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THE SECRET OF THE EAST;

OR,

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS RISE
AND DECLINE.

BY
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TO

THE MEMORY OF

JORDANUS BRUNO,

THE HEROIC APOSTLE OF

NATURE, FREEDOM, AND TRUE RELIGION,

THIS WORK IS REVERENTLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE right of free inquiry is the first condition of progress, and dogmatists who dispute that right virtually impeach the evidence or the morality of their own dogmas. An exception from that rule may, under certain conditions, be admitted in favor of theological tenets. Unobtrusive mystics have a right to expound the unknowable after their own fashion. The priests of Isis and the adepts of the Eleusinian Mysteries had the privilege to veil the secrets of their sacred rites. The discreet Pythagoreans could not be obliged to explain the bean-law of their master or their reason for believing in his ghost-stories as firmly as in the evidence of his geometrical theorems. Even nocturnal devil-worshippers may be permitted to mumble about their altars, if they do not dress them at the expense of their neighbors.

But it alters the case, if such creeds become aggressive. The right of secrecy does not pertain to religions that have devastated our earth by a series of murderous wars, that have enforced their

anti-natural dogmas by destroying the prosperity of whole nations, and their ghost-dogmas by the torture and slaughter of millions; religions which, after the loss of their political power, have used all their moral influence to obstruct the progress of freedom and science, to arrogate the education of our children, and to interfere with the recreations of our holidays,—all under the pretext of promoting the propaganda of an infallible revelation. The votaries of such creeds cannot plead the privileges of the ancient mystics, for the right to investigate their claims has become a social and *religious* duty. Those who recognize that duty will approve the purpose of the present work.

FELIX L. OSWALD.

CINCINNATI, *September, 1883.*

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION, ... 9

I. THE GENESIS OF PESSIMISM, ... 15

II. BUDDHA AND HIS GALILEAN SUCCESSOR, . . . 23

III. THE ETHICS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, . . 33

IV. THE CONVERSION OF EUROPE, ... 52

V. THE NIGHT OF THE MIDDLE AGES, ... 65

VI. AN EXPENSIVE CREED, ... 78

VII. DAYBREAK, ... 93

VIII. THE PROTESTANT REVOLT, ... 104

IX. REGENESIS, ... 115

APPENDIX, ... 122

THE SECRET OF THE EAST;

OR,

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS RISE AND DECLINE.

INTRODUCTION.

"Who has unlocked the gates of the morning ?"—*Sadi.*

THE wisest man of all nations and times warns the seeker after truth against the influence of what he calls the "idols (or illusions) of the tribe";* that is, the traditional prejudices of his nation, family, or sect, or, in other words, against the bias of confounding hearsays with the results of our own investigations. To him who could divest himself of that bias, the history of civilization during the last twenty centuries would present itself in the succession of the following prominent phenomena: —

I.

The development of a great cosmopolitan empire. The military rigor of a belligerent commonwealth, gradually relaxing under the influence of prosperity and international commerce. Political absolutism, co-existent with an almost unlimited personal, social, and intellectual freedom. A flourishing state of husbandry. Industrial progress in

* *Novum Organon*, lib. i., cap. 3.

the direction of architectural and agricultural improvements. An optimistic religion, founded on a symbolic nature-worship, and supplemented, or partly supplanted, by three rival systems of naturalistic philosophy. Universal tolerance of all tolerant religions. An excellent system of physical education. Flourishing schools of philosophy, natural science, jurisprudence, rhetoric, and medicine. Liberal patronage of the fine arts. Unparalleled material prosperity, flourishing cities, active commerce, excellent roads. Love of health and recognition of its social importance, free aqueducts, free baths and gymnasia. The optimism of the popular religion manifested in the general worship of joy, cheerful festivals, inspiring athletic games and field sports, though in the larger cities the want of better diversions leading to the brutal excesses of the gladiatorial combats. Æsthetic culture evinced in the love of scenic and artistic beauty, poetry and music.

Summary: Nature-worship, agriculture, industrial and scientific progress, commercial activity. Wealth, luxury, and their concomitant vices, offset by a naturalistic philosophy, and the love of athletic sports, physical education and health-promoting institutions. Intellectual and æsthetic culture, tolerance, material prosperity, and the successful pursuit of earthly happiness.

II.

A general eclipse of common sense and science. A wide-spread epidemic of anti-naturalism, miracle-worship, and self-torture. Rapid decline of

industry. The neglect of rational agriculture turning thousands of fertile fields into deserts. Systematic suppression of political, personal, and intellectual liberty. Religious terrorism, culminating in man hunts and wholesale massacres. General ignorance, brutal abasement of the lower classes. Squalid misery of domestic life, general indifference to the beauties of nature and the blessings of health. A thousand years' interregnum of science, Faith usurping the throne of Reason, every branch of human knowledge withered by the poison of supernaturalism, literary activity limited to the production of homilies and miracle-legends, education devoted to the suppression of all natural instincts and the substitution of submissive belief for the love of truth and free inquiry. Decadence of the fine arts, natural science merged in a deluge of superstition.

Summary: Darkness, misery, and slavery.

III.

The dawn of a new day. Reason awakening from her long slumber. A spirit of free inquiry arraigning its votaries against the authority of tradition. Gradual emancipation of common sense. The success of a dogmatic insurrection followed by an unprecedented revival of intellectual activity, superstitions and abuses succumbing to the successive triumphs of science. Social reconstruction, the recognition of human rights, a general reform of juristic, administrative, and municipal institutions, education redeemed from the tyranny of anti-naturalism. Development of new

sciences, new arts, and new branches of literature. The increase of general prosperity furthered by the progress of natural science, industry, and rational agriculture, but retarded by the influence of mediæval reactions and lingering prejudices. Material advantages counteracted by hereditary vices, the purpose of free institutions partly defeated by traditional superstitions and hereditary moral cowardice.

Summary: Traditional prejudices obstructing the propaganda of a rationalistic reform, the after-effects of moral and physical poisons resisting the healing agencies of Nature. But, on the whole, progress in the direction of light, freedom, and happiness.

The most important problem in the history of civilization is now the question: Whence this great sunburst of knowledge? What magic has broken the spell of the dreadful night? How has the sunshine of our life been restored? Is it the dawn of a new day, or the end of an unnatural eclipse?

The most frequent answer to these inquiries is the theory which ascribes the blessings of modern civilization to the influence of the system of dogmas and traditions known as the *Christian Religion.* The doctrine of the New Testament, we are told, is the leaven of the moral universe, the reforming agency that has redeemed the world from vice and barbarism. Only Christian nations have entered the path of progress. Virtue, humanity, and true peace can prosper only in the shadow of the cross. In the night of the Middle Ages, the Bible was our beacon; and, as the cloud-

pillar of a heavenly guide, it will lead our further progress.

But, in examining the claims of these theorists, the impartial inquirer cannot overlook the following objections: 1. That the rise of the Christian faith coincides with the sunset of the great South-European civilization; 2. That the zenith of its power coincides with the midnight of mediæval barbarism; 3. That the decline of its influence coincides with the sunrise of a North-European civilization; 4. That all the principal victories of Freedom and Science have been achieved in spite of the Church, in spite of her utmost efforts to thwart or diminish their triumph, that only in consequence of the futility of these efforts the heresies of one age have become the truisms of the next, so that Christianity has always marched in the rear of civilization; 5. That the exponents of the Christian dogmas persist in their hostility to the progress of a reform which they recognize only by condescending to share the fruits of its former victories; 6. That the worst enemies of political and intellectual liberty were firm believers in the dogmas of the New Testament, while the direct or indirect repudiation of those dogmas has been the fundamental tenet of nearly every great thinker, scholar, or statesman, till the degree of *Protestantism* has become the chief test of intellectual sanity; 7. That, among the contemporary nations of the Christian world, the most sceptical are the most civilized, while the most orthodox are the most backward in freedom, industry, and general intelligence.

But, on the other hand, if the creed of the Middle Ages was a pernicious superstition, how could its exponents succeed in fastening their yoke upon so many noble and manly nations? How were they able to suppress the healthier instincts of the human race, and perpetuate their power for nearly sixteen centuries? By what baneful magic could the worst enemies of human happiness maintain themselves upon the throne of religion and morality?

The solution of the enigma has long been a half-open secret, and, but for the clouds in the east, should long have ceased to be a secret at all. One by one, the covering veils have since been lifted, till even the blind could have recognized the palpable facts; but though palpable, and often glaringly visible, they have never yet become audible. Their discoverers have been silenced with fire and poison, with threats and bribes. Their promulgation has been deprecated in the name of piety, in the name of prudence, in the name of social welfare, in the name of morality; nay, in the name of heaven and in the name of heaven's God. In the course of the last eighteen hundred years, that God has been appealed to under many strange pretexts. Let us for once invoke his aid in the name of Truth.

CHAPTER I.

THE GENESIS OF PESSIMISM.

"Woe to the Sphinx, if we can solve her riddle."—*J. P. Richter.*

About twenty-four hundred years ago, a religious Hindu retired to the hills of Barabar, near Gaya, to meditate upon the problem of life and the origin of evil. The Ceylon Buddhists date the advent of their religion from 534 B.C., but geographical traditions are generally more reliable than chronological records; and between Behar and Patna, on the Upper Ganges, the traveller of the future may linger in the valley of the Bar Mohânan to visit the fountain of the great Marah, the well of bitterness that has poisoned the life-springs of so many hundred nations, and still mixes its gall with the sources of our moral food.

Near Buddha-Gaya, in the solitude of the Barabar hill-forests, the mind of the brooding Hindu evolved a system which has the theoretical advantage of consistency. He proposed to solve the problem of existence on the nihilistic plan, and avoid the disappointments of life by renouncing its hopes. The hope of earthly happiness, according to the theory of Buddha Sakyamuni, is a chimera, a phantom that lures us from error to error through endless toils, and robs even the grave of its peace; for he who dies uncured of his

delusion must return to earth, and continue the hopeless chase in another life. Quietism—*i.e.*, annihilation of desire—is the only hope of emancipation; and that goal of peace can be reached only by total abstinence from earthly pleasures. All worldly blessings are curses in disguise, and he alone who has lifted the veil of that disguise has entered the path of salvation. To him, self-denial becomes the highest wisdom, and self-abhorrence the supreme virtue. He must court sorrow and disappointment as others woo the smiles of fortune, he must avoid everything that could reconcile him to life and lure him back to the delusions of worldly pursuits. Life is a disease, and death the only cure. The highest goal of the future is Nirvana, peace and absolute deliverance from the vexations of earthly desires. All human knowledge is vain, the great object of life being the suppression of our natural instincts. Self-affliction is the only rational pursuit. The love of wealth is folly: the slaves of covetousness forge fetters for their own feet. True believers should seek temporal peace by curtailing their wants and cultivating the virtue of indifference to the vicissitudes of fortune. He who strives after higher merit must renounce all earthly possessions, live on alms, dress in rags, shave his head, and abstain from marriage, merry-makings, and the use of animal food. He must have no fixed habitation, and must even avoid to sleep twice under the same tree, lest an undue affection for any earthly object should hinder his spirit in the progress of its emancipation from the vanities of life!

According to the Indian tradition, Mahar, the prince of the earth-spirits, exhausted all his resources to prevent the promulgation of the new dogma. But, unfortunately for the happiness of the human race, the efforts of Mahar proved unavailing. Buddha Sakyamuni preached his gospel with the zeal of a divine messenger. His apostles infested all Northern and Eastern Hindostan. Fifty years after his death, the doctrine of anti-naturalism had superseded the native religions of Cashmere, Cabul, Candahar, Bactria, and Burmah; and, five hundred years later, a modified form of the Buddha gospel was preached on the shores of the Mediterranean, and the mania of pessimism spread westward and northward with all the symptoms attending the dissemination of an unnatural vice. Vices are perverted instincts, and by fastening upon the basis of a natural propensity usurp its functions and its resources. Hence their persistency. The propaganda of Buddhism owed its first success to the enthusiasm of its apostle; but what is the secret of its further progress? What innate bias of the human mind has furnished the basis of its development,—in the cultus of the eastern nations, as well as in the mind of its founder?

Gnosticism, Essenism, Sufism, and the doctrines of the New Testament, with all the various subdivisions of its votaries, are so many excrescences of the Buddhistic parent-tree; and an exegetical reference to their complex mysticism would be an explanation *per obscurius*. But like other dogmas, and nearly all the myths of the Aryan races, Buddh-

ism has a germ in the great pantheon of Brahmanism. In the *Sanskara*, or book of sacraments, the law of Menu lays down a special code of religious ordinances for every period of life, and assigns to extreme old age the duty of certain ascetic practices, which were supposed to harmonize with the *natural quietism* attending the subsidence of the passions and vital energies.

"When a man perceives his body flagging," says the *Sanskara*, "when he sees his hair becoming gray, when he has seen the son of his son, let him leave his home and retire into the solitude of the forest. He is to live on herbs, roots, and fruits, not to cut his hair or nails, and busy himself only with the Vedas and the contemplation of Brahm, in order to approach perfection in piety and science"; *i.e.*, he is to renounce worldly occupations and retire to the solitude of the woods, as Felix Sylla retired to his Apulian farm-house, and way-worn Firdusi to the hermitage of Thuss. "Peace returns," says Dr. Zimmermann, "at an age when solitude is enough to make a hermitage pleasant." Under the influence of sorrow and infirmity, old men become instinctive pessimists. Nature practises her delusions for wise purposes of her own. She baits her matrimonial traps with visions of Elysium, and reconciles her children to the gathering shadows of the long night by exaggerating the disappointments of the day and the recollection of its fatigues. And, even at the end of a pleasant evening, rest becomes sweet enough to be desired for its own sake.

But this quietude of the sunset hour Buddha

Sakyamuni attempts to enforce in the morning of life, his disciples are to seek refuge in sleep before their day's work is done, he gathers dry leaves to bury the budding flower. Like the genius of death, he depreciates life by dwelling upon the vanity of its hopes; and the secret of his success is to be found in the circumstance that in every human breast there is a germ of this feeling which may be stimulated into premature activity. Pessimism is precocious senility. It is a reversion of the vital instincts. Even in the prime of life, the systematic suppression of all our natural desires will lead to that weariness of earth which nature had intended to deaden the sorrow of the parting hour, as we may force a plant to return as dust to dust by depriving it of its flowers and green leaves. Young pessimists resemble the fruits that rot before they ripen. Monastic tendencies imply an abnormal condition of the human mind. Only a defeated warrior, a man without hope and without courage, can find solace in contemplating the approach of a premature night.

Buddhism and its daughter-creed can flourish only in a sickly soil. Christianity developed its first germs in the carcass of the decaying Roman Empire, and still retains its firmest hold upon the degenerate nations of Southern Europe; while the manlier races of the North resisted its propaganda to the last, and were the first to free themselves from its despotism,—just as Buddhism has been expelled from the homes of the Aryan races and relegated to the moral pest-house of the South Mongol empires, for in Japan its influence is con-

fined to the observance of a few traditional ceremonies. Disease, crushing misfortune, mental derangement, whatever disqualifies a man for the healthy business of life, qualifies him for the reception of anti-natural dogmas. Marasmus and pessimism are as concomitant as optimism and health. Crippled foxes decry the vintage. Caged murderers, like gouty libertines, generally become devout. Nearly every scaffold orator edifies his audience by the enunciation of orthodox sentiments. Superannuated coquettes revenge themselves by denouncing the illusions of a world that neglects them. Unmasked hypocrites console themselves with the hope of a better hereafter. When the gods of war rejected his appeal, Charles IV. of Spain solaced his spirit by embroidering a petticoat for the Holy Virgin. The apostles of pessimism were mostly men who had reason to revenge themselves upon nature. Rancé, the founder of the New Trappists, became devout in consequence of a domestic tragedy, Ignatius Loyola after the siege of Pampeluna where he was crippled and disfigured, Raimund Lullius' quietism dated from the infidelity of his bride, and Count Stolberg's from the death of his wife. Swift, Schopenhauer, and Hannah More were martyrs to chronic headache, Dante was an exile, and Calvin a dyspeptic.

Tradition says that Buddha Sakyamuni entered upon his mission only after he had exhausted the pleasures of wealth and luxury. The debilitating effects of superannuation may thus be anticipated; and, if the vital energies have been spent to the

dregs, night and rest become the *summum bonum*. Lethe is a refuge from the weariness of surfeit as well as from the infirmities of old age; and, under the influence of that weariness, Sakyamuni perhaps recognized its remedy, and mistook it for a panacea.

"He interdicts the sweetmeats that have become indigestible to his stomach," as Voss explained the pessimism of his friend Stolberg. The gratification of our natural instincts is, indeed, a sin against the cardinal tenet of a creed which identifies nature with the origin of evil. Hence, that *worship of sorrow*, which is the distinctive dogma of the two anti-natural religions, and which has so perverted their ethics that they refuse to recognize the merit of any virtue which they cannot exaggerate or misconstrue into a duty of self-affliction.

Pessimism is essentially the creed of decrepitude. Moribund impotence pleases itself in the idea that her lot is preferable to that of the survivors, and from that idea there is but a step to the blasphemous thought that life itself is a delusion, and earth a "vale of tears," a land of sorrow and disappointments. A eupeptic boy with a sincere predilection for such dogmas would be a monster *per defectum*, a being devoid of the instincts of content and gratitude. Hence, we find that, in spite of all street missions, the name of the Young Men's Christian Association is a misnomer, its conventicles being attended chiefly by old women of both sexes. Hence, also the frequency of "sick-bed conversions,"—

"The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be."

The evils caused by our sins against the health laws of nature our ignorance, indolence, and arrogance prefer to ascribe to an inherent defect of her constitution. We find it easier to pine for the gardens of the New Jerusalem than to replant the trees of our wasted earthly paradise.

Pessimism and anti-naturalism are inseparable correlatives. Buddha saw that the healthiest and noblest instincts of the human mind were opposed to his system, and met the difficulty by the total depravity dogma. In order to justify the conclusions of his diseased imagination, he had to deny the competence of mental health, and did not hesitate to denounce our natural instincts as the sources of original sin. A declaration of war against nature was the logical outcome of his system.

Every religion reflects the moral character of its birthplace: Odin-worship, the martial barbarism of the old Northland; Judaism, the loyal faith and the stern morality of the Hebrew shepherds; Islam, the chivalrous enthusiasm of the free Arab; Stoicism and Epicurism (which had supplanted the ethical functions of an obsolete mythological system), the manliness and the optimistic common sense of the ancient Greeks. Of all the countries of the earth, ancient India was the most cursed with the evils of despotism, with abject and hopeless social degradation, with fantastic superstitions, combined with a neglect of all the sciences that could have enabled an inquirer to ascertain the true cause of human sufferings and their proper remedies. India, the seed-plot of the most contagious diseases and the home of the opium-habit, was the birthland of Pessimism.

CHAPTER II.

BUDDHA AND HIS GALILEAN SUCCESSOR.

"Ex Oriente Lux."

In the morning hour of reawakening reason, when men tried to explain religious traditions without questioning the infallibility of their truth, it must have sorely puzzled many an honest inquirer to reconcile certain dogmas of the Church with the daily evidence of his senses; for instance, the innate purity and candor of young children with the doctrine of natural depravity, or the mental and moral degeneration of the most orthodox communities with the dogma of regeneration by faith.

But, wherever indoctrination had not yet utterly deadened the instinct of truth, the most perplexing of all tenets must have been the theory which considers the two books of the Christian Bible as consistent and mutually confirmatory parts of a harmonious revelation. Unreasoning faith may have repeated the conventional formulas of that dogma, but only wilful blindness could ever defend it upon the internal evidence of the facts. Jean Bodin, a French mystic of the sixteenth century, wrote a book in which he bemoans the growing scepticism of the age, and, after demonstrating the reality of witchcraft by a long list of prodigies and ghost-stories, gives his reasons for enforcing

the penal code against heretics, with full instructions for their discovery and torture. If that book had been published as an appendix to the philosophical works of Lucius Seneca, and under the name of the great pagan moralist, the absurdity of the mistake could not have been more glaring than that of the orthodox Bible theory.

As a continuation—a second part, as it were—of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament would be utterly inexplicable. Perhaps no other two books ever published are more dissimilar in their tendencies. Here, the chronicle of a brave and simple-minded nation of shepherds and husbandmen and the code of their manful law-giver, an honest system of morals, rustic and somewhat austere, but with a realistic basis and a practical purpose; there, a compilation of contradictory miracle-legends and anti-natural dogmas. Here, an honest silence on the unknowable mysteries of a future existence, a consistent avoidance of the immortality tenet; there, a constant *petitio principii* of that dogma: here, a stern inculcation; there, a constant violation of the first commandment: here, health-laws, Samson traditions, and pastoral poetry; there, indifference to health, to manly strength, and the gifts of our mother earth. Here, nature, agnostic candor, optimism and realism; there, supernatural and anti-natural dogmas, mysticism, sophistry, and gnostic phantoms. The ethical characteristics of the two books would be a sufficient proof against the alleged origin of the New Testament, but there is an equally strong presumption that the so-called historical elements of

that work are almost wholly fabulous. The committee of the church-council that made the "four Gospels" the canons of their faith had to select them from fifty-four contradictory versions. The evangelists themselves contradict each other on many essential points; and their chronicles can hardly have been written before the end of the second century, as not one of the earlier fathers (before Irenæus) ever quotes a single passage of their text, while they relate many events which seem to have been recorded in the apocrypha. These apocrypha, like the arbitrarily excepted works, originated in a century so prolific of spurious prophecies, forged epistles and biographies, that it has justly been called the age of pious frauds. The four Gospels, as well as the larger part of the Pauline Epistles, were repudiated by the Socinians, and others of the more intelligent sects of the early Christians. It is equally certain that the stupendous events supposed to have attended the appearance of the new prophet are not recorded by any contemporary pagan author, and that the short passage in the seventh chapter of Josephus is a clumsy forgery. Josephus, who describes the reign of Herod in its minutest details, never mentions the miracles of Bethlehem, the appearance of a new star, the massacre of the innocents, or the prodigies of the crucifixion.

