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STUDIES
IN COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY.

SIX LECTURES

DELIVERED BY

REV. GEO. H. TREVER, Ph. D., D. D.,
" "
MILWAUKEE, WIS.,

Before the Students of Lawrence University,
Appleton, Wis.



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Religions

"
Christianity & other religions

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DEDICATION.



To

PRESIDENT W. F. WARREN,

OF BOSTON UNIVERSITY,

from whom my first inspiration to these studies

was received,

and to whom I owe a debt of gratitude,

these pages

are affectionately dedicated.

GEO. H. TREVER.

PREFACE.

NOT because we think that we are meeting a "long-felt want," do we send these pages to the press, but in hope of contributing, perhaps, a little to the great Science of Comparative Theology, just now in its infancy. Delivered originally as lectures before the students of Lawrence University, they drew forth expressions of desire that they might take permanent form. Hence we send them out into the great world of books to meet their fate. If any one shall be helped, we shall be satisfied. It is needless to assert our obligation to numerous scholars who have toiled in these fields.

MILWAUKEE, WIS.

G. H. T.

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LECTURE I.

THE VEDIC RELIGION AND PRIMITIVE
REVELATION.

THE VEDIC RELIGION AND PRIMITIVE REVELATION.

WHEN Anglo-Saxon and Hindoo met in conflict on India's coral strand, it was one of the most dramatic and thrilling scenes in history. Could they have beheld what science has since revealed, the picture would have startled them. It would have been enough to kindle the dullest imagination. It was brother suddenly meeting brother after years of separation, far from the old homestead—years in which no tidings of either had reached the other. What! the lithe, subtle, mystical, dreamy Hindoo, the brother of the stalwart, practical Englishman? How do we know this? India herself could never tell us so by any written history, for she has none. The Chinese have annals running back thousands of years; the Egyptians had the veritable scribbler's itch, writing the most trivial events of daily life on the imperishable stone; but the Hindoo seems to have been utterly deficient in the historic sense. In a cold, if not contemptuous spirit, he gazes on the vanities of sense and time. The scholar of that torrid clime dreams away his hours in the midst of intellectual problems. He labors hard to measure the immeasurable, to circumscribe the absolute. Compared with such recondite speculations, the common affairs of life are mere bits of foam or ripples on the boundless ocean. The most unhistorical people on earth, they cared more for the grammatical minutæ of their sacred books, or for the subtleties of metaphysics, than for their whole past history. Therefore, historically considered, the literature of India is a blank

and barren waste. No annals tell of the feats of princes, States, or peoples. The chronology is unknown. The only date in their entire history of which we can be certain is found by the help of the Greeks.

By comparison we learn that the Hindoo potentate Chandragupta, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, became king in 315 B. C. Now, since, by the Hindoo statements, the Buddha had been dead one hundred and sixty-two years when this king came to the throne, we get as the probable date of the Buddha's death, 477 B. C. How, then, do we know that Hindoo and Englishman are close blood relations? Ah! what they did not consciously record about their pedigree they did engrave, without design, upon material more lasting than marble monument or granite wall. They wrote their history, not upon inscribed tablets, painted temples, or papyrus rolls, but upon the fugitive wings of the air. The volatile and fleeting aerial waves have proved as reliable as brazen column or imperishable rock. The words which left the lip and seemed to disappear in the seas of air have been preserved like medals, revealing a secret and obscure past. How?

Suppose you are a Sanskrit scholar. You are also familiar with the tongue of ancient Persia, with the Greek, Latin, old Irish, and Slavonic. You are reading one of these old Hindoo books. You come across the Sanskrit word *dama*, meaning house. You say, "Why, that is almost the same as the old Persian word for house." Yes, and the Greek is *domos*, and the Latin *domus*, and the Slavonic is *domu*, and in our English we have domestic or household affairs. Would not that come almost as a revelation to you? You read farther, and you find similar resemblances in the words for father, mother, brother, daughter, boat, roof, door,

horse, ox, cow, and a score of other words. Then you perceive that the grammatical constructions also show similar likenesses. The conviction is forced upon you, "Certainly these languages must be daughters of one mother tongue." These words have been compared to the watchwords of soldiers. We challenge the seeming stranger, and whether he answer with the lips of a Greek, German, Englishman, Roman, old Persian, Irishman, or Hindoo, we see that he belongs to our own company. Where, when, how, did these people live who spoke that primitive mother tongue? By a careful study of these resemblances in speech we get a picture which it may be interesting to look at.

We see a people, say as early as 3000 B. C., when Chaldæa and Egypt are still in early youth, dwelling in Western Asia or Eastern Europe. Modern science calls them Aryans. Do they dwell in tents like the Arabs, or in wagons like the Scythians? No, but in houses. Each house incloses a domestic hearth, around which gather father, mother, brother, sister, in a well-ordered family life. These houses have walls, roof, doors, some kind of windows, an aperture for the ascending smoke, and some sort of inclosure. Sometimes they are grouped into villages or even into towns. You follow the men out to their work. They are dairymen or keepers of sheep. Your host has cows, oxen, horses, sheep, swine, dogs, geese. His herds of cattle feed in pastures which are the property of the community. Each pasture has a cluster of stables in the center. The boy he calls by a name which means "he who cleans the stable," and the girl by one which signifies "the milkmaid." You sit down to eat with them. Upon the table are milk, butter, cheese, honey, and the flesh of their flocks or herds. But this is not all. This man practices a rude

agriculture. With a primitive substitute for a plow he lightly stirs the soil for the sowing of his barley, and perhaps other grains. He has also some means of separating the grain from the chaff. Between two stones he grinds it into meal. So some kind of cakes or bread is upon the table, and salt is not wanting. The meat is boiled or roasted, and the chances are that soup will be a part of the meal. After dinner you go out, and he hitches his horses or oxen to his wagon; but for some reason he never rides on horseback. He takes you to some kind of a shop where the artisan is at work making rough ornaments, such as necklaces, rings, or other ornaments of gold, silver, copper, tin. But you see no iron. The carpenter, however, uses some kind of a hatchet, hammer, auger. Some of the people can spin and weave, sew and dye. Others know how to fashion the clay into pottery. Upon his anvil of stone the smith hammers his tools or weapons into shape. When these men go to war or to hunt, they have lances, javelins, bows and arrows, shields, but no swords, and no other defensive armor. The animals he hunts are the bear, wolf, hare. The mouse would nibble his cheese, the worm burrow into his soil, the serpent wriggle its way over his pasture, and the otter swim in his streams; the cuckoo and quail, crane and owl, fly about his house and in his forests of birch, beech, and oak. You see flax and hemp in his fields. Should you go with him to the river you would see boats with oars and rudder, but without masts or sails.

