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A handbook of comparative  
religion









A HANDBOOK  
OF  
COMPARATIVE RELIGION

BY

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*"The Light of Asia and the Light of the World," "The Genesis and  
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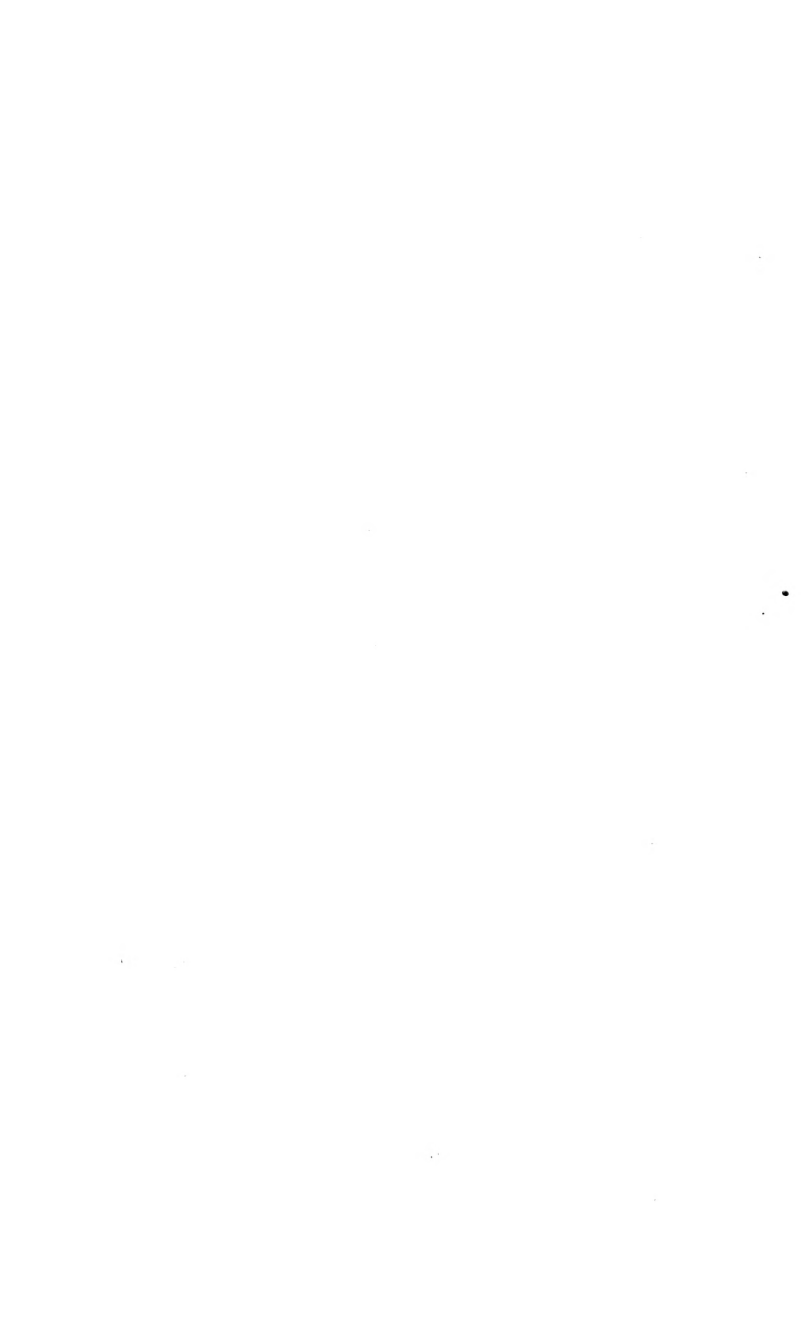
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## PREFACE.

IT might perhaps seem as if such a brief and incomplete discussion of the question of Comparative Religion, as is given in the following pages, would be superfluous. Many of the ablest scholars and specialists in the world have published of late years elaborate discussions of the subject, which have laid all students under lasting obligations. It is to be regretted, however, that to a very great extent, the general result of the presentation of the subject, so far as it has hitherto been made popularly accessible, has been to create a widely spread impression that the difference between the various religions of the world has formerly been greatly exaggerated; and that, in particular, the teaching hitherto current in the Church as to the exclusive position held by Christianity as the one only divinely revealed system of saving truth, is as erroneous as uncharitable.

It seems to be imagined by many, that just as we ought to have charity toward our fellow-

Christians in various sections of the Church of Christ, who hold on many points religious beliefs different from those which we have been educated to receive, inasmuch as in all that is essential to true religion and acceptance with God, we are truly at one; even so ought we to regard those who are not even Christians in name, but followers of one or other of the great world-religions. It is strangely fancied that howsoever these may differ from us in many things, yet in all things which are essential to man's eternal well-being, they also are practically at one with Christians; so that, if they but carefully live up to the precepts and observances prescribed in their several religions, it is thought that it is only charitable to suppose that their prospects for the life to come may be, on the whole, as good as our own.

The practical bearing of opinions of this kind is only too obvious. When the Lord Jesus Christ was about to ascend into heaven, He gave unto His disciples orders, in the clearest possible terms, to preach His gospel in all the world, to every creature; and that with the object of making men who were disciples of Buddha or Confucius, or worshippers of Jupiter or other of the gods of Greece

and Rome, disciples to Himself, and worshipers of the one God and Father, whom He declared that He had come into the world to reveal unto men. If, however, the view of the other religions of the world which we have just indicated, be correct, then it certainly seems much of an impertinence that men should undertake a proselytizing work of this kind; and it is only natural that people who cherish such a view of the non-Christian religions, should withhold from Christian missions both their service, their means, and their sympathy. As a matter of fact, I have observed, during many years' residence in India, and an acquaintance more than usually extensive with missions and missionaries in every part of the world, that men and women who entertain so favorable views of the various ethnic religions, as all alike more or less perfect revelations of the mind and will of God, are very rarely found in the missionary ranks. But this is only what we should naturally expect.

If then the facts set forth in the following pages with regard to the most important of these religions in the world of to-day, shall prove helpful in enlightening any as to their actual teachings, or correct in any case the very radical and serious misconceptions on

this subject, which, we fear, are already beginning to show their effect in dulling the missionary zeal of many professed Christians, one great object of the writer will be attained.

It may not be amiss to remark that this book has been perforce written under great disadvantage, on account of the impossibility of access to many valuable sources of illustration such as abound in libraries in Great Britain and America; for in such a small and out-of-the-way station as has been of late the author's home in India, such helps are practically not obtainable. I will only venture to hope that for this lack some slight compensation may be found in the writer's many years of residence and familiarity with the life and language of the people, in such a great non-Christian land as India.

S. H. KELLOGG.

LANDOUR, MUSSOORIE, NORTH INDIA,  
July, 1898.

A HANDBOOK  
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COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF RELIGIONS.

AT first, to the casual observer, the various religions of mankind seem to present such a chaos of conflicting beliefs as to defy classification. Upon somewhat fuller and more exact knowledge, however, it becomes quite possible to bring all under a few distinct and comprehensive heads. First, we have the theistic religions, of which, at present, Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism, are the chief examples. In the second place, we have the pantheistic religions, of which the most important example is found in the popular religion of the Hindoos. Thirdly, paradoxical though it may seem, we have atheistic reli-

gions. Such appears to be the Shinto religion of Japan, that of the Jains in India, but, most important by far, the religion of the Buddha, who, in the Buddhist Scriptures, is said to have declared of himself that nowhere among gods or men, did he see any one whom it would be "proper for him to honor." In the fourth place, we may name the prevailing ancestor worship which is specially characteristic of Confucianism. Originally, this would appear to have coexisted with a general theistic belief in Shang Te as the Supreme God; but all agree that the worship of the Supreme God forms no part of the Chinese religion of to-day.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, we have a large number of religions, found for the most part among the uncultured races, which may be classified in a general way as "animistic." In all religions of this class, the objects of popular worship are spirits of various grades of power and importance, good and evil, whom it is supposed to be important to propitiate in order to man's earthly well-being. In some of these, as in many of the religions of Africa, a Supreme God is dimly

<sup>1</sup> Quite possibly Confucianism might be properly classified with Buddhism as an atheistic religion; but in the official worship by the emperor in Peking, there is still a vague recognition of God under the name of Heaven.



recognized; but He is not believed to have anything to do at present with human affairs, and the crude religion of the people therefore is not concerned with man's relations to Him.

Polytheism, as such, does not appear in this classification; for the reason that among different peoples, the popular polytheism is based on very diverse presuppositions. The polytheism of India, for instance, is grounded upon, and is popularly justified by, pantheistic assumptions; while that of the Turanian aborigines of India, such as the Santals, the Gonds, and others, is animistic; though among these savage peoples, the existence of one great God, above all the spirits and demons whom they worship, is commonly recognized. With Him, however, they believe that they have nothing to do. So, again, among the northern Buddhists, we have a type of practical polytheism which rests upon, and is a development from, the atheistic Buddhism. Similarly, nature worship, wherever it prevails, commonly rests upon either pantheistic or theistic presuppositions, or else is connected with animistic superstitions.

It should be remarked that in point of fact, these different types of religion above enumerated, are not in practice always sharply distinct. For example, while the popular Hin-

doism of the masses of the population of India is correctly described as a pantheistic polytheism, yet many religious observances, more especially among the lower castes, are undoubtedly of an animistic type, and have arisen from the intercourse of the Aryan Hindus with the aboriginal Turanian demon worshipers whom they found living in the land when first they entered it, and who still exist to the number of several millions, in the more remote and inaccessible parts of the country. So also, although no faith is more emphatically theistic than that of Islam, yet among certain Mohammedan sectaries, as, *e. g.*, the Súffis, the conception of the Deity has become distinctly modified in the direction of a mystic pantheism.

As it were quite impossible within the limits imposed upon the present work, to consider all the various religions of each type, ancient and modern, it has been necessary to confine the discussion to typical examples of each type, as existing in the world of to-day. If animistic religions have been but slightly treated, this is simply because they present us with no such elaborated system of religious thought as we find in the religious systems of the more cultivated races of the world; so that there is comparatively little to be said as to the details of

the religious beliefs of those who hold them. But, as regards the practical purpose of the present book, this is of the less consequence, since Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and the other religions of China, which we have considered at length, together claim as their adherents the immense majority—probably not less than some 1,300,000,000—of the human race.

With these prefatory observations, we may now proceed to inquire, What are the teachings of the chief world-religions of to-day on the fundamental questions of religion? These are, firstly, the being, nature, and character, of God; secondly, the relation of man to Him, especially as affected by the universal fact of sin; thirdly, concerning the way of salvation; fourthly, concerning the future of individuals and of the world; and, finally, the question as to the duty of man to God and to his fellow-man.

## CHAPTER II.

### FUNDAMENTAL AGREEMENTS.

IT is not without much reason that man has been defined as "a religious animal." If we define him as "a rational animal," as some have done, there is left room for discussion; for it cannot well be denied that many actions of the higher animals seem to indicate not merely the operation of instinct, but also a process of true reasoning. But no one has ventured soberly to maintain that some animals are also religious. To speak of the religion of a monkey, a dog, or a horse, were only to excite a smile. Man only is religious; and in the case of man, religion, in some form or other, often no doubt very vague and ill-defined, is universal. It is yet to be proved that any tribe has ever been found so degraded as to be utterly destitute of religious ideas. The assertions to the contrary which have often been made, have repeatedly by further investigation been shown to be erroneous.

No doubt when we thus speak of religion as universal, we must use the word "religion" in

a very broad sense; but however broad the sense in which we take it, it is still true that the possession of a religious faculty is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the human race.

In any comparison of the various religions wherein the religious nature of man manifests its activity, we shall do well first to note those elements which are common to all. All religions, from the highest to the lowest, assume the existence of a Power (or powers) superior to man, on which he is dependent, and which is able decisively to influence his destiny. It is also taken for granted in all religions that the relation between man and the superior Power or powers, is a necessary relation. Man feels instinctively that he is born into this relation, and that by no power or wisdom of his own is he able to free himself from it. As to the nature of the Power assumed, religions differ. Some regard the Power as one and only; others assume a plurality of such powers. It is however important to observe that in most, if not all, cases where men worship gods many, there is discoverable in the background of the religious consciousness the dim outline of one sole Power, of which the many who are worshipped are either different manifestations, or

to which they hold a position strictly subordinate.

More or less distinctly in all religions is the thought also expressed, that because of man's relation to this Supreme Power, certain things are obligatory on him, and other things must be avoided at the peril of suffering. It is true that among many peoples morality has become more or less dissevered from religion; but it would probably be hard to find a people so far degraded that there remained not at least some vague sense of responsibility for one's actions; and this is true, even although among many such the commonly accepted theory of religion logically precludes responsibility.

In all religions, again, is expressed the feeling that between man and the Supreme Power or powers, something is wrong; in other words, all religions more or less distinctly express or appeal to man's sense of sin. This is clear from various familiar facts; but it is especially evidenced from the wide prevalence of religious offerings and sacrifices, designed to propitiate or conciliate the good will of the Being worshiped, to whom the offerer feels himself subordinate, and whose favor he believes to be necessary to his well-being. The significance of such religious observances is

the greater, that in many instances they have maintained their place even although, as in the case of Mohammedanism, the authoritative Book declares any propitiation of the Deity to be impossible, or when, as in Hindooism, an inexorable logic, which is accepted practically by not a few, declares such ritual services to be folly unworthy of a man who has attained the supreme wisdom.

Again, more or less distinctly, religions generally assume that there is for man a state of being after death; and that the consequences of wrongdoing or right-doing in this present life will follow a man after death. There is no doubt a very great difference in the way in which this life after death is conceived; and indeed, in some instances, as notably in the primitive Buddhism, the orthodox teaching seems even to deny the existence of a soul which can live after the death of the body. And yet even in Buddhism one meets with much that seems inconsistent with this denial; while the constant tendency of mankind in such cases is still to insist, despite the philosophers, on the reality of a state of future rewards and retributions. The profound significance of this fact needs but to be mentioned.

Finally, it is to be observed that the general acceptance, in religions the most diverse, of the fundamental beliefs which have been enumerated, gives the strongest *a priori* reason for inferring that to these beliefs correspond veritable spiritual realities in the unseen world. For these are beliefs which have been so universally accepted in all ages by men of both the highest and the lowest degree of culture, that we can hardly avoid the conclusion that they must be due to a certain instinct of man's nature. But where in the whole kingdom of life is there an instance of an instinct or appetency universal in any species, to which, nevertheless, nothing whatever in its environment corresponds? Is it not then in the last degree improbable that man should exhibit a unique and solitary exception to a law which elsewhere appears to be universal? and that, too, in regard to a matter which most vitally concerns his conduct and happiness, even in this present state of existence!



## CHAPTER III.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORLD-RELIGIONS CONCERNING GOD.

IN any comparison of the various religions of mankind, fundamental to all else is the inquiry as to what they severally teach with regard to the existence and the nature of the Supreme Being.

Christianity assumes the existence of a God who is self-existent, and therefore eternal. All else exists only because He has willed its existence; He alone exists necessarily, and therefore from eternity to eternity.

Secondly, the God of Christianity is a personal Being. By this we mean that He is eternally distinct and separate from all other beings, rational or irrational, personal or impersonal; that He is eternally and necessarily conscious of Himself as the eternal Ego; and, finally, that He is possessed of the power of free self-determination. In all His acting, He acts, not under any inner law of physical necessity, as when a tree produces a flower, but as we act; namely, through an absolutely free

and unfettered choice, alike of various ends and of the means to secure them.

Again, the God of Christianity is a moral Being, loving righteousness and hating iniquity. Hence His choosing is never like the arbitrary choice of a human despot, who chooses and decrees whatever he will, often through mere caprice and unjustly. His choices and decisions are always determined with reference to those eternal principles of righteousness, goodness, and truth, of which His own nature is the eternal and absolutely perfect expression.

Again, in all His attributes as such an intelligent, moral Agent, the God of Christianity is represented as absolutely without limitations. As to His Being, He is without beginning and without end, and He fills immensity with His presence. He is not merely more wise, more just, more good, more holy and loving than any other being, but He is infinitely wise, infinitely just, infinitely good, infinitely holy, and infinitely loving and merciful.

Hence, in consistency with all this, the God of Christianity is represented as Sole, Unique, and Supreme. There is no other like Him; there is no other associated with Him. In all

His boundless perfections, He is absolutely solitary and unique.

But the Church in all ages has generally understood the Holy Scriptures also to teach that in the unity of the Godhead there is a Trinity of Personality. The one and only God, indivisible in His essence, exists necessarily and eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For the Eternal Love there ever existed within the unity of His own Being and Essence, an eternal and infinitely worthy object of that Love, revealed to us as the "well-beloved Son"; and there is also an eternal holy fellowship of the Father and the Son in a Third, even the Holy Ghost. And yet though the one God thus exists in persons three, nevertheless, according to the belief of the universal Church, the Three are not three Gods, but God is in His essence One eternally.

This is not the place to argue this ineffable mystery: our present object is merely to state, for the purpose of comparison with other religions what, as a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority of Christians have for centuries understood to be the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures as to the nature of God.

From the conception of God above set forth, it follows that such a Being must be the Cre-

ator and the Moral Governor of the universe. If He is the only self-existent One, and is possessed with all the attributes assigned to Him, then evidently, if anything else exists, it must exist simply because it is God's will that it should exist. And again, if any creature, rational or irrational, act in any way, this must be because God, according to the nature of the case, either causes it to act, or, for whatsoever inscrutable reason, allows it so to act. In a word, the Christian doctrine on this subject is summed up in the words of the apostle Paul: "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things."<sup>1</sup>

If we inquire more particularly as to what Christianity teaches as to the relation of God to the world, it is to be answered that He at once transcends the universe, and is also immanent therein. He transcends the universe, as the phrase is. That is, in time and in space He is before all, and beyond all, and independent of all. Hence He is by no means to be identified with the universe of matter or mind, as if these were the phenomena of which He is the eternal substrate. Before any of these were, He was.

But no less is it the doctrine of Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xi. 36.

that God is immanent in all things. This aspect of the relation of God to the world,—of which the perversion is pantheism—has in earlier days been too much overlooked by theologians, but in our day is again much insisted on by Christian thinkers, and with abundant reason. For this is the constant teaching of those sacred writings which are the foundation of Christianity. No less than on God's transcendence to all, do they also insist on His immanence in all things. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being;"<sup>1</sup> "in Him," as the eternal Son, "all things consist."<sup>2</sup> The various activities of nature are constantly referred to God in terms which, as modern physical science unmistakably suggests, are not so much the language of poetry, as the sober and accurate phraseology of careful statement of fact.

But in view of comparisons to be hereafter instituted, it is of importance to notice here that the Christian Scriptures do not allow us to infer from this immanence of God in all things, that He is therefore the sole real Agent in all the various activities of man. While spirit, soul, and body are all upheld in being by the incessant operation of His almighty power, so that it is true that "in His hand our

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 17 (R. V.).

breath is, and His are all our ways ;”<sup>1</sup> yet when a man acts, it is he himself who acts, and not God. He acts moreover under no necessity of external constraint, but in the fullest and most unhindered exercise of that freedom of personal choice without which indeed he could not be regarded as in any true sense a responsible moral agent.

Such, then, in brief, is the teaching of Christianity as to the being and nature of God, and His relation to the universe of matter and spirit which He has made.

Nearest of kin to Christianity among the ethnic religions, is Mohammedanism. Most strenuously, as all know, Islam insists on the spirituality, unity, and personality, of God. “There is no God but God,” is the keynote of the theology of Islam. Yet even here we are met by a difference from Christianity most profound and far-reaching. For when the Mohammedan affirms with such energy the unity of God, he means thereby not merely to deny all polytheism, but also the doctrine of the trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead, as held by the immense majority of Christian people. Those who have labored among Mohammedans will agree that when the Moham-

<sup>1</sup> Dan. v. 23.

medan so insists on the unity of God, he has indeed in mind above all else, the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity. To affirm this, he declares, is to be guilty of the damnable sin of "*shirk*"; *i. e.*, of affirming that God has a "*sharîk*" or associate; no less than if one affirmed the existence of the many gods of the polytheist.

Again, while Islam affirms, in opposition to pantheism, that God is a personal Being, it yet so represents—or rather, misrepresents—this truth, that the idea of personality is caricatured. For while it is true that personality is centered in will, and implies the perfect moral freedom of the agent; yet the highest possible conception of personality does not imply a power to will arbitrarily, without reference to the nature of the person willing, or to reasons believed by him to be good and sufficient for willing as he does. Hence, while Christian theology attributes to God the power of free self-determination, it is ever careful to explain that this self-determination is not arbitrary, but that, on the contrary, God in all His choosing is determined by the highest reason and righteousness, and the most perfect goodness and love. Thus while the Holy Scriptures unmistakably teach that in the life to come God

will punish many of the human race with extreme severity, yet they never represent this as proceeding from arbitrary caprice, but always as based on a moral reason; namely, the free choice by such men of sin, and their incorrigible persistence in rebellion against the infinite Love.

In contrast with this, one of the most eminent and enlightened Mohammedan doctors of our day, regarding this matter has used the following startling language: "It is the prerogative of God, if He please, without repentance, to pardon all sins, except that of *shirk*; or again, if He please, to visit His wrath upon the very smallest of all transgressions."<sup>1</sup> In this we have self-determination no doubt, and therefore personality, but a will which is freed from the control of all considerations of reason and righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

The contrast between Mohammedan and Christian teaching regarding God, comes out still more impressively when we consider the question of the divine attributes. Both alike insist indeed on the infinite wisdom, power, and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Sayad Ahmad Khan, in the *Introduction* to his *Commentary* on the Book of Genesis.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the words of Kuenen: "It was not in the God of the Mutazilite, whose essence was righteousness, but in the God of Orthodoxy, the Almighty, subject to no other rule than His own caprice, that they recognized their own and Mohammed's Allah." Hibbert Lectures, 1882, p. 49.



goodness of God, but they stand in profound contrast regarding the relation and proportion of His attributes. In the foreground of the Mohammedan system, beyond question, stands the almightiness of God. In the front of the Christian system of doctrine stands the infinite love of God. "God is love" is an apostolic summary of theology. Yet, according to the gospel, neither the power nor the love is ever exercised capriciously. When God puts forth His almighty power, this is ever to carry out the purposes of His infinite righteousness and love. In like manner, when God displays His love, it is ever in full accord with righteousness, and under the limitations imposed by the fact that He is as righteous as He is loving, and as holy as He is kind. Consequently, when He pardons, He pardons righteously, no less than when He condemns; and is declared to be "just" even when He "justifies the ungodly."<sup>1</sup> And although He is infinite in love and compassion, so that to save the guilty He is said to have given His only begotten Son;<sup>2</sup> yet when men, in the unfettered exercise of their power of free choice, persist in impenitence and rebellion, they are not by the love of God, exercised in a way of weak and unholy

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> John iii. 16.

indulgence, saved from the just consequences and heavy penalties of their sin. Yet in it all, the Christian revelation ever holds forth God as the God of holy and infinite love. The keynote of both the Old and the New Testaments is that which we hear in the words of the prophet Ezekiel: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. . . . Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?"<sup>1</sup>

Most impressive and most sad is the contrast herein with the character of God as presented in the Quran and the Hadis.<sup>2</sup> It is quite true that here and there in the Quran we find representations of God which so far as they go, are true in thought and sublime in expression. A Christian can well join in the ascription of praise which we find in Sura 1:

"Praise be to God, Lord of all the worlds,  
The Compassionate, the Merciful,  
King on the Day of reckoning!  
Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help."<sup>3</sup>

But although God is continually praised as "the Most Merciful," His mercy is not thought of as springing from His nature as eternal

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxlii. 11.

