and to propagate the knowledge of it among their people. It was a movement full of God. The honor and service of God, and nearness to God, and receiving of communications from God, as a man from his teacher, constitute the

principal feature of all its literary remains. To Moses God reveals himself both orally and by visible signs. The pious monarch, T'ang, has no other way of knowing God's will but that of prayer, of the impression spiritually made upon his mind, and of the providential ordering of events; but to these he applies with earnest desire to know what God would have him do, as well as for the sanction of what he has done; and he consults with the wisest in his kingdom, to guard as far as he can, against mistake in interpreting the meaning of events. But he was regarded by his own and subsequent generations as especially favored by God; and long after the downfall of his dynasty, and the successful establishment of another, T'ang was worshipped with more than common ancestral honors. In the odes and sacrifice of Shang, in the fourth part of the She-King his name is repeatedly mentioned with the highest veneration.

“The favor of God did not leave (Shang),  
And in T'ang was found the subject for its display,”  
“Brilliant was the influence of his character for long,  
And God appointed him to be a model to the nine  
regions.”

Zarathustra, in opposition to polytheism, teaches that there is but one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and that he alone is the proper object of adoration. Like Moses he holds that they who would worship God aright must worship him according to his own instructions, and in perfect purity, and distinctly expresses his be-



lief that men need revelation from God himself in order to find that end.

It was a peculiar feature of the Avestan reformation, that it rejected ceremonial observances to the extent of abolishing sacrifice, in its ordinary sense, and confining the duties of worship to prayer and praise, the study and recitation of the sacred hymns, and purity of life. The Mosaic system, on the other hand, recognized the existing methods of worship as having a powerful hold upon the public mind; and accepting that as the actual condition, took it as the basis of instruction, and did not at once make a clean sweep away of all forms and ceremonies; but adopting such as were capable of conversion into means of instruction for the time being, filled them with a new and spiritual meaning in relation to Jehovah, and prophetic of better things to come. The Mosaic ritual was also accompanied throughout with a spiritual and intellectual instruction, fixing attention upon the spiritual meaning thus imparted to the forms, and urging that the forms, without their spiritual meaning, were worse than useless; and preparing the people for the better time, when all the forms and ceremonial laws, their typical import being fulfilled, should be no longer needed, and the people of Jehovah should be able to apprehend him as a spirit to be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

A ritual, at first very simple, subsequently expanded around the Avestan religion, constituting its outward form. But that was contrary to the purpose of its founder, and opened the gate by which corruption

entered. Accepted by the Persian nation, it separated them the more from their Aryan kinsmen of India, who meanwhile held on to the further unfolding of the Brahmanical ceremonial, constructing it into a legal system.

The Mosaic economy, in a similar way, set the Hebrew people apart from the progressive corruptions of Egypt and the nations of western Asia.

The grand point on which those ancient reformations agreed was that of taking up from the past the spiritual worship of the One God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and presenting it as being originally taught by revelation. On this point, the Mosaic, although establishing a ceremonial and a sacerdotal order, was the most stringent of all. "Thou shalt have no other God beside me," was its first commandment. And it as sweepingly, in its second commandment, excluded idolatry of every kind.

Although aiming to restore the simple elements of primitive worship, the reformers could not restore its primitive simplicity. They could restore only by prescribing it and its observances, enforcing them by law, and enacting special prohibition of anything to the contrary. In all cases, that reformation was of necessity legal, and the authority of its law was the same One God of heaven and earth, whose worship it enjoined. It attempted to revive pure monotheism by authority of divine law.

It was in the progress of the legal tendency of the original religions that the great monotheistic restoration arose. That its leaders had knowledge of

each other, we cannot assert; that any two of them were contemporaneous we do not know; but that they all lived at corresponding stages of religious progress in their respective nations, and not far from the same period in general history, there is sufficient evidence. And the identity of the doctrine they advocated, evincing a widely extended religious interest of the purest and loftiest character, is the most remarkable fact in the history of the world in those centuries. But interesting as any one of them is, the Hebrew in its peculiar features, and in the vastness of its influence over the most progressive civilization, and the most widely ruling nations of the modern world, merits a more particular attention.

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## II.

### HEBREW EXODE.

Under the Theban kings of the new royal house, who knew not or chose not to recognize the services of Joseph, the Hebrew residents in Egypt were grievously oppressed. "The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field; all their service wherewith they made them serve was with rigor." As illustrative of the work to which they were constrained in the royal brickyards, may be adduced a monument from the tomb of Rek-sha-ré, architect of some of the great structures of Thothmes III., in which the process of brick-making is delineated. The workmen, employed in vari-

ous parts of the drudgery, are foreigners of Semitic features, and comparatively fair complexion, and the taskmasters, standing, or seated beside them with each his rod in his hand, are Egyptians, as determined by their features, and the characteristic brick-red color of the skin. We cannot assert that the workmen there depicted are Hebrews; but the scene is precisely such as that described in Exodus of the Hebrew brickmakers, and belongs to a date at which it is probable that the Hebrews were suffering in such service. Under that hard bondage, they were constrained to agricultural habits, and to the practice of all the arts necessary to agricultural life: and others of them, as well as Moses, became more or less learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians; as appears in the fact that among them, within less than a year after the exode, were found artists to execute all the designs for the tabernacle, its furniture, utensils, and embellishment; and the legislation revealed to them at Sinai presupposes the people already formed to agricultural pursuits. Their subsequent nomadic life in the desert, was not of their choice, and was felt by the most of them to be an affliction. In their "murmurings against Moses," their regrets are always turned to the humble comforts of agricultural life in Egypt. As a nation they had completely abandoned the nomadic tastes of their forefathers.)

After a residence in Egypt of four hundred and thirty years, and most probably after the middle of the eighteenth dynasty of Egyptian kings, the descendants of Jacob were delivered from their servitude by

extraordinary interposition of Divine power. To the preparation of Moses by natural means, for the duties of that great revolution, miracles were added to sustain his authority and to overwhelm the power of opposition.

The Egyptian king had seen the religion of his nation sustained by the wonderful feats of its priesthood, and held that miracles were the way for a god to evince his presence in. It had been foretold that he would challenge Moses and Aaron to substantiate the claims of their God in that way. And so it seems he did. Egypt was eminently the land of such pretensions. The worship of its idol gods was full of mystery and miracle, and great was their hold upon the convictions of the world in general. It belonged to the work of emancipating Israel to expose the nothingness of the gods of Egypt, and to defeat their priests in their proudest pretensions. The wonders wrought to that end increased in impressiveness as they succeeded each other. Beginning from the favorite feats with serpents practiced by the priests to produce belief in their supernatural power—from the level of their enchantments, and belittling them in the use of their own artifices, they swelled into the command of all the elements of nature. From the mere signs, which were sufficient to evince the real presence of Divine power, as distinguished from the juggling tricks of magicians, they successively rose to such magnitude and comprehensiveness, as no magician could imitate. They became plagues over the whole country, alarming, terrific, awfully sublime in their supernatural horrors, until the series was crowned by

that dreadful night of doom, when Jehovah went out into the midst of Egypt, and smote all the first born, both of man and beast, and executed judgment against all the gods of the Egyptians. That nation which had long been beguiled by false miracles, was made to feel the real hand of the wonder-working Jehovah. In that presence the enchantments of magicians were but the play of children, imitations which could add but little to the evil, and were helpless to counteract or allay it. These works were wrought on behalf of the Israelites, but were addressed to the Egyptians, as an argument for them to abandon their errors, and return to the worship of the one God whom their fathers knew. Nor is it improbable that some Egyptians may have been so affected by them.

All the ten plagues were inflicted in rapid succession, occupying not much more than two months from about the beginning of February. Whatever else may be said of them, any attempt to identify them with natural events in the seasons, or physical features of the country, or changes of the river, is inconsistent with the facts of the narrative. There are no natural occurrences which correspond to the conditions. The last plague was a direct blow at the patriarchal system, in the monstrous development of which the Egyptians had constructed their elaborate idolatry. It carried off all the highest of their priests; and among the animals which were found dead that awful night were many of the most venerated objects of their mythology. Judgment had been executed against the gods of Egypt, and the people that served them.

From that judgment the Israelites were saved. But they could be saved only by an atonement. A new sacrificial observance was enacted for the occasion. The people were to evince their faith and obedience by selecting, four days previously, a lamb or a kid, which was to be kept up until the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, which was to be henceforward the first month of their ecclesiastical year. Of the blood, some was to be sprinkled on the lintels and posts of their doors, the sign of atonement, by which the lives of the inmates were to be saved. It was another lesson on the doctrine that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sin; and embodied in a new form that promise which lay at the foundation of the Hebrew faith.

In each household the lamb slain for it was to be eaten entirely by it; and persons were instructed to unite themselves into households of such number as to be convenient for that purpose, and if any part remained uneaten, it was to be burned. They were to prepare it by roasting, and to put it on the table whole. Not a bone was to be broken. And they were to eat it with bitter herbs and with unleavened bread, and equipped with their loins girt, with their shoes on their feet and staves in their hands, as ready for a journey. And from the evening when the lamb was slain, the fourteenth of the month, until the evening of the twenty-first, they were to use none but unleavened bread. The first and the last days of that interval of time, were to be days of public worship, in which no servile work was to be done. The observance was to

be repeated annually ; and regulations were subsequently laid down in regard to it, when they should be settled in the promised land.

Another institution was enacted at that time, in the consecration of the first born, being a male, of every mother ; not to the priesthood, as in the case of the first born of the father, under the patriarchal system, but as an offering to God. The command included, in the same terms, the first born of man and of domestic animals. But it was provided that the first born of an ass should be redeemed with a lamb, and that all the first born of man should be redeemed. The substitution was soon after provided for more regularly by setting apart the Levites instead of the maternal first born of all Israel, with their cattle instead of the maternal first born of cattle. The Levites were not all priests, but they were thus consecrated as an offering to God, the offering of all Israel, and consequently no longer counted as a tribe. They were an offering representative of the several offerings human and animal of all the tribes. And out of them consistently the priests were taken.

Such was the impression of that awful night, that Pharaoh immediately sent for Moses and Aaron, and commanded them, with their people and all that they had, to get forth from his country. The Egyptians also were urgent, and freely gave them whatever they asked to accelerate their departure. The Israelites accordingly left Rameses, a city which they had built, or fortified for Pharaoh, on the morning after the first passover, while their oppressors were confounded by the judgment which had just fallen upon them, and



the fifteenth day of that month which was henceforward to be to them the first month of the year.

Had it been the intention of their leader to take them to Canaan as they then were, the way lay open directly to the northeast. Instead of that he conducted them towards the southeast. A great work had to be performed for that people before they could be prepared either to encounter the warlike Canaanites, or to enter upon the duties of their national existence. Already they were possessed of a tribal government; but that, while answering the purposes of local order, was more powerful to divide than to unite the different tribes. A constitution was needed of a nature to bind them together in common bonds as one nation; and they needed instruction in the particular duties to be demanded of them under the new economy of their religion. For the execution of that work, which must take many months, if not years, no better place could have been chosen than the mountains in the peninsula of Sinai. When, with that intention, Moses was leading the people round the northern extremity of the Red Sea, he announced to them that he had received an order from God, who now manifested himself as their leader, in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, that they should march down the western coast. In complying with that order, they soon found themselves shut in between the sea and the mountains on the Egyptian side. Pharaoh at the head of his army was now in pursuit. The Israelites, fully sensible of their danger, loudly censured the bad generalship of Moses, as leading them where they could not fail to be

destroyed. Moses told them to stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah. Soon he received another command to lift his rod over the sea and for the people to go forward. The pillar of cloud removed from before them and passed over between them and the Egyptians, being a dark cloud over the latter; but on the side towards Israel a light shining upon the path by which they had to go. And as the multitude advanced, a strong east wind caused the waters to go back, leaving the channel bare for their passage. All night they marched on over the wet sands to the opposite shore, and when the last of them had reached it in the morning watch, Jehovah brought the sea again to its place, and the Egyptians, who were pursuing, were overwhelmed in the returning waters.

Now was the deliverance of Israel complete. Not only was the Red Sea put between them and their enemies, which could have been done by going round the head of the sea, but the great army which otherwise would have pursued them into the desert, and which they were not in a condition to encounter, was destroyed. In the majestic psalm composed by Moses, and in the performance of which he was joined by the chorus of the emancipated people, the entire praise of victory is ascribed to Jehovah. In that incomparable triumphal hymn the name, or agency, of a human victor is not once alluded to. It is Jehovah who has triumphed gloriously.

The course now pursued was nearly parallel to the shore of the Red Sea, southward, until they came opposite to the Sinaitic Mountains, when they turned

eastward into some of the valleys leading to the centre of the group. While on that part of their march they fought their first battle. It was with the Amalekites: and they were taught that their victory was won only by the power of Jehovah, and in accordance with the prayers and uplifted hands of Moses. Miracles had been wrought for them; the bitter well of Marah had been sweetened for their use, and when the provisions brought with them from Egypt were exhausted, that supply of manna began, which never failed them afterwards during all their residence in the desert. Quails were brought them from the sea, and water was miraculously supplied them in the rocky waste of Rephidim.

About six weeks after their departure from Raameses, the host of Israel arrived at the foot of Mount Sinai, where they remained a year, all but ten days. Dates are given with precision. The existence of Israel as a nation begins with the first Passover. Until that time they had been only a family of tribes, under the common government of a foreign power. Then they become a nation, liberated and under a leader of their own. But it was at Sinai that they received the constitution and laws which shaped their national character.

The desert, in which they were now to wander so long, is part of that great belt of barren country which extends in greater or less desolation, and with little interruption, from the plains of India, increasing in breadth and sterility towards the west until its burning sands are quenched in the waters of the Atlantic ocean.

The principal interruptions are in its eastern part, the country on the Indus, the country of the Iranian plateau where well watered, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Nile, and wherever springs of water are protected from the overflowing sands, by mountains or otherwise. That part of it where Israel took refuge is protected by both the sea and lofty mountains. Most of the desert consists of flat, or undulating table-lands. But in the peninsula of Sinai, a great deal of it rises into lofty mountains, interspersed with valleys containing springs of water and abundant vegetation: and the climate is mild and healthful. Towards the south, where it lies between the two extreme bays of the Red Sea, the mountains attain their greatest elevation, in a vast group of which Sinai on the south and Horeb on the north are the most historical. A third summit, now called Mount St. Catherine, is the highest, rising to about eight thousand feet from the level of the sea. The height of Sináí is 7497 feet. Thence the mountains run at various elevations in a chain parallel with the eastern bay, and northward constituting the western boundary of the Wady Arabah, until they merge in the table-land of Palestine. Nearly opposite the northern end of the eastern gulf, a chain of mountains, called in modern Arabic *Jebel et Tih*, strikes out toward the west, but bending first to the southwest, then to the northwest, and terminates near the head of the western bay, like a cord suspended between those two points. South of that chain lie the higher summits, and the consecrated scenery of the peninsula. North of it, and westward from the eastern ridges,

spreads out an elevated table-land, with a general slope towards the west, until it sinks into a plain terminating in the Mediterranean Sea and the borders of Egypt. Israel, for the most part, avoided it, and in their wanderings clung to their refuge among the mountains. Only in making the indispensable crossing from Sinai to Palestine, do we read of their marching through the eastern part of it, and of their return, after failure of the first attempt. In the end of their desert sojourn the same had to be repeated. That expedition, in the first instance, was connected in their history with woful disaster. It was afterwards referred to by Moses as their journey through that "great and terrible wilderness." Northward its boundaries were the Mediterranean sea, the borders of the Philistines and the mountains of the Amorites.

In that region were the singular people of Israel formed into a nation.

In many particulars, the people who followed Moses were different from the family which went down to Egypt at the invitation of Pharaoh. They were no longer migratory herdsmen, but had taken upon them much of the manner of the land where they had resided so long, had been constrained into those habits of settled life, and agricultural industry so hard for Nomades to learn, and yet indispensable for those who were to be the occupants of an agricultural country, and the depositories of a sacred learning. They had now seen and learned, and become familiar with the practice of the arts of Egypt, and contracted a dislike for the wandering pastoral life of their

fathers. But the compulsion necessary to effect that change had broken their energy of spirit, and bent them to weakness and servility, while long intercourse with idol worshippers had deeply corrupted their hereditary faith. It consequently became necessary to renew their knowledge of God, and to expand their religious instruction in accordance with the wider range of duties about to be exacted of them, as well as to raise up a new generation, under circumstances, and with education of a nature to elicit energy, courage and entire faith in the God of Abraham.

Accordingly, they were early made witnesses of sensible signs of Jehovah's presence, and thoroughly impressed with the blessedness of his favor, and the terrors of his vengeance. At Sinai they dwelt in sight of the clouds and thunder and lightning and tempest, which declared the power of God, employed in, or witnesses of the work connected with the revelation of the law, and erection of the tabernacle under God's command. And forty years the mysterious pillar of cloud or of fire was continually before their eyes, and daily the miraculous supply of manna fell around their camp; and sometimes they beheld the proof of the divine justice in signal punishment of the disobedient. In the desert they were separated from all contamination or contact with the heathen, and formed to the institutions provided for them, as if they had been taken out of the world.

With exception of the temporary regulations for their desert life, the laws revealed at Sinai were provided for their government when settled in the land

of Canaan. Already they possessed the organization growing out of their division by tribes, and subdivisions of tribes, and groups of families near of kin. And their government according to the principles of common justice, by their patriarchal officers, was in full operation before their departure from Egypt. That structure was not now abolished. But adopting it, and comprehending it, there was now revealed a national system much more complete. The patriarchal element was retained in the ancient nation of Israel to the last, but as incorporated with, and subordinated to, the constitution given at Sinai. The elders of the people became their local rulers, and their representatives in all general assemblies of the nation.

How deeply familiarity with Egyptian idolatrous practices had corrupted the Hebrew people, appeared in the fact that on one occasion during the absence of Moses, they made to themselves a golden image of a calf, after the manner of the Apis worship of Egypt, and paid adoration to it, as the representative of Jehovah, the god who had delivered them from bondage: and Aaron, the elder brother of Moses, instead of resisting, was led away by the error, and suffered himself to become the leader in it. Clearly, they were at that time as ready to become thoroughgoing idolaters as any of their neighbors. That they did not was due to nothing ethnic in them.

## III.

## LEGISLATION AT SINAI.

In the code given at Sinai we find, first of all, a moral law, containing the fundamental principles of right action for man, in all his relations to God and his fellow-men: secondly, a ceremonial law specially addressed to the religious observances of the theocratic nation; and thirdly, a system of civil laws, for the direction of the various ministers of the government, and to guide in the administration of justice. These three, although in themselves distinct, were, owing to the theocratic and sacerdotal character of the government, and the circumstances of their delivery, intermingled in the order of institution. The course of time so completely separated them, that while the civil element ceased to be in force with the independence of the nation, and the ceremonial ceased to be practicable with the destruction of the temple and the expulsion of the people from Palestine, the moral element remains unchanged, having taken its place as the moral code of all christian lands.

The foundation of this new polity was religion, a religion which differed importantly from that of Egypt, or that of any other nation then upon the earth. It revived the old doctrines of one spiritual personal God, ruler of heaven and earth, and of peace with him through sacrificial atonement; in the former, presenting what had lain at the foundation of primitive religion, and constituted the strength of every genuine



reformation, that doctrine which, bringing man near to his Maker, gives him dignity, truth and energy; and in the latter the central truth of all that is called redemption among Jews and Christians.

Its moral system is the most remarkable work of its kind, containing within the compass of ten brief precepts a summary of morals which, for justness, comprehensiveness, and universality of application, with sufficient discrimination for practice, is without an equal. All its subordinate precepts are of the same spirit, of a nature to enforce justice, truth, purity of life, and of worship, and brotherly kindness among the sons of Israel, with reverence for the spiritual presence of Jehovah.

Its ecclesiastical system differed in some important respects from that of the foregoing time. The religious society of the patriarchs had been a family, that of the growing tribes must have been of the same type divided among a great many families: the new religious society was to be a nation, and the religious observances a legal system.

That first principle of patriarchal government, whereby the offices of sovereignty, priesthood and instruction, or prophecy, were united in the head of the family, was now set aside. God is himself presented as the sovereign, and the official duties are assigned to different persons among the people. Israel is to stand as a priest before the one invisible God, and in relation to the rest of mankind. We have no evidence that any other nation looked upon the Israelites in that light, nor thought of their religion as other than one

among the many, the worship as some at least thought, of a very powerful god. But in whatever way they thought of it, there was the open fact of a national testimony to the doctrine of the one invisible personal God held up before the world. The very existence and national constitution of that people was a constant proclamation of their monotheistic faith, and of the promise which its worship implied.

In reaching its fullest development under circumstances most favorable to civilization, the patriarchal system had become exaggerated into absolute monarchy, and monopoly of priesthood and instruction in the hands of an hereditary few. In the house of Israel the patriarchal was suffered to develop only to a certain length, when its further growth was stayed and it was taken up and woven into a new economy more suitable for a nation. What saved Israel from going the way of all the rest of the world was the act which checked development of the patriarchal at the point where it was about to run into monstrosity, and introduced a new set of causes.

The principal features of that new economy were, first, a consecrated nation under God as their King; second, sensible and permanent symbols of Jehovah's presence; third, an organized and hereditary priesthood; fourth, a system of observances typical of things belonging to a future dispensation; and fifth, approach to God through those appointed means. All the spiritual elements of the foregoing economy were retained, but taught more fully, and in the language of a typical ceremonial greatly extended and legally enforced.

As the whole people of Israel were to hold themselves specially near to Jehovah, in one sense, a priest nation, so ceremonies of purification were appointed to impress upon them the idea of purity of habits and holiness of spirit. To the sons of Levi, who were especially set apart to religious and literary duties, additional rites of purification were assigned. And of that house the family of Aaron were appointed to be priests with more ceremonial cleansing, and finally the most elaborate purification was prescribed for the high priest, who moreover could not make his annual entrance into the Holy of Holies without specific purification and blood of sacrifice. The truth that God is holy and cannot dwell with iniquity was inculcated by the lesson of such observances, accumulated and stringent, in proportion to the nearness of approach to the signs of his presence.

To this there is a striking similarity in the Avesta, where the constantly urged spiritual purity of the Gathas becomes the laborious and legally enforced ceremonial of the later scriptures.

Every error then prevalent in the world, which that new Hebrew economy touched, it provided with a remedy. Among things condemned, polytheism and idolatry are prohibited with particular severity and in detail; and that not only among things specifically religious, but also at the head of the moral law. As to polytheism, Jehovah says I am the Lord; and thou shalt have no other God beside me. And of idolatry the prohibition is the most sweeping conceivable, extending to the making of any figure whatsoever, and to

the bowing down or serving in any way whatever any object but Jehovah. No distinction is recognized between *proskynesis* and *latreia*. They are both alike put under the same unqualified condemnation.\* In all cases the prohibition is addressed to the radical elements of the evil. In thus assailing the structures of iniquity by applying means to crumble their materials, Jehovah's lessons to the Hebrews became perpetual instructions for all mankind.

In as far as the legislation at Sinai revealed a civil code, it had a view to the establishment of the Hebrew people in the promised land. That land they were to take possession of, and hold as the gift of God, and every family was to receive an estate in it, inalienable, as long as they rendered the required service to the Giver. But only on condition of maintaining the true worship of God was their inheritance given and secured to them. Upon turning aside to any other religion, they forfeited all. Levites alone were not assigned to any separate territory. They were dedicated to the service of religion and of public instruction; and accordingly, were distributed in separate towns over the whole country, and the tenths and first fruits were to be paid yearly by all the other tribes for their support. Such were the constitutional checks upon the sacerdotal class that it could never become a sacerdotal aristocracy.

The form of the government was determined on the same principle as their religion. God was to be their king. But they were to be his free subjects; and

\* Septuagint in Exod. xx : 5.

were called upon to make their election of him, and to swear allegiance to him, which they repeatedly did. In this respect the Hebrew, especially during the time of the Judges, differed from all other forms of government. It was not a republic, although without a human monarch, not an aristocracy, although executed by judges and heads of houses; but a theocracy. Those who administered it did so as the ministers of King Jehovah. If any credit is to be given to the voice of primeval fable, even when uniform, such was the original government for all mankind; and the same apostasy which multiplied gods, multiplied also kings, which men assumed to be as claiming descent from God. If so, then the Hebrew polity, in this, as in some other respects, was a revival, on behalf of a chosen nation, placed in more guarded circumstances, of what had primarily been instituted for the whole race. And if so then the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah over all the earth, will be the restoration of that divine government, which was the earliest of all, in which man was originally constituted to live in the capacity of minister to God as his immediate king. If not so, then it was a peculiar relation, in which the ruler of all chose to stand to the Hebrew people, as a priest nation. For it is the only instance of the kind recorded within the period of history.

Consistently, the constitution and laws of the nation were not framed by the people, nor by their princes and elders, nor presented to them as the work of their leader, but issued as the revelation of their invisible king.

By a condescension to the crude notions and feeble apprehension of the people, who were to be elevated and purified, certain sensible objects were adopted to signify the divine presence. In the main such things were chosen as were venerable in their eyes. Only nothing was employed as a likeness of God. The people were to be educated to the worship of the one invisible Jehovah, but the beginning had to be made from habits of thought contracted in the land of their late residence. Accordingly a tabernacle was erected, in its great outlines similar to the temple structures of Egypt and combining the character of a temple and a palace. In it was a throne, which was also the ark of the covenant, a table whereon were set twelve loaves of bread, and renewed every Sabbath day; and near was the altar of incense, and a superb candelabrum all made of or overlaid with the purest gold. The structure, on account of the migratory life which the people led in the wilderness, was composed of movable materials; but all of the finest quality, acacia wood overlaid with gold, and when set up, the whole was hung with rich drapery. The interior consisted of two apartments, the holy place, and the most holy place; the former being twenty cubits long by ten wide and ten high, the latter ten cubits in all its dimensions. It was inclosed in a quadrangular court, one hundred cubits long by fifty broad. A brazen altar for sacrifice, and a vast basin of the same metal for ablutions of the priests, stood within the sacred inclosure, and in front of the tabernacle.

In the tabernacle the most sacred object was an

ark or chest, within which were deposited the tables of the moral law, and by its side a golden vase containing a quantity of manna, Aaron's rod, and, after the last instructions of Moses, a copy of the book of the law.

Within the court, the people, with the ministry of the priests, presented themselves, and conducted those parts of the worship which belonged to them. It was the court of their king. To the sanctuary were admitted only his ministers, and into the holiest place the high priest only once a year with blood of sacrifice.

All the divisions of the tabernacle, in the order described, and almost the proportions, are to be found in the ground plans, and existing ruins of ancient Egyptian structures; the great court or *temenos*, the altar, the holy place, and in the rear of that the smaller apartment, deemed the holiest of all. And the same parts and proportions are repeated in the Greek. The style of architecture is different in each from the rest, but they are all on the same general plan. In like manner, some of the furniture of the Hebrew tabernacle corresponded to what the Hebrew people were already accustomed to regard as sacred to religious uses. But in one respect the difference was great. In the holiest place of the tabernacle the object of adoration was not an idol. The mercy seat, or throne, was unoccupied by any material form. Faith was required to rest upon an invisible God. And as to all the materials employed, they were to be filled with a meaning drawn from that central truth.

It is also mentioned that on the completion of that

edifice, the pillar of cloud, which had gone before them from the morning when the people began their march from Egypt, removed and stood over it, and remained upon it throughout all their journeys in the wilderness. The tabernacle was the prime object of attention at all times in the camp of Israel.

When that structure was complete, Aaron and his sons were solemnly consecrated to the highest offices of the priesthood. The ceremonies of consecration were performed for the ordinary priests now once for all. Their sons and descendants were held to be born in consecration, and when they came of a proper age, entered upon the duties of office without any ceremony. But the high priest was always specially ordained, and inducted into his office by repetition of the anointing with oil, and robing with the vestments of Aaron.

In reading of the elegance of the sacerdotal vestments and symbolical decorations, as well as of the richness and style of the tabernacle and its furniture, we are forcibly impressed with the great excellence which the Hebrew workmen had attained. All the materials and much of the workmanship were furnished by the free-will offerings of the people. In the main the style of those vestments was new, although some of the articles are found among the official decorations of the priests in Egypt. What figures constituted the Urim and Thummim we are not informed, but they are first mentioned in Scripture as already known to the Israelites: and both in name and use they corresponded to certain symbols of Egyptian worship.



When the tabernacle was complete and the priests installed, the series of sacrifices began by the issuing of a supernatural fire from before the Lord, which consumed the offering upon the altar. Thereafter daily morning and evening was the smoke of burned offering to rise before the holy place. A slain lamb every morning and evening laid upon the altar was to be the daily service of the nation, continually. There were also various occasional sacrifices appointed, some as expiatory and others as expressive of thanksgiving. Of the latter class were the peace offerings, and of the former were burnt offerings, sin offerings and trespass offerings. The details of their performance were minutely prescribed, both as to what was to be done in each kind of cases, and what kind of person was to do it as well as the kind of victim and all that was to be done with it. Some of those services were prescribed for particular sins; others were voluntary, dictated by the feelings of the person who brought the victim. But in all, the ceremonial is described with equal minuteness.