Besides, the rhetoric of the New Testament is throughout *illustrative* rather than *persuasive:* it is the eloquence which distinguishes the communication of transmitted from the introduction of original ideas. And, as Feuerbach well observes, the

testator's strange neglect to insure the record of his revelation by committing it to writing is a strong presumption that he delivered his gospel as a pre-recorded doctrine.

But all such discoveries led only to negative results, and increased the obscurity of the main question, when the study of the Oriental classics, that had shed a flood of light upon the etymology of the West-Aryan languages, began to elucidate the mysteries of Biblical exegesis. Dark words were traced to their origin, occult passages assumed a meaning, perplexing contradictions became suggestive analogies. Buddhism not only explained the doctrines of the New Testament, but harmonized them by revealing the root-dogma which forms the connecting link of their logical correlation. The doctrine of Pessimism is the master-key to the ethical enigmas of the Christian creed. If the blessings of earth are curses in disguise, it behooves the wise to renounce his material possessions, and despise the precautions by which the worldly-minded seek to protect themselves against want and misfortune. If our natural instincts are wholly evil, it would be meritorious to love our enemies and hate our father, mother, sister, brother, and children, "yea, and our own life." If God has created a world the sorrows of which so far exceed its blessings, it would be perfectly consistent to expect in a future life a similar proportion of good to evil: Heaven for the elect — ten or twelve out of ten thousand; for the rest, an eternity of frightful tortures. If the pursuit of earthly happiness is a chimera, the

children of light should prove their freedom from that delusion by the mortification of their desires and natural impulses: fasting, passive submission to injustice, sackcloth and ashes, and celibacy.*

The *anti-cosmic tendency* of the Christian doctrine distinguishes it from all religions except Buddhism. In the language of the New Testament, the "world" is everywhere a synonyme of evil and sin; the flesh, everywhere the enemy of the spirit. And, when the first Christian missionaries reached the sacred cities of Thibet, they were astounded to recognize in the sacraments and ceremonies of Buddhism all the essential features of their own cultus. The *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Vol. II., p. 491) mentions the "celibacy of the Buddhist clergy, and the monastic life of the societies of both sexes, to which might be added their strings of beads, their manner of chanting prayers, their incense and their candles. Confession of sins is regularly practised."

Father Huc, in his *Recollections of a Journey in Tartary, Thibet, and China* (Hazlitt's translation), says, "The cross, the mitre, the dalmatica, the cope,—which the Grand Lama wears on his journeys, or if he is performing some ceremony out of the temple,—the service with double choirs, the psalmody, the exorcisms, the censer suspended

*Matt. xix., 12, etc. Referring to this passage, Strauss, in his *Life of Jesus* (Vol. I., p. 618 of the first edition), says, "In order to defend Christ against the charge of unpractical principles, the Christian apologists have made haste to smuggle in the idea (*den Gedanken einzuschwärzen*) that Jesus recommended celibacy only to his disciples, and in anticipation of the peculiar difficulties of their apostolic mission; but the truth is that in this as in other passages the spirit of asceticism reveals itself too plainly to be mistaken."

from five chains, and which you can open or close at pleasure; the benediction given by the Lamas by extending the right hand over the heads of the faithful, the chaplet, ecclesiastical celibacy, religious retirement, the worship of the saints, the fasts, the processions, the litanies, the holy water, —all these are analogies between the Buddhists and ourselves."

The analytical methods of comparative mythology have since been applied to the study of the Buddhistic scriptures and the writings of the early Gnostics; and, considering the results of that comparison, it can no longer be doubted that Schopenhauer's conjecture* will soon become an established fact; namely, that *the Prophet of Nazareth was a Buddhistic emissary, and preached his gospel in the name of Buddha Sakyamuni.* Myths have a curious metamorphic tendency. In a large number of indubitable instances, the sayings, doings, and adventures of legendary heroes (or myth-shrouded historical personages) have been attributed to representative men of a later period: the exploits of a Persian archer, first to a Danish soldier, and afterward to a Swiss patriot; the dicta of Zoroaster, to several of his followers; the attributes of the old Wood-god, Woden, to Barbarossa, the entranced cave-dweller of the Kyfhäuser; the adventures of the Indian Dawn-Spirits, to the heroes of Troy.

By a similar metastasis of myths, the traditions of the old Hindu Krishna legend were transferred,

*"I cannot get rid of the idea that the Christian creed will yet be traced to a Buddhistic source."—*Die Welt als Wille,* Vol. II., p. 716.

first to the founder of Buddhism, and afterward to the person of his western apostle. Krishna, like Buddha, was a parthenogenitus, a virgin-son. Krishna was crucified; and the sculptured Pantheon of Brahmanism includes the image of a virgin, called the "Queen of Heaven," holding an infant and cross in her arms. Krishna, like Buddha, astonished his teachers by his precocious wisdom. Both were born with a fully developed power of speech. According to the "Gospel of the Infancy" (attributed to St. Thomas), *Maria* holds a conversation with her new-born son, who informs her of his origin and his divine mission. The name of her Buddhistic prototype was *Maja*. Both Krishna and Buddha were of royal descent. A chorus of celestial singers celebrated the moment of their birth. The ruler of Krishna's birthland is frightened by a prophecy, and resolves the death of the infant. The boy's parents save his life by a timely flight, and conceal him for several years. The baffled despot commands the massacre of all male children of his kingdom. The "Gospel of the Infancy" relates the miraculous achievements of the Christ-child, his combats with serpents and dragons, the fate of persons who insult him and are stricken dead, a council of young boys who choose him as their king. The boy Krishna, according to the Bhagavat Purana, subdues a fiery serpent, strikes dead persons who insulted him, and in his plays with other boys is chosen as their king. Krishna, like Buddha, had twelve favorite disciples who accompanied him on his missionary travels. Krishna, like Buddha, is tempted in the wilder-

ness by the devil, rejects all proposals, and rejoices with a host of ministering angels.

In the constellation of the Pleiades, six larger and forty or fifty smaller stars are crowded together within a space that could be enclosed by the apparent circumference of the moon. Either these stars form a correlative system, or their aggregation in the field of our vision, as well as the nearly uniform size of the larger ones, must be ascribed to the strangest kind of coincidence; and the astronomer Olbers calculates that the probability of the former hypothesis exceeds that of the latter about twenty-five million times. With a similar degree of assurance, the student of the Hindu scriptures must reject the belief in the *accidental* analogies of the above-named traditions; and an equally untenable theory is the conjecture of the Jesuit missionaries, that the Buddhists derived their legends from the Christian sect of the Nestorian heretics. We might as well be asked to believe that Homer borrowed his epic from the Iliad of Alexander Pope.

Together with the unmistakable* doctrine of Buddha Sakyamuni, the prophet of Galilee prob-

*Even in the modified form of the canonized Gospels. But, besides, there is no doubt that the Church eliminated a large number of *unpractical* dogmas. Nine-tenths of the early "heretics" were too literal Buddhists to suit the purpose of the shrewd and compromising hierarchs. The Encratites abstained from wine, animal food, and marriage. The Marcionites denounced all "worldliness,"—the pursuit of wealth, office-holding, fine houses, and clothes, etc. The Montanists tried to purify their souls by fasting and long vigils, and often took a "vow of solitude," like the Cingalese Buddhists, and retired for years to the lonely highlands of the Phrygian Mountains. The Valentinians practised communism, and subjected their novices to all sorts of ascetic ordeals. The Cassianites professed doctrines which resembled those of the modern "Shakers."

ably disseminated the current tradition about the miracles and adventures of his master; and, when in the oral traditions of the next century the records of Buddha and Christ had coalesced, the East Indian legend was transferred to the soil of Palestine, while the myth-making faculty of the monastic historians supplied the details of the local coloring.

The history of Krishna fades in the cloudland of primeval traditions, and seems to be largely blended with astronomical myths. The historical existence of Buddha Sakyamuni, on the other hand, can hardly be doubted, nor that of his glowingly eloquent West-Asiatic apostle. The records of the earlier Gospels are too fragmentary and contradictory to reconstruct a trustworthy biography of the Galilean Buddhist, but his system of ethics proves that it was the main object of his mission to graft the doctrine of Buddha upon the optimistic theism of the Hebrew law-giver. Hence, the dogmatical contradictions of the Old and New Testaments; the prominence assigned to the (ante-Mosaic) paradise legend,* the penitential psalms, and

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In refuting these heretics, it is curious to notice how Clemens Alexandrinus uniformly appeals to the Old Testament, and quietly ignores the precepts of the ascetic appendix. The third book of the *Stromata* is a perfect *reductio ad absurdum* of Christian pessimism, which, nevertheless, gained ground wherever the belief in the new revelation was sincere enough to turn theory into practice.

*"The essence of the Christian religion is the centre dogma of Buddhism,—the doctrine of the worthlessness of terrestrial life. With this difference only, that Christianity dates that worthlessness from the transgression of our apple-eating forefathers. This modification implied the fiction of a *liberi arbitrii indifferentiae;* but it was required by the necessity of grafting the doctrine of Buddha upon the mythological dogmas of Judaism. The myth of the Fall offered here the only basis for the insertion of the scion from the East Indian parent-tree."—Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille*, Vol. II., p. 694.

all passages that could be made to assume a pessimistic significance; the open rejection of the Mosaic health-code (as absolutely irreconcilable with the gospel of anti-naturalism), the sophistry of the Patristic writings, and the forced interpretations of the Hebrew prophecies. Hence, also, the old but ever new controversy of the Pelagians and Gnostics, the former leaning toward the rational, manly, and realistic part, the other toward the mystical, pessimistic, and puling part of our heterogeneous Scriptures.

Like the votaries of Zoroaster, the Hebrew Unitarians preserved the purity of their religion; but the seed of the East Indian upas-tree did not perish. In the superstition-loaded atmosphere of Egypt and the effete vice-centres of Asia Minor, it found a more congenial climate, where it flourished, and finally betrayed its origin by bearing fruits after its kind, though its roots are still encrusted with the soil of the land that rejected it.

NOTE.—*Vide* Appendix, *Indian Sources of the New Testament* and *Concordance of Christianity and Buddhism.*

CHAPTER III.

THE ETHICS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

"Untruth should be exposed, whether its teachers come in the name of God or of the devil."—*Ulrich Hutten.*

In the code of ethical principles which the world uses to judge the merits of a social reformer, it has long been recognized as a truism that "the end does not justify the means." But we are apt to overlook the equally cogent maxim that the means do not justify the end. The unkempt republican, who with fire and sword preaches the earth-redeeming gospel of liberty and equality, is denounced as an enemy of the human race; while the bland, well-combed, and unctuous Jesuit is revered as a saint, though he labors to perpetuate a superstition that has turned the better half of this earth into a desert, and arrested the progress of the human race for fourteen hundred years. Our short-sightedness prevents us from tracing the connection of cause and effect in the fury of the purifying storm and the soft summer winds of the malarious fens. We shudder at the rage of the gale, and admire the beauty of the poisonous swamp-flower.

To the nations of the Caucasian race, the genius of salvation did twice appear in a storm-cloud, the lures of the tempter came in a small, still voice. The sound of that voice was first heard on the banks

of the Ganges, and filled the lands of the East till its echo seduced the poor fishermen on the banks of the Jordan. The keystone dogma of the Christian ethics is the *anti-physical* principle of Buddhism: whatever is natural is wrong. The mission of the Galilean ascetic, like the gospel of Buddha Sakya-muni, was a declaration of war against nature. According to the doctrine of Pessimism, our natural instincts are our natural enemies; life is a disease, and death its only cure; the pursuit of earthly happiness is a chimera, and enjoyment in all its forms only serves to strengthen the fatal delusion; emancipation from the bondage of life is the *summum bonum*, and can be attained only by mortifying our natural desires.

The instinctive love of joy is wrong: the path of self-affliction is the road to salvation. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily." "Blessed are they that mourn." "Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." "Woe unto you that laugh, for you shall mourn and weep."

Our natural affections should be suppressed. "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

The love of health is wrong: the body is the enemy of the spirit, and does not deserve our care. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." "Bodily exercise profiteth

but little." "There is nothing from without a man that, entering him, can defile him."

The pursuit of natural science is wrong; doubt and free inquiry are sinful; submissive faith is the gate to heaven. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." "If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." "He that believeth on me is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he does not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God." "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

The trust in secular remedies is wrong: diseases can be cured by faith. "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee." "If any man is sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." "And, when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."

The natural instinct of resistance to injustice

is wrong. "Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also. . . . If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask him not again."

The spirit-fancies of the nature-loving nations are wrong. The wilderness swarms, not with harmless fairies, but with malevolent demons. "And the unclean spirit goeth, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself." "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. . . . And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them." "And the devil took him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple." "They brought unto him many that were possessed with devils."

The belief in the peace of the grave is erroneous. For the great plurality of the human race, the end of life is the beginning of endless and horrible tortures. "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; and strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "They shall be cast into the furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." "They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the

Lamb." "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night."

The love of industry is wrong. A true believer shall not seek to supply his wants by earthly means, but rely on prayer and supernatural aid: "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." "Take no thought of the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." "Ask, and it shall be given you." "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

These dogmas were propagated with the zeal and with the disinterestedness of the purest moral enthusiasm; and yet there is no doubt that they have caused the human race more woe than all wars, all plagues, all famines, all poisons, and contagious diseases, and the rage of all the hostile elements of nature taken together: for it can be demonstrated with the utmost certainty of historical evidence that the darkness of the Middle Ages, and the horrors and the misery of that terrible night, were the direct consequences of the faith which attempted to practise the precepts of the New Testament, and that the repressed instincts of our better nature burst their dam when the faith of the Middle Ages dissolved into scepticism and the conventional assent that stops short of practice.

The worship-of-sorrow dogma led to the self torturing insanities of mediæval monachism. If physical pleasures are sinful and our physical instincts an impediment to our spiritual welfare, the seekers after salvation naturally concluded that the body must be treated like a wild beast, caged in monasteries and hermitages, and subdued by fasting, vigils, and all kinds of self-afflictions.* Hence, Anchorites, Flagellants, Celibates, Trappists, Puritans, Sabbatarians, and Shakers.

True friendship was unknown while the denunciator of natural affection passed for a divine revelator. "He that hateth not his father and brother," etc., "cannot be my disciple." "For if ye love those who love you, what reward have you?" Hence, the zeal of the wretched bigots who delivered up their friends to the knife of the Holy Inquisition, and exulted in the suppression of their better instincts.

The repudiation of the Mosaic health code and the pagan culture of the manly powers led to the physical degeneration of two-thirds of the noblest Caucasian races. If the body is the enemy of the spirit, the promotion of its welfare would be a sheer waste of time, or even a crime against our higher and eternal interests. Hence, the neglect of physical education, the gluttony, the besottedness, and the crimes against nature in which the seed-plots of monachism vied with the vice-centres

*"If any sect," says Ludwig Börne, "should ever take it into their heads to worship the devil in his distinctive qualities, and devote themselves to the promotion of human misery in all its forms, the catechism of such a religion could be found ready-made in the code of several monastic colleges."

of the decaying Roman Empire,* the general neglect of sanitary precautions, which shortened the average longevity of mediæval Europe by fourteen or fifteen years.

The faith-cure dogma is the root of mediæval miracle-mongery. If diseases could be averted by prayer, medical science and sanitary precautions were equally superfluous. Lazy faith was easier than rational research, and the belief in the efficacy of exorcism enabled the Church to share the emoluments without the labors of secular science. Hence, Loretto chapels, Lourdes water, processions, consecrated rosaries, and relic swindle.

The propagandists of the Submission to Injustice dogma became the faithful ally of every form of despotism. The pagan pride in the majesty of self-reliant manhood was superseded by the worship of abject self-abasement and self-distrust. If human nature was essentially evil, men were unfit for self government; and their own welfare required the suppression of every revolt against the authority of the spiritual powers. Without the recognition of human rights, without the principles of personal dignity and natural justice,† social order

*"Quod enim Anno 1538, prudentissimus Rex Henricus Octavus cucullatorum coenobia, et sacrificorum collegia, votariorum, per venerabiles legum Doctores Thomam Leum, Richardum Laytonum visitari fecerat, et tanto numero reperti sunt apud eos scortatores, cinaedi, ganeones, pae icones, puerarii, paederastae, Sodomitae, Ganimedes, ut in unoquoque eorum novam crediderís Gomorrham." Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 449. And the state of affairs in Southern Europe is attested by numerous unquotable passages in the memoirs of the Italian Guiccardini, the writings of the Spaniard Sanchez, and the indictment of Pope John XXII.

†"Justice and equity were foreign to that creed. Why should man try to be better than his God? A God to whom

became a legalized system of oppression, manliness, became a stigma, the love of freedom was denounced as a sign of an unregenerate heart. Hence, the national degradation of so many Aryan nations, their sickening flunkeyism, their heartless subservience to the caprices of brutal despots. As Herbert Spencer demonstrates in his masterly *résumé* of the dangers in the path of a progressive republic, a defiant resistance to every form of injustice and official despotism is the price of liberty, and that resistance is incompatible with the spirit of a system that inculcates the duty of self abasement as an article of faith. The pagan martyrs died for human rights, for personal freedom and national independence. The Christian martyrs died for a system of spiritual slavery. The Byzantine bigots who massacred each other in their competition for a lackeyship at the court of the New Jerusalem could not defend their own city against domestic despots and foreign aggressors.

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they were taught to ascribe a monstrous system of favoritism: arbitrary grace for a few children of luck, and millions foredoomed to eternal damnation."—*Feuerbach.*

"They attributed to the Creator acts of injustice and barbarity which it would be absolutely impossible for the imagination to surpass, acts before which the most monstrous excesses of human cruelty dwindle into insignificance, acts which are, in fact, considerably worse than any that theologians have attributed to the devil."—*Lecky.*

"It is said that the King of Morocco, Muley Ismael, has five hundred children. What would you say if a dervish of Mount Atlas related to you that the wise and good Muley Ismael, dining with his family, at the close of the repast, spoke thus: 'I am Muley Ismael, who have begotten you for my glory; for I am very glorious. I love you very tenderly, I shelter you as a hen covers her chickens. I have decreed that one of my youngest children shall have the kingdom of Tafilet, and that another shall possess Morocco; and for my other dear children, to the number of four hundred and ninety-eight, I order that one-half shall be tortured and the other burned, for I am the Lord Muley Ismael.'"—*Voltaire.*

The fanatics who originated the dogmas of exclusive salvation by faith, and hell-fire as a punishment of unbelief, are responsible for the agonies of the three million human beings who perished in the flames of the stake. It is a libel against human nature to ascribe the barbarities of the Middle Ages to an innate love of cruelty; and, in order to account for the numberless epidemic outbreaks of truculent fanaticism, the Christian apologists have to invent as many different theories as the mediæval astronomers who attempted to reconcile their system with the apparently eccentric motions of the heavenly bodies. The hypothesis of Copernicus solved all those riddles, and a similar solvent of otherwise hopeless enigmas is the vainly disputed fact that the inhumanities of our Christian ancestors were the inevitable consequences of a sincere belief in the dogmas of their monstrous creed. The most relentless butchers of the Holy Inquisition were men of spotless personal morality. Many of the savage man-hunters of the Thirty Years' War were conspicuous for their clemency in private and domestic affairs. Neither the Austrians nor the frugal Spaniards * are by nature a bloodthirsty race. But the dogma of exclusive salvation left them no choice. It made the suppression of unbelief a sacred duty; for, if the propagation of erroneous doctrines could doom thousands to an eternity of unspeakable, incomparable, and hopeless tortures, the objections founded upon such scruples

* "Travellers are unanimous in declaring that in Spain an intense passion for the bullfight is quite compatible with the most active benevolence and the most amiable disposition."—*Lecky*.

as compassion with the short sufferings of a condemned heretic must have assumed an appearance of almost idiotic futility.*

Hence, inquisitions and crusades, thirty years' wars, heretic-hunts, massacres of St. Bartholomew, expulsions of the Moors, and extermination of the Albigenses. Hence, also, that chief disgrace of our own age,—the cowardly hypocrisy which, like an all-pervading poison-vapor, taints the whole atmosphere of our social life. "The fathers laid it down as a distinct proposition," says Lecky, "that pious frauds were justifiable and even laudable; and, if they had not laid this down, they would nevertheless have practised it as a necessary consequence of the doctrine of exclusive salvation. Paganism was to be combated; and, therefore, prophecies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged, lying wonders were multiplied, and ceaseless calumnies poured upon those who, like Julian, opposed the Church. That tendency triumphed wherever the supreme importance of these dogmas was held. Generation after generation, it became more universal: it continued till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth were blotted out from the minds of men." And this mode of thought has survived after the hot fanaticism which engendered it has cooled down to

* "Few persons, I think, can follow the history of Christian persecution without a feeling of extreme astonishment that some modern writers, not content with maintaining that the doctrine of exclusive salvation *ought* not to have produced persecution, have ventured in defiance of the unanimous testimony of the theologians of so many centuries, to dispute the plain historical fact that it *did* produce it."—*Lecky*.