<sup>2</sup> The authorized Mohammedan Tradition.

<sup>3</sup> See also a number of passages brought together by Mr. Bosworth Smith in his *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, pp. 179-181.

Love, but as exercised in the most arbitrary caprice. The one attribute which in the Quran and all Mohammedan writings is ever placed in the foreground, is not God's love, but His power. The names of God are reckoned at ninety and nine, but the name "Father" is not among them. Sir William Muir has rightly said: "We may search the Quran in vain from beginning to end for any such declaration as this, 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish,' or 'Who will have all men to be saved.'"<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, again and again God is represented as misleading men and causing them to believe error.

Nor is this to be understood as merely meaning, as in the Christian Scriptures, that He abandons the incorrigible to their self-chosen ways of sin and error. On the contrary, God is represented as saying that He actually created those who are damned in order that hell might be full. Thus, *e. g.*, we read: "If thy Lord pleased, He had made all men of one religion; . . . but unto this hath He created them; for the word of thy Lord shall be fulfilled; Verily, I will fill hell altogether with genii and men."<sup>2</sup> And so again: "We cre-

<sup>1</sup> *The Coran, its Composition and Teaching*, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Sura xl. 119.

ated man of a most excellent fabric; afterward we rendered him the vilest of the vile.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, the God of the Quran is not a holy God. The word *quddùs*, meaning “holy,” is indeed used of God; but practically one rarely hears the word applied to Him. The Rev. S. M. Zwemer, missionary to the Mohammedans at Busrah, rightly says that in the Quran the word *quddùs* “nowhere occurs in its biblical sense of ‘pure in heart,’ ‘separate from sin.’ God is called once or twice ‘the holy King,’ but the reference is more to His glory and majesty than to His holiness.” That which the same authority says of the Arabs, is true also of the Mohammedans of India: “The very word ‘holy’ is an unusual, often an unintelligible one to the Arabs about the Persian Gulf. It is the name least frequently given to Allah among all the ninety and nine beautiful names they number on the rosary of Islam.”

Not to enlarge further, we may thus say without hesitation that the representation of the character and nature of God which is found in the Quran, and that which is given in the Christian Scriptures, are, in matters the most vital, diametrically opposed the one to

<sup>1</sup> Sura xev. 4. 5. See also, *The Coran*, by Sir William Muir, p. 52, footnote †, where is given a list of twenty-two texts of the Quran to the same effect.

the other. In name, the God of Mohammed is the God of Abraham, of the prophets, and of the Lord Jesus; but in fact, He is represented as a Being of a very different character.

Hindooism, whether ancient or modern, teaches a doctrine concerning God, which offers the greatest contrast to both that of Christianity and of Islam. It is however difficult to state with any brevity the teaching of Hindooism concerning God, for the reason that the "Six Systems" of philosophy which are regarded as authoritative among all orthodox Hindoos, differ radically among themselves as to this very question of a God. But no one of all these systems teaches the existence of a God who is personal. Two of them, indeed, acknowledge no Supreme Ruler, and, like Buddhism, make the abstraction of *karmma* or "deeds" to be in effect, the supreme power to which all things are due. But leaving the teachings of the Hindoo Scriptures and dealing with the actual beliefs accepted by the mass of the Hindoos to-day, we may safely say that all their belief and thinking regarding the being and nature of God are determined by the pantheism of the Vedantic system of philos-

ophy. Thus every Hindoo, howsoever many gods and goddesses he may acknowledge and worship, will none the less steadfastly maintain that God is one and one only. The formula which represents their faith is found in the words, “*ekambrahmam dvitīyanāsti*: Brahma is one and there is no second.” But these words, which in sound so perfectly agree with Christian teaching, in reality have in the mind of the Hindoo a very different meaning. For by this formula it is intended, not that besides Brahma there is no second God, but that besides Him,—or It—there is no second real existence whatsoever. In other words, the God of the Hindoos is not a personal Being. This is indeed indicated by the fact that in the above and similar Sanskrit expressions the word for “God” is neuter.

As regards the attributes of God, it is one of the commonplaces of Hindooism that Brahma exists in a twofold form; viz, *nirgun*, and *sagun*, lit. “with bonds,” and “without bonds.” In other words He is to be thought of either as with, or as without, attributes; or, more precisely, in our modern philosophical terminology, as “unconditioned,” or as “conditioned.” In His essential ultimate nature He is “unconditioned”; as manifested in the

universe of mind and matter He is "conditioned." As *nirgun*, He is declared to be an "invisible, imperceptible, formless, infinite, and immutable Essence," which not only was, and is, and ever shall be, but besides which nothing else ever really was, or is, or can be. This is not merely the doctrine of learned Sanskrit works, of which the masses know nothing, but is the teaching of the most popular of North India poets, Tulsi Dàs, who says, in the Bâl Kând of his Ràmâyan, "Both unconditioned and conditioned is Ram's essential nature;" "Ineffable, incomprehensible, without beginning, and without his like."

Hence, while the God of Christianity is a personal Being, eternally and necessarily self-conscious and self-determining, the God of the Hindoos is not a personal Being, nor is he essentially distinct either from man or from the universe. This, again, is not merely the doctrine held by the learned and educated few, but is the belief of the people generally. Even from ignorant coolies who cannot read, I have often heard the words, *Ham usi ke ansh hain*, "We are parts of That One;" or, again, *Jo boltà hai, so wahì hai*, "He who speaks is That One;" that is, whenever I speak, that in me which speaks is God. Or, again, they will

say, *Karttā wahī hai*, "That One is the Agent."

Some have fancied, however, that there was at least a real and very suggestive analogy between the Hindoo and the Christian conception of God, in the Hindoo doctrine of the Divine Triad, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, who are each the one God. But the analogy is superficial and utterly misleading. For the Christian teaching represents the threeness in the one essence of the Godhead to be a threeness of persons; such that the Father and the Son can reciprocally address each other as "Thou," etc., etc. But Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva are not regarded as three distinct persons, but as ideally three manifestations of the One Being, which—in another than the Christian sense—is all and in all. Brahma is That One, conceived as originating new manifestations of being; Vishnu, as maintaining these manifestations; Shiva, as bringing them to an end; and, indeed, as these three are one, so their work also, from the Hindoo point of view, is one. For it is argued: There is no creating of something new which does not involve the bringing to an end of that thing or condition which existed before it; hence, the act of



origination and of destroying are really one and inseparable; and, again, what is preservation but a continued creation?

It follows from this popular conception of God that when a Hindoo assents to the Christian affirmation of certain attributes as belonging to the Supreme Being, he does not mean what the Christian means. He will readily admit that God is all-powerful, but meaning that all power is really His power, and that we cannot set limits to that power; that He is omniscient, inasmuch as all knowing is His knowing; omnipresent—or rather, all-pervasive; but only because all that is, is His very essence. He will admit that God is holy, but explains this in such a way that it is clear at once that he does not mean by this what the Christian means; but only that all holiness is of God in the same pantheistic sense and manner in which also all unholy actions are, no less truly, the acts of that one only Agent. Hence, it is extremely difficult to make the ordinary Hindoo feel that there is anything in, for instance, the unspeakable licentiousness imputed to Krishna, or the awful bloodthirstiness attributed to Shiva or Kali, which is inconsistent with the supposition that each of these is truly Divine, and to be worshiped as such. It is

quite true that an ineradicable instinct of social self-preservation has led Hindoo writers to teach that in acts of such a character their supposed deities are not to be imitated by us; a counsel logically indefensible and not always observed; but it is only too generally believed that their favorite poet, Tulsî Dàs, was quite right in his constantly quoted dictum: "To the mighty, O Gusain, is no sin."<sup>1</sup>

From all this it is evident that Hindoo polytheism is not inconsistent with the universal insistence of the Hindoos on the unity of God, as they understand that unity; but is instead securely grounded on it. If everything—whatever else by reason of ignorance it may appear to me to be—is really God, then it is assuredly right to regard and worship anything as God. Whether it be the intellectual Krishna of the Bhâgavad Gîta, or the licentious Krishna of the Prem Sâgar; whether the glorious sun or the—very common—obscene symbol of the *ling* or united *ling* and *yonî*, each is Divine, and he who likes may worship either without blame. Even so, the evil char-

<sup>1</sup> This is not merely an unpractical speculation. In the speech made in 1897 at Poona by the Hon. Mr. Gangadhar Tilak, which was the occasion of his arrest, trial, and imprisonment on the charge of inciting to rebellion against the British Government of India, he justified the Mahratta hero, Shiva Jee, in the assassination of the then Mohammedan ruler, expressly on this ground.

acter of many of their supposed incarnations is not inconsistent with Hindoo belief as to the attributes of God, but is evidently in full accord therewith.

It only remains to be added that this teaching of Hindooism as to the being and nature of God, logically involves what the Hindoos commonly believe as to the relation of God to the world. All Hindoos agree that God is the Creator of the world; but, again, they mean not by this what the Christian means by such words. That God created the world out of nothing, according to Hindooism, is not for a moment to be believed. The Sanskrit maxim is regarded as expressing axiomatic truth:—*nàvastuno vastusiddhiih*, “out of nothing nothing can come.” Christianity teaches that God is the *efficient* cause of the world; Hindooism, that He is the *material* cause. That is, He is the cause of the existence of the world in the sense in which the clay is the cause of the existence of the pot which is made of it. Or, to use their own favorite illustration: If I go into a dark room and see a rope which I mistake for a snake, the rope is the cause of the appearance of that snake; even so, when I see the world, which seems to every one to be other than God, yet is really That One, I must

say that God is the cause of what appears to me to be a world.

Also, as according to the Hindoo conception, God is not, in the Christian sense, the Creator of the world, so neither is He to be thought of as in any true sense its Moral Governor. For it is evident that the everyday phrase among the Hindoos, *Karttà wahì hai* "He himself is the Agent"—*i. e.*, in all man's seemingly free actions—excludes the idea of a moral government of the world by God. Hindooism indeed admits that there is a necessary and inevitable sequence between our acts and their reward or retribution; but this is not because of any moral government of the world by God, as we understand it; but only because of an inherent and necessary, but non-moral, nexus between *karmma* and *phal*, "works" and "fruit." And indeed if the personality of God be denied, where is there left any place for the conception of His moral government?

Such in merest outline is the teaching of Hindooism as to the being and nature of God. If there be at first sight not a few points of apparent similarity to Christian doctrine, yet a very little examination shows that the similarity is chiefly apparent, and that the contradictions between the teaching of the two sys-

tems as to this most fundamental question, far outweigh any real agreements.

Buddhism in recent years has been much lauded by many as a religion which, more than any other, agrees with Christianity. We have been told that Buddha, no less than Jesus Christ, taught the existence of a personal God. Mr. James Freeman Clarke has told his readers that the object of the life of Sakya Muni "was to attain *nirvāna*, . . . a union with God, the Infinite Being."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ernest de Bunsen has gone even further and declares that the doctrine of Gautama Buddha "centered in the belief in a personal God."<sup>2</sup> But over against such assertions we may place the well-nigh unanimous declarations of the most eminent specialists in the study of Buddhism. Köppen declares categorically that Buddhism knows of "no God, . . . as to be supposed antecedent to the world. . . . There is only an eternal *Becoming*, no eternal *Being*."<sup>3</sup> Oldenberg, who perhaps may be regarded as *facile princeps* among modern investigators of Buddhism, says that the Buddhists maintain "causality without substance." "Where there is no

<sup>1</sup> *Ten Great Religions*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> *The Angel Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes, and Christians*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Religion des Buddha*, 1 Bd. S. 230.

Being, but only a coming to pass, there can be recognized as the First and the Last, not a substance, but only a law.”<sup>1</sup> No less categorically Professor Max Müller says that Buddha denies the existence, “not only of a Creator but of any absolute Being;”<sup>2</sup> and that as regards “the idea of a personal Creator . . . Buddha seems merciless.”<sup>3</sup> A few citations from the canonical Buddhist Scriptures will show with what good reason such scholars have so spoken. In the *Vinaya* Text of the *Pàràjika*, the Buddha is represented as saying, “I do not see any one in the heavenly worlds, nor in that of Mara, nor among the inhabitants of the Brahma worlds, nor among gods or men, whom it would be proper for me to honor.” In the *Salla Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipàta* the Buddha declares, “Without a cause and unknown is the life of mortals in this world.” Similar statements and intimations are so numerous, and the utter absence of anything contradictory of them is so conspicuous, that it is no wonder that the leading Buddhistic scholars of our day are practically unanimous as to this point of Buddhist doctrine; and such assertions to the con-

<sup>1</sup> *Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, S. 257, 258.

<sup>2</sup> *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. 1. p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> *Buddhaghosha's Parables*, Introduction, p. xxxi.

trary as are above cited, are evidently based on an astonishing misapprehension or ignorance of the facts. With the statements of European students of the Sacred Books of Buddhism, agrees the unanimous testimony of missionaries in Buddhist lands who, as living in daily contact with the people, are of all others best qualified to tell us what is understood by the votaries of Buddhism to be its teaching. Mr. Hardy, who was many years a missionary in Ceylon, says that while there are here and there individual Buddhists, more particularly among those who have come under Christian influence, who believe in the existence of a God, yet these are exceptions; and "the missionaries are frequently told that our religion would be an excellent one, if we could leave out of it all that is said about a Creator."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edkins, some time missionary to China, says: "Atheism is one point in the faith of the southern Buddhists: . . . the Chinese Buddhists do not hold that one Supreme Spirit rules over the whole collection of worlds."<sup>2</sup> To the same effect might be cited the testimony of Dr. Adoniram Judson, missionary to Burmah, and many others. I will add only

<sup>1</sup> *Legends and Theories of the Buddhists*, p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 191.

that in India, the birthplace of Buddhism, Buddhism is universally understood by the people to be distinguished from Brahmanical Hindooism as being atheistic. The Brahmans constantly use the phrases *Bauddha mat*, "the Buddhist doctrine," as equivalent to *Nàstik mat*, lit. "the He-is-not doctrine; *i. e.*, the doctrine which declares that He—namely, God—is not.<sup>1</sup>

Confucius probably could not fairly be called an atheist, but he avoids, to a great extent, referring to any Supreme Being. He frequently refers to the ordinances of "Heaven," but in a way which leaves it uncertain whether he thought of the power thus named as a personal God. In fact, Confucianism deals so exclusively with the affairs of earth, and the duties between man and man, that it may well be questioned whether it can fairly be called a religion, or anything more than a system of social ethics. All agree that in extreme antiquity, the Chinese recognized the existence of a Supreme God, known as Shang Te. Professor Douglas says that then "in the eyes of the emperor and people, Shang Te appeared

<sup>1</sup> For a much more complete discussion of this and other points of Buddhist doctrine, I may be permitted to refer the reader to my *Light of Asia and the Light of the World*. Macmillan & Co., London and New York.



as a personal God, directing their ways, supporting them in their difficulties, and chastising them for their faults. . . . But as time went on, the distinctive belief in the personality of Shang Te became obscured, and he was degraded from his supremacy to the level of the impersonal Heaven.”<sup>1</sup> From this national degradation of belief, Confucius did not escape. He is said never to mention this Shang Te, nor enjoin his worship, although he does sanction the worship of spirits and also of one’s ancestors. It is therefore only in a very qualified sense, if at all, that we can speak of Confucianism as a theistic religion.

Not much better can be said of the Chinese Taouism. What indeed were the real teachings of its founder, Laou Tsze, with reference to God, has been—and probably always will be—greatly disputed. On the whole, however, the opinion seems probable that, although in veiled and obscure language, Laou Tsze meant to teach the existence of a Supreme Being. But certainly, if this was his intention, he must be understood in a pantheistic sense; for, as Professor Douglas tells us, he taught that it was possible for the creature to be absorbed into the Creator.<sup>2</sup> But whatever may have

<sup>1</sup> *Confucianism and Taouism*, p. 83.    <sup>2</sup> See *ibid.* pp. 211, 212.

been his precise belief, his modern disciples have practically lost sight of the Supreme God, and instead worship Laou Tsze himself, and with him also an imaginary being, Yuh-hwang Shang Te—supposed to be the ruler of the material universe. In addition to these are also worshiped the heavenly bodies, and the various powers of nature, together with a multitude of imaginary spirits, who are supposed to preside over the various departments of life.

Passing over to Japan, in the national Shintoism we find a religion—if religion it can properly be called—which is thoroughly atheistic. It can hardly be better described than as a system of fantastic atheistic evolution. The “gods” who are worshiped in Shintoism are not the originators of the world, but were themselves evolved from it. But it is needless for our purpose to go into further detail. In a word, the Shinto doctrine regarding God, is that there is no such Being, and that the so-called gods appeared spontaneously, at a certain stage of the world’s evolution.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING SIN.

As before remarked, all religions more or less distinctly recognize and deal with the fact of man's consciousness of sin. Even such religions as Shintoism and Buddhism, wherein is recognized no personal Creator, are no exceptions to this rule. What sin really is many sadly misunderstand, but they cannot ignore the fact that man is not in a spiritually normal condition.

Nothing is more characteristic of the Christian religion than the place which sin holds in its system of teaching. It is, in a word, that supreme evil, the root of all other evil, to deliver man from which is everywhere represented as the prime object of Christ in coming into the world. As to the nature of sin, it is the Christian teaching that sin concerns man's relation to God. It consists fundamentally in this: that man is not what the holy law of God rightly requires him to be, and does not do what either the law of nature or of supernatural revelation requires of him. That re-

quirement is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . [and] thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>1</sup> "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."<sup>2</sup> He that loveth not thus God and man, is a lawbreaker, a sinner.

Going still more deeply into the matter, the Christian Scriptures teach that sin concerns not only actions but states and feelings as well; in a word, that man's nature is sinful. He did not merely, by some unfortunate accident or unwise choice become a sinner, and thus the object of God's holy anger, but he is a child of wrath by nature.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the Christian teaching insists that for this God is not responsible, but man. With the utmost earnestness the apostle James declares that God neither is nor can be the author of sin.<sup>4</sup> The trouble is with man, with his perverse and rebellious will which will insist on self-will as the rule of life, instead of God's will.

Hence, Christianity magnifies to the utmost the guilt of sin. It declares that because "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, even His eternal power and Godhead," therefore men are "with-

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. xxii. 37-39, and parallels.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xlii. 8.

<sup>4</sup> See James i. 13, 14.

out excuse" in that "when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful."<sup>1</sup> It further teaches that this guilt of man is such that by no tears of repentance nor any sacrifice of his own, however costly, can he expiate his guilt and become reconciled to God. It teaches, moreover, that while sin leaves man's free agency untouched, so that he is fully responsible for his sin, yet it is none the less true that, as Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant [slave] of sin."<sup>2</sup> It is insisted that for one who is accustomed to do evil, to learn to do well is as possible as for the Ethiopian to change his skin or the leopard his spots.<sup>3</sup>

As for the consequences of sin, Christianity is, again, most explicit. For man left to his own resources, there is no escape from a life of unending sin and misery. While the first beginnings of these evil issues are felt with more or less severity in this present life, they are represented as culminating in the life to come; which retributions none have described in more terrible language than He who said that He came into the world to save sinners.

As to the origin of the sin and misery in which mankind is evidently sunk, Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xlii. 23.

does not attempt to explain the ultimate mystery, further than to teach that it had its origin in the abuse of man's free agency, and that the sin of the first ancestor of the race in this respect involved the whole race in hereditary guilt and misery. "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin."<sup>1</sup>

Among modern non-Christian religions, Mohammedanism, although widely differing from Christian teaching in its doctrine as to sin, yet most nearly approaches it. As in Christianity, sin is regarded as consisting in opposition to the will of God. Sin has however in the theology of Islam, a much narrower definition than in Christianity, inasmuch as only willful violations of the law of God are reckoned sin, and sins of ignorance are not recognized.

But the Mohammedan conception of sin is further vitiated by a misapprehension of what is involved in the absolute freedom of God. Whereas, according to the Christian conception, God wills this or that because it is right, namely, in accord with His own infinitely perfect and holy nature, on the other hand, it is the Mohammedan doctrine that a thing is right merely because God wills it. Consistently, in the Quran, God is represented as ordering the

<sup>1</sup> Rom. v. 12.

commission of gross crimes, forbidden in the Mosaic Decalogue, which then become right and obligatory, simply because God has declared this to be His will. Hence it is that, very significantly, instead of the words "guilt" and "transgression," Mohammedan writers prefer the terms "the permitted" and "the forbidden." Hence, again, the distinction between moral and ceremonial precepts is almost completely destroyed. Thus, Mr. Palgrave, in his travels in Arabia, tells us that on one occasion he asked a Wahabi Mohammedan what, in his opinion, was the greatest of sins. "Undoubtedly," he replied, "the sin of *shirk*."<sup>1</sup> And what the second? "Undoubtedly, the use of tobacco." And how about murder, lying, and adultery? "Ah! God is merciful!" was the reply.

Again, sin, according to the Mohammedan doctrine, has nothing to do with our nature. It is denied that the nature of man has any evil taint. It is believed that human sin began with the fall of Adam, as related in Genesis; but man inherits from him nothing of the nature of moral evil. Yet the Quran admits the universal sinfulness of man, though little is said of it. Thus: "If God should punish

<sup>1</sup>That is, denying the personal unity of the Godhead.

men for their iniquity, He would not leave upon the earth any moving thing.”<sup>1</sup> Why sin should be thus universal, if there be no taint of nature, and each man sins independently, is a question which Mohammedanism leaves unnoticed.

As to the consequences of sin, in this life and the life to come, Mohammed depicted these in the most terrible language. “The wicked shall be cast into scorching fire to be broiled; they shall be given to drink of a boiling fountain; they shall have no food, but of dry thorns and thistles.”<sup>2</sup> But the sufferings of the wicked are not represented, as in the Bible, as the necessary moral consequence of sin, but as due simply to the arbitrary will and decree of God.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast with the teaching of the Christian Scriptures, Mohammed did not recognize the guilt of sin to be such as to require an expiation in order to the Divine forgiveness. The remission of the penalty of sin is regarded as wholly within the prerogative of God, and dependent solely on His sovereign pleasure, wholly apart from any mediation or expiation.