Special observances were now appointed for the Sabbath. That day was to be set apart entirely to the service of God. It was to be a day of rest from all bodily work; and was to be celebrated by offering double the number of daily sacrifices, by putting twelve fresh loaves of shewbread, and the incense belonging thereto, on the table in the holy place of the temple, and by the assembling of the people for the public exercises of their religion. And on that day the division of priests destined for the weekly service

commenced their duties. It was to be a day of religious enjoyment. But it was also to be enforced by the severest penalties. Whoever proceeded with his ordinary work on that day was to be put to death.

The whole plan and operation of the tabernacle service as well as the tabernacle itself, and everything connected with it, combined religion and civil government. His religion was to the Hebrew the foundation of his whole civil structure. To apostatize from the faith of his nation was also to be guilty of high treason. Union of regal with priestly office had prevailed under the Hamitic system, from earliest recorded times; but the king of the Hebrews was not a priest. He was God,—the only God. Their constitution embodied much which had been wrought out by the experience of their predecessors; but a higher and purer spirit imbued it all, proceeding from the central principle of their dedication to the service of Jehovah as depositaries of his revelation.

God had hitherto been revealed to the Hebrews as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and by the same name under which he was known to their Canaanitish neighbors; but now the glorious nature of his existence is more fully set forth in the proclamation of him as Jehovah, by which he was revered as the king of Israel. But the king of the priest nation of the world was also declared the sovereign of all nations and as subjecting all to the same principles of legislation. He was the over-all king, head over all the several kings of all the earth,—the King of kings, the Lord of lords.

The people were also taught that God was jealous of the worship which he required, and would not suffer it with impunity to be divided with another. And over and above the demand of strict justice from man to man, they were instructed in the most practical manner, that every man had a duty to all the nation of Israel, and the whole nation to the individual ; and that the eye of the invisible monarch was equally upon the whole nation and upon the humblest person in it, discriminating between the obedient and disobedient ; and yet, that in the case of national sins, the external punishment would fall upon the multitude, including many who had no particular positive agency in incurring the guilt.

## CHAPTER VII.

### I.

#### SUBSEQUENT PROGRESS OF LEGALISM.

RELIGION as it appears in the earliest scriptures was now almost extinct. And with it had disappeared the earlier morality. The shocking cruelty and profligacy of Egypt and Western Asia needed more than natural means of reform. Less information comes to us from other quarters, but it is of the same nature. In the very existence of the great reformatations there stands forth the best witness to the fact. While those reformatations in their subsequent history, continued to maintain their ground, with changes for the better or the worse, the idolatrous religions from which they dissented having, by natural process, developed into legal systems, held on their course of multiplying errors and sinking deeper into debasing practices, until Egypt, Canaan, India and Assyria, at the head of their respective style of culture, were completely prostrated under sacerdotal despotism. China did not sink into such a degree of polytheism and of idolatry; but her national patriarchal religion became a system of hollow ordinances, and her only real religion a worship of forefathers. The degeneracy of the patriarchal system in China became a worship of patriarchs. Thus in

their respective careers of development or permanence those nations continued for ages.

In the legalism which had received new definiteness and force from the measures of reforming monotheists, error had found a new argument. More authoritatively than ever were the rites of religious service represented as good works with God, making the worshipper acceptable, if rightly performed according to law. Importance was legally attached to the proper pronounciation of every word of the prayers and hymns prescribed for each occasion, the right attitudes of body, the right junctures of time, and so on, everything was fixed in a sacred formula, in which the slightest mistake might vitiate the whole service. Such became the state of religion everywhere, but especially in Egypt and India, where its ritual was the most complex and its law the most imperative.

A legal religion and fixed ritual worship determined the principal elements of the later scriptures in all the great nations. In China, the *Le-ke*, with its rites and ceremonies, follows at some distance the *Shooking*; in Persia, the liturgy of the *Yasna* follows its sacred hymns; the *Vispered* is appended to the *Yasna*; and the legal institutions of the *Vendidad* follow the liturgy. So the liturgical *Vedas* follow the *Rig-veda*, the commentaries on them determine details, and the laws of *Manu* give recognized sanction to all. And in Hebrew, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy* succeed the histories of *Genesis* and *Exodus*.

A ceremonial thus established, and a legal literature connected with it, the authority of the priest

class was put upon a firm footing above dependence on the mere good will of the masses. Its members established in a positive authority, acquired an almost supernatural power over the less educated, by whom they were viewed as especially holy, and as having the salvation of other men in their hands. And where the ritual was most elaborate, and the sacred books most exacting of minute compliance, the importance of the priesthood became the greatest. A complicated system of ceremonies, recurring frequently and regularly, in public and private, with a liturgy of prayers and hymns, demanded the whole attention of the men set apart to the duty of conducting it. Not only was it no longer practicable for every man to perform for himself all the duties thus multiplied, but it was no longer allowable to attempt it. By presuming to offer his own sacrifices after the manner of his forefathers, man would now incur a severe penalty. And this added to the fear of invalidating the service, by failing to comply with every minute particular aright, intensified the importance of the sacerdotal profession. Like every other means of power, in such a state of the world, the priesthood became hereditary, and a sacerdotal nobility was formed, with special privileges, next to royalty, and in some cases, with the King at its head.

Such was the form into which the original patriarchal cult of the Assyrians, Babylonians and Egyptians developed. That of India reached the most complete sacerdotalism; but with the king of a different caste. In Israel, priestly office was hereditary, but was

so constituted that it could not become the basis of sacerdotal aristocracy. The sons of Levi were denied territorial possession with the other tribes, and were confined to forty-eight cities, far apart and small, with but a trifle over three hundred acres attached to each, and to the perquisites of their office. So effectually were those precautions established, that the Levites never rose to any superiority of power, as a tribe, were not even counted as a tribe at all, after they had been set apart to their literary and sacerdotal duties. Only a few families of them were priests. The rest were distributed throughout the nation, in literary and professional avocations, and in subordinate offices assigned them under the general government, and in which latter they were under check of the local tribal governments, to which they were also a check in being a bond of union for the whole. The priesthood was so constituted that it never could subordinate the nation, while occupying a place in religion, and government securing for it the national respect.

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## II.

### SUBSEQUENT PROGRESS OF REFORMED LEGALISM.

All the religions of the monotheistic revival also degenerated in course of time. They went down into a superficial and superstitious ritualism, if not into polytheism and positive idolatry. The Hebrew, which was essentially ritual, had a long struggle with the tendency of the people to carry it into superstitious sym-

bolism and from that to step into the idolatrous practices of their neighbors. Ultimately in the end of their commonwealth, under that heathenish proclivity their whole system broke down, and the peculiar observances of their religion were neglected so long as to be almost forgotten ; and they were on the verge of having their features as a separate people obliterated. Only through the persevering firmness of one man in the prophetic office were they saved from that catastrophe. Samuel barely saved them ; but he transferred the work which he had done to one who carried it to completion. And thereby while the Iranian and Chinese monotheistic interests continued to drag on their degenerating history, that of the Hebrews was revived to a new activity and with some new features by King David.

It was in the days of the Judges that the peculiar features of the Mosaic polity were most consistently exhibited. And the government of that period was designed to be perpetual among them, had they remained faithful to its conditions. But that they did not, except by intervals. And at length about three hundred and fifty years after the conquest of Canaan, they sank into a state of civil and ecclesiastical disorder and helplessness. Under the reign of David the worship of Jehovah, as instituted at Sinai, was rescued from the ruin into which it had fallen, and the confusion of heathenism with which it had been mingled, and elevated to a new period of purity and prosperity. It also received a fuller development of some of its elements, viz., fuller organization of the serving priest-



hood ; second, great expansion of the musical part of the service ; third, the regular establishment of the service in psalms ; fourth, the tenderer attributes of Godhead are more fully unfolded ; and fifthly, further expansion and greater definiteness of the promise, and fuller and clearer declaration of the character of the Messiah and of his reign. All the attributes of Godhead set forth in the Psalms are taught or implied in the writings of Moses, but in the Psalms they are brought out more fully, dwelt upon and commended. The mercy of God is revealed in Moses, but then it was especially important to urge the terrors of his law. For the institution of the law was the work of Moses. That law is the theme to which David continually recurs ; it is his meditation all the day, and God's severity against the violators of his law is abundantly declared ; but it is on the mercy of God that he expands more largely than his predecessor. In general, the severer aspects of Deity are prominent in Moses ; the tenderer in David, although all are presented by both. But in David there is a great advance in bringing out the relations of God to the believer as a friend and protector : and some things appear in his writings touching the Messiah for the first time :—His Sonship in Godhead, his Kingship in Israel, and thence to the uttermost parts of the earth, and his descent according to the flesh in the line of David. There is more light and joy also in the religion of the Psalms than in that of the law, and less dependence upon the ceremonial.

Solomon adorned that religion with the splendors of art ; but he also darkened it with the questions of

philosophy, and in his later years led it far on the career of degeneracy, which the division of the kingdom, upon his death, accelerated. The history of Hebrew religion under the divided monarchy is a narrative of decline alternating with partial reformations, until in the Northern kingdom its characteristics disappear, and the nation is scattered among the heathen, and in the southern kingdom the observation of it in purity is confined to a few; and they are saved from utter submersion by being carried into captivity by a monarch who becomes their protector. There, in a foreign land, they listen more thoughtfully to their law, to the songs of their temple service, and the lessons of their prophets, and learn better to apprehend the superior excellence of the religion of their fathers, and the baseness of the folly through which the nation had lost all the blessings it was designed to secure. Appointed there to learn a lesson of the fruits of polytheism and idolatry in unmitigated maturity, which they never again forgot, they became more consistent monotheists than their nation had ever been in the days of its prosperity. The steps of decline from the religion delivered at Sinai were:

I. In keeping up in some families, perhaps many, the worship of the idols of Laban. Joshua 24: 2, 14, 15. That was connected, it would seem, with the worship in some quarters, of the brazen serpent made by Moses. These errors the last counsels of Joshua had some effect in checking.

II. But the next generation took a step further in worshipping different gods under the name

of Baal, that is, Lord, and Ashtoreth, gods of their Canaanitish neighbors, of the people whom they had not driven out, and with whom, on the contrary, many of them intermarried. That connection was a constant temptation, and acted upon the people more or less through all their national history. Mosaism was ritual. It needed only to change its object to become idolatrous. To sanctify a grove to Jehovah was naturally thought to be a good work. To set up an image in it was only to help devotion. But when the eye was familiar with that sight, it was easy to substitute the image of another god, to whose worship a wife, or some pious friend, from among the Canaanites was devoted. And reforming kings seldom went the length of removing the heretical places of worship in the groves. There was always that starting-point for error.

III. And finally, when kings, priests and prophets failed to abstain from the same error, the whole nation went headlong into heathenism; and only a remnant was saved.

Meanwhile among the few who were faithful to the worship of Jehovah, another, and an inverse process had been going forward. Accompanying the strictness of Mosaism there was from the first a system of literary instruction appointed for the whole people. In that, they were instructed in what was necessary to the ritual observance of their religion, but also in the meaning of it, upon the whole, and that such offering and ceremonies signified repentance, others signified devotion, others, thankfulness, others

atonement, and so on, and all was to be performed in view of a spiritual acceptance by a spiritual God.

This spiritual and intellectual element was that which the heretics always neglected. But it was that to which the progress of the Hebrew religion belonged. In the time of Samuel it grew into the societies or schools of the prophets, whose whole work was concerned with the *literary* and *spiritual* elements of religion.

A perfect symmetry of these two existed under David, both being developed to a degree beyond any previous example.

But the tendency among heretical Jews always was to give preponderance to the formal and material. The prophets who came after expressed their message chiefly in opposing that tendency. In course of time they urge the superior importance of the spiritual to the degree of vilifying the ritual, and expressing the condemnation of God upon it when separate from its spiritual import.

It was to the party which followed the prophets that the faithful remnant in Babylon belonged. And prophets continued to be their instructors until after the restoration.

Accordingly it was that part of the Hebrew people which held to the unfolding spirituality of their religion which alone was saved out of the general wreck. That some of their descendants fell into another style of error does not concern us at this point. The heretical party sank out of notice of Hebrew scriptures for a reason obvious upon the face of things; namely,

that they were the neglecters of intellectual and spiritual instruction ; but they also ceased to be of importance in the history of Hebrew religion ; and blending with heathen, lost their Hebrew identity. Subsequent history of their religion is only in the line of those who followed its spiritual development.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PROGRESS OF AVESTAN LEGALISM.

IN the history of the Avestan religion certain stages of progress are marked by the succession of its sacred books, which is determined not by their arrangement in the canon, but by the state of the language in which they are respectively written, and by their intrinsic relations to each other.

First in order are the Gathas; because theirs is the most archaic diction; and because they were necessary to the very existence of the other books. Their bearing upon the principal topics of religion has been already stated,—their doctrine of one sole personal God, eternal, invisible, infinite, the Creator and Ruler of all; of subordinate angelic beings; of the origin of evil in the perversion of the moral faculties first on the part of a higher intelligence, and then through his corrupting influence, extended to man; its worship, consisting of prayer, in song, consecrated offerings, and the observation of purity in thought, purity in words, and purity in life. The Gathas were themselves the prayers, the adorations, and supplications provided for the utterance of devotion,—the earliest that we know of Avestanism.

## II.

## LITURGICAL SCRIPTURES.

The next stage is that which presents the matured forms of a liturgy, founded upon the Gathas, enjoining and directing the use of them in worship. Of that service the Vispered and Yasna contain the whole form and substance. The older and principal part is the Yasna, in which the Gathas are bound up. The Vispered is a smaller liturgical book of later production.

Avestanism had no sacrifice, in the Hebrew sense of that observance, much less in the Hindu sense of it, as food and drink of the god to whom it was offered; but only a consecrated festival, in which the victim was presented before the sacred fire, and then eaten wholly by the worshipper, with his friends and the priests.

The Yasna, in its liturgical parts, is prose; in its other parts, the more spiritually devotional, it is verse, consisting chiefly of the Gathas.

All these parts of the canon now mentioned were recited, for the most part, by the priests alone, during the performance of certain religious ceremonies, to which the liturgy referred. Those ceremonies were, first, consecration of the holy water; second, consecration of the Baresma, a bundle of twigs taken from the date, tamarisk or pomegranate; third, the preparation and consecration of the Haõma, or inspiring liquor—the Soma of the Hindus; and fourth, offering of the Draõnes, or sacred cakes, with pieces of cooked meat

on them, which, after certain prayers, were eaten by the priests.

Accordingly, the most important duty of priests was recitation of the sacred books in the order, not of their chronology, but of their liturgical arrangement in the Vendidad-Sadés. Worship commenced with invocations to Ahura-mazda, and all good spirits. Then followed the preparation of the holy water, Baresma, Haöma, etc., then the offering of these things to the spirits, the eating of the Draönes, and drinking of the Haöma by the priests, during which more prayers were recited, praises of Haöma, etc. The Gathas were recited alternately with passages of the Vendidad. After the Gathas followed other prayers with doxologies.

This ritual in its primary elements most probably commenced with the practice of Zarathustra himself; but in its completeness could not have come into existence until after the canon of their scripture was full. For it was the duty of the priests to recite the whole of the sacred writings every twenty-four hours, the greater part of them in the night. They had also other duties, such as to watch and tend the sacred fire, kept continually burning.

The Vendidad or book of law, is chiefly concerned with rules of ceremonial purity. It commences with a chapter on creation, followed by one on the happy reign of Yima, both of which, as well as the twenty-first chapter,—a relic of old Persian star worship, are thought to be disconnected fragments of some more ancient book now lost. They are not legal. Yima declined being a lawgiver, and preferred to be a bless-



ing, with less formality. The third Fargard, or chapter, enters on the subject of ceremonial purity, with a statement of the five things most pleasing, and the five most displeasing to earth. The former have reference to where a holy man walks; that a holy man should build himself a habitation, have a wife and children, good flocks, fire and all that is necessary for life, water for dry land, and draining for land too moist. The five things most displeasing are the conception of the *Arezura*, when the *Daēvas*, with the *Drujas* come to it, out of hell, and the rest are cases of defilement by dead bodies of men and dogs, and the holes of the beasts created by *Anra-mainyus*.

Raising of cattle and cultivation of the soil are recommended with religious sanction.

“He who cultivates the fruits of the field, cultivates purity.”\*

The country inhabited by the ancient Aryan people must have been cold; fire is mentioned as one of the most valued possessions.

Then follow several chapters of ceremonial legal enactments, defining faults and assigning punishments; touching uncleanness, occasioned by contact with dead bodies, and the means of removing it; a scale of prices to be paid to the priest, who has officiated in the ceremonies; and punishment for those who have officiated without proper authority; the purifying of dwellings, of fire, of water, of earth, and even of the sun, moon and stars.

The thirteenth Fargard contains laws for the pro-

\* *Vendidad* iii. 99.

tection of dogs, the most serviceable animal to a pastoral people, and teaches the future existence of the spirits of dogs. In several succeeding chapters the subject is continued, and followed by laws for the proper treatment of women. Rules are laid down for cutting of hair, paring of nails, and kindred details of personal cleanliness. The nineteenth Fargard recounts the rebellion of the evil spirits against Zarathustra. They seek to kill him. He defeats them. Anra-mainyus tempts him to curse the Mazdean law. He resists; and learns how to protect men and women from the Spirits of evil, by praising the divine law, and the heavenly powers. The twentieth Fargard is an account of Thrita, the first physician; and the twenty-second, which is the last, is of sickness and healing.

Thus the Vendidad is a book of ceremonial law. Its most minute details, like the other Avestan books, are ostensibly revealed by Ahura-mazda, in response to the inquiries of Zarathustra.

As these old scriptures were to be recited principally by the priests, so the Khorda-Avesta was intended for the laity, and all their daily prayers are contained in it. Of those the greater number are in the language of the other liturgical books, not unfrequently consisting of extracts from different chapters of the Yasna; but several including *Patets*, that is, confessional prayers, are written in Parsee, and belong, in their present shape, at least, to a comparatively modern period. They bear internal marks also of a later date. For example, the name of God, as it appears in

them, is not Ahura-mazda, but the much later abbreviated Ormazd; and their adoration of Mithra, Sraosha, and some other mythical beings, approaches to polytheism. Those great angels are not put on an equality with Ormazd, yet attributes of deity are ascribed to them.

In all the ancient scriptures, Zarathustra is the prophet, the person to whom the revelations are made; but in some of the earlier he speaks of himself, and in the later is mentioned in the third person. The inferiority of all that second class of passages in point of spirituality cannot escape the notice of any reader.

In the Yasna adorations are offered to Sraosha, some parts of which are quoted in the Khorda-Avesta; and so in regard to the Fravashis; but all these praises are more extended, and more of the nature of god-worship in the later book.

Invocations and adoration are also addressed to water, to wisdom, to Haōma, to the Manthra, that is to the inspired hymn, to kingly Majesty, to the Majesty of the Aryan regions; and the Gathas one by one, are almost personified as objects of praise.

In the Khorda-Avesta there are also private prayers for special occasions, for certain classes of persons, prayers before and after eating, and confessions of faith. "I confess myself a Mazdayasnian, a disciple of Zarathustra, an opponent of the Daēvas, a worshipper of Ahura," is the substantial part of the Avestan confession, to whatever divine being the adoration is offered.

Thus to the latest of their sacred scriptures, al-

though a process of mythologizing was going on, and their worship was stiffening into forms, and losing in spirituality, the followers of Zarathustra were in reality still monotheists, the adoration they pay to inferior divine beings never goes to the length of detracting from Ahura-mazda, whose incomparable superiority is always asserted as often as he is named.

Anra-mainyus, in the ancient hymns, appears as the name of a moral principle; in the liturgical books his personality is fully determined. A similar change in the same interval has passed upon some other moral abstractions, both good and bad. A number of evil spirits are conceived of as the followers of Anra-mainyus, and seldom called by distinct names, but classed as Daēvas. Anra-mainyus appears also as a creator, but only of means to the end of marring, perverting or destroying the good creatures of Ahura-mazda. He is served by a retinue of demons, of his own creating, as Ahura-mazda by good angels.

Avestanism, in the first instance, did not teach the co-existence of sovereign powers of good and evil,—a dualism of moral authorities; but after the elevation of Anra-mainyus to be the prince of evil, over against the holy creator, it gradually assumed that type; while the monotheistic idea asserted itself in maintaining the superiority and final victory of Ahura-mazda, and sometimes in a dark hint of a greater Deity, who created them both.

Idolatry never made much progress among the followers of Zarathustra. Although they may be said to have gone the length of idolizing their rites and

ceremonies, and their mental personifications; no images were ever used of Ahura-mazda, or of Anra-mainyus, or of the angels. But the emblem of Ahura-mazda was pure flame, immortal Vohumano, the good mind.\*

In these books we also find the doctrine of immortality of the human soul, and the existence of guardian angels (Fravashis) over every individual life. They also teach that immediately after death the souls of men, both good and bad, proceed together, by an appointed path, to the Bridge between earth and heaven, along which the pious alone could pass with safety, while the wicked fell from it into the gulf below, where they found themselves in the place of punishment.

The Avestan religion began its history at the point where the people among whom it arose, were changing from the pastoral to the agricultural style of living, which change it as decidedly advanced as did the Mosaic the same change among the Hebrew people. Arnaiti, the guardian angel of earth, promoted the culture of the soil, her favor was anxiously solicited to bless the labors of the husbandman, and to convert to that occupation those who otherwise were disposed to the nomadic habits of their forefathers. And Vayu, the spirit of the power of the air, was addressed with corresponding honors.

Agni, (fire) and Soma, (intoxication) deities in the

\* For all this section see Bleeck's translation of Spiegel's Avesta, with prefaces and notes. Also Eichhoff, in the French Bibliotheque Orientale, vol. ii. Preface.

Vedic religion, were as such rejected from the Avestan. Fire was held sacred, as a symbol of God, and before it were their so-called sacrifices presented, but only as a material agent, not as a divine power, not as an object of worship. The Soma worship, which formed a main element of the old Aryan religion, and was retained in Brahmanism, was at first altogether rejected by the author of the Avestan creed.\* A ceremony which implied that intoxication was an acceptable element of worship, seems to have been revolting to him. But he failed wholly to wean his followers from the favorite Soma festival, and could only put a restraint upon it, consistently with his exalted idea of God. Under the Zeud form Hãöma, it continued to be an element in Avestan worship. Indra a Vedic god was retained in the Avesta, as second in the government of evil, the powerful demon of storms, of the thunderbolt, and of war. And in general, the objects of Vedic worship as far as retained in the Avesta, are retained as evil spirits. In the changes to which it had submitted, the Avestan religion maintained a consistent opposition to the Brahmanical.

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### III.

#### MAGISM.

When Aryans migrated towards the west, and extended their settlements into the countries south and west of the Caspian Sea, they came into contact with a Scythian people, whose religion, importantly differ-

\*Compare the Gathas.

ent from their own, resembled it, on some points, far enough to establish an affinity with it, and in course of time a corrupting influence over it. That Scythian religion was purely sacerdotal. No man had a right to put his hand to its observances save the Magi, who were its hereditary priests, and who used all their arts to propagate and establish its practices. Its worship was paid to the elements of nature, not as symbolical of a higher Being, nor as manifestations of his attributes, but in themselves. Earth, air, water and fire were the immediate and ultimate objects of adoration. But a special veneration was paid to fire, for the worship of which altars were erected on high places all over the country. On these altars the sacred fire, originally kindled by miraculous agency, was kept always burning. No temple enclosed the worship, which was conducted in the open air. The holy air was the temple. Sacrifice was offered to the fire. But not more than a small portion of the fat of the victim was burned. Pertaining to that ceremony were many minute observances which none but the Magi could perform.

Sacrifices were also offered to rivers, lakes and springs. The victim was slain beside the divine object and offered to it, but no drop of the blood was permitted to defile the holy element.

Earth and air, being also holy, imposed many inconveniences upon consistent Magians. Especially in the disposal of the bodies of their dead, they felt constrained by their religion to do violence to natural human feeling. A dead body was held to be unclean.

It should not be buried. For that would defile the earth. It must not be sunk in water. For that would desecrate another holy element. And it must not be burned. For that would offend the holiest of all. Round towers of great elevation, without doors or windows, were constructed with iron bars crossing them at the top. Ascending on the outside by ladders, the Magians deposited their dead upon those iron bars. Birds of prey immediately descended upon the corpses, and when they had devoured the flesh, the bones fell through the bars to the bottom of the tower.

This revolting and inhuman practice, many of the Aryans, who otherwise fell in with the Magian religion, rejected. Instead of it they preferred to envelope the bodies of their dead in wax and deposit them in the earth. The coating of wax it was presumed would defend the earth from pollution. And the Magian priests, not to be too severe with their valuable converts, allowed the plea.

When the Zoroastrians first came among the Scythians of Media, they found the Magi, as a priest-class, already fully organized and in authority. Their control over the ordinances of religion was absolute. No person could acceptably conduct any part of worship but through their ministration. They were the priests and mediators between men and God. It was by them that victims for sacrifice were prepared and slain, the proper rites were observed, and the hymns and prayers and incantations were recited. They were also the prophets who ascertained and made known the will of God. They explained omens, and inter-



preted dreams. In their hands the Barsom (Baresma,) was a mystic instrument of incantation and prophecy, and indispensable in every sacrificial ceremony. Sometimes the rods of which it consisted were used singly, but a mysterious power was thought to reside in the whole when bound up in a bundle. It was used in the Avestan religion; but without such superstitious powers being attributed to it. Another sacred implement of the Aryans, subsequently adopted by the Magi, was that for the killing of bad animals.

The sacerdotal style and vestments of the Magi were imposing. Arrayed in white robes, and wearing tall felt hats, with lappets at the sides, which concealed the jaw and lower part of the face with the lips, "each with his Barsom in his hand, they marched in procession" to their fire-altars, and standing around them performed the magical incantations. The ignorant populace looked on with superstitious awe, and kings and princes recognized their supernatural claims, and consulted them as oracles.

In this religion there was much to remind the Avestan believers of their own, enough to propitiate their favor for the adoption of a system essentially different from their original belief. Their pure Avestan creed abhorred polytheism and idolatry. But its development, as appears in its own later Scriptures, was into formalism, and thence into idolatry of forms, and through multiplication of divine beings, in the direction of polytheism. And when, spreading westward, some of them came into contact with the Magian religion, they were prepared to fall in with it in

whole or in part. The result seems to have been a fusion—an adoption into Avestanism of all the chief points of the Magian belief, and all the more important of the Magian usages. This absorption appears to have taken place in Media. It was there that the Aryan tribes first associated with themselves, and formally adopted into their body the priest caste of the Magi; and it is there that Magi are first found acting in the capacity of Aryan priests. According to all the accounts which have come down to us, they soon acquired a predominating influence, which they no doubt used to impress their own religious doctrines more and more upon the nation at large, and to thrust into the background, so far as they dared, the peculiar features of the old Avestan belief. Magian usages—elemental worship, divination with the sacred rods, dream-expounding, incantations at the fire-altars, sacrifices whereat a Magus officiated—seem to have prevailed; the new predominated over the old, backed by the power of an organized hierarchy. The spiritual and moral religion of Zarathustra was gradually overlaid by a nature worship, which propitiated its favor through resembling it in some of its outward forms.

Rawlinson, from whom the above passage is substantially taken,\* regards Magism as in its origin completely distinct from Zoroastrianism, and as the chief cause of its corruption, and of the remarkable difference between the earlier and the later Zendic books. Similar is the view presented by Westergaard, in his preface to the *Zendavesta*. “The faith ascribed by

\* *The Five Great Monarchies*, vol. ii. 322–354.

Herodotus to the Persians is not the lore of Zoroaster, nor were the Magi, in the time of Darius, the priests of Ormazd. Their name, Magu, occurs only twice in all the extant Zend texts, and there in a general sense, while Darius opposes his creed to that of the Magi, whom he treated most unmercifully.”

The Bundehesh, although a book of much later production, and containing doctrines not found in the ancient hymns, may be presumed to state correctly the belief which grew up under the influence of Magism, and maintained itself in the best days of Persian prosperity. One of these was the conception of Deity, sole, and far removed from the activities and conflicts of life, to whom both Ormazd and Ahriman owe their existence. Indications of this belief, undeveloped, appear in the Vendidad.

This absolute Deity, Zerana-akerana, created Ormazd and Ahriman, both holy, princes of light; but the latter proved unfaithful, and became the malignant prince of darkness. To correct the evil thus introduced, Zerana-akerana created the visible world by Ormazd. It is to last twelve thousand years, and be the means whereby Ahriman is to manifest himself and work out his own defeat. That period is divided into four parts of three thousand years each—the different acts of the great drama of the Universe, wherein a theatre is furnished for sin to carry out its malignant passions, to its own ruin.

In that creation and process, all things in heaven, in earth and hell, take their place s intelligent beings, in the hosts of Ormazd, or of Ahriman. It is the

conflict of good and evil; always strenuous, and occasionally breaking out into open war. Only the Infinite Zerana-akerana remains serene and undisturbed by the contest. In his omniscient mind all was already ordained how it should come to pass. The prince of evil will be defeated by the issue of his own devices. After a long and terrible war he will destroy the earth by a conflagration; but will himself be purified in the fire; all sin will be purged away, and a new creation will arise in spotless beauty, and evil shall be found no more.\*

In one sense, this is a religion of nature. For it makes everything a spiritual agency in the cause of religion; for or against. But it is not nature worship. For, although various holy beings are venerated, supreme worship is paid only to Ormazd, the leader of the hosts of good. On some points this is not the doctrine of the Gathas; but it is a sublime moral conception. The gross nature-worship of the Magi, the empty pomp of their formalities and incantations, must have been offensive to every true believer in the pure moral religion of Zarathustra.

\* Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, 194, 201.

## CHAPTER IX.

### PROGRESS OF LEGALISM IN CHINA.

THE Chinese sacred book of poetry is a collection of three hundred and five pieces, brief and lyrical. It was edited by Confucius, who also perhaps improved the arrangement in some respects ; but, in the estimate of Dr. Legge, his editorial work upon it must have been slight. For there is abundant evidence that it existed before his time, in all essentials, as it is now. In the attempt of the Tsin dynasty to destroy the sacred books, this was more fortunate than the rest, in that it was retained completely in memory by a great number of literary men ; and was easily restored with little or no damage. Although very ancient, it is not the oldest of the sacred books ; but the remnant of various collections made during the early reigns of the Chow dynasty, with perhaps some subsequent additions. All of these additions, if any, must be older than the time of Confucius. For the number of pieces edited by Confucius is the number of the collection now. It consists not merely of hymns, but also of popular secular songs, gathered by the early Chow princes from different provinces, as a means of ascertaining the tone of moral sentiment among the people. The odes of the kingdom are chiefly religious,

those of the temple entirely, and together these two parts form about half the whole collection. From those poems, as compared with the historic classic, may be gathered important facts touching the historical development of the national religion.

Chinese History begins with King Yaou (2356 B. C.) who was succeeded by Shun. Their two reigns cover one hundred and fifty years. Then followed the Hea dynasty, lasting four hundred and thirty-nine years. After that came the dynasty of Shang which continued six hundred and forty-four years; followed by that of Chow, which was still on the throne in the time of Confucius.

“ According to the received accounts, the three dynasties of Hea, Shang and Chow were established, one after another, by princes of great virtue and force of character, aided in each case by a minister of consummate ability and loyal devotion. At the head of the Hea dynasty was Yu, educated in the religious doctrines and practices of the pious Yaou and Shun. But his line degenerated, and with it, the nation, in government, religion and morality. A thorough and godly reformation was introduced by the emperor T'ang, founder of the Shang dynasty. But after a few reigns his successors also failed in virtue or energy. From time to time a prince arose who partially repaired the state of government, and thereby prolonged the existence of that imperial house, until it finally gave way before the gifted and more virtuous prince of Chow. But the history of that dynasty, founded by Woo, pursued a similar career, until in the days of Confucius,

government, religion and morals alike had fallen into a state of great irregularity.

In the historical classic "the termination of the dynasties of Hea and Shang is attributed to the wickedness of their last emperors. After a long array of feeble princes," there appear on the throne men of physical strength, and extravagant "debaucheries, having neither piety nor truth; and in contrast with them are princes, whose fathers have for several generations been attracting general notice by their righteousness and benevolence. When Heaven and men can no longer bear the iniquity of the tyrants, the standard of revolt is raised, and the empire speedily comes under a new rule." \* The accounts touching the causes of revolution in both cases may be exaggerated, we do not know that they are; the main facts there is no reason to doubt.

It was under the revival of national religion and of good government in the beginning of the Chow dynasty, in the twelfth, or eleventh century before Christ, that the Book of poetry comes into notice. "The Shoo," that is the historical classic, "mentions that Shun every fifth year made a tour of inspection through his empire; but there were no odes for him to examine, as to him, and his minister, Kaou-Yaou is attributed the first rudimentary attempt at the poetic art. Of the progresses of the Hea and Yin dynasties we have no information, those of the kings of Chow "were made once in twelve years." "From the 'Official Book of Chow'" it appears that "in the

\* Legge Sacred Classics, vol. iii. Pt. 1. Prolegomena, p. 198-9.

Chow dynasty there was a collection of poems," "which it was the business of the grand music-master to teach the musicians and the élèves of the royal school. It may be granted then, that the duke of Chow, in legislating for his dynasty, enacted that the poems produced in the different fendal states should be collected on the occasions of the royal progresses, and lodged thereafter among the archives of the bureau of music at the royal court. The same thing we may presume *a fortiori*, would be done with those produced within the royal domain itself."

"But the fendal states were modelled after the pattern of the royal state. They also had their music-masters, their musicians, and their historiographers. The kings in their progresses did not visit each particular state, so that their music-masters could have an opportunity to collect the odes in it for themselves. They met at well-known points, the marquises, earls, barons, etc., of the different quarters of the kingdom; these gave them audience; adjudicated upon their merits; and issued to them their orders. We are obliged to suppose that the princes would be attended to the places of rendezvous by their music-masters, carrying with them the poetical compositions collected in their several regions, to present them to their superior of the royal court. By such arrangement the poems deemed the most deserving of preservation were collected and classified "among the archives of the capital." Thence, as having received the sanction of the highest authority, they were copied and carried abroad to be sung in all the states of the empire. The small-



ness of the collection may be satisfactorily accounted for by the reduplicated and careful criticism to which all such productions were subjected before any of them could be admitted to the imperial archives during the period to which those progresses belong, as well as to the utter neglect of the whole subject, in "the disorder and confusion into which the kingdom fell after the lapse of a few reigns from King Woo. Royal progresses ceased when royal government fell into decay, and then the odes were no longer collected." The collection was made in the interest "of good government and virtuous morals." And when these declined at headquarters, the people were left without a guide in religious and popular song, to follow their own fancy.\*

"The book of poetry abundantly confirms the conclusions already drawn from the Shoo-King" touching the knowledge of God possessed by the ancient Chinese; as well as their belief in subordinate spirits, or angels. But it also contains evidence of a progress in development of the latter, proceeding by the path of personification of natural agencies, and by multiplying and exalting of spiritual beings, towards a polytheism, and especially to deification of ancestors.

No idolatry appears in the worship of Yaou and Shun, nor in the revival of that under T'ang; nor does it appear that images of God were employed as helps in his service. But in succeeding times, it came into practice in the religious veneration paid to ancestors, and from that extended to the national religion. Thus, as it was through an intermediate

\* Legge, vol. iv. part 1. pp. 24, 25, 26.

idolatry that the Semitic nations arrived at polytheism, and through a poetic personification of divine attributes and powers of nature that the Aryan nations were beguiled into the idea of many gods, so the Chinese were misled into a multiplicity of objects of worship by their exaggerated veneration of ancestors.

The national worship of God, the unseen Supreme Ruler, degenerated into a mere ritual observed twice if not four times a year, as the spirit of a national festival presided over by the emperor. In the midst of the Patriarchal idolatry of the masses, and the shallow ritualism of the national observances, educated and intelligent men began to doubt the truth of all religion, and of the existence of a future life, and that long before the time of Confucius.

Meanwhile, every tribe and family having its own particular object of faith and adoration, the ceremonial of popular worship was greatly increased; while the national had become more pompous: and among the people the fundamental ideas of a supreme Ruler in Heaven, and of a state of rewards for the righteous beyond the grave held their place in a vague and general way. Future punishment was early lost sight of in the tendency of every family to regard their own departed forefathers as objects of worship.

This polytheism of ancestors was further augmented by the exaltation of the spirits, presiding over different spheres of nature, to such worship as was proper to God alone.

There were also sacrifices in the royal temple of ancestors in the first months of the four seasons of the

year. In the time when the poetry of the She-King was collected that ceremonial was an object of more interest than the worship of God.\* It is mentioned often in the odes, which make no mention of the worship of God, except incidentally. Those ceremonies were preceded by fasting and various purifications on the part of the king and the parties who were to assist in the performance of them. There was a great concourse of the feudal princes, and much importance was attached to the presence among them of the representatives of the former dynasties; but the duties of the occasion devolved mainly on the princes of the same surname as the royal house. Libations of fragrant spirits were made to attract the Spirits, and their presence was evoked by a functionary who took his place inside the principal gate. The principal victim, a red bull, was killed by the king himself, using for the purpose a knife to the handle of which were attached small bells. With this he laid bare the hair, to show that the animal was of the required color, inflicted the wound of death, and cut away the fat, which was burned along with southern wood, to increase the incense and fragrance. Other victims were numerous. The fifth ode of the sixth Book, in part second, describes the offerings, the preparations, the "flaying the carcasses, boiling the flesh, roasting it, broiling it, arranging it on trays and stands, and setting it forth." Ladies are present, "presiding and assisting, music peals, the cup goes round." The description is as much that of a feast as of a sacrifice, and in fact, those great

\* Legge, vol. iv. *Protegomena*, p. 132-135.

seasonal occasions were what we might call grand family re-unions, where the dead and the living met, eating and drinking together, where the living worshipped the dead, and the dead blessed the living.

This characteristic of these ceremonies appeared most strikingly in the custom which required that the departed ancestors should be represented by living individuals of the same surname, chosen according to certain rules which the odes do not mention. They took for the time the place of the dead, received the honors which were due to them, and were supposed to be possessed by their spirits. They ate and drank as those whom they personated would have done; accepted for them the homage rendered by their descendants; communicated their will to the principal in the sacrifice or feast, and pronounced on him and his line their benediction, being assisted in this point by a mediating priest, as we must call him, for want of a better term. On the next day, after a summary repetition of the ceremonies of the sacrifice, these personators of the dead were specially feasted, and so, as it is expressed, "their happiness and dignity were made complete." "This custom probably originated under the Chow dynasty—one of the regulations made by the duke of Chow; and subsequently to it, it fell into disuse.

"When the sacrifice to ancestors was finished, the king feasted his uncles and younger brothers or cousins, that is, all the princes and nobles of the same surname with himself, in another apartment. "The musicians, vocal and instrumental, who had performed in the

preceding ceremonies, "followed the convivial party, to give their soothing aid at the second blessing." Viands, which had been provided in great abundance, "were brought in from the temple, and set forth anew. The guests ate to the full and drank to the full; and at the conclusion they all bowed their heads, while one of them declared the satisfaction of the spirits with the services rendered to them, and assured the king of their favor to him and his posterity, so long as they did not neglect these observances." "During the feast the king showed particular respect to those among his relatives who were aged, filled their cups again and again, and desired that their old age might be blessed, and their bright happiness ever increased."

The above sketch of the seasonal sacrifices to ancestors shows that they were mainly designed to maintain the unity of the family connection, and intimately related to the duty of filial piety. Yet by means of them the ancestors of the kings were raised to the position of the Tutelary spirits of the dynasty; and the ancestors of each family became its Tutelary spirits."

Other services were also performed in the temple of ancestors; but less frequently, such as those on the occasion of setting up the spirit-tablet of a deceased monarch twenty-five months after his death, and the celebration, once in five years, when sacrifice was offered to all the ancestors of the royal house, "beginning with the mythical emperor *Kuh*, to whom their lineage was traced."

The existence of God was not lost sight of, nor his

worship entirely neglected, in the course of the Chow dynasty; but both were reduced to a secondary importance in the midst of an accumulating idolatry of half-deified ancestors. In the religious odes the praises of God are often sung, but only as connected with those of ancestral heroes, one of whom is always the principal theme. With the still existing recognition of one God, the worship of the nation was actually paid to thousands of divine beings.

The solemnity of worship was lost in the multitude of its ceremonies. And the imperfect observance of the minutest particular was deemed ominous. Although entirely at variance with a radical principle of Chinese religion, even human victims were sometimes offered in sacrifice to the deified spirits of men. And in the funeral of a prince men were sometimes buried alive along with him. In the odes these things are condemned as contrary to the practice of the ancients. The Muh of Ts'in is censured because "In his death he threw away *the lives of his* people. When the ancient kings left the world, they yet left behind them a good example;—would they ever have snatched away from it its good men? The words of the Ode

‘ Men there are not,  
And the empire must go to ruin  
And misery ’

have reference to the want of good men.’\* The historical classic, which treats of the two hundred years immediately preceding Confucius, is the baldest and

\* Legge v. p. 244.

scantiest of records, and deliberately omits what the author deemed discreditable to his people, but yet with aid of the ancient commentary upon it, bears abundant testimony to an equally degenerate tone of morals. In spite of all devices to ignore and cover up the evil, without committing positive falsehood, it appears that dishonesty, unfaithfulness to trust, licentiousness and murder were of frequent occurrence in the highest places of rank and office, while insubordination and disorder prevailed in the provinces.\* An original veneration for parents, having assumed a religious character, had developed into a semi-polytheism, and a complete idolatry, which so fully occupied the public mind as to remove from it the idea of the supreme Being to a great distance. The moral effect of a real belief in the presence of God had given place to that which must attend upon faith in the guardianship of an indulgent ancestor, who can sympathize with the wishes of his children, and easily tolerate their weaknesses and errors. In the order of ceremony God took precedence, as a superior but far distant monarch.†

“ In spring and Autumn, without delay,  
He presents his offerings without error  
To the great and sovereign God,  
And to his great ancestor How-Tseih.”

That honor of precedence is assigned to God by the Chinese extreme regard for the proprieties of order and deportment, which were prescribed to the minutest particular by the rules of society.

\* See the Ch'un Ts'ew, with the Tso-chuen, *passim*.

† Legge v. 1. page 234 and She-King iv. ii. song iv. 3.

The early fragments of history which constitute the greater part of the Shoo-King and pertain to the second millennium before Christ are imbued with an elevated spiritual religion; the odes, collected during the first reigns of the Chow dynasty from 800 to 1100 years before Christ present a religion more ancestral and less godly, and the Ch'un Ts'ew has no more religious spirit than a calendar. It is from the commentary on it, Tso-chuen, that any view is obtained of the state of religion between the end of the eighth century B. C. and the time of Confucius. At that later epoch the degeneracy extended to all classes, to intellectual culture as well as to religion. It was told to Min-tse-ma that the Lord of Yuen did not like learning. "There will soon be disorder in Chow," he replied. "There must be many there who talk in that way, before such an idea reaches the great men. The great men are troubled at errors [of some who have learned,] and become deluded [on the subject,] till they say, 'Learning may be done without. The want of learning does no harm.' But it is an accidental circumstance when the want of learning does no harm. From such a condition inferiors will be usurping and superiors will be set aside;—is it possible that disorders should not ensue? Learning is like cultivation; if people do not learn, there will be decadence and decay. We may judge that the family of Yuen will come to ruin." \*

Next after the Shoo-King, the Book of poetry is the most interesting of the Chinese sacred scriptures. It is possessed of more real poetry than might be an-

\* Legge v. p. 671.



ticipated from the prosaic character of the Chinese people. But it illuminates only a brief period of their history, and that far from the earliest; and is less devotional than similarly ancient poetry elsewhere. The Ch'un Ts'ew is a very bald and scanty calendar of the province, or state, of Loo, extending from the first year of Duke Yin in 721 B. C. until the fourteenth of Duke Gae in 480 B. C. \* In the province of Loo and in the twenty-second year of Duke Sēang, namely 549 B. C., Confucius was born, at a time of great degeneracy of the national religion and morals.

\* Legge v. Prolegom. p. 102, etc.

## CHAPTER X.

### PROGRESS OF LEGALISM IN THE UNREFORMED POLYTHEISMS.

WHILE these changes were taking place upon the religions of the monotheistic reformation, the old primitive beliefs continued the career of degeneracy which had provoked the dissent. Egypt and the nations of Syria never learned to look upon the religion of the Hebrews as different from their own, otherwise than as the worship of another god. In their estimate Jehovah was only another name added to the pantheon, and as he was the god of an intrusive people, regarded perhaps with apprehension and dislike. Nor does it appear that any of them adopted from his worship an improvement of their own, nor that the natural development of their religious views was in any way obstructed by the influence of Mosaism in their neighborhood.

The sentiment of patriarchal authority pervaded all nations primitively. But its development was various according to the elements with which it was combined. Its outgrowth for the state in all quarters was monarchy, and, for the most part, a sacerdotal monarchy, in which the king was the chief priest or head of the national religion. This took place in Egypt, in As-

syria and in China ; and in Vedic times, also in India. To such degree also were the Homeric heroes sacerdotal princes, that with the aid of professional priests, they presided over the sacrifices they made, and offered prayers for themselves and their people. The increasing importance attached to the accuracy in details of the service gave increasing importance to the professional minister, who had nothing else to occupy his mind. In course of time the Aryan priesthood became separated from the royal office and assigned to a different class or caste. In Assyria the patriarchal idea blossomed into the absolute authority of the monarch in both civil and religious matters. It was the king of Nineveh who ordained the repentance and acts of humiliation before God, at the preaching of Jonah, and Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the great religious observances mentioned as conducted in Babylon under his reign. Such was the position of the king of Egypt in relation to the religion of his people, as long as a native dynasty held the throne.

Another outgrowth of the same sentiment was the deification of some of the proto-patriarchs of each of those great ethnic branches. Ham (Khem) was the Father-god in Egypt, and Asshur in Assyria. Among the Aryans that line of thought was not pursued. Their forefathers became heroes but not gods. In China, it reached the most complete development, entering into the fundamental idea of the civil government, and grasping within its arms the whole of the national religion and system of society.

Such importance as we attached to the Hebrew in the

foregoing connection, is hardly less due to the Hindu, in this. Nowhere else has a primitive religion been fortified by such a legal structure, so complete, so pervasive and so long maintained.

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## I.

### LATER HINDU SCRIPTURES.

Hindu scriptures, subsequent to the ancient hymns, are liturgical, expository, legal, and theological. First, there is worship in which hymns are used. Next comes the formal work of collecting and arranging the hymns, and second to that, the appending of directions for the use of them, with expository remarks about them; thirdly, the construction of separate books for liturgical purposes, and fourthly, the extending of exposition into theological teaching.

The first falls under what Prof. Max Müller distinguishes as the Chhandas period, and the second, under that which he designates of the Mantras.

To the third head belong parts, perhaps the rudimentary parts, of the Brahmanas, then the two liturgical Vedas; the continued extension of the Brahmanas, as attached to all three Vedas; and finally, into those theological treatises called Aranyakas and Upanishads. Of these elements consists the Hindu canon of Scripture, as far as it is thought to be revealed.

A second portion derives its authority, not immediately from revelation, but from tradition, or from the eminent learning, wisdom and piety of its authors.

To this head belong the Sutras, which, although regarded as sacred scripture, are not on a footing of equality with the Brahmanas; and also the laws of Manu, and some other works. There was a time when only the hymns were accepted as revealed. The claiming a divine origin for the Brahmanas was related to a serious dissent in the Hindu religion, but for that, the Sutras might, in course of time, have also been added to the class of revealed.

The nature of that growth will appear more distinctly in the following explanations, collected from Prof. Wilson's Lectures, Müller's History, and Small's Handbook of Sanskrit Literature, Ward on the Hindus and Ballantyne's "Christianity contrasted with Hindu Philosophy."

1. "The Sutra, Brahmana and Mantra periods of Vedic literature all point to some earlier age, which gave birth to the poetry of the early Rishis. There was a time, doubtless, when the songs, which were collected with such careful zeal in the Mantra period, and examined and analyzed with such minute exactness during the Sutra period, lived and were understood without any effort by a simple and pious race. There was a time when the sacrifices, which afterwards became so bewildering a system of ceremonies, were dictated by the free impulse of the human heart, by a yearning to render thanks to some Unknown Being, and to repay, in words and deeds, a debt of gratitude, accumulated from the first breath of life—a time when the poet was the leader, the king and priest of his family or tribe; listened to and looked up to as

better, nobler and wiser than the rest, and as being nearer to the gods in proportion as he was raised above the common level of mankind." "Such men were at once teachers, lawgivers, poets and priests. Their teaching, poetry and religion, simple and crude as they are, possess a peculiar charm, as spontaneous, original and truthful."

The greater portion of what we now possess of Vedic poetry must be ascribed to the Mantra (or secondary) period; but there still remains enough to give us an idea of an earlier race of Vedic poets. Even those earliest specimens of Vedic composition, however, belong clearly, as Bunsen remarks, to the modern history of the human race. Ages must have passed before the grammatical texture of the Vedic Sanskrit could have assumed the consistency and regularity which it shows throughout. The same applies to the religion of the Veda. The earliest periods of its historic growth must have passed away long before the Rishis of India could have worshipped their Devas, or 'bright beings,' with hymns and invocations. But we should look in vain in the literature of Greece or Rome, or of any other Aryan nation, for documents from which to study that interesting chapter in the history of mankind—the transition from a natural into an artificial religion—so full and valuable as we possess them in the Veda."

2. *Mantra period.* "The only document we have in which we can study the characters of the times previous to the Brahmana period is the *Rig-veda Sanhitá*. The other two Sanhitás (viz. of the Yajur-veda and the Sama-

veda) were in truth, what they have been called, 'the attendants of the Rig-veda.' The Brahmanas presuppose the *Trayi-Vidya* the 'threefold knowledge,' or the threefold Veda, but that again presupposes one Veda, and that the Rig-veda. It belongs to a period previous to the complete ascendancy of the Brahmanas, and before the threefold ceremonial had been worked out in all its details. And yet there is some system, some priestly influence clearly distinguishable in that collection also. The ten books of the Rig-veda stand before us as separate collections, each belonging to one of the ancient families of India, but there are traces in them of one superintending spirit. Eight out of the ten *Mandalas* begin with hymns addressed to Agni, and these with one exception, are invariably followed by hymns addressed to Indra. This cannot be the result of mere accident, but must have been from previous agreement, and it leads us to conclude that the *Mandalas* were not made independently by different families, but were collections carried out *simultaneously* in different localities under the supervision of one central authority."

It may be remarked, in passing, that what Prof. Müller infers as the way in which the Indian collection of hymns was made, corresponds to what is historically demonstrable of the Chinese. His chronology, the shortest that can be reasonably supposed, puts the Mantra period between 800 and 1000 B. c. An earlier date is more probable. And between 1100 and 900 B. c. the main body of the Hebrew psalms must have been composed. About that date the great work

of religion over the world was the composition and collecting of hymns and sacred songs. Not much if any later, Greece produced her hymns to the gods. No other period in the world's history presents such a universal and systematic care in collecting and classifying the productions of religious poetry. That zeal was probably stimulated by the presence of the best hymn-writers, and having completed its work the gift of poetic production became less common and finally disappeared; or what was subsequently composed failed to meet the same zealous appreciation. The period to which the great collections of psalms and hymns belong is that lying between 1100 and 800 years before Christ. Then were the She-King of China, the Rig-veda Sanhitá of India, the mass of the Hebrew psalms, and of the Greek hymns to the gods, each in their respective ethnic connections, compiled.

3. "It is difficult to give an exhaustive definition of what a Brahmana is. 'They were Brahmanic (*i. e.* theological) tracts, comprising the knowledge most valued by the Brahmans, bearing partly on their sacred hymns, partly on the traditions and customs of the people. They profess to teach the performance of the sacrifice, but for the greater part are occupied with additional matter, chiefly connected with the Hindu faith and ceremonials." They are included under the name of Veda, but are of a "more peculiarly sacrificial character" than the Mantras, and are not composed in metre. Different portions of them are referred to under various names, and some of those divisions must have been written at far distant periods of time; as in-



deed "is proved not only by the testimony of Pánini, but also by quotations in the Brahmanas themselves." They represent successive stages in the Hindu religion, and in that respect are of much value ; but according to a competent authority "judged by themselves as literary productions, they cannot be matched anywhere for pedantry and downright absurdity. Their general character is marked by shallow and insipid grandiloquence, by priestly conceit and antiquarian pedantry."

4. "The Aranyakas, or 'Treatises of the Forests,' were so called, as Sayana, 'an Indian critic, informs us, because they were to be read in the forest.' It seems as if they had been intended for persons "who after having performed all the duties of a student and a householder, retire from the world to the forest to end their days in the contemplation of the Deity. In several instances the Aranyakas form part of the Brahmanas, and they are thus made to share the authority of *Sruti*, or revelation. The most important Upanishads, which are full of philosophy and theology, form part of the Aranyakas, and (particularly in later times) the Aranyaka was considered the quintessence of the Vedas."

"The Aranyakas presuppose the existence of the Brahmanas, and may be considered as enlargements upon them. The philosophical chapters, known by the name of Upanishads, are almost the only portion of Vedic literature which is extensively read to this day. They are supposed to contain the highest authority on which the various systems of philosophy in India rest. The founders of the various systems, if they have any

pretensions to orthodoxy, invariably appeal to some passage in the Upanishads, in order to substantiate their own reasonings. However, when none of the ancient Upanishads could be found to suit their purpose (liberal and conflicting as they often are), the founders of new sects had no scruple, and no difficulty in composing new Upanishads of their own. This accounts for the large and ever increasing number of these treatises, the most modern of which seem now to enjoy the same authority as the really ancient and genuine. The original Upanishads had their places in the Brahmanas and Aranyakas, but chiefly in the latter." It is in these productions that the great philosophic system, which attempts to harmonize the conflicting ingredients of Hindu religion had its beginning.

5. "The word *Sutra* literally means a string; and all the works written in this style, on subjects the most various, are nothing but one uninterrupted string of short sentences, twisted together into the most concise form. Shortness is the great object of this style of composition, and it is a proverbial saying among the Pandits, that 'an author rejoiceth in the economizing of half a short vowel as much as in the birth of a son.' Every doctrine thus propounded, whether grammar, metre, law, or philosophy, is reduced to a mere skeleton. All the important points and joints of a system are laid open with the greatest precision and clearness, but there is nothing in these works like connection or development of ideas. 'Even the apparent simplicity of the design,' as Colebrooke remarks, 'vanishes in the

perplexity of the structure. The endless pursuit of exceptions and limitations so disjoins the general precepts, that the reader cannot keep in view their intended connection and mutual relation. He wanders in an intricate maze, and the clue of the labyrinth is continually slipping from his hands.' There is no life or meaning in these Sutras, except what either a teacher or running commentary, by which these works are usually accompanied, may impart to them."

In the Sutras are compacted the substance of "all the knowledge which the Brahmans had accumulated during many centuries of study and meditation:" and their form, like the rules in a school book, is a convenience for committing to memory, most likely the result of a long continued system of traditional teaching.

The Sutras are sacred writ, but not revelation, "In the dogmatic language of orthodox Hindus, the works which contain the *sruti* have not been composed, but have only been seen or perceived by men, i. e., they have been revealed to them. The Sutras, on the contrary, although based on the Sruti," "are yet avowedly composed by human authors. Whenever they appear to be in contradiction with the Sruti, their authority is at once overruled."

"This distinction has ever been the stronghold of the hierarchical pretensions of the Brahmans. We can easily understand how a nation might be led to ascribe a superhuman origin to their ancient national poetry, particularly if consisting chiefly of prayers and hymns addressed to their gods. But the reason why the *prose* compositions of the Brahmanas, which are

evidently so much more modern than the Mantras, were allowed to participate in the name of Sruti, could only have been because it was from these theological compositions, and not from the simple old poetry of the hymns, that a supposed divine authority could be derived for the greater number of the ambitious claims of the Brahmans. We can find no reason why the Sutras should not also have been ranked as Sruti, except the lateness of their date, if compared with the Brahmanas, and still more with the Mantras."

"The distinction between Sruti (revelation) and Smriti (tradition) had been established by the Brahmans previously to the rise of Buddhism," and their claim of a divine origin for the Brahmanas had much to do with the schism and success of Buddha.

6. *Law or Regulations.* Another class of sacred scriptures consists of those supplementary to the Vedas and called the Dharma Sástras. "These belong partly to the Brahmana and partly to the Sutra periods of Sanskrit literature, and consist of

1. The Vedanta (end or scope of the Veda), under which name there is an ancient work in Sanskrit, said to have been composed about two thousand years ago, and to contain an abstract or quintessence, of all the Vedas united. It is also "known as the Pûrvá Mimánsá, that is, the first, or most ancient inquiry, in opposition to the Uttará, or Brahmá Mimánsá, one of the philosophical systems."

2. The four supplementary Vedas (Upa-vedas) are the *Ayus* which treats of diseases and medicine, with practical methods of treating bodily disorders ;

second the Gandharva, a treatise on music, third, the Dhanus, on the making and use of arms and implements employed by the Kshatrya caste ; and the fourth, a collection of various treatises on sixty-four mechanical arts, for the improvement of such as exercise them."

3. The Vedangas, (members of the Veda) "are considered as in some sense a subordinate part of the Vedas. Six sciences are treated of in them ; 1. *Siksha*, or the science of pronunciation and articulation ; 2. *Chhandas*, prosody ; 3. *Vyakarana*, grammar ; 4. *Nirukta*, the explanation of difficult or obscure words and phrases that occur in the Vedas ; 5. *Kalpa*, an account of religious ceremonies ; *Jyotisha*, on astronomy or astrology. The first two are considered as necessary for reading the Veda ; the next two for understanding it, and the last two for employing it at sacrifices.

The *Pratisakhya*s treat of the metre, accent and pronunciation of the ancient sacred hymns, and lay down the rules and exceptions systematically. And the whole subject of Vedic grammar was presented in its utmost completeness by Panini.

4. The Upangas, or additional limbs, are four in number, viz., the *Purána*, or history ; the *Nyaya*, or logic ; the *Mimansa*, or moral philosophy ; and the *Dharma Sastra*, or jurisprudence.

5. The *Parisishtas* are a class of works intimately connected with the Sutra period, although of a later date than the sutras, and of secondary importance. They have, however, a character of their own, and represent a distinct period of Hindu literature, which, though it shows clear traces of intellectual and literary

degeneracy, is not to be altogether overlooked." "Some of the Parisishtas profess to be composed by authors whose names doubtless belong to the sutra period." Such are Saunaka and Katyayana. The style of these compositions is less concise than that of the Sutras. They are in metre: and there is a collection of Parisishtas for each Veda, eighteen being attributed to the Yajur Veda. The Rig and Sama-Vedas seem not to have had so many, but their number is uncertain. They are said to have been written in the form of dialogues, in a style similar to that of the Puranas." Though unknown to the ancient grammarian, Panini, it appears that they belong to the Vedic age; but may be considered as the very last outskirts of Vedic literature. Later Sanskrit books are concerned with philosophy, law, criticism, poetry, and mythology.