"Haeretici non solum excommunicari sed juste occidi possunt."—*Thomas Aquinas, Summa*, Vol. II., Art. III.

frigid bigotry. The root of hypocrisy is the belief in the atoning efficacy of faith, or, *faute de mieux*, of conventional conformity. Our bigots sacrifice their conscience where their ancestors sacrificed their reason, and would be very sorry to admit the decadence of a creed that enables them to maintain the reputation of respectable principles by such easy means as connivance, cant, and mental prostitution.

The Prayer *vs.* Labor dogma was a death-blow to industry and science. Rational agriculture was abandoned to the Moorish infidels.* Christians neglected their fields and sought to avert famine by prayer-meetings. The pursuit of natural science was regarded with suspicion. Inventors were denounced as magicians. Erudition was considered a prima facie evidence of unbelief. Scientific progress decreased with the increase of the belief in the efficacy of prayer. Hence, moral and physical deserts; the desolation of the once fertile shores of the Mediterranean; a thousand years eclipse of common sense† and reason; mendicants,

*"The Spanish Christians considered agriculture beneath their dignity. In their judgment, war and religion were the only two avocations worthy of being followed. Some of the richest parts of Valencia and Grenada were so neglected that means were wanting to feed even the scanty population remaining there. Whole districts were deserted, and down to the present day have never been repeopled. All over Spain, the same destitution prevailed. That once rich and prosperous country was covered with a rabble of monks and clergy, whose insatiate rapacity absorbed the little wealth yet to be found. The fields were left uncultivated; vast multitudes died from want and exposure; entire villages were deserted."—*Buckle's History of Civilization.*

†How rational, sensible, and humane appear the writings of the pagan philosophers, in comparison with the ghastly nonsense of the monastic authors! In the freest cities of our most advanced countries, in Concord and Heidelberg,

pious vagabonds, and monastic drones; blind hatred of progress, mysticism, supernaturalism, and contented ignorance.

Has Christianity made us more moral? A chorus of stall-fed obscurantists will denounce the impiety of the very question; but the time is past when the shadow of the cross could veil a multitude of sins against truth, and with the help of God we will lift some of these veils. A fruitful source of ethical delusions is the *autodogmatic fallacy*, or the tendency of every sect to judge the merits of its founder by the standard of his own dogmas. The votaries of barbarous creeds award the highest prize of virtue to deeds of relentless ferocity. They mistake pity for weakness, and its suppression for an act of praiseworthy heroism. The followers of Confucius inculcate the punctilious observance of ceremonies; and, tried by that standard, the Chinese moralist was undoubtedly the most perfect man. The worship of sorrow has so perverted our moral ideals that for long centuries joylessness and self-affliction ranked among the highest virtues. A jaundiced, whining abstainer from physical enjoyments was the Puritan paragon of moral perfection.* The municipal codes of

an ancient Athenian would feel almost at home, a modern Unitarian would hail Job as a man and brother; but a resuscitated priest of the Middle Ages would walk our streets like a spectre defying the morning sun.

*"According to this code, all the natural affections, all social pleasures, all amusements, and all the joyous instincts of the human heart were sinful. The clergy looked on all comforts as sinful in themselves, merely because they were comforts. The great object of life was to be in a state of constant affliction. Whatever pleased the senses was to be suspected. It mattered not what a man liked: the mere fact of his liking it made it sinful. Whatever was natural was wrong."

many American cities still contain provisions for the suppression of public amusements on the only day on which a large plurality of our workingmen find their only leisure for recreation. The old Egyptians turned their funerals into holidays. We celebrate our holidays like funerals. Sublunary life, according to a still prevalent theory, is a state of probation for testing a man's power of self-denial. God is supposed to delight in the self-abasement and mortification of his creatures. A "man of sorrows" is our ideal of moral perfection. The cross, an instrument of torture, is the symbol of our creed. That creed has made our daily life so joyless that the mere prospect of a change must, indeed, enhance the attractions of a future existence.

We have been taught to treat the body as an enemy of the soul; and, if bodily health is an obstacle to true saintliness, we have evidently progressed in the path of salvation. Under the influence of a sixteen hundred years' reign of Anti-naturalism, the degeneration of the South-European races has reached that degree where terrestrial existence ceases to be a blessing, and where the

"Bathing, being wholesome as well as pleasant, was a particularly grievous offence; and no man could be allowed to swim on Sunday. It was, in fact, doubtful whether swimming was lawful for a Christian at any time, even on week-days; and it was certain that God had on one occasion shown his disapproval by taking away the life of a boy while he was indulging in that carnal practice. . . . Even on week-days, those who were imbued with religious principles hardly ever smiled, but sighed, groaned, and wept. One pious elder had acquired distinction by his faculty for what was termed 'a holy groan.' He used to weep much in prayer and preaching; he was every way 'most savory.' Even among young children, from eight years old upward, toys and games were bad, and it was a good sign when they were discarded."—*Buckle's History of Civilization.*

undue love of life is not apt to prevent the appreciation of spiritual comforts.

We have been taught that *faith—i.e.*, mental prostitution—is a prime condition of eternal welfare, and in many countries that virtue has been so earnestly cultivated that, if spiritual poverty is bliss, the kingdom of heaven cannot be far off.

After the measure of such standards, the Gospel of Pessimism has certainly regenerated the human race. But the virtue of a merchant should not be weighed on his own balance. The merits of a creed cannot be proved by its conformity to its own precepts. The standards we should apply are the laws of nature, the revelations of science, and the lessons of history. Such tests would teach us that the love of gloom is a mental disease; that, in a state of nature, every normal function is connected with a pleasurable sensation; that happiness, therefore, is the normal condition of every living creature; that to enjoy is to obey; and that he who deprives himself or his child of any innocent pleasure commits a crime against nature. They would teach us that physical vigor is a prime condition of moral health, and that he who neglects the health-laws of nature sins against his soul as well as against his body.* They would teach us that light is the harbinger of happiness, that the

* "When life has been duly rationalized by science, it will be seen that, among a man's duties, care of the body is imperative, not only out of regard for personal welfare, but also out of regard for descendants. His constitution will be considered as an entailed estate, which ought to pass on uninjured, if not improved, to those who follow; and it will be held that millions bequeathed by him will not compensate for feeble health and decreased ability to enjoy life."—*Herbert Spencer.*

sun of science has ripened more blessings in a single year than the moonshine of mysticism in eighteen centuries, that the suppression of free inquiry has never benefited any country, and that faith without reason is not a virtue, but a vice. They would teach us that the love of earth was the gospel of all progressive nations, that the love of life lends wings to every valiant enterprise, that the love of joy is the parent of every healthy instinct, while the worship of sorrow has never produced anything but monsters and chimeras. They would teach us that pessimism is a blasphemy against the Author of life, against the Power whose all-sustaining hands furnish the weapons of its very assailants,—an insane, impious, and suicidal rebellion against our All-mother Nature, a foe to happiness, and the antithesis of all true religion.

The doctrines of the Galilean Buddhist have burdened the record of human misery with thousands of devastating wars. Have they ever added one millet-seed to the sum of human happiness? Did the apostle of Nazareth ever speak one word in favor of industry, of rational education, the cause of health, the love and study of nature, of physical and intellectual culture? Not one. Has he promoted our progress in the paths of science and freedom? Not one step. The phantasms of his sickly anti-naturalism have made the world neither better nor wiser. His doctrine in all its tendencies is wholly *unearthly*, and therefore wholly unavailable for any secular purpose.

In what respect, then, has the human race been benefited by a creed that has perverted their ethi-

cal instincts and systematically opposed the development of their physical and intellectual faculties? "In the Duty of Disinterestedness," we are told, "Christianity has revealed a higher type of virtue." A *new* type would be more correct, if the study of the Buddhistic Scriptures had not revealed the true author of that doctrine. But we should not forget that the self-denial of the New Testament is not the disinterestedness of liberality, not the unselfishness of friendship or patriotism, but the *self-abnegation of pessimism*, the indifference to the weal or woe of life which inspires the Buddhistic renunciation of worldly possessions. On the shores of the Mediterranean, that *disinterestedness* has sadly reduced the interests of real estate, and made mundane life extremely uninteresting. A joy-loving cultivator of the smallest farm, who improves his land and his trees and surrounds himself with a troop of happy children, benefits the world more than a whole convent full of disinterested Buddhists with their ascetic crotchets and puling pessimism.

Has Christianity made us more religious? Its terrorism once covered the land with churches, and the steeples of those churches still bristle in every city; but *religion—i.e.*, a whole-souled moral enthusiasm—requires the co-operation of heads and hearts, and is as different from mediæval devil-panics as from the stock-list-consulting sanctimony of our Sabbatarian Pecksniffs. Whether as brainless bigots or as heartless hypocrites, the defenders of the Trinitarian dogma have always been the worst enemies of natural religion. Even a moral atheist would object to the absurdities and atroci-

ties they ascribe to the Supreme Being, but there are no real atheists. Naturalism, Pantheism, and Theism are only different names for the recognition of the beneficence and omnipresence of the great unseen Power; and, to every sincere worshipper of that Power, the apotheosis of Nature's enemy must be a shocking blasphemy against her God.

Has the *Reformation* improved our moral status? would be a very different question; for that reform, without admitting, and perhaps without suspecting, its ultimate mission, has proved itself a rather progressive one,—so much, indeed, that the doctrine preached from the pulpits of our Protestant churches is not Christianity, but an eclectic Bible doctrine, mixed with at least fifty per cent. of purely pagan ethics. Outside of La Trappe, few human beings could nowadays allege a reason for calling themselves Christians, and an honest repugnance to a solecism of that sort has perhaps evolved the nomenclature of our countless isms. Most Methodists know that some of Wesley's doctrines are already out of date; few Calvinists would like to mention certain tenets of the Geneva witch-hunter; and neither Catholics nor Old Kirk Presbyterians can doubt that the unqualified dogmas of the New Testament would circumscribe the sphere of a modern apostle by limiting his influence to the audience of a lunatic asylum.

The viands served in the refectory of our spiritual purveyors are half pagan and one-fourth Hebraic, but the Buddhistic flavor of the remaining fourth greatly impairs the digestibility of their collation. Their temperance-precepts are neutralized

by the doctrine of the man who depreciated the health-code of the Mosaic dispensation, who denied the defiling influence of "anything that enters the mouth," and who once proved his sincere indifference to the physical welfare of his fellow-men by manufacturing a considerable quantity of intoxicating drink. The worship of God in the wonders of his visible creation is counteracted by the impious tenets of Anti-naturalism, the "vale of tears" dogma, the alleged worthlessness of earthly life, that fills convents and prebendaries with the whining gluttons who

> "With senseless, base ingratitude
> Cram, and blaspheme their feeder."

The worship of Nature in her progressive revelations, and the regenerative influence of science, are paralyzed by the dogmas of natural depravity and salvation by faith; and every champion of human rights has to contend with the rancorous opposition of the creed that inculcates the duty of self-abasement.

Protestantism has already eliminated three-fourths of the pessimistic elements in our eclectic system of ethics; and, even in the interest of religion, it ought to complete its task. We cannot regain our moral health till we cease to consult the oracle of a life-hating fanatic and to disregard the teachings of our life-preserving instincts. Religion will fulfil its mission when our Unitarians begin to deserve their name by renouncing the dogmas of the blasphemous age when the offerings intended for the Temple of our God were carried to the house of a usurper. We must choose between Nature and

Anti-naturalism. The compromise plan has failed. If the Prophet of Galilee was a god, we must humbly recognize the fact that it has pleased the Supreme Being to contradict himself in his direct and indirect revelation. If he was a man, I hold that the blindness of his followers does not absolve us from the duty of exposing his baneful errors. Can good intentions outweigh the consequences of such errors? If a quack kills my child with a poison which he honestly believed would cure it, I may forgive him because he meant to do me good instead of harm; but should I revere him as a model physician, merely because his intentions were good? And should the same reason entitle the Apostle of Anti-naturalism to be worshipped as a saviour? The advocates of the compromise plan protest against the revelation of the whole truth, and hide their real motives behind a mask of charitable forbearance; but that mask has become threadbare, and to their protest I answer: Truth needs no veil, and you would not hesitate to expose the delusions of your unfortunate fellow-men, if you did not desire their welfare less than you fear their prejudices.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONVERSION OF EUROPE.

"Consistency is the seal of truth."

THE alliance of Christianity and barbarism, and their joint triumph over the civilization of the Roman Empire, form the most fateful episode in the annals of the human race; and in the book of history no other page is so stained with the sweat of laborious sophisms. To what complicated theories of strange coincidences and peculiar mishaps the Christian apologists have to resort, in order to reconcile the alleged merits of their creed with the suspicious circumstances of its introduction and the monstrous consequences of its supremacy! From year to year, the progress of science has obliged them to modify their hypothesis by qualifying its conclusions or falsifying its premises. But the evidence of history remains, and the only theory which can account for the persistent uniformity of that evidence furnishes also the key to the equally persistent duplicity of the theorists who wish to approximate the truth of historical facts and yet dread to divulge the trade-secret of their creed.

The Religion of Antinaturalism appealed to the pessimistic tendency of decrepitude, and thus recommended itself to the instincts of a decrepit generation.

During the first century of the Cæsarean era, the silence of the pagan moralists, and their often alleged blindness to the destiny of the new faith, admit of an equally simple explanation: they did not underrate the influence of the Galilean church, but they overrated the moral health of a nation which, in the incipience of its political abasement, seemed still justified in despising the contagion of a creed which even casual observers had recognized as an "execrable superstition." For the descent from Cato to Nero was really a mere trifle, compared with the fall from Nero to Constantine. The murderer of Seneca was the tyrant of a proud commonwealth, which sought and found means to shake off his yoke. The patron of Eusebius tyrannized a community of submissive slaves, who had lost not only the blessings, but the instinct of liberty. The proud stoicism of the Roman philosopher, the beauty-worship of the Roman poet, the joyous nature-worship of the Roman peasant, had all given way to the whining pessimism of the Galilean bigots,—to a creed which superadded the devil-panics of the Egyptian church to the asceticism of the nature-hating Buddhists. Tacitus misread the signs of his time. But let us put ourselves in his place. Even if the stars of our Republic should be transferred to the crown of a despot, we might still feel ourselves entitled to despise the followers of an Oriental visionary who should deny the value of earthly possessions and the competence of human reason, but profess his belief in devils and witches; who should denounce the observance of sanitary precautions, the prompt-

ings of our natural affections, and the cultivation of industrial habits, and advise his disciples to supply their wants by prayer and miracle mongery. Even our Spiritualists, even the Cherokese worshippers of the Great Spirit, would be entitled to execrate the superstition of the bigots who should propagate such dogmas, and blaspheme their Creator by co-ordinating his name with that of their mystagogue.

Tacitus and Suetonius did not apprehend any danger from such sources; but Oriental vices prepared the way for Oriental superstitions, and two hundred years later the countrymen of Scipio Africanus had accepted the yoke of a creed which the countrymen of Judas Maccabæus rejected with persistent scorn.

Worn-out sensualists consoled themselves with the hope of a better hereafter. Cowards pleased themselves in the idea of fulfilling the duty of meek submission to injustice and the "powers that be." Monastic drones denounced the worldliness of industrial enterprises. Physical indolence welcomed the discovery that "bodily exercise profiteth but little." Envious impotence insisted on the duty of self-abasement. Transgressors against the health laws of nature relied upon the efficacy of the prayer-cure. Stall-fed priests sneered at the lean philosopher who wasted his time upon laborious inquiries, while he might wax fat on faith and the sacrifices of the pious. The demon-dogma was a godsend to the spiritual poverty of the elect. The so-called scholars of the Galilean church, who could not encounter the pagan philosophers on

their own ground, found it very convenient to postulate a spook for every occult phenomenon.

But moralists who clearly discern the change in the ethical standards of a nation are apt to overlook the *progressiveness* of that change. They see the present and the past, but not the future. In the game for moral supremacy, the pagan philosophers had all the good players on their side; but the Christians, like the gods, played with loaded dice. Two rival crews struggled to row the Ship of State in opposite directions: Health, Manliness, Reason, Science, and Optimism arraigned against Disease, whining Bigotry, Unreason, Fanaticism, and Pessimism. But the Pessimists had the winds and tides in their favor. It was a struggle of declining philosophy against growing superstition. Before long, the imperial despots recognized their mistake in persecuting a creed which inculcated the duty of passive submission to oppressors, and the doom of Roman liberty was sealed when on its grave the despot Constantine erected the cross of the Galilean Buddhist. Claudius Constantine, the Roman Haynau, the man who added the cant of Uriah Heep to the crimes of a Cambyses, became the Pontifex Maximus of pessimism, and, in the view of his ecclesiastical biographers, atoned for all his murders by making Christianity the court-religion of the empire. The despotism which Nero and Caligula had exercised under the influence of temporary insanity, or in defiance of laws which they otherwise recognized, was then elaborated into a system. The last traces of the old democratic institutions were utterly abolished. Where the poor-

est plebeian of the ancient republic would have claimed a right, the proudest patrician had now to cringe for a favor. The Roman Padisha retired to Constantinople, and surrounded himself with an army of flunkeys and eunuchs. The visitors of the Audience Hall were required to perform the rite of genuflexion, and submit their petitions to the caprice of the autocrat. From the decrees of that caprice there was no appeal. The imperial saint compelled his father-in-law to hang himself. His brother-in-law was strangled in prison. His nephew, the only boy of a widow, had his throat cut. His eldest son was beheaded, and his wife was strangled in a bath. The will of the despot was officially recognized as the supreme law. Every symptom of political or religious independence was rigorously suppressed, and the alliance of Church and State bore its first-fruit in the decree which threatened the readers of Aryan books with capital punishment. "*In hoc vinces.*" The cross had triumphed.

There is an old Indian tradition that Ravan, the Prince of Darkness, avenged himself upon his conquerors by inviting them to a banquet of poisoned soma-vine. The myth of the Python and the legend of Hercules and Nessus are echoes of that tradition, and its meaning has been illustrated in the fate of many a barbarous nation that adopted the vices and superstitions of its conquered rival. The worshippers of sickly saints appealed in vain to the old god of war; and, a century after the death of Constantine, the hordes of the Sarmatian steppe dismembered the empire of the nation

which, for centuries, had represented the highest mental and physical development of the human race. But the dying Centaur avenged himself by the bequest of a moral Nessus shirt. With the purple of the Cæsars, the Gothic chieftains inherited the poison of the Galilean pest.

Polytheistic savages are especially apt to conclude that their intellectual superiors must have a superior fetich. A Yankee missionary once confessed that he won the confidence of a Fiji Islander by presenting him with a set of carpenters' tools, and describing the several implements as a *Christian* hatchet, a *Christian* claw-hammer, a *Christian* buck-saw. The barbarians of the North embraced the religion of the *Roman* god as they adopted the code of the Roman lawyer and the trappings of the Roman cavalry. When the savage conquerors returned to their native villages, they could hardly find room and names for the quantity and variety of their spoils,—purple, gold cloth, curious glass trinkets, ornamental shields, sweetmeats and incense, musical slaves, dancing-girls, soothsayers, monkeys, and parrots. To commodities of that sort, they had added a few bishops and crosses. They managed to acclimatize them, and quite enjoyed their novel acquisition. The poison had not yet revealed its virulence. A little while after, we find them involved in all the horrors of religious massacres, witch-riots, heretic-hunts, devil-panics, and manias of self-torture. The poison had begun to operate.

The shadow of the cross began to creep over the face of the earth. The sun of pagan civilization

still gilded the horizon with its last rays, but the foul birds of darkness were already on the wing; and the spectres of superstition heralded the advent of the dreadful night which for thirteen centuries was to blight and darken the fairest countries of the globe. It is a significant fact that the civilization of the East revived under the influence of the optimistic doctrines of Islam, while the civilization of the West was crushed by the ascendency of a pessimistic religion, and only revived at the decline of its influence. Two centuries after the conversion of Mecca, the sixteen provinces of the Caliph were studded with academies. Their culture and prosperity rivalled the Golden Age of the Grecian republics; and, six hundred years later, the Moors of Spain were still the teachers of Europe in science and arts, as well as in industry and agriculture. Two centuries after the conversion of Rome, the sun of reason had set in a sea of insanity; and that night was broken only by the dawn of modern rationalism. At the end of the fourteenth century, when the power of the Church had reached its zenith, not a single country in Europe had gained by its conversion from optimistic to pessimistic polytheism. Every school had been turned into a seed-plot of superstition, every jail into a grave of liberty; the sword of Themis had become an instrument of spiritual despotism, literature a farrago of silly fables, science a sham; the tillers of the soil were treated like wild beasts, thinkers and inventors as criminals; the enemies of Nature were worshipped as the ministers of her God.