<sup>1</sup> Sura xvi. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Sura lxxxviii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> See also the passage cited above, p. 18, from the writings of Sir Sayad Ahmad Khan, p. 10.



Evidently, therefore, Mohammed rated the guilt and ill-desert of sin much lower than do those religions in which atonement, in some form or other, is regarded as the indispensable condition of pardon; and accordingly, among Mohammedans everywhere the sense of the guilt of sin is exceedingly slight.

Nothing has done more to lessen the sense of guilt among Mohammedans than their doctrine of *taqdir*, or the foreordination of God. According to the general belief of Mohammedans, everything—even the apparently free acts of men—has not only been foreordained by God, but the morally good and the morally evil have been foreordained in the same sense and in the same manner. If this be so, then it is quite plain that man is a mere puppet in God's hands, and responsibility and guilt there cannot be.

It is indeed true that there are some passages in the Quran which seem inconsistent with the extreme form in which Mohammed taught the foreordination of God. Thus men are commanded to pray, to believe the prophet, and to do good works, and salvation is often represented as depending upon their believing or rejecting the doctrine taught by Mohammed. We read, for example: "The truth is from

your Lord ; wherefore let him who will believe ; and let him that will be incredulous. We have surely prepared for the unjust hell fire.”<sup>1</sup>

But the Quran is full of passages of a very different tone ; which, as every one knows, have had the effect of making the Mohammedans everywhere to be the most thoroughgoing fatalists to be found in the world. Thus it is written : “The fate of every man have we bound about his neck.” “God misleadeth whom He pleaseth, and guideth whom He pleaseth aright.”<sup>2</sup>

If it be asked, wherein does the doctrine of the divine foreordination as taught in the Quran and accepted by Mohammedans generally, differ from the same as taught in the Christian Scriptures, we may say that the fundamental difference lies in this ; that, according to the Scriptures, while God has predetermined all things, and while the ultimate reasons of His decrees are found in Himself, yet inasmuch as He is not only infinite in power, but also, by the very necessity of His nature, infinite in righteousness and love, therefore no decree can be arbitrary, but has its reason in the perfect righteousness, love, and goodness of God. Hence it follows that, according to

<sup>1</sup> Sura xviii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Sura xvi. 95 ; xvii. 14, *et passim*.

Holy Scripture, the purpose of God is not related in the same way to all the free acts of His creatures. He decrees that which is good effectively, as its direct source and origin; but the origin of evil is never in the Scriptures attributed to the foreordination of God, but to the abuse of free agency by His creatures. So, again, though He have chosen some unto life eternal in His Son, not on the ground of their works, but solely out of His free grace and pity; on the other hand it is nowhere taught in the Bible, as in the Quran, that God in like manner foreordains some to perdition without reference to their works, creating them for this end. For while it is taught that many are undoubtedly foreordained to perdition, it is ever kept before us that this is on the ground of their willful and incorrigible rebellion, as foreseen by God. But the Quran, on the contrary, represents the Divine decree as related in precisely the same way to the good and the evil acts of men. God decrees, now the salvation of this one, and now the damnation of that one, simply and only because He wills it. The decreeing of God is wholly independent of any considerations of either righteousness, justice, or love. The spirit of the theology of Islam on this point is well represented in one of the

authentic Mohammedan traditions, which Mr. Palgrave gives as often heard by him from the Wahabees of Nejed, thus :

“ When God resolved to create the human race, He took into His hands a mass of earth, the same whence all mankind were to be formed, and in which they in a manner pre-existed; and having then divided the clod into two equal portions, He threw the one half into hell, saying, These to eternal fire, and I care not; and projected the other half into heaven, adding, And these to Paradise, and I care not.”<sup>1</sup>

Terrible as the language of the “ Traditions ” is, it does not go beyond the teaching of the Quran as to the relation of God to the sin of men, in such words as these: “ If we had pleased, we had certainly given unto every soul its direction; but the word which hath proceeded from me must necessarily be fulfilled when I said, Verily, I will fill hell with genii and with men altogether ” . . . “ unto this hath he created them.”<sup>2</sup>

Obviously the inevitable effect of teaching such as this will be to blunt to the utmost the sense of responsibility and of ill-desert for

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Clarke's *Ten Great Religions*, p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> *Sura xxxii. 13; xi. 119.* The Quran is full of similar statements.

wrongdoing. If a man sin, the Quran itself assures him that this is because God "hath bound his fate about his neck";<sup>1</sup> so that the fault is not man's but God's.

The teaching of Hindooism as regards sin, is in marked contrast alike with both Christianity and Mohammedanism. Both of these, as we have seen, agree in so far that they regard sin as an evil which essentially consists in opposition to the will of a personal God. But according to the doctrinal creed, commonly accepted by the Hindoos, sin, in this Christian sense of the word, cannot accurately be said to exist. This follows, first, from the denial by orthodox Hindooism of a God who is personal. If there is no personal God, then law, in the Christian or Islamic sense of the word, cannot exist, for law is the expression of a personal will. Sin in the Christian sense of the term, is the more impossible, because the agent in every act, is really God. If so, then guilt is but a fiction. I who seem to be the agent, in reality am not the agent.

Again, essential to the Christian conception of sin, is this, that the sinner in sinning act freely. If a man do a thing which in outward form is sinful, but do this under constraint, as

<sup>1</sup> Sura xvii. 14.

when he has been drugged, and simply carries out the purpose of another, his own will through no fault of his being in abeyance, then however evil and ruinous the action may be in itself, there is no sin, and no responsibility or guilt. But this is precisely the popular creed of Hindooism; that whatever I do, I do under the same law of physical necessity as that under which a certain tree bears a certain kind of fruit. This is so with the tree because of the nature of the seed which was sown; because of which this particular kind of fruit is borne, and no other. So according to the universal Hindoo belief, shared alike by the most ignorant villagers and by the most learned pundits, all that I am, and all that I do, be it what we call good, or be it evil, is the necessary and inevitable result of certain other acts of mine in a previous state of being, of which I have no recollection, but the fruit of which I nevertheless must bring forth, of whatever sort it be. So while Hindooism and Mohammedanism agree in affirming that everything—even the evil that I do—is predetermined; yet they differ profoundly, in that whereas the Mohammedan believes that the predetermination is the act of a personal God, who *wills* what each man shall do or shall not

do, Hindooism makes the predetermination of all things to be simply the necessary self-manifestation of the unconscious Brahma, in a multitudinous and almost endless series of individual births and consequent acts of human beings.

Indeed, the reality of an essential distinction between good and evil, as by logical necessity, so often in actual fact, is formally denied. For the Hindoo will often insist that if we will speak accurately, what we call "sin" *pàp*, and "righteousness" or "merit," *dharmma*, *punya*, are both alike evil; because every act, be it good or bad, makes it necessary that I be again born that I may reap its fruit, and that personal existence in some form should be continued; for it is this, and not what we call sin, that is really the fundamental evil.

And if the conscience or reason of any still rebel against such teaching, and insist on the reality of the distinction between moral good and evil, sin and righteousness, then Hindooism has yet one more resource by which to silence the witness of conscience. This is found in its doctrine of *màyà* or "illusion." *Màyà* is that illusion which of necessity arises when the Supreme Brahma, essentially unconditioned, (*nirgun*) becomes conditioned (*sagun*) in the

universe. Of this *mâyà* are begotten the ideas of a distinction between God and the world, of personality, free agency, responsibility, sin and righteousness. For it is quite clear that if indeed Brahma is the only Being, then there is no room for sin, and the idea of sin and all connected with it must be illusion. In this way, again, orthodox Hindooism denies the reality of sin as the opposite of righteousness.

Such is the Hindoo doctrine as to the nature of sin. It will be asked: Do men in India practically accept this belief? The question cannot be answered in a word. Not a few there are, who endeavor, with a horrible faithfulness to their principles, to exhibit those principles in actual living. Here we see them walking about in stark nakedness and utter shamelessness; there, again, seeking in deep meditation to center their thoughts on this one conception, *aham Brahman*, "I am Brahma," and so to cultivate and attain an absolute freedom alike from doing right and doing wrong. With such the writer has often talked; and men in a more hopeless moral state it would be impossible to find. Furthermore, the reality of any necessary, unchanging distinction between moral right and wrong, is practically



denied by every one in the constant use of the popular proverb before cited, "To the mighty is no sin"; and in the refusal to admit that the indescribable licentiousness of Krishna, or the horrible bloodthirstiness of Shiva or Kali, is in the least incompatible with the belief that these are worthy representations of the Deity. When men do wrong, one often hears responsibility denied in the words: "True, I have sinned; but what fault was it of mine? It was in my *karmma*."

And yet while, logically, no Hindoo should ever admit sin, yet their Sacred Books have much to say of sin, and prescribe many penances and expiations by which it may be removed. Well known is the Sanskrit couplet:

*Pàpohampàpakarmmàham pàpàtmà pàpasambhavañ  
Tràhi mam pundarikàksha sarvva-pàpaharo mama.*

"I am sin, my work is sin, my spirit is sin, in sin was  
I conceived:

Save me, O Lotus-eyed One, Remover of all my sin."

The Rig Veda even speaks of a sin of the fathers, whose sin has come on us. Thus

"Absolve us from the sin of our fathers,  
And from those which we have committed with  
our own bodies." <sup>1</sup>

Especially are such confessions of sin, how-

<sup>1</sup> Rig Veda, vii. 86.

ever, to be found in the modern non-canonical writings of many Hindoo reformers, who doubtless became such because the sense of sin was too strong in them for the Hindoo creed. Such are the following :

“With what face can I approach thee? Shame cometh unto me!

Thou knowest the evil I have done. How can I be pleasing unto thee?”

“I went out to seek a bad man; bad man I found none at all:

If I look into my own heart, Myself is the worst of all.”

But having lost sight of the personality of God, and therewith of the true nature of sin as opposition to His holy will, the conceptions of the Hindoos as to the nature of sin—so far as it is, despite philosophy, admitted,—have been perverted and degraded correspondingly. A man will lie and cheat with no apparent sense that he is thereby sinning; but will not so much as touch an egg, lest he should thus become defiled, and be reckoned as a sinner.

If it be possible, the Buddhist religion leaves even less room for a right conception of sin than modern Hindooism. It is true that the Buddhist Scriptures have much to say of sin, and by this fact many who are ignorant of the true significance of terms in the Buddhist re-

ligion, and so read into this word "sin" a Christian meaning, are grievously misled. Hence a degree of harmony is imagined between the teachings of Gautama Muni and those of Jesus Christ, where instead there is only the most irreconcilable antagonism.

Recalling what has been shown in a former chapter as to the essentially atheistic character of orthodox Buddhism, it will be seen at once that where there is denial of, or even uncertainty as to, the being of God, there cannot possibly be any conception of sin in any such sense as that which Christians attach to the word. For the very essence of sin lies in antagonism between the will of God and the will of man; and where the being of God is doubted or denied, as in Buddhism, obviously sin, as we understand the term, cannot be recognized.

If it be asked then, What is it that the Buddhist means when he speaks of sin? we answer, that according to the Buddhist Scriptures sin consists essentially in *tanhà* (*trishnà*). *Tanhà*, lit. "thirst," means "desire," and is therefore often rendered in English "lust," and so appears as identical with that "lust" (Gr. ἐπιθυμία) of which the apostle James says that "The lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin." (R. v. James i. 15.) But a little study

of the Buddhist authorities serves to show that what the Buddhist means by *tanhà* is far enough removed from what the New Testament writers mean by ἐπιθυμία "lust." As to the real meaning of *tanhà*, either of two views may be maintained with good show of reason. A large number of passages in the Buddhist Scriptures seem to teach clearly that by *tanhà* is meant desire of anything whatever, whether in this life or another. It is directed that he who will attain to peace "learn to subdue"—not merely evil desires—but "all the desires that arise inwardly."<sup>1</sup> The Bhikkhu, or disciple of the Buddha, is charged explicitly not to "desire anything whatever."

Nevertheless here and there passages occur which seem to limit this all-inclusiveness of the term, and from these some eminent specialists have inferred that these prohibitions of desire can refer only to such aims and aspirations as are "grasping and selfish."<sup>2</sup> But even if we take the term in this restricted sense, we are as far as ever from the Christian meaning of the word "sin." For the Buddhist regards not merely those acts or states of mind as self-

<sup>1</sup> See *Sutta Nipàta*; *Mahà viyàha Sutta* 5-8.

<sup>2</sup> See Rhys Davids: *Buddhism*, pp. 101, 106.

ish which we should so call; but all desire which terminates on or has regard to self, and thus even the desire for a life of happiness in heaven.<sup>1</sup> Hence, while no doubt, according to the Buddhist doctrine, many things are regarded as sinful which we also regard as sin, many other things are regarded as no less the offspring of *tanhà* and therefore sinful, which in reality are not sinful in the least. This utter confusion of mind on the subject of sin is well illustrated by the list of "the Ten Sins" which we find enumerated in Buddhist authorities. These are said to be: Doubt; Dependence on rites; Sensuality; Bodily passions; Hatred, or ill-feeling; Love of life on earth; Desire for life in heaven; Pride; Self-righteousness; and Ignorance.

The wide divergence between the Buddhist and the Christian conception of sin is no less strikingly shown by the Buddhist Decalogue, as contrasted with the Mosaic. The ten commands are as follows:—(1) Take not life (of any living thing); (2) Do not lie; (3) Do not steal; (4) Do not commit adultery; (5) Do not drink what can intoxicate. These five only, indeed, are regarded as obligatory on the ordinary Buddhist layman; but for him who will

<sup>1</sup> This is reckoned one of "The Ten Sins."

become an Aràhat or saint, the fourth command above given is modified to a command to lead a chaste celibate life, and then the Decalogue is completed as follows: (6) Eat not at prohibited times; (7) Wear no garlands, and use no dentrifices or perfumes; (8) Sleep on no high or broad bed; (9) Abstain from music, dancing, and from stage plays; (10) Abstain from the use of gold or silver.

As these ten commands constitute the Decalogue, perfect conformity to which is one mark of the perfected Buddhist saint, therefore the doing of any of these prohibited things is a sin. So we see that not only lying, stealing and adultery, but also using tooth powders, singing even the purest and most elevating song or hymn, and even the use of gold and silver in the ordinary and most necessary transactions of life,—all these things are reckoned sin. Surely this is enough to show that when any one, in reading anything regarding sin in any Buddhist book, understands that word in the Christian sense, he is under a misapprehension which must lead him utterly astray in his understanding and estimate of the moral value of the Buddhist religion as compared with Christianity.

In reading the teachings of Confucius, one

cannot but again be impressed deeply with the total absence of any adequate conception of sin. Among the "Five Relations of Life,"<sup>1</sup> the relation of man to God is not mentioned. Indeed, since sin consists in a disturbance of the relation between man and God, there is obviously no room in Confucianism for the Christian conception of sin. Whether Confucius was at heart an atheist or agnostic or not, it is certain that he never clearly recognizes any duties but such as are due from man to man. Indeed, occasionally he seems to go further, and enter his voice against the recognition of such duties. Said he: "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom."<sup>2</sup>

The views of Laou Tzse it is difficult to set forth with exactness. His works are said by Chinese scholars to be difficult of understanding even by the Chinese themselves. But in what of his teachings has been made accessible to European readers, it is as difficult to find any clear recognition by him of duties due from man to God, as in the teachings of Con-

<sup>1</sup> These are:—the relation of friend to friend, of brother to brother, of husband to wife, of father to son, and of ruler to subject.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia, in article, "Confucius," vol. I., p. 532.

fucius. As to the duties of man to his fellow, he said much which is good and true; but that there are duties due from man to God, and that in these man fails, and is therefore a sinner, of this we have yet to find any acknowledgment. Indeed, Professor Douglas tells us that Laou Tzse, like Confucius, "held that man's nature was good, and that he who acted in all things with the uncontaminated instincts of that nature, would eventually return home to Taou."<sup>1</sup>

How very profound is the difference between the chief non-Christian religions, and that of Jesus Christ, in their teaching as to sin, we have now seen. But these, again, involve differences no less profound and radical in regard to the vital matter of salvation. What the great world-religions teach on this subject, we shall see in the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> *Confucianism and Taouism*, p. 196.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE DOCTRINE REGARDING SALVATION.

IF anything be vital to religion, it is the question of man's salvation. That the human race is in an evil condition, that men are in bondage to various evil tendencies and passions, is admitted, as we have seen, in all religions. Hence the question is fundamental in religion, how man may be saved from sin and its present and future manifold miseries.

Evidently, man needs two things, namely pardon and cleansing. He is in a state of manifest disharmony with God. Among men of all ages and all religions we find variously expressed this sense of alienation from God. Very touching utterance has sometimes been given to the need which is felt of reconciliation between man and God; more frequently, perhaps, in other than the canonical books of the various ethnic religions. Thus, in North India, Kabir Dàs lamented:

“Master! Master! all are saying; but I have another concern:

I'm not with the Master acquainted! Ah! where shall I sit in His presence?”

But man needs more than pardon ; he needs also cleansing and deliverance from the presence and power of sin. This is also admitted among men of all races and religions. Again and again, by one and another in non-Christian lands, the sense of this need has been most pathetically expressed, as thus in South India :

“Purification before the great God  
Is greater than life and is stronger than death ;  
'Tis the hope of the wise, 'tis the prize of the saint,  
Where is the fount whence flows this pure stream ?”

On this momentous subject, the Christian teaching is very clear and emphatic. In the first place, the Christian Scriptures teach that man is wholly unable, by any effort or expedient of his own, to attain either to assured reconciliation and peace with God, or to deliverance from the power of sin. As regards reconciliation with God, the apostle Paul only sums up the teaching of all Scripture when he declares that “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.”<sup>1</sup> While no other religion admits this in theory, yet historically nothing is clearer than that this is the practical confession of all men. For no

<sup>1</sup> Rom. III. 20.

sooner is one supposed work of merit completed, whether sacrifice, penance, lustration, than straightway the man undertakes another, thus unwittingly confessing that the sought-for certitude of pardon, and peace of conscience, has not yet been attained.

The Scriptures teach, in the second place, that man is equally unable to deliver himself from the bondage to sin, and secure purity of heart. The Lord Jesus Christ said plainly: "Who-soever committeth sin, is the servant [slave] of sin."<sup>1</sup>

Again, the Christian Scriptures teach that what man is thus unable to do for himself, God is both able and willing to do for him; and that He has in fact provided for the pardon and purification of every man who will have the blessing, through the incarnation, atoning death, resurrection, and exaltation of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ to the right hand of power.

As for the Incarnation, the statements of Holy Scripture are such as these: The Word, by whom "all things were made," "was made flesh and dwelt among us."<sup>2</sup> The Son of man "came down from heaven," to do the will of Him that sent Him.<sup>3</sup> Jesus speaks of a glory

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 34.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 3, 14.

<sup>3</sup> John vi. 38.

which He "had with the Father before the world was,"<sup>1</sup> which glory He left, to come into the world to save man. The apostle Paul goes not a word beyond the explicit teaching of Christ Himself, when he says that He "being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death."<sup>2</sup>

As to the relation of the work of Jesus Christ to the salvation of men, the sacred writers are also unanimous and explicit. The apostles uniformly teach that man's salvation is secured, primarily, not through the moral influence of the holy life or self-sacrificing death of Jesus Christ, but through that death as an expiation for sin. He is said, with allusion to the ancient Jewish sacrifices, to be "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world";<sup>3</sup> and to be "the propitiation for our sins."<sup>4</sup> We are said to be "reconciled" by His death, even as, being thus reconciled, we are "saved by His [glorified] life."<sup>5</sup> He is said to have "put away sin by the sacrifice

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> John i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. v. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Phil. ii. 6-8 (R. V.).

<sup>5</sup> 1 John ii. 2; Rom. iii. 25.

of Himself";<sup>1</sup> to have been "delivered up *on account of* our offenses,"<sup>2</sup> so that we are "justified,"<sup>3</sup> not by our own works, but "by His blood."<sup>4</sup> And all these and numerous similar statements only reproduce in varied form what our Lord explicitly said of Himself, that He came, not merely to set men a noble example, and lure them to God by the beauty of holiness, but "to give His life as a ransom for many,"<sup>5</sup> and shed His blood "for the remission of sins."<sup>6</sup>

As the Christian teaching concerning reconciliation [of God is on this wise, so it is also taught with equal clearness, that as pardon, so also purification of the heart and life, is attainable only through the power of this same Christ, working in us by the Holy Spirit. We are said to be saved "by His life."<sup>7</sup> He is said to be "able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."<sup>8</sup> We are said to be made "free from the law of sin and of death," to which we are all by nature in bondage, by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."<sup>9</sup> The atoning death it-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ix. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iii. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xx. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. v. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. viii. 2 (R. v.).

<sup>6</sup> Rom. iv. 25, Greek.

<sup>7</sup> Rom. v. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. vii. 25 (R. v.).

self is represented as in order to this end. He is said to have reconciled us "through [His] death," in order to present us "holy and without blemish and unreprouable before Him [God]."<sup>1</sup>

And as to the way in which men may secure this pardon and purity of heart which is provided for us in Christ, the Scriptures teach that both the pardon and the purification and deliverance come through faith. "By Him every one that believeth is justified from all things."<sup>2</sup> Sanctification also is declared to be "by faith in" Him.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the Scriptures which teach these things teach no less explicitly that this is not merely one way, or the best of many ways of salvation, but the only way. The apostle declared: "There is none other name under heaven given . . . whereby we must be saved."<sup>4</sup> Even to His own disciples Jesus said, with regard to holy living: "Apart from Me ye can do nothing."<sup>5</sup> That men may also be saved by faithful following of the prescriptions of other religions, although in these days a very popular opinion, is not only a thought wholly foreign to biblical teaching, but is

<sup>1</sup> Col. i. 22 (R. v.).

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.

<sup>3</sup> John xv. 5 (R. v.).

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiii. 39 (R. v.).

<sup>4</sup> Acts iv. 12.

again and again directly contradicted in the Scriptures. Concerning all who had come before Him, and offered themselves to men for their spiritual shepherds, Jesus Himself said: "All that came before Me are thieves and robbers."<sup>1</sup> So much for the biblical doctrine as to the way of salvation.

The Mohammedan doctrine of salvation stands in the sharpest contrast with all this. While according to the teaching of our Lord, salvation is, above all, a salvation from the power and the presence of sin; and deliverance from the penalty of sin, is simply in order to this end; on the other hand, in the Mohammedan conception, salvation consists merely in deliverance from punishment. The connection of salvation with holiness of character, as pertaining to its very essence, is so completely lost sight of, that, as above noted, one of the most enlightened Maulavis in India has declared that God, in virtue of His absolute sovereignty, may even save some who have never repented of sin.<sup>2</sup> Hence there may easily be impenitent sinners in Paradise!

With such low views of the evil of sin, and indifference to deliverance from it, it is not surprising that Islam utterly denies the need

<sup>1</sup> John x. 8.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 18.

of any expiatory sacrifice in order to the pardon of sin. The Christian doctrine of atonement is in the Quran denied again and again in the most explicit manner. Thus repeatedly it is written to this effect: "No soul shall acquire any merits or demerits but for itself; and no burdened soul shall bear the burden of another;"<sup>1</sup> "Nothing shall be imputed to a man for righteousness except his own labor."