From the beginning of the work of classifying the hymns, all through this process of Vedic literature, the controlling sentiment is that of law, as inherent in that of religion. It is the legal element of religion which finds the fullest exposition, in order, in definition, in precept, in formula, in ceremonies, and prescribed duties. That tendency ripens in the production of Dharma Sastras, or law-books, and finally, in the great Manava-Dharma-Sastra; or as it is commonly called the "Laws of Manu." As to the date at which that maturity was reached, authors differ from 800, to 1280 B. C.

The work alludes to earlier codes which have now no existence save in as far as incorporated with itself. Under that control of law, the subsequent development of the Brahmanical system and sacred literature grew

up; and subject to it was the expansion of Hindu mythology and philosophy.

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## II.

### RELIGIOUS CLASSES AND CASTES.

In course of the same process the Hindu people manifested an analogous tendency to array themselves into classes, and to create and accept class regulations. According to their pursuits, all were distributed into a few, as Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, great classes which subsequently divided themselves into many. The regulations proper to each became increasingly numerous and stringent. Brahmans become the priest class. But the priests are of different orders appropriated to different offices, as Hotri, Udgatri, and Adhvaryu-priests. In study of the sacred books, sects arose which perpetuated themselves and their prescribed topics and methods, for long periods of time. Certain Sanhitas, Brahmanas and Sutras were made the specialties of as many different Charanas, or sects, which so identified themselves with their work that it is often called Charana. These Charanas were all of the priest class. The bond of unity in any one of them was their community of sacred texts. But high rank Hindus were also classified by families under the name of Gotra, or Kula, which were held together by real or imaginary ties of blood, and by special family regulations touching the duties and privileges of religion. Gotras, or eminent families, existed among

Kshatriyas and Vaisyas as well as among Brahmans. But the most eminent were those of the Brahmanic families who keep the sacred fire, who are supposed to be descended from the so called seven but really eight Rishis, or saints. "The eight Gotras thus descended are subdivided into forty-nine Gotras, and these forty-nine branch off into a still greater number of families."

"A Brahman, who keeps the sacrificial fire, is obliged by law to know to which of the forty-nine Gotras his own family belongs, and in consecrating his own fire he must invoke the ancestors who founded the Gotra of his family. Each of the Gotras claims one, two, three or five ancestors, and the names of these ancestors constitute the distinctive character of each Gotra. A list of these forms part of most of the Kalpa-sutras." These lists, accordingly, had a practical bearing on two most important acts of ancient Brahmanic society, viz., the consecrating of the sacrificial fire and marriage. "Persons belonging to the same Gotra, or tribe, were not allowed to intermarry. Violation of that law, in all but a very few Gotras, "was considered incest, and visited with severe penance."

Such a method of severe distinctions and classification, of the people extending from the highest to the lowest, and interesting every upper class in its permanence, from a view to class privileges, gradually while ostensibly conferring honor, fastened down and riveted the fetters of a legal bondage upon all.



## III.

## BRAHMANICAL PHILOSOPHY.

Another development of Hindu religion was due to the philosophical tendencies of the Hindu mind. Ancient philosophy early shaped itself according to the views of six different schools, which were not so much adverse philosophic systems, as progressive stages in the teaching of the same system. And the professed design of all was to teach the method by which eternal blessedness might be secured either before death or after it. The path which the soul is to arrive at this supreme felicity is science, or knowledge. "The discovery and the setting forth of the means by which this knowledge may be obtained, is the object of the various treatises and commentaries which Hindu philosophy has produced."

The six schools, Darsanas, "or stages of that philosophy are the Nyáya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Vedanta, and Mimánsá Darasna." But "the Vaiseshika being in some sort supplementary to the Nyáya, the two are familiarly spoken of as one collective system under the name of Nyáya; and as the case is somewhat similar with the two other pairs, it is customary to speak of Hindu philosophy as being divisible into the Nyáya the Sankhya, and the Vedanta schools. These three systems, if we follow the commentators, differ more in appearance than in reality, and hence they are, each in its degree, viewed with a certain amount of favor by orthodox Hindus. Their common

bond of union is their implicit acceptance of the Vedas, which however they explain differently. In this respect, and on this ground, they unite in opposing Buddhism, which denies the authority of the Vedas.

These three systems differ from one another in the several points of view from which they regard the Universe,—or things in general—as standing in relation severally to sensation, emotion, and intellection.” “The *Naiyayika*, founding on the fact that we have various sensations, inquires what and how many are the channels through which such varied knowledge flows in? Finding there are five very different channels, he imagines five different externals adapted to these. Hence his theory of the five elements—the aggregate of what the *Nyāya* regards as the causes of affliction.

“The Sankhya, struck with the fact that we have emotions—with an eye to the question whence our impressions come—inquires their quality. Are they *pleasing, displeasing, or indifferent?* These three qualities constitute, for him, the external, and to their aggregate he gives the name of Nature. With the *Naiyayika* he agrees in wishing that we were well rid of all three, holding that things pleasing and things indifferent, are not less incompatible with man’s chief end than things positively displeasing.

“Thus, while the *Nyāya* allows to the external a substantial existence, the *Sankhya* admits its existence only as an aggregate of qualities; while both allow that it really (eternally and necessarily) exists.

“The *Vedantin*, rising above the question as to

what is pleasing, displeasing, or indifferent, asks simply what *is* and what is *not*. The categories are here reduced to two—the real and unreal. The categories of the Nyáya and the Sankhya were merely scaffolding for reaching this pinnacle of philosophy. The implied foundation was in all respects the same, viz., the Veda.”

“Thus the Nyáya is conveniently introductory to the Sankhya, and the Sankhya to the Vedanta. And it is in this order that in Hindu schools, where all three are taught, the learner usually takes them up. The Nyáya is the *exoteric* doctrine, the Sankhya, a step nearer what is held as truth, and the Vedanta the *esoteric* doctrine, or the naked truth.”

In making this distinction, it is not to be understood that the “Nyáya confines itself to sensation, excluding emotion and intellection; nor that the other systems ignore the fact of sensation; but that the arrangement of this system has a more pointed regard to the fact of the five senses than the others have, and treats the external more frankly as a solid reality.”

It is a system which undertakes to teach the “proper method of arriving at that knowledge of the truth, the fruit of which, it promises, is the chief end of man.” “When knowledge of the truth is attained to, false notions depart; on their departure, the ‘*fault*’ of concerning one’s self about any external object ceases; thereupon the enlightened sage ceases to *act*; then, there being no *actions* that call for either reward or punishment, there is no occasion, after his death, for his being *born again* to receive reward or punishment;

then not being born again, so as to be liable to pain, there is no room for 'pain,' and the absence of pain is the Nyāya conception of the *Summum Bonum*."

Between soul and body the distinction made by this philosophy is that of different entity, and the reduction of the latter is the improvement of the former by emancipating it from an injurious bondage. Another source of evil is activity, defined "as that which originates the [utterance of] the voice, the [cognitions of] the understanding, and the [gestures of] the body, and is regarded as the cause of birth, which is the cause of pain, which it is the *summum bonum* to get permanently rid of." "It is through our own 'fault' that we are active," and "our faults have this characteristic, that they cause activity." These faults are classed under the heads of affection, aversion, and stolidity, or delusion," each of which "leads to actions, the recompense of which, whether good or evil, must be received in some birth, or state of mundane existence, to the postponement of the great end of entire emancipation." The greatest of all evils from which it is desirable to be emancipated is transmigration. To escape from being born again is indispensable to the highest good, and is to be obtained by "abnegation of all action, good or bad."

The Veseshika is more mystical and metaphysical. Religion it defines as "Those ceremonies by the practice of which the knowledge of the divine nature is obtained, and that by which all evil is forever removed." Of God it teaches that He is "essentially possessed of wisdom; that He is the ever blessed and supremely

happy ; and that in all His works and His will, He is irresistible and omnipotent.”

The universe it distinguishes from God and arranges under its component parts. And matter is so far an evil, that separation from it is indispensable to “complete deliverance from sorrow, and the enjoyment of final bliss.”

It also teaches the necessity of a firm belief in religion ; and assumes as its basis, not human, but divine, testimony as contained in the sacred scriptures of the Veda. Religion is not conceived of as purely spiritual, but as a ritual, to the existence of which certain instruments are indispensable.

“ By the knowledge of the excellent fruits of good actions (as those are connected with sacrifices, ablutions, gifts, etc.), when performed with a fixed and ardent mind, men are drawn to practice the duties of religion ; and by a knowledge of the future evil consequences of certain actions (such as visiting forbidden places, committing injuries, eating forbidden fruit, etc.), men are deterred from those actions.”

In treating of cause and effect, proofs are adduced of the existence of God, and of spirit in man distinct from the corporeal frame. In opposition to the doctrine that “the body is a collection of atoms, which contain a living principle, and that this living principle is not something separate from the body, but inherent in atoms, and therefore diffused through the whole body,” it is objected that thereby “you deny the existence of inanimate matter. For if atoms be animate and this be an atom-formed world,

then all matter must be life ; for this is a settled maxim, that the nature of the cause is always seen in the effect. Why then do we not see matter possessed of life ? ”

Next, from the “existence of anxiety arising from desire and aversion ” is argued “the existence of a spirit separate from body or matter, since these emotions are excited by a perception of the good or evil arising from certain things, so that good is sought and evil is avoided. But this perception of the good and bad results of different actions, and the anxiety, occasioned by this perception, to embrace that which produces good and avoid that which produces evil, are attributes of spirit. And as we find these perceptions and this anxiety existing in ourselves, we infer that they must exist in others, since they possess with us a common nature, and from thence we ascend up to a first cause distinct from Matter.”

“The mode of matter and spirit becoming united is next discussed. ‘When an animal soul, through having the consequences of good and evil actions attached to it, is about to assume human birth, it is united to a single atom, and to this others are added, till a regular body is formed. All material things are composed of atoms, which singly are invisible.’ Atoms are uncreated, and are of four kinds, from which arise earth, water, light, and air.”

“Some Hindu philosophers plead for the existence of innumerable minds in one individual. Others endeavor to establish the doctrine of five minds to agree with the senses. Kanáda founder of the Vais-

eshika system, contends for one reasoning faculty in each individual." Mind he teaches is "a single power, but is possessed of five faculties corresponding with the senses, by which its faculties are multiplied."

Sin is ascribed to the effect of actions in a former state of existence. Habits generated in some previous stage of transmigration transmit to the human being its bias to wrong.

As respecting religious duties, the system teaches that in the "pursuit of secular concerns a person is not to expect the benefits peculiar to a future state. Nor in the duties connected with the invisible world are visible fruits to be sought. Invisible benefits refer to the pleasures of heaven, and absorption in Brahama. The duties that procure invisible benefits are such as bathing at holy places, fasting on holy days, the study of the Veda in the house of a divine teacher, offering appointed sacrifices, and in general the practice of asceticism. "Actions are religious or otherwise, according to the motives which inspire the performers."

The chief aim of religion is to obtain liberation from transmigratory births. Vaiseshika teaches that it is to be effected by listening to the description of spirit contained in the Sastra, by meditation, by the acquisition of the knowledge of *Yoga* (asceticism), by perfect fixedness of mind and correct posture during the performance of *Yoga*, by restraining the breath, by retaining in subjection the powers of the body and mind, and by the vision of spirit in the animal soul. Hence, future birth is wholly prevented, and

all sorrow annihilated; and this is what is called *liberation*.

So far, Hindu theology issues in self-righteousness effected by asceticism as the only way of salvation from sinful desires and aversions. From that fundamental doctrine the Sankhya system has no dissent. It makes, however, "a step in advance of the Nyáya by reducing the external from the category of *substance* to that of *quality*. *Souls alone* are, in the Sankhya, regarded as substances; whatever affects the soul being arranged under the head of a quality—1. pleasing; 2. displeasing; or 3. indifferent. This mode of viewing the Universe may be designated the emotional view of things."

The word Sankhya means '*numeral*, rational, or discriminative. The system promises beatitudes as the reward of that discrimination which rightly distinguishes between soul and nature."

Like the Nyáya, the Sankhya is presented in a set of aphorisms. It begins by defining the chief aim of human life as being "the complete cessation of pain." Pain is of "three kinds, 1. diseases, griefs etc., which are intrinsic, or inherent in the sufferer; 2. injuries from ordinary external things; and 3. injuries from things supernatural or meteorological." Kapila, author of the Sankhya system, declares "that the bondage under which the soul, or individual man groans, is due to its conjunction with nature, and this bondage is merely seeming, because soul is ever essentially a pure and free intelligence." The distinction being made between the soul and the mind, and bondage residing in



the mind, that of the soul is merely a reflection. Liberation of the soul from this ensnaring contact is, accordingly, to be effected by the "discrimination" "of soul as contradistinguished from nature." The plurality of souls is asserted; and the doctrine of annihilation explicitly repudiated.

*Yoga*, or asceticism, not introduced but systematically taught by the sage Patanjali, taught "that the Divine Spirit and the soul of man are distinct: that the former is free from passion, but not the latter: that God is possessed of form, and capable of being seen by the true *Yogi*, (i. e., practicer of the *Yoga* rites and duties:) that He is placable, glorious, the creator, the preserver and the regenerator of all things: that the Universe first arose from His will, or command, and that He infused into the system a power of perpetual progression; that the truth of things was discoverable by the senses, by experience, comparison and revelation: that some material things are unchanged and others changeable, and that the latter pass through six changes, as birth, increase, etc., that everything originates in the five elements, fire, water, etc., that knowledge is of five sorts, certain, uncertain, etc.; that there are five kinds of men, viz., those who are governed by their passions, the wrathful, the benevolent, the pious, and those who are freed from wordly attachments, "and finally that emancipation is to be obtained by the practice of *Yoga*, or perfect abstraction of mind."

*Yoga* is further explained by ancient commenta-

tors as "the restraining of the mind, and confining it to internal meditations."

"When the mind is then confined within, it becomes assimilated to the Being whom it seeks to know;" and the object of Yoga is by certain ascetic practices to detain the mind upon God, and thereby prevent the evils of natural life. The directions for those practices are numerous and particular. They include seclusion, silence, inactivity, and as far as possible suppression of breathing. The Yogi must "endeavor to fix the understanding by some act of the senses, e. g., he must place his sight and thoughts on the tip of his nose, by which he will perceive smell; then bring his mind to the tip of his tongue, when taste will be realized; and afterwards fix his thoughts on the root of his tongue, by which sound will be suggested." Thus it was expected that the spirit would be gradually abstracted from all the agitation of desires and aversions wherein consists sin. He will be tranquil, impassive. "His mind will be fixed whose intercourse with secular objects is like that of a person in a deep sleep, who, without the active union of the senses, partakes of perfect happiness. He who meditates on God, placing his mind on the sun, moon, fire, or any other luminous body, or within his heart, or at the bottom of his throat, or in the centre of his skull, will by afterwards ascending from those gross images of the Deity to the glorious original, secure fixedness of mind." "He thus becomes identified with the Deity; that is, visible objects, the operations of the understanding, and

personal identity, become absorbed in the Being contemplated, in the same manner as the crystal receives the image of whatever is reflected upon it." The blessedness of Yoga is to be secured by "relinquishment of all happiness in secular things, and by that meditation which identifies every religious formula, every sacred utensil, and every offering with the object of worship. This object is the supreme Being, represented as being free from the fruit of works, i. e., exempt from birth among any of the forms of matter, from increase or decrease of life, and from enjoyment or suffering as the consequence of actions. To his will all creatures owe their preservation. He is omnipotent, eternal, the omniscient fountain of knowledge, who presides over all events.

This Being the Yogi must intensely and continuously meditate on, while repeating constantly his sacred name. Thus he gradually loses his worldly attachment, the quality of goodness obtains a clearer manifestation in him, and he is brought to resemble God, and thus he obtains also deliverance from the effects of birth, and final emancipation."

"That he may not fall from the elevation he has attained, the Yogi still seeks God by meditation on his names, or on the import of those names, or on his existence, after which he loses all remembrance of the names of the Deity, and of their import, and God is realized in the mind as pure light, and to this succeeds a state of mind similar to self-annihilation."

Such perfection is not to be expected of all men. It is the attainment of the saint; the mature victory

of the Hindu monk. Other degrees of blessedness are marked out for secular persons, and which are to be reached by the practice of similar austerities, "the repetition of the names of God, or of incantations without the desire of benefit, referring all to the will of God." They are to seek victory over pain and its causes, which are of five kinds, viz., illusion, consciousness of self-existence, passion, religious disgust, and love of life. The last mentioned is to be overcome by turning the thoughts inward, which will infallibly secure meditation upon God. The other causes of pain are to be overcome by fixing the mind on God, and by cultivating benevolent feelings towards men in every condition of life."

This is not so high a degree of blessedness as that of the saint. But then it is also taught that to "secular persons the consequences of illusion do not produce sorrow as they do to the Yogi. The former are likened to those members of the body which remain at ease, while the visual faculty, from some accident suffers excruciating pain; the Yogi is the eye of the body." But in the secular as in the saint the ultimate blessedness kept in view—the sum of salvation, is deliverance from the necessity of being born again, in the appalling cycle of transmigrations.

The Vedanta system "taught that the best idea we can form of God is that he is light or glory. At the same time it maintained that God is a spirit, without passions, separate from matter; that he is pure wisdom and happiness; one without a second, everlasting, incomprehensible, and unchangeable; and that,

after describing all modes of existence, he is that which is none of these."

The universe, it taught, was formed by the five elements, viz., air, fire, water, earth, and æther (or vacuum :) that the world, being destitute of life, was liable to dissolution; that God himself was the sole possessor of life, and that one divine spirit pervaded the whole animated creation."

It taught creation of atoms, and that thence "the Creator caused the first forms of things to arise." Salvation for men was deliverance from matter and re-absorption in the Divine Spirit; and that was to be obtained in the following manner:—First, the devotee must read through the Vedas. He must suffer no desire of advantage to mix with his religious services; must renounce everything forbidden in the Sastras; must render himself pure by the performance of daily devotions, duties for the good of others, atonements, and divine contemplation; must acquaint himself with the unprofitableness of that which is fleeting and transitory, and the value of that which is unchangeable and eternal; must renounce all hope of present or future rewards, gain the complete mastery over all his sensual organs, and meditate on God in all the forms and media by which he is made known to his creatures. By the power of these meditations and austerities the soul will leave the body through the basilar suture, and ascend to the heaven of Agni (the god of fire), from thence, in succession, to various other Heavens, till, having obtained in the heaven of Varuna, an aerial body, the devotee will ascend to the heaven

of Brahma, and after the expiration of one hundred years of Brahma and that God's absorption into the divine spirit, the devotee likewise will obtain the same state of felicity."

Such was gradual emancipation. Immediate emancipation was to be secured only by divine wisdom. But in order that divine wisdom should exist in the mind, all consciousness of outward things must be expelled by meditation on the one supreme Spirit. When that attainment was made the soul would enjoy emancipation even in a bodily state.

The radical idea of the Vedanta system is the essential identity of all being. To believe the opposite is the supposed root of evil. When the dictum "that art thou," i. e., Thou—whosoever thou art—art the one," has been rightly understood and accepted, the accepter of it changing the 'Thou' to the first person, reflects thus—'I am the one.' This is so far well; but he must finally get rid of the habit of making even himself an object of thought. There must be no object. What was previously the subject must now remain alone—an entity, a thought, a joy; but these three being one only—"the existent joy thought."

Such an increasingly abstract philosophy operating within the field of religion and being at the same time of the nature of sacerdotal law, went to build up the importance of monasticism and the rule of the sacerdotal orders; and to establish that rule over body and soul of all who believed in it, for time and eternity.

In the Mimánsá system it was taught that "God is to be worshipped only through the incantations of the

Vedas ; that the Vedas were uncreated, and contained in themselves the proofs of their own divinity, the very words of which are unchangeable. Its reasonings on the nature of material things were similar to those "of the Nyāya philosophy, insisting that truth is capable of the clearest demonstration, without the possibility of mistake. Creation, preservation and destruction are represented as regulated by the merit and demerit of works," while the "doctrine of the Universe" is rejected. It is maintained that the images of the gods were not real representations of those beings, but only given to assist the mind of the worshipper ; that the mere forms of worship had neither merit nor demerit in them ; and that the promises of the Sastra to persons who presented so many offerings, so many prayers, etc., were only given as allurements to duty."

The person who sought final emancipation, was directed "to cherish a firm belief in the Vedas, as well as persuasion of the benefits of religion, and the desire of being engaged in the service of the gods ; and then by entering upon the duties of religion, and by degrees ascending through the states of a student, a secular, and a hermit, he would be sure to obtain final absorption in Brahmá."

Religion is described as "That which secures happiness." It is incumbent upon man to "attend to the duties of religion, not only on this account, but in obedience to the commands of God." Forms of praise, motives to duty, and religious observances are auxiliaries to the divine law, and have therefore a relative sanctity and obligation."

“Those actions from which future happiness will arise are called religious, or good, because productive of happiness; and those which tend to future misery are called evil on account of their evil fruits.” Hence, according to this system, “actions of themselves have in them neither good nor evil. Their nature can only be inferred from the declarations of the Veda respecting them, or from future consequences. The Hindus appear to have no just idea of *moral evil*.”

With perhaps the exception of the Ramayana, the other great works of Hindu literature are the productions of later dates, subsequent to the rise of Buddhism.

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#### IV.

##### PROGRESS OF WORSHIP IN INDIA.

The testimonies now adduced sufficiently declare the nature and tendency of development in the history of Hindu religion. Though checked for a time by Buddhism, its later progress followed the same direction, by its own inner cyclic movement, to the last extreme.

1. The primitive central point of theism, belief in one Supreme Being, is never abandoned. But

2. The idea that his works in nature are manifestations of himself leads to the belief that he divides himself into various gods, yet retaining his identity in all.

From these points two different lines of development proceeded.



1. Personifications of divine powers hardened into separate and real personalities, before the common mind. The figurativeness of the divine names was, in course of time, popularly lost sight of, and the names used purely as designating different gods, presiding in different kingdoms of nature. And these multiplied to correspond to the multiplicity of provinces in nature, and otherwise, filled creation with spiritual personages.

By a similar process, the different gods were assigned their respective symbols, and these embodied in images to which worship was paid as to the god himself. Polytheism is not necessarily idolatry, though it tends naturally in that direction. Hindus of Vedic times were to some extent polytheists; but not idolators. No images were used by them of the gods they adored. In later times, the symbol came to be deemed the likeness of the god, animated by him, and thence to be the real embodiment of him, who was worshipped in it.

2. On the other hand, the originally sole supreme Being is progressively further removed from the life of man. His manifestations take his place. The Vedic gods, Varuna and Indra, appear with all the sovereignty of godhead. But as divine persons increase in number, and cease to appear as supreme, so they are conceived of as further separated from the Supreme Being, until there grows up a hierarchy of deities of different ranks, with the One Great God over all, essentially in all, but not personally anywhere.

Of this hierarchy the humbler are the nearest to

human life, and take most interest in it; while the supreme God is so far away, so exalted above the cares of men that men cannot, or dare not, hope that any appeal to him will receive the least attention. He exists in a state of inactive blessedness from and to all eternity, and is in and comprehends all things, without being moved to an interest in anything.

Thus the originally paternal God—God whom men called Father—is erroneously exalted into a visionary existence, and imaginary beings are endued with reality, and put into his place, and this progressively more and more until he is actually removed from all the love and veneration of men, and ceases to be an object of worship altogether.

Parallel with this theological development, philosophy speculating upon existing belief, at its different stages, rendered each successive step plausible to the reason. It appears that philosophy did not form the national religion, but in course of time, introduced itself into interpretation of the sacred books; and subsequently took its place as the sole expounder of all the elements of religion as they grew. It was the light by which the Priesthood reconciled their religion to their reason. The growth of polytheism and idolatry is from and among the populace, slowly and imperceptibly; and no doubt in those early ages among that religious people they grew only as fast as they were earnestly believed; the faith of the priesthood expanded the range of philosophy to reconcile all with a rational system of thinking.

But an everlasting, infinite and all-pervading God,

when divested of affections and of personality, otherwise than as manifested in the ten thousand myriad phases of created existence, becomes merely the essential substance and spirit of being. Tens of thousands of deities as different manifestations of one, when those manifestations represent all known kingdoms and provinces of nature, lead, by a process of reasoning, to the conclusion that all things are God, and that God and the universe are identical. Of all systems of Pantheism, the most consistent and unforced, the most rational in its growth and conclusions was that of the Hindu.

It lurked, though unperceived, in the very incipency of their mythology. The figurative designation of divine beings from powers of nature contained occultly a principle, which a consistent philosophy could scarcely fail to unfold as a pantheistic unity. In China that tendency was checked and counterbalanced by a mythology of ancestors; in Egypt by a pantheon of local deities, each sole for his proper city or district; while the one common god over all was not a mere generalization of all pervading law, but the monarch of the universe, as imaged in the sun, whose type upon earth was Pharaoh. Pantheism was far from unknown among the priesthood of Egypt; it appears distinctly in a hymn to the Deity, recently published from a large Hieratic writing \* of the twentieth dynasty and bearing the name of Rameses IX.; but it was not in the basis of the national faith. In India, it was the natural fruit of religious thinking about Deity, from the first, conceived of as operating in and through

\*Published with a translation by Paul Pierret, Paris, 1873.

nature, and expressing Himself in the operations of nature.

Accordingly Varuna, the ancient god, who used to come down and reside with potent and paternal benevolence among men, is forgotten. Altars no longer smoke in his service. No longer is prayer or adoration offered to him. Brahma is generalized into the neuter Brahm, and relegated by Philosophy to an infinite distance, and a vast duration of inactivity; while as Brahma he merely retains his place as a traditional, but unworshipped member of the Triad. Deity, as far as concerned in human affairs, and approachable by human worship, now centred in the great Triad of the Pantheistic cycle, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, from the last of whom spring two others, Durga and Kali, forever controlling the activities of being in creation, preservation, destruction and regeneration. And Deity was accepted as coming down to the passions, as well as the interests of men in the incarnations of Vishnu, and the manifold characters assumed by them. To these gods were added their corresponding energies; and thus new elements were added to the multiplication of gods. And the rites and ceremonies of worship were varied or increased according to the character of him to whom it was offered.

Before the rise of Buddhism, the Hindu religion had become practically polytheistic and idolatrous; and theoretically, to the few, a system of pantheism.

The doctrine of life was, to all classes, that of emanation from impersonal Deity into a vast and dreary circle of transmigrations. Vice was punished by a

transfer to a lower grade of existence; virtue, by elevation to one of a higher degree; and the blessedness to be expected was re-absorption into Deity impersonal and unconscious.

Practical virtue was not overlooked, but the principal demands of religion consisted in rites, ceremonies, and acts of asceticism, many of which were imposed by law; and others might be voluntarily observed with corresponding increase of merit. By these means, more than by common virtue, were the rewards of a future life to be earned.

A universally prevailing belief in transmigration of souls made the present life, with its utmost sufferings, appear of little moment except in its relation to the stages of existence which were to follow. In its brevity, it was as nothing in the eyes of the Hindu, compared with the stupendous cycle of hundreds and thousands of years, in which he might have to pass through one birth after another into as many different states of being. The earnest believer contemplated such a future with the gloomiest apprehensions, and was willing to submit to any amount and degree of austerities, that thereby he might step through death immediately into the bosom of Brahm, where he should neither enjoy nor suffer any more, and never be born again.

The naturally religious spirit of the Hindu was crushed into bondage under the Brahmanical priesthood wielding the power of such convictions. And the priesthood itself was as completely controlled by them as were the people. For their faith was no fiction to either.

Hence Hindus, even more than Egyptians, lived in

their religion, and with a view to its promises of a future state. All present things, to them, were illusory, mere seeming and deceiving. The only reality was all-pervading Deity. Transient forms, mere appearances, why should they be recorded? History was nothing; and the unseen world was all.

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V

PROGRESS OF EGYPTIAN SYMBOLISM.

Whatever immediate effect the exode of Israel may have had upon the Egyptian people, it was not one of permanent change in their religious convictions. If alarmed for a time by the wonderful concomitants of that event, they soon returned to their former practices and belief.

The primary element of Egyptian polytheism, consisting in each of the great cities having its own single impersonation of Deity, besides giving the whole country, when united, many gods, unfolded itself also into triads, each consisting of a father, a mother and a son. "Each triad was worshipped in the sanctuary of one of the capital cities of the nomes, and no two cities worshipped the same triad. Now the rank held by the triad enshrined in the sanctuary in the scale of the divine emanations, was in direct relation with the political and administrative importance of the city. We can scarcely find even two or three exceptions to the rule, that when cities of great importance in very ancient times, and where a worship had been officially

constituted, lost their old importance, the gods, who were there worshipped, lost their rank in the divine hierarchy.