The same Germans and Celts whom the Roman pagans had turned into intelligent citizens the Roman Christians turned into brutish bigots. At the same time, when Moorish Spain rivalled the god-gardens of ancient Italy, and every Moorish town had its schools of poetry and philosophy, Christian Spain was cursed with a chronic plague of mental and physical famines. With every possible allowance for "unfortunate contingencies," "revivals of barbarism," "misunderstood doctrines," etc., we cannot mistake the significance of the contrast. "Bring up a child in the way it should go, and it will not depart therefrom." And nations, too, are, on the whole, what their educators make them. We need not expect that Pusey's "heaven sent gospel of regeneration" should turn every corner of earth into Eden; but, if it not only failed to alleviate, but always and under all circumstances was sure to aggravate, the misery, and intensify the vices of every converted nation, we can have no difficulty in forming an opinion about the import of such facts. The laziest and sickliest Sybarites of ancient Italy would have execrated the systematic health ruin of the Italian monks, who boasted of disease and forced their disciples to treat the body as the enemy of the soul. The Alexandrian Platonists, with all their penchant for gnostic phantasms, would have loathed that mixture of superstition, insanity, and disgusting sophistry which the Alexandrian clergy disseminated as a divine revelation. The warriors of the old pagan Northland, with all their martial truculence, would have shuddered at the mention of the

inhumanities which their children perpetrated at the instigation of their priests.

The first Galilean missionaries came in Unitarian and optimistic disguises. Arius Alexandrinus was the patron-saint of the Visigoths, the Suevi, the Vandals, the Celt-Iberians, and the Burgundians. But moral epidemics can rarely be confined to their incipient stages, and there is a curious analogy between mental and physical *poison habits*. Harmless sweets always please. There is no reason why an octogenarian should not relish a cupful of strawberries as much as seventy years ago, when he picked them among the rocks of the mountain glens. Virgil's Eclogues never lose their charm. But the votaries of an unnatural stimulant must continually increase the dose: their tonic palls, the jaded nerves demand a stronger medium of stimulation. The alcohol-tippler has to advance from cider to brandy and rum. The opium-eater graduates from laudanum to morphine. The victims of mental poison habits, too, prove that their vice is progressive. Visionaries advance from hobgoblins to the personal devil. Buddha began with the deserts of Nepaul and ended with Nirvana. The asceticism of the Nazarenes led from celibacy to the Cross. All southern Arians ended by becoming fanatical Trinitarians and persecutors of Arianism: the stronger poison prevailed; moderate absurdity had no chance against absolute nonsense. Their missionary zeal, too, increased. From synods, it rose to riots, to heretic-hunts, to Jew-massacres, to civil wars, to international wars, and culminated in the inter-continental warfare of

the Crusades. Intolerance advanced from excommunications to excoriations, from the burning of heretical books to the burning of heretics.

The progressiveness of every poison habit bears an exact proportion to the virulence of the poison. Johnsonian tea-drinkers are phenomenal. For one man who drinks coffee to an absurd excess, we shall find a thousand who swill wine or lager beer. The nature-worshipping Greeks repeated the harmless myths and practised the merry rites of their creed for centuries without troubling themselves about the myths and rites of their neighbors. Their superstition differed from that of the Church as the inspired love of nature differs from the ecstatic fury of her enemies, as the day-dream of a happy child differs from the fever-dream of a gloomy fanatic. "*Procul profani!*" was the cry of the Eleusinian priests. They had more followers than they wanted. Their joy-loving creed could dispense with autos-da-fé. The Hebrews, in stress of famine, conquered a little strip of territory between Arabia and the Syrian desert, and then tried their best to live in peace with heaven and earth, and their sects contented themselves with metaphorical rib-roastings. The Saracens spread their conquests from Spain to the Ganges, but their wars had a physical rather than metaphysical purpose. They needed land, and made a better use of it than the former occupants. They contented themselves with assessing dissenters, and did not think it necessary to assassinate them. But the Galilean pessimists could not afford to tolerate an unconverted neighbor. To the enemies

of nature, the happiness of an earth-loving, garden-planting, and science-promoting nation was an intolerable offence: reason had to be sacrificed to faith, health and happiness to the cross, and earth to heaven. Their conquests were generally unselfish: they did not care for the lands of heathendom, they merely felt it their duty to suppress the impious prosperity of those who cultivated them. The Spanish Christians did not annex the property of their Moorish neighbors: they merely destroyed it. They did not covet the gardens of Andalusia: they merely wanted to extend the deserts of Aragon. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of heaven." It was the duty of a pious pauper to relieve his neighbors of such religious disabilities. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." It was the duty of a pious pessimist to enlarge that basis of spiritual hopes. Year after year, Charlemagne left his Rhineland palace to ravage the villages of the pagan Saxons, who betrayed an undue fondness for bear-hunts and field-sports, when they ought to have been at church, bemoaning their sins. When they declined to slave for his abbots and surrender their children to a band of gloomy fanatics with their unnatural dogmas and secret vices, he endeavored to cure their stiffneckedness by beheading as many as he could catch. For a century and a half, the Spanish Unitarians were burned at the rate of two hundred a year. Jews and Moors were almost the only industrial inhabitants of the peninsula: their expulsion would paralyze agriculture, manufactures, science, commerce, and me-

chanical arts; but such trifles could not be allowed to outweigh the ghostly interests of the natives, and, at the expense of the national credit, and the irretrievable loss of national prestige, the subjects of the Most Christian Monarch were reduced to a proper state of financial and spiritual poverty. Between the outbreak of the first crusade and the final expulsion of the Andalusian Moors, more than fourteen million human lives were sacrificed to the propaganda of pessimism, and for seven centuries the neighbors of Christianized Europe were exposed to the almost continual horrors of a moral opium war.

The monody of Libanius* was the dirge of pagan civilization. As soon as the light of philosophy had faded, the vampires of the Galilean church became aggressive, and for the next thousand years the moral history of Europe is the history of an unremitting war against Nature, a war which systematically promoted the survival of the unfit by making manliness a stigma and common sense a capital crime. It is this anti-naturalism that makes the study of mediæval history such a sickening task. The moral atmosphere of the old pagan republics, even after the star of their fortune had declined, is pervaded by a spirit of mental and physical health; while the air of the Christian Middle Ages reeks with the miasma of misery and superstition.

Between the morning-light of pagan philosophy and the evening-light of modern science intervened a thousand years' eclipse of human reason,

*On the death of the Emperor Julian, 363.

a millennium of madness and misery which but for that unnatural night might have been the happiest period in the history of mankind. The rule of the Cross robbed the Germanic nations of the spring-time of their national development. When they awakened from the morning-slumber of their political infancy, they found themselves in the coils of a strangling hydra; and the prime of their strength, which might have won them the golden prizes of the international arena, had to be wasted in the struggle against the slimy monster that threatened to crush out their reason and their life. In that struggle for life and light, the Hercules of the North finally prevailed; but the Apollo of the South succumbed to the Python: the Mediterranean Paradise was forever lost. Here and there, the worshippers of the Light-god still wreathed his altars in happy ignorance of the impending change; but the shadows of Nirvana gathered fast, and fifty years after the death of Julian the day of the Juventus Mundi had faded into the night of the Middle Ages. There, the fragrance of a sunlit mountain-forest, resounding with the hunter's shout and the jubilee of happy children; here, the fumes and the groans of a Buddhistic opium-den.

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

"Your prayer for light shall be answered, if you consent to open your eyes."—*G. E. Lessing.*

Since the dawn of modern rationalism, the path of social reform has been obstructed by a Sphinx that still propounds her riddle to every philosopher, to every moralist, to every speculative historian. That Sphinx is the Christian religion; and the riddle, which has to be solved before we can clear the road of progress, is the enigma of the Middle Ages.

Whence that dreadful night that followed suddenly and unnaturally upon the bright sunrise of pagan civilization? that long eclipse of reason, science, freedom, and happiness, that trance-like lethargy of the very nations which before and after gave the most decided proofs of their capacity for mental progress? What turned their health into a thousand years' disease? Was it the influence of a supernatural religion? Then, how did the followers of other supernatural creeds happen to escape that doom? For we should not forget that the morning-hour of our prosperous Age of Reason is but a moment compared with the long centuries of health and prosperity which the Greeks, the Spanish Moors, and the Eastern Saracens contrived to combine with a firm belief in the reality of supernatural agencies.

It would have been well for the nations of Europe, if their priests had contented themselves with the inculcation of such beliefs. The misery of the Middle Ages was due not to the supernatural, but to the *anti-natural*, tendency of the Christian religion. According to the gospel of the Galilean Buddhists, earth, with all its joys and desires, with all its visible and invisible habitants, is wholly evil; the renunciation of temporal blessings is the first condition of eternal welfare, and death the only gate of true life. The Christians did not deny the existence of the pagan deities: they merely changed them into devils. The pagan Pantheon became a pandemonium. Rivers, woods, and mountains swarmed, not with harmless nymphs and dryads, but with tempting demons, emissaries of the brimstone-pit who devoted their superhuman powers to the seduction and affliction of Adam's progeny.* The gods and saints of Greece, Rome, and Palestine, descended from heaven to share the earthly joys of mortals, to bless and hallow the scenes of their earthly struggles and triumphs. The saints of Buddhism and Christianity visited earth to mar its joys, to depreciate its blessings, to wean its children from their natural instincts and sympathies. Has the worship of sorrow ever failed

*The belief in fairies was of Druidic origin, and was either suppressed or characteristically metamorphosed by the Church, who, true to her pessimistic principles, diabolized the Celtic and German as well as the Grecian deities. Wodan, the hunter-god, became a Wild Huntsman; Hulda, a night-hag, the first May night, when Hertha awakens the slumbering wood-spirits, a Walpurgis-Nacht with its hellish revivals. Even objects of scenic interest, the trysting-places of the nature-worshipping Druids, became "devils' pulpits," "devils' bridges," "devils' castles."

to darken the light of nature? Has it added one millet-seed to the sum of earthly happiness? Did the Apostle of Galilee ever speak one word in favor of industry, rational education, the love and study of nature, physical and intellectual culture? Not one. Has his mission promoted our progress in the paths of science and freedom? Not one step. His doctrine in all its tendencies is wholly unearthly, and therefore wholly unavailable for secular purposes.

The pagan gods were the deified powers of Nature, the patrons of mariners, shepherds, and husbandmen. The Christian gods were the deified enemies of Nature. Even the Christian *Deus Maximus* frowned on earthly pleasures, and could be propitiated only by the mortification of almost every natural instinct: the bounteous All-father had become an All-tormentor, a celestial grand-inquisitor, who demanded an implicit submission of human reason to inhuman dogmas, and doomed the vast plurality of his creatures to the tortures of an everlasting *auto-da-fé*.

In the instinct of freedom, in the love of knowledge, and the sense of beauty, the Christian moralists, like the pagan philosophers, recognized the power of a mysterious inspiration, but with this difference, that the pagans ascribed that inspiration to the favor of a beneficent god, the Christians to the wiles of a tempting fiend. More than fifty generations of our Christian ancestors were taught to neglect the health laws of nature as unworthy the attention of a candidate for the higher blessings of the world to come. Every opposition to the

tyranny of the secular or spiritual authorities was punished as a revolt against the authority of a creed which inculcated the duty of passive submission to injustice. The Holy Alliance of Church and State disdained to recognize the natural rights of men whose natural instincts were supposed to be wholly evil. In every progress of natural science, the guardians of an anti-natural creed scented a danger to the prerogatives of the holy brotherhood. Every philosopher, every mathematician, every naturalist, had to keep the secret of his discoveries, if he wished to keep his head. The night of the Middle Ages was not the natural blindness of unenlightened barbarians, but an unnatural darkness, maintained by an elaborate system of spiritual despotism, and in spite of the fierce struggles of many light-loving nations.

In the French province of Languedoc alone, the man-hunters of the Holy Inquisition spilled more human blood than ever reddened the sand of the Roman arena. "But the gladiators died to minister to a frivolous popular amusement," says the Jesuitical apologist, "while the mediæval heretics were sacrificed to the interests of our revealed faith." A faith which would undoubtedly tempt you to renew the butcheries of your predecessors, if you could regain their power; but, after its doctrines have been recognized as a mixture of God-insulting idolatries, nature-insulting precepts, and reason-insulting superstitions, what remains to compensate the world for the lives of the twenty-five hundred thousand martyrs of reason and freedom whose murder has undoubtedly debased the

mental type of the human race? Will sophistry dare to mention the elements of *natural* morality which are common to all religions, but which the anti-natural dogmas of Christianity crowded into the background? Has religion gained by its association with the doctrines of a Church that made it a synonyme of all that is odious and absurd? Has the rule of that Church furthered the moral progress of the forty generations whose wisest, manliest, noblest, and bravest men were systematically weeded out, to enforce the survival of idiots and hypocrites? For thirteen centuries, the rack, the stake, and the cross were leagued against nature and mankind.

It is true that here and there the genius of Humanity triumphed over its enemies; it is true that the Christian obscurantists could not entirely suppress the mental activity of the Caucasian race; but it is equally true that their labors to suppress the fruits of that activity were successful enough to retard the progress of mankind for nearly fourteen hundred years.

I am not disposed to deny the merits of the amiable *inconsistencies* of several Christian sects, such as the republican enthusiasm of the English Puritans, who found it convenient to forget the duty of passive submission to injustice; or the tolerance of several Catholic pontiffs in their zeal for the revival of pagan arts and sciences,—the same arts and sciences which their predecessors had labored to suppress; or the promotion of the cause of temperance by Protestant clergymen, who have at last awakened to a recognition of the fact

that a man *can* be defiled by things that enter his mouth, and that the magician of Canaan set a bad example by turning drinking water into wine. I do not deny that some of the worst Christian hierarchies have done some good, *in spite* of their creed; but I maintain that, just as far as they have tried to conform to the precepts of that creed, they have proved themselves the worst enemies of mankind.

"What!" cries my theological friend, "*enemies of mankind?* Have they deserved that epithet by their unselfish zeal in propagating a religion which inculcates such precepts as the duty of universal love?"

And I reply: Yes, in just as far as they acted in the antinatural spirit of that religion. For how did it teach them to prove their "love"? By making earth more lovely? By making life more worth living? By increasing the creature comforts of their fellow-men? By teaching them to observe the health laws of God, to recognize the principles of rational education, the conditions of social progress? Not if they could help it. Whatever is natural is wrong, was the foundation dogma of their creed; and true believers tried to promote the welfare of their fellow-men by suppressing their freedom in the interests of "Christian discipline," their reason in the interests of "Christian revelation"; by burning their bodies for the benefit of their souls, and by imprisoning their children in convents, where tyranny and superstition conspired for the suppression of every natural instinct.

The Arabs have a tradition that a roving Bedouin once discovered the earthly paradise, and was so haunted by the memory of its scenes and bird songs that he found the dreariness of his native deserts unendurable, and wandered to the seashore and drowned himself. And, if a resuscitated Roman could see what the rule of the Cross has made of his birthland, he, too, would probably take refuge with Charybdis rather than endure the hideous sight. The paradise of Southern Europe could not be at once spoiled. Traces of the old nature worship still lingered here and there. The Apennines still sheltered the remnants of the sacred groves. A few mountain tribes still kept the foe at bay, and relied on the strength of their sinews rather than on prayers and miracles. But the efforts of the spoilers did not cease; and it may be doubted if the Caucasian race will ever wholly recover from the effects of a thousand years' attempt to lure their children from earth to ghostland, to poison their minds with the dogmas of pessimism, to sacrifice the pagan Elysium to the Buddhistic Nirvana. How is it that "climatic influences" have not sapped the physical vigor of the Arabs, the Jews, the Berbers, the Persians, the East-Indian Mohammedans? Only antinatural religions have achieved that deep abasement of the physical type of our race which we see in China and Southern Europe. For we should not forget that the nations of Northern Europe saved themselves by the revolt of the Protestant Reformation, before the poison of pessimism had sapped their strength. The gods of Greece were

the deified powers of Nature; Olympus was an earthly mountain; the immortals were worshipped with songs and dances, and did not oblige their votaries to sacrifice their reason and their freedom. The doctrines of anti-naturalism, diabolism, and eternal punishment, were unknown to the exponents of the Mosaic dispensation. Nay, with the exception of that doubtful passage in Job, the Old Testament contains not a line, not a single word, that could be fairly construed into an allusion to the doctrine of a future existence. Its God rewards his servants with temporal blessings, its retributions are earthly retributions, its paradise bloomed on this side of the grave. The nations of Islam believed in a supernatural paradise; but its gates had to be won by valiant deeds, by wisdom and temperance, and not by whining self-abasement and the contempt of bodily health. But the dogmas of the Galilean Church were wholly anti-natural, and, in their strict acceptation, necessarily conducive to mental and physical bankruptcy.

When the sceptre of Rome passed into the hands of the victorious Goths, Western Europe and the Mediterranean peninsulas were still in the prime of their fertility. Climate, soil, scenic grandeur, natural facilities of communication, the happiest proportion of cultivated fields and forest lands,—all contributed to make them the most favored regions of the Eastern Continent; and we should remember that the nations who inherited them were, in natural capacities, immeasurably superior to the best Arabian tribes. Among the sad "It might

have beens" of the world's history, the saddest is the reflection what those countries might have become, if the noble Visigoths, the heroic Longobards, and the manful Saxons had been permitted to rule them, under the influence of a moderately rational religion, like that of Islam. The golden age of Hellas would have been eclipsed by nations who (as they proved, as soon as they could rid themselves of the Galilean incubus) combined the intellectual faculties of the Greeks with a warmer love of nature and a prouder love of personal independence.

At the end of the thirteenth century, the enemies of nature had reached the zenith of their power; and, at that time, it may be said that, *without a single exception*, the countries of Christian Europe were worse governed, more ignorant, more superstitious, poorer, and unhappier than the worst governed province of pagan Rome.* The "scion

*"Feudalism," says Blanqui, "was a concentration of all scourges. The peasant, stripped of the inheritance of his fathers, became the property of ignorant, inflexible, indolent masters: he was obliged to travel fifty leagues with their carts, whenever they required it; he labored for them three days in the week, and surrendered to them half the product of his earnings *during the other three;* without their consent, he could not change his residence or marry. And why, indeed, should he wish to marry, if he could scarcely save enough to maintain himself? The Abbot Alcuin had twenty thousand slaves, called *serfs*, who were forever attached to the soil. This is the great cause of the rapid depopulation observed in the Middle Ages, and of the prodigious multitude of monasteries which sprang up on every side. It was doubtless a relief to such miserable men to find in the cloisters a retreat from oppression; but the human race never suffered a more cruel outrage, industry never received a wound better calculated to plunge the world again into the darkness of the rudest antiquity. It suffices to say that the prediction of the approaching end of the world, industriously spread by the rapacious monks at this time, was received without terror."—*Résumé de l'Histoire du Commerce*, p. 156.

of the Buddhistic parent tree" had begun to bear fruit after its kind. The sway of the Cross extended from the Baltic to the Hellespont; the empire of the Church embraced every variety of European climate, it embraced Greek, Latin, German, Slavic, and Celtic nations,—nations which it had received in every stage of civilization, semi-civilization, and barbarism, but whom the poison of its dogmas had affected with a uniform result.* Wherever we look, darkness, slavery, and misery; bigoted tyrants and brutalized serfs, neglected fields, blighted cities, perverted sciences, and paralyzed industries; hordes of self-torturing maniacs frenzying the populace with their threats and prophecies; international man-hunts, religious massacres, witchcraft riots, and a merciless war against every form of mental and social independence. Peasants were treated like beasts of burden. If earthly pleasure was sinful and heaven our proper home, Herr Baron and Monsieur l'Abbé saw no reason to provide creature comforts for their serfs.

*Protestant Jesuits have tried to ascribe the cause of that result to the pagan admixtures of the Catholic creed. The seasons and rites of many Catholic holidays, they say, correspond to those of old Roman festivals; the most popular saints of the Catholic calendar were pagan demigods in disguise; the legends of the early Church were corrupted with interpolations of Roman and Grecian myths. Corrupted forsooth! The humanizing and naturalizing influence of pagan traditions alone saved the victims of the Galilean Church from mental inanition in the desert of asceticism: they were reduced to the alternative of the prince in Grimm's folk-sagas, who had to wed a peasant girl or a grinning death's-head. For analogous reasons, the English Puritans had to popularize their ghastly creed with an infusion of *Hebrew* elements: the names of their warlike saints, the shibboleths of their peculiar cant, the favorite texts of their field preachers, were nearly always borrowed from the *Old* Testament. But such palliatives served only to disguise the doctrine of pessimism, as poison-mongers administer their potions with pleasant condiments.