Hence, as is well known, Mohammedanism also denies with emphasis the Incarnation of the Son of God. Christ Jesus was merely a man; a prophet, no doubt, but yet a mere man like Abraham, Moses, and the other prophets; greater than those before him, but less than Mohammed.<sup>2</sup> With so little apprehension of the evil of sin, it is not strange that the doctrine of the New Testament, of an incarnation in order to a Divine atonement for sin, should find no place in Islam. There is no logical place for it, if Mohammedan postulates be granted. The Quran once and again declares that those who regard Jesus as God, are "infidels," and for them a special hell (Laza) is prepared. The affirmation of the In-

<sup>1</sup> Sura vi, 164.

<sup>2</sup> And yet, strangely, while the sinfulness of Mohammed is admitted in the Quran, Jesus is represented as a sinless prophet!



carnation is “*shirk*,” the greatest sin of which a man can be guilty. It is *kufir*, blasphemy—against God.

It should be noted, however, in passing, that notwithstanding all this, even in Islam the crying need of the human soul for an incarnation and for atoning blood is witnessed. Inconsistently enough, sacrifice is required of every good Mohammedan. It is true that the expiatory idea is ignored, and the Mohammedan sacrifices are explained as commemorative of the readiness of the patriarch Abraham to offer up Isaac, as self-dedicatory, or as offered by way of thanksgiving. Still, behind these lies none the less truly, even though unconsciously, the original witness of the human heart to the need of incarnation and atoning blood in order to salvation. Moreover, various sects among the Mohammedans, as, *e. g.*, the Babis in Persia, and the followers of the Caliph Hakim in Egypt, hold to some notion of an incarnation; and the Shais in India maintain that the deaths of Hosein and Hasan at Kerbela were expiatory of sin.

As for deliverance from the presence of sin, and the attainment of holiness, Mohammed has simply nothing to say on the subject. A missionary to Egypt states that he has ex-

amined every passage in the Quran with reference to this question of personal holiness, and as the result declares that "it is a hopeless task to look for . . . the doctrine of the necessity of purity of heart in the Quran." There is therefore no suggestion whatever as to the way of its attainment.

In the Quran the means of such a salvation as it recognizes, is said to be faith; but this, again, not in the Christian sense. There is no element of trust in a loving and forgiving God and Saviour. Faith is represented as consisting merely in an intellectual, nay even ignorant, unintelligent, and merely verbal assent to the Kalima:—"There is no God but God and Mohammed is His prophet." Good works, however, have their place in obtaining salvation. Especially important is it to observe daily the five times of prayer, to give alms, to fast from sunrise to sunset throughout the whole month of Ramazan, and once in the life to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Sometimes language is used which seems to ascribe to good works a direct efficacy in the procurement of salvation.

Thus it is said that if believers who give alms conceal them, and give unto the poor, "this will be better for you, and will atone for

your sins.”<sup>1</sup> Practically, it is fair to say that Mohammedanism teaches the merit of good works, and their efficacy as a ground—though not a certain ground—of acceptance with God.

Finally, Mohammedanism teaches no less emphatically than the Christian Scriptures that there is only one way of salvation: but whereas in the gospel Christ declares Himself to be the only Way, and His Name the only name given under heaven whereby men may be saved, the Quran teaches that there is no salvation for any outside of Islam. “Whosoever followeth any other religion than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him; and in the next life he shall be of those that perish.”<sup>2</sup>

Very different alike from the Christian and the Mohammedan conception of salvation, is that of Hindooism. No more than in Islam, is the question how to be rid of the sinful heart and character; but rather how to escape from the various sufferings incident to this embodied life. But, according to the commonly accepted notion, these various suffer-

<sup>1</sup> Sura ii. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Sura iii. 84. It is indeed true that in Sura ii. 61, an early Sura, given at Medina, it is said that Jews, Christians, and Sabians, in a word, “whoever believeth in God and the last day, and doth that which is right shall have their reward with their Lord, and there shall come no fear on them.” But it is generally agreed by the Mohammedan doctors that this early deliverance was degraded by the passage given in the text.

ings and troubles of life, are in fact inseparable from personal existence. Hence when the Hindoo speaks of *mukti*, which is the term usually employed by Indian Christians to denote "salvation," he means something very different from what we mean. The word strictly means "liberation," but connotes nothing as to what that is from which one is liberated. With the Christian, *mukti* is "liberation" from sin; but with the Hindoo it is liberation from personal conscious existence.

All sects of Hindoos believe in the doctrine of transmigration. When a man dies he is ordinarily born again, either in this world or some other: but in any case this rebirth involves at least the liability to manifold pains and troubles. As a South India Folk Song puts it:

"How many births are past, I cannot tell.  
 How many yet to come no man can say:  
 But this alone I know, and know full well,  
 That pain and grief embitter all the way."

Deliverance from this necessity of repeated births, whether into this world, or one of the heavens or of the hells, is what the Hindoo means when he talks of obtaining salvation. I do not recollect ever to have met the con-

ception in any authority on modern orthodox Hindooism that salvation essentially consists in deliverance from sin, in an inner radical transformation of character.

As to the means of salvation, understood in the Hindoo sense, it is taught, in general, that there are two ways, namely, the *gyàn mârḡ*, "the way of knowledge," and *bhakti mârḡ*, or "the way of devotion," or—as some have chosen to put it—of faith. From those who advocate the superior excellence of the way of knowledge, one often hears language which sounds very like the teaching of Christ, that to know God is life eternal. But the knowledge intended is very different in the two cases. The knowledge, the attainment of which, according to the *gyàn mârḡis* becomes the instrument of liberation, is the recognition of my essential identity with Brahma, the impersonal God; whence it follows that all that consciousness testifies to the contrary is an illusion; as is frankly admitted. It is taught that this transcendental knowledge is to be attained by the diligent practice of various ascetic observances, which space will not allow us to detail. For this reason, the *gyàn mârḡi* has not had the popularity that the *bhakti mârḡ* has had. This is the way of

“devotion,” or “faith” in personal deities, especially in the god Krishna. But this *bhakti* is as different as possible from the Christian conception of faith in Christ. For nowhere is it taught that either Krishna or any other of the personal objects of worship has done anything for the sinner’s salvation; nor do they propose to do anything for him. His liberation is to be obtained by something which he is to do himself; namely, by the maintenance of a certain frame of mind toward the deity whom he worships.

In the Bhâgavad Gîta, wherein it is attempted to combine these two contrasted schemes of salvation, it is taught that the *bhakti* which thus saves consists in doing everything with exclusive reference to Krishna, without regard to any pleasure or other advantage or benefit to be derived from such actions. Ordinarily, it is taught, we are by our actions, good and bad, bound to the necessity of repeated births. Hence the ideal of the *gyân mârḡis* is to renounce “action”; an ideal most nearly attained by some of the Hindoo ascetics, who sit day after day with their eyes closed, apparently oblivious to all about them, endeavoring to think nothing but this one thought, *Tadaham*, “I am That,” *i. e.*, Brahma.

But the more popular Bhāgavad teaches that this end may be more easily attained. Even although I act, as is necessary for most men in this world, I may be saved, if only my actions be all performed without any reference to any advantage, here or hereafter, which may come to me through them.

In the primitive Vedic religion of India, there is much which reminds one of the Christian doctrine of the necessity of a Divine atonement to the forgiveness of sin. In the Rig Veda we find expressions such as this: "Do thou, by means of sacrifice, take away from us all sin."<sup>1</sup> In the Tāndya Maha Brahmana of the Sama Veda it is said of sacrifice: "Thou art the annulment of sin—of sin!" Not only so, but the doctrine of that early time was that Prajāpati, the Lord and Saviour of the universe, gave Himself for men. Thus it is written in the Satapatha Brahmana: "The Lord of creatures gave Himself for them; for He became their sacrifice." In the Taittirīya Brahmana it is written: "The sacrifice is the victim; it (the sacrifice) takes the sacrificer to the blessed place."

But these ancient conceptions, so marvelously near the truth set forth in the gospel,

<sup>1</sup> Rig Veda x. 133-6.

have practically disappeared from modern Hindooism. The place which is occupied by sacrifice—now much less frequent—in the modern religion, is very different. In these days, the ideas of atonement and substitution are not commonly connected with the sacrifice. It is instead regarded either as an offering of food to the god which is worshiped, or as in order to the placation of some angry demon. But while we cannot say, that atonement, in the sense of the substitution of a sacrificed victim for the sinner, in order to the expiation of his sin, is a doctrine of modern Hindooism; yet it is still believed that sin must be expiated, in order to salvation; and this by the sinner's own voluntary or involuntary acts or sufferings. That is, whatever evil one does, the ill-desert of the act must be expiated, either through some penance (*pràyaschitt*) enjoined by the Brahmans, or by suffering in some future birth. But it is held equally true that whatever good one may do, this also, no less than the evil, makes a rebirth necessary, in order that he may reap the fruit of this. But this is far enough from the Christian doctrine of atonement.

The Hindoos, as is well known, generally believe in the incarnation of the Deity. Concern-



ing this, it is the orthodox doctrine that there thus far have been nine incarnations (avatârs),<sup>1</sup> and that a tenth, commonly known as the *Nishkalank Avatâr*, or "Sinless Incarnation," is still future. It has often been fancied that in this doctrine of incarnation we have a very close agreement with Christian doctrine. But in reality, between the Christian and the Hindoo doctrine as to the incarnation of the Deity, there is much more of contrast than of agreement.

In the first place, it is the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation that Jesus Christ was God incarnate in a sense unique and exclusive. On the contrary, the Hindoo doctrine, in accordance with the universal pantheism, is that the distinction between men in general and the so-called incarnations, is not in kind, but in degree only. All men are incarnations of the Deity, each in his measure; and even among the ten who are regarded as incarnations *par excellence*, some are said to have had more, some less, of the Divine nature.

Secondly, the incarnation of the Son of God, according to New Testament teaching, was in its very nature incapable of repetition; while, as just remarked, the Hindoos maintain that in

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "descents."

the special supereminent sense there have already been nine incarnations of the Deity, and that a tenth is yet to come. Again, the Christian doctrine lays stress upon the fact that the incarnation of the Son of God was a voluntary act; while Hindooism expressly teaches that the supposed incarnations of the Deity, no less really than the births of ordinary men, were the necessary fruit of works done by the incarnate one in a previous state of existence. They could not therefore be expressions of the Divine love to lost sinners, and as a matter of fact, are never so represented. Further, whereas our blessed Lord is declared to have been without sin, "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," all the Hindoo incarnations thus far are represented as having been sinful; indeed, many of them are set forth as having differed from ordinary men in nothing more than in having utterly transcended them in impurity of life, hatred, anger, and vindictiveness. The doctrine of the "sinless incarnation" yet to appear, is however very suggestive, as being a virtual confession, which seems to express the sense of the Hindoos that these supposed incarnations hitherto, as having been thus sinful, have not fulfilled the ideal of a Divine incarnation.

Finally, whereas it is said to have been the object of the incarnation of our Lord that He might save His people from their sins, this is never in the Hindoo Scriptures once represented as the purpose of any of their incarnations. On the contrary, the Deity is again and again said to have assumed bodily form on earth, in order to deliver the good from their enemies, and destroy sinners, instead of saving them. Even the *Nishkalank Avatâr*, still expected, is likewise foretold as to come for the destruction of sinners. Thus in no instance has the Hindoo doctrine of incarnation, any more than have their modern sacrificial rites, any connection with the salvation of sinners from their sins; while, it should be added, the Shaivites or worshipers of Shiva, deny the doctrine of incarnation altogether.

In connection with the doctrine of salvation, Christianity lays great stress upon union with God through Jesus Christ, as essential to salvation from sin and to holy living; and, so far as words go, the expressions which are used in many Hindoo sacred books might seem to teach the same thing. *Yoga*, or union with the Supreme Being, is often held up as the highest good, in language which sounds like much in the gospels and epistles. But in this matter

again, in reality, we have not similarity, but the strongest contrast. For the union with God in Christ of which the New Testament writers say so much, does not involve any suppression of, still less loss of, personality. The believer, through his faith mystically united with God in Christ, is still, according to the New Testament teaching, as separate and distinct from God as ever he was. But, on the contrary, all Hindoos intend by *yoga*, "union" with God, the exact opposite; namely, the utter loss of the separate personality of the devotee, the absolute and final cessation of personal existence, through absorption in Brahma, even as the wave becomes lost in the ocean.

Finally, to complete this part of our comparison, it must be added that whereas Christianity recognizes no way of salvation apart from Christ, Hindooism regards no man as excluded from the final possibility of *mukti*, on account of race or religion. Some will no doubt regard this as a point wherein the Hindoo teaching, as being more broad, is superior to that of Jesus Christ; but the vital question, after all, is not which is the broader, but which is the true teaching. Nor can we credit this belief to the superiority of the Hindoo to the Christian in charity; seeing that such an in-

ference necessarily follows from the pantheism which is fundamental to the modern Hindoo religion.

Turning now to Buddhism, we meet with a doctrine concerning salvation which is even more remote from Christianity than that of Hindooism. Salvation, in the Buddhist doctrine, is not absorption in the universal Divine Essence, as in Hindooism, for Buddhism knows of no Supreme Being, whether in a theistic or pantheistic sense. Still less is it eternal residence in heaven, even such a heaven as is promised to the faithful Mussulman. It is simply non-existence. It is deliverance from that necessity of repeated rebirth which is occasioned by the presence of *tanhà* or "desire," and is eternal cessation of being. This is *nirvâna* or *nibbâna*; <sup>1</sup> or, to be more precise,—since a lower grade of *nirvâna* is recognized,—it is *parinibbâna*, the supreme *nirvâna*.

I am well aware that this has often been denied by scholars of eminence; but it is hard to resist the feeling—if one may judge some such by their own words—that they have often been determined in their opinion more by their western ideas as to the highest good, than by a reference to the plain words of the ancient

<sup>1</sup> *Nibbâna* is the Pâli form of the Sanskrit word *nirvâna*.

Buddhist Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> It is hard to see how the non-existence of him who has attained *nirvāna* could be more categorically affirmed than by the words attributed to the Buddha in the *Sutta Nipāta*; wherein one asking information on this subject is answered by the Buddha: "That by which they say 'He is' exists for him (the delivered or saved one) no longer."<sup>2</sup> No less explicit are the words in another part of the same *Sutta*, where we are told that they "who perfectly conceive the state (of *nibbāna*) . . . are completely extinguished."<sup>3</sup> So again with equal explicitness, we read in the *Vinaya Pīṭaka*, "By the destruction of thirst (*tanhā*), Attachment is destroyed; by the destruction of Attachment, Existence is destroyed."

And indeed, when it is remembered that the idea of the supreme good must needs be determined by the conception one may have of the supreme evil, it is plain that granting the Buddhist postulates constantly reaffirmed, that the chief evil is pain or sorrow, and that sorrow is a necessary and inseparable concomitant of existence, then salvation, at least in its strict and

<sup>1</sup>See, e. g., the language used by Sir Edwin Arnold, in the Preface to his *Light of Asia*; also the words used by Professor Max Müller, *Science of Religion*, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>See *Sutta Nipāta*; *Pārāyanavagga*, vii. 4-8.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.* *Dcayatānupassana Sutta*, 42.

highest sense, *must* consist in the extinction of existence.<sup>1</sup>

It is however true that *nirvāna* is also represented in a different way in the Buddhist authorities; namely, as the attainment of a certain ethical state and temper of mind and character; something, moreover, which is or may be reached in this present life. We read, for instance: "The destruction of passion, and of wish for the dear objects which have been perceived, O Hemaka, is the imperishable state of *nirvāna*."<sup>2</sup> Here then we meet with a conception of salvation which in so far agrees

<sup>1</sup>Quite recently, Dr. Paul Carus, in *The Monist*, has reiterated the denial that *nirvāna* consists in the extinction of existence. But I find in his article nothing which should constrain one to believe that such eminent specialists in Buddhist doctrine as Childers, Oldenberg, Rhys Davids, and others, are mistaken in this matter. He argues his position from a passage in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, wherein apparently, if it be understood according to our western ideas, the continued existence of him who has attained *nirvāna* might seem to be taught. But Dr. Carus' own interpretation seems to lead to the very conclusion which we maintain. For we are told that all the constituents of man are "transitory," and therefore "cannot be regarded as his . . . enduring self." But if so, then if all the constituents of the man who has attained *nirvāna* are gone, how can the man himself be still regarded as existing? Dr. Carus illustrates what he regards as the correct understanding of this matter by a quotation from the *Visuddhi Magga*, which he takes to imply his own view of the nature of *nirvāna*. Thus:

"Misery only doth exist, none miserable.  
No doer is there, naught save the deed is found.  
*Nirvāna* is, but not the man who seeks it;  
The Path exists, but not the traveler on it."

But these words will seem to most of us as only a paradoxical expression of the most extreme nihilism. The substance is perished, but its attributes remain! The deed remains, but not the doer! To attempt to distinguish such a condition from what in ordinary language we call non-existence, seems to be a mere waste of words. See *The Monist*, Jan. 1897, pp. 265, 266.

<sup>2</sup>*Sutta Nipāta; Pārāyanavagga*, ix. 3.

with that of Christianity that it is made to consist in the attainment of a certain type of character; a type, moreover, which is characterized by the extinction of sin. But when we recall to mind what has been set forth in the previous chapter as to the Buddhist idea of sin, it is plain that the resemblance herein between this conception of the nature of salvation and that which is presented in Christianity, is wholly superficial and unreal. For sin is one thing in Christianity, quite another in Buddhism. It is true enough that certain things regarded as sinful by the Buddhist, are held to be sin also by the Christian; but many other things are held to be sin by the Buddhist, which according to the gospel are not sin; so that it is very clear that the standard by which an action or moral state was judged by the Buddha to be sinful or otherwise, was very different from that which determines this in Christianity. Hence *nirvāna*, even if considered in its (lower) sense of deliverance from sin, is something very different from the salvation of the gospel. The Buddhist who is regarded as in this sense a saved man, is not merely a man who has ceased to hate, but who has ceased also to love; who has not only ceased to desire evil, but also to desire good; and who, if delivered from the



desire of long life in this sinful world, is equally delivered from any desire to go to heaven! Assuredly, this ideal of salvation is only one less degree removed from that of the gospel, than that of absolute annihilation.

Again, it is also true, that the common people, in Buddhist lands often conceive of salvation as consisting in a residence after death in a place of blessedness; and for this view also texts can be quoted from the Buddhist Scriptures. Thus, we read: "Evil doers go to hell; righteous people go to heaven." But it is immediately added in this text from the *Dhammapada*,—as if to caution any one from supposing that in its highest sense this is salvation—"those who are free from all worldly desires" (*i. e.*, from all desire for anything, either good or evil in this world) "attain *nirvāna*."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the Buddhist heaven is not a place of eternal abode. No one can stay there forever. To suppose this, were to contradict directly the fundamental postulate of the whole Buddhist system, that there is no permanence anywhere in anything, either good or evil.

Again, whereas the teaching of Christ was

<sup>1</sup> *Dhammapada*, 126.

that no man ever has saved or can save himself, and that the sole author of salvation is God Himself in Christ, the Buddha taught, and that with emphasis, the exact opposite, that every man must be his own saviour. It is written :

“By one’s self the evil is done ; by one’s self one suffers ; by one’s self evil is left undone ; by one’s self one is purified. Lo, no man can purify another.”<sup>1</sup>

In nothing is the contrast between Buddhism and Christianity more marked than just at this point. The teaching of the gospel is that God became man to save man : that of Buddhism is, in effect, that man may make himself God, thereby saving himself. The one teaches a Divine self-humiliation to save sinful man, the other a human self-exaltation whereby the man may save himself.

One can scarcely speak of a “ground” of salvation, when speaking of the Buddhist salvation ; for this phrase implies a superior Power who accepts or rejects a man on account of certain things done or suffered by himself or another, whereas Buddhism knows nothing of any such Power. It is taught, however, that the means whereby one may

<sup>1</sup> *Dhammapada*, 165.

attain to salvation is the practice of certain good works. Not that there is any superior Power which will reward the doer; but there is a certain necessary, though non-moral, nexus between certain deeds or acts and certain results, which insures that, given certain acts, a certain result will follow. But the reason of this is not judicial or legal, but purely physical, like that in virtue of which the planting of a certain seed insures the appearance of a certain kind of plant.

As for the means whereby one may secure salvation, the biblical statements are plain that the sinner obtains salvation by means of faith; that is, by trust in a crucified, but now risen and living, Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord, and in virtue of His atoning death. The Buddha, on the contrary, taught that salvation is to be obtained by following the "Noble Eightfold Path." From the standpoint of the southern and orthodox Buddhism, to speak of trust in the Buddha were absurd; for having attained the ineffable *nirvāna*, he is now infinitely beyond reach. The "Noble Eightfold Path" is declared by the Buddha to be:—Right views; Right aspirations; Right speech; Right conduct; Right livelihood; Right effort; Right mindfulness; and Right contemplation. Even

were we to assume that these several phrases mean what the words naturally suggest to any one brought up in a Christian land, it would be plain that the Buddhist doctrine of salvation, as contrasted with the Christian, teaches instead of salvation by trust in another, salvation by one's own works, in a word, by rightness of life. Even so, the two doctrines are antagonistic,—if one is true, the other is false.

But the divergence is far greater than this. For the Buddha did not intend to teach by these words merely salvation by moral and upright living, such as is the trust of so many in Christian lands; he meant something wholly different. For what these words may mean, manifestly depends upon what is regarded as the standard of rightness; which in this case is one nowhere recognized in Christendom. For instance, when "right views" are enjoined as fundamental to all the rightness, by this it is meant that he who would be saved, must hold those views of life which are set forth in what are known as "the Four Noble Truths," namely: that existence of necessity involves sorrow; that this sorrow is caused by desire; that the extinction of sorrow, which is the object of the doctrine of salvation, is therefore to be attained through the extinction of all

desire; and, finally, that this extinction of desire will be brought about by walking in the above described "Noble Eightfold Path." These are the "right views," the adoption of which is the first step in the "Noble Eightfold Path" which conducts to *nirvāna*. Similarly, the "right aims" are described as "such as tend to the renouncing of the world." But this phrase is not intended in the ordinary ethical sense as understood by Protestants; but in the most extreme monastic sense. By "rightness of livelihood," again, as another of these means of salvation, it is intended that a man shall gain his livelihood in such a way as shall injure no living being. It is taught, for example, that the employment of a hunter, or a fisherman, or a butcher, is incompatible with walk in the "Noble Eightfold Path"; and if consistent, the Buddhist would also have to say that the employment of a doctor commonly involves sin; because, by giving quinine to a patient suffering with intermittent fever, he thereby destroys that low form of animal life the presence of which in the circulation causes the chill and fever!