You go back to the house to witness a wedding. The maiden has given her free consent to marry the swain. The period of betrothal has passed, and they are gathered about the hearth. The young man with his right hand takes the damsel, and a sacred formula

is pronounced. The husband bears a name which signifies, "he who provides for the household," "the kind master." The wife is styled "the dear mistress." Thus marriage implies union without tyranny on the one hand, or degradation on the other. The father of the bride presents to the young husband a cow intended originally for the wedding-feast, but in later times taken to the house of the groom. This was the dowry, emblem of agricultural richness. Then the hair of the bride is divided by a dart; she is conducted around the domestic hearth, mounts a wagon drawn by two white oxen, and is received at the door of her new abode with a present of fire and water. As long as she is alive her husband never brings another wife to his home. The birth of a child is hailed with joy. Daughters are equally welcome with sons. Naturally, the family had developed into the clan, the clan into the tribe, at the head of which is a king whose name means director or sustainer. Cattle are used as money, but property in land is already recognized. The plowed furrow is the boundary. Government is rather vague, though there is a system of penal justice, with judges, witnesses, and punishments. You find some slaves, but they are always prisoners of war. Man himself seems to have been looked upon with keen insight into his nature. He was called "the thinker."

So, multiplying and expanding, these people lived together for no one knows how long. But there came a time when they seem to have outgrown their quarters. Then some of them began that great world movement which has never ceased. Charles Dickens said that a real live Yankee would hesitate about going to heaven unless, after he got there, he could move West. Well, his ancestors began that movement at a very early date.

Some went, and, of course, some remained behind. So it happened again and again. Bands, larger or smaller, kept leaving the ancestral home for other lands.

Leaving all the rest, it is of the Hindoo branch of this family that we are now to speak. Moving out from their original home, they kept company for a time with those who were afterwards to become the Iranians, the chief branch of whom were the Persians. Then, at the dawn of traditional history, for some cause separating from this Iranian branch, those who were to become the Hindoos journeyed on towards the mighty Himalayas, crossed their snows, passed rivers into that land which has ever since been their home. Did they find that country without population? No. One race they met, which is represented to-day by the hill-tribes of India. Then there was another, a little higher in civilization, the Dravidian, the ancestors of the modern Tamil and Telugu. With these earlier peoples the Aryans from the north came into bitter conflict. They hated each other's gods, and despised each other's persons. But the aborigines were much the inferior race. The sacred books of the conquering Aryans speak of their enemies as men of the black skin, goat-nosed and noseless; monkey-like men. They are even taunted with eating human flesh. They are scorned as madmen and demons, are devoted to the pit and everlasting hatred. They are again and again contrasted with the noble Aryans, their conquerors and masters. Of course we must take these pictures, drawn by their enemies, with a grain of salt. Nobody wishes his bitter foe to paint his portrait. At any rate the aborigines were subdued, reduced to servitude or driven out. It is the religion of these conquerors of India that we are now to study.

Why do we call it the Vedic? Because we learn it

from the holy books which they called Veda, meaning "knowledge," and corresponding exactly with the Greek *oîda*, "I know." The word Veda represents, not so much a single book as a whole literature. There are four Vedas, Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva. Each one consists of Mantras, or songs, and Brahmanas, or books of ritual. The Rig Veda represents the oldest collection. The hymns in it are arranged according to the families of the poets who composed them. The Sama Veda is a collection of hymns or verses for liturgical use, and was employed in the great Sama sacrifice. They are hymns from the Rig Veda in a liturgical setting. We see here the system in operation. The Yajur consists of two parts, the white and the black. It is more extensive than the Sama Veda. It contains formulas for the whole sacrificial ritual, not simply of one school or order of sacrifice as in the Sama. In the black Yajur, formulas and explanations are blended; in the white, they are separated. The fourth Veda, called the Atharva, is later. It is a series of magical formulas, full of superstitions that are absent from the Rig Veda, yet with some very old hymns imbedded in them, because they had lived in tradition and memory as popular psalms. It is with the oldest collection, or Rig Veda, we have to do in this lecture.

These hymns are amongst the oldest literary records of man. They mirror a time that can never more return. To study these is, as it were, in a weary manhood, to stand face to face with a vanished childhood that has in its soul a freshness and a great wonder, trying in many a crude way to express its wonder and its awe; to reach the truth which nature at once concealed and revealed, and to bring life, individual and social, into harmony with the will manifest in things. In

these hymns this age lives. In them its childhood is seen, in a manner, eternally looking out on the aging world, like a sweet and winsome dream of days that never grow old. Herein lies their profound significance for us. To a moment in the history of man that can never be repeated they transport us; but they are alive for all time. They carry us far behind Homer to a simpler and more primitive age. They shed marvelous light on what lies behind, as well as on what lies before. They suggest a vivid picture of man, of his world, of his history. Nature, as it surrounded him and lived in his mind, lives here. The mountains, snow-clad, majestic, eternal; the homes of the furious winds that sweep the plains, of the dark clouds, of the thunder that rode on the wings of the storm and was so terrible to the ear; the beneficent and gracious rain; the rivers, fertilizing the land, and holding back the enemy; the sun, that begat the dawn and rose out of it to drive his golden chariot across the sky; the great, encompassing heaven, that seemed to touch the earth, but which man never reached, all-enfolding but never enfolded, made vaster in the glorious night as star after star came forth, each a resting-place for the eye, but when all had appeared, a bewildering multitude dazzling him who dared to look,—all this we can see reflected by an imagination that, with a child's daring, deified what it beheld.

In these hymns man is mirrored as well as nature. Then, as now, he knew the enchantments of love. We see the bridegroom wooing his bride. Then there is the housefather, who sends to possess the wife he loves; watchful against the foe that may seize his wealth; scornful of the dark-skinned dwellers in the land, of the monkey-like men, whose refuge was the hill or forest; very fearful of the gods he worshiped; very re-

spectful of the singers who could weave words into music in praise of the deities, or by sacrifices could win their favor. The tribes, though kindred, were not always friendly. They were often at war with each other, but at one in their hatred of the swarthy-faced men who, before their coming, held the land. There were men who plowed the soil, and those who kept the cattle; some who went to war, and some who followed the king. The king had his minstrels, who praised and blessed the gods.

Thus these hymns are a clear mirror of the world that then was. If we are to understand the religion of these people, we must gaze carefully into this mirror until these features live in our mind. These men must be to us real men—living, breathing, loving, willing, thinking, striving, suffering, hoping men—if we are to have even the least chance to read aright their religion.