The supreme triad was that of Thebes, composed of Amen-ra (Amen the sun), who had become officially the greatest god of Egypt, from the time that the twelfth dynasty established its native city as the capital of the country; Maut, the divine mother *par excellence*; and Chons, son of Amen, who was also a form of Amen himself; for in these groups of divinities the son is always identified with his father. Amen is, however, the most elevated, the most spiritual form of the deity presented by the Egyptian priests for the adoration of the crowds in the temples. He is the invisible and incomprehensible god; his name means 'the hidden;' he is in fact the mysterious power who created, preserved and governed the world. An invaluable passage in the Ritual distinctly represents him as the original and only first principle, the other divine personages being merely his attributes or emanations. 'Amen-Ra' it is there said (chap xvii), 'is the creator of his members; they become the other gods who are associated with him.'

The parent god in the triad of Memphis was Phtah, the second demiurgus, the personification of creative energy (but inferior in the scale of emanations to Chnuphis), lord of justice, and regulator of the worlds, believed as the author of the visible universe; his attributes, however, show entire confusion between the creator and the created, between the author of order in the world and chaos. His wife was Pasht, the great

goddess of Bubastis, sometimes with a lion's and sometimes a cat's head, considered to be the avenger of crimes, and also one of the forms of Maut. The sun was considered her son in the sanctuary of the old capital of the primitive dynasties.

Month, with the hawk's head, was the terrible and hostile form of the sun, when his rays strike like arrows and are sometimes fatal. He was specially worshipped at Hermonthis, with the goddess Ritho, his wife, and their son Harphre (Horus the sun), another example of the identity of the divine father and son.

But of all these triads, the most closely related to humanity in external form and worship, although the conception was one of the most exalted, was that of Osiris, Isis and Horus, who were the objects of universal worship in all parts of Egypt. They were said to be the issue of the god Set, the personification of the earth, and of the goddess Nut, the vault of heaven. Osiris, said the tradition, had manifested himself to men and had reigned in Egypt. The whole of the legend of his death, from the violence of Set, of his resurrection, and of the vengeance taken by his son Horus on his enemies, was said to have taken place on earth; and every city on the banks of the Nile professed to have been the scene of one of the episodes of this great drama.

Symbolism was the very essence of the genius of the Egyptian nation, and of their religion. The abuse of that tendency produced the grossest and most monstrous perversion of the external and popular worship in the land of Mizraim. To symbolize the attributes,



the qualities and nature of the various deities of their pantheon, the Egyptian priests had recourse to animals. The bull, the cow, the ram, the cat, the ape, crocodile, hippopotamus, hawk, ibis, scarabæus, and others, were each emblems of a divine personage." The god was represented under the figure of that animal, or by the head of the animal with the human body. But the inhabitants of the banks of the Nile preferred to pay their worship to living representatives of their gods rather than to images of stone or metal, "and they found these representatives in the animals chosen as emblems of the idea expressed by the conception of each god.

"Hence arose that worship of sacred animals which appeared so strange and ridiculous to the Greeks and Romans. Each of these animals was carefully tended during its life in the temple of the god to whom it was sacred, and after death its body was embalmed."

"For those who understood the basis of their religion, those sacred animals were only the living representatives of the deities, but the popular superstition made them into real gods; and the worship of those animals was, perhaps, that part of their religion to which the people were most invincibly attached."

Of those sacred animals three were more celebrated than any others, which from very early time were considered "not merely as representatives, but as incarnations of the deity." These were the bull Mnevis, worshipped at On, Heliopolis; the goat of Mendes, the incarnation of the god Khem, or Min; and the bull Apis, the incarnation of Phtah. Apis was presumed to be

born of a cow impregnated by lightning from heaven, and had on him some very uncommon marks, which however, the priests contrived to find in some calf when an Apis was needed for the succession in the temple. On such an occasion the people dressed in their best attire and gave themselves up to rejoicing. The divine bull was not suffered to live more than a limited number of years, "at the end of that time, if he did not die a natural death, he was killed; still, however, they mourned for him."

But not only animals, certain vegetables were also used as signs of divine attributes, and regarded with a degree of superstitious regard. There was more reason for such homage being paid to their great and fertilizing river.

"Such then was in reality the worship of the Egyptian people, a strange and almost inextricably confused mixture of sublime truths with metaphysical or cosmological ideas, often confused, always grandiose, a refined morality, an abject form of worship, and popular superstitions, coarse to the last degree."\*

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## VI.

### LEGALISM IN BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA.

To the Hindu, the misleading idea was that of God manifesting himself in nature; to the Egyptian, it was the use of natural objects as symbols of God, or of his

\* Lenormant, vol. 1. pp. 324-27.

attributes; so, to the people of Syria, Assyria, and Babylonia, it was the idea of the Divine monarch ruling in and through the agency of the heavenly bodies. From the original *Ilu*, God sole and unrepresented by form, the process of innovation was through astronomy. Egyptians were especially struck by the daily and yearly course of the sun; the Babylonians and Assyrians, by the astral heavens, and most of all by the movements of the planets. And the difference between the Babylonian and Assyrian was due chiefly to the degrees of consistency with which that idea was carried out.

In Chaldea it does not appear that any temple was ever dedicated to *Ilu*. "The idea of him was too comprehensive, too vast, to have any determined external form." "But at Nineveh, and generally throughout Assyria, he received the peculiar national name of *Asshur*," apparently related to the Aryan word *Asura*, which by a characteristic substitution of *h* for *s*, became in *Zend*, *Ahura*, the *Avestan* name for God. The image, or symbol of *Asshur* was accordingly, in later times, accepted perhaps with good reason by the Persians to represent *Ahura-mazda*. That image consisted of a circle or wheel pictured as soaring in heaven with the wings and tail of an eagle. The circle sometimes contains the bust of a human figure, and sometimes is empty.

"Below *Ilu*, the universal and mysterious source of all, was placed a triad," consisting of *Anu*, the *Oannes* of the Greek writers on this subject; "*Bel*, the demiurgus, the organizer of the world; *Ao*, called

also Bin—that is, the divine ‘son’—the divine light, the intelligence penetrating, directing and vivifying the universe.” These three divine personifications, equal in power, were regarded as having issued successively one from the other ; Ao from Anu, and Bel from Ao. Anu, “the lord of the lower world, the lord of darkness, was represented on the monuments under the strange figure of a man with an eagle’s tail and for his head-dress a fish, whose open mouth rises over his head, while the body covers his shoulders. It is under this form that Berosus tells us, according to Babylonian traditions, he floated on the surface of the waters of Chaos. Bel, ‘the father of the gods,’ was usually represented under an entirely human form, attired as a king, wearing a tiara with bulls’ horns, the symbol of power. But this god took many other secondary forms, the most important being Bel-Dagon, a human bust springing from the body of a fish. We do not know exactly the typical figure of Ao, or Bin, ‘the intelligent guide, the lord of the visible world, the lord of knowledge, glory and life ;’ the serpent seems to have been his principal symbol.”

Each god of this triad had a corresponding female deity, to use the expression of many of the inscriptions, ‘his reflection.’ Anat, the Anaitis of the Greek writers, accompanied Anu ; Bilit, rendered by the Greeks Mylitta, the mother of the gods, belonged to Bel ; and Taauth to Ao. The triad is symbolical. It is God, the first cause originating all things ; the intelligent designer and author of life, to the universe, and the creator of all existing forms.

A secondary triad was constituted of the Sun, Shamash, the Moon, Sin, and an inferior manifestation of Ao, representing the atmosphere, or firmament. And third in the divine hierarchy were the gods of the five planets, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury, represented respectively by Adar, Merodach, Nergal, Ishtar, and Nebo. Throughout the list of these inferior, though still august personages, it is the first triad of attributes personified which energizes in various ways. The planet-god of Saturn seems a further expression of the nature of Anu, and Nebo, of Ao; and Merodach, though of primary importance at Babylon, and called "the ancient one of the gods, the supreme judge, the master of the horoscope," was but an agency of Bel. Ishtar corresponded to the female members of the triad, Anat and Bilit. For Ishtar was twofold, "that worshipped at Arbela, and that at Nineveh." "The plural name of the double Ishtar, Ishtaroth, was the origin of the Phœnician Ashtaroth." Nergal was the god of war, the "master of battles," and "god of the chase."

In Babylonia, the Chaldeans, from their study of astronomy, were early led to the belief that the stars exercised a divine agency over the birth and life of men, and determined the destiny of nations. It was believed that they, especially the planets, were interpreters of the almighty decrees, to those who observed and understood the meaning of their movements. Accordingly the mythology of Babylon was more strictly astronomical, or astrological than that of Nineveh. To the two triads, and the deities of the five planets, the Babylonians added "twelve councillors of the gods, each of

whom presided over one month of the year, and over one of the signs of the zodiac." And to these chief deities were also attached other powers, distributed in both a scientific and religious order, forming essential elements in Chaldean worship. The system inevitably grew under the scientific hands which framed it, into a sidereal pantheism, in which the stars were the agencies of the one all-pervading deity. Its influence extended to Syria and other neighboring nations, entering into union with the native faith. It reached the kingdom of Judah. Among the reforms of king Josiah was that of putting a stop to the burning of incense to the sun and moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord. He also burned the chariots of the sun with fire.\*

Such were the great gods, according to the belief of those who could give an account of their faith. But popular superstition conceived of them more grossly, and added largely to their number. And the primary elements of worship, few and the same everywhere, were overlaid with a multitude of accessories, some of them absurd and immoral. Even one or two of the great gods of the stellar system were worshipped with rites which were scandalous. Not the less were they, as observances of religion, prescribed by inflexible law.

One feature of the national worship was the "localization of the service of each divine personage in

\* 2 Kings, xxiii. 5, 11.

some particular city, where he was regarded as the first and greatest of the gods, whatever might be the place he filled elsewhere" in the Babylonian pantheon.\* In form this was like the Egyptian system, had a resemblance to some effects of the Hindu, and in spirit was identical with polytheistic pantheism everywhere; but the method of operation was different. In Egypt, polytheism was primarily constituted by the union of several monotheisms; in Babylonia, the local gods were all the offspring of a dividing monotheism which was originally spiritual; while in India, localization of deities, where it did exist, proceeded out of a system of pure nature-worship, and was due to the variety of forms in which God conceived of in that way, appears, whereby every locality might have its special reasons for worshipping the all-god in a character proper to itself.

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## VII.

### PHENICIAN AND SYRIAN LEGALISM.

El, the originally sole god of the Syrians and Sidonians, identical with the Ilu of the Assyrians, also, in the progress of innovation, receded into the distance, as too solemn and exalted to be approached by man. The less awful name substituted by superstitious reverence, was Baal, the master, or lord. Sometimes Jaoh was used; but that was hardly less solemn than El. The lord was a reverent name, not too awful for human lips to pronounce.

\* Lenormant, vol. 1. 452--456.

The relations in which God stood to his creation were felt to be manifold, and the evidencing of his power, different in different creatures and different places. The sun was the chief power in the universe, the blessing and glory of God to all the nations; but different nations and cities were indebted to him for many special gifts. So Baal is represented to all the states of Syria and Phenicia by the sun, at the same time that he is worshipped under different names, and with somewhat different rites in the several states. Baalim, that is, Baals, became as numerous as the cities in which that god was worshipped. By the time that the Israelites returned from Egypt, this stage of the Baal mythology was fully constituted. Thus we read of Baal-Zephon, a place named from some relation to Baal, Baal-Peor, that is Baal as worshipped at Peor, Baal-Meon, Baal-Tamar, Baal-Hermon, and Baal-Gad, all mentioned in the early history of the Israelitish nation, and attached to places scattered from the frontiers of Egypt, to the heart of Lebanon, vouching for the already wide diffusion of Baal-worship among the nations of Canaan and Syria. It continued to increase during the time of the Hebrew judges; and maintained itself with unabated power through the best part of the monarchy.

The growth of polytheism in Syria and Phenicia was largely due to local and political causes. Baal worshipped in Tyre became the Tyrian Baal, and further appropriated by Tyrians as "king of the city," in their own language Melek Kiryath, was, in the course of time constituted a separate deity as Melkarth.



Thus Baalim were multiplied over the land without system, and by accidental circumstances; and yet as constituted in any one city that religion became implicated with the state, enforced by authority of government, and determined in its observances by the regulations of law.

At the same time, the local variations of Baal were variously combined with those which grew out of the belief that he manifested himself, or at least his will, in the objects and operations of nature. In that light he was conceived of as fourfold, in creating, destroying, reviving, and in that process of decomposition whereby the decaying materials of life are recombined into new forms of vitality. Thus was another inferior class of gods formed, as Baal-Thammuz, otherwise, Adon, the lord of productive nature, Baal-Chon, the preserver, Baal-Moloch, the destroyer, and Baal-Zebub.

There were also astronomical Baalim. Under the solar god, Baal-Samim, "lord of the heavens," were the seven planet gods, worshipped under the generic name of Cabirim, "the powerful ones," to whom were added Esmun, the invisible and highest minister of the primordial Baal. "He personified the whole sidereal system, and was supposed to preside over the laws and harmony of the universe."

A fourth class proceeded from the same common source in accordance with a "more general physical conception. The element of fire was considered, in its most extended acceptance, as the principle of life, the source of all activity, of all renewal, and of all

destruction. "The solar or sidereal gods are essentially fire-gods. This clearly appears in Baal-Moloch, and his worship, in which fire played so great a part." To the same order "belonged Baal-Hamon, burning Baal; the national god of Carthage," Resheph, 'the thunderbolt,' the celestial fire," and Adar, the fire-god adopted from Assyria.

With the personages of these different classes were connected corresponding female deities. To each Baal, a Baalath who represented the same attributes under another aspect.

By these various processes, out of the belief in one almighty Being, the polytheism of Syria ramified indefinitely.

Worship, in a corresponding way, multiplied and diversified its observances. In many places it became notoriously immoral, both in voluptuousness and cruelty. Children were burned alive in sacrifice to the fire-god Baal-Moloch. In the ceremonies of Thammuz, great mourning was followed by monstrous orgies, and others rivalled the debauchery which belonged to rites of Mylitta at Babylon. "The Canaanites were remarkable for the atrocious cruelty that stamped all the ceremonies of their worship, and the precepts of their religion. No other people ever rivalled them in the mixture of bloodshed and debauchery, with which they thought to honor the deity."\*

This religion was early carried abroad along the shores of the Mediterranean, by the merchant ships and

\* Lenormant, vol. 11. 219-224.

colonies of Tyre and Sidon : and in Cyprus and Crete and on the coasts of Asia Minor, in several islands of the Ægean, and elsewhere, some of its characteristic features long remained. In the Tyrian colonies on the coast of northern Africa, and of Spain, it was established in full. Where it came in contact with the Greek populations, its more offensive elements were mollified, or abolished, by the finer taste and feeling of that eminently humane people.

Among the Hebrews, symbolic images of God were often used, and by many of the people ; but they were chiefly borrowed from their neighbors ; as the golden calf, at Sinai, the calves set up by Jereboam at Bethel and Dan, and the Terephim of Micah, mentioned in the book of Judges, all copied from the national religion of Egypt ; and the groves, images and high places of Syrian worship. The Israelites were constantly subject to be approached by the aggressive and persisting proselytism of the servants of Baal, who, of one sect or another, were all around them. The commonest error was to worship Jehovah with an imitation of a foreign ritual. But from that heretical way of worshipping the true God by the methods of a foreign religion, the transition was easy to the adoption of the foreign religion itself. But the orthodox idea of Jehovah was never degraded. He was a God never put by the sacred books of the nation in the light of a mere abstraction ; never removed to an impracticable distance, to give place to subordinate gods ; never brought down to an irreverent familiarity. Such as he was presented to Abraham and to Moses, he is also

declared to David and the later prophets. The people did use, out of reverence, a less solemn name for that of Jehovah ; but it was never taken to mean another god.

There is progressive fullness in the presentation of Jehovah's attributes, but no alteration of his nature, no dividing of it into various gods, no degrading of it to the level of human weaknesses or vices, no evaporating of it into philosophical abstraction. It is never exalted to the almighty nonentity of Brahm, or of Ra, to the mere formal existence of Shangti, or reduced to the mixed human imperfection of Jupiter. In the latest Hebrew Scriptures as in the earliest, the character of Jehovah is the same personal, spiritual, holy, just, almighty and merciful God. If corruption attaches to his worship and the thoughts of men about him, it invariably comes from abroad ; never in the development of the sacred literature. Nor does that sacred literature in any respect, at any time, justify the changes which some of the people favor. It never bends to take up and embody a prevailing popular practice. The Hebrew people became as a whole idolatrous and immoral, most of them quite as much so as their neighbors ; the moral and religious character of their sacred scriptures continues to be of the same elevated standard from beginning to end.

To some extent this may be explained by the fact that error was generally brought in from abroad and was naturally opposed by the native priesthood. But on the other hand, it was not the priesthood but the prophets who formed the firmest barrier to error, nor

does it appear that the priests had much to do with the production of holy scripture.

In all other known cases, the later scriptures, in their progressive production, keep pace with the popular changes, take up the notions and practices which have grown into popular authority, and work them into a system sacerdotal, legal, or philosophical,—in the latter case, harmonizing them, as well as may be, with the earlier scriptures, which they frequently contradict.

The Hebrew people turned aside from their national religion into all sorts of foreign errors to which they were exposed. But the Hebrew religion in itself remained unchanged, and the new sacred books were successively written in the same spirit as the ancient, and never stooped to take up the heretical notions prevailing among the people.

Hindu scriptures of the legal period followed, if they did not to some extent lead in the path of departure from the earlier standards. Avestanism faithfully retained its monotheistic creed; but its later scriptures were entirely ritual and ceremonial, and the sacerdotalism of the Magi made large aggressions upon the simplicity of its priesthood and worship.

On all sides, legalism had developed, with a striking uniformity, into a burdensome system of hollow observances, idolatrous of images or of forms, or of both; and practically exclusive of a spiritual God, personally present and powerful to save; and into a priestly despotism all pervading and oppressive.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE GREAT REVOLUTION OF REASON.

SUCH was the state of progress, fully reached, and already for a long time felt to be a bondage intolerably oppressive upon the nations, when, about six hundred years before Christ, a great movement of reform arose simultaneously in all the principal seats of civilization.

In this instance, there was put forth no claim of inspired authority for the foundation of a new faith. A general uprising of human reason, as opposed to an idolatrous priestcraft and stupid abuses under the name of law, it attempted to supply their place with a reasonable religion, or with sound moral or legal culture. It was the epoch of Confucius, in China, of Buddha, in India, of Darius Hystaspes, the great reforming monarch of Persia, of Zerubabel and Ezra, and the final abandonment of idolatry by the Jews, of the rightly called sages in Greece, of Servius Tullius in Rome, and of the establishment of the monotheistic Persians in dominion over Western Asia and Egypt.

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#### I.

#### CONFUCIUS.

The most moderate of reformers was Confucius, and yet none have been by succeeding generations more ex-

travagantly honored. In his time the teaching and recorded example of the sages of Chinese antiquity were falling into neglect. The books, in which their honored labors were recorded, already had suffered loss. Confucius saw the prevailing and increasing degeneracy, and the danger that the sacred books would soon perish entirely, and that the national religion and practical morals would fall into irremediable corruption. Without pretending to any superior gifts, or to any instructions of a supernatural kind, while yet in early manhood he began to devote his attention to collecting all that remained of the ancient scriptures, and to editing them with care and urging the attention of others to the study of them, and to follow the precepts and examples which they contained. He was a statesman, and aimed especially at the establishment of good government. Religion he viewed chiefly in its relations to morals, and the peaceful order of the empire. While holding high public offices, he had a number of disciples, who diligently waited upon him at all times when he was free to see them, for the profit to be derived from his conversation. It was to him a matter of regret that none of the princes were to be found in that number. His estimate of himself was sober, even humble. He had no communications from God; he was only a man of respectable learning, anxious to revive the religion and virtues of the earlier times, and the study of the sacred books, and doing the best he could by example to enforce his teaching. All that he can be justly said to have taught, as of his own judgment, was good, sound rational morality. Yet his fol-

lowers soon began to speak of him in the most extravagant way, as more than mortal, and before many generations had elapsed, he was exalted to be an object of worship. Fortunately for his reputation, his writings remain, as well as the greater part of the sacred books on which he expended his editorial care; whether fortunately for China, in the long run, may be doubted. For the influence of his rationalistic style of thinking is to this day controlling among the learned classes, and is the greatest obstacle encountered by Christian missionaries in that land.

Confucius was born in the year five hundred and fifty-one before Christ, and died in four hundred and eighty-eight. He was followed by a numerous list of disciples, who carried his doctrines, and the reverence of his name, to the utmost bounds of China. They have asserted their dominion over the minds of a vast multitude of men, perhaps more than ever submitted in equal degree to the teaching of any other moral philosopher; but the remarks which have been recently made about him as superior to Socrates are too hasty. He was a wise man among his people, a sober-minded, Benjamin-Franklin-kind of a man, in a vastly populous branch of mankind where that kind of merit is highly appreciated; but Confucius was no Socrates. That intuition into the nature of human thinking, that power of discerning and expounding causes, of discriminating, and constructing arguments whereby to ascend to causes, which have constituted Socrates the father of all true science, are far above the level of Confucius. Fewer minds come into immediate contact with



Socrates, but they are the minds which govern, and must govern, the world ; and the more that they come into collision with the followers of Confucius, the more will their superiority appear.

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## II.

### BUDDHISM.

Six hundred years before Christ the religion of Brahmanism had matured into an absolute domination over India. The simple patriarchal worship of the early Vedic hymns, already corrupted within the Vedic period, had become a sacerdotal system, constructed and managed by a sacerdotal caste. Founded in the most solemn convictions of the people, it had extended its ramifications of despotism over the whole country, and from the highest to the lowest grades of society. It held every individual, from birth to the grave, in bonds which he could not escape for a moment, and which were the more awfully oppressive, since they were riveted in the soul. It was then that an intellectual champion appeared, who undertook to rescue India from the bondage of her creed, and from the natural ills which her creed had aggravated.

Çouddhodana was king in Kapilavastu, capital of the country of the same name, in central India, at the foot of the mountains of Nepal. He was of the family of Sakya, a branch of the powerful tribe of Gotama, and of the Kshatrya, or warrior caste. His queen, Maya Devi, was daughter of a neighboring

monarch, and equally distinguished by her beauty, intelligence, and piety. Such were the father and mother of the liberator. Resistance to Brahmanical oppression did not spring from the ranks of the oppressed, but from the tender and generous heart of one who came down from the loftiest rank of society to deliver them.

Siddhartha, the first son of Couddhodana and Maya Devi, and heir apparent of the throne, was born towards the end of the seventh or beginning of the sixth century before Christ. From childhood he evinced a meditative disposition. The plays of other children had no attraction for him, while he excelled in every branch of learning, as presented to his years. Prolonged solitary meditations were not deemed suitable to the education of a king, and various methods were devised to interest him in the business and amusements proper to his rank, and the office to which his birth assigned him. Mildly, but firmly, he persisted in his way. The sight of poverty, sickness, old age and death, filled him with sadness for the sufferings of mankind. Was there any way of salvation to be found? Brahmanism, as far as he could see, furnished none, but, on the contrary, aggravated all the ills of human life, and gratuitously increased their number. Resolved to probe the canker to its depths, he made several attempts to seclude himself for meditation on this momentous subject. Finally, at the age of twenty-nine years, he stole away from his father's court, by night, leaving behind his young and much beloved wife, and all the pleasures designed to occupy

his affections, and eluding the guards appointed to detain him, he succeeded in getting beyond the bounds of his father's dominions before pursuit could overtake him. Divesting himself of every badge of rank, he assumed the garb of an ascetic, and entered one of the highest of the great Brahmanical schools.

Among the more than three hundred pupils of the illustrious Arata Kalama of Vaiçali, Siddhartha soon took his place as the first, and was solicited by his master to take part with him in teaching. But he replied, "The doctrine of Arata is not truly liberating; to practice it is not a true liberation, nor a complete draining out of misery." Then added in his own heart, "By carrying to perfection that doctrine which consists in poverty and restraint of the senses, I shall arrive at true deliverance; but for that, I need yet to make more profound researches."

In Rajagriha, the capital of Magadha, lived the Brahmanical doctor, Roudraka, the son of Rama, more celebrated still than Arata Kalama. To him did Siddhartha modestly present himself with the petition to be enrolled as one of his disciples. Roudraka soon accepted him as an equal. "You and I," said he, "will teach our doctrine to this multitude." The number of scholars was about seven hundred. But, as at Vaiçali, so here the earnest inquirer soon became dissatisfied with the sum of all the master had to teach. "My friend," said he, "this way leads not to indifference to the things of the world, leads not to emancipation from passion, leads not to arrest of the changes of existence, leads not to tranquillity, leads not to com-

plete intelligence, leads not to the state of Çramana, leads not to Nirvana." And then, in the presence of all the disciples of Roudraka, he withdrew. Five of them followed him. Thus accompanied, he betook himself to entire seclusion, first on Mount Gaya, and then to the village of Ouruvilva, on the banks of the Nairanjana, where he devoted six years to study and ascetic exercises, before obtaining any satisfactory light on the great question of his life.

Before the end of that time he became convinced that extreme asceticism was not the way to perfect intelligence, and began to relax his severity, yet without indulging to greater length in food or drink than was necessary to efficiency in study. His five disciples disapproved of the change, deserted him and went to Benares. Left alone, Siddhartha continued his meditations with the more effect, that he had relaxed his austerities. Then it was that he completely wrought out the principles of his system, and the rules of discipline which he designed to propose to his adherents.

In commencing his ascetic life he had exchanged his royal attire for the garb of a hunter. That had now, in the end of six years' wear, fallen to pieces. He resuited himself by opening a recently made grave, and plundering the body of its shroud, which he cut, sewed and fitted to himself with his own hands. Subsequently he made it a law for his monastic followers, that their clothing should consist of rags gathered by themselves from the streets and the cemeteries.

Siddhartha had now learned all that the Brahmanical schools had to teach; he had thoroughly mastered

it, and gone beyond it. He knew his future adversaries, and knew himself, where they were weak, and where his position was strong. But his aim being not distinction nor superiority, but the salvation of men, he still examined himself as to whether he had obtained a definitive and unalterable view of the truth which he was to communicate to the world. "By all that I have acquired," said he to himself, "I have greatly transcended the law of man, but have not yet reached to a clear discrimination of the venerable wisdom. This is not yet the way of understanding. This way is not able to abolish forever the evils of old age, of sickness or of death." After all the dreams and noble aspirations of his boyhood, and all the studies and austerities of his manhood so far, was he ever to be the savior of mankind? He was reaching the crisis of his life, and it was one of intense anxiety. In one of his frequently recurring ecstasies, and after a meditation which appeared to have lasted almost without interruption for a week, he believed that at last he had obtained the desired power; and in all sincerity answered his own question affirmatively.

"Yes," said he, "I have at last discovered the firm way of the great man; the way of the sacrifice of the senses; the way without error and without dejection; the way of blessing and of virtue; the way without stain, without envy, without ignorance and without passion; the way which leads to the high road of salvation, and which causes the force of the demon to be no force; the way which renders the regions of transmigration no regions; the way which excels Çakra,

Brahma, Maheçvara and the guardians of the world; the way which leads to the possession of universal knowledge; the way of memory and of judgment; a way which removes the bitterness from old age and death; a way tranquil and without trouble, exempt from fears of the demon, and which conducts to the city of Nirvana." In that moment he felt assured that he had at last become Buddha, the enlightened, the sage in all his purity, his greatness and power more than human, more than divine, master of himself, the savior of the universe, or of all in the universe who can be saved.

Bodhimanda, the place of intelligence, where the liberator obtained that first vision of supreme truth, is one the of holiest places to the Buddhist pilgrim. In the last days of his protracted, and latterly almost despairing meditations, he made himself a mat of grass, and taking his seat upon it in a secluded place, under the shadow of a tree, he finally determined to wait the advent of that supreme intelligence, of which he had long dimly conceived the possibility, and if disappointed, to perish in waiting. "Here," said he, as he took his seat, "let my body wither, let my skin, my flesh and my bones decay, if before having attained to the supreme intelligence, I rise from the sod on which I sit."

There he remained immovable all day and all night, waiting to find it. It was in the last watch, and just as the dawn arose, that he felt himself endowed with the long desired intelligence, vested with the quality of Buddha, elevated to a perfect knowledge of the

three-fold science. "Yes," he exclaimed, "thus will I put an end to the sufferings of the world." And striking the earth with his hand, he added, "Let this earth be my witness : she is the abode of all creatures ; she comprehends all that is movable and immovable ; she is impartial ; she will witness that I lie not."

From that moment he never hesitated as to the doctrine to be preached, the method of salvation for himself and his fellow-men. It was one, and could only be one. But still he doubted how it would be accepted. He had the divine light. Would men open their eyes to admit it ? Would they be willing to enter the way in which they should walk ? To settle his mind on this subject, and determine upon a method of teaching to be carried out consistently and without variation, he clung to his solitary meditation some time longer, meditating thus in his heart : "The law which proceeds from me is profound, luminous, subtle, difficult to comprehend ; it eludes criticism ; it is beyond the range of reasoning, accessible only to the learned and the wise ; it is in opposition to all the world. Having abandoned all conception of individuality, extinguished every idea, interrupted all existence by the way of tranquillity, it is invisible in its character of vacuum ; having dried up desire, exempted from passion, stopping all production of new existences, it conducts to Nirvana. But if become Buddha truly complete, I teach that law, other men will not understand it, it may expose me to their insults. I will not abandon myself to my own compassion."

Three times was Buddha on the point of succumb-

ing to that weakness, and perhaps would have renounced forever his great enterprise, satisfied with having found for himself the secret of eternal salvation; but a final reflection decided him, and forbade the return of his irresolution.