Such is the means of salvation as set forth in the canonical books of orthodox Buddhism as held in Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam. In

Thibet, China, and Japan, however, Buddhism has become greatly modified, and therewith especially its doctrine as to the means of salvation. The northern Buddhists believe that a Buddha yet to be born on earth is at present living somewhere in the heavens; and this imaginary being, called the *Bodhisat*, is practically regarded as a God to whom men in their need may pray and look for help. And so it has come about that in consequence of that ineradicable sense of the need of a Saviour, which the orthodox Buddhism utterly refuses to satisfy, man has evolved for himself, in the northern Buddhism, a doctrine of salvation which bears a considerable resemblance to the Christian doctrine. Not Christ, but the heavenly *Bodhisat*, the so-called *Amitaba Buddha*, is the object of faith. He is supposed through countless bygone ages to have been accumulating for himself an infinite stock of merit; and it is believed that when a man puts his faith in this imaginary being, all of Amitaba's merit is, as it were, transferred to him; and so, released now from the necessity of continued rebirth into this world of pain and sorrow, the believer is at death received into a heaven of everlasting blessedness. It has with reason been remarked: "It is very

remarkable that Buddhism, beginning in sheer atheism, should finally have reached the very threshold of Christianity, without the Christ. No other false system has ever paid so marked a tribute, though involuntary, to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.”<sup>1</sup>

As for Confucianism, it cannot be said to have a doctrine of salvation. Confucius concerned himself exclusively with this present life; and, ignoring God and our relation to Him, and with this the future and unseen world, he had no place for any teaching as to the saving of sinners. The question does not even seem to have been within his horizon.

Taouism long ago borrowed from Buddhism the doctrine of transmigration of souls, and appears to teach that the deliverance of man from evil is brought about through various purgatorial sufferings. If these fail to bring about a man's moral improvement, he is then consigned to endless torment in hell. But so inadequately have both Confucianism and Taouism dealt with the question of what a sinner must do to be saved, that practically, the Chinese have fallen back for a doctrine of salvation, on a Buddhism of the type just explained.

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopædia of Missions*, vol. 1., p. 212.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE FUTURE.

OF importance fully equal to the fascination which it has had for the greatest minds in all ages, is the question, What shall the end be? This question comprehends two questions: first, What is the final destiny of the individual man? and, second, What is the destiny of this world of men as a collective organism?

In answer to the first of these two questions, the gospel of Christ assures us that death does not end all; that the soul of man is immortal, so that man will live forever, as a self-conscious personality; and moreover that there shall yet be, at a time unknown to all but God, a resurrection to bodily life of all the dead, in order that they may be judged according to their works. It further teaches that until the day of resurrection the souls of all penitent and obedient believers in God, and—whenever and wherever revealed—in His Son Jesus Christ, when they die, “depart to be with Christ”; and that if their blessedness in this disem-



bodied state be not yet complete, their condition is yet “very far better” than in this present life.<sup>1</sup>

It is taught, on the other hand, that the souls of the departed ungodly and wicked—to use the words employed by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, concerning the rich man who died—are “in torment”; which He Himself also chose to illustrate by the image of fire and extreme thirst.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to that period called “the day of judgment,” it is taught that “all that are in the tombs shall hear His [Christ’s] voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment.”<sup>3</sup> In that day, we are told, every man shall be rewarded according to his works;<sup>4</sup> that as for believers, while their acceptance before God on the ground of Christ’s atonement is the sole reason for their exemption from that “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish” which shall overtake the ungodly,<sup>5</sup> so that they are saved merely through the grace of God; yet their reward shall be strictly according to their works; one

<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 23. (R. v.)

<sup>3</sup> John v. 28, 29. (R. v.)

<sup>4</sup> Rom. ii. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xvi. 23, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xvi. 27, and N. T. *passim*.

shall rule over five, another over ten cities;¹ while the work of others which they wrought in the days of their earthly life “shall be burned,” so that, although they themselves shall be saved, it shall yet be as “through fire.”²

In like manner, it was taught by Jesus Christ that there will be great differences in the severity of the punishment of the finally impenitent and condemned. The servant that knew his master’s will and did it not, shall be beaten “with many stripes”; while he that knew not his master’s will and did it not, shall be beaten “with few stripes.”³ And, according to the teaching of the Scriptures, as understood by the great majority of Christians in all ages, not only the reward of the righteous, but also the retribution of the ungodly will be eternal. Regarding this matter the Lord Jesus used these most explicit words: “These”—*i. e.*, those just mentioned who had failed in the law of love—“shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.”⁴

It is of the greatest importance to observe, in comparing Christian with non-Christian

¹ Luke xix. 17, 18.

² Luke xii. 47.

³ 1 Cor. iii. 15. (R. V.)

⁴ Matt. xxv. 46 (R. V.).

teaching on this point, that, according to Christian doctrine, in this final fixation of the eternal destiny of men, there is nothing arbitrary. The final destiny is determined by the presence or absence of a certain type of moral character, marked by purity of heart, and supreme love to God. That the salvation of the believer is always said to be of grace, does not affect this fact: for the Holy Scriptures everywhere teach that the grace which through atoning blood justifies and pardons the believer, does this in order that by the inworking of the Holy Spirit, the teaching of the Word, and the various discipline of life, the once sinful man may finally come to be without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."<sup>1</sup> Nor does any word of Scripture ever hint that any man will ever be visited with everlasting punishment in whom this holiness of character is found. Such, in brief, is the teaching of Christianity, as commonly understood, regarding the ultimate destiny of individual men.

As regards the final destiny of this world, the Scriptures teach, as understood by all Christians, that whereas now sin and unrighteousness, and ignorance of God, prevail more or less in all lands, a day is coming in which

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 27.

all this shall be reversed; "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,"<sup>1</sup> and "all nations shall serve" and obey the Christ of God.<sup>2</sup> They also teach that in that day of judgment which brings in the resurrection and reward of the righteous and the wicked, this material earth in which we live shall be burned with fire.<sup>3</sup> But the same apostle who speaks most fully on this subject, hastens to add that the result of these last fires, shall be, not the annihilation of the planet as a habitable globe, but the appearance of "a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."<sup>4</sup> And the sacred record closes with a picture full of mysterious glory, in which it is no doubt hard to say how much is to be taken as literal, and how much as figurative, but in which this at least seems clearly to appear as the issue of human history: namely, a new heaven and a new earth, from which all that is impure and unholy shall be forever excluded, and whose blessed inhabitants shall live in the immediate vision and fellowship of their God and Father to all eternity.<sup>5</sup> Such, in a very general way, is the teaching of Christianity concerning the last

<sup>1</sup> Is. xl. 9.<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.<sup>3</sup> Rev. xxi. 1-8; xxii. 1-6.<sup>4</sup> Ps. lxxii. 11.<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 13.

things, as understood by the majority of Christian people.

As Islam has drawn so largely from the Christian and Jewish Scriptures, we find in its eschatology much that is in agreement with these, though still more derived from the fancies of rabbinical traditions. Like the Christian Scriptures, the Quran teaches, or rather assumes, the immortality of the soul of man, and the persistence forever of self-consciousness and personality. Like Christianity, Islam also teaches the resurrection of the dead, at a certain preordained time, unknown to all but God, and the eternal existence thereafter, in a form of bodily life, of all men who shall have ever lived. Islam adds, however, that not only men, but also angels, the imaginary beings called jinns, and even the brutes, shall have part in the resurrection.<sup>1</sup> But as regards the last named, it is taught that after having been thus raised, and having taken satisfaction for all that they had suffered, and having been duly punished for all evil done by them, their bodies shall be again reduced to dust.<sup>2</sup>

The Mohammedan religion also recognizes,

<sup>1</sup> Sura vi. 35-37: xvii. 52-54.

<sup>2</sup> See Sale's *Preliminary Discourse to the Quran*.

of necessity, an intermediate state of the souls of the departed, between death and the resurrection. As to its nature, and the condition of man therein, the Quran has but little to say; though traditions of sayings attributed, with more or less reason, to Mohammed, have variously supplied the deficiency. It is taught in the Quran, however, that the angel of death separates the soul from the body, with violence in the case of the wicked, and with gentleness in that of the righteous.<sup>1</sup> After the corpse is placed in the grave, it is visited by the two angels, Munkir and Nakir, who examine the dead man as to his religious standing. If he believe in the *kalima*, they give him no further trouble; but if he be an unbeliever, they beat him cruelly with heavy clubs.<sup>2</sup> When this examination is completed, the soul passes into *Al Barzakh*, the Mohammedan Hades.<sup>3</sup> Concerning the condition of the faithful who have departed this life, nothing in the Quran is in higher tone than what is said of those who had fallen in battle at Ohod:

“Thou shalt in no wise reckon those who have been slain in the cause of God as dead;

<sup>1</sup> Sura xvi. 34, 35; lxxix. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Sura xlvii. 29; viii. 52.

<sup>3</sup> See Sura xxiii. 101, and the Rev. Dr. Wherry's Note thereon in his *Commentary on the Quran*, vol. iii., p. 184.

may, they are sustained alive with their Lord, rejoicing for what God of His favor has granted them; and being glad for those, who, coming after them, have not yet overtaken them: because there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they be grieved. They are filled with joy for the favor which they have received from God and His bounty; and for that God suffereth not the reward of the faithful to perish.”<sup>1</sup>

But Islam has not been content with this, and the various traditions accounted authentic by Mohammedans, add numerous particulars as to the state of the dead, most of which are in suggestive contrast with the New Testament on this subject. A distinction is taught as to the condition of disembodied spirits. The souls of prophets are admitted at once into Paradise; those of the martyrs are said to rest in the crops of green birds in Paradise. As to the souls of other Mohammedans, many believe them to linger around the graves where the bodies are laid. Others teach that all dwell in the lowest heaven with Adam, the righteous on his right hand, and the wicked on his left; others, again, that they exist under the throne of God in the form of white birds,

<sup>1</sup> Sura lii. 170-172

The souls of the wicked, many believe to be kept in durance in a dungeon in the lowest earth; others believe that, according to a tradition imputed to Mohammed, they dwell under the jaw of Satan, and are tormented by him until the resurrection.

7 As to the nature of the resurrection, it is taught that faithful Mohammedans are raised in their own bodies, in various degrees of honor, according to their merit.<sup>1</sup> Unbelievers, on the other hand, will not in all cases be raised in their own bodies; some will be raised in the form of apes, others as swine, others as maimed or variously distorted.<sup>2</sup> Of the teaching of the New Testament, based on that of our Lord, that the resurrection body shall be a spiritual body, such that "in the resurrection . . . [they] neither marry, nor are given in marriage,"<sup>3</sup> there is not a trace in the Quran. On the contrary, all the descriptions, many of them in gross language, intimate that the body shall be as truly an animal body as this. Believers shall not only be delighted with the pleasures of the palate, but shall be capable as here of procreation; and for their

<sup>1</sup> Sura xxxvi. 54.

<sup>2</sup> See, for a detailed account of the teaching of the *Traditions* on this whole subject. Sale's *Preliminary Discourse to the Quran*, sec. lv.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xx. 35.



enjoyment beautiful houris shall be assigned to every true believer.<sup>1</sup>

The resurrection is to take place in the day of judgment, of which the purpose is declared to be the reward of all according to their works. Rightly enough, great emphasis is laid on the certainty, and the unspeakable terror of that day. Sura Al Haqqât opens with the words: "The infallible! the infallible! What is the infallible?"<sup>2</sup> To which the answer is given that it is the announcement of this great day of judgment. The day is said in the Quran to be preceded by signs, such as the splitting of the moon,<sup>3</sup> the appearing of a great and awful smoke;<sup>4</sup> to which the authorized traditions add many more: such as the appearing of a portentous beast sixty cubits high; great distress among all nations; the decay of the faith; sunrise in the west, the descent of Jesus from heaven, who will marry and live on the earth for forty years,<sup>5</sup> kill antichrist, etc., etc. During this short period of His sojourn, the earth shall enjoy great

<sup>1</sup>The grossness of the descriptions of these sensual enjoyments of good Mussulmans in Paradise, which are found in the Quran, is astounding. See (*e. g.*), Suras lv. 41-78; lvii. 11-39; lxvi. 12-22, *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup>Hence the name, *Al Haqqât*, of this Sura.

<sup>3</sup>Sura liv. 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup>Sura xlv. 9, 10.

<sup>5</sup>Some say, twenty-four years.

peace, so that even camels and sheep shall live with lions and bears, and little children shall play with serpents. Beasts and even inanimate things shall use articulate speech; the Imam Mahdi shall appear; the moon shall be eclipsed when in conjunction with the sun; <sup>1</sup> etc., etc.

As to the adjudications of that day, it is taught: "The weighing of man's actions on that day shall be just; and they whose balances laden with their good works shall be heavy, are those who shall be happy; but those whose balances shall be light, are those who have lost their souls." These "shall remain in hell forever."<sup>2</sup> Great physical convulsions shall occur: "The earth shall be shaken with a violent shock, and the mountains shall be dashed in pieces, and shall become as dust scattered abroad. And ye shall be separated into three distinct classes: The companions of the right hand—how happy shall the companions of the right hand be! And the companions of the left hand—how miserable shall the companions of the left hand be! And those who have preceded others in the faith, shall precede them to Paradise."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sura lxxv. 8, 9. See Sale's *Preliminary Discourse, etc.*, sec. iv. in which seventeen such signs are enumerated.

<sup>2</sup> Suras vii. 8, 9; xxiii. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Sura lvi. 4-10.

The duration of the day of judgment is said in one place to be "the twinkling of an eye, or even more quick"; elsewhere, a thousand years, and again, in another place, fifty thousand years.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of the day will be the driving of the wicked into hell, and the reception of the righteous into Paradise.<sup>2</sup> According to the authoritative "Traditions," all will have to pass the bridge Sirat, no broader than a hair, and sharper than a sword, which the righteous shall cross safely, while the unbelievers shall fall off into hell.<sup>3</sup> It should be added, however, that Islam teaches that wicked Mohammedians will have to expiate their sins in the hell called *jahannam*; but that finally all, even of such Mussulmans, will be delivered, while, on the other hand, no one who was not on earth a true Moslem, will ever be delivered from the torments of hell.

In nothing is there a greater contrast between the Christian Scriptures and the Mohammedan Quran and traditions, than in the way in which the pains of hell are described. The few statements in the New Testament are awful indeed; but there is a holy reticence on

<sup>1</sup> Suras xvi. 79: xxxij. 4: lxx. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Sura lvi. 11-43, *et. seq.*; also ci. 6-9 *et passim*.

<sup>3</sup> A notion probably derived from the Magians.

the subject, and always an undertone of yearning pity and longing for the salvation of all; as also a careful justice which declares that but "few stripes" shall be visited on him who did not his Master's will through ignorance. In terrible contrast with this, in the Quran the tortures to be inflicted on men in hell are dwelt upon to weariness, and with a grossness of detailed description and an utter absence of any trace of pity that any must so suffer. Thus we read: "Verily, those who disbelieve our signs, we will cast to be broiled in hell-fire; so often as their skins shall be well burned, we will give them other skins in exchange, that they may taste the sharper torment; for God is wise."<sup>1</sup> "Transgressors shall be cast into hell to be burned; and a wretched couch it shall be. This let them taste, to wit: scalding water and corruption flowing from the bodies of the damned." For refreshment they shall have the fruit of the tree *Al Zaqquq*, which is described as a "tree that issueth from the bottom of hell: the fruit thereof resembleth the heads of devils, and the damned shall eat the same and shall fill their bellies therewith, and there shall be given them a mixture of filth and boiling water to

<sup>1</sup>Sura iv. 54.

drink: and afterwards, they shall return into hell.”<sup>1</sup> Instead of a justice tempered with holy pity, they are represented as taunted in their helpless agony. When the unbelievers shall be cast into a fire “furiously raging and roaring; . . . they shall call for death.” It shall be answered them, “Call not this day for one death, but call for many deaths.” “It shall be said to the tormentors, ‘Take him and drag him into the midst of hell and pour on his head the torture of boiling water, saying, Taste this! for thou wast that mighty and honorable person.’”<sup>2</sup>

Equally gross are the descriptions constantly recurring in the Quran, of the enjoyments of Paradise. The New Testament dwells on the spiritual fellowship with God, and with all the earthly imagery that is employed, never once uses an image which could suggest an evil thought. Very different is it with the Quran. It is true indeed, that now and then is found a not unworthy description of heaven, as: “They shall be introduced into gardens of perpetual abode; . . . and they shall say, Praise be to God who hath taken sorrow from us. Verily our Lord is ready to forgive the sinners and to reward the obedient, who hath caused

<sup>1</sup>Sura xxxvii. 60-66.

<sup>2</sup>Sura xliiv. 47-49.

us to take up our rest in a dwelling of perpetual stability through His bounty, wherein shall no labor touch us, neither shall any weariness affect us.”<sup>1</sup>

Far more frequent, however, are such descriptions of the pleasures reserved for the faithful as the following: “They shall repose on couches the linings of which shall be of thick silk interwoven with gold. . . . Therein shall receive them beauteous damsels refraining their eyes from beholding any besides their spouses, whom no man shall have deflowered before them.”<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere, we read concerning “the companions of the right hand”: “They shall repose themselves on lofty beds. Verily, we have created the damsels of Paradise by a peculiar creation: and we have made them virgins, beloved by their husbands, of equal age with them, for the delight of the companions of the right hand.”<sup>3</sup>

An eternity of sensual enjoyment—this is the heaven set forth in the Quran for the reward of them that please God, as the passages are naturally interpreted by all orthodox Mohammedan interpreters.

As to the future of this earth and the world

<sup>1</sup> Sura xxxv. 30-32.

<sup>2</sup> Sura lvi. 33-37.

<sup>3</sup> Sura lv. 56.

of men, Islam holds out no bright prospect. Where the Holy Scriptures tell of the coming and permanent triumph of the kingdom of God on earth, of this Mohammed seems to have known nothing. This world is to go on, much as now, in all its evil, until the break of the day of judgment. The traditions indeed say that Jesus will come again into the world, and continue here for an ordinary lifetime, and that during this short period universal peace and harmony will prevail. But I have never fallen in with a Mohammedan who seems to have had this creed. And whereas after the fiery judgment wherein "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up," the New Testament bids us anticipate "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,"<sup>1</sup> and which shall endure forever;<sup>2</sup> Islam knows nothing of this hope. So to the dark enigma of human history with all its sin and suffering, Islam returns no answer and offers no solution, other than that the ages of sin and agony were what they were simply because it so pleased God, who willed that the hell which He had created should be filled. All is because of a horrible caprice of absolute and arbitrary almightiness.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Is. lxvi. 22.

To all this, the eschatology of Hindooism, in every form, offers a great contrast. As to the future of individual men, whether, as the Nyâyiks believe, the souls of men are distinct from each other and from God; or whether, as is the common Vedantic belief, all souls are really parts of the Divine essence, all agree that the soul exists eternally. With equal unanimity, however, is denied the continuance of personality. The transmigration of souls is universally believed; but it is not claimed that either the recollection of past forms of existence abides in the present, or that the memory of the present life shall survive into the next stage of being.

Hindooism speaks of a heaven and a hell to which many go, but these are by no means the only places or states of post-mortem existence. I may after death assume some heavenly or some infernal form, in one of the heavens or hells, or I may reappear here on earth, in the form either of a human being or some other living creature. Even though one go to heaven or hell, no one there abides forever. For the whole Hindoo theory of rewards and punishments is based on a system of salvation by merit. If any one goes to hell, or is born in some form again on earth or in the highest



heavens, this state of being will endure only until the amount of happiness or of suffering which is the necessary fruit of his works here, shall have been exhausted. But inasmuch as in each new state of being new actions, good or evil, are done, this necessitates yet another birth, as and where one's merit may determine. Apart from the interposed effect of any saving mode of religious life, this continual succession of births and rebirths is supposed to go on, until the transmigration shall have been repeated unto eighty-four lakhs, *i. e.*, 8,400,000 times. Hence a common colloquialism for the attainment of salvation is "to cut short the eighty-four." After this, at latest, each soul is reabsorbed into the unconscious Brahma, even as a wave after rolling on and on for months is at last reabsorbed and lost in the ocean out of which it arose. Obviously, while this eschatology, in its steadfast insistence upon the necessity of recompense for works good or evil, seems to lay stress on at least one ethical element, in reality it deprives the doctrine of the hereafter of all moral character and power. For evidently, if either reward or punishment is to have any moral effect either on myself or another, I must recognize myself, and others must be able to recognize me, as

the self-same person who in this life did that of which in the next life I reap the fruit. But the doctrine of transmigration does not contemplate this. No one pretends to have such memory of those deeds of a previous life, because of which he enjoys or suffers what he does; nor is there left any room for believing that in the case of a next birth, the memory of the present will survive the change called death.

For the world of men at large, or for the earth in which we live, Hindooism holds forth no more hope than Islam. The history of the world is believed to be divided into four ages; Satya, Dwâpur, Treta, and Kali. Of these four each in succession is worse than that which preceded it, till now has come the Kali Yug, which is the worst of all, and which will be terminated by the Mahapralâya, or "Great Catastrophe," in which the world of men, with the earth on which they live, shall finally perish. This shall no doubt be succeeded by another world, but that has no connection with the present, and so far as anything is taught or believed, is destined to have no different history. Of a final everlasting triumph of righteousness, Hindooism, like Islam, knows nothing.

No more satisfactory than the teaching of Hindooism is that of Buddhism regarding the last things. What is fundamental on this point has been of necessity anticipated, and a brief recapitulation will suffice. According to orthodox Buddhism, for the individual man there is no future life. It is repeatedly taught that man consists of merely *nāmarūpa*, "name and form." He is merely the result of the combination of certain *skandhas*; and when these are separated in death, nothing of the man can remain any more than—to use the common Buddhist illustration—when a wagon is taken to pieces anything of the wagon can remain except the mere idea.

Transmigration is held, but in a sense distinctly different from that of Hindooism. As according to the original teaching of the Buddha, the doctrine of an abiding soul is one of "the ten heresies"; therefore, there is not supposed to be any substantial essence which passes from one body to another. The connection between this body and that which shall follow it, is therefore not physical, but merely ethical, not real, but ideal. That is, the works which I do, necessitate the production after my death of another body in which their fruit can be realized. Hence, to speak

with accuracy, this is not so much a transmigration of souls, as a transmigration of *karmma* action, or of merit.

Obviously such teaching as this deprives the doctrine of future reward and punishment of all ethical character and moral power. So far as a man is concerned, regarded as a conscientious person, death for him ends all.