But did they really have a religion, or did they wander over the earth dull and indifferent, obeying appetite only? Were they oppressed by magic and superstition in a thousand forms, and did they have no religious faith beside? Or did they, with deep reverence, raise their eyes to heaven with its terrors? If so, in the sun that drives away the night; in the lightning which descends in fire upon the earth, to herald the refreshing rain; in the storm that bursts from heaven, uprooting the high-crowned trees; in the blue vault of heaven itself, which stands above the earth and never changes, did they see nothing but natural forces, now terrible, now gracious? Or did they think of beings in or above nature, who sit to judge the deeds of men, to reward the right and punish the wrong, the incarnation of a moral order and of a law divine? Did they bow the knee in reverence, and offer prayer and sacrifice? Did

they have people who succeeded in persuading others that they were specially chosen of the gods as instruments and guardians of Heaven's will; and when the funeral pyre had ceased to glow, or the earth had covered the corpse, was all over with man, or did the spirit soar from the body to join the spirits of sire and grand-sire, and live with them in blessedness in some invisible world?

Passing over many literary questions connected with the Rig Veda, we simply note that its chronology is at best but plausible conjecture. There are no astronomical references to measure from, no events that can be called historical, nothing to give us standing-ground in the bog of chronological uncertainty; yet if we say that, about the time when Joseph ruled in Egypt, about 1650 B. C., was the center of the Vedic period, we shall not be far astray. Within this period, as we should expect, there were many changes, geographical, political, social, religious. Though points of time can not be fixed, yet the general order of changes can be determined with admirable accuracy. Applying carefully principles of criticism, four periods in the development of the religion can be quite clearly determined. We may call them: 1. The Pre-Vedic; 2. The Early Vedic; 3. The Middle Vedic; 4. The Late Vedic. We will consider these each in turn.

1. *The Pre-Vedic.* This carries us back to the days when the people lived together in their primitive home. What was the religion of these early ancestors of ours before they had divided into Celt and Teuton, Latin and Greek, Persian and Hindoo? We can deal with this question just as we did with the question as to their homes, occupations, customs. If we can find certain religious elements common to the Sanskrit, Zend, Greek,

Latin, Teutonic, Slav, Celt languages, these must be the oldest elements, for the simple reason that they belong to a time when these separate languages did not yet exist, but only the primitive mother tongue of all. We can not learn much about the religious faith and feeling of that early period; but partly from these hymns, and partly from a comparison of the Vedic deities with those of their brothers, whose religious ideas are better known, we can form some very interesting conclusions. Taking our position considerably on this side of the source of the stream, we walk towards its head. As we shall see, in these Vedas the chief god of the period from which we start is Indra. But the phenomena which describe him, and the terms that are ascribed to him, are taken from the nature that surrounds the dwellers in Hindoostan. He therefore arose after the migration thither. Walking upwards, we see, just behind Indra, a majestic, divine figure named Varuna; behind him, again, an almost superseded and vanished god. He is but just dimly visible here and there in the Vedas. He seems to be almost out of place there, as the curiously-carved stones of a Gothic cathedral in a modern house. His place in these hymns resembles the flora and fauna in the strata of the earth, telling of life that once was, but is no more. Looking about us again in the Middle Vedic period, we find with Indra many other gods that are utterly unknown to the sister peoples that lived in that primeval time. These are, therefore, most likely, later additions to the older faith. Thus, as we ascend the stream of time, we discern a process of simplification; the deities become fewer; as we come down, a process of multiplication.

Now, what was the name of this early god so prominent in the ancient days, so insignificant later? Dyaus

Pitar. Now, put side by side with this name, the Zeus Pater of the Greeks, the Latin Jupiter, and see similar forms as Tiu, Ziu, in other languages of this class, and what is the natural conclusion?

The conclusion in which all scholars may be said to agree: That the deity who bore this name was worshiped in primitive days; that he was acknowledged and worshiped by the whole family; that he was prominent enough amongst them to make such an impression upon them that in their far-distant homes, after long wanderings and ages, they remembered him; that some of them remembered him so well and revered him so much as to make him their supreme god throughout their national history; and that the name of no other deity of that remote period fulfills these conditions.

But not only did they have this proper name for a great god, they had also a general term denoting deity. What was this? Deva. Put by the side of this the Zend *deva*, the Latin *deus*, the Lithuanian *devas*, the old Prussian *diva*, the old Irish *dea*, and what is again the conclusion? That our great-grandfathers in the forests of Western Asia had advanced far enough to form an abstract notion of deity. This implies a higher grade of mental life than the simple giving of names. For example, when we say "John," the word may express a simple perception of our senses, or a picture in our imagination of a single individual who looked thus or so. But when you say "man," it implies, either in you or in the one who first said the word, a more or less practiced power of comparison, judgment, abstraction, generalization. Now, when a religion is absolutely monotheistic, the proper name and the general term are exactly alike in meaning. If you were the only man in existence, and your name was John, then the word

John and the word man would each mean you and nobody else. This illustrates the theological position of the Hebrew people. Elohim was the general term for deity, and Jehovah the proper name for the God of Israel. But, in their mind, these tended to become so absolutely one that to say Elohim was to speak of Jehovah, and no other. So we have no specifically proper name for deity at all. Though we are compelled to use the word gods to designate heathen divinities, yet to us God is God, and needs no individual name.

But now we must note, with respect to the ideas of those ancient ancestors of ours, that, since the word *deva* appears in more languages than Dyaus, they seem to have had a general term for deity before they had the proper name Dyaus for a particular god. What is the conclusion again? Is it not that before the earliest emigrants moved to the West, they had begun to distinguish between the general term for deity and the individual name for a specific god? That is to say, they were in precisely the same condition, in that respect, in which we are now.

Notice another point. The proper name Dyaus and the general term *deva* spring from the same root. This indicates a fundamental unity of idea, or at least of feeling, as to the deepest nature of deity. Putting all these facts together, we seem to be forced to the conclusion that the primitive Aryan people had conceived Deva and Dyaus to be at bottom identical, just as the Hebrew thought of Elohim and Jehovah as the same. The word which is the root of both Deva and Dyaus means "to beam," "to shine." Deity was thus the resplendent, the light-giving. The Deva was the bright, the shining one, and Dyaus the personification of the bright, luminous heaven.

In that hazy past were there goddesses too? We do find traces of a companion of Dyaus named Prithivi, and heaven is conceived as married to earth; a conception, as Reville says, which forms the foundation of a hundred mythologies. But was this idea of a goddess and the marriage of heaven and earth an element of the earliest religious faith? One thing is certain: there is decided evidence that the earth is not as old a deity as heaven. Dyaus, as we have seen, was known to almost all the Aryan peoples; but, on the contrary, each people and often the several tribes of the same people, had a different name for the earth goddess. India had her own. Amongst the Greeks, Zeus, in his several forms, whether early Pelasgic or later Hellenic, had the same name and the same ultimate elements of character; but, on the other hand, almost every Greek tribe had its own earth-mother.