“All beings,” said he, “whether low, moderate, or exalted, whether very good, imperfect, or very bad, may be arranged in three classes. One class is in the false, and will remain there; a second is in the true, and a third is in uncertainty; as a man on the banks of a pond sees lotuses which are beneath the water, others which are just at the surface, and others which have risen above it. Whether I teach the law or not, those who are in the false will never understand it; whether I teach or do not teach the law, those who are certainly in the truth will understand it; but those who are in uncertainty, if I teach the law, will know it—if I do not teach the law, will never know it.” And as he reflected, he felt moved with great compassion for the vast multitude sunk down in uncertainty. That decided him. He would go to those unhappy beings so long misled and wandering among their own bad thoughts, and open to them the gate of immortality, in revealing to them the four sublime verities, which he had now discovered, and the mutual connection of causes.

Once clearly satisfied in his convictions of truth, his first thought was to communicate his discovery to his former teachers, the son of Rama and Arata Kalama. Honest thinkers, modest inquirers, they, he felt assured, would accept his law of salvation with rejoicing.



But when he sought the coveted conference with them, he learned that they were dead. To whom then shall he first announce his discovery, that they may assist in publishing it? He will go to Benares, and find his five fellow monks of the six years' seclusion. They had left him because of his relaxing the severities of asceticism, and had resolved never to return into fellowship with him. But such was the power of his presence over them, that no sooner did he appear among them than they received him with submission and cordiality, and listened with admiration to his new instructions.

At first they addressed him by the title of Ayoushmat, or Lord. "Call me not Ayoushmat," he said. "Long have I remained unprofitable to you. I have procured for you neither aid nor well-being. Now I have attained to a clear view of immortality. I am Buddha. I know all. I behold all. I have blotted out sin. I am master in all laws. Come that I may teach you the law. Listen, give ear attentively. I will advise, I will teach you. And your spirit being delivered by the destruction of sins, and by manifest knowledge of yourselves, you will put an end to your births, you will arrive at the condition of Brahmacharis, and you will never experience another existence after this. There is what you will learn."

To those five disciples, and others at Benares, did Buddha first preach his doctrine of salvation. That city was then a stronghold of Brahmanism. It subsequently became no less sacred in the eyes of Buddhists. After no very prolonged residence there, he removed

to the farther north, not far from the scene of his former austerities, and spent the rest of his days at Magadha, at Rajagriha, or in Koçala, at Çravasti, to the north of the Ganges. The kings of those two countries protected him, as they accepted his doctrines. Rajagriha was his principal residence, from which he performed missionary journeys in various directions. A few miles from the city rose a mountain called the Vulture Peak, whose deep groves, cool springs, and points of picturesque view, Buddha loved to frequent. It was there that, surrounded by his devotees, he preached his great system called "The Lotus of the good law," besides many other sutras.

Near the gate of the same city was another favorite haunt of the enlightened teacher. It was the Bambu Garden of Kalanda, a wealthy merchant who had at first given the ground to the Brahmans, but after learning the sublime law, took it from them, built upon it a superb mansion, and presented the whole to Buddha. In that place were several of the most celebrated apostles of Buddhism converted; and there did the first council of its devotees assemble after their leader's death.

These and other places, where Buddha resided for longer or shorter time, are the holy lands of Buddhist faith.

Notwithstanding the protection afforded him by the kings of Magadha and Koçala, the leader of the new faith had a severe and protracted struggle to maintain with those of the old. True, he spared no criticism of his adversaries; not content with convict-

ing them of error and of ignorance, even of their own system, he treated them as hypocrites, as charlatans, as jugglers, charges the more cutting that they were well merited. His influence extended only at the expense of theirs; and from no means that could promise to arrest a progress so threatening to themselves did they refrain. In their controversies their vanity was not less interested than their power. Buddha had the advantage over them of thorough knowledge of both their system and his own, and of carrying his logic without shrinking to all its own legitimate conclusions. The legends of his followers represent him as invariably victorious in debate. But such was the power and malignity of his opponents, that but for the protection of his royal friends, his teaching might have ended with his life, before it had reached the nation's ear.

The career of Buddha, as teacher of the divine law, extended to more than forty years; his whole life to eighty. It was on a missionary journey, and passing through the country of the Mallas, that he felt the approach of death. In a forest, and under a grove of Çala trees, the great deliverer, as he is still regarded by hundreds of millions, breathed his last; or, in the language of his doctrine, entered into Nirvana.

Buddhism is a protest against Brahmanism, in the whole breadth and depth of its existence: dissenting from its sacerdotal system, from its worship, and from its gods. The "Enlightened one," in this respect, passed beyond the limits observed by all other reformers. He did not fall back upon the old Vedic scriptures, but treated as null everything that Brahmanism

was, or taught, or was founded on. Whatever elements of it remained in his religion, were there, not because they were Brahmanical, but because they belonged to his own system. The radical pantheism of the Brahmans he ignored, and supplied its place with nothing. In whatsoever his teaching and theirs agreed, is was only as inherent in the Hindu way of thinking. Pantheism was opposed with atheism. Man was emancipated from the fear of the gods, by being constituted the highest intelligence himself; but again enslaved by the dread of future transmigrations, endless and degrading; dying only to enter a new life, in some mean and loathsome form, and after a series of such new births, for thousands or millions of years, to be sent back in a human body to commence the weary circle again, capable of change and suffering, but incapable of death.

This universal Hindu belief in the transmigration of imperfect souls, and annihilation of conscious personality in those who have attained perfection, was the common ground occupied by both religions. But the element which gave Buddhism its great power over the minds of men, and secured for it the unparalleled favor which it received, was its profession to remove the ills of human life, and the penalty of sin, and to teach every man how to secure that blessedness for himself. Its ends were to be attained by moral duties, and tranquillity of spirit, but especially, and in the highest degree, by abstraction from outward things and from all sensations, and by reducing the measure of wants to the lowest degree.

Asceticism, mostly in its cenobite form, was essential to Buddhism from the first. Its common people, who did not aim at so high a state of perfection, did not need that help, but its saints, from the very nature of the case, became monks. The Buddha Sakyamouni, the monk of the Sakyas, himself set the example. Thus, Buddhism was founded by a monk, its first apostles were monks, it was carried abroad from nation to nation by monks, and its monastic institutions were set up wherever it obtained a footing; and its monks, who travelled much in the cause of their religion, were at home in any monastery they came to. In Brahmanism the gods are beings of terrific power, but of the same common descent and substance with man and nature, and as helpless as they to arrest the career of life in its fated changes. For that Brahmanism can only hope vaguely from absorption into the being of the Supreme, out of which all things are continually proceeding. It is a slavery of dread to gods who have no power to save in the life to come. In original Buddhism the only thing which approaches the idea of God is Buddha. But Buddha signifies merely "The Enlightened," and is a rank of intelligence, to which Siddhartha arrived by intellectual effort, and to which others who labor and study as he did, may also arrive. His followers have deified him; but his own teaching made no such pretension, took no notice of beings called gods, and addressed itself as that of a man to men, masters of their own destiny. Dread of the future was to the mind of the Hindu, and other races of eastern Asia, not a dread of death, but of life;

endless life of everchanging, but of everlasting anxiety and misery. Buddhism was designed to arrest transmigration, and liberate from the bondage of its ever-recurring cycles of penal life. Men were to be taught so to subordinate all affections and susceptibilities, by denial, as to arrest the development of all capacity to suffer; in the course of this mortal stage of existence, so to discipline the vital powers that they shall be perfectly under control of themselves, and insensible to everything external, capable of retaining themselves in a state of abstraction from all embodiment, without activity and without affection forever. This was Nirvana—virtually salvation by death. Accordingly, it was salvation, not of men alone, but also of the creatures,—all animate creation. By enabling men to enter Nirvana, it so far diminished the number of suffering animals, whom those men after death would have animated. Let the law of Buddha be universally acted upon, and the cycle of life must terminate always in man, and the life which has once animated the lower creation never be permitted to return into the same channel again. Salvation would thus be extended to all creatures, self-controlling man, the highest recognized power in life, constituting himself the final barrier to its revolution.

The founder of Buddhism was not a priest, but a philosopher. His religion was purely the fruit of his philosophy, a system founded not upon faith, but in reason—the most extreme and consistent of all branches of rationalism that the world saw. Yet being addressed largely to the popular understanding,

it was from the first far from being scientifically stated. In choosing popular expression, its founder, although his own views were very positive and definite, left much uncertainty resting upon the meaning of some of his words, giving rise to speculation and conflict of opinions among his followers. In the determination of those questions, the principal authority rests with the work of the three ancient councils, which were held at long intervals; the first immediately after his death.

Buddha himself wrote nothing; but his sayings, carefully treasured in memory by those who heard them, were collected and written out in order, by his principal disciples, who after his death met in council at Rajagriha, in Magadha. Under three heads, as the *Sutras*, or Discoveries of Buddha; the *Vinaya*, or Discipline, and the *Abhidharma*, or Philosophy, they arranged all that they remembered of their master's words, and all that they could understand of the meaning of his doctrine. The whole collection received the name of *Tripitaka*, The Three Baskets, and formed the sacred canon, the standard of Buddhist faith for all succeeding time.

Before the opening of the Christian era, this singular belief had become the established religion in Northern India, had spread southward over the land, and into the island of Ceylon; had extended thence to Burmah, and adjoining countries. It had also crossed the Himalaya mountains into Thibet, and been invited into China, dividing there the faith of the people with the ancient national scriptures, and westward had

extensively prevailed over the jurisdiction of the Avesta, and taking the place of some of the declining idolatries. That dominion it continued to hold, and in some directions, especially in central Asia, to extend for centuries; and in all, but India and the further west, it holds its footing still.

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### III.

#### DARIUS AS THE REFORMER OF AVESTANISM.

When the first disciples of Buddha were preaching his doctrines in India, the Medes and Persians, under Cyrus and Cyaxares, were carrying their conquests over Western Asia. In the issue of their campaigns, the Avestan faith was asserted, as that of the ruling people, over all the domain of ancient civilization from India to Greece and Egypt. But in the ages intervening since Zarathustra, the practice of that religion had suffered corruption, chiefly at the hands of the Median priesthood, the Magi, in a way constituting it more ritual and sacerdotal.

Upon the creation of the Medo-Persian empire, and the death of Cyrus, the Magian party made strenuous efforts to secure themselves in power. Cambyses having slain his brother Smerdis, and being occupied with the conquest of Egypt, Gomates, a Mede, gave out that he was Smerdis, who contrary to rumor had escaped the attempt upon his life. His usurpation was sustained by the Median party, by the chiefs of the Magian religion, and by most of the provinces, no doubt by all of the Median connection and as many of



the others as could see any reasonable hope for themselves in the division of the new empire. Of the subjects of that empire by far the greater number were polytheists and idolators. The Medes were only approximately such, but their stately ceremonial was of the style practiced by the idol worshippers of the west. As far as religion was concerned, they had more favor to expect from the Medes than the Persians.

Gomates took care to extend special patronage to the Magian religion and its priesthood, and, wherever his rule was allowed, to suppress the Avestan. After the accidental death of Cambyses, Gomates reigned over the whole empire. A number of Persian noblemen conspired against him, and slew him, and set Darius, son of Hystaspes, of the royal Achæmenian line of Persia, on the throne. Darius, in reducing the rebellious provinces, and re-establishing the Persian dynasty, removed the Magian innovations, and set up again the Avestan worship, not in its primitive, but in its own liturgical type; as he testifies for himself in the Behistun inscription.

“Says Darius the King. The empire, which had been taken away from our family, that I recovered. I established it in its place. As (it was) before, so I made (it). The temples which Gomates the Magian had destroyed, I rebuilt. The sacred offices of the state, both the religious chants and the worship, (I restored) to the people, which Gomates the Magian had deprived them of. I established the state in its place, both Persia and Media, and the other provinces. As (it was) before, so I restored what (had been) taken

away. By the grace of Auramazda I did (this). I arranged so that I established our family in its place. As it was before, so I arranged (it), by the grace of Auramazda, so that Gomates the Magian should not supersede our family." \*

The son of Hystaspes was a great king and a great reformer ; but he either did not know, or did not think it practicable to restore Avestanism in all its pristine simplicity. He re-established it in opposition to Magism ; but not without some of the Magian practices. Still, the word rendered *temples* cannot be understood to be temples of the gods, as Oppert gives it. For, whatever the Great King meant, he certainly did not mean to say that he restored polytheism. He was not to such a degree ignorant of the creed he professed and defended. Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes showed such marked favor to monotheists, and contempt for polytheists and idolators as to leave no room for doubt touching their views on that subject. In their pacified dominions they were cautious, and respected recognized institutions ; but on foreign campaigns, or in dealing with rebellion, they showed their detestation of idolatry as strongly as ever Puritan did, and with less restraint of violence. In the wars whereby Darius reduced the revolted provinces, he treated the semi-idolatry of the Magi with great severity. The spiritual potentates, who constituted the court of Auramazda, he revered, as did all believers in his creed, and believed he had enjoyed their aid as angels of God,

\* Rawlinson's Herodotus. B. III. App. Note C. Oppert, *Expéd. en Mesopotamie*, II. 244.

but it is by the power and grace of Auramazda, and not by theirs, that he prospers, and he only mentions them once or twice, while Auramazda is gratefully mentioned in every paragraph of his great historical inscription. And Xerxes, in his invasion of Greece, burned every temple of the gods on the line of his march.

The effect of that Medo-Persian conquest was immense, as much religious as political. It overthrew, and finally crushed out the strength of the great polytheistic nations, so long the rulers in Western Asia. The Babylonian empire fell before it, never more to rise; the kingdom of Lydia was extinguished, and the Greeks of Asia and the islands brought into subjection; the Phœnicians were made to furnish its navy, and Egypt was reduced to a state of humiliation from which she never rose to independence again. The polytheistic and idolatrous systems of Assyria and Babylonia fell with the nations which sustained them. That of Lydia lost all means of recommending itself to the world. Falling in with that of the neighboring Greeks, to which it seems to have been similar, it must have held its place among the people somewhat longer, but obscurely. And the effect of contact with the Persians upon the Greeks, was greatly to diminish their faith in their own mythology—a faith already declining from other causes. The idolatrous worship of Egypt was a laughing stock to the Persians. Cambyses requested to see the god over whom his new subjects were rejoicing. The bull Apis was exhibited to him, by the attendant priests. “Blockheads, to think

that gods become like this, of flesh and blood, and sensible to steel!" exclaimed the great king, and struck his sword into the animal.

That old Egyptian religion never submitted to reform, but from that day it was constrained to divide its jurisdiction with foreigners who despised it, with freethinking Greeks, and monotheistic Persians, and Hebrews, while it pursued its own career of baseness, dragging down the subject people who practiced it, until it became an object of contempt even to polytheistic Romans, exposed as such in the bitter sarcasm of Juvenal, and finally, after the lapse of centuries, went into extinction before the approach of Christianity, yet not without imposing upon it some inheritance of error. And the Israelites, who notwithstanding their careful and exalted monotheistic instruction, had never in even their best days, entirely subdued the tendencies to idolatry among themselves, after their captivity in Babylon, and kindly relations with the Persians, were completely emancipated from that infatuation. No doubt other causes also went to produce that effect, but it began with Persian rule in Syria and Babylonia.

The Persians showed great respect for the Jews. In the midst of the polytheistic and idolatrous nations now added to their dominion, they found a people who, like themselves, adhered to the doctrine of one only God, the Creator and Ruler of all things, and immediately regarded them with special interest. Cyrus recognized the God of the Jews as the God of his fathers, and his own, and one of the first acts of his reign was to

grant their captives freedom to return to their own land, to rebuild their city and temple, and furnished them with all that was necessary for their safety and provision on the journey and when they should arrive. And that favor of the first Persian king was continued by Darius and Artaxerxes.

In brief, the establishment of the Persian empire was a deadly blow to the ancient polytheistic systems of the nations which had before governed Western Asia. They did not all cease to be, but they all ceased to rule, and ceased to be the honored examples of religion before the civilized world. And these effects were wrought at the very time when Buddhism was displacing the idolatry of the Brahmans in India, and the moral rationalism of Confucius was establishing itself in China.

When Persia fell, Greece took possession of her empire; and the language of Greece never left the lands of Western Asia, until under a stronger protector it had preached the Gospel of Christ.

The religion of the Persians was greatly corrupted before the Macedonian conquest, and the Greeks in Alexander's times were polytheists, as far as they were anything religiously, but neither under later Persian nor Greek did the old idolatrous systems of Western Asia revive to their former power, and that of Greece, though dividing influence with them, never took their place.

## IV.

## GREECE IN RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

Greeks never were an eminently religious people. Compared with Egyptians, Hebrews, or Hindus, they always carried their religion lightly about them. Their gods early assumed a human and æsthetic character. That part of their history to which the Epic poems belong was their period of strongest and simplest faith. The prevailing spirit of the epic tales, as well as the epic hymns, is piety, but piety towards a familiar and graceful mythology. It might have been otherwise, but that at an earlier date, the hereditary faith of the Hellenic people had been subjected to innovations of a nature to impair its weight and solemnity, which the innovations did not inherit.

The scene of that great conflict of the gods was Thessaly. And it was achieved so long before the time of Homer that he could without impropriety sing of a Thessalian prince, as well as all the rest of the Greeks, as belonging to the new creed.

The old Hellenic religion was a worship of nature. Its gods were Heaven and Earth, Sea and Land, Sun and Moon, Day and Night, and the Dawn, rivers and mountains, and so on, being identical in kind with those of the Vedic hymns.

At the head of the new religion was a God of entirely different character, separate from and independent of nature, ruling over all things but allegorical of nothing. Such were also the gods who came into the

system with him. Apollo, for example, took the place of Helius (the Sun) and Artemis, of Selene, (the Moon). The new gods were personal and anthropomorphic, rulers over nature, and not themselves powers or elements of nature.

They are not the mere growth of the old gods into anthropomorphic personality. For they come into power in addition to the old. In some cases they displace the old, in others they overrule them, and some divide jurisdiction with them: Zeus displaces Cronus, Poseidon overrules Oceanus, Athena succeeds Metis, and Dionysus divides the honors of vegetation with Demeter, herself remodelled by the same process of innovation.

They come with entirely different names, some of which are distinctly foreign. And their attributes were in many respects different from those of the gods, whom they superseded. In short most of them were not Aryan conceptions originally. Although in course of time, re-conceived in Aryan minds, they were gods of Syrian, or Egyptian character.

It was a revolution which marked a broad era in Greek mythology; that whereby Zeus violently usurped the throne of his father.

All parts of the old mythology, however, were not abolished. What belonged most intimately to the life of the peasantry, the allegorical gods of the hills and woods and streams, of the rivers and seas, was retained. It is always a difficult and tedious process, by natural means to change the religious views of a peasantry, especially if uneducated. But all even that part of the

old worship of nature, took, in course of time, in greater or less degree, the colors of the new mythology.

As the scene of the revolution was Thessaly, so the earliest chief seat of the new faith was Dodona, in Epirus, if not also in Thessaly.

Now it is to be remarked of this new religion, first, that its chief deity is without a proper name. Zeus is a purely Aryan word, and derived from the Nature worship of the Aryans, but to the Greeks that was so far in the past as to be entirely forgotten. In their language, from Homeric times, it meant only God the supreme.

Secondly, that new religion came from the south and never appeared further north than its southern advocates carried it.

Thirdly, all the traditions belonging to it are of the south in their origin.

The Hellenic people came into Greece by the north, while the Pelasgi, a partially civilized people, were already in possession of the south. The new religion must have been first that of the Pelasgi.

The conflict between the two religions occurred, where first the two races met in full national force. And that was certainly in Thessaly and about its latitude. And, as in similar cases, the religion of the more civilized people prevailed over that of the ruder though stronger incomers: while in the retaining of a part of the old mythology and the assignment of the later to it as a descendant, though a rebellious descendant, we read the practical compromise resulting from the subsequent union of the two races into one people.



Again, the elements of civilization came into Greece by way of the sea, from the east and from the south. The Ionians, from time immemorial, in communication with Phœnicia and Egypt, were the principal branch of the Pelasgi.

A revolution also took place at an early period in the religion of Upper Egypt. Khem, the chief god of the country, was displaced in favor of Amun. This occurred when the population in the south of Egypt became strong enough to give Thebes the predominance of a capital city. And the worship of Amun was introduced into Thebes from Ethiopia, a fact regularly commemorated in the temple service at Thebes.

In Ethiopia, Amun was the principal, if not primitively the sole object of worship. The Ethiopian people showed great zeal in regard to him. After his worship had been accepted in Thebes it was planted by the co-operation of Thebes and Meroë in the oasis of El Siwah, on the caravan route between Meroë and the Mediterranean coast. And relations of kindred were always recognized between the temple in El Siwah (Ammonium) and that of Dodona.\*

The attributes of Amun, as he appeared after taking the place of Khem, and before he became confounded with the ram-headed god Num, were in the main, those of the ancient Zeus. "King of the gods" is the epithet regularly applied to Amun on the monuments, and as occupying the place of Khem, he is also called the Father of men. The system of mythology connected with him is also similar.

\* Herodotus B. 11, chapters 42-56.

In the temple of Jupiter at Dodona, the most ancient in Greece, a tradition was retained that the religion there observed had been brought from Egypt. And when Herodotus went to Egyptian Thebes, he found a record there to the same purport.

In the temple at Dodona, it was also taught that the Pelasgi received their religion from abroad, and long observed the practice of refraining from uttering the name of their object of worship, and that the names were ultimately learned from abroad chiefly from Egypt. They would not, however, use them without consulting the oracle at Dodona. And in the same record it was noted that the Hellenes received their information about the gods from the Pelasgi.

Although the Greeks never used it among themselves, yet they always recognized Amun as the proper name of the deity whom they designated simply as God, or as the Father God, by a name of their own, Zeus or Zeus Pater.

Amun, in the tongue to which it belongs, signifies the *unseen*, or inscrutable, and was originally, no doubt a purer recognition of a spiritual god than either the symbolical service of Egypt or the allegorical nature worship of the Aryans. Most likely, its original superiority was the force which carried it so far. Its later corruption is the fate of every religion left to the unaided hands of man.

In the time of Homer, Greece had not forgotten the source of her recently adopted religion. Jupiter still occasionally left his palace on Olympus, to pay long and cordial visits to the Ethiopians who were

still regarded as a peculiarly holy people. Ethiopia was, to early Greece, the holy land whither she referred her conceptions of blameless purity and perfect happiness.\* And such it also was to the worshipper of Amun at Thebes.

Amun was established in Egypt by the predominance of Thebes, in the twelfth dynasty of Egyptian kings, but did not usurp the place of Khem until the eighteenth dynasty. His name was early connected with that of the Egyptian sun god, Ra; but the two personages were never confounded. Subsequently Amun, in Egyptian mythology became one with the ram-headed god Num, and that as early as the reign of the second Rameses in the nineteenth dynasty.

The peculiar epithets of Jupiter are those of Amun, after he took the place of Khem, and before he was confounded with Num. Hence, we may infer that his worship was not brought into Greece directly from Ethiopia, but from Thebes, most likely during the early part of the 18th dynasty of Egyptian kings: or somewhere between 14 and 16 centuries before Christ. Accepted most reverentially by the Pelasgi of the south of Greece, who worshipped the god without a name, that religion was afterwards communicated by them to the ruder tribes migrating in upon them from the north.

It was not until after the Trojan war that the most powerful branches of the Hellenic people succeeded in establishing their mastery south of Mount Oeta. But if Homer is correct, as he most likely is, in representing the Hellenes, as worshippers of Jupiter in the

\* Iliad B. 1, 423.

time of the Trojan war, then the great religious revolution must have occurred while their principal force had not got further south than Thessaly. And its adoption by them must have been very recent at that date. The poems of Homer certainly did much to confirm the revolution which substituted an anthropomorphic religion for a pure worship of nature.

Herodotus is probably correct, therefore, when he speaks of the system as recent in the time of Homer himself; and of Homer and Hesiod as having the principal hand in giving it Hellenic shape.

Original Amun worship was simple. Only as other notions and practices were appended to it did it assume the character of a mythological system. And that of classic Greece was, long after Homer, a growing system. For several of its divine personages were introduced from different quarters, from Syria, Asia Minor, and elsewhere, as well as from Egypt, and were harmonized together by identification with older gods, or by being assigned as children to them or to Jupiter.

Instead of superciliously rejecting, as some do, Greek tradition of identity between the gods of Dodona and Ammonium, I am convinced that the great revolution of Greek religion, from which the sentiment of the Prometheus springs, and the Jupiter worship introduced thereby, can be truly accounted for only by following its indications.

The old Hellenic migrations were conducted religiously: but in the progress of commerce, colonies were planted in great numbers merely for purposes of gain,

and both government and religion were made subordinate to that ruling motive. In the widely ramified Ionian colonies, for example, the religious observances of the mother country lost much of their original hold upon the mind; and the civil revolutions which, within the same time, took place over the greater part of the Greek world, went also to shake the foundations of religious conviction. The farming population, and especially the Doric race, were reverential of their gods and of all religious rites; but the commercial classes were, to say the least, exceedingly liberal, on those subjects, and the progress of education among them increased that freedom of thinking.

Of that revolutionary period in Greek politics, the very centre was the sixth century before Christ, and chief among the leaders in it were those men subsequently honored by grateful remembrance with the name of Sages,—the so-called seven, although far from limited to that mystic number. Every free state of Greece had its sage, or leading reformer. At the head of all were Solon and Thales.

In the process of learning to think of gods as being actuated by like passions with themselves, Greeks learned also to think of them with familiarity. Homer depicted them with the utmost freedom, treating their characters and conduct as if they were beings born of his own invention. His gods are larger, stronger, lighter and more beautiful than human beings, but neither wiser nor better; and as passionate and self-willed as inexperienced youth.

Further thinking restored to the humanized gods

some features of those departments of nature over which they presided. In the remains of sacred lyric poetry they appear with more dignity, and are actuated by a higher sense of justice. A profounder faith is also manifested in the wisdom of their providential government, strengthened by a reaction in favor of regarding them in the light of the old nature-worship.

Again, that latter tendency was counteracted, on one hand, by the speculations on natural things of the great Ionic school of philosophy, and on the other, by the impersonations of divine character in art; the latter deciding the anthropomorphic tendency, and the former going to shake belief in the direction of nature by any agency save its own.

Development of solemn lyric into tragedy, the growth of art, and the progress of philosophy magnified their respective aims. Poetry and art produced their effects most immediately upon the common mind, and sustained a popular worship of human-gods, conceived of as depicted in beautiful and majestic statues, and resident in temples almost worthy to be adored.

But the Hellenic mind was not only susceptible of beauty in an uncommon degree, it was also keenly logical. In the order of nature, the preponderance of the latter follows that of the former. Such a people are first poetical, then speculative, and then critical. So in Greece, the poets came first, and for many generations reigned alone. They also afterwards outran the early philosophers in popular influence. But the time followed when that order was reversed, and the spirit of the nation became predominantly critical and

skeptical. The course of religion separated from that of intelligence. Poetry and Art shaped, adorned and sustained the former, and Philosophy more slowly developed the latter.

All the so-called sages were statesmen, and their philosophy was the practical wisdom of statesmen, in whose eyes everything else was secondary to the order and welfare of the state. Without positively withdrawing any reverence from religion, and in many cases piously defending it, those men, by the policy they pursued, effectually undermined its practical power in the life of Greece. The whole movement in which they were concerned was rationalistic, going to overthrow old civil institutions blended with religion, and to set up new, upon entirely rational grounds, and, in general, to elevate the nature of man, and recognize him as master of his own destiny. That effect was sustained by the speculations of the Ionic school of philosophy, which opened its career in the teaching of Thales, one of the sages. And successive schools and sects prolonged and expanded the current of rational discussion.

Greek religion, except in its ceremonies and anniversary festivals, through all the succeeding time of Greek superiority, occupied singularly little place among the great elements of Greek culture. It was overshadowed by statesmanship and politics, winnowed by philosophy and criticism, and almost converted into art. In the degeneracy of Athens, after her humiliation under Macedon, education declined, political discussion was restrained, and a blind, and somewhat

timid superstition, fastidiously respectful of all gods, grew up, but only as the effect of unsettled belief feeling after something to rest upon.

Notwithstanding their general levity of opinion about the gods, the Greek people at all times believed in an impersonal and invisible power, the Deity, which ruled over all, and to whom even the gods were subject. The Deity was everlasting, almighty, and of inflexible purpose, the gods were of limited duration and power, and as changeable as human will. But they were objects of worship, because they could be influenced, the Deity was not worshipped, because no intercession or sacrifice could affect that inflexible destiny. Accordingly, the course of Greek religion among the masses descended to the condition of worshipping deified human attributes, represented in material images, and which educated men rejected with pity or contempt.

#### V.—RELIGION IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC.

A revolution of the same character occurred within the same period, at Rome, but in that case, among a people of profoundly earnest religious feeling. Numa had given Rome a religious constitution as strictly legal as the systems of the east, and which also, like them, professed to be revealed, and established with divine sanction; but what the nature of its creed must forever remain unknown. The books constituting the sacred canon of Rome were lost in the course of succeeding revolution. One copy of them, deposited in a tomb, was discovered in the year 181 B. C., and, after inspection by the Praetor, was at his instance, condemned by



the senate to be burned, as being of a nature to subvert the existing religion. Plainly, the religious practices of Rome in the second century before Christ were not justified by the old scriptures, on which they professed to be founded.