But as already remarked, despite the clear teaching of the Tripitaka, this doctrine is rejected by millions of Buddhists to-day. The masses in most Buddhist lands believe in the transmigration of souls in the same sense as the Hindoos. Like them, they also believe in various heavens and hells, into one or other of which any one, according to his merit or demerit, may be born. But, as in Hindooism, so in Buddhism, even as thus understood, there is no eternal heaven, any more than an eternal hell. No matter what summits of celestial bliss in one of the highest heavens a man may attain, and no matter how many ages he may live there, when his merit is exhausted, which brought and kept him there, he must again be born, in heaven, earth, or hell, according to his deeds. And so must the weary sequence of birth and death go on, until at last, perchance, in some one of these myriad births, by

following and walking steadfastly in the "Noble Eightfold Path," the poor soul may attain *nirvāna*, and know no more of bliss or woe forever.

This supreme attainment, however, we are assured, is very rarely reached. Theoretically, it is within the reach of every man: but, in fact, we are told that in all the ages only two men outside the monastic order have ever attained *parinibbāna*; and, even of the monks, only two since the time of the Buddha have achieved this consummation.

Buddhism has a doctrine of the future of the world and the race as well as of the individual, but it is by no means cheerful and inspiring. Indeed, granted the Buddha's fundamental postulate of the necessary impermanence of all things, and the necessary evil of all existence, a cheerful eschatology is impossible. And so Buddhism teaches that from the time of the Buddha onward to the end, the tendency of the human race, religiously considered, will be downward, until at last, the state of things shall have become so very bad, as to necessitate the appearing upon earth of another Buddha again to preach the Way. This will help for a time; but soon a similar retrogression will begin, and the same dreary history shall repeat

itself, and so on and so on, for no one knows how long. Of an unending age of a holy humanity on a glorified earth, such as the New Testament predicts, there is not a suggestion in orthodox Buddhism.

In a very late work, however, the *Saddharma-pundarika*, "The Lotus of the Good Law," which can scarcely be older than A. D. 200, six or seven hundred years after the Buddha, an eschatology is set forth, which, in contrast with the above, presents an outlook more cheerful, and more in accord with the biblical teaching. In this book it is represented indeed that the process of moral degeneration will go on until the end of this *kalpa* or world-period, when this world will be destroyed by fire, Mara, the Spirit of Evil, having been destroyed previously. Thereafter will appear a better world, in which purity and righteousness shall prevail. Such a representation is of much interest, as so closely agreeing to the representations of the New Testament; but it can hardly be fairly credited to Buddhism, with the original doctrine of which it is in direct contradiction. In fact, when we remember that according to evidence of considerable weight, the gospel was preached through India already before this book was written, it is

scarcely possible not to believe that as in the Krishna legend of Hindooism, so in this teaching, we may justly trace a historical connection with the gospel doctrine, which, before the above named book had been written, had been undoubtedly preached in India.

As for the earth, it has been already noted that Buddhism, like the New Testament, predicts a future destruction of this earth by fire, and the appearing thereafter of yet another earth. But this teaching diverges widely from that of the New Testament. For according to the latter, the new earth, though material, is not to be like this present earth, but in bright contrast with this, in that in it righteousness is to abide; whereas, it is the general Buddhist teaching that the earth which shall succeed the present, shall be in all respects like unto this. Sin and evil shall rule in that earth as in this. Man shall go from bad to worse; from time to time a new Buddha shall appear to preach the Way, and stay for a little the downward course of men, and again and again shall men soon forget his teaching, and go on their downward way as before, till at last another world catastrophe shall occur as before, and thereafter a new *kalpa* and a new earth, in which the whole dismal movement shall be

repeated. And so shall it go on, for all that Buddhism teaches to the contrary, forever and forever.

Such is the teaching of Buddhism regarding the future, whether of the individual, or of the earth and world of collective humankind.

From what has been before said, it will be clear that Confucianism has no eschatology. Confucius concerned himself wholly with this world and with our life here and now. The questions what shall be after death for the individual, or to what consummation the history of the world is moving, he simply ignored.

Taouism has ventured more. The Taouists teach that each man has three souls, one of which abides with the dead body, another near the "spirit-tablet," while another is supposed to be taken to purgatory, where it is made to undergo various disciplinary sufferings; and if at last, after all the transmigrations and the pains of purgatory, the sinner prove irreformable, he is sent to an endless hell. But it is said that in general these post-mortem penalties are little thought of, and the penalties attached to sin in "The Book of Rewards" consist merely in the shortening of the sinner's earthly life. It should be said



however that some scholars, like, *e. g.*, Professor Douglas, deny that the doctrine of a heaven and a hell is any part of Taouism. As to the future course of human history on earth, Taouism is as silent as the doctrine of Confucius.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PRACTICAL MORALS.

THE moral teachings of Christianity are summed up in the Ten Commandments, as illustrated and explained by our Lord. As regards our duties to one another, all is summed up in the words: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." And lest even this might be misinterpreted into a merely outward regulation, concerning external acts alone, in another passage our Lord has laid down the principle that all true morality, all the commandments of God regarding our duties to Himself, and our duties to each other, are summed up in these memorable words: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."<sup>1</sup>

From this it follows that a mere external keeping even of the Ten Commandments, or a merely

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 27.

outward observance of the ordinances of religion is very far from satisfying the moral ideal set before us in the gospel. Hence, we find that Christ taught that even the feeling of hatred in a man's heart, in God's sight makes him a murderer; and the indulgence of the lustful look, makes a man in God's sight an adulterer.<sup>1</sup>

It is again most characteristic of the moral teaching of the New Testament, that stress is everywhere laid rather upon principles than on the literal and punctilious observance of a multitude of minute regulations. Slavery is not prohibited; Onesimus is even by an inspired apostle commanded to go back to his master, nor is Philemon commanded to emancipate him; and yet in commanding him to treat Onesimus as a brother beloved, he used words which, as they have worked on through the ages, have put an end to the institution of slavery in all Christian lands. This is but a single instance out of the many with which history is filled, that show with more than noonday clearness how the elevating and reforming power of the moral teaching of Christ is no less conspicuous than its singular purity and nobility.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28.

In Mohammedanism, we may readily admit that many precepts can be found, as indeed in all religions, which are in full accord with the law of the gospel. The best of Islam is expressed in the following passage in the Surat ul Baqr:

“It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces in prayer toward the east and the west; but righteousness is of him who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the Scriptures, and the prophets; who giveth money for God’s sake unto his kindred, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the stranger, and those who ask, and for redemption of captives; who is constant at prayer, and giveth alms; and of those who perform their covenant when they have covenanted, and who behave themselves patiently in adversity, and hardships, and in time of violence; these are they who are true, and these are they who fear God.”<sup>1</sup>

To refer to particulars, willful murder is prohibited in the Quran, and especially infanticide; also adultery, theft, and taking of usury; and believers are directed to treat with kindness the wives whom they may have. Not only drunkenness, as in the New Testament,

<sup>1</sup> Sura ii. 177.

but unlike the New Testament, all use of wine is absolutely prohibited.

All this and much more is well; but now many things must be added which will show how very much lower is the moral standard of the Quran than that of the gospel. If willful murder is prohibited, yet it is commanded in the case of unbelievers in Mohammed, who will neither accept Islam nor pay tribute, and, in particular, in the case of every Moslem who may embrace another religion. In Sura ul Mâida, we read that "the recompense of those who fight against God and His apostle shall be that they shall be slain, or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides, or be banished the land."<sup>1</sup>

Again, theft is prohibited, which is well; but for this the cruel punishment is said to be "appointed by God," that both of "the hands of the thief shall be cut off."<sup>2</sup> Slavery is not only negatively tolerated, but is commanded; in that the Moslems are directed to make slaves of the women and children of heathen, Jews, and Christians, conquered in battle.

It is urged by some, however, that Mohammed at least ameliorated slavery; and this

<sup>1</sup> Sura v. 37. See also Suras iv. 28; ix. 5, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Sura v. 42.

claim is supported, *e. g.*, by the fact that the prophet said, on the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage: "See that ye feed your slaves with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear." So also there is a qualified prohibition of prostitution of female slaves, thus: "Compel not your maid-servants to prostitute themselves, if they be willing to live chastely";<sup>1</sup> and in the same verse it is said to be an act of merit to give slaves "of the riches of God, which He hath given," in order to help them to redeem themselves from slavery.

Again, the law was given regarding slaves: "If they commit a fault which ye incline not to forgive, then sell them; for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, no one familiar with the facts can deny that up to this present time, there is no indication that the Mohammedan world even desires to give up the institution of slavery; and, as a matter of fact, Islam is directly responsible for about all the slavery

<sup>1</sup>Sura xxiv. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Bosworth Smith's statement that Mohammed laid down the principle that the captive who embraced Islam should be *ipso facto* free, is simply incomprehensible. In Surat un Nisa. vs. 24, explicit reference is made to such female slaves "as are true believers"; nor is this a solitary reference to such slaves.

that exists in the world to-day. Moreover, that slavery throughout the Mohammedan world is of an exceptionally cruel and debasing type, as witness the facts of the African slave trade with which we are only too painfully familiar—"the open sore of the world."

Especially notorious is the fact that under the explicit and repeated instruction of the Quran, formally authorizing unlimited concubinage with female slaves, slavery has been made to pander to all the basest lusts. For while polygamy was authorized, yet the number of wives was limited to four: but the apparent limitation on sensuality was nullified by the explicit declaration in the Quran that as to "the carnal knowledge of . . . the slaves which their right hands possess" the good Mussulman "shall be blameless."<sup>1</sup>

It is sometimes urged, in comparing Mohammedan with Christian social morality, that as regards the sin of prostitution, the case is not so bad in Mohammedan as in Christian lands. After living for many years in a land where Mohammedanism prevails, the writer can see no adequate ground for this statement. It is true that the form under which licentiousness prevails, may in some places be modified; but

<sup>1</sup> Sura lxx. 29, 30.

it is to be declared with emphasis that Mohammedanism has not diminished licentiousness, but increased it. Not only so, but in Mohammedan communities it appears under forms more revolting than anywhere in Christendom. We agree entirely with the strong language used by the Rev. Dr. Henry Jessup, of Beirut, Syria, who has said: "In these days when so much has been written about the high ethical tone of Islam, we shall speak plainly on this subject, unpleasant though it is. . . . Polygamy has not diminished licentiousness among the Mohammedans. The sin of Sodom is so common among them as to make them in many places objects of dread to their neighbors. The burning words of the apostle Paul in Rom. i. 24-27, are applicable to tens of thousands in Mohammedan lands to-day."<sup>1</sup> These statements are substantially warranted as regards the state of society in India to-day. It is here generally agreed that in respect of licentiousness, the Mohammedans of India compare very unfavorably with their Hindoo neighbors.

If anything could add to the debasement of the family as unalterably determined by the

<sup>1</sup>See *The Mohammedan Missionary Problem*, p. 46 et seq. Also compare the remarks of the Rev. Dr. Wherry, in his *Commentary on the Quran*, Note on Sura iv. 3, in vol. ii., p. 69.



legislation of the Quran, it is found in the regulations regarding divorce. It is in all Mohammedan lands permitted to a man to divorce a wife merely by a word, and for no cause but a caprice. He may even do this twice, and take her back again; but if he do this a third time, then he cannot take her back until she shall previously have been married and cohabited with another man, who may then in turn divorce her, when the former husband may take her back again.<sup>1</sup> And in Moslem lands, such marriages of temporary convenience are often formally arranged to suit the wish of some capricious and tyrannical husband. In a word, woman, in the ethics of the Quran, is not practically regarded as a human being, but as an animal, to be used merely for the service and pleasure of her master; who, while he is charged to treat her with kindness, is yet formally invested with unqualified authority to beat or confine her whenever he judge her to be perverse; and abandon her when he please.<sup>2</sup> If anything were needed to the stimulation of the animal passions by the moral (?) law instituted by Mohammed, it is found in this, that whereas

<sup>1</sup> Sura ii. 229, 230. Compare this with the Old Testament view of such an action; Jer. iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Sura iv. 33.

there is some nominal restriction on unbounded licentiousness on earth, in the limitation of the number of wives; the pious Moslem is taught that when he shall reach Paradise, all restriction shall be removed, and the faithful are promised that they shall delight themselves with thousands of beautiful virgins.<sup>1</sup>

To give a just and complete account of the ethical teachings of Hindooism in any short space is impossible. Not only is there no one authority on the subject to which one might refer, but the differences in moral teaching in different forms of Hindooism are so many and great, that comparatively few statements can be made of universal application. To represent the morality of Hindooism by the unnatural orgies of the Bàm-mârgis or followers of the Tàntrik Hindooism, would be as unfair as, on the other hand, it would be to take the often lofty morality of the eclectic Bhâgavad Gîta, as representing the average moral code of the millions of India.

In general, one may say that not a few moral duties are generally recognized and the merit of observing them extolled. The duty of children to honor and obey their parents,

<sup>1</sup> See the passages from the Quran cited above, pp. 98, 104.

howsoever often neglected—as, alas, even in Christian lands—is much emphasized by all. Equableness of temper is enjoined by writers of every school, though on grounds widely different from those exhibited in the New Testament. Neither is one to be easily ruffled by provocations or by trouble of any kind, nor, on the other hand, should the wise man be greatly elated by what is pleasant and agreeable. Truthfulness, though little enough observed by most people, is in theory ranked as a very great virtue. The greatest stress is laid on the inviolability of the marriage relation; and one may well believe that the women of India are generally loyal to their husbands. Polygamy, if allowed, is not extensively practiced; the disloyalty of a wife is regarded with the strongest feelings of reprobation.

On the other side, however, not so much can be said. The frequency of violations of the seventh commandment is sadly evidenced, as medical friends tell us, by the exceeding prevalence of the disease which is its common penalty. More strikingly suggestive still is the fact that in Hindi there is no word answering to the English word “chaste,” which can possibly be applied to a man. The only word of such meaning which is in the lan-

guage, can only be used of a woman. Obscenity in speech is one of the crying sins of the land, and is confined to no class or sex. But this is not strange, when we note to what an extent obscenity is connected with Hindooism. In the Penal Code of British India, in the section regarding obscene pictures, carvings, etc., the government was obliged, out of a prudent regard to the feelings of the people, to enter a clause to the effect that the prohibition and penalty attached was not to be understood as applying to the carvings of temples and idol cars, etc.

Nor can it be said that this is merely characteristic of the modern corrupt Puranic Hindooism. In the course of a quarrel in the Panjab a few years ago between the orthodox Hindoos and the Reformed Hindoos of the Àryà Samàj, who insist that the Hindoos ought to return to the religion of the Vedas, it came about that a part of the Sanskrit text of the Yajur Veda relating to the *Asvamedha*, or Horse Sacrifice, of ancient times, together with the Commentary of Mahidhar upon it, was translated into the vernacular of the people, for general circulation. A complaint was made against the Àryàs for an alleged false translation; with the result that when

examined by Sanskrit experts, the translation was declared accurate ; and thereupon the government, although always cautious of doing anything to offend the religious prejudices of the natives, to the dismay of the Āryās, punished those concerned in the translation and publication of this part of the Veda, as having violated the law against obscene literature! Writing of this matter, the Rev. T. Williams, C. M. S., of Rewari, Panjab, says, in the *Indian Evangelical Review*:<sup>1</sup> “I dare not give, and you dare not print, the *ipsissima verba* of an English version of the original Yajur Veda *mantras*. . . . Even a Latin translation of these scandalous *mantras*, would not, I imagine, be tolerated in a newspaper.”

Yet all this only agrees with the representation of the character of God which is given in some of the authoritative “sacred books” of the Hindoos. It is safe to say that the view which any religion gives of the Divine character may be fairly taken as indicating the moral standard accepted by the people who follow such religion. If Hindooism be thus judged, it is found terribly guilty. It is indeed true that the character of the incarnation known as the Rām Avatâr, presents many at-

<sup>1</sup> Jan., 1891.

tractive features; but Rām is by no means free from deceit and other human frailties; and if the character of Krishna as placed before us in the Bhāgavad Gīta, be pure from sensuality, the character of the same supposed incarnation as presented, *e. g.*, in the Bhāgavat Purāna, is distinguished by the uttermost licentiousness conceivable. Rām and Krishna present the incarnations of Vishnu, the second member of the Divine Triad. Many however adore the Divine ideal as presented in the god Shiva or Mahādev, the third member of the Triad. In him, that ideal is represented in a character which combines in the highest degree the traits of a revolting asceticism and of unspeakable filthiness and cruelty. What then must be the moral ideals of the mass of the people, who believe that such characters as these are worthy manifestations of the Deity? It is true that in one of the Purānas, readers are cautioned that they are not to suppose it permissible to ordinary people to imitate these Divine Beings in such things. But the caution is not carefully observed even now, and in earlier days, when English law was not supreme in India, far less than in these times.

Again, in contrast with practical Christian ethics, it is the great outstanding fact that the

system of caste, alike in the laws, written and unwritten, by which it is regulated, and in their practical application in the India of to-day, is nothing less than the formulated rejection of the fundamental principle of morals laid down by Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." How merciless has been the tyranny which the Brahmans of India have exercised over the castes below them, is a matter of common knowledge among intelligent people. It may be added that the members of each lower caste, taught by their example, in their turn, as they have opportunity, are no less merciless in their enforcement of caste laws on those who may be still lower in the social scale than themselves. It is also worthy of notice that while a few advanced thinkers, especially in the Brahma Samaj and a few similar associations, repudiate caste laws, yet the most of the highly educated men in India still feel that, practically, whatever else of Hindooism they may reject, they must by no means break the bonds of caste. Indeed a recent Bengali writer strenuously maintains that it is the recognition and acceptance of the rules of caste, and not any particular theological belief, that constitutes a man religiously a Hindoo. He says: "The Hindoo system is a hier-

archy of caste, and those who belong to this hierarchy of caste are Hindoos.”<sup>1</sup>

Injustice belongs to the very essence both of the teachings and the practice of Hindooism concerning caste. Manu declares that a king “should not slay a Brahman, even if he be occupied in crime of every sort; but he should put him out of the realm in possession of all his property, and uninjured.”<sup>2</sup> Again, he says: “If a low-born man, a Shudra, assault one of the twice-born castes, he ought to have his tongue cut out.” If a man be of a caste lower than the Brahman, he is not to be taught the law of the Veda nor is any religious observance to be enjoined upon him; and the man who teaches him religion is to be cast, together with his pupil, into “the darkness of hell.”<sup>3</sup> Instead of the law which teaches that we are to seek every one another’s good, and in honor to “prefer one another,” it is the law of Manu that “a Brahman may take possession of the goods of a Shudra with perfect peace of mind, since nothing at all belongs to this Shudra as his own.”<sup>4</sup> Instead of giving a poor Shudra what is good, he is to receive from the Brahman

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to the Study of Hindooism* by Guru Prosad Sen, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Institutes of Manu*, Book i. 380.

<sup>3</sup> *Code of Manu*, Book iv. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Ib.* Book viii. 417.



“the blighted part of the grain, and one’s old clothes and furniture.”<sup>1</sup>

It will be said, and truly, that such laws as these are not actually carried out. But the reason is obvious. Under the British rule in India, the Brahman who should attempt to act toward the lower castes in all respects according to the authoritative law of Manu, would soon find himself in the penitentiary. But this undoubted improvement in the situation cannot be fairly credited to Hindooism. And of caste, even as it exists to-day, under the British administration of India, not a Christian, but a Hindoo reformer has said: “That caste is a frightful social scourge, no one can deny. . . . When we view it on moral grounds, it appears as a scandal to conscience, and an insult to humanity, and all our moral ideals and sentiments rise to execrate it.”<sup>2</sup>

Hindoo ethics is again to be contrasted with Christian morals, in the position which is assigned to woman. No doubt excellent things may be quoted even from Manu, as to the honor in which women should be held; as when he says that “women are to be honored by fathers and brothers, by husbands, as also

<sup>1</sup> *Code of Manu*, Book x. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Keshub Chunder Sen, in his *Appeal to Young India*.

by brothers-in-law who desire much prosperity, etc.”<sup>1</sup> But then the same authority teaches that on occasion “a wife . . . should be beaten with a cord or a bamboo cane.”<sup>2</sup> If loyalty to a husband is enjoined by all Hindoo authorities, the duties required by that loyalty are exaggerated to the utmost. Thus in the Skanda Puràna it is said: “Let the wife who wishes to perform sacred oblations wash the feet of her lord, and drink the water. . . . The husband is her god, her priest, and her religion; wherefore, abandoning everything else, she ought chiefly to worship her husband.”<sup>3</sup>

The treatment of widows in India, even of those who are mere children, is a matter which is notorious. It is indeed sometimes charged that missionaries exaggerate the evils incident to Hindoo widowhood; but it was not a missionary, but a Hindoo<sup>4</sup> who has used the following strong language: “An adequate idea of the intolerable hardships of early widowhood can be formed only by those whose daughters, sisters, daughters-in-law, and other female relations have been deprived of their husbands during infancy.”

But worst of all in Hindoo ethics is the de-

<sup>1</sup> *Code of Manu*, Book iii. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.* Book iv. 299.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* iv. 135.

<sup>4</sup> Pundit Iswara Chundra Vidyasagar.

nial of the necessary and essential distinction between right and wrong. This vitiates everything. As already observed, the Rāmāyan formally teaches the doctrine that “might makes right,” and in the Bhāgavad Gīta, which is probably the purest and noblest production of Hindoo literature, the doctrine is most fully and plainly taught that actions in themselves defile no one, so that they are but performed in the state of mind which is enjoined in the poem. Krishna is therein said to declare of himself as God incarnate, “Actions defile me not;” and of his worshipers, “He who knoweth me thus, is not bound by actions.”<sup>1</sup>

That this belief is not merely the teaching of the sacred books of the Hindoos, but is the actual creed of many of the educated Hindoos of to-day, is an indisputable fact. In a book published by S. C. Muhopadhaya, M. A., *The Imitation of Sree Krishna*, this educated Bengali gentleman says: “To our mind virtue and vice being relative terms can never be applied to one who is regarded as the Supreme Being. . . . Conceive a man who is trying his utmost to fly from vice to its opposite pole virtue; . . . imagine a being to whom virtue and vice are the same; and you will find

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit. iv. 14.

that the latter is infinitely superior to the former." (!) Nothing then is of necessary and unalterable obligation; and to do right or to do wickedly, is merely a question of expediency!

If this be so, then it follows that the idea of moral obligation is simply an illusion. According to Christian ethics, the ultimate reason why this or that should be done or not done, is found in the fact that such is the will of an infinitely good, wise, and holy God, to whom we are bound by an indissoluble bond, to whom we owe everything, and on whom we absolutely depend. Hence the profound moral significance of our common words to denote this moral obligation. "Duty" is that which is "due" from, or is owed by me to another. In the word "ought" the same thought is expressed in Anglo Saxon, as in the other case in a word of Latin origin. For "ought" is "owed,"<sup>1</sup> and what I ought to do is what I owe to some one; so that sin in this aspect becomes a debt (*debitum*) even as our Lord taught in the Lord's Prayer. Now it is a very striking fact that in Hindi, the language of full one-third of the population of India—and, to the

<sup>1</sup>As in Tyndale's New Testament, Luke vii. 41. "There was a certain lender which had two debtors, the one ought five hundred pence."

best of my knowledge, in the other Aryan languages of India—there is no term which really corresponds to this class of words in English. Every preacher and translator in India has painfully felt his impotence when attempting to express in the vernacular, these profound moral conceptions. Of such words in North India the most common is *châhiye*, which however only means “that which is to be desired”; thus tacitly implying that only what one may wish to do is what he ought to do. The story is told of an eminent missionary translator into Bengali, who was seeking for a Bengali equivalent for the word “conscience”, to whom his native pundit replied, after the missionary had tried to explain to him the content of this English term: “Sahib, where there is not the thing, how can one have the word?” Yet this is not strange: for where pantheism has become the faith of a people, how can such ideas as “duty” or “conscience,” in the Christian sense of those terms, have any longer a place? All such terms connote relations to a Being who is personal, and whose will is and must be for us law. But when the Person has vanished from the spiritual vision, the relationship to Him also of necessity disappears.