"One sees certain dark, livid, naked, sunburnt wild animals, male and female, scattered over the country and attached to the soil, which they root and turn over with indomitable perseverance. They have, as it were, an articulate voice; and, when they rise to their feet, they show a human face. They are, in fact, men: they creep at night into dens, where they live on black bread, water, and roots. They spare other men the labor of ploughing, sowing, and harvesting, and, therefore, deserve some small share of the bread they have grown. Yet they were the fortunate peasants,—those who had work and bread,—and they were then the few" (while two-thirds of the arable territory of France were in the hands of the Church).*

If truth was communicated from heaven by direct revelation, if diseases, famines, and droughts could be averted by prayer, why should men waste their time on science? "A cloud of ignorance," says Hallam, "overspread the whole face of the Church, hardly broken by a few glimmering lights who owe almost the whole of their distinction to the surrounding darkness. . . . I cannot conceive of any state of society more adverse to the intellectual improvement of mankind than one which admitted no middle line between dissoluteness and fanatical mortifications. . . . No original writer of any merit arose; and learning may be said to have languished in a region of twilight for the greater part of a thousand years. . . . In 992, it was asserted that scarcely a single person was to be

*La Bruyère. Quoted in P. L. Courier's *Petition à la Chambre des Députés*, p. 19.

found, in Rome itself, who knew the first elements of letters. Not one priest of a thousand in Spain, about the age of Charlemagne, could address a common letter of salutation to another." The history of every mediæval philosopher, discoverer, or reformer is the history of a life-long struggle against the tyranny of a light-hating alliance of despots and bigots.

The doctrine of "renunciation" made patriotism an idle dream: the saints whose "kingdom was not of this world" had no business with vanities of that sort; no chieftain could trust his neighbors; cities were pitted against cities, and castles against castles; patriotic reformers would vainly have appealed to the sympathies of men who had been taught to reserve their interest for the politics of the New Jerusalem.

And what an age for the lovers of truth! Where should they take refuge from their enemies, when every year the blood of free thinkers was poured out like water? Where should they quench their thirst after knowledge? Among the Arabs, who would slay them as spies? In cities, where the next neighbor would betray them to the spies of the Holy Inquisition? In convents, in the strongholds of pessimism, where, year after year, they had to

"Erwachen mit Entsetzen Morgens auf,
Den Tag zu sehen, der in seinem Lauf
Nicht einen Wunsch gewähren wird, nicht einen!"
—Awake with horror every morning,
To see the day which in its course will not
Grant the fulfilment of a single wish!—

But the deepest shade of the dreadful night darkened the path of natural religion. To him who seeks to know the will of the All-father by studying the laws of his universe, and honors his wisdom and beneficence by ordering his life in conformity with those laws, it must indeed have appeared as if our earth had been abandoned to the powers of darkness. For what fiends could have insulted the name of the Creator by grosser blasphemies than the maniacs who ascribed to him acts of such monstrous cruelty that the inhumanities of the worst earthly despots appeared mild in comparison, and who hoped to gain his favor by turning his paradise into a desert, by rejecting his gifts, by renouncing the blessings of his marvellous earth, and by sacrificing their freedom, their health, and their reason!

A year after the death of the prophetess Sospitra, says the pagan historian, Eunapius, her son was one day standing before the temple of Serapis, when the prophetic spirit of his mother fell upon him. "Woe be our children!" he exclaimed, when he awakened from his trance. "I see a cloud approaching: a great darkness will fall upon the human race."

That cloud did not come from Olympus or Sinai. The spectre of an earth-blighting disease stalked through the land; and the time will come when, in the form of that spectre, all but the wilfully blind will recognize not the manful monotheism of Moses, not the mythology of the nature-loving Greeks, but the nature-hating pessimism of Buddha Sakyamuni.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EXPENSIVE CREED.

"Insani fugiunt mundum, immundumque sequuntur."—*Jordan Bruno.*

THE most cherished dogma of the modern Jesuit is the belief that the conditions of our earthly happiness are influenced by the continual interference of preternatural agencies; for he has to postulate a continued miracle to explain the fact that the creed, which he calls the best of all possible religions, has been a constant source of misery and error. But, if the true reason of that fact has once been named, its concordance with the historical records of the last sixteen centuries will be a sufficient vindication of its correctness; for the consistency of theory and experience may reach a degree that can defy the wiles of sophistry.

From the first council of Nice to the last conference of the "Evangelical Alliance," the history of the Galilean Church has been the history of an unremitting war against nature; and the propaganda of her dogmas could prosper only at the expense of our earthly happiness. The direct results of that warfare would be amply sufficient to account for the fact that the Age of Faith, the era when the rule of the cross maintained its supremacy, was the dreariest period in the history of the human race; but, unhappily, those results were not confined to the suppression of harmless

amusements and scientific investigations. *It is easier to pervert than to suppress a natural instinct.* Wherever pessimism crushed the flowers of this earth, the soil began to teem with poisonous weeds. The suppression of healthful pastimes begat a passion for vicious pastimes, and made the fancied identity of sin and pleasure a sad reality. The Olympic games and the Capitoline festivals were abolished by the order of a Christian emperor. The field-sports of the Gaelic peasants were suppressed by the influence of the Scotch clergy. The worship of sorrow spread its gloom over every emotion of the human heart. But, when the Church had succeeded in making life as dismal as the dogmas of her creed, her victims took refuge in secret sins and drunkenness. Even the slaves of ancient Rome had their saturnalia, when their masters indulged them in the enjoyment of their accumulated arrears of happiness; but our laborers toil like machines, whose best recreation is a temporary respite of work. Human hearts, however, will not renounce their birthright to happiness; and, if joy has departed this life, they pursue its shadow into the land of dreams, and try to spice the dry bread of daily drudgery with the sweets of delirium.

The attempt to suppress the pursuit of natural sciences led to the pursuit of *pseudo*-sciences,—to supernaturalism, demonism, and all sorts of hideous chimeras. The attempt to suppress the worship of nature led to the worship of *unnaturalism*, the veneration of a whole almanac full of nature-hating, self-torturing maniacs. The fanat-

ical asceticism that begat callousness to personal sufferings led its victims to behold with indifference, and at last with delight, the sufferings of their fellow-men. The cruelties of the worst pagan despots were surpassed by the absolute inhumanity of pious Christian monks and priests. The suppression of the spirit of manful emulation that assembled the champions of the Olympic festivals forced that instinct to seek its gratification in cunning and treachery, in the sordid competition of hypocrites and sycophants. The suppression of rational freedom led to anarchy, to communism and nihilism. The ordinance of celibacy became the mother of secret vices. Intolerance is the parent of hypocrisy.

Pessimism has been on trial for sixteen hundred years; and the history of the Middle Ages has taught us that man's divorce from his earthly instincts is the removal of a tree from its native soil, a removal from the basis of life. For sixteen centuries of faith and trust, our ancestors tried to reach heaven by abandoning their place in nature; and we can now estimate the costs of the experiment.

The dogmas of the Christian Church have cost the world three million square miles of lands, which once were the garden spots of this earth, but which have been turned into deserts by the neglect of rational agriculture and the influence of a creed which labored to withdraw the attention of mankind from secular to *post-mortem* concernments. "The fairest and fruitfullest provinces of the Roman Empire," says Prof. Marsh,—"precisely

that portion of terrestrial surface, in short, which, about the commencement of the Christian era, was endowed with the greatest superiority of soil, climate, and position, which had been carried to the highest pitch of physical improvement,—is now completely exhausted of its fertility. A territory larger than all Europe, the abundance of which sustained in bygone centuries a population scarcely inferior to that of *the whole Christian world at the present day*, has been entirely withdrawn from human use, or, at best, is thinly inhabited. . . . There are regions where the operation of causes, set in action by man, has brought the face of the earth to *a desolation almost as complete as that of the moon;* and, though within that brief space of time which we call 'the historical period,' they are known to have been covered with luxuriant woods, verdant pastures, and fertile meadows, they are now too far deteriorated to be reclaimable by man, nor can they become again fitted for his use except through great geological changes, or other agencies, over which we have no control. . . . Another era of equal improvidence would reduce this earth to such a condition of impoverished productiveness as to threaten the depravation, barbarism, and, perhaps, even the extinction of the human species." (*Man and Nature*, pp. 4, 43.)

And the ruin of these countries* is not due to the recklessness and intentional destructiveness of

*Asia Minor, Turkey, and Northern Africa were for centuries inhabited by priest-ridden Christians, and lost their fertility before they passed under the sway of their present master. India, Persia, and the Caucasus, and those parts of Southern Egypt and Eastern Armenia that

their inhabitants, but is the inevitable consequence of a persistent attempt to follow the precepts of an anti-natural creed.

Christianity has retarded the progress of the human race by at least fifteen hundred years. The fruits of science and social reform, which our descendants will reap in fifteen centuries hence, might be enjoyed at the present moment, if the last sixty generations had not wasted their time in disputes about the interpretation of idiotic dogmas, and the attempt to gain the heaven of a future world by despising the blessings of the present.

On the altar of her anti-natural idol, the Christian Church has sacrificed the lives of eighteen millions of the noblest and bravest of our fellow-men. Two millions were butchered in the wars against the freedom-loving children of nature, the Saxons, the Sarmatians, and the pagan Scandinavians; one million, in the wars against the Arian heretics; at least five millions, in the seven larger and four smaller crusades. The extermination of the Spanish Saracens reduced the population of the peninsula by seven millions. One million was slaughtered in the fifteen years' man-hunt against the Albigenses, the Thirty Years' War against the Protestant princes, the massacres of the French Huguenots, the Waldenses, and the insurgents of the Netherlands. A full million human lives were devoured by the Moloch of the Holy Inquisition

were never under Christian control, have preserved much of their ancient fruitfulness. The so-called Christian countries of Northern Europe were not converted before the eleventh century of our era, and revolted in time to prevent their utter ruin.

and the witch tribunals, which for nearly seven centuries infested all the principal cities of Christian Europe. To this number, we might add the twelve million aborigines of the New World, who in less than a century fell victims to the insane fury of their Christian conquerors and the unremitting persecutions of the Christian Inquisition. Many of the Inquisitors were men of spotless personal morality. Montfort, the butcher of the Albigenses, was a pious and righteous cavalier. Jean Bodin and Judge Sprenger, the defender of the witch tribunals, sincerely pitied the fate of their victims; but their horrible creed left them no choice. The blood of thirty millions of our fellow-men cries out against the nature-hating fanatic who inculcated the belief in the sinfulness of our natural instincts, the guilt of scepticism, and the possibility of Satanic incarnations.

Christianity has turned whole nations of freedom-loving men into slaves and flunkeys. The precepts of self-abhorrence and passive submission to tyranny and injustice was a direct declaration of war against the manly self-reliance that is the basis of all true independence. The worst tyranny that has ever oppressed the children of this earth was perpetrated in the name of the Christian God. When Charlemagne conquered the land of the pagan Saxons, thousands of brave men were slain like wild beasts; thousands were transported to the slave-farms of the Abbot Alcuin or imprisoned in Christian convents; hundreds of widows and bereaved mothers committed suicide; hundreds of children were scourged to death for resisting the

tyranny of their jailers or trying to regain their liberty. The Spanish Unitarians, the Jews and Moriscoes, the most industrious inhabitants of the peninsula, were hunted from province to province; and when, after centuries of horrible persecutions, a remnant of the fugitives sought a refuge in Portugal, the Christian monarch of that country was forced by the priests to break his promise of protection: the refugees were banished, and their children dragged away to the slavery of the Christian convents. "Piercing shrieks of anguish filled the land: women were known to fling their children into deep wells or to tear them limb from limb rather than resign them to the Christians." (Lecky's *History of Rationalism*, ii., p. 270.) The Church that abolished slavery in name promoted it in fact; for her doctrine implied a divine sanction of despotism, and an entire disregard for man's natural rights. The slave-barracks of ancient Rome were temples of liberty compared with the dungeons of the hierarchical torture-dens, where thousands of nature's noblemen vainly invoked death and madness as a refuge from the power of a more cruel foe.

The ascetic dogmas of the monstrous delusion have darkened the life-light of countless millions; for, in the zenith of its power, Pessimism rose almost to the climax of a worship of sorrow for its own sake. And, when the sources of earthly misery were exhausted, the Church elaborated that dogma of a hell of eternal and all but inevitable tortures, which destroyed the last solace of the wretched as well as the peace of daily life. Dis-

senters were silenced by armed force. Pessimism solved the problem of inflicting the greatest possible amount of misery on the greatest possible number. Every appeal to common sense and mercy was punished as a crime against the authority of an infallible church; every atrocity was sanctioned that would help to crush the instinct of free inquiry, the dignity of manhood, the sense of justice, the love of joy, freedom, and nature. How many thousands of the countless victims who were induced to take the vow of the monastic orders must have awakened to the significance of their sacrifice, and sought, too late, to regain a world which to them was as hopelessly lost as if they had crossed the ferry of Styx! How many children of the joy-loving nations, whose countries had been cursed with the gloom of the cross, must have pined for the freedom of nature as the captives of Tartarus pined for the sunlight of the upper world; or sought refuge in death, in the hope of reaching a land where the code of Pessimism was unknown. "According to that code," says Buckle, "all the natural affections, all social pleasures, all amusements, and all the joyous instincts of the human heart were sinful. . . . The clergy looked on all comforts as sinful in themselves, merely because they were comforts. The great object of life was to be in a state of constant affliction. Whatever pleased the senses was to be suspected. It mattered not what a man liked: the mere fact of his liking it made it sinful. Whatever was natural was wrong." And that creed dares to boast of its charitable institutions! The charity of the Christian Church

is the charity of the fanatic, who for the love of heaven turned a flower-garden into a desert, and for the love of earth housed a few of the withered plants and watered them with his sickly tears.

The Christian Church has spread the blight of its influence far beyond the boundaries of her spiritual empire. The freedom of the North-European pagans and the civilization of the South-European Moors succumbed to the incessant attacks of their Christian neighbors, instigated by the light-and-freedom-hating fanaticism of their priests.

The dogmas of the Christian Church have smitten its victims with the nauseous disease of hypocrisy. The atmosphere of our whole social life is tainted with the poison of cant and dissimulation. By invoking the aid of the secular powers to protect the authority of dogmas which to all clear-sighted men have become a mixture of blasphemy and absolute nonsense, the Church offers a premium for intellectual dishonesty. Every lover of truth is branded with the reproach of eccentricity by the upholders of a system whose centre has always been an untruth, and generally a very transparent untruth. After doing their best to turn this world into a hell, after insulting the Creator by disregarding his physical laws and despising his marvellous earth, the moralists of the Galilean Church hope to conciliate this favor by lying for the glory of his "son."

The anti-natural dogmas of the Christian Church have so perverted our ideas of duty and natural religion that the worst enemies of mankind perpetrated their enormities for the sake of conscience,

and millions still despise this earth for the sake of heaven. Neither the vices of the Roman Cæsar nor the excesses of the French Revolution have contributed so much to weaken the respect for the authority of the law as the systematic inhumanity of the Christian Middle Ages, when laws were so intolerable that only the lawless could enjoy life,—outlaws and irresponsible princes, Robin Hood and Robert le Diable. The delusion of anti-naturalism has certainly caused more mischief than the bane of all human vices taken together. "Translated into plain speech, the foundation-principle of our system of ethics is this: that all natural things, especially our natural instincts, are essentially evil, and that salvation depends upon mysterious, anti-natural, and even supernatural remedies. This bottom error has long biassed all our physical and metaphysical theories. The use of our reasoning powers is naturally as agreeable as the exercise of any other normal function. The anti-naturalists declared war against free inquiry, assured us that the study of logic and natural science is highly dangerous, and that the seeker after truth must content himself with the light of ghostly revelations. We have since ascertained that the ghosts are grossly ignorant in all terrestrial concernments, and that their reports on the supramundane state of affairs are, to say the least, suspiciously conflicting. In all but the vilest creatures, the love of freedom is as powerful as the instinct of self-preservation. The anti-naturalists inculcated the dogma of implicit submission to secular and spiritual authorities. The experiment was

tried on the grandest scale; and the result has demonstrated that blind faith leads to idiocy, and that absolute monarchs must be absolutely abolished. The testimony of our noses justifies the opinion that fresh air is preferable to prison smells: the anti-naturalists informed us that at various seasons of the year, and every night, the out-door atmosphere becomes mortiferous, and that sleepers and invalids ought to be confined in air-tight apartments. We believed, till we found that the most implicit believers got rotten with scrofula. Happiness is the normal condition of every living creature; for, in a state of nature, every normal function is connected with a pleasurable sensation. 'To enjoy is to obey.' Animals have not lost their earthly paradise: he who has observed them in the freedom of their forest-homes cannot doubt that to them existence is a blessing, and death merely the later or earlier evening of a happy day. The anti-naturalists assured us that God delights in the self-abasement and mortification of his creatures, and hoped to gain his favor by afflicting themselves in every possible way,—by voluntary seclusion, fasts, vigils, the wearing of dingy garments, and abstinence from every physical pleasure. Failing to enamour mankind with their doleful heaven, they revenged themselves by depriving them of their earthly joys. In hopes of making the hereafter more attractive, they made life as repulsive as possible: kill-joys and persecutors were the active heroes of those times; ascetics and self-tormentors, their passive exemplars. Virtue and joylessness became synonymes. Men aspiring

to superior merit exchanged the glories of the sunny earth for the misery of a gloomy convent. 'A man of sorrows' became a type of moral perfection. The cross, an instrument of torture, became the trade-mark of the new religion. *Kosmos* —*i.e.*, beauty and harmony—was the oldest Grecian term for God's wonderful world; a 'vale of tears,' the favorite Christian epithet.

"'Worldly pleasures' are still under the ban of our spiritual purists. Daily drudgery and daily self-denial are still considered the proper sphere of a law-abiding citizen, and special affliction a special sign of divine favor. Life has become a soc-age duty. We do not think it necessary to alleviate the distress of the poor till it reaches a degree that threatens to end it. We have countless benevolent institutions for the prevention of outright death, not one benevolent enough to make life worth living. Infanticide is now far more rigorously punished than in old times. We enforce every child's right to live and become a humble, tithe-paying Christian; but, as for its claim to live happy, we refer it to the sweet by-and-by. We shudder at the barbarity of the Cæsars, who permitted the combat of men with wild beasts to cater to the amusement of the Roman populace; but we contemplate with great equanimity the misery of millions of our fellow-citizens wearing away their lives in work-shops and factories: millions of children of our own nation and country who have no recreation but sleep, no hope but oblivion; to whom the morning sun brings the summons of a task-master, and the summer season nothing but lengthened

hours of weary toil,—nay, we make it the boast of our pious civilization to deprive them of their sole day of leisure, to interdict their harmless sports lest the noise, or even the rumor of their merriment, might disturb the solemnity of an assemblage of whining hypocrites. Hence, the recklessness, the nihilism, and the weary pessimism of our times, the melancholy that everywhere underlies the glittering varnish of our social life. Hence, also, that vague yearning after a happier hereafter, which the murderers of the happy past have made the principal source of their revenues.

"The Christian dogma of the reformatory value of misery has been refuted by the most dreadful arguments in the world's history. The unhappiest nations are not only the most immoral, but the most selfish and the meanest, in every ugly sense of the word. Virtues do not flourish on a trampled soil. Genius, too, is a child of light. The Grecian worship of joy favored the development of every human science, while the monastic worship of sorrow produced nothing but monsters and chimeras; for, to modern science, Christianity bears about the same relation as the plague does to the quarantine." (*Physical Education*, p. 186.)

The doctrine of anti-naturalism still perverts the principles of our system of education, as it perverted the ethics, the science, the social tendencies, and the religion of the Middle Ages. It is the extra-mundane fulcrum of the lever that forced the moral world from its normal orbit.

Has the happiness of the human race been secured, or in any degree promoted, by the dogmas of

the Christian religion? Cowardice and stupidity have too long connived at the crime of abetting the dissemination of that earth-blighting superstition, and it is time to say the truth in plain terms. The demonstrable truth then is that, if all the countries of Europe that were destined to pass under the yoke of the cross had, instead, for a thousand years been covered by the ashes of the fire-storm that buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the world would to-day be benefited by the result. Our earth would be more fertile and populous, our fellow-men would be freer, wiser, and happier. The waste of the volcanic cinders would have proved less irreclaimable than the desert of pessimism. The survivors of the catastrophe would have saved their children from the alternative of death or moral slavery that awaited the next forty generations of their descendants. The nations of the Caucasian race would have been spared the systematic extirpation of their wisest and bravest men. The Saracens, whose western empire was destroyed by the insane fanaticism of the Christian priests, would have cultivated the garden of civilization in a more grateful soil. The discoverers of America would not have deluged the New World with a sea of blood. The relics of pagan art and science would have been safer in the custody of the elements than in the hands of the monkish forgers and fanatics.

We read of Ammonite devotees sacrificing their first-born to Moloch; of Egyptian peasants starving their children, to fatten a herd of lazy dervishes; of Hindu pilgrims performing seventy-seven

thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven somersaults, "for the benefit of their souls," and compelling their families to join in the exercise. But such poor maniacs are, after all, less to blame than the juggler-guild of priests and mystics who first persuaded them to renounce their right of free investigation in favor of any human authority. As soon as reason surrenders to a dogma, the power of the exponents of that dogma becomes autocratic: they can securely further their selfish interests by almost any outrage on common sense and justice. If the philosophers of future centuries should recognize this chief root of superstition, they will perhaps acquit the nations of the Dark Ages from the guilt of their manifold sins against nature, and explain their strangest delusions, with one exception. If they read the history of pessimism and the fate of the nations who had accepted its doctrines, they will fail to understand how the author of that creed could ever be mistaken for a Saviour.