When Homer set his bright divinities on high upon Olympus, he put stately Hera by the side of Zeus, father of gods and men. She was his spouse, and queen of the radiant Olympian circle; but before Hera, Dione had been queen—her, Homer reduced to a mere lay figure. Similar phenomena may be found amongst other Aryan peoples. Of course, difference of sex must precede the idea of marriage; marriage must be a later mythical product, and, as names like Juno and Dione witness, the bright divinity of heaven may have been sexualized and married to a goddess of heaven, before the mythical faculty deified earth, and married earth and heaven. The Latin Juno and the Greek Dione are celestial, not terrestrial beings. The marriage, therefore, had at first been between two deities of the sky before any earth goddess had been given as spouse to the god of heaven. Everything goes to show that the idea of goddesses was

later than that of the great heaven-god. Even so cautious and naturalistic a critic as Schrader grants that this was probably so. Were there any other gods worshiped there? None that we can clearly see, or, indeed, that we can see at all. True, we have not a full report from these our ancestors, but as far as we can judge, their religion was a monotheism somewhat vaguely defined. Looking at the Vedas themselves, the great Pictet and Max Müller maintain that traces of this early monotheism are visible there; that the remembrance of a god, one and infinite, breaks through the mists of an idolatrous phraseology like the blue sky that looks at times through the piled-up clouds.

How did they conceive of this deity? Was he a fearful Being, before whom they crouched in terror, who must be wheedled or coaxed or flattered into kindness? Must his wrath be bought off by blood? Nay! This early faith was not a religion of fear. Man's god was not an omnipotent devil. If you had asked him about it, he would have answered you in language reminding you of the glorious proclamation of John, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." A great many foolish things have been said both for and against solar mythology. It has at times almost run to seed; but the fact on which it rests remains untouched; namely, that the oldest generic term for deity and the oldest proper name applied to god amongst these primitive peoples, from whom so large a share of the world's civilization has come, speaks not of darkness, storm, and dread, but of light and brightness, of blessing and joy. The light was the joy-bringer, the giver of life. In its presence men were glad. By its genial beams the earth was fertilized. The returning day was the season of rejoicing. The sunny summer was the season of fruitful-

ness and blessing. The proper name ascribed to the god they worshiped signified beneficent action, providence over man, animal, earth.

What better fitted to express to these poetic children of nature the name of deity? The more we think of it, the more it seems like a happy inspiration. There, bending over them in sympathy and love, in brightness, calmness, beauty; stretching far above them and without bounds on every hand; looking down immutably through all its phenomenal changes, what better fitted to express the thought of God? No wonder if, with poetic heart, looking up to it, cheered and blessed by it, some one should say, "Let us name our god after the sky." There would seem to be no word in all the compass of human speech more suited to the purpose. In the words of Charles Kingsley, "Those simple-hearted forefathers of ours looked round upon the earth, and said within themselves, 'Where is the All-Father, if All-Father there be? Not in this earth; for it will perish. Nor in the sun, moon, or stars; for they will perish too. Where is He who abideth forever?' Then they lifted up their eyes, and saw, as they thought, beyond sun, moon, or stars, and all which changes and will change, the clear blue sky, the boundless firmament of heaven. That never changed; that was always the same. The clouds and storms rolled far below it, and all the bustle of this noisy world; but there the sky was still, as bright and calm as ever. The All-Father must be there, unchangeable in the unchanging heaven; bright, and pure, and boundless like the heavens; like the heavens, too, silent and far off."

It is true that those who are determined to take the naturalistic view of human history, resolved to prove

that man began his career on a level with the brute or the savage, may say the object of worship here was the visible sky, and nothing more. But for such an assertion there is not the slightest evidence. It is sheer assumption. What were the attributes ascribed to this deity? Certainly there are some physical ones. Heaven is father, and earth is mother. The bosom of heaven rests upon the breast of earth. Earth is broad-bosomed, and heaven is all-embracing. They are generators, protectors, guardians. But they have also moral attributes. They are called wise, good, and, especially, ordainers and maintainers of law and righteousness. How were they worshiped? We have no detailed account of their religious ceremonies, but the word for worship signifies a prostration of the soul before deity in mingled fear, veneration, and love. The idea of holiness seems to be derived from the purity of light. In all these kindred tongues there is only one word for faith. It always stands for trust and respect. Its primary meaning is, "that which binds one to deity." Prayer is described by the same word, whether addressed to men or gods, and implies supplication, desire, complaint, or praise. There are no evil deities, and no signs of the crowd of baleful and malevolent spirits which are so numerous in the old Assyrian mythology. There are no sorcerers, incantations, or magical arts, to drive away evil spirits. Sacrifice is essentially a libation, and though some have tried to make out that they had human sacrifices, there is no certain evidence for it. Whether they had preachers, we do not know, but we do know that the mountain-tops were sacred spots where they might have most intimate communion with God. We see the beginnings of a mythology in which we can trace the pastoral and

agricultural character of their lives; for the clouds above are the celestial kine, and the sun, the great fertilizer and producer, the heavenly bull.

Did they believe in a life after death? We know that they called man by way of eminence, "the thinker;" believed that the soul, endowed with intelligence, goes on existing after death; must cross the river at its departure, and, before entering the happy abode, must maintain some kind of a conflict with the powers of evil. Putting together all the facts in our possession, we find them expressly to contradict the assertion of Professor Pfeleiderer, made, both in his "Philosophy of Religion" and recent Gifford Lectures, that the idea of God was formed out of the belief in spirits, contemporaneously with the beginnings of social civilization on the threshold of the historical life of the peoples; and that the fountains, rivers and seas, trees and woods, winds and waves; and, in particular also, the earthly fire of the hearth and the heavenly fire of the storm; and, finally, the sun, moon, and stars, and the heaven that embraced them all,—appeared to their fancy as living beings, possessed of an active soul, after the analogy of the soul of man. There is, in fact, no trace here of any such multitude of spirits. To Professor Pfeleiderer, it must be so simply because of the demands made by the philosophy he accepts. His work does not seem to deduce his theories from the facts, but to make the facts fit his theories.

But, now, the deities of this early period are fading and vanishing ones. They are not to the Vedic man what they had been to his fathers. Other and later gods have superseded, and are superseding them. Few hymns, only six in all, are found in the Rig Veda, in honor of Dyaus. Compared with some other deities,

he can hardly be called an object of worship at all. His very name, as the years go by, tends to lose its divine significance. In many later hymns, these old deities have entirely ceased to be gods, and have become creatures, themselves produced, instead of being producers.