In our day the ethics of Buddhism has been by many extolled almost without limit. We can readily admit that when contrasted with the moral system of the Hindooism against which it was a revolt, it is in many ways far superior. It was a noble and righteous protest against the tyranny of caste, and boldly asserted the equality of all men.<sup>1</sup> It was also a protest against the degrading ceremonialism of the popular Hindooism, and declared most truly, in words which remind us of the teaching of our Lord: "Anger, intoxication, obstinacy, deceit, envy, grandiloquence, pride and conceit, intimacy with the unjust; this is uncleanness, but not the eating of flesh."<sup>2</sup> Hence, in contrast with Hindooism, many moral duties are placed in the foreground of the Buddhist system, and their observance declared essential to salvation. Its first five commandments forbid lying, stealing, killing, drinking what can intoxicate, and adultery. Not only so, but Buddhism teaches that not merely outward actions,

<sup>1</sup> But not the "brotherhood" of men, as sometimes represented. For brotherhood implies a common father; but of a God and Father of men, of whom all men are in a true sense "the offspring," the Buddha, with all his supposed enlightenment, knew nothing.

<sup>2</sup> *Sutta Nipàta*; *Amagandha Sutta*, 7. Yet the Buddhists of today lay the greatest stress on abstinence from eating flesh, as a high religious duty; and are indeed in this in full accord with other teachings of the Buddhist Scriptures.

but also inner states and feelings constitute sin. Instead of retaliating for injuries, it is written: "Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good." We are to "leave the sins of the mind," as well as those which are outward:<sup>1</sup> the lustful look at the wife of another, is sin.

But, for all this, very deep and significant is the contrast between Buddhist and Christian ethics. First and most fundamental is the fact that since Buddhism ignores the being of a God, the moral "law" of Buddhism knows nothing of any duty that a man owes to Him. From which it follows immediately that God being thus ignored, the ground of obligation, even as regards undoubted duties of man to man, is not found in the will and command of an infinitely good and holy God. In fact, it is quite correct to say that, if one will speak accurately, there is no such thing as "law," in our sense of the word, in Buddhist ethics. All is merely advisory. The word is constantly used in translating Buddhist works, but this must never be forgotten, that it connotes nothing mandatory.

Again, while we may gladly admit that many counsels are given in Buddhist books

<sup>1</sup> *Dhammapada*, 222, 232.

which are most excellent, and while passages may be produced in which, as remarked, a merely ceremonial righteousness, as compared with moral purity and righteousness, is depreciated utterly: yet in utter inconsistency with this, it is taught that whoever wishes to attain to the summit of Buddhist saintship, must attend to a variety of ceremonial observances, many of which are most puerile, and some even revolting to decency. Thus, in Buddhist ethics, injunctions most excellent are mingled with others to observances utterly trivial and indifferent, and in some instances even degrading; as, for example, the direction to the saint to go clad in rags and lead a mendicant life. If it is written that no one should lie, or steal, or commit adultery; it is added that if one would attain to a still higher degree of saintship than the observance of such duties alone would make possible, he must not use tooth-powders, nor sleep on a bed which is broad or high!

This utter confusion of the moral sense which is evidenced by the ethics of Buddhism, is well illustrated by the well-known enumeration of "the Ten Sins," which the Buddhist saint must overcome. Among these we find, quite rightly, hatred, pride, and self-righteous-



ness, and dependence on rites: but on the other hand are enumerated, "doubt," namely, of the truth of the atheistic and pessimistic teaching of the Buddha; "the delusion of self," that is, the belief in the existence of the Ego as a permanent subsistence; "sensuality"—not in our sense of the word—but all gratification of the senses; and finally all love of life on earth, and all desire for life anywhere else, even in heaven.

Finally, whereas in the Christian system of morals, the highest motive to all right living is found in supreme love to a God who is both the absolutely perfect expression of all moral beauty and excellence, and our Father in heaven, in the Buddhist ethics, the highest motive is found in the desire to escape, by obedience to the Buddha's "law," from the misery which in greater or less degree is said to be inseparably connected with existence even in heaven itself. Thus while the Christian moral ideal is found in perfect love to an absolutely perfect Being, leading to utter self-forgetfulness for His sake, in Buddhism, the ideal is found in an absolute and selfish asceticism, which in its fullest realization regards virtue and vice alike with indifference.

To the ethical system of Confucius one may

rightly give much praise. If all men were to obey his precepts, one may safely say that this would at least be a far happier world than it is. All men, Confucius taught, should seek to live a virtuous life. All virtue, he said, begins with knowledge, and knowledge is obtainable only through learning. Only, according to Confucius, the source of knowledge is not independent thought, but the careful study of the teachings of the great sages of antiquity. By this a man may hope to arrive at truth, and especially the knowledge of his own defects and shortcomings. Attaining to this knowledge, the superior man will above all be sincere. His supreme affections and his highest desires will be set on what is right. He will be "gentle, forbearing and forgiving." Asked by one to give him a rule of moral conduct which might serve to regulate all one's life, Confucius answered: "Reciprocity. What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." It must be admitted that this falls below the "Golden Rule" of the New Testament, in that it does not positively enjoin one to do what he wishes that another should do to him, but only, negatively, to abstain from what he would not like to have done to himself; still, one cannot but recog-

nize with thankfulness the approximation to the teaching of Christ.

Chief among the virtues, according to Confucius, stand courage and benevolence. Under the latter term, however, he included much more than the word commonly connotes with us. It is explained as having relation not only to those who are below us, but no less to those who are above us; in a word, it is said to consist in "love to all men." As exemplified in life, it includes the rule of "reciprocity," as above given, then "loyalty," "reverence," and "faith." By loyalty is intended not merely loyalty to one's sovereign or ruler, but no less to equals and inferiors; in a word, faithfulness in the performance of all the duties owed by man to his fellow in every relation of life. Reverence is explained as first exemplified in the feeling of the son toward his father; then, of all subjects to their rulers; and then, of the emperor himself to heaven. By "faith" is apparently intended sincerity in the performance of all these duties.

Among all the virtues in which the performance of these duties will be exemplified, filial piety is given a foremost place. This is said to be indeed "the beginning of all virtue,"

and brotherly love "the sequel of virtue." Filial piety is said to consist in serving and obeying one's parents so long as they live, and in giving them a suitable burial when they die; to which it is added that it also requires that after their death men shall offer to them sacrifices. On this exaggerated idea of what the duty of filial piety requires, is based the whole system of ancestral worship prevalent in China. Confucius declared that in filial obedience there was nothing "so essential as to reverence one's father"; and that "as a mark of reverence there is nothing more important than to place him on an equality with heaven." Great stress was laid by Confucius on the duties, not only of subjects toward their rulers, but on the duty of the emperor toward his subjects.

Such, in brief, are the chief points in the moral teaching of Confucius, and in them we all will admit there is much to commend.

On the other hand, as in Buddhism, so in Confucianism, duties to God, if not absolutely ignored, are relegated to the background. It would probably not be correct to say that Confucius was an atheist; but, if he endorsed the ancient rule of reciprocity, he seems to have utterly failed to discover that other rule

which requires us not only to love our neighbor as ourself, but also to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and strength; and which also rightly places this first, as the root from which the love to one's neighbor is sure to spring.

As in Buddhism, so in Confucianism, woman is depreciated, and the duties arising out of the relations of man and woman are very imperfectly apprehended. The sister, for example, is not contemplated when Confucius extols fraternal affection. Not until a girl becomes a mother, does she acquire any proper claim to regard. In the opinion of Confucius, the most difficult people of all to manage, are "women and servants."

Marriage, with the Confucian, is not, as in the New Testament, in order that husband and wife may live together in mutual helpfulness, "as being heirs together of the grace of life";<sup>1</sup> but is simply in order to the procreation of children. It naturally follows from this conception of the ideal and object of marriage, that both divorce for many reasons, and also polygamy, are sanctioned. If a wife bear no children, her husband may at his pleasure either divorce her, or may take another wife.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 7.

The "Rites of the Chow Dynasty" enact that since it is of special importance that the emperor should have a son to succeed him, he should have beside the empress, one hundred and twenty concubines. For divorce, Confucius enumerated seven sufficient reasons, namely: disobedience to either of the wife's parents-in-law; barrenness; lewdness; jealousy; leprosy; garrulousness; and stealing. As the procreation of sons is the chief object of marriage, it is made the duty of the childless widower to marry again; while, on the contrary, if a widow remarry, this is held to be a sign of a bad and lustful character. To sum up in the words of Professor Douglas, from whose valuable little Handbook I have largely drawn: "The failure to recognize the sanctity of the marriage bond is a great blot on the Confucian system. It has in a great measure destroyed domesticity, it has robbed women of their lawful influence, and has degraded them into a position which is little better than slavery."

The ethics of Taouism is represented in two small books, the *Yin chih wan*, or "Book of Secret Blessings," and the *Kan ying peen*, or "Book of Rewards and Punishments." A translation of the whole text of the last named

booklet is given by Professor Douglas,<sup>1</sup> and consists of two hundred and twelve precepts, a large part of which are every way commendable, and enjoin most of those natural virtues which the common conscience of mankind requires. Thus we read: "Practice righteousness and filial piety, be affectionate toward your younger brothers, and respectful toward your elder brothers." "Have pity for orphans, and cherish widows." "Respect old men, and cherish infants." "Pity the misfortunes of others." "Rejoice in the successes of others, and sympathize with their reverses." "Never boast of superiority." "Bestow favors without expecting recompense." "Do not calumniate your fellow-students." "Be not hard, violent, or inhuman." "Be not forgetful of benefits." "Commit not murder for the sake of gain." "When you know what is right, do it." "Do not separate husband and wife." "When you see others possessed of riches, do not desire that they may lose them."

While the duties of man to man are thus fully set forth, we find in this book only two allusions to any duty to a Supreme Being, thus: "Do not murmur against Heaven at your lot." "Do not seek to obtain anything

<sup>1</sup> *Confucianism and Taoism*, pp. 257-271.

beyond the lot appointed you by Heaven." Moreover, as so often in other non-Christian religions, with such commendable precepts as the above, are mingled others which are merely silly and puerile. Thus: "Do not leap over a well or a hearth." "Do not shout or get angry on the first day of the month." "Do not spit toward shooting stars." "Do not weep or spit toward the north." "Do not point at a rainbow." "Do not stare at the sun or moon."

Similar remarks might be made, in general, as to the contents of the other ethical book of the Taouists, the *Yin chih wan*. In it we read: "Devote your wealth to the good of your fellow-men." "In all your actions follow the principles of Heaven, and in all your words follow the purified heart of man." "Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bury the dead." But also: "Never destroy paper which is written upon." "Be careful not to tread upon insects on the road"; etc., etc.<sup>1</sup>

Not to enter into further detail as to the ethics of the various non-Christian religions, it is to be observed, in general, that in all, to a great extent in theory—as universally in practice—morality is dissevered from religion. In

<sup>1</sup> See *Confucianism and Taoism*, pp. 272-274.



all alike, it is true that a man may be very religious, and yet in one way or another, very wicked. To be a Confucian in good standing, if only the authority of the sage is recognized, it is not necessary to recognize God in any way. The fearful prevalence of infanticide in Confucian China, is a sad illustration of our remark. To be a Hindoo in good repute as regards religion, it is by no means necessary to abstain from lying, stealing, or even murder. This is evident from the fact that while in India there are very many things because of which a man may be excommunicated from caste fellowship, violations of the moral law are not among these.

But this is only the natural consequence of the fact that in the preceptive part of the best of the ethnic religions, the observance of various ceremonial injunctions is practically made of much more consequence than the keeping of the law of morality. The effect of this upon the people is most manifest everywhere, in all non-Christian lands. I have known a man, while in the midst of lying to me about work which he had done for me, to refuse to touch a piece of old dry bone, on the plea that it was contrary to religion. In all the great world-religions except Christianity, the moral,

the immoral, and the morally indifferent are hopelessly confounded.

Most noteworthy, again, is the fact that whereas the ethics of the New Testament, while no doubt teaching a certain subordination of woman to man, yet ever regards woman as the equal of man, as an heir together with him of the grace of life; on the other hand, in all the other great world-religions, in one way or another, and more or less formally, woman is debased. Most commonly this is brought about through concubinage and polygamy, which, as already shown, have the formal sanction of the Quran; while also among the Hindoos of all schools, as among the followers of Confucius, polygamy is more or less formally recognized as lawful.

Even the modern reformed schools of Hindooism have not always been able to free themselves from this reproach. It is, moreover, to the special infamy of the *Ārya Samāj* of North India, that while in many ways this *Samāj* encourages the education and elevation of women, yet the *Āryas* earnestly uphold and justify the infamous Hindoo rite of *nīyoga*; which may best be described as an arrangement by which a childless husband, in order to secure offspring and so continue his family, ar-

ranges for the adultery of his wife through her temporary union with another man.

Buddhism would seem to deal better with woman, in some respects, than Mohammedanism and Hindooism. The cruel seclusion of women which in accordance with the Quran, is the rule in Mohammedan lands, and to so great extent in India—where Moslem violence and licentiousness made it necessary after the Mohammedan invasions—is unknown in Buddhist countries like Burmah and Siam, where in this respect women have all the liberty which is enjoyed by their sisters in Christian lands. Nevertheless, Buddhism does not exalt, but debases woman. Instead of elevating and glorifying the marriage relation, as does the gospel law, it declares in its authoritative Scriptures that “the house life is the seat of impurity”;<sup>1</sup> and teaches that “so long as the love of man toward women, even the smallest, is not destroyed, so long is his mind in bondage.”<sup>2</sup> He who would attain to any high degree of saintship is charged that he have nothing to do with any woman, not so much as to speak to one.<sup>3</sup> With the idea of woman which such injunctions imply, it is not strange that

<sup>1</sup> *Sutta Nipâta* ; *Pabbajja Sutta*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Dhammapada*. 284.

<sup>3</sup> See *Mahâparinibbana Sutta*, v. 23.

Buddhism, at its best, has never succeeded in elevating woman to her proper place. If it has not enjoined polygamy or polyandry, it has not succeeded in suppressing them; and the laxity of morals in Buddhist lands is notorious.

Most striking, again, is the contrast that appears between Christianity and other religions as regards the place which they severally give to man's duties to God. As already seen, in both Buddhism and Confucianism, these are ignored. In Hindooism, if not ignored, they are grievously misrepresented; as indeed it is easy to see that they must be, when we remember how grievously Hindooism errs in its representations of God. Mohammedanism no doubt very fully recognizes the fact that man has duties to God, but strangely fails to inculcate the chief duty: namely, to love the Lord our God with all the heart, which alone is the root and the bond of all moral perfections. But how indeed could a God such as is exhibited in the Quran, be loved? He might no doubt, be regarded with great awe; and may be very greatly dreaded; but never loved.

Again, the great religions of the world stand contrasted with Christianity in respect

to the highest motive which they severally place before man.

The chief motive which is brought before us in the ethics of the gospel is that of grateful love to a God who has not only made, and ever upholds us, but has given His only Son for our salvation. Other motives are doubtless recognized, but to this one supreme motive all others are made subordinate.

On the other hand, no other religion knows in its system of morality any motive higher than that of expediency. The morals of Confucius, which contain so much that is excellent, nevertheless never rise above the motive of the politic and expedient. If you live so and so, it will be better for you, and better for the State. Buddhism, knowing nothing of a God, obviously can know nothing of the love of God as a motive. Over and over, on the other hand, the Buddhist authorities represent the ultimate motive for all action or abstinence from any action as "the quieting of pain." If self-restraint in all things is extolled, it is because such a man is "freed at last" through the attainment of the unconscious *nirvāna*, "from all pain."<sup>1</sup>

Nor can better be said for Hindooism. Not

<sup>1</sup> *Dhammapada*, 361.

holiness, nor even happiness, but rather freedom from pain, is the great motive. This takes the form of desire for exemption from further transmigration. If a man is exhorted to live so and so, this is in order that he may thus bring to an end the wearisome succession of repeated births, and therewith the inevitable pain and suffering which birth insures.

Very touching is the expression of this longing, this dread of an earthly existence renewed, which is sometimes found in Indian literature. Thus in a song of South India one moans :

“ A weary and broken-down man,  
With grief I come to thy feet ;  
Subdued by the pain and the ban  
Of a sorrowful, infinite life.”

It is true that much is made of union with God as the chief object after which a man should strive. But when we learn the meaning of the words employed, it becomes evident that not a moral, but a physical, union is intended. The Hindoo devotee seeks that he may in such a sense become united with the infinite Brahma, that he shall have no existence as separate and distinct from him ; but lose at once self-consciousness and personality in Him, or rather, in that eternal, unconscious impersonal Essence, and so end pain forever.

It should hardly be necessary to add that in nothing do the best of the non-Christian religions stand more strikingly contrasted with Christianity, than in the fact that not one of these religions, either in modern or in ancient times, has ever shown any power to realize in the lives of its followers any high moral ideal; not even in so far as that ideal has been dimly perceived. It is no doubt true that for almost every precept of Christianity which concerns the duty of man to man, a parallel can be shown in the ethical teachings of other religions. Purity, truth, generosity, forgiveness of injuries, patience, benevolence,—all these are in all religions extolled greatly. Nor is it denied that here and there in the non-Christian world individuals appear in whose character there is much to admire, and who are often much better than the religions they profess. But it is a simple matter of historic fact that outside of Christianity the general failure of the accepted religion to realize these virtues, and lift society in general out of the mire of sin and impurity, is nothing less than appalling.

This may seem to some very harsh and uncharitable; but let us hear what is confessed by intelligent men among these same peoples. In a recent article on the late Mr. Gladstone

in the Urdu paper, *The Hindustani*, of Lucknow, the editor, who is not a Christian, writes as follows with regard to the moral condition of his countrymen :

“ We Indians are yet far from true progress. Englishmen rule over us because they are possessed of those high moral virtues of which we have not a vestige, nor are likely to acquire them for centuries yet. Leave alone political matters, is there among us a pious and highly moral man? Does he get justice done him? Are not people ready everywhere to put him into trouble? . . . It is impossible for our narrow minds to understand how a man can devote himself to the service of his nation. It is very essential that before we demand political rights and privileges from Englishmen (our rulers) we should endeavor to acquire those virtues which alone have made Englishmen great among the nations of the world.”

So writes this Indian gentleman of the moral condition of his countrymen, and such admissions are far from uncommon. Yet no one will claim that as compared with China, Africa, and other non-Christian lands, the moral condition of India is exceptionally bad. We do not forget that much gross sin is also practiced among peoples whom we call Christian. But



in estimating the significance of this, it must be kept in mind that according to the teaching of the New Testament, men are not born Christians, nor are they true Christians in virtue of education or baptism, but only through repentance and a new birth by the Holy Ghost. It is the undoubted fact that as a rule, where we meet with those who intelligently profess to have known the saving power of God's Holy Spirit, and to have experienced this transcendent change, we do see such a degree of deliverance from the power of sin as we look for in vain among the most devoted adherents of other religions.

When we take a broader view, and regard the state of society in Christian communities, in which true Christians and unbelievers are mingled together, even then what a great and marvelous contrast with the condition of things in lands in no sense Christian! Despite the existence in such communities of many great sins and crying evils, how different is the state of society and the atmosphere of public opinion in America or Great Britain, from that which exists in India, China, and other like countries, none assuredly can realize who have not lived in other than Christian lands. From Christian communities, slavery and polygamy

have disappeared. The horrible unnatural crimes of which the apostle Paul speaks in Rom. i., common enough in communities not Christian in profession, have so completely disappeared from Christian lands where an open and free Bible is found, that the most of those who read the terrible description of Roman society as given in that chapter, do not even understand what the apostle means. Where, in a word, is there a spot on the whole earth outside of Christian lands, where a decent man would of choice bring up his children?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RELATION OF THE WORLD-RELIGIONS TO CHRISTIANITY.

WHAT is the true relation of the non-Christian religions to the religion of Christ? Very commonly, and in our day more and more, it is maintained that the various religions of mankind, from fetichism up to Christianity, represent successive stages of progress in the natural evolution of religious thought. All alike are the product of the operation of the human mind upon the phenomena of the material and spiritual world; and thus represent a progressive approximation to the absolute truth, which many tell us has probably not even yet in Christianity been reached. Hence, to speak of the various ethnic religions in relation to Christianity as religions of nature contrasted with revealed religion, or as the "false" religions, in contrast with the "true," we are assured, is wholly unwarranted, unscientific, and erroneous.

For the discussion of the question thus raised

an entire book would be required, and we cannot pretend to enter into it in this place. Only, in general, as against the view above set forth, we place the indisputable facts of the history of religions. There is not the slightest evidence that, as a law of evolution, the general tendency of religious thought among men has been from lower to higher and more correct thinking and belief as to God and the relation of man and of the world to Him. On the contrary, there is no exception to the rule that from the earliest beginnings of authentic history to the present time, the history of each and every religion has been a history of decline and increasing obscuration of right conceptions of God, interrupted only at rare intervals by the appearing of one or another to recall to the minds of men, at least in some imperfect degree, almost forgotten truths.

It was so in Egypt, where the earliest expressions of religious thought are incomparably the purest and noblest.<sup>1</sup> It was so in India also. For whatever may be said as to the excellencies and defects of the ancient Vedic religion, it was assuredly much purer and nearer the truth in its conceptions of the

<sup>1</sup>See Renouf: Hibbert Lectures, on *The Origin and Growth of Religion, etc.*, pp. 91, 249.

“Heaven-Father” than the vulgar Hindooism of modern India.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese, again, unanimously testify to the same effect; that the religion of the earliest days of their nation was much purer than the religion of modern China.<sup>2</sup> No less certain again is it that modern Buddhism has fallen far below the original faith as proclaimed by Gautama Muni. The Buddha thought he saw no one anywhere whom he ought to worship;<sup>3</sup> but his followers of to-day are practically as truly idolaters as any people in the world.<sup>4</sup> Not to multiply illustrations, to represent the various religions of mankind as indicating successive stages of religious progress, and as showing a continuous advance in the apprehension of religious truth, is to confound movement with progress. Movement there has undoubtedly been, but the law of the movement has ever been backward and downward, and not forward and upward.<sup>5</sup> To maintain the contrary, one must ignore his-

<sup>1</sup> See the explicit admission of this by Professor Max Müller, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 559.