CHAPTER VII.

DAYBREAK.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.—DANIEL xii., 2.

The revival of rationalism at the beginning of the sixteenth century forms the turning-point and the most interesting era in the history of the Middle Ages; for all the developments of our present civilization can be traced to germs which then first ventured into the light of day. But the researches of the few free-thinking historians of that period have been sedulously perverted by the hired pettifoggers of the Christian cliques. The insurrection against the authority of the Church has been ascribed to the national antipathies of the Latin and German races, to a revival of Latin literature and paganism, to the lessons of the Crusades, to the intrigues of the Spanish Jews, to the pantheism of Averroes and other Moorish philosophers. The most extravagant theories have been elaborated to avoid the confession of the simple truth,—that the excess of the evil itself produced a reaction which led to its abatement.

Like the idol of the Baal priests, insatiable devourers sooner or later swallow an explosive mixture; and the very triumphs of an intolerable tyranny have thus often led to its overthrow. The power of the Roman Empire was broken by the revolt of barbarians whose troops had been trained

in the imperial armies. The Turks selected their janizaries from the stoutest young men of the vanquished Slavonians, and these very janizaries eventually compassed the ruin of the Ottoman Empire. During the first ten centuries of the Christian era, the power of the Church was balanced in the North by the untamed pride of the Teutonic princes, and in the South by the lingering influence of pagan philosophy. The fanaticism of her militant apostles prevailed against valor and common sense, but the plenitude of her triumph proved fatal to her supremacy. Europe had become an ecclesiastical allodium. Wealth, the treasures of literature, the control of the censorship, the institutes of learning, were almost entirely in the hands of the clergy. Legislators were their obedient tools. The civilization of the Moors had been annihilated. The high-schools of Toledo and Cordova had lost their protectors. The establishment of the Inquisition and the vigilance of her spies insured the punishment of non-conformists. In less than a century, the prodigious number of convents had more than doubled. In 1450, the Franciscans had sixteen thousand two hundred convents. In 1520, the subdivision of the order known as the "Observants" had thirty-four thousand monasteries of their own. In the fifteenth century, the Dominicans and Augustinians had spread all over Western Europe. In many parts of Spain there were six friars and two priests for every dozen workingmen. In Spain and Portugal, the Jews had shared the fate of the Moriscoes; and, in Germany, the Inquisitor Hog-

straaten attempted the destruction of their entire literature, with the exception of the Old Testament. Free thinkers were not only unaided in the pursuit of truth, but effectually debarred from its dissemination. The Church controlled the whole machinery of education, and the votaries of knowledge had to become priests or monks. Among the many millions who entered the monasteries in search of peace or in quest of the refectory, a few hundred came with higher aims, and their unselfish love of truth drove them to a fierce rebellion against the power of her enemies. The Church that tried to digest this mixture of monachism and philosophy found that she had swallowed the prescription of Daniel. The font of her consecrated water had been vaunted as the fountain of truth. All other well-springs of knowledge had been stopped, and pilgrims whose thirst could not be stilled with sophisms had been admitted behind the scenes. The revelations that dispelled the shadows of the Middle Ages did not come from Cordova or Bagdad, but from the strongholds of the Christian hierarchy. Luther, Campanella, Eckardt, Charron, Roger Bacon, Lipsius, and Jordan Bruno were monks. Duns Scotus, Vanini, Abelard, and Woolston were theologians. Jean Meslier was a Catholic clergyman. These men, and hundreds of their contemporaries, had entered the Church without any special bias in favor of anti-naturalism. In Northern Germany, the word "*Pfaffe*" (a Romish priest) had never ceased to be a synonyme of everything unmanly and contemptible. In Southern Italy, the descendants of the old hero race still

cherished the traditions of their forefathers, and hated the chains which they were unable to break.

In the hearts of such men, the study of ancient history, the echoes from the paradise of the past, and the knowledge of the true character of the moralists who had sacrificed that paradise to force their way to the throne of the world,—this knowledge, and the comparison of the past and present condition of their native lands, must have produced a degree of indignation which we can only conceive by imagining an analogy of our own country and age.

Suppose that the Californian Chinese manage to propagate a superstition which finally enables them to subvert the civilization of the North American continent. The new Celestial Empire is governed on the principle of Buddha, that all earthly possessions are vain, and that salvation can be obtained only by suppressing our natural instincts. By the alliance of Pagoda and State, the Buddhists secure the aid of the civil powers, and, in return, sanction the basest tyrannies of the secular rulers by inculcating the duty of passive submission to "the powers that be."* In the summit regions of the

* As long as their own necks were in danger, the clerics of the early Christian Church inveighed against tyranny and intolerance; but, as soon as that danger was past, the doctrine of passive submission to injustice bore its natural fruit, and the lot of the European peasantry became infinitely worse than that of the so-called slaves of the Roman Empire and the Grecian Republics, where their servitude was so often merely nominal, as many of them were employed as pedagogues and artists,—nay, as bankers, actors, and historians. Besides, the worst Roman despots enslaved only foreign prisoners of war, while the Christian princes, bishops, and abbots enslaved their own countrymen, and treated them with a degree of relentless and systematic inhumanity that produced an incomparably greater aggregate of misery than the occasional truculent caprices of the pagan tyrants.

Rocky Mountains, a few Anglo-American tribes still maintain the independence of their Republican forefathers; but the farmers of the plains are captured, branded like sheep, and divided in chain-gangs to work for the monks of the Buddhistic convents that spring up like mushrooms in every town. Turner Halls, gymnasiums,* and public baths † are suppressed as "fleshly vanities," tending to divert the minds of men from things spiritual. Our public libraries are demolished; ‡ some of the larger volumes are packed off to the monasteries, not from an appreciation of their literary value, but for the sake of their fly-leaves and blank margins, which are to be used for the record of Buddhistic ghost stories. The New England universities are closed by order of the Grand Mandarin. § Industrial progress is limited to the invention of improved machinery for the torture of heretics. The government bounty for timber plantations is discontinued. The forests are devastated, and the bonzes advise the proprietors to avert droughts by prayer-meetings. The Grand Lama instructs his provincials to suppress unbelief by the enforcement of an elaborate penal code. Thousands of scholars are burned alive for maintaining the difference between one and three.

*The Olympic festivals and the Capitoline games were suppressed by order of the Christian Emperor Theodosius, A.D. 394.

†The Spanish clergy abolished the public baths of the Moriscoes. Even baths in private houses were at last interdicted.

‡The Christian monks destroyed the Serapian Library of Alexandria and murdered the citizens who resisted the vandalism, A.D. 389.

§The University of Athens and the academies of Berytus and Thessalonica were suppressed by order of the Christian Emperor Justinian.

Mathematicians are treated as enemies of the human race.* The professors of the Washington Observatory receive forty bamboo stripes for demonstrating the annual motion of the earth, and twenty-five extra for maintaining her diurnal motion. Public festivals are enlivened by the wholesale burning of misbelievers. All cities, all schools, all places of public resort are infested with the spies of the Mongolian Inquisition. Clerical terrorism depopulates the land. Misery and famine follow in the wake of the Buddhistic propagandists. The industrial classes abandon their homes by thousands. Buddhistic monks fatten on the spoils of the exiles; but before the families of nonconformists are permitted to depart, their sons and daughters are dragged away to the slavery of the Mongolian convent. Would we not, like the Spanish Moors, tear our children limb from limb to preserve them from such a fate?

Yet all this is a mere outline of the change from the civilization of the nature-loving pagans to the barbarism of the Galilean pessimists: the realities of the Middle Ages supplied the details of the dreadful contrast. The very stones of the South-European convents still proclaimed the godlike forms of the men who celebrated life as a festival, and whose desecrated temples now housed a whining brood of nature-hating and nature-hated caricatures of the human shape.

The peasants of the North still cherished the battle-hymns and hunting-songs of their free fore-

*Justinian and several of his successors issued edicts for the "suppression of mathematicians."

fathers, while their children were forced to chant the puling cant of the Christian litany. The traditions of the folk-lore still preserved the memory of a time when the arena of life awarded its wreaths to valor and manly strength, while now hypocrisy and servility were the beaten roads to advancement. Wasted fields, starving hamlets, and gloomy cloisters covered the face of the earth where sculptured ruins mourned the glory of bygone times; the temples and palaces of Italy, the academies of Greece, the sacred groves of Daphne, the shady mountain forests of Taurus and Lebanon, had been devastated to fatten the foul vampires of the Galilean Church.

Nor need we doubt that the clearer-sighted students of ancient literature had discerned the change which had come over the moral world. No educational bias could entirely blind them to the glaring contrast between the logic, the critical acumen, the manly eloquence, the noble self-reliance, the sublime poetry of the Pagan philosophers and old Hebrew prophets, and the idiotic rant and disgusting sophistry of the monastic writers. No great poet, no independent philosopher, had appeared for the last eleven centuries. The Muses had fled the desecrated land; the laurel withered in the soil of pessimism; Nature had revenged herself upon her enemies. The philosophers of the sixteenth century might fail to recognize the secret of pessimism, but they could not help seeing the result of its tendencies, the stultifying, soul-diseasing, unmanning, debasing, and earth-blighting influence of its dogmas. They saw that

hypocrites and sycophants prospered, while thousands of free thinkers, many of whom they must have known as the truest of Nature's noblemen, had to rot behind prison walls, or could fertilize the seed of liberty only with their blood. What had the world gained by its conversion from Naturalism to Anti-naturalism? "Faith," blind faith, the supposed soul-saving merit of mental prostitution, as the only recompense for so many sacrifices. And now the foundations of that faith proved unsound, nay, utterly unsubstantial and untenable. The honest inquirers into the evidences of the saving faith awakened to a recognition of the fact that the supposed heavenly star which had lured the last forty generations to neglect and ruin their earth was the *ignis fatuus* of a bottomless swamp. In short, the fearful truth dawned upon them that the paradise of antiquity had been sacrificed in vain. They could no longer doubt that the chains which galled the noblest races of Europe were an unmixed curse, and the worst curse which had ever befallen the children of men. That this conviction begat a thirst for freedom which often overcame the fear of death is proved by the martyrdom of the twenty-six thousand Protestants, in the noblest sense of the word, who in the course of the sixteenth century bartered their lives for the luxury of breaking the silence which threatened to crush their hearts.* Those who declined the crown of martyrdom or hoped

*Between 1500 and 1580, the Inquisition murdered two hundred and seventy thousand non-conformists. Nine-tenths of these were American pagans and Spanish Mohammedans and Jews; the rest were Caucasian sceptics.

to see the dawn of a better day, and yet wished to promote its advent, adopted two indirect methods of attaining their object. They veiled their revelations in the language of allegory, like Eckardt, Silesius, and Campanella, or they published their views in the name of former free thinkers, and for the feigned purpose of refuting them. The latter plan was adopted by Reuchlin, Lipsius, and Woolston, and with eminent success by the precursor of Voltaire, Lucilio Vanini. Thomas Woolston's *Apology* is not weaker than his statement of the heresies he pretends to controvert. But Vanini's *Amphitheatre* anticipates the best arguments of Voltaire, Hume, and Thomas Paine. The masterly exposition of these arguments—in pretended quotations from the writings of obscure heretics—is followed by a not less masterly burlesque of the monkish method of controversy, clumsy dogmatism, personalities, and swaggering threats. Yet this scathing satire not only received the imprimatur of the government censor, but was published with the special recommendation of an ecclesiastical college, and did, probably, more to disseminate anti-clerical tenets than any work of the professed reformers. But no man can always wear a mask. In Toulouse, Vanini discovered himself to a better-masked bigot, who hastened to betray him to the Holy Inquisition. He was burned at the stake. Jordau Bruno, Savonarola, Leszynski, Arnold of Brescia, Stephen Dolet, Mathew Hamount, were tortured and burned. Campanella was racked and persecuted till a merciful death ended his misery; Roger Bacon

was persecuted and exiled; Thomas Woolston died in prison; Eckardt, Abelard, and Lipsius were bullied into silence. Their works were burned, their disciples were suppressed; but their labor had not been in vain. Their fate had proved that only the success of an open rebellion could liberate the human race from the hell of Anti-naturalism; and only in this sense is it true that the fiendish intolerance of the Middle Ages has promoted the progress of European civilization.*

*Every *ne plus ultra* is interesting, and the impudence of Jesuitical sophistry has never surpassed the following dictum of a Protestant Jesuit: "So large a thinker as Albert Réville has expressed his belief that the intolerance of Christianity indicated *a passionate love of truth*, which has *created modern science*. He says that, 'if Europe had not passed through those ages of intolerance, it is doubtful whether the science of our day would ever have arrived.'" —*North American Review*, May, 1883, p. 473. In justice to the honor of our age, I must quote another contemporary. "The persecutor," says W. H. Lecky, "can never be certain that he is not persecuting truth rather than error, but he may be quite certain that he is suppressing the spirit of truth. And, indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the doctrines I have reviewed represent the most skilful and at the same time most successful conspiracy against that spirit that has ever existed among mankind. Until the seventeenth century, every mental disposition which philosophy pronounces to be essential to a legitimate research was almost uniformly branded as a sin; and a large proportion of the most deadly intellectual vices were deliberately inculcated as virtues.... In a word, there is scarcely a disposition that marks the love of abstract truth, and scarcely a rule which reason teaches as essential for its attainment that theologians did not for centuries stigmatize as offensive to the Almighty."—*Hist. Rat.*, vol. ii., p. 90.

"Every man loves liberty," says Ludwig Boerne; "but the unjust claims it for himself alone, the just for all." Between dogmatism and the "love of truth" there is just as much difference as between despotism and the love of freedom. A disposition to *take liberties* would be a queer claim to the merit of liberalism. In the last eight years of his reign, the Czar Nicholas sentenced forty-two thousand political prisoners to the Siberian mines or the worse misery of a Russian jail, and at his command eleven thousand Polish boys were torn from their parents and dragged away to the military barracks of Eastern Russia. These exploits of the Slavonic Pope the eulogist of Mons. Albert Réville would probably ascribe to a passionate love of lib-

The tyranny of the Church led to the Protestant Revolt, as the tyranny of the French autocrats led to the French Revolution. Christian intolerance has promoted science as the plague has promoted the quarantine.

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erty,—the liberty of tyrannizing his subjects. For more than eleven hundred years, the activity of Monsieur Réville's passionate friends obstructed the progress of all sciences, with two exceptions; for it cannot be denied that they successfully cultivated the science of forging miraculous biographies and the science of suppressing free inquiry.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROTESTANT REVOLT.

Tyranny begins her arguments by fettering free speech. Begin your reply by breaking your fetters.—*Mirabeau.*

THE analogies of body and mind are most strikingly exhibited in the development of physical and moral *poison-habits.* At first, every poison is repulsive. Children abhor the very smell of alcohol. The first effect of tobacco is that of a nauseating drug. The disgusting taste of opium prevails through every disguise. Nature protests against the incipience of an insidious "second nature," and this protective instinct often saves where neither law nor science yields its aid. In the slum-alleys of our great cities, and beset by daily temptations, the children of poverty and ignorance often preserve their physical purity by an innate repugnance to vice; and even in Northern China there is a "Vigilance Society," whose members, in defiance of law, pledge themselves to antagonize the abettors of the opium traffic and use all possible means to restrict an evil which they cannot suppress. Gross vices do not achieve an easy conquest: the protests of a faithful conscience warn us again and again; but, if that protest is persistently disregarded, nature at last adapts herself to the abnormal condition, and the instinctive repugnance gives way to a morbid craving for the unnatural stimulus. Healthy food grows insipid. The toper becomes a

slave to his drug; and, by educational influences, the baneful habit may develop into a hereditary or even national vice.

In a similar way, such moral poisons as hypocrisy, the miracle-mania, and pessimism have to overcome the resistance of every healthier instinct before they can enslave the mind of a whole nation. In Southern Europe, the doctrines of the Galilean Church have achieved this victory. Among the Caucasian races of the Mediterranean peninsula, millions of our fellow-men have lost the normal instincts of their species, and have come to enjoy the poison of anti-naturalism. The Greek and Roman monks vied in self-abasement, self-mutilation, and the voluntary sacrifice of their reason, as their forefathers vied in science and heroic games. Patriotism has withered under the influence of anti-natural dogmas. Unmanliness has ceased to be a reproach. Manly self-reliance and athletic sports have lost their charm. The prescriptions of the Jesuitical poison-mongers have made simple truth insipid: their victims have contracted a morbid craving for supernaturalism, and love cant for its own sake. The Celtic races, whose forefathers had become inured to the vicissitudes of anarchy and despotism, have accepted the yoke of the cross and reserved their protestantism for the struggles of the political arena. Their priests have maintained their influence by catering to their national prejudices.

But the Germanic races of Northern Europe have never been really converted. Their forefathers were compelled to submit to the logic of

superior force; but their acquiescence was that of the North-China Vigilance Society—a latent protest. Their conqueror had to baptize them in their own blood, and they yielded only after all their able-bodied men had literally been cut into pieces. In the winter of 772, the apostle of Northern Germany crossed the Weser with an army of sixty thousand men, and founded the bishoprics of Halberstadt, Minden, and Paderborn; while the natives disputed every inch of the ground, and only retreated after the devastation of their villages had deprived them of the means of subsistence. Two years after, they rallied their forces, expelled their priests, and chased them across the Rhine, when the return of Charlemagne compelled them once more to yield their homes to the spoiler and take refuge in the wilds of the far North-east. Here, they were attacked in 776, and repelled the invaders with such slaughter that the royal propagandist thought it wiser to confine his efforts to the Westphalian lowlands. New bishoprics were founded; and the remaining inhabitants shared the fate of the peasantry in the priest-ridden Frankish crown-lands, and were treated worse than brute beasts, till the menaces of the Spanish Moors called their oppressor across the Pyrenees. As soon as he was gone, all Saxony rose in a fierce insurrection. The hero Wittekind united the scattered tribes, and advanced as far as Osnabrück, but was soon confronted by all the forces of the Frankish Empire; and, during the next seven years, a war of extermination turned his native land into a desert. When the insurgents had been

driven into the furthest recesses of the Hartz Mountains, the priests returned; and the "converted" Saxons tilled their land as duly baptized bondsmen till 792, when the intolerable despotism of their oppressor goaded them into a fresh rebellion. But the dire tactics of the iron-clad Franks prevailed again, and the war now became a remorseless man-hunt. The natives were waylaid at the ruins of their homesteads and at the river-fords. Thousands of women and children were dragged off into exile, and the male captives were slain like wolves. In Quedlinburg alone, *four thousand* prisoners were beheaded in one day.

There was no gainsaying such arguments, and the next twenty generations of the Saxon yeomen acted on the principle that "Christian submission to the powers that be" may sometimes be the safest plan. But no other slaves have so loathed the chains they could not break. When famine and defeat began to thin the ranks of Prince Wittekind, the Franks erected large crosses, as rallying-places for "converts"; *i.e.*, deserters, who wished to accept baptism and the bread of bondage. *Zu Kreuze kriechen* (crawling to cross) has ever since been the most contemptuous term in the German language. *Pfaffenthum* and *pfäffisch* (from *Pfaffe*, a Romish priest) have become the synonymes of obscurantism and Jesuitical intrigues. The heroes of the national ballads were not the whining saints of the Romish Church, but men like Robin Hood or Ritter Siegfried and Tannhäuser. The favorite political leaders were free thinkers, like Otto I., Frederic Barbarossa (as afterward Frederic

the Great), or Goetz von Berlichingen, Ulric Hutten, and George Frundsberg, who openly adopted the motto, "Gottes Freund, der Pfaffen Feind."

The descendants of the manful old Odin-worshippers still prayed to a hero-protecting, bounteous All-father rather than to a joy-hating, cant-loving "head-of-the-clerical-interest." Long after the litanies and groaning procession hymns of Southern Europe had silenced the lyre of Anacreon, and even in Southern Germany passion-plays had superseded the lays of the minnesingers, the songs of the North still breathed a fervid love of nature.* Throughout Northern Europe, and long before Luther, independence and protestantism were as invariable concomitants as faith and slavery. The German nobles paid neither spiritual nor material tithes. A few of them kept private chaplains, in order to complete the *clientèle* of a liberal household, or for educational purposes (as their successors still employ candidates of theology); but their practical habits were the very antithesis of monkish humility, and that anti-natural renunciation of earthly happiness which the Church represented as the highest type of human virtue.

* In the *Streitfragen* (Minden, Wilhelm Köhler) for January, 1881, Prof. Kepler quotes the following "Alte Jäger-Lied" (Old Hunter's Song):—

"Nun steig' ich nimmer wieder ins graue Dorf hinab.
Im Walde will ich wohnen; im Wald grabt mir mein Grab:
Wo mir des Pfarrer's Kühe nicht drauf zur Weide gehn;
Das Wild soll drüber springen, kein Kreuz im Wege stehn!"

Literally:—

"Now, nevermore shall I return to the gray old village.
In the woods let me live; in the woods dig me my grave:
Where the cows of the priest cannot batten upon its grass;
Above it let the wild deer play, no Christian cross stand in the way."