2. This brings us to the second period; namely, *The Early Vedic*. This period runs back to the time when the people who afterwards became the Hindoos, and those who became the Persians, still lived together, or were as yet in some intimate association, after their other brothers had moved to the west. But this still united stock had also left the primitive home for more southern climes. They, too, at last separated, one branch traveling to the southwest, and the other southeast, toward the Himalayas. How do we know that they remained together so long, and separated at last? By the immense number of similar words and grammatical constructions which they have in common, but which are not found with the rest of their race. We take, then, the old Iranian faith, as preserved for us in the most ancient parts of the Avesta, and comparing it with these Vedas, we learn the gods, the terms, the rites, customs, which they had in common, and which they must therefore have held before they went on their divergent paths. Many an obscure place in the Avesta has grown luminous in the presence of the Vedas, and many dark passages and mysterious texts of the Vedas have become clear in the face of the Avesta. The Vedas stand nearer the point of separation, and reveal more of the time that lies behind them. The points in which the two agree are landmarks of the ancient faith that was living and active when they chose their different ways.

Let us go, then, into the presence of these men, and see them at their worship. One supreme, glorious Being

seems to fill the entire horizon of their thoughts. The name of this great deity is Varuna. It means "the coverer." Compare the Greek Ouranos. We have again the luminous, all-enveloping heaven. But he is completely personalized. The old Dyaus was now the bright heaven itself, and now the god; but Varuna was always the proper name, and nothing else. He still has physical attributes, but has cast off entirely all bonds of naturism. All his attributes are splendid, and immense as the heaven, now radiant in sunlight, now glorious with the shining of the stars. He stretched out on high the firmament like a rich garment; he fashioned and upholds both heaven and earth. The sun is his glistening eye; in all worlds he dwells as sovereign ruler; he made the golden and revolving sun to shine in the firmament, and opened boundless paths for his pilgrimage. The stormy wind is his breath; he hollowed out the channels for the rivers, which flow by his command, pouring their waters into the sea, but never filling it. His laws are fixed; none can shake or change them. They rest upon him unmoved, as upon a mountain. Through his laws the silver moon walketh in the darkness, and the stars which appear in the nightly sky mysteriously vanish at the dawn. He knoweth the flight of the birds in the sky; the path of ships in the ocean; the course of the far traveling wind; and beholds all the secret things which have been or shall be done. No creature can even wink without him. He witnesseth man's truth and falsehoods. He instructeth the saints in mysteries, but his secrets are not to be revealed to the foolish. An old hymn declares his omniscience and omnipresence: "The great one who ruleth over these worlds beholdeth as if he were close at hand. When one thinketh he is doing aught by stealth, the gods

know it all. . . . Whatever two persons sitting together devise, Varuna the king, a third, knoweth it all. This earth belongeth to Varuna, and this vast sky. He who should flee far from beyond the sky would not there escape from Varuna, the king. His angels, descending from heaven, traverse this world. The thousand-eyed Varuna looketh across the whole earth. . . . He handleth all things as a gamester throws his dice.”

But Varuna has also exalted moral attributes. It is not enough that he be almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, sovereign; there is a moral idea connected with this sublime deity, that makes it pulsate with high and noble life. We come here upon a peculiar term, *rita*. A word, *asha*, with a meaning exactly similar, is found in the Avesta. They denote order. Rita comes from a root which means, to fit, to join; and denotes that which is fitted, which moves smoothly, regularly, to its end. It is a term for order, the fit and regular way in which nature works. The world for these old poets was not a chaos, or reign of chance. In the march and succession of natural phenomena there is a rule, a law; and so the heavens are the home of order. These old poetic souls lifted their eyes to the heaven, and saw that the sun and the moon are invariable in their coming and going; saw that the stars move ever in harmony, and look down in calm purity on the troubles and guilt of time. The divine above was the realm of ordered movement, and what God loved in heaven he loved also on the earth. Order in the life of man was as beautiful to God as order on high. So applied, the word had a moral and religious meaning, signifying the order which the human soul realized when it stood in harmony with the divine Varuna.

This order Varuna made and maintains. His foe

is Anrita; *i. e.*, falsehood, wrong. To be in harmony with rita is to be true, to be out of harmony with it is to be false. Thus Varuna has the august qualities of moral governor, and man is endowed with the nature of a moral being. So the man, in the presence of Varuna, becomes conscious of sin. The sinner is likened to a thief loaded with chains, or to a calf bound with a cord. Sometimes the sin itself is regarded as an accursed shackle, and the suppliant prays, "Take from me my sin like a fetter, O Varuna." Nor is sin only failure to perform the ritual of sacrifice. It has its seat in the heart. These ancient men had also a hint of the solidarity of man, and saw that the children sometimes suffer for the sins of the parents.

But another most remarkable fact emerges. This august, all-seeing God, in whose presence, in a pre-eminent degree, man becomes conscious of his sin, is yet the God to whom he appeals for mercy. In his distress the guilty one, smitten by his conscience, casts himself into the arms of the all-powerful Father. However thick the veil by which his glorious face still is hidden, the humble suppliant would reach him by his agonizing prayer. Listen to him as he utters one of the most pathetic cries that ever proceeded from the conscience of man. He first confesses his sins, not only those of which he is himself conscious, but even those which are known only to the All-Searcher. "How can I get unto Varuna? Will he accept my offering without displeasure? When shall I, with a quiet mind, see him propitiated? I ask, O Varuna, wishing to know, this my sin. I go to ask the wise. The sages all tell me the same. It is Varuna who is angry with thee. Was it an old sin, O Varuna, that thou wishest to destroy thy friend who always praises thee? Tell me thou

unconquerable lord, and I will quickly turn to thee with praise, freed from sin. Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which are committed by our own bodies.”

These passionate utterances of confused desire seem to beat against the bars, and, at length, burst out into a sublime hymn, that breathes almost the Christian spirit of hope in the Divine mercy: “Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay. Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy! If I go along, trembling like a cloud, be gracious, Almighty, be gracious! Through want of strength, thou strong and bright God, I have gone wrong; have mercy. Almighty, have mercy. Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offense against the heavenly host; whenever we break the law through thoughtlessness, be gracious, Almighty, be gracious!” It was in obedience to a great spiritual law that the ancient Vedic man fled for mercy to the very god in whose presence he felt most deeply the consciousness of sin.

A Christian writer has said, “If you would flee from God, flee to God.” The holier a man feels God to be, and the guiltier himself, the more he is inclined to believe in the Divine mercy. It is the god without ethical character that is hard to propitiate; the perfect God is the gracious God. Man never believes in the good-will of a devil, and confesses his sin to him only when he thinks he can the better bribe the infernal majesty into favor. The least moral is always the most malicious deity, just as the man with the largest beams in his own eye is always least tolerant of the motes in his neighbor’s. A few other points we must notice in this great deity.

(1) He has no wife. By the side of this masculine heaven stands no mother earth. But he is associated

with some being called Mitra. They are addressed together, praised together, described in the same terms, made to exercise the same functions, seem to be really one divine person. They are at bottom one; always blended; one representing the day, and the other the night; fellows that are yet a unity.