The name of Servius Tullius, his birth and his death, and the manner of his accession to the throne, are all wrapped in fable; but some of his public acts are the most indubitable of history. The constitution which he gave the Roman people was the foundation of all their subsequent greatness. It must have been framed about the middle of the sixth century before Christ. At subsequent dates it received numerous additions and limitations, but substantially continued to be the government of Rome, as long as her freedom lasted. It was the iron framework which upheld the structure of her power in the civil wars, and the long succeeding precarious rule of her emperors, until the whole was set aside by the new constitution of Constantine.

The revolution of Servius Tullius was designed to be of an entirely civil and military nature, and carefully shunned all changes of religion. The Romans of republican days were religious, but not mystical. Their religion was earnest, like everything else about them; but it was not a religion in the sense in which that of Egypt or of Syria was religion. It was virtue, rendering what was due to gods and men; and had less view to a future world than to the present. The Roman regarded religion as divine law, and all law as having a religious sanction. In his mind, the

highest virtue was veneration for law, subordinate to which went on the conflict of the two great energies, consisting of adherence to old established customs, privileges, and duties, and on the other side, the as profoundly earnest purpose to secure an equal distribution of rights to all citizens. The religion of Rome lay at the basis of her ancient laws, imbedded in them. It was a legal religion. Faith in it was real, working itself out in an elevated and severe morality ; but did not view it so much as a promise or provision for a life beyond the grave, as the spiritual in human character in this life.

Roman gods were the supernatural protectors of Roman interests, the spiritual judges of right and wrong in human affairs. We cannot conceive of Romans of those early days spending their lives in theosophic speculation, in self-separation from the present world in hopes of attaining blessedness in another. Romans gave extreme examples of self-sacrifice, and denial of the strongest and dearest affections ; but it was always for Rome, not for heaven. It was patriotism, not religion ; or rather, it was the religion of patriotism. Did Mucius plunge himself into the gulf, it was to save Rome. Did Decius offer himself to the gods below, it was to purchase a victory for Rome. Did a Brutus or a Manlius send to death the dearest to their hearts, it was not to propitiate a Moloch or a Juggernath ; it was not to secure for themselves, or for any one else, a life beyond the grave, but to defend the safety of Rome. The religion of republican Romans was a deified virtue, the crown of which was

patriotism. They solemnly honored their gods; but their gods were moral gods, whose existence was wrapped up in the interests of the Roman state. Patriotism was the centre of Roman virtue, and that virtue, of which patriotism was the centre, was the spirit of religion in republican Rome. The strength of the Roman people was their moral sense, the force and tenacity with which they apprehended virtue, heading up in the great virtue of patriotism. Out of this grew their reverence for the laws by which the order of the state was maintained.

A people who consciously made their own laws, in accordance with the constitution of their most honored king, could not look upon them as the gift of the gods, or as in any sense revealed. They knew full well the struggles whereby many of their laws had been enacted. No mysterious antiquity robed them with sanctity. The whole process of making them was entirely rational. And the rational powers of the people were fortified, and made clearer in the course of it. History has no record of a grander political education than that of the Romans, from the adoption of the constitution of Servius Tullius, until the securing of equal rights for Patrician and Plebeian. The patience, the moderation, the passionate fervor of controversy, the respect for existing laws, while struggling to carry new laws, the exhibition of all those qualities, elsewhere to be found in only the wisest statesmen, making the general conduct of a whole people, constitute a more interesting spectacle than all their military victories of later times. Never was a people more rationally conscious of its aim, or more rationally persistent in adhering to

it. That aim was to secure the integrity of their republican constitution, and to harmonize and complete it by equal laws. But at every step in the career upon which they had been started by Servius Tullius, they became more distinctly legal, self-reliant, and less religious. Religion became to them, more and more, the mere sanction of virtue, the traditional observances of the republic. The legal process, whereby the commonwealth developed itself, was one which actually upturned some of the most solemn religious practices and privileges, and went to put all things upon the basis, not of faith but of reason. It inevitably followed that religious practices which contradicted reason lost their hold on the convictions of intelligent men.

The lack thus created, succeeding generations attempted to supply by importations from abroad. But the adoption of Greek mythology, although connected with much literary culture and improvement in the elegance of worship, could not take up the inheritance of ancient Roman faith; and the gods and ceremonies introduced from Asia-Minor, from Syria, and from Egypt, went greatly to increase the religious derangement and uncertainty.

Thus in China, in India, in Persia, and over the Persian empire, among the Jews, in Greece, and in Rome, a similar spirit actuated the minds of leading men, in the sixth century before Christ. The effect was, in some quarters, to overthrow, elsewhere, to undermine, or at least, to weaken the great idolatrous religions of the civilized world, with the sacerdotal systems founded upon them, and to exalt human reason, and the idea of what man can do for himself.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PROGRESS UNDER RATIONALISM.

SELDOM is a national religion extinguished at a juncture. It ordinarily prolongs its decline through centuries, holding tenaciously by the strongest ties of human feeling. Even error may long survive its refutation by argument. For multitudes will never hear the argument, and many who do hear it, will never understand it: and there is in every natural religion of civilized people something, a sentiment, if nothing more, which vindicates its claim to respect, if not homage, from the clearest reason. Nor was the rationalism, which preceded the Christian era, in all quarters consistently progressive. In some, it ended by going under the tide of reactionary superstition; in others, its quickening and exaltation of mind operated with extraordinary and brilliant effect. It was the making of Athens and Rome, the very impulse which started them on their respective careers of success. In other quarters, it only crushed the spirit of the people, together with the old religion, to which they clung. The populations of Babylonia and Assyria never recovered from the effects of it, and only in one case did old idolatry succeed in reaction. It was that of Brahmanism in India; and that only after the lapse of many centuries. The idolatries,

which afterwards engrafted themselves upon Confucian morals, and upon Buddhism, were new phases of innovation. Further west, the rational movement went on consistently, slowly crumbling away the old systems of religion, without providing any substitute, save philosophy. In that process, the principal agencies were the Persian, the Hebrew, and the Greek, latterly above all others, the Greek. The religions of Western Asia and Europe, as far as civilized, went through a succession of changes and combination of elements, very unfavorable to their hold upon the convictions of intelligent people.

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## I.

### IN WESTERN ASIA.

It was in the reign of Darius Hystaspis, from 520 until 485 B. C., that the Persian empire reached its summit of power, and the utmost extent of its dominion. By him its boundaries were carried to the Indus, on the east, and to the Danube, on the west, while it covered the whole breadth of country from the Indian sea to the Jaxartes, the Caspian, and the Euxine.

As compared with that of other oriental princes, the government of Darius was eminently liberal and humane. Governors were set over all the twenty great satrapies of his kingdom, who were to enforce submission to the general good order, and receive the stipulated revenue. But most of the subordinate states were indulged in their own internal gov-

ernment and laws ; and in some cases ancient institutions, and decayed national organizations were revived. The Jews were everywhere favored, and as many of them as had returned to their own land, were protected and aided in the restoration of their city and temple. And the Tyrians were relieved from the oppression, which they had suffered under the Babylonians, and subject to the general government allowed to have a king of their own. The Persian dominions presented more features of a regularly constituted and consolidated empire than any previous conquest of arms in Western Asia, while guaranteeing greater freedom and security to its several provinces. The Great King was actually, as he was called, a King of kings, and his rule was, more than any preceding it in those countries, one of civil law.

Nothing occurred to seriously interrupt this distinguished prosperity for thirty years. The battle of Marathon, although a check upon aggression, did not affect the solidity of the Persian empire. Ten years afterwards it poured forth the largest and most magnificently equipped army that the world had ever seen, to overwhelm not only Attica but European Greece. And well for Greece that he was not a Darius who commanded it. Its failure was the turning point of Persian fortune. From the day of Plataea and Mycale, the empire began to decline ; but yet held together firmly, the greatest dominion in the world, for a hundred and fifty years.

Persians did not, all that time, retain their religion uncorrupted. by the practices of the people over

whom they ruled. Some of the angelic beings of their own belief were, in course of time, elevated to the place of gods, after the example of those of Assyria. That process was promoted by the success of the Magi in gradually reviving the popularity of their sacerdotal ritualism, which, if not idolatrous, accustomed the eyes of the people to many forms of worship practiced by idolators. As early as the time of Herodotus, the Magian religion, in the western part of the empire, prevailed over the pure Avestan. And ere long its ceremonies were assimilated to those of polytheists. The Assyrian symbol of Deity, the winged circle, or wheel in the heavens, was accepted as the sign of *Aura-mazda*; to whose service the human-headed bulls, and other Assyrian sacred figures, were converted; while the bull and lion, and monsters of various descriptions, were used to represent the Avestan powers of evil. All this favored that blending which took place between Magism and Avestanism, and justified Plato in speaking of the Magism of Zoroaster (the prophet) of Oromazes.

In the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon (405-362 B. C.), Mithra, the Avestan storm-spirit, had become a god, with special offices set apart for his worship. Gods of the old mythologies were also retained, or revived. The Babylonian Nana, identified by the Greeks with more than one of their goddesses, but most properly with Aphrodite, obtained favor for her worship, at first covertly, but finally with open acknowledgment, her images being set up in the principal cities of the empire. Other foreign gods were allowed, and other



Avestan spirits elevated to divine honors. But this seems to have been more the work of the idolatrous populations than of the true Persian people, an adoption, after their fashion, of some elements of the religion of their masters. For although some of the later monarchs became converts to idolatry, there was among the Persic people a part, perhaps the greater part, who remained faithful to the creed of their fathers; and the supremacy of Aura-mazda was never forgotten, nor the danger to the soul to be feared from the violence or seductions of Anra-mainyus.\* But the syncretism, which these combinations effected, increased the derangement of religion, its distracted and revolutionary condition in Western Asia.

That state of disorganization was still further deranged by the conquests of Alexander the Great. For the revolutionary and desolating campaigns of that hero went still more to break down the ritual systems which grow up and prosper in times of peace. His plan of blending in one people his European and Asiatic subjects, as far as it ever took effect, the dissensions of his successors, and division of his conquests among them, their long continued wars, and the Greek settlements made in various quarters, from Egypt to Bactria, settlements which overshadowed the original populations, all operated to the same end of disorganizing society and religion. Under the Seleucidæ, religion was allowed to take its own course. The Greeks never were propagandists. Although they continued in some degree to observe their own rites in their new

\* Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*. Fifth monarchy Chap. VI.

homes, it was generally with greater or less modification or addition from those of their new neighbors, who also adopted something from them. One immediate effect was to remove from the place of honor the Avestan religion, to confine it once more to those who believed in it, while the Greek ceremonial was not set up in its place, and no revolution was interested in restoring the religious establishments of the nations whom Persia had overthrown.

At the end of less than a hundred years after the death of Alexander, the insurrection of the Parthians began, which, in no very long time, expelled the Syro-Greek rule from the farther east; and before B. C. 136, supplanted it entirely, from the Hindu Cush to the Euphrates, and the western borders of Armenia.

In religion the Parthians observed some elements of Avestanism, and some of an apparently indigenous idolatry. The dualism of the former, its reverence of Aura-mazda, and dread of Ahriman, they combined with a species of nature worship, in which the sun and moon were the chief objects of adoration, the former of whom was worshipped in temples as Mithra. They had also family rites, and ancestral images, which had a place sacred to them in each house. Most of the peculiar rites and tenets of the Magian religion were professed and followed by the Parthians. The Magi were in high repute among them, and formed a large portion of the national council, which elected, and, if need were, deposed the kings. But in course of time much laxity was introduced. In some quarters the sacred fire of Aura-mazda was suffered to go out.

And respect for "fire so entirely passed away, that we hear of the later Parthians burning their dead. And the Magi, if not expelled from their place in the council, at any rate found themselves despised, and deprived of influence. The later Parthian religion can have been little more than a worship of the Sun and Moon, and of the *Teraphim*, or sacred images, which were the most precious possessions of each household." \*

While thus lax and changeful in their own religious practice, the Parthians were naturally tolerant of a variety of creeds among their subjects. Fire altars were maintained by Avestan zeal, which was allowed in the dependent kingdom of Persia. But it remained in obscurity, until the rise of the Sassanide dynasty, and overthrow of the Parthians, in the third century (226) of the Christian era.

Established once more as the national faith, over that great country between the Indus and the Tigris, Avestanism held its own between Christianity on one side, and Buddhism on the other, as well as in opposition to the idolatries, which had been tolerated under the religious laxity of the Parthians, until all were merged in one common dissolution by the Mohammedan conquest (651 A. D). Within that period the ancient faith of Zarathustra enjoyed its latest prosperity. The much venerated, but not canonical, Bundelesh presents it in its final development.

In Syria, irregular hereditary practice kept idolatry and polytheism alive, under one form and another,

\* Rawlinson, Sixth Oriental Monarchy, p. 400.

except where unbelief presumed to disregard them, or converts to Judaism worshipped the God of Abraham. Greek influence sustained that disjointed idolatry, and some of the Syro-Greek kings introduced Greek mythology and worship. Romans also allowed and protected whatever religions their subjects practiced, if they had any national sanction. But neither the practice of priests, the compliance of the masses, nor the patronage of foreign rulers could restore the old mythologies of Syria and Phenicia to their former place of power and venerability. For learning and intelligence had withdrawn their confidence.

In that tendency of the public mind skepticism could not be confined, in its questions, to the doctrine of many gods; it not unfrequently extended them to that of any god; and some persons went the length of withholding credence from everything which did not address the senses.

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## II.

### THE JEWS AFTER THE CAPTIVITY.

The subjects of the first captivity of Israel had been carried into Northern Assyria; those of the second, into Halah, and elsewhere by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes; those of the third, to the banks of the river Chebar, and those of the fourth to Babylon. In the former two, Nineveh was the conqueror; in the latter two, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. And the interval between the first

and the last was about one hundred and fifty years. Israel was the victim of Assyria, and Judah, of Babylon; and the liberator was Persia. It is the captivity of Judah which is called the Babylonish, and its duration is counted from the first conquest by Nebuchadnezzar, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, (606 B. C.,) until the decree of Cyrus, permitting their return, in 536 B. C.

During their exile, the Jews maintained their tribal organization, and the practice of their religion, as far as it was not inseparable from the temple. In all places where they resided, they "erected synagogues, where their scriptures were read and expounded, and free access to the services was granted to the heathen." A knowledge of the doctrines and expectations of Israel thereby received extensive publication. Prophets also arose among them, whose teaching sustained the spirit of the people with hope. By that means, and by the example of other holy men, together with the wholesome lesson of adversity, and perhaps to a greater extent than we can define, the encouragement and example of the Persian people, and patronage of Persian princes, they were not only restrained from joining in heathen idolatry, but more effectually weaned from all leaning to it than they had ever been before, even in the days of purest prosperity.

In Babylonia, the Jews were not held in afflictive bondage, but permitted to follow what occupations they chose. Some were elevated to places of rank and trust. And many of them prospered so well that they ceased to regret their native country. In course of time a new

generation arose, among whom many regarded the place of their own birth with more love than that of their fathers. Others, actuated by nobler motives, longed for the restoration of their city and temple, and the unmutilated service of their heavenly King.

At the end of fifty years from the destruction of Jerusalem, and of seventy from the first Babylonish captivity, the kingdom of Babylon being overthrown by the Medes and Persians, and the Princes of the allied powers taking their place successively upon the throne, when it came to the turn of Cyrus, he distinguished the first year of his reign by issuing the edict permitting the Jews to return to Judea and rebuild their city and temple. He accompanied it by an order that all their sacred vessels should be restored, and that the officers of his government should furnish them with all the necessary facilities; and his subjects, where Jews were resident, were recommended to aid them with gifts. The privilege was also granted of obtaining timber from Lebanon, for the temple. With all this Cyrus believed himself to be charged by the God whom he adored, and whom he understood to be also the God of those exiles.

Only fifty thousand availed themselves of the decree of Cyrus. They were led by Zerubabel, grandson of Jehoiakim, the last king of Judah; and arrived on the site of their ancient capital just seventy years after its first humiliation under Nebuchadnezzar, and in the latter part of the year 536 B. C.

No Hebrews from the other captivities seem to have taken any part in this revival; and the Samari-

tans, who desired to join it, were rejected on the ground of not being pure Hebrews in either birth or religion. Upon the death of Cyrus, the offended Samaritans succeeded in persuading Cambyses, and the false Smerdis, that the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem would be detrimental to the interests of the Persian crown: and the work was accordingly stayed during the reigns of those two kings. In the second year of Darius Hystaspis, a new application was made by the Samaritans. But that more enlightened and large-minded prince renewed the favor of Cyrus to the Jews, and otherwise befriended them; and under the exhortations of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the work on the temple was completed in the sixth year of Darius. In this second temple the most holy place was entirely empty, the ark of the covenant having been lost.\*

The events of the book of Esther fell within the next reign, namely, that of Xerxes; and concerned chiefly the Hebrew people who remained in captivity.

In the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, about 458 B. C., a second company of returning captives was conducted to Jerusalem by Ezra, a learned scribe, with full authority from the king. By Ezra, more than by any other, was the knowledge of their holy scriptures revived. In the exceedingly liberal decree of Artaxerxes, issued in favor of Ezra and his people, the "God of heaven," that is God in the language of the Avestan scriptures, is repeatedly identified with the God of Israel, the God in whose worship Ezra was a

\* Jahn, *Archæology*, § 333-339.

scribe. The great king, plainly from that document, felt that in doing what he did for the service of the God whose temple was at Jerusalem, he was worshipping the god of his own people, and of their holy scriptures. It seems to me that the decrees of Cyrus, of Darius, and of Artaxerxes, as compared with the language of the Avesta and of the Behistun inscription touching God, put the fact that those princes identified the God of their fathers with the God of the Israelites beyond all doubt or reasonable dispute.

Thirteen years later, Nehemiah, cup-bearer of the same king, hearing of the unprosperous condition of the colonists at Jerusalem, obtained permission, and was invested with the proper authority to proceed thither and strengthen the hands of his people. Under his direction, the rebuilding of the city walls, interrupted by Samaritan hostility, was carried forward to completion. Nehemiah then distributed nine-tenths of the people in other cities of Judea, to effect a similar restoration of them. And having by these, and various other measures, strengthened and encouraged his people, and made them really once more a nation, he returned, at the end of twelve years, to Babylon, where he resided until, in the reign of Darius Nothus, he was made governor of Judea a second time.

In that work of restoration, Ezra addressed himself chiefly to the interests of religion, and Nehemiah to those of civil government.

During the same period, the last of the Hebrew prophets appeared. Haggai and Zechariah flourished in the earlier years of Darius Hystaspis, and Malachi was



contemporary with Nehemiah. With the close of his prophecy the series of Hebrew scriptures came to an end. His prophecy was written most probably in the reign of Darius Nothus, about 420 B. C.

Completely cured of idolatry and of polytheism, to which they never afterwards recurred, the Jews of Judea subsequently took the opposite extreme of Deism, with or without a high ritualistic idea of worship; although there never were lacking among them some who rightly understood and consistently observed their national religion, in its historical and prophetic bearing; and who, in it and through it, looked for the consolation of Israel.

During the suppression of the regal and sacerdotal offices in the captivity, the prophets maintained the cause of their religion. Afterwards, when the priesthood was reinstated in the regular services, the prophetic office came to an end; and the nation being subject to the king of Persia, the high priest became the highest officer of government among the Jews.

Particular attention was now given to preservation of the books of scripture. The restoration of the Jews was to the Hebrew sacred books, as the schools of Alexandria to the classics of Greece. Ezra was the Aristarchus of his people. Different schools of Jewish Rabbis continued the work of copying, interpreting, and commenting upon the scriptures,—a work which has not been suspended to the present hour. These two thousand years a connected line of commentators has waited upon those sacred books. In the third century before Christ, they were translated into Greek,

which had then become the principal language of literature and business for the western world. And every language which has succeeded it in that distinction, has also been intrusted with a translation of those scriptures.

Upon the approach of Alexander the Great to Jerusalem, it is related that the High Priest, attended by other authorities of the city, went out to meet him. The conqueror received them with distinguished favor. And from that day the Persian dominion was there supplanted by the Greek. After the death of Alexander, 323 B. c., Judea was added by Ptolemy Lagus to his kingdom of Egypt, in which connection it continued in the free exercise of religion, until in 203 B. c. it was transferred to the rule of the Greek kings of Syria. In 169 B. c. the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to force upon the Jews the religion of Greece gave occasion to the heroic resistance of the Maccabees. The successors of those patriotic priests became from 141 B. c. the independent high-priest kings of Judea. They ceased to be independent when, in 63 B. c., they submitted to Roman arbitration. But their heirs held the throne, as separate from the priesthood, until the death of the first Herod.

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#### SUMMARY.

In that great cycle of the world's history, which terminated in the fall of the Persian empire, the various types of civilization determined for man by his earthly dwelling place, presented their earliest exam-

ples. The best that ever flourished on the dry lands was illustrated in the early Iranian tribes, in the Hebrew patriarchs, and their nomadic descendants; Egypt and Assyria carried out consistently the order of agricultural society, and Sidon with her colonies, the more varied culture of commerce; while inferior degrees of all were to be found among the table lands, the valleys and sea-coasts of that diversified, yet harmonious country, over which Persian rule had extended.

Within its limits also had each of the great historical branches of mankind played an important part. It opened in the enterprise and supremacy of the sons of Ham, and for more than fifteen hundred years remained under their control; when sinking into corruption, religious and moral, it received a new impulse and higher purpose from the great increase of the Shemites, and from the religious reformation effected by their means; and all the nations belonging to it were, for the first time, united under one ruler, and saw their final decline under the earliest empire of the Japhetic race.

The special importance to be attached to the history of this area is that within it have occurred those changes, which successively have gone to build up the progressive civilization of the world. India and China have also been the scenes of great empires, and have enjoyed their respective progress in power and culture. But their dominion has always been confined to less variety of ethnic character, less diversity of lands, and fewer elements of culture; nor have they ever evinced the

same degree of outgoing enterprise. Their respective civilizations have exhibited progress; but limited, and in course of time returning upon itself to pursue the same round again. In both cases the effect has been, upon the whole, not so much advance as revolution. In the area west of the Indus, the endless variety of elements and their combinations, and the successive changes in the nature of those combinations bringing up as leading influences, one after another, new branches of mankind, and variously combining them, have resulted in several long and important periods of real advance, during which the superiority of the ruling people within it—superiority to all the rest of the world—has been evinced in such a way as to make denial of it irrational. One of those periods, including both advance and decline, was that which ended with the Persian empire. Its leaders, in their respective cycles, had been Egypt, Ethiopia, ancient Babylonia and Sidon, giving shape and general bearing to it from beginning to end. They found rivals, reformers, correctives, who also in some quarters displaced them, in the Hebrews, later Assyrians and Chaldees, but remained substantially the same. And when they all alike had lost their force and were falling to pieces, the iron bands of Medo-Persian dominion were thrown around them, and prepared them to be handed over to the true heir of their position in the world. The Persians contracted only the gloss of the ancient refinement, which perished in their grasp. In them the race of Japhet commenced its career of mastery, but elsewhere was it destined to unfold a culture proper

to itself. To ancient oriental civilization the Persians stood as the Romans to that of Hellenic growth. They gave one master, and a firm legislation to its whole domain. And as the decay of the Roman empire was to the Hellenic, so was that of the Persian to the Oriental. But the final blow was given by the campaigns of Alexander. Though the head of a great civilized power, and destined to diffuse the civilization of which he was the champion, he came upon the last days of Orientalism as the Goth upon declining Rome. Hellenism never took root in the east, though it converted to its own use much of the fruit produced there.

The historical unity of the ancient Orient stands out the more distinctly that its prosperity did not survive to mingle with that of its successor, and has never been restored. All that the Greek accepted from it became Greek. Then fell the dark ages of the Oriental world—dark ages which have seen no returning dawn; the learning which preceded them has enjoyed no revival. Under the rule successively of Greek and Roman, the arts of refinement met with liberal patronage; but neither Greek nor Roman could revive Orientalism. By the introduction of new elements, with the prostration of native independence, an exotic style of life, of manners and pursuits was created, which, extruding the old, never took its place in the heart of the people, and only led the way down to barbarism. Greek culture and fashions prevailed, and the language of the Greek became the chief medium of literature and business, and those of the native inhabitants

passed away, or changed into dialects which literature did not recognize. Later Saracenic culture was brief and partial, only enough to dazzle in the midst of the darkness.

The world had seen another of the grand cycles of its history—a round of civilization, brought to a close—one of the mighty days of God concluded. And now that its work was done, what in brief, was the sum of all that could descend to posterity? Lessons of warning and example, primary elements in every department of life, and the great fundamental truths of man's relations to God, together with some similarly fundamental errors, from which even the best of the world have not yet obtained entire emancipation. From its original germ in the structure of the family, absolute monarchy grew up by such natural progress that it was regarded with the reverence due to the order of nature. The world so far had recognized no other form of government. A king in hereditary descent was held to be a son of God, and to rule by divine right. Resistance to his will, on the part of a subject, was impiety incurring the vengeance of heaven.

The first recorded effort to remove that error and raise a people from that state of servility, belonged to the history of Israel, and, owing to the universally prevailing feelings and prejudices, was only partially successful. The impression that the rightful king was the lineal descendant of the deified national patriarch, and, as such, a son of God, held a control over the populace in those days so powerful that nothing

save a higher religious position could overcome it. That higher religious position was taken by the Mosaic constitution. No man was to be king in Israel; and the people were constituted a nation of brethren. But the God of Heaven and Earth, the eternal and invisible, was to be their king. Thus despotism, with its evils, was to be removed from among men; the sense of necessity for a king satisfied by being addressed to Him whose right it is to reign, and the servile element supplanted by the worship of Him to whom alone worship is due, and whom to worship truly lifts the created being to its proper sphere. The conception was at once true, sublime, and elevating in its effects upon all who accepted it, and the only practical way of instituting a free national government in that day. The Hebrews were taught the nearness of man to God, the native equality of men, and the principles of self-government subordinate to God and his laws alone. But they ill understood the glorious distinction of that constitution; and soon began to look upon it as an awkward singularity; and finally insisted upon having a king, like other people. The seeds of national freedom did not bear fruit in the period of Oriental superiority. Ritualism and sacerdotalism and superstition carried despotic government on their shoulders; as their causes were implicated and almost identified. Not until the rise of the great rational revolution in the religious world, was the attempt revived to remove despotism from the government of the state. But then it was made by separating the civil as far as necessary from religious office.

In both the Athenian and Roman Republics, while the name of king was abolished for the state, it was retained for religion.

In some respects, that servility towards rulers, implicated with religion, served to produce effects which were not altogether evil. Upon the virgin soil of the finest countries in the world, those primitive nations, submissive to the will and enterprise of their rulers, labored systematically, and coöperatively with the order almost of an army. Material results were produced, and structures were erected of a magnificence which could not otherwise have been attained; and achievements were made in reducing nature and organizing industry and society, which, no doubt, could have been better made, if men had been better and wiser; but being as they were, would never have been made without an absolute ruler.

Many successive improvements have added to the comfort and elevation of society, in later times, but all constructed upon the basis erected then. It was a period of great beginnings, in discovery and inventions, in arts and science and social culture; yet everywhere its works present marks of a progress prematurely arrested. Superstition or sacerdotal purpose early interposed with religious conventional limits. As in some places, at the present time, the ugly old pictures of the middle ages are holy, the recent and better painted are unholy; so, in ancient Egypt, the old stiff outlines held their place against all improvement, by sacred prescriptive right. The sculptures of Nineveh are of a different style, but equally conven-



tional and limited. Earlier religion being an immediate communion of man with God, cultivated, under God, self-reliance, enterprise, and progress; but when religion became ceremonial and ritual, and dependent upon the intercession of a priesthood, with a king at its head, all things were determined by prescribed limits. Religion, as it became more ritual, put a limitation upon progress, and finally forbade it. When all the works and processes of art and industry were consecrated, it became impious to change them. It was left for the unshackled genius of the Greek, inheriting those lessons, to improve upon them, without such restraints of religion, and to carry execution to ideal perfection.

Letters, the greatest of all the arts, and the most benign, were an invention of very early date, and received a more prolonged culture and a higher finish. Nothing can be more complete of its kind than a Hebrew Psalm. And yet the perfection of form in the great branches of the literary art was not attained by the ancient oriental world.

Above all, the vital part of the legacy, that which is limited to no cycle, but pursues its onward course from one to another, had already gone forth upon its mission into many lands, and by many ways, while, in its own proper forms, it continued its history among a remnant of the theocratic people, until its symbols should receive their spiritual fulfilment. That has lost no part of its value to the present day. As a later antiquity left its bequest of classical literature and art, so the ancient oriental world handed down to

succeeding time the inheritance of religion, in the midst of which as the spirit of the only progress which is onward, and not cyclic, there is an exalted, and ennobling religion, which has been found able to co-exist with the most refined culture, and is of a nature to promote it, and to lift the barbarous from their degradation.

The purely oriental period closed with the Persian conquest, in the sixth century before Christ; but European superiority did not take its place until the victories of Alexander of Macedon, in the fourth. Of the two, the more momentous crisis in the history of religion is the former, inasmuch as it coincides with movements of similar effect upon religious opinion elsewhere, constituting the most extensive uprising of human reason against superstition and sacerdotalism that the world ever saw. The Macedonian empire coincided with its spirit, in some important respects; but retarded its progress, while rendering a complete reaction against it impossible.