"Self-help" was their motto. They redressed their own wrongs, and maintained their rights even against their sovereign. In their castle halls, the rule of free speech recognized no higher law whatever. They did not devote their holidays to the self-afflictions of nature-hating fanatics, but to the recreations of their free ancestors,—to the chase, to songs, and athletic sports. At a time when the Spanish cavaliers competed for the honor of marching in procession with the pageant of an auto-da-fé, Francis von Sickingen risked his head rather than surrender the free thinker Hutten, and Martin Luther found a protector in every German nobleman.* As soon as the cities of the Hanseatic League became strong enough to resist the tyranny of the Church, they exhibited the same spirit of defiance; and several of the North-German free towns renounced the advantage of a papal recognition rather than comply with the demands of the Inquisitor-general.

The priests, in the mean time, had not been idle. Their recognized efficiency as the allies of despotism secured them the connivance of every despotic ruler; they controlled the educational institutions; they influenced legislation; they founded convents and seminaries. But, in spite of all that, their Church remained an exotic plant, and had con-

* At a time when a man had to choose between slavery and lawless independence, the chivalry of Northern Europe often maintained that independence at the expense of their fellow-men; but, in better times, they have produced many of those truest friends of liberty who demand freedom for others as well as for themselves,—*e.g.*, Coligny, Volney, Hutten, Holbach, Philip of Hessen, Stein, Humboldt, De Ligne, Mansfield, Bolingbroke, Byron, Halifax, Queensbury, Egmont, Barneveldt, Kossuth, Bathyani.

stantly to be fertilized by papal subsidies. Like the North-China Temperance League, the nations of Northern Europe were forced to connive at a pernicious poison-traffic, but never ceased to detest the poison. The temptations of the anti-naturalists had failed to corrupt their healthier instincts. Hence, the apparent paradox that the latest converts were the first to revolt; while those who had suffered most under the yoke of the Church were unable or unwilling to break their chains. For those chains were the fetters of an inveterate poison-vice. "Hear me first a few words," said a young man, whom Dr. Mussey had admonished about his intemperate propensities, "and then you may proceed. I am sensible that an indulgence in this habit will lead to loss of property, the loss of reputation, the loss of domestic happiness, to premature death, and to the irretrievable loss of my immortal soul; and now, with all this conviction resting firmly on my mind and flashing over my conscience like lightning, if I still continue to drink, do you suppose anything you can say will deter me from the practice?"

In similar words, Cardinal Retz might have answered the arguments of Erasmus. For the nations of the Latin races, the chance of salvation had come too late. The brain—their enlightened men—clearly saw the coming tophet of degeneration and national bankruptcy; but the body of the people were intoxicated with the fumes of the Moloch fire, and pursued the road to ruin like blindfolded victims. The poison of anti-naturalism had fastened upon their souls. They had lost

not only their liberty, but their desire for liberation. The systematic murder of all avowed free thinkers had emasculated the national mind. They were contentedly ignorant. They had ceased to despise mental prostitution. They had come to enjoy the ceremonies and wretched mummeries of their Church. Spain and Portugal have sunk to the level of the East-Buddhistic nations. Ireland, Southern Germany, and Southern France still sleep; and Greece will awake no more. In Italy, however, the reaction of the Protestant propaganda has led to a quasi compromise,—the intellectual emancipation of the educated classes. By a system of mutual concessions, the lower orders have been abandoned to the wiles of their clerical obscurantists; while scholars indulge in a scepticism that transcends all that Southern Europe witnessed in the days of Lucretius and Diagoras. The writings of Leopardi, Mundt, and Taine throw a curious light on this anomaly of social life, even in Rome itself.*

*In the fifteenth century, the revival of classical studies led to a somewhat similar result. The Colonnas and Medicis protected several avowed free thinkers, and the Dictionary of the French Encyclopædists has preserved the following anecdote: "Prince Pico de Mirandola once met Pope Alexander VI. at the house of the courtesan Emilia, while Lucretia, the holy Father's daughter, was confined in child-birth, and the people of Rome were discussing whether the child belonged to the pope, to his son Cesar, or to Lucretia's husband, Alphonso of Aragon, who was considered ——. The conversation immediately became animated and gay. Cardinal Bembo relates a part of it: 'My little Pico,' says the pope, 'whom do you think the father of my grandson?' 'I think your son-in-law,' replied Pico. 'What! how can you possibly believe such nonsense?' 'I believe it by faith.' 'But, surely, you know that an —— cannot be a father.' 'Faith,' replied Pico, 'consists in believing things because they are impossible. You require me to believe more incomprehensible mysteries. Am I not bound to believe that —— had no

In Switzerland, Hungary, and other countries of mixed races, a part of the populace had actually to be bribed to achieve their own salvation. Others merely exchanged creeds, and often adopted a gloomier though more consistent form of the old superstition, or yielded only to the eloquence of an inspired apostle.

But, in the North, such arguments could be dispensed with. The nations of Northern Europe waited not for a reformer, but for a liberator; and, when the intellectual support of a few prominent scholars and the political support of an influential prince had given Luther's enterprise the least chance of success, the moral support of the people took the form of a jubilant uprising, and the Protestant Revolt broke out like the torrent of

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earthly father at all; that a serpent spoke; that from that time all mankind were damned; that the ass of Balaam also spoke with great eloquence; and that the walls of Jericho fell down at the sound of trumpets?' Pico thus proceeded with a long list of all the prodigious things in which he believed. Alexander absolutely fell back upon his sofa with laughing. 'I had better believe all that as well as you,' says he; 'for I well know that I can be saved only by faith, as I can certainly never be so by works.' 'Ah, holy father,' says Pico, 'you need neither works nor faith: they are well enough for such poor profane creatures as we are; but you, who are absolutely a vice-god, you may believe and do just whatever you please. You have the keys of heaven, and St. Peter will certainly never shut the door in *your* face. But as for myself, who am nothing but a poor prince, I freely confess that I should have found some very powerful protection necessary, if I had employed the stiletto and nightshade as often as your holiness.' Alexander VI. understood raillery. 'Let us speak seriously,' says he to the prince. 'Tell me what merit there can be in a man's saying to God that he is persuaded of things of which, in fact, he cannot be persuaded? What pleasure can this afford to God? Between ourselves, a man who says that he believes what is impossible to be believed is a humbug.' Pico de Mirandola at this crossed himself in great agitation. 'Mi Dio!' says he, 'I beg your Holiness' pardon, but you are not a Christian.' 'Upon my faith,' says the Pope, 'I am not.' 'That's what I suspected,' says Pico de Mirandola."

a long-obstructed river. The common people took little interest in the theological subtleties of the dogmatic controversy: they had no cause to hope that the doctrine of the New Testament could in any degree be reconciled with human reason; but, with the broad instinct of self-preservation, they seized upon the main fact that the success of the insurrection meant liberation from the thraldom of an intolerable yoke. Their clear-seeing men foresaw that the wedge which now divided the power of the Church would soon split it into smaller and lighter pieces: they felt sure that, in the course of time, the antiseptic of free inquiry and the tonic of secular pursuits would eradicate the taint of anti-naturalism; and, in the mean time, they accepted the dogmas of Luther as a man accepts the cow-pox,—as a protection from the danger of a more horrible disease.

Martin Luther was not the first sect-founder who builded more wisely than he knew. Pythagoras, who intended to introduce the superstition of the Hindu Gnostics, succeeded only in reforming the hygienic habits of his countrymen. Mohammed, the Unitarian revivalist, was inspired by a purely religious zeal. He recommended neither physical education nor the culture of the intellectual faculties, but he was wise enough at least not to depreciate them. They recommended themselves as means to his ends; and, a hundred years after his death, the civilization of Islam rivalled the culture of Greece and Rome. Luther's chief purpose was to propagate his dogma of salvation by faith, etc., and to restore the theocracy of

the early Christian churches; but, before he could plant, he had to uproot, and this weeding of the soil revived the suppressed germs of Naturalism and Philosophy. And though, like Moses, he called himself a humble servant of God, it is certain that neither the diatribes of Martial and Demosthenes, nor the philippics of Danton, Mirabeau, and Lord Brougham, have ever equalled the tremendous emphasis of his invectives; and to this negative preaching he owed his wonderful popularity.

"Freedom awakened in every breast";* the mere rumor of the first success gained over whole cities and provinces; the nations of the North flew to arms, like the old Saxons at the return of their heroic chieftain; Northern Germany became the arena of an international war; and after a struggle, in which the very earth seemed to rise in defence of her children, the enemies of nature were overpowered: the demon of the Buddhistic pest had found its victor.

The leaders of the Reformation intended a Christian-Patristic revival, but the soul of its success was a *protest.*

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*Es gereicht den alten Deutschen zum Ruhm,
Dass sie gehasst das Christenthum,
Bis Kaiser Karolus leidigem Degen
Die edlen Sachsen unterlegen;
Auch haben sie lange genug gerungen,
Bis endlich die Pfaffen sie bezwungen
Und sie sich unter's Joch geduckt:
Auch haben sie immer einmal gemuckt.
Auch lagen sie nur in halbem Schlaf
Als Luther die Bibel verdeutscht so brav;
St. Paulus, als ein Ritter derb
Erschien den Rittern minder herb:
Freiheit erwacht in jeder Brust;
Wir protestiren alle mit Lust.—Wolfgang Goethe.

(Recommended to the translators of the Goethe-worshipping Concord School of Christian Philosophy.)

CHAPTER IX.

REGENESIS.

The night ends with storms; yet rejoice: They herald the Morning.—*Jean Paul.*

THE history of Protestantism is the history of a progressive reform. When the congress of Westphalia accepted the terms of the Protestant princes, the power of anti-naturalism received its death-sentence; for, with the interests of the Christian religion, the right of free inquiry is as incompatible as sunlight with the interests of an owl-association. The spectres of the Middle Ages are fleeing from the morning air; dogma after dogma has silently evanished before the advance of that reform of which the Augsburg Confession was not the consummation, but the beginning. It is probable that few of the reformers could foresee the consequences of the movement they were setting forward, but the instinct of the people could not be deceived: they felt the true import of the great regenesis, and expressed their appreciation of its chief fact by the popular name of the cause of *Protestantism.* That protest has been repeated till we can no longer doubt that its causative principle is a *revival of naturalism.* The abolition of witchcraft laws, of religious disabilities and ecclesiastic privileges, the divorce of Church and State, secular education, civil marriages, our newspaper

oracles, lecture-bureaus and cyclopædias, our republics, our railways, telegraphs, telescopes and electric lights, our life insurances and lightning conductors, mechanics' institutes and gymnasiums, our zoölogical gardens, Sunday excursions and festivals of the Turner-bund, are strange comments on the theory of the sages who ascribe our superior civilization to the restoration of the patristic dogmas. Anti-naturalism was not only the consequence, but the cause and essence of those dogmas.

The ministers of pessimism still disregard the signs of dawn, or mistake them for the reflection of their mystic light; but they cannot help perceiving that the demand for consecrated candles has alarmingly decreased. Their didactic functions have been intrusted to the exponents of secular science; their judicial and statistical functions to the municipal authorities; their tribunal of public censure has been surrendered to the public press; and the very foundation of their spiritual authority has been undermined by the agencies of that ominous phase in the decadence of a creed which drives its ablest champions into the camp of the opposition. Two hundred years ago, a considerable plurality of our educated clergymen would have been burned as heretics; and the veil of external forms can hardly disguise the fact that the doctrine now preached in the city churches of the progressive nations is neither Romanism nor Calvinism, but *eclectic casuistry.* The signs of a progressing change are, indeed, getting distinct enough to be visible even through

the painted windows of the Roman cathedrals. The tenure of the infallible Church is in litigation; her drafts on heaven are sadly below par; her Hades has changed its climate, as well as its name. The plan of pressing science into the service of dogmatism has only hastened the progress of disintegration. Nature cannot be fought with her own weapons; by just as much as her enemies increase the knowledge of their disciples, they decrease their orthodoxy; the ministers of darkness try in vain to utilize the electric lights of civilization.

Yet the church of natural religion is still a militant church. Pessimism is fighting its last battle with bitter obstinacy. The aggressive agencies of the Galilean Church have become obstructive elements. The roars of the *bestia trionfante* have been silenced; the open war against truth has ceased, but her enemies still maintain a defensive warfare; such plain duties toward our fellow-men as the exposure of superstition and hypocrisy are still denounced as crimes against the majesty of our God. Monks and Puritans have ceased to enforce the worship of sorrow, but their influence still prevents the worship of joy; the poison of asceticism still blights our festivals; the love of earth is still a stigma. The Stylites have descended from their columns; self-mutilation and self-torture have ceased their work of degeneration; but the regenerating influence of physical education has not yet been recognized; even in America, we have a hundred mythology schools for one gymnasium. Like the deities of

the Roman Empire, the gods of pessimism have lost their thunder; their butcher-priests have been disarmed, but their temples still cumber the land; the embers of their altar-fires still cloud the sky with their murky fumes.

Yet the rising sun will soon dissipate those clouds. Our pilgrimage to the land of regeneration is not yet finished; but the light of the new day has at least brought to view the goal of our journey, and will help us to avoid the obstacles of our path. The night-spectres flee. The morning sun begins to reveal the true form of the vampire whose loathsome embrace has sapped the life-blood of the last hundred generations. The demon of pessimism will not long hide his ghastly face under the guise of a heavenly messenger. One by one, his masks have dropped; and the hour of deliverance is near, when the hand of science shall lift the veil of the *Perversion-fallacy*,—the last sophism that still enables the Galilean Church to deprecate the odium of their crimes against the happiness of the human race. The outrages against the friends of science and freedom, they say, were the consequences of a perverted creed, while the founders of that creed inveighed only against earthly desires, against unbelief, against the love of wealth, of sensual enjoyments, and worldly honors. "I did not destroy the flowers and fruits of the tree," says the fatuous gardener: "I merely aimed my blows at the base roots."

The dupes of the perversion-fallacy see the contrast between the lowly beginning and the outrageous consequences of anti-naturalism, but they

fail to trace the inevitable sequence of cause and effect. They fail to see that the withering of the earthly roots of human life will equally blight the highest flowers of the spirit. They fail to see that decrepitude begets cowardice, meanness, and duplicity; that destitution is a worse tempter than affluence; that non-resistance leads to slavery; that blind faith opens the door to imposture; that the neglect of terrestrial affairs leads to moral and intellectual as well as material bankruptcy; that the spirit sickens with the body. They fail to see that a noble mind is a flower of which physical health is the stem and the root.

The New Testament, in fact, contains all the seeds of the insane dogmas that turned the world of the Middle Ages into a mad-house. Not the outcome only, but the very source of the Galilean creed is an earth-blighting superstition. And, wherever the tendencies of our so-called *Christian* civilization have led to health and happiness, it proves that we have left the age of St. Augustine very far behind. It proves that the doctrine of pessimism has become untenable, that our earth has awakened from the fever-dream of the Middle Ages, that the healing powers of nature have at last prevailed against the most terrible disease of the human race.

For a large number of our contemporaries, the day of deliverance has already arrived; but no one deserves his liberty who does not contribute his share to the emancipation of his fellow-men. The bigotry of a besotted fanatic is hardly more contemptible than the cautious selfishness of the

man who silently enjoys the sweet air of freedom while thousands of his brethren sicken in the dungeon of anti-naturalism. The agnostic and apathic creed of science must become a positive religion. The energy which we owe to the fear of disease should be inspired by the love of health. Before the end of this century, the protest against the enemies of nature should consummate its triumph in a gospel of earthly happiness. Religion must cease to be a synonyme of hypocrisy.

The Religion of the Future will dispense with stakes and torture-chambers. It will employ no weapons but logic, no inquisition but the inquiry after truth. It will appeal to no higher canon than the progressive revelation of science. All the thinkers, discoverers, and reformers who were the enemies of religion will become its missionaries. Its work of redemption will not be achieved by the suppression, but by the encouragement of free inquiry; not by the renunciation, but by the promotion of temporal happiness; not by ghost-stories and self-torture, but by natural science, Olympic festivals, outdoor life, social and educational reforms, desert-redeeming forest culture, gymnastics, and health-schools. The path of its victory will not lead over the trampled flowers of this earth. The religion of nature will dispense with miracles. It will heal the sick by teaching them to avoid the causes of disease. It will help the poor by increasing their means of self-help: it will still their hunger after happiness with better fare than litanies and consecrated wafers.

We may keep our altars; but the priests of the

future will not require the sacrifice of our reason, of our freedom and our natural affections, and will not reject an honest votary, though he should decline to hate his father and mother,—yea, and his own life. We shall worship our God in the temple of nature; and, if Paradise can be regained, we shall try to enjoy it on this side of the grave.

APPENDIX.

I.

Indian Sources of the New Testament.

The study of Comparative Mythology has established the rule that the metastasis of myths confines itself to a descending line of transmission. The attributes, doings, and sayings of national *numina* are transferred from gods to heroes, from heroes and demigods to favorite saints and political leaders, from exuberant and popular religions to inchoate and aspiring creeds. Sarama, the Spirit of the Dawn, becomes a Grecian Helena; the stronghold of the night-gods shrinks to a Mysian city; Wodan, with his celestial companions, descends to the vault of a German castle or rides the storm-cloud through the midnight woods. A mythical hero of ancient Iran sinks to a Danish warrior, and finally to a Swiss peasant; Venus becomes a lamia; Hertha, the earth-goddess, a nursery witch. Conquered nations degrade their old idols, if they cannot preserve them on better terms. The priests and devotees of a newly promoted Olympian try to establish his claim by identifying him with a deity of superior rank.

It is therefore not probable that the *Krishna-tradition* was transferred directly from Brahmanism to Christianity. Long before the advent of the

Galilean avatar, Krishna, the heaven-born lover of the milkmaids, had ceased to be the centre of a special worship, Buddhism had reacted on Brahmanism as the doctrine of Luther had reacted on the Catholic religion: It had forced the older creed to relinquish its exuberant myths, and retreat to the stronghold of its essential dogmas. Those portions of the Krishna-legend which have blended with our gospel myths were probably transmitted through the medium of Buddhism, and, being confined chiefly to the infancy traditions of the two Messiahs, have no ethical importance whatever.

Of far different significance is the concordance of Christianity and Buddhism. The character and the astounding number of their analogies not only reveal the genesis of the Christian myths, but also elucidate numerous otherwise obscure passages in the parables and ethical precepts of the New Testament, and thus confirm the intrinsic proofs of its extra-Hebraic origin and its pessimistic tendency.

The chronological subterfuge of the Christian apologists has been effectually disposed of. It had been supposed that the *Lalita Vistara*, the chief compend of the Buddha legend, was a Cingalese romance of comparatively recent date, and that its compilers might have availed themselves of West-Asiatic traditions. But the researches of Burnouf, Wassiljew, Köppen, Max Müller, Seydel, Julien, and Plath have most incontestably established the fact that Cingalese Buddhism, though a younger branch of the great Indian religion, has more

faithfully than the northern sects preserved the original traditions of the Buddha Bible, and that the canonical recognition of the *Lalita Vistara*—not to mention the period of its development—far ante-dates those of the Christian gospels. Stanislas Julien proved by an ancient Chinese catalogue of the Kaygur scriptures that the *Lalita* was one of the books which in the first century of our chronological era were translated from the old Indian originals, and that therefore, even at that early period, the *Lalita* was included among the canonical books of Buddhism. Besides, many of the most suggestive passages of the Cingalese gospel are found already in the Thibetan *Hinayânas*, which more than two centuries before Christ had taken rank among the sacred scriptures of the northern Buddhists. Plath demonstrates that 230 B.C. the *Hinayânas* had already assumed their present form. Prof. Rudolph Seydel, the learned Christian apologist, admits that the canonical recognition of the *Lalita* cannot be assigned to a later period than twenty years after the birth of Christ. "But what would it avail us," he adds, "to postpone that date to the uttermost limit of possibility? We could not make it less incredible that the Buddhists should have copied from the legends of a creed which was then only in its cradle, and whose traditions had not even begun to crystallize into fixed forms."—(*Das Evangelium von Jesu*, p. 79, Leipzig, 1882.)

Especially since Buddhism was then in the very zenith of its vigor. The homage which the Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans have paid to the

founders of their religions, is frigid, compared with the fervor of devotional enthusiasm which gathered about the person of Buddha Sakyamuni. In Ceylon, the name of Gautama has *twelve thousand* synonymes. Compared with the self-tortures of the Buddhistic anchorites, the askesis of the Christian monks looks like self-indulgence. Millions of Buddhistic laymen devoted a tenth part of every day to the study of their sacred scriptures, and committed whole books and chronicles to memory. And shall we believe that the priests of that religion—a religion which then counted its converts by hundreds of millions, and was daily preached from many hundred thousand pulpits—dared to adulterate their gospel with the traditions of a creed which, from their point of view, was professed only by a small sect of a contemptible and ignorant mountain tribe of Western Syria? Suppose that the English translator of the Vulgate had tried his hand at a mediæval romance: would any Protestant sect have attempted to enrich the New Testament with the adventures of Sir Lancelot du Lac? And can we believe that the Cingalese, the most orthodox sect of Buddhism, have thus tampered with the sacred canon of their Hinayâna gospel? It would not be more absurd if a thousand years hence a student of comparative mythology should assert that our new version of the Scriptures had been borrowed from the writings of Joseph Smith, or that the chronicle of the wars and adventures of Mohammed were a mere paraphrase of Voltaire's drama.