(2) He is called Aditya; that is, the son of Aditi. Aditi means "the boundless," "the unlimited in space and the imperishable in time;" the visible infinite, standing immutable while the generations come and go. He is the chief of a group who bear this name, at first as qualities personalized to express his intensity and fullness of being. Later, mythological meanings were attached to it, and Aditi became an early goddess, with Varuna as her son. But he was never supposed to have a father, wife, or posterity.

(3) He has no sacerdotal associations. His character is regal, not priestly. The inspired bard, or rishi, who sung his praises, was not priest, but more akin to the prophet. Not sacrifice is the most pleasing worship, but the holy hymn sung by the ancient bard: "To propitiate thee, O Varuna, we unbend thy mind with the songs, as the charioteer a weary steed." His own tears and prayers also fly up to the god as birds to their nests. There is no human mediator to procure the favor of deity by material gifts and magic rites. All is free, personal, spiritual.

Hitherto we have seen the Hindoos as yet in company with others of their kindred, from whom they finally separated. The period we have just considered ends a comparatively short time after they and those who subsequently became the Persians had parted company. When we next look, the Vedic people have crossed the snowcapped Himalayas; have reached North-

ern India in the region called the Punjaub; have fought with and conquered the dark-skinned natives of the land. Now, the ideas of man are always affected by the climate, natural features, and surrounding peoples,—all the conditions of life amid which they dwell. The living germ may be the same, but what comes from the acorn will not be the same, whether planted in a flower-pot or in the forest primeval. Religion, like the arts, poetry, music, manners, customs of a people, bears the impress of its environment. The environment did not make the living seed, but did modify the product. So here the changes of relation bring changes in the religion. The new nature in which the people find themselves, powerfully affects their imagination. Contact and conflict with men of feebler race weakens the sense of brotherhood, and fosters contempt for the blood, manhood, color, gods of the enemy. The solid structure is also affected. Warfare tends to create a warrior class, and to make the successful leader into a powerful king. Then, the constant use of song to cheer the warrior as he marches to the fight against the alien, and to bless the gods who, because blessed, gave help in the battle, elevates the singer in popular regard, and creates a special class of religious poets. And as the gods love the praiseful bards, the sacrifices they offer are the most potent to win divine favors. Thus the poet tends to become also the divinely-anointed priest. All this powerfully affects the religion. Naturally some new gods arise.

The first is Indra. As we shall see, he is a very fit god for the invading and belligerent warriors to worship. He is indeed the most favored of all the Vedic gods. By far the greatest number of hymns are in his praise. Note his characteristics.

(1) As compared with the deity of the previous period, we find that Indra is not nearly so moral, and far more man-like. Varuna has a more distinctive moral character and qualities, but Indra has more of the passions, impulses, limitations of man. Yet he appears very plainly to be superseding Varuna, as Varuna superseded Dyaus. Indeed, there are distinct traces of a lingering recollection that Indra also had a hand in thrusting aside the oldest god. We read that before Indra the divine Dyaus bowed down. Before him bowed down the great Prithivi, the earth. Another hymn declares, "The greatness of Indra exceeds Dyaus." One poet says, "The other gods were shriveled up like old men; thou, O Indra, becomest king."

(2) His attributes have a close relation to the natural phenomena of India. He is, first of all, a mighty natural force, warring against the destructive powers in the physical world. Looking up into the sky, man saw the thick, heavy clouds, that seemed the grave of the light. The demon of darkness imprisoned the dawn as a robber shuts up the cows in a cave. Upon earth, the power of destruction blasts the fields with barrenness, smites the flocks and herds, and strikes down man in his prime. Then the enemy, with black hair and swarthy skin, attacks the noble Aryan invaders. These evil powers must be resisted, or the world will become theirs. So the mighty Indra goes forth to war against them. His first battle-field is in the heavenly regions. The conflict is described by these Vedic bards with incomparable power. Lifting his majestic head like the lofty summits of the Himalayas, wearing the heaven as a helmet, roaring with his thunder, which seems like the bellowing of the heavenly bull, the mighty god scatters terror all around. The trees of

the valley bow before him in fright, the granite mountains shake as if they were but dust. He breaks the power of the demon of the air, rends the valleys in which he had bound the fertilizing waters, and sets them free. He wields the lightning; he has sharpened it like a practiced cutler; and as one fells a tree with an ax, so he cuts down the dragon. Nor is he alone in this conflict. Under him fight the Maruts, the storm-gods. Their chief is Rudra, the howler. He is a fair-haired god, who wields the thunder only on behalf of man and to protect his herds. The company of the Maruts are mounted upon a shining car; the lance of a hundred colors is in their hand, with the glittering spear. From afar is heard the crackling of their bows. With dazzling swiftness their troop moves forward. Beneath their tread the earth trembles like an aged woman; man bows before them in awe. They glow with the ruddy light of the fire; they roar like lions. Vayu, the wind, is also the faithful companion of Indra. It is he who wakens the sky and makes it visible, and clothes the earth with the purple of the morning. His chariot also is glorious. Over the sky he spreads a rosy light, and lifts the dust from the earth. After triumphing in the celestial regions, Indra begins his fight on the earth. He is the national god of the Aryans. By his help the goat-nosed and noseless, black-skinned, black-haired, monkey-like men of the land are subdued, and the noble Aryans take their flocks. In the day of battle he is invoked. When sharp arrows fly through the air; when the combatants use their muscles; when the chariots rush down the slopes like falcons upon their prey, and sweep along like overflowing torrents, then their eyes look to him for help. He gives to his faithful ones strength to overcome, and shares the spoil with them.

Thus did man, exposed to peril, suffering, death, feel himself a feeble creature, needing a divine deliverer, who should fight for him against the powers of evil that environ him on every side. Thus passionately does he cling to the divine champion of light and life. Indra is a great living god, whose aid can be invoked in all need, and in whose goodness man may always be confident.

(3) Yet he has his limitations—limitations which we could perceive in neither Dyaus nor Varuna. He has a wife and family. His spouse is described as beautiful, and he is dismissed from sacrifice that he may enjoy himself in his pleasant home. Then he loves the intoxicating Soma, which was poured out in sacrifice, and was believed to exhilarate, not only men, but gods as well. He took to Soma on the very day of his birth. So much does he love it that he sometimes hesitates between it and his home, even though his wife waits and Agni calls. Thus, with these gods of old, tippling habits seem to have been as inconsistent with domestic peace as with people to-day. By this intoxicating juice he is stimulated, and made equal to any work or daring. He drinks it like a thirsty ox. Without it, he is like a bull rolling mad in a waterless waste, and when he finds it he fills his belly—nay, his two bellies—which are like two lakes, greedy of all the rivers and of all the rain. When exhilarated with the Soma he is equal to the most prodigious tasks. He fixed heaven in the empty space; hung the world in the air; supported the heavens and spread them out by the strength of Soma. Remembering that this Soma he received through the sacrifices of men, you perceive that the religion is assuming more of a sacerdotal character. The account of his birth testifies to the same thing. It is said that

his mother bore him by the practice of tapas; that is, religious austerity. The nature of his gifts is also significant. They are natural rather than moral, precisely the kind of gifts implored from a deity who still stood too near to nature to have become ethical. His worshipers ask him for wives, riches, horses, chariots. He shakes down wealth upon his favored children as a man shakes ripe fruit from the branch. He is implored to give a thousand horses, and a thousand jars of Soma, and a thousand, yea, hundreds of thousands of cows. Hear that high-born Aryan pray: "O glorious one, give us of thy riches. Thou art the giver of horses, Indra. Thou art the giver of cows, the giver of corn; the strong lord of wealth, . . . disappointing no desires; a friend to friends. Daring the fiend night after night with the help of Indra, let us rejoice in food, freed from heaven. Let us rejoice, Indra, in treasure and food, in wealth and manifold delight and splendor. Let us delight in the blessing of the gods, which gives us the strength of offspring, gives us cows first, and horses." "As a bucket is drawn up in a well, thus we poets, wishing for cows, wishing for horses, wishing for booty, wishing for women, bring near to ourselves Indra as a friend."

We see that these ancestors of the modern Hindoo had a share of that love of wealth which has been at once the pride, the blessing, and the curse of the West Aryan peoples. Summing up, we note that Indra, though a wonderful and mighty god, stands upon a lower plane than either Dyaus or Varuna. He is far more of a pure nature god. He has more of the man in him, more of the earthly alloy, more of the stormful sky. Yet he implies a far more organized worship. He loves sacrifices, the oblations which men pour out to

him, that, as it were, buy his favor. He is a deity to be bribed. Naturally there is, in consequence, a distinctly lower moral tone. The deity that can be bribed and bought is not a deity who makes highest ethical demands, and delights in character. This is one of the earliest indications known to history of the fact, again and again manifest, that wherever the ceremonial and sacerdotal receives emphasis the ethical decays.

Connected with this developing sacerdotal religion are two gods, Agni and Soma. Agni is the god of fire; fire that burns in the sun above, that leaps in the lightning which darts over the face of the sky; fire that burns with a comforting glow on the domestic hearth, and in the sacrificial flame consumes the offering. Though it leaps heavenward toward the assembly of the gods, it may, nevertheless, be produced by rubbing dry sticks together or by the tinder. With his quick glancing tongue, Agni tastes the sweetness of the sacrifice. He clothes himself in a garb of flame, his golden hair floats on the breeze. He is like a wounded dragon, swift as the wind. After quivering like a golden bird upon the hearth, he darts forth into space like a rapid courser which chews the bit and can not be held in. His titles are numerous. Many of these denote every kind and class of priests. Even Brahman is applied to him, denoting his comparatively recent origin. This indicates that the ritual had become complicated, and the priesthood was to some degree developed. For mortals, who bring wood for the altar and pour out libations to him, he acts as priest, bearing their messages, presenting their sacrifices. He is sometimes implored to arrange the sacrifices which we imperfect mortals, with our feeble intellects, do not understand. He makes the oblations fragrant, and sum-

mons the gods to partake. He is the mouth and tongue through which gods and men partake in a common meal. He is the mediator between gods and men. Prayers, hymns of highest praise, are due to Agni, who not only promises great things to his worshipers, but also performs them. Since clarified butter was one of the things most used in the oblations, he is described as butter-formed, butter-fed, and issuing from butter. He is also said to have been begotten in heaven by the celestial music. He is described as having dark hair, the smoke that issues from the flame. His powers are varied. He is the friend of man, the giver of wealth, the guardian and lord of immortality. He warms with his heat the unburnt part of the deceased, and conveys him into heaven.

The other sacrificial deity is Soma. To the average prosaic Western mind this god is scarcely comprehensible. It is almost impossible for us to see through the eyes of these Vedic men, and feel as with their hearts. Can you imagine yourself as deifying the drink of the libations? Yet that is precisely what these people did in the worship of Soma. His earthly origin is as humble as that of Agni. He is nothing but the juice distilled from the mountain plant. After the juice is expressed, it is passed through a sieve, then poured into wooden cups, and mixed with water, clotted milk, and ground corn. Thus prepared, it becomes the drink of immortality. This deity simply expresses the notion that what exhilarates is divine. Since it exhilarates man, it must also exhilarate the gods. The more they drink of it, the more they are equal to, and the better they are pleased with their servants who present it.

Before he lived in the juice that came forth from the press, Soma had a divine history. He seems to

represent the cosmic element of humidity. Born on high, he has come to live on the earth. With the rain he enters into the life of plants. His highest attributes are those of exhilaration and inspiration. He confers immortality; he is the soul of the sacrifice; he rides a chariot with winged horses; his weapons are sharp and terrible. He is sometimes called the creator and father of the gods; the generator of hymns; that is, the man intoxicated is the man inspired. The more he is possessed of Soma, the diviner his song. When the big thunder-clouds are rent by the lightnings, he comes down in the life-quickenning form of rain, which has a heart of fire. Pressensé says that the truth represented by this deification of Agni and Soma is, that the life of the world is a divine life, and is only one great sacrifice which the gods are offering to themselves. The life of the universe is nothing else but a great sacrifice. But it is doubtful if these early men had formed any such abstract notions as this. They have more likely been read into this religion than read out of it. Both Agni and Soma tend to become great gods, and even to rise to the supreme place, or, losing their individuality, to be confused with the others. The poet seems to forget that he has before him only natural elements deified. For example, hear this hymn: "O Soma, high in wisdom, thou guidest the right way. Through thy leadings have our fathers, the wise ones, found joy and safety among the gods. Thou art full of wisdom, O Soma, and mighty in power. Thou art a bull in thy strength and greatness. Thine are the laws of King Varuna. High and deep is thy seat, O Soma!" "Thou dost shield us, O Soma, from the sorrows we make for ourselves, and from those that spring from others." That which is lost he brings back, and uplifts the pious.

There are some other deities which we will just mention in passing. There are the deities of the storm, already named; as, Rudra and his allies, the Maruts. Their worship lies especially along the roots of the Himalayas. They represent the angry, stormful sky. Then there are two great sun-gods, Surya and Savitri, described as golden-haired, ruddy, and full of beams, and as having crossed the sky in three strides. Then there is Pushan, the multiplier of the cattle, with goats instead of steeds. His scepter is an ox-goad, and his weapon is a golden dagger. There is besides, Ushas, the dawn, of whom it is said, "She has ever shone without beginning." She has shone to-day; she will shine in all the days to come, unchanging, never dying; the last to pass away, the first to rise, she shines, goddess of dawn. She rides forth on her resplendent car of light; the birds form her retinue; and when she opens the gates of the day, the breath of life for all beings is in her. Her rays flow forth like rivers of milk from the superb abundance of the breast. She is as one fresh come forth from the path.

Without spending time to introduce in detail any more of the deities of this period, let us watch these Vedic men of the ancient days worshipping their divinities. Could the modern mind, so sobered and saddened by its long search after truth, so sick of religious controversy as to be almost in fear of religion itself, and almost to feel cynical and skeptical of the worth and wisdom of humanity,—could such a mind get a living picture of this ancient age, it would seem like a vision of a sweet and winsome childhood. We hear this man speak of his gods with refreshing simplicity. He strongly believes in the Golden Rule, at any rate as applied to deity. One poet courageously tells Agni

that were he the bard, the god, he would be the better and more generous deity of the two. "Wert thou a mortal and I an immortal, I would not abandon thee to malediction and misery. My worshipers should be neither poor nor distressed nor wretched." Another says, "Were I lord over as much as thou, I would not leave a man that praised me to want." This is a very common human weakness. Many a person to-day acts as if he thought that he would be a better deity than the Almighty, only he has not the courage so frankly to say so.

But these Vedic men had the courage of their convictions. They loved flocks and herds and good pastures; the rain that watered the fields; the clouds that carried the rain; the winds that brought the clouds together; the thunder that rent their bosoms and scattered their watery treasures; but they hated the winds that swept these vessels of plenty unemptied from the sky. They loved happy homes, good wives, dear children, victory over enemies, and deliverance from foes; and what they loved they asked from the gods, thought they ought to receive, and believed that they did receive; and what they received they gave again. They believed that the gods needed them, and that to the liberal man heaven was liberal in its gifts. The man's gifts were the song of praise to the gods, songs that exalted their powers, their majesty, their persons, their achievements; the sacrifices that increased their strength and ministered to their greatness; the libations that exhilarated them, and made them equal to the divinest things. But these things did not stand alone. Without toil it was impossible to please the gods. They did not love the man who loved sleep. Nor did they approve a sacrifice without faith. By faith the sacrificial fire

was kindled, and by faith the oblation was offered up. The bountiful man was saved from evil or calamity, but the man who hated devotion was destroyed. Man ought to love the gods. Without this, neither the libation nor the hymn could please.

Moral purity also they held at one time to be necessary to religious service. The poet prays that he may be free from sin. Prayer is supposed to have prevailing power. It is called the protecting arm, and is praised as having preserved a king in battle, and discovered the sun when hidden by an unholy darkness. Thus this ancient man lived in faith and fellowship with the gods. His virtue was based on his religion. It is not a gloomy, but a glad faith. The gods live and walk in the light, hating the darkness. Religion, here, is nothing like a method of pleasing and propitiating the devil. In fact, nothing less like devil-worship can be found. Indeed, it knows no such being as the devil. There is a demon, a foe who fights against Indra, but whom Indra always defeats; a being whom man hates, yet to whom he pays no worship, wisely leaving God to take care of the devil. The priest practices no rigid asceticism. Worship consists in sacrifice, prayer, and praise. The sacrifices are melted butter, clotted milk, rice-cakes, and sacred libations thrown into the fire. It was thought that the gods consumed them. Bulls, cows, buffaloes, and rams were also sacrificed, but only on special occasions. There are no idols nor sanctuaries, properly so called. The real altar is the family hearth. These men have faith in a life beyond the grave, and pray to be loosed from death. Heaven is the abode of the other and higher life. We hear this man say, "May I attain to the blessed abode of abundant fruitfulness, to the blessed abode where pious men rejoice!"

Cremation was substituted for burial to typify the flight of the dead who, like Agni, rise to heaven. Indeed, the flame from the funeral pyre was supposed to carry the soul aloft. The dead go to inhabit the luminous abodes of Agni in the sun, and thenceforward the three worlds are open to them as to him. The doctrine of transmigration was not yet developed. There is little trace of a future judgment of the wicked; but this is not to be wondered at when we remember that the moral idea was beginning to be obscured by the sacerdotal, as in the worship of Agni and Soma.

We have now arrived at the last period, the period of transition to Brahmanism. We have seen these wanderers as they left their primeval home; have tracked their wanderings with their associates, from whom they afterwards separated; have seen them, after this last division, make their way over the snowy crests of the Himalayas into the land of the seven rivers, driving before them or subduing the dark-skinned natives of the soil. We have now to follow them one step farther. They migrate into Central India. They travel from the Indus right down into the rich and fertile, but enervating valley of the Ganges, and, after prolonged struggles, settle in comparatively small numbers amongst the conquered. The different clans dispute amongst themselves for the possession of the land. The old inhabitants are reduced to slavery, and society rapidly loses all traces of its primitive form. The men who had won the battles became a distinct order; so did the men who cultivated the fields, or who wrought in cities; and so, above all, did the men who had so well celebrated and sacrificed to the gods that they helped most mightily to win the victory. Thus the caste system emerged into distinctness and form.

The new social order, with the ideas it represents, finds expression in a hymn which is probably the latest in the Rig Veda. There it is said that from the mouth of the deity came the Brahman, for he was to be a speaker; from his arms came the warrior class, because they had to fight; the cultivators of the soil and the merchants came from his thighs; but the Sudra, the vanquished and enslaved native of darker skin, came from his feet. Naturally all this affects the religion. We may expect new deities, new ideas, new worships.

Then the change of climate would have notable effects. The early Aryans had lived an active and brilliant life. But under this burning sky they became more dull and torpid, inclined to secure their ends by prayer and sacrifice, rather than by struggle and toil. Thus the old gods, who carried on such a desperate struggle in the clouds and upon the earth, began to lose their importance, while the god of prayer came more and more into the ascendant, until the priesthood devised a veritable deification of prayer itself. This process had begun in the earlier time. As the sacrificial fire and libation were made into gods, so prayer had begun to be regarded as divine. It is said to have its dwelling in heaven. The cloud prays when it thunders; the sounding of the sea is a holy hymn. In rising from earth to heaven, prayer, like Agni and Soma, is returning to its own place. Sacred hymns are the echoes of the songs of the immortals. The power of prayer is unbounded. It is like a dart to strike down the evil spirits; it has power over the rising of the sun and over the storm; it unlocks the mountain where the dawn lies hidden, and brings down the rain from heaven. But now he tends to become a supreme god, swallowing up all the rest, even the great Indra. He

is now called Brahmanaspati, "