<sup>2</sup> See Professor Douglas on the worship of Shang Te, in *Confucianism and Taoism*, pp. 82, 83.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Pārājika* of the *Vinaya* Texts.

<sup>4</sup> For a full account of the process of this degradation from the original Buddhism, see Rhys Davids' *Buddhism*, chaps. vii., viii.

<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed account of the facts which justify these statements see the author's *Genesis and Growth of Religion*, London, Macmillan & Co., pp. 203-247; and especially the whole second volume of Ebrard's *Apologetik*, which contains an exhaustive presentation of the historical facts that justify the statements made in the text.

tory, and set at naught the testimony of human experience for bygone millenniums.

As Christians, we do well also to keep in mind that not only is the fashionable modern view as to the evolutionary religious progress of mankind, and the relation of the various ethnic religions to Christianity, contradicted by the facts of history, but also, no less certainly, is it in the most direct opposition to the teachings of those Scriptures which as Christians we profess to receive as the Word of God. In both the Old and the New Testaments, there is much about the religions which surrounded the writers of the various books; and never once do those writers, speaking "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," exhibit that broad "sympathy" with the ethnic religions which, we are now taught by many, it is the first duty of the intelligent Christian to cherish.

On the contrary, the rich resources of the Hebrew language in terms relating to the moral and spiritual life are taxed to the uttermost, by the writers of the Old Testament books, to express the severity of their condemnation, and the depth of their loathing and contempt, for the religions of Babylon, Assyria, Canaan, and Egypt. This is true both as re-

gards idolatry of the grosser form, and all nature worship as well, together with the false philosophy by which these were popularly justified. Very striking is the phrase so constantly recurring in the Books of Kings and Chronicles concerning the apostatizing kings of Judah and Israel: not merely, as in our authorized version, "he did evil in the sight of the Lord," but always in Hebrew with the definite article, "*the* evil"—R. v., "that which was evil", in other words—as often explained by themselves—the king in question was an idolater. Instead of looking with a kindly sympathy on the Assyrian bowing before some visible symbol of the Creator, his idol is stigmatized as "an abomination," a "stump." Or, again, the idol is contemptuously termed *àcen*, "a nothing," *ayim*, "a bugbear," or *elil*, with ridicule, as "a wee god, a godling"; and—with special reference, probably, to phallic images such as are common in India to-day—*niphletseth*, "a horror." Instead of recognizing in the worship of idols a reaching out of the soul after God, the Holy Scriptures represent idolatry as rebellion against Him. It is reckoned a sin of such enormity as to be properly classed with witchcraft, stubbornness, hatred, lying, and murder,

etc., etc.<sup>1</sup> Most frequently of all it is represented by the Old Testament writers as a veritable adultery of the soul, provoking God to a fiery heat of jealousy; a crime which therefore, like the type, is deserving of the most condign punishment. Never once in the whole Old Testament is the Assyrian, Egyptian, Phenician, or any other religion of the old world, represented as expressing an effort of man after communion with God, but, instead, as formal revolt against Him; not as marking an approach of the soul to God, but as a guilty departure from Him. When the prophet Isaiah saw the men of his time bowing down and worshiping carved pieces of wood as emblems of the invisible God, instead of expressing any sympathy with this kind of worship, as being well-intended, even though so imperfect in form, he poured upon such a man the most scathing ridicule and contempt; that he should actually bow down to a part of a stick of wood, from another part of which he had cooked his dinner!<sup>2</sup>

The apostle Paul, in a more formal manner than any other of the sacred writers, has set forth the genesis of the religions of the ancient

<sup>1</sup> See Gal. v. 20: 1 Cor. vi. 9, etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup> See Is. xliv. 10-17.



world as they existed around him.<sup>1</sup> He declares that they all had their origin, not in love to God, and the aspiration of the soul after Him, but in alienation from Him. He teaches that they had arisen because men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge"; that, instead of representing the progress of man in religion, they expressed progressive moral and spiritual degradation; that, instead of having their root in what was good in man, they grew out of man's aversion to God, and his ungrateful ignoring of Him. Instead of making excuses for the multitudes who were in his day bowing before idols, or worshiping various objects in nature, he expressly declared that the light of nature is so clear in its revelation of the being and character of God, that the votaries of these various idolatrous religions were without excuse for their error. It is in full keeping with all these representations of the Old and New Testaments, that the sacred Book closes with a declaration which associates all who in any religion worship and adore aught but the invisible Creator, with "liars, whoremongers, and murderers"; for it is written that, equally with such as these, the idolater shall be excluded forever

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 19-25.

from the Holy City, and have his portion, with such like men, "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."<sup>1</sup>

Nor is it merely the grosser forms of the ethnic religions which are thus condemned. No distinction is made as regards the fact of condemnation. One may adore as a symbol of Deity, a stone or a stick; another, more enlightened, may adore a deified hero; another still, may worship the sun; but all alike fall under the same unsparing condemnation. Nor has the apostle any gentler or more tolerant words for the philosophy which underlies these various religions. On the contrary, he asserts that as an attempt to attain to the knowledge of God, it had been a failure;<sup>2</sup> and that the supposed philosophic wisdom of the ancient Greeks, Romans, and others, was in God's sight mere "foolishness."<sup>3</sup> In a word, as regards all forms of the ethnic religions, the whole teaching of the Christian Scriptures stands in the most complete and unqualified opposition to the modern view, which, in a spurious charity, maintains that all religions alike present a means, more or less perfect, of attaining to communion with God, and in their history afford cheering evidence

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi. 8.<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 21.<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 19.

of the gradual religious progress of the human race.

But it will be said, and truly, that such representations as the above respecting religions characterized by idolatry, cannot hold good against the religion of Islam : which, it is supposed, we may therefore regard with a larger degree of charity and sympathy ; since Islam everywhere and always protests against all worship of any other than the one invisible God, in as emphatic terms as Christianity. But if Mohammedanism is happily strong in its utterances on this point, it is no less emphatic in its uncompromising denial of the holy incarnation of the Son of God, and of atonement as made through His sacrificial death. When this is remembered, it will be clear at once that Mohammedanism falls under no less unsparing condemnation, in the New Testament, than the other non-Christian religions. For not only are we told that “the Word” who “was in the beginning with God” who “was God,” “the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father” “became flesh,”<sup>1</sup> and also that “His [God’s] Son . . . was born of the seed of David according to the flesh ;”<sup>2</sup> that to deny, as do the followers of

<sup>1</sup> John i. 1, 14, 18 (R. V.).

<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 3 (R. V.).

Mohammed, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God in the sense for the affirmation of which He was declared by the high priest and the sanhedrin to be guilty of blasphemy and was condemned to death,<sup>1</sup> is to deny the Father also who sent Him ;<sup>2</sup> but we are further taught that “many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”<sup>3</sup>

These considerations have now prepared the way for an answer to the question whether or not it is correct, in the light of the facts which the comparative study of religions has brought before us, to distinguish other religions from the Christian religion as the false from the true. Only let the question be rightly apprehended. It is not, as sometimes assumed, whether other religions than the Christian recognize important moral and spiritual truths. About this there is no dispute. Indeed, except for this, they would not have had the power they have to attract the millions of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 63-65; Mark xiv. 61-64; Luke xxii. 66-71.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John ii. 22, 23. The Rev. Dr. Robson, of Aberdeen, for many years a missionary in India, has truly said,—as illustrating this connection of the denial of the Son with the denial of the Father: “It is of the essence of Christianity to affirm the Fatherhood of God. It is of the essence of Mohammedanism to deny the Fatherhood of God.” *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*; as quoted by Dods in *Mohammed, Buddah, and Christ*, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> 2 John 7 (R. V.); and 1 John iv. 1-3 (R. V.) where same is implied.

mankind. Moreover, it may be remarked in passing, that it is of great importance that all Christians, and missionaries especially, recognize and heartily acknowledge such truths as they may find more or less clearly admitted in the religions of those among whom they labor. Let us by all means acknowledge with thankfulness the fact that Islam insists on the unity and spirituality of God, as opposed to all polytheism and pantheism; and no less, on His absolute supremacy and sovereignty over all that is. Let us rejoice again, that in Hindooism we find so many intimations of that other profound truth, of which Islam seems never to have caught a glimpse, the immanence of God in the world. Let us even thank Buddhism for its continual insistence on the utter vanity and the unsatisfying nature of the world and all that is in it, and for its assertion of the equality of all men, as against the intolerable pretensions of caste.

Nor have we the least reason to fear, lest by such frank recognition of any truth to which any non-Christian religion may give witness, we detract aught from the Divine authority and unique supremacy of Christianity. If the teaching of the Holy Scriptures is to be received, it were even incredible that some frag-

ments of spiritual truth should not be found in all religions. For the teaching of the Word is explicit that all men alike have a moral nature, and that humanity began its history with a true, if imperfect, knowledge of God. We are told that the invisible things of God, from the time of the creation itself, have been clearly revealed, "being understood by the things that are made";<sup>1</sup> and that men who have not the revealed law of God, are yet "a law unto themselves": inasmuch as they show the operation of a "law written in their hearts," when their thoughts within them accuse or else excuse them for what they have done.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the same Scriptures teach no less clearly that the working of God's Holy Spirit is by no means confined to those who have the revealed Word, but that the eternal Word "lighteth every man."<sup>3</sup> And since the same Scriptures also teach that even before God separated Israel to be the special vehicle and channel of His supernatural revelation, His will for our salvation was made known to the children of men; therefore, in the light of all these facts, we need not be surprised that among religions other than the Christian we should find, as we do find, some

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 20.<sup>2</sup> Rom. ii. 14, 15.<sup>3</sup> John i. 9.

vestiges of God's ancient revelation and many most impressive suggestions of truths which are commonly regarded as belonging, not to natural, but to revealed religion.

Then we have further to remember that by the dispersion of the Jews after the Babylonian captivity, in the first instance, and after that, by the preaching of the apostles and their associates and immediate successors, the distinctive facts of the gospel were very widely spread abroad in the world of that time. That such truths, so extensively proclaimed, should have everywhere utterly perished from the memory of men, in those various lands where they labored, had been truly astonishing; and the evidence is all to the contrary.

As is well known, Mohammedanism accepts as infallible truth very much of the history and doctrine of the Old and New Testaments. Hindooism, with its teaching concerning Prajâpati, who sacrificed himself in behalf of the gods, recognized in its most ancient days, the doctrine of a Divine Atoner and atonement; and at this present time, in its doctrine of the avatârs, confesses to the fact that if the world is to be saved, an incarnation of the Deity is required. These two ideas have been strikingly combined in the Bhâgavad Gîta, where

Krishna, as an incarnation of the Deity, is represented as saying, in language which might be applied without modification to our Lord Jesus Christ: "I am the offering; I am the sacrifice; I am the burnt offering."<sup>1</sup> The poem is of later origin than the Christian era, and this teaching with regard to Krishna, like some of the incidents of his life as given in the Bhâgavad Purâna, may indicate faint recollections of Christian preaching by the apostle Thomas, or other early missionaries to India. But the fundamental idea thus expressed had found striking expression even in India before the incarnation of our Lord; as in one of the Brahmanas previously cited: "The Lord of creatures gave Himself for them,<sup>2</sup> for He became their sacrifice."<sup>3</sup>

Not to multiply illustrations, let it then be granted, once for all, that in all the great religions of mankind may be discovered more or less important fragments of Divine truth; and even of such truths as are distinctive of Christianity.

But it by no means follows from this that it is therefore wrong to speak of the various ethnic religions as "false," and of Christianity

<sup>1</sup>*Bhâgavad Gîta*, ix. 16.

<sup>2</sup>I. e., the gods; but these were originally mortal men.

<sup>3</sup>*Satapatha Brahmana*, xiv. 3. 2. 1.



alone as the "true" religion. For, in the first place, it is to be noted that even where a truth is recognized in any one of the non-Christian religions, it is very commonly exaggerated out of all proportion to other truths, or utterly erroneous inferences are drawn from it; or, again, the representation itself is distorted, like the image of the full-orbed sun upon a tossing sea. Thus, if Islam insists on the unity of God, as we have seen, it misapprehends this, as being a unity such as excludes the possibility of a threeness of personality in the one God. If, again, it makes much of His absolute power and sovereignty, it so caricatures this doctrine as to make it essential to believe that God is the author of evil, and even when it most loudly extols Him as "the Merciful and the Compassionate," quite loses sight of the depths of His pardoning grace and loving-kindness.

Hinduism, again, holding so firmly to the truth of an immanence of God in the world, has identified His relation to the soul with His relation to matter, has lost sight of His personality, and by making God the agent in all acting, makes Him to be the author of all sin. If Buddhism has rightly said much of the vanity and unsatisfying nature of all earthly things, in doing this, it has missed of the mo-

mentous truth that the evil which pertains to this earthly life, is not because existence—even bodily existence—is of necessity evil; but is because of man's sin, which has turned what God made "very good" into evil.

But not only are the truths which are recognized in the various religions thus either distorted, or separated from their proper place in the system of truth, but the *system* of religious teaching in which they are made to take some place, in each and every case, as a system, is diametrically opposed to Christianity. And this is the real question as to the truth or falsity of any religion as compared with Christianity. It is not whether in such religion many religious truths are recognized; it is whether the *system* of teaching represented in that religion, as a whole, is true or false. Now surely it is quite inconceivable that a religion, for example, which is based on the denial of the personality of God, and therewith also of man and of his responsibility to God, and a religion in which, as in Christianity, all this is affirmed, can both be true. It is impossible, again, that a religion which affirms an incarnation of the Deity in order to the salvation of men through a Divine atonement for sin, is affirmed as a historic fact and fundamental

truth, and a religious system like that of Islam, wherein the denial of the possibility of either incarnation or atonement for sin is made an element integral and essential, can both of them be true. It is, again, no less certain that, if in one religion, as in Buddhism, God is ignored or denied, and it is assumed as fundamental truth that existence, everywhere and always, is of necessity an evil, and the whole doctrine of salvation is based on this assumption; and if in another religion, as in Christianity, we have a system of teaching which assumes the existence of a personal God, the Creator of all, and teaches the original excellence of all things as made by Him; then it should be as clear as the noonday that these two religions cannot both be true.

Hence, being assured that as an organized and self-consistent system of related truths, Christianity is to be held a true religion, it is not through any lack of charity, but under the constraint of an imperious logical necessity, that we affirm that Islam, Hindooism, Buddhism, Confucianism, in a word, all religions whatsoever other than that of Christ, must be regarded as false. Howsoever they may all incidentally acknowledge many important truths, nevertheless, *as systems of religion,*

we must pronounce them false. Contradictions *cannot* both be true.

Finally, in the light of these facts, we are now prepared to consider the question so often debated in Christian circles, whether men can be saved by other religions than that of Christ. There are many who think that this is quite possible, if only a man live up to the injunctions of the religion which he professes; and there are many still who deny this. Let it be carefully observed, however, that this question is quite distinct from another with which it is often confounded; namely, whether men who are outwardly numbered in a body professing other than the Christian faith can possibly be saved. This may safely be said, to preclude any misconception, that it is perfectly certain that whenever and wherever a man truly repents of all his sin and turns unto God, he will be saved. Only the question may fairly be raised just here, whether a man can repent of sinning against God, who, like a Buddhist, is not assured of His existence; or who, like a Brahman, is unable to believe that God is a personal Being. However, the question immediately before us is not whether, as a matter of fact, individuals not professedly Christian have ever truly

turned from all sin unto God; but the very distinct question whether a man can be saved from sin here and hereafter *by means of a diligent observance of the prescriptions of some other religion than that of Jesus Christ.*

In answer to this question we remark first—what is very little understood—that religions other than the Christian do not even propose salvation from sin as the object to be attained. As has been already fully shown, the salvation proposed by the world-religions is, in every case, merely a salvation from those sufferings here or hereafter, which are caused by sin. Let it be remembered that, for instance, the Mohammedan idea of salvation, like that of too many nominal Christians, is merely salvation from hell-fire. The Hindoo idea of salvation is deliverance from the necessity of going through the eighty-four lakhs of transmigrations, and therewith, speedier deliverance from suffering by the final loss of self-conscious personality through absorption in the infinite Brahma. The Buddhist idea of salvation, in the highest sense apprehended by the Buddha, the *parinibbànà*, is to cease to be eternally, to reach that state wherein “That by which they say ‘He is,’ exists for him

no longer.”<sup>1</sup> Even though we should grant that any one religion is adapted to the attainment of salvation in the sense in which its votaries understand that term, surely it would not follow that they were therefore adapted to the attainment of a salvation *from sin*, when this is not even contemplated therein as the end of the religious life.

Again, to suppose that by obedience to the prescriptions of any religion other than the Christian, men may attain to acceptance with God, is to assume that God can be pleased and satisfied by actions and observances of diametrically opposite moral character; with human sacrifices, or with no sacrifice; with reliance upon His incarnate Son, or without it. Is this conceivable? If we accept Christianity as true, then we must admit that it teaches that the Divine verdict is that no man can possibly attain to salvation through efforts of his own, and that salvation therefore is of necessity through God’s free grace alone. But every other religion, without exception, in so far as it teaches anything on the subject, teaches with all possible emphasis that salvation, of whatsoever sort it be, is to be attained through something done or suffered by the

<sup>1</sup> *Sutta Nipàta: Pàràyanavagga*, vii. 8.

man himself. Can these contradictory teachings both be true?

Finally, as Christians, we are bound to admit that for all who honestly receive the New Testament as the Word of God, this question should be regarded as settled. Nothing could be more explicit than the words of the apostle with regard to Jesus Christ: "In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."<sup>1</sup>

This statement of the apostle, together with all the foregoing arguments, is also justified historically. For it must ever be borne in mind that salvation consists essentially, not so much in escaping the retributions of eternity, as in the production of a certain type of character, which is described by the term "holy," taken in the biblical sense of that word. Now there is no want of charity when we affirm that among the votaries of other religions we do not, as a matter of fact, find this special type of character. We doubtless find among them all, here and there, men who may be rightly described as brave, or generous, or benevolent, or moral, but for holiness we look in vain. When and where has Islam, for ex-

<sup>1</sup> Acts iv. 12. (R. V.)

ample, ever produced a Saint John? When has Hindooism ever shown the world an Isaiah; or Buddhism, a Saint Paul? And if the world-religions do not develop such a type of character here and now, what possible reason is there to believe that by devotion to them here, a man may at last secure complete deliverance from sin, and personal holiness of character in the life to come?

The practical consequence of the argument of this book is so evident that it needs only to be mentioned. If the differences between the various religions of the world and the religion of Jesus Christ are such as have been herein set forth, and if the teaching of Christianity be accepted as undoubted truth, then Christian missions to the followers of other religions become a duty so clear that it should be self-evident. If the words of the Tamil poet before quoted be true, and

“ Purification before the great God  
Is greater than life and is stronger than death ;  
Is the hope of the wise and the prize of the saint,”

and if, as both the history of our race and the Holy Scriptures clearly testify, all religions except that of Jesus Christ have utterly failed to secure for man this supreme blessing, then



manifestly it is the first duty of the Church to let all the world know, without any further delay, that what neither the Buddha, nor any of the deified heroes of Hindooism, nor Mohammed, nor Confucius, nor any other teacher of religion has ever proved able to do, has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord; who in very truth saves His people from their sins,<sup>1</sup> and whose gospel is shown by the history of almost nineteen hundred years to be of a truth "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. i. 21.

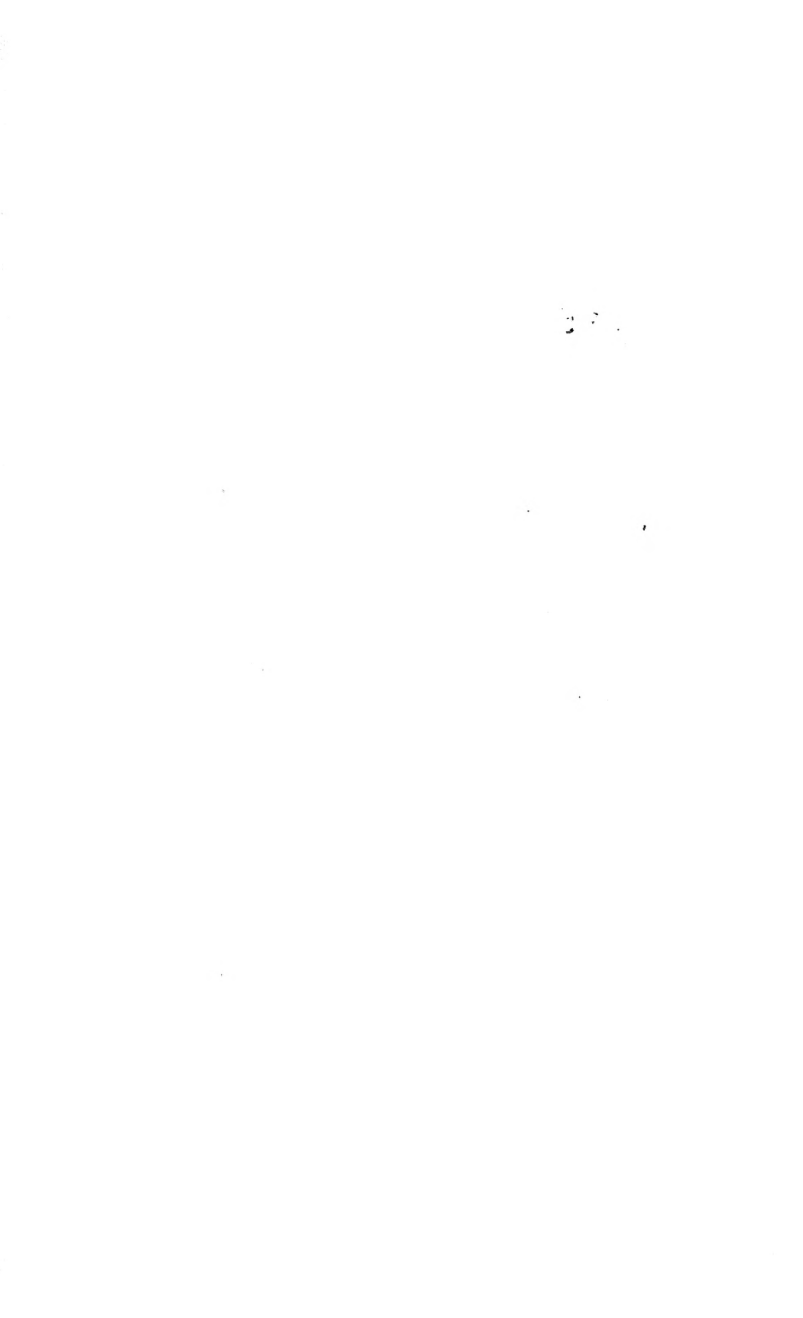
<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 24.

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