On the other hand, no circumstance in ancient

history is more clearly established than the fact that, before the appearance of Christ, Buddhistic traditions and Buddhistic missionaries had reached the land of the Mediterranean nations. Like all great movements in the history of the human race, Buddhism at first advanced toward the setting sun, and only the recoil of its westward tide led to the inundation of Eastern Asia. Long before China and Siam were brought under the sway of the "Word," Buddhistic colonies had been planted beyond the Indus. Spiegel's translation of the *Five Gathas* and Târanatha's *History of Buddhism* (translated by Wassiljew) mention Buddhistic missions in Western Persia during the reign of Artaxerxes Longomanus (about B.C. 450). Alexander Polyhistor describes the ascetic practices of Buddhistic monks in Bactria, and speaks of self-torturing hermits and mendicant orders; while in the Thirteenth Edict of Girnar, King Asoka, the "Constantine of Buddhism," refers to missionary embassies sent to the Yôna (Ionian or Greek) kings, Antiochus, Ptolemäus, Antigonos, and Magas. Under the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, the Grecian philosopher Ktesias gathered a large amount of curious information about India and Indian religions; and the historian Aristoxenos, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, mentions an Indian *magus* who visited Socrates and other philosophers—probably Pythagoreans—whose doctrine of metempsychosis and abstinence from wine and animal food indicates an East Indian origin. When Alexander the Great returned to Persia, the Indian ascetic Calanos accompanied him to Per-

sepolis, and burned himself at the stake to demonstrate his indifference to earthly existence. Two hundred years before Christ, the city of Alassada, near the sources of the Oxus, was a central point of the West Buddhistic propaganda. The conquests of Alexander established a constant intercourse between the Mediterranean and the western cities of Central Asia, caravans travelled to and fro, the Grecian colonists were probably as tolerant as their western countrymen, and the zealous missionaries of the Cashmere convent towns can hardly have failed to avail themselves of such favorable opportunities. Clemens Alexandrinus, St. Jerome, and Suidas speak of a deified "Butta." Pliny (H. N. 37, 11) refers to the large overland trade between India and Cappadocia; *i.e.*, between the stronghold of Buddhism and a region which swarmed with Greeks, Jews, and the early proselytes of Christianity. The same historian (H. N. VI., 19, 22, 26) records the fact that the commerce by sea between India and Europe drained the Roman Empire of a yearly sum of fifty million sesterces, and that Indian ships with accommoda tion for five hundred passengers with their baggage and merchandise landed every year at Alexandria and Syracuse. Among the ambassadors whom King Poros, or Paurava, sent to the court of Augustus, there was the Buddhist Zarmanochegas (Srâmanacharya, *i.e.*, teacher of Srâmana, the doctrine of self-mortification), who afterward went to Athens, and, like Calanos, burned himself on a funeral pyre to attest his belief in the worthlessness of earthly life.

II.

Concordance of Buddhism and Christianity.

A. TRADITIONAL ANALOGIES.

1. Both Buddha and Christ were of royal lineage. Both were born of a mother who, though married, was still a virgin.

2. Both virgin mothers were overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, and, though found with child, remained immaculate.

3. The birth of the future Saviour is announced by a heavenly messenger. The apparition which Maya sees in her dream informs her: "Thou shalt be filled with highest joy. Behold, thou shalt bring forth a son bearing the mystic signs of Buddh, a scion of royal lineage, a son of highest kings. When he shall leave his kingdom and his country to enter the state of devotion, he shall become a sacrifice for the dwellers of earth, a Buddha who to all men shall give joy and the glorious fruits of immortality." (*Rgya Cher-rol-pan*, 61, 63.)

The angel says unto Mary: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt bring forth a son and call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." (Luke i., 30, 31.)

4. At the request of Maya, King Sudodhana renounces his connubial rights till she has brought forth her first son. (*Rgya*, 69–82.) "And Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth her first son." (Matt. i., 25; Luke i., 39–56.)

5. The immortals of the Tushita-heaven decide that Buddha shall be born when the "Flower-star" makes its first appearance in the east. (Lefmann, 21, 124; Wassiljew, p. 95.) "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east." (Matt. ii., 2.)

6. A host of angelic messengers descends and announces tidings of great joy: "A hero, glorious and incomparable, has been born, a Saviour unto all nations of the earth! A deliverer has brought joy and peace to heaven and earth." (*Lotus*, 102, 104. *Rgya*, 89, 97.) "And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. . . . For unto you is born this day a Saviour." (Luke ii., 9.)

7. Princes and wise Brahmans appear with gifts, and worship the child Buddha. (*Rgya*, 97, 113.) "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child and worshipped him; . . . and they presented unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh." (Matt. ii., 11.)

8. The Brahmin Asita, to whom the Spirit has revealed the advent of Buddh, descends from his hermitage on Himalaya to see the new-born child. He predicts the coming kingdom of heaven and Buddha's mission to save and enlighten the world. (Sutta-Nipatha, iii., 11; *Buddhist Birth Stories*, i., 69.) "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. . . . Then he took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.

. . . For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. . . . A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke ii., 26.)

9. Hymnic Intermezzos.—The Gospel of Luke, like the *Lalita Vistara*, abounds with hymnic rhapsodies, which in the parallel passages of the Buddhistic original harmonize with the spirit of the epic; while, in the Christian chronicle, their abrupt introduction suggests omissions and arbitrary selections. (Luke i., 13–17, 30–33, 35, 42–45, 46–55, 67–79; ii., 10–14, 29–32, 34, 38; xix., 37.)

10. The *Abhinish-Kramana Sutra* relates that the king of Maghada instructed one of his ministers to institute an inquiry whether any inhabitant of the kingdom could possibly become powerful enough to endanger the safety of the throne. Two spies are sent out. One of them ascertains the birth of Buddha, his tribe and dwelling-place, and the promise of his future glory. He makes his report to the king, and advises him to take measures to exterminate the tribe. (Cf. Matt. ii., 1–11.)

11. The Presentation in the Temple.—The princes of the Sakya tribe urge the king to present (or introduce) his son in a public assembly of nobles and priests. Spirits accompany the march of the procession; inspired prophets extol the future greatness of the Messiah. The parallel story of Luke supplies the motive of the ceremony with the words: "As it is written in the law of the Lord." But diligent comparison of the sources of Hebrew law has revealed the fact that no such ordinance ever existed. The rite of purification merely required the mother to offer up a sacrifice,

a ceremony which demanded neither the presence of the husband nor of the child, the motive of the narrator's fiction being evidently the necessity of fitting the incident into a frame of Hebrew customs.

12. Names and Titles.—Among the twelve chief names of Buddha,—the Word, the All-wise, the Messiah, the Way, the Awakened, the Saviour, the Intercessor, the Truth, the Life, the Prince of Peace, the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World, —all but the second and fifth have been applied to the Prophet of Nazareth.

13. Buddha's parents miss the boy one day; and, after searching for him far and near, they find him in an assembly of Rishis (sages of the past), who listen to his discourse and marvel at his understanding. (*Birth Stories*, 74; Plath, xii., 2.) "And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." (Luke ii., 45–47.)

14. Buddha, before entering upon his mission, meets the Brahmine Rudraka, a mighty preacher, who, however, offers to become his disciple. Some of Rudraka's followers secede to Buddha, but leave him when they find that he does not observe the fasts. (*Rgya*, 178, 214.) Jesus, before entering upon his mission, meets John the Baptist, who recognizes his superiority. Two of John's disciples follow Jesus, who states his reasons for rejecting

John's rigid observance of the fasts. (John i., 37.)

15. Buddha retires to the solitude of Uruvilva, and fasts and prays in the desert till hunger forces him to leave his retreat. (*Rgya*, 364; Oldenberg's *Mahâvagga*, p. 116.) "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted by the devil. And, when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards a-hungered." (Matt. iv., 1.

16. After finishing his fast, Buddha takes a bath in the river Nairanjana. When he leaves the water, purified, the devas open the gates of heaven, and cover him with a shower of fragrant flowers. (*Rgya*, 259.) Comp. Matt. iii., 13.

17. The Temptation.—During Buddha's fast in the desert, Mâra, the Prince of Darkness, approaches him, and tempts him with promises of wealth and earthly glory. Buddha rejects his proposals by quoting passages of the Vedas. The tempter flees: angels descend and salute Buddha. (Mâra: Köppen, i., 88; *Dhammapadam*, vii., 33.) "And said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then Jesus saith unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." (Matt. iv., 9–11.)

18. Precursors.—During the transfiguration on the mountain, Christ is joined by Moses and Elias. Sakyamuni has frequent interviews with the *two* Buddhas who preceded him. (Seydel, 163.)

19. Under the Fig-tree.—The shade of the sacred

fig-tree that shelters the meditating Buddha is the scene of the conversion and ordination of the first disciples, formerly followers of Rudraka. Christ chooses his first disciples from among the former followers of the Baptist; and in John i., 48, his remark about a fig-tree appears wholly incongruous and irrelevant to the context. In the answer of Nathanael, the circumstance of having been seen under a fig-tree is accepted as a proof of Christ's messiahship!

20. Disciples.—Before Buddha appoints a larger number of apostles, he selects five favorite disciples, one of whom is afterward styled the pillar of the Faith; another, the bosom-friend of Buddha. Before Christ selects his twelve apostles, he chooses five chief disciples, among them Peter, the "rock of the Church," and John, his favorite follower. Among the followers of Buddha there is a Judas, Devadatta, who tries to betray his master, and meets a disgraceful death. (Köppen, i., 94; Lefmann, 51; *Birth Stories*, p. 113.)

21. Sakyamuni alludes to an interview with several former Buddhas. Sceptics question his statement: "Only forty years ago, you left your native town: how can you claim to have seen all those saints of old?" Buddha explains it by the pre-existence of his soul in other forms. (*Lotus*, xiv. and xv.) "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" (John viii., 57.)

22. The Macarisms.—The first words of Christ are the macarisms (blessings) in the Sermon of the Mount. When Buddha enters upon his mis-

sion, he begins a public speech (according to the French translation of *Rgya*, 355): "Celui qui a entendu la Loi, celui qui voit, celui qui se plaît dans la solitude, *est heureux;* lié (à l'existence) au milieu des créatures vivantes, et ne faisant pas de mal, il *est heureux* dans le monde. Parvenu à se mettre au-dessus des vices, exempt des passions, il *est heureux;* celui qui a dompté l'égoisme et l'orgueil est *parvenu à la suprême félicité.*"

23. Buddha remains homeless and poor; repeatedly instructs his disciples to travel without money, and trust to the aid of Providence. (Comp. Matt. iv., 23; viii., 20.)

24. Ananda, Buddha's favorite disciple, at the end of a wearisome journey, sits down near a well. A woman of the despised caste of the Chandalas appears with a water-jug. Ananda asks her for a drink of water. The woman warns him that he will lose caste by persisting in his request. Ananda laughs at her scruples; and, while they argue the question, Buddha comes up and approves the view of Ananda, who, as he perceives, has found favor in the eyes of the woman. (Burnouf's *Divya-Avadâna.*) Comp. John iv., 1–20. "He whom thou now hast is not thy husband."

25. If thy right eye offends thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. (Matt. v., 29.) According to Max Müller's translation of the *Ocean of Legends*, a young monk of the mendicant order meets a rich woman who pities his hard lot, and wonders what could induce him to renounce the world. "Blessed is the woman," says she, "who looks into thy lovely eyes." "Lovely?" says the

monk. "Look here." And, plucking out one of his eyes, he holds it up, bleeding and ghastly, and asks her to correct her opinion.

26. Miracles.—Buddha walks on the Ganges, as Christ on the lake. He heals the sick by a mere touch of his hand; and, according to Wassiljew, the *Mayana-Sutra* relates the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Buddha repeatedly has a miraculous escape from the snares of his adversaries. "But he, going through the midst of them, went his way." (Luke iv., 30.) A transfiguration, ascension, speaking in foreign tongues, are additional parallels. Buddha descends to hell, and preaches to the spirits of the damned.

27. In the story of the blind man (John ix.), the disciples ask: "Who did sin,—this man or his parents?" The meaning of the question is revealed by the Buddhistic parable of a *wilfully blind* (obstinate) heretic, whose perversity is caused by his sins in a former existence. (*Lotus*, 82.) For, in the version of the gospel, the guilt of a man *born* blind could hardly be alleged as a cause of his misfortune; while, in the Buddhistic original, the idea is in perfect harmony with the doctrine of metempsychosis.

28. Instructions to disciples.—*Lotus*, v., 105; *Gâtha*, pp. 53, 143, 165, and other passages, repeat the injunction of self-denial, meekness, the duty of declining presents, often nearly in the words of Matt. vii., 6. Several of Buddha's disciples receive power to exorcise evil spirits.

29. At the death of Buddha, the earth trembles, the rocks are split, phantoms and spirits appear.

(Köppen, i., 114; Saint-Hilaire, 44; Seydel, 281.) "And, behold, the earth did quake, and the rocks were rent, . . . and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose." (Matt. xxvii., 51–53.)

B. DOGMATICAL ANALOGIES.

1. Belief in the necessity of redemption by a supernatural mediator.

2. The founder's exaltation to the rank of a God. Buddha is equal to Brahm; demons are powerless against his word; angels and Arhats minister unto him.

3. Belief in a hell of fire and ceaseless torments.

4. Belief in a prodigious number of malevolent demons.

5. Demerit of wealth. "It is difficult to be rich and keep the way."

6. Merit of mendicancy. Monastic brotherhoods resembling the order of St. Francis.

7. The moral merit of celibacy. Abstinence from sexual intercourse a constitutional rule of Buddhistic convents and priest-schools.

8. Rejection of ancient rites, sacrifices, etc.

9. Monastic seclusion; merit of a retired life; hermitages and convents.

10. Vanity of earthly joys.

11. Depreciation of labor, industry, the pursuit of worldly advantage and worldly honors; monastic vows of poverty and obedience.

12. The sinfulness of skepticism.

13. Auricular confession of sins.

14. Efficacy of vicarious atonement.

15. Inculcation of patience, submission, and self-denial; neglect of the active, manly, and industrial virtues.

16. Love of enemies; submission to injustice and tyranny.

17. Depreciation of worldly affections; merit of abandoning wife and children.

18. Trinity of holiest names,—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Dharma is the "Word." "And the Word was with God."

19. The worship of saints.

20. Miracle-mongery. The chronicle of the Buddhistic church is overloaded with the records of prodigies.

21. Evangelical analogies.—Buddha is called the "Light of the World" (*Gâtha*, p. 105). Buddha's mercy is compared to a rain cloud which showers blessings upon the just and unjust. Earthly joys are compared to the grass which blooms to-day and to-morrow is cast into the fire (*Dhamm.*, 334). True believers are advised to gather treasures which neither thieves can steal nor fire or water can spoil (*Lotus*, 130). Ignorant teachers are likened to the blind guiding the blind. The repentant sinner is described in a parable of a prodigal son, who wastes his substance in foreign countries, but at last returns to the house of his father, and, after serving him as a common day-laborer, is pardoned, and becomes the father's chief heir.

C. CEREMONIAL ANALOGIES.

Monasteries; nunneries; popery; the Thibetan Lama is worshipped as God's vice-regent upon

earth; œcumenical councils; processions; worship of relics; strings of beads; incense; confession of sins; chaplets; service with double choirs; pulpits; dalmaticas; a censer suspended from five chains; litanies; holy water; chalices; shaven polls; priests go bareheaded; weekly and yearly fasts; exorcism; division of temples into a nave and lateral halls; aspersion with consecrated water; bell-ringing; candlemas; feast of the Immaculate Conception; masses for the repose of departed souls.

The chief proof of the essential identity of the two creeds is the *anti-cosmic principle*, the nature-hating and earth-despising tendency which distinguishes Buddhism and Christianity from all other religious systems. The gospel of Buddha, though a pernicious, is, however, a perfectly consistent doctrine. According to the ethics of Gautama,—"the Awakened," as his followers call him in distinction from benighted mortals,—birth, life, and rebirth is an eternal round of sorrow and disappointment; the present and the future are but the upper and lower tire of an ever-rolling wheel of woe; existence is wholly evil, and the only salvation from the misery of life is the escape to the peace of Nirvana. The attempt to graft this doctrine upon the optimistic theism of Palestine has made the Christian ethics so inconsistent and contradictory. A paternal Jehovah, who yet eternally and horribly tortures a vast plurality of his children. An earth, the perfect work of a benevolent God, yet all a vale of tears, not made to be enjoyed, but only to be despised and renounced.

An omnipotent heaven, yet unable to prevent the intrigues and constant victories of hell. Christianity is evidently not a homogeneous, but a composite, a hybrid religion; and, considered in connection with the indications of history and the evidence of the above-named ethical and traditional analogies, these facts leave no reasonable doubt that the founder of the Galilean Church was a disciple of Buddha Sakyamuni.

Those who oppose this theory should, besides, remember that the question at issue is not between gospel truth and borrowed traditions, but between borrowed traditions and deliberate fiction; for that the narrative of the New Testament has no historic value admits of mathematical demonstration. Not only does it abound with the records of prodigies at variance with the normal experience of mankind and entirely unsupported by the testimony of contemporary historians, but also with self-contradictions which remove the last doubt that the chronicle of the Synoptic Gospels, whatever may be its origin, is not based upon facts.

III.

Historical Value of the New Testament.

The following are a few of the self-evident proofs of the historical (and, *a fortiori*, *canonical*) value of the book which Prof. Christlieb calls "a canon which it has pleased the Lord to reveal and which the Lord's children are therefore bound to believe."

In the first chapter of Matthew, the Lord reveals the fact that from the birth of Christ to the reign

of David there were twenty-six generations, which are enumerated by name. In the Gospel of St. Luke, it has pleased the Lord to reveal a genealogy of forty-three names, of which only the first and last agree with that of the former list.

Matthew also informs us that Herod ordered the massacre of an enormous number of young children, and that the parents of Christ saved their infant son only by a timely flight to Egypt. St. Luke does not mention the massacre, and states that the parents of Christ, instead of fleeing to Egypt, continued to dwell in their native city of Nazareth. (Luke ii., 22–39.) Josephus, who relates every trifling circumstance in the reign of Herod, especially the despotic acts of the viceroy, does not mention the murder of a single child.

St. Matthew states that the name of Mary's father-in-law was Jacob. (Matt. i., 16.) According to the Gospel of St. Luke, Dr. Christlieb is bound to believe that the gentleman's name was Heli. (Luke iii., 23.)

Mark mentions that John was in prison when Jesus came into Galilee. John informs us that at that time John was not yet in prison.

Matthew relates that the centurion came in person to beseech Christ in behalf of his sick servant. Luke states that he sent the elders of the Jews.

According to Mark (xv., 25), Jesus was crucified at the third hour. According to John (xix., 14, 15), the preparation for the crucifixion only began at the sixth hour.

St. Matthew (xxvii., 5) asserts that Judas

hanged himself. The Acts (i., 18) relate that he died in a different way.

According to John, only one woman came to the sepulchre. According to Matthew, she was accompanied by a namesake. Their statements might be reconciled, but Mark informs us that not less than three women came together. But, even that must be an under-estimate, for Luke assures us that there were more than four women.

Matthew and Mark's women saw an angel at the sepulchre: Luke's more numerous witnesses oblige us to believe that they saw two angels; but the dim religious light of the tomb may have confused their vision, for, while Matthew informs us that the apparition was seen without the sepulchre, John and Mark admit that it was seen within. Mark's statement that they reached the sepulchre at the time of the rising sun is no positive counterproof, for John confesses that they reached it while it was yet dark. Matthew's angel was sitting down. Luke's angels did not think it proper to keep their seat in the presence of so many ladies.

Matthew and Luke state that the women hastened to carry the news to the disciples. Mark (whose women had reached the sepulchre after daylight) admits that they had no excuse for saying anything to anybody.

If we shall believe Matthew, Jesus was three days and three nights in the grave. The account of Mark implies that he was resurrected during the second night.

According to Luke, the ascension of Christ took place at Bethany. The Acts (i., 9, 12) state that

he ascended from Mount Olivet. Both accounts differ from that of Luke (xvi., 19).

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, we are informed that at the death of Christ "there was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour unto the ninth." The veil of the temple was rent, the earth quaked, the rocks split, and troops of corpses sallied from their tombs and availed themselves of the opportunity to visit their metropolitan friends. St. Mark and St. Luke do not think it worth while to report such trifles. St. John, an eye-witness of the crucifixion, does not allude to them. Josephus, in his detailed history of the same time and the same country, never mentions them. The Roman historians, whose countrymen ruled all Syria and Asia Minor, mention nothing of the kind. Can we doubt that the rumbling of Matthew's earthquake was the echo of that East Indian tradition which the writers of the New Testament mistook for the revelation of the Lord? When Buddha, the saviour, died at Kusinagra, the earth quaked and the rocks were rent, phantoms ascended from their caves, and the nine heavens were darkened, as well as the earth.

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