The later Chinese classics, the four books called Shoo, were written by successors of Confucius. They treat of topics of moral and political philosophy in a practical way, without any claim to inspiration. Confucianism suffered persecution in the reign of the Tsin dynasty, in the latter part of the third century, B. C., but was revived, with some loss of its scriptures in the second. About the middle of the first century B. C. the religion of China was further divided, and the faith of her people shaken by the introduction of Buddhism. Study was still applied to the ancient classics; and the

elevated piety of the ancient sages was therefore not entirely forgotten. But in that Confucius Buddha and Lau-tze thenceforward divided the religious veneration of the people the evidence is complete that the true theistic faith of their forefathers had departed.

Aryan mythology and worship, which had developed into Brahmanism, in one direction, and into the systems of Greece and Italy, in the other, were, during the same period, in a state of suppression or decay. Over the most of India, Brahmanism was giving way before the followers of Buddha, who by the third century B. C., had completely established their authority over northern India. And the spread of Buddhism continued with great activity and success until long after the Christian epoch. During all that time the Brahmanical system and faith, if not extinguished in all places was held under deep depression. Buddhism, it is true, did not consistently retain its purely philosophical character, for in course of time it took up some of the superstitions of its predecessor, and practically deified its founder, but in no sense could it be called the ethnic faith of the people among whom it rose.

In the west, while the forms of the old Aryan religion were still observed, and its gods honored with their traditional epithets and worship, it was being steadily undermined by the progress of philosophy and popular intelligence. Decay of faith in the gods is generally bewailed or admitted by the classical writers of the period, who refer to the subject. And the testimony becomes stronger, both direct and indirect, as it is nearer to the christian era.

In the Asiatic west and in Africa, the breaking down was most chaotic. For there no philosophic system had come in to sustain the minds of men, and take the place of faith. Ethiopia was the Holy Land of the worshippers of Amun, and of the Ammonian Jupiter. But Ethiopia followed up her religious tradition with no philosophy, which could impute a human sense to rites and practices which had lost, or parted company with the spiritual. And so Ethiopia, and Egypt, and their implicit pupils, slowly, but surely, went down into religious imbecility. Greek thought was an exotic in Egypt, and could only protract the process. For Greek faith was itself letting go its hold of religion to grasp philosophy.

The religions of Syria presented the type of that which was established among nations of Semitic blood; and which had been carried to important points on the coast of Europe and Africa by Phenician colonies. Its varieties had been established, and munificently supported, in Nineveh, Babylon, Damascus, Hamath, Phenicia, and their respective dominions; but in the course of their wars with each other, had been all successively humiliated. For the great Syrian and Assyrian kings made war upon the religion, as well as the civil power of their enemies, and when victorious, carried the statues of their gods into captivity. Sennacherib boasted especially of the number of national gods he had defeated. And, when the Persians came with their monotheistic views, it was really to sweep all the enfeebled religions of that part of their conquest into a mass of ruins. Subsequently

the Syro-Greek kings attempted to supply their subjects with some degree of uniformity in religion, by establishing the Greek. But that only added to the chaos of religious forms, without presenting anything to satisfy the mind of an earnest thinking man.

The Hebrew scriptures had lost nothing of their spirituality, and they were carefully preserved, and regularly read in all settlements of Jews, who professed to retain their Hebrew nationality. And the promise of a Saviour, which in those Scriptures is the principal theme, encouraged and cheered the heart of the believer, and saved him from the prevailing religious despondency, and spread abroad among the nations, to which the Hebrew dispersion extended, a vague expectation of some great personage to come, who should instruct the world, and restore mankind to the condition of righteousness and happiness, which it was thought the race had once enjoyed.

But while the reading of the Scriptures held up among the Jews a religion equally spiritual and reasonable, very few of them accepted it as such. The greater number were either rationalists or ritualists. Pharisees and Sadducees divided the expounders of Scripture between them. Both had among them some who apprehended the spirituality of their creed; but we have the best authority for saying that the Pharisees, as a class, were mere formalists, and the doctrine of the Sadducees was unbelief of all spiritual existence, and of a life to come.

There is no record of another such period of deep, wide-spread, and long-continued skepticism as that

which followed the downfall of Persia, or more correctly the division of the Macedonian conquest. Nor is there much reason to believe that, if that great rational movement had not taken place, the state of the world would have been better ; more likely worse—a state of prostration, such as actually has befallen the nations elsewhere. We know what India became under restored Brahmanism, and what Egyptian persistent idolatry descended to. The decay of faith in what had forfeited its claim to faith provoked to inquiry. Whatever a few individuals may do, society cannot settle down contented without religion. When constrained to abandon an old faith, by discovering it to be groundless, it is only to stand out in an attitude of expecting something better—a state of craving for truth. Man's sense of relation to his Creator may be seriously violated, may be long neglected or repressed, but cannot be extinguished. The human mind may be terribly deceived, and rest in falsehood, under the color of truth ; it cannot rest in what it recognizes as falsehood. But utter rejection of a Supreme Being, or, at least a spiritual law, is felt by most of mankind to be a false position. National unbelief of all religion is hardly possible. National skepticism, whether of long or brief duration, is fluctuating and transitory unless sustained by a philosophical system, and the weight of the learned. When the public mind comes to rest, it will be in the belief of something accepted as true.

Such was the condition of the educated world in the latter days of the Roman Republic. The old religions had lost their hold upon intelligent men,—in all

the great homes of western civilization had completely broken down into mere ceremonies, whose only remaining dignity was due to their connection with matters of state, and their only real weight to popular superstition, sustained by the tricks of imposture and the fears of ignorance. Subsequently, as expounded and interpreted by some philosophers in controversy with christians, the more respectable of heathen observances enjoyed a partial revival, but they never recovered the old dominion of belief which they possessed, and which gave them dignity prior to the sixth century before Christ. "What is truth?" was the common inquiry. And the general impression among educated men held it to be unanswerable.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE SPIRITUAL DISPENSATION.

THE next great revolution of faith pertaining to general history, was one which blazed up from the very midst of that abyss of religious derangement and incredulity. It had no dependence upon any of the philosophies, had no rationalistic explanations with which to recommend itself; and it differed from the systems of the far east in rejecting the sufficiency of human ability. It did not merely fall back upon ancient revelation; it professed to come directly from the councils of heaven, and to come with a power of divine authority from which all preceding revelations were to receive their sanction. In that deepest of all depths of unbelief into which the world had ever been plunged, did Jesus of Nazareth announce the most exalted revelations—the highest possible claims upon faith, accompanied by the highest of all credentials.

It is within the region of the ancient decaying mythologies of the west, and among the neighboring barbarians, and their descendants, that so far his religion has won its triumphs. Not until recently has Christianity, in its own proper character as a gospel, opened attack upon the systems of Confucius and Buddha, or made any important inroads upon Brahmanism. For, in the hands of Jesuit missionaries of



earlier time, it was presented as differing so little from them, that it could not be said so truly to have made converts, as that it stooped to assimilate itself to them.

Subsequent religious revolutions of any great importance have fallen within the field of Christianity. They are the Mohammedan and the Protestant—the former an external assault upon idolatry and sacerdotalism, when these practices were first engrafted upon the Eastern church; and the latter an internal dissent from the more numerous and matured corruptions of the Western Church in later times.

Mohammedanism fell back upon the fundamental elements of the Abrahamic creed, and added thereto a number of its own oracles; Protestantism is the Christian Church reverting to primitive Christianity, to the original Christian books, and to what they sanction, and aims to adhere to them, in their simplicity, and without additions.

Conspicuous above all other religions, in the power with which it has retained hold upon the world of progressive civilization, is that of the Hebrews. Ethnic, that is addressed to the circumstances of the Israelitish nation, to some extent, and for a period of its history, it gradually dropped the fetters of that limitation; and, in its Christian form, abandoned them entirely, presenting itself in a simplicity, a breadth and freedom, and a fulness of grace adapted to the spiritual wants of all mankind. Among the many legacies bequeathed from the early ages of our race, none has descended with such purity and completeness as that which comes

to us from the religion of the Hebrews. It has been preserved in its spirit as well as in its form. The aim of Christianity was not to establish a philosophy, a priesthood, or a political system, but to secure the salvation of souls, and the promotion of heart-and-life holiness, under a union between God and man in mutual confidence and love. Its provisions were made for those spiritual wants which all men experience. And it could reach its own proper maturity only in such a form as should present it acceptably to all mankind.

It may be observed by every reader of the Hebrew scriptures, that the religious history therein contained is inwoven with records of ethnic, civil and military events. Until the call of Abraham, revelation was committed equally to all the descendants of Noah, and sacred history was also universal history. From the call of Abraham until the migration to Egypt, revelation belongs to the whole Abrahamic race, and its history includes the children of Lot, of Ishmael and of Esau. After the death of Jacob, the narrative is almost suspended, and no addition is made to revelation for ages. When it opens again, in the Exode from Egypt, it is concerned with the Israelites alone, and with other nations only in as far as connected with them. Ishmaelites, Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites have become heathen, and sacred history touches them only as they affect Israel. Revelation and the record of it are now confined to the sons of Jacob. After the ten tribes depart entirely from the God of their fathers, and are broken up as a nation, and scattered, the sacred

narrative also abandons them, and confines itself to the kingdom of Judah. Portions of the history of Assyria are brought out, in the account of their overthrow. When the multitude of Judah also proved unfaithful to Jehovah, and were scattered in various lands, the narrative abandons all but the few who remain faithful to the spirit of their religion. It does not go into Northern Assyria, and very little into Egypt, nor does it dwell upon the mixed race, which remained in Palestine; but throws its light upon Babylon, where the most faithful few spent the time of their captivity. And when Babylon fell, beneath the arms of the Medes and Persians, it records only that victory of the great allies, in which the captives of Judah were most concerned. More particular mention is made of the princes by whom their religion was defended and by whom they were restored to their own land, and their temple and city rebuilt. It then confines itself entirely to the restored remnant.

Thus, it appears that the number of those by whom the historical religion was faithfully retained, continued to diminish; and ever as the interest in it was revived, by a new interposition of revelation, so did the observance of it again decline, and become limited to a smaller number. That process continued until the appearance of Christ; when only a small remnant of the Jews adhered to the forms of their religion, and of those but few observed them in the proper spirit.

In Christ a new process was instituted, consisting in the expansion of the sphere of godliness, tending

to that ultimate comprehension of all mankind, which it is the aim of his gospel to effect.

In view of another point, a progress of elevation and purification had been going on. The number of intelligent pious had progressively diminished, but every successive revelation had lifted the faithful higher on the scale of spirituality and knowledge. The falling off in numbers came of human weakness and folly; the increase of knowledge and of spirituality was of God: the former was natural development, the latter, growth by successive acts of origination. Such is the Hebrew view of the matter. Natural development of human ideas, or of ideas committed entirely to that career, tends in one way; development controlled, guided and cultured by successive origination goes another way. The former becomes human, and limited by the limitations of human capacity can make only limited progress. It then degenerates, and revives again, if it revives, only by returning to its own beginning, to run the same round once more. The sustaining hand of God is needed to foster the plant he has sown. Progress in the line of revelation is the only progress among men which is never backward, nor in a cycle, but onward and upward continually.

Although that progress at certain stages takes up elements which long before seemed to have been dropped, yet it never returns to that stage at which they were dropped; but simply brings them into the place for which they had been deferred. Thus, according to the same authority, one religion, in the first instance, belonged to all men, and its offices of prophet,

priest, and king, resided in the one head of the tribe or nation. In the changes which became necessary to work reformation, and inculcate spirituality, those offices were separated and a particular nation was taken under culture, until a few men were actually prepared to set up, live and preach a purely spiritual kingdom of God, then are the offices of prophet, priest and king recombined in one person, in a dispensation of mercy once more addressed to all mankind. But so far from being a return to the original ground, it is the issue of an arduous process of lifting human ideas from error to truth, from the ritual to the spiritual, from typical intimations to the fully developed purpose.

The most extensively accepted religions of the world now are Buddhism and Christianity; the latter founded upon the mercy of God in an Almighty Saviour; the former upon what man can do for himself. Both have undergone corruption in various quarters; but Buddhist error leans to trusting in Buddha, while Christian errors tend to trusting in something else than Christ.

Mohammedanism is an offshoot from the Hebrew and Christian religion, and all its best elements it holds in common with them. Its relation to them is different from that of Buddhism to the religion of the Brahmans. Buddha rejected Brahmanism totally ignoring all the gods it taught; Mohammed accepted the God of the Hebrew and Christian; made it the chief end of his religion to teach the sole existence of God, in distinction from all others that are called God,

to reverence his ancient worship, and to honor all the prophets of its canon. The errors of Mohammedanism were heathen; all that made it powerful as a religion was truth of Christian or Hebrew revelation.

The greatest and most direct opponent of Christianity is Buddhism. The former teaches salvation through the merits of a divine Saviour; the latter through man's efforts for himself. Christianity is a gospel of life; Buddhism, of death. Christianity proclaims salvation into conscious blessedness; Buddhism salvation by means of eternal unconsciousness. The former brings life and immortality to light; the latter covers up the future beneath a dreary hope, ever trembling on the verge of nonentity. The former is a social religion, designed to unite all its adherents together in love, through their common love of a Saviour; the latter is monastic, designed and calculated to turn every man's thoughts inward upon himself, not for self-development, but for suppression of the affections, and just as far as he progresses in it, to separate him from his fellow-men. The culmination of Buddhist effort is to detach its devotees from all usefulness in the world; the aim and effect of pure Christianity is to make men helpful to each other. Christianity is full of hope and faith in a present and everlasting God, who is a friend and a father; Buddhism recognizes no god, unless a great pantheistic generalization may be so called. It rests under a perpetual apprehension of perhaps not being able, with all its austerities, to reach that dreary state of negation which is all it has to expect. Christianity is buoyant, and full of anticipations

of progress for the better in this life, and of a glorious life to come. The Buddhist heaven is the security of insensibility ; the Christian heaven is a state of exalted enjoyment, in a perfect and glorified society. They are direct antagonists. No other religion is at the same time so flatly opposed to Christianity, and so worthy to be compared with it as that of Buddha. Both teach a pure morality with tenderness and love. Both promise salvation to suffering man ; and in that sense are gospels to their respective believers ; but one is a gospel of life ; the other virtually of death. One promises salvation from an indefinite succession of degrading births, by putting an end to the susceptibilities of life ; the other from the pangs of eternal death, by one spiritual birth into larger capacities. To save from evil, the one takes away sensation ; the other confers blessedness. One claims to be the highest effort of human thought ; the other a message from God.

Buddhism had its highest prosperity before Christianity was revealed, and during its ancient and middle ages. Of late years Christianity has reached a population about equal to its rival, and is still advancing, while Buddhism is declining. The religion which set out with trusting in the sufficiency of human ability, is now sluggish and despondent ; while that which trusts not in man, and denies his sufficiency to himself, is full of hope, enterprise and energy.

Religions have their periods of youthful zeal, prosperity, conservatism, and decline. There is only one set of doctrines, which, although presented in various successive ways, has never been substantially other than

it is now. Some of those doctrines are found in all the great religions ; but in the Hebrew and Christian they have their place in a kindred system, and are combined with others of a more originating character which appear nowhere else. In that line of history, there has been fluctuation in zeal and fidelity, there has been change in method, but always the same doctrine in progressive clearness and fullness of exposition. One system of doctrine, animated by one promise, constitutes the religion of the Hebrew and Christian, one in life and purpose from the beginning. The same promise followed, in the respective stages of its history, always by fulfilment ; and in the next, always expanding into wider meaning, and anticipating a larger fulfilment, is its vital principle. A promised Saviour, a Saviour present, who while fulfilling the past forms of the promise, adds new elements to it, which yet belong to the import of the original promise ; and still a further unfolding of the import and a fuller fulfilment is before the eye of hope and faith. Present fulfilment, while outrunning the anticipations from ancient promise, unfolds into the blossom of a new and grander promise ; and still the Christian prays "Thy Kingdom come."

The history of what is now the christian church is the outward progress of one cause. Of no other religion can it be said that from the earliest record of human existence it has observed the same unvarying aim through all the accretions which at times have accumulated around it. Through all the mistakes of those who have professed belief in it, through periods



of benighted barbarism and the elegant vices of high civilization, proclaiming the same message, irrepressible by persecution and incorruptible by success, it has pursued inflexibly the direct line of its own proper progress. Others have been successful for a time, and within the range of their own respective ethnic affinities ; but, without exception, have degenerated into corruption, rotting to the core, until reform cannot find one healthy point for reaction. In Christianity, under its deepest depression, there have always been energies competent to reform.

Christian history exhibits a repetition of the changes which made up the preceding history of the religious world. First, there was its period of primitive faith, in the days of its apostles, apostolic fathers, and early defenders. Then came its period of legalism, when, in the constitution of Constantine, it took its place in union with the state. A long reign of sacerdotalism followed, in which all the steps of degeneracy recurred after their ancient order, only restrained and modified by the spiritual life which dwelt in the church, and which all the legal apparatus of the church, though calculated to crush out, or render inactive, was never able entirely to subdue. When that course of things could no longer be endured by all, the revolt of human reason followed, analogous to the vaster movements of the centuries immediately preceding Christ. Two hundred years before the reformation of religion was able to maintain itself effectively, disgusted reason rose in rebellion against sacerdotal assumption, and restrained it by limitations of civil law, popular intelligence, and common sense.

The men who revived the study of the civil law, who rekindled the flame of learning, and laid the foundations of modern literature, and disseminated among the people the first ideas of modern freedom, were the pioneers of intellectual emancipation. Analogous to the first publication of the gospel, reformation of the church followed when it had become indispensable for men fully prepared to distinguish between a true spiritual faith and the blinding forms and falsehoods in which it was enveloped. Reformed religion has all along ever since contended against both declining sacerdotalism, and increasing rationalism ever tending into religious infidelity. As free thought extends its area, it is ever encountered by the advocates of a free gospel, which is rapidly extending itself to every country of the Christian name, and as Christianity is the religion of the ruling races, is also extending to the world in general. The same questions, now shaking the unchristian legalisms of christendom, are overthrowing belief in the religions of heathenism. For free thought awakens inquiry which nothing but the Christian revelation answers. The rational movement of modern times promises to be of still greater breadth and power than that of the five centuries preceding Christ, and to continue its progress, side by side with evangelical religion, until it shall pervade the world. Christianity has nothing to fear from that contact, that rivalry, nothing to fear from comparison or criticism. Hitherto it has increased in clearness and power of self-exposition with every discovery of science, and every achievement of research.

## RECAPITULATION.

It is probable that the oldest extant writings are recent as compared with the origin of the human race, and yet they have a peculiar relation to it. They are of a certain patriarchal simplicity, they picture life in a primitive state, and, as far as historical, are concerned with the beginnings of society. They are religious, and record acts of religious persons; but prescribe no forms of devotion. Any prayers or adorations or rites contained in the book of Genesis, or the Shoo-King, are only occasional and incidentally mentioned. And yet religious things are so plainly mentioned that little doubt can rest upon the nature of the creed, or the parts of which worship consisted.

2. Next oldest are some of the carefully composed prayers and songs of praise, and of blessing, as those recorded of Isaac and of Jacob, and of some of the early Chinese monarchs.

3. But with the idea of careful preparation of such exercises, came also that of careful arrangement of the parts of divine service in a prescribed order. The establishment of a ritual to which all should conform was the subject of the next oldest scriptures. There was an Egyptian ritual embodied in writing long before Moses. A national ritual, though perhaps unwritten, it is also apparent, existed in India, and in China before the collecting of their hymns.

4. At the next step, the order of succession differs in different countries. In Hebrew, it is the giving of the law, which is recounted historically, but also inci-

dentally the composition of sacred poetry. In India and China it was the multiplication of hymns, including well ordered prayer, going on for many generations; and also among the Persians, though in that case, as the work of one man.

5. Next was the collecting and classifying and perhaps selecting of the hymns.

6. Succeeding scriptures of India and Persia consist of liturgies in which hymns, or parts of hymns, are arranged into suitable places in the prescribed ritual. At this point again the Hebrew differs from the rest. For while a great addition of hymns was made to the national worship, no liturgical book was prepared to prescribe their use. The great choir instituted by David is described in its chronological place; but the order of its performances, and their places in relation to the other parts of the service are not mentioned, much less prescribed.

7. In the sequel of the liturgical scriptures of India followed annotations, commentaries and books of law; in Persia, law alone. Within the same period, the new Chinese scriptures consisted of chronicles and moral and political instruction. Among the Hebrews progress omitted commentaries on older scriptures, and made little addition to the law, but proceeded in the channels of history and prophecy towards further unfolding of the spiritual element in the national worship.

8. Subsequently to the great rationalist era, the scriptures of China and of Buddhism were philosophical and moral. In Persia, no addition was made; but the Avestan religion was more widely enforced by

civil authority. Greece had no sacred scriptures, properly so called; but her epic literature, and choral odes took their place to some extent; and these, within the same period, began to be counterbalanced by philosophy, and there as well as in Rome, the character of law, as a part of religion, to be superseded by the idea of law as of human institution. Hinduism, as its sacred books multiplied, went more extensively into theosophic speculation, and mythological fable. Hebrew scriptures turned not aside from prophecy and records of the time.

Later heathen scriptures, with little exception, were not designed for the general public, but for priests, or rulers, or at most, for a learned class. The Hebrew law was appointed for all classes of the people to know. And the subsequent scriptures were directly addressed to the public. They were of an attractive and popular character. With exception of the law of Moses, the Bible has very little of the sacerdotal about it,—less than any other of the later scriptures, except the Chinese, and they are merely moral and political. The Bible is also spiritual.

The whole history, until the time of Christ, divides itself into three grand periods; the patriarchal, the legal, and the rational.

1. The first principle of religion is one God, to whom all men are responsible. Of this the educated priesthood never entirely lost sight; but, while they ministered in the popular polytheisms, and no doubt in most cases believed them, retained among them-

selves, in one way or another, the doctrine of one spiritual and supreme Being, who was the real power over all, or in all.

2. God was conceived of in the first instance as personal, occasionally visiting his worshippers as a just, but benign patriarchal ruler. In this idea there was an inconsistent combination of the human and divine, the material and spiritual, from which several lines of thinking radiated.

3. Polytheism, in some quarters, grew out of the union of several states into one, each retaining its own idea of God; in others, from looking at the various objects, or operations of nature as manifestations of God, and in that light as God; in others by employing certain objects as symbols of God; in others by conceiving of the divine government as conducted by the agency of divine beings, in their respective jurisdictions; or by thinking of great or holy men as, after their death, maintaining a spiritual supervision over their descendants, or followers.

4. Idolatry in all cases grew out of man's sensuous nature, seeking to give the objects of his worship a visible, or tangible form, sometimes as the fruit of symbolism, and sometimes of the personal, degenerating into the anthropomorphic, idea of God. The reformations, which have done most for the dignity and energy of human character, have rejected it. In connection with polytheism it has done more than anything else to lower the popular idea of God, each succeeding step in its history being one of degradation. And the gods lowest on the scale are always favorites

in the popular mythology, and receive the most abundant and immediate worship.

5. The platform upon which sacerdotal Theosophy and popular idolatry meet is the great pantheistic Triad of the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer; according to speculation representing the order of the Universe operating in a cycle of everlasting revolution; and in the eye of popular belief consisting of three gods, a father, a friend, and an enemy. Polytheism generalizes into pantheism, and pantheism germinates on every hand, into polytheism.

The great religions of China, India, Persia, and the Hebrews, at the earliest ascertainable stage, held very nearly the same fundamental doctrines and practice, which, in Genesis are assigned to the covenant with Noah. But the difference between them increased with the progress of their history, and the ends they reached were very far apart. The simple and truthful spirituality of the earliest Scriptures were progressively, and at last completely, abandoned by the later in all cases but one. The Hebræo-Christian Scriptures not only retained the spirituality of their earlier books, but became more elevated and heavenly towards the close. If the other scriptures had maintained the religious character with which they all began, the later Hebrew scriptures would have greatly surpassed them. As it is, in the degeneracy of the later heathen, and the ascending progress of the Hebræo-Christian, the relation ceases to be comparison, and becomes contrast.

In literary character, all of these Scriptures, as far as now accessible to the English reader, are possessed

of very great merit ; the Chinese retaining a charming union of dignity with archaic simplicity, a little stiff, like the manners of a gentleman of the olden time ; the Hindu, disjointed in form, but affluent in thought, to the opposite extremes of criticism and imagination ; the Persian, presenting a little group of poems beautiful both in symmetry of structure, and moral and religious sentiment, imbedded in a liturgy, and connected with a law, for which, as literature, there is not much to be said ; in point of form, nothing can excel the epic literature and choral lyrics of Greece ; but, if to simplicity, and form, and affluence, and imagination, we add majestic weight of meaning, and splendor and variety of imagery, with a healthy good sense on the subject of religion, we shall not exceed the literary merits of the Hebrew, whose superiority to all the rest would be best demonstrated by an edition of them all together in parallel columns.

Beginning with those primary elements of worship which have been ascertained to belong to all the most ancient book-religions, we find historical progress exhibits variation from them according to certain principles, which are also similar in all.

1. Worship was first unconstrained, private, and domestic. It consisted of adoration, prayer, vows, and offerings, especially sacrifice.

2. Natural and undisturbed progress insisted upon careful repetition in successive services of what had been considered acceptable in the foregoing, and thereby established the sanctity of the forms.



3. The observation of the forms became good works, above all other works gratifying to the deity.

4. Another step of progress was to increase the number of rites, both regular and occasional, the better to secure divine favor, under the impression that the more of such service paid, the better would God be pleased.

5. It became a matter of national importance to enforce by law the performance of the rites according to prescribed rule ; precision being essential to the validity of the service.

6. In long course of continual repetition of legal rites, the worshippers lost sight of the doctrines implied, and observed the rites for the merit which was deemed resident in them.

All the religions of which we are speaking, did not assume those different stages in one distinct and uniform way ; nor did all their adherents reach the same extreme. Because the circumstances of the nations were different, and revolutions, partial or general, broke up regularity. Moreover, our information is too defective on some points for a complete comparison. But, in as far as undisturbed progress has been recorded, worshippers always manifested the tendency to that direction, and the great body of them in all those religions pursued it to its lowest stage.

Historical progress in the ministry of religion advanced by a kindred process.

First, the natural head of the family was the sole minister of religion for his family.

Second, when the family became a tribe, or nation, its head became chief priest, with a number of assistant priests.

A third stage was that of a legally constituted hierarchy of different ranks for different offices, with the king as head of its authority.

In some quarters, the latter element gave place to the hierarchy of a separate family, or class recognized in the state as the lawful ministers of religion, with a chief of their own; a state of things the most conservative and tenacious of existence. To limit the power of such a hierarchy, where it exists, is always one of the most obvious duties of a reformation. To a progressive change of that kind belonged the elective priestly offices of Greece and Rome. But reformation can seldom or ever return to the patriarchal ministry. It can only simplify as far as possible, and guard against abuse. But however simple the reformed institution, and careful the checks applied, it is liable to be subjected to the same process again.

In the Hebrew religion existed the most effective checks upon that natural progress, whereby the faithful believer was sustained, and upon which the intelligent reformer took his stand. And within its pale, although the multitude, priests and people, went the way of the rest of the world, consistent development of its truth was carried forward by the few who were faithful to its scriptures.

A ritual religion, when spiritual meaning has deserted its rites, provokes intelligent men to reforma-

tion, or to skepticism. The easiest and shortest road is that of skepticism. Honest reformation goes back to restore the meaning which originally dictated the rites, or further back to the authority for that meaning itself, and for the priesthood connected with it.

In brief, it may be said that,

I. The natural course of religious progress is from simple to complex ;

1. Popular religious progress towards complexity in elements of worship and objects of veneration ;

2. Scholastic religious progress towards complexity of doctrine and exposition : and

3. Sacerdotal religious progress towards complexity of rites, regulations, ranks and duties.

II. The course of reformation is from complex to simple, either

1. On the authoritative ground of returning to primitive doctrine and practice ; or

2. On the philosophic ground of a more comprehensive classification of truth.

III. Every reformation, however simple, when once established in security, is liable to be again carried into the current of general tendency. Human nature gravitates towards the complex in religious observances. Simplicity can be maintained only by the constant watchfulness of intelligence.

IV. Philosophy, however excellent in itself, does not answer the purpose of religion. For religion is trust in a superior Being ; philosophy is trust in human reason ; when substituted for religion, it unsettles faith,

and creates moral disorganization. Even Buddhism, in order to success, had to become trust in Buddha, as a supernatural being.

V. Society cannot rest satisfied without a religion in which it can believe. Unsettled skepticism is not so hopeless a religious state as confidence in error.

All the ancient extant Scriptures began with teaching or implying the nearness and love of God to man. All the later, except the Hebræo-Christian, gradually moved away from that ground, until the idea of God was divided into that of a being removed to an infinite distance, a mere abstract conception of impersonal power; or on the other hand, that of a god, or gods, on a level with the nature of man, or beneath it,—a stock, or a stone, or an animal; and in both inculcating servile fear.

The Hebræo-Christian Scriptures consistently taught the same majestic, but tender, love of God, united harmoniously with justice and might. Progress consisted in the increasing clearness, fulness, and tenderness of revelation. Beginning where all the rest began, that series of Scriptures alone continued in the line of consistent unfolding of the paternal love of God, efficient to the salvation of men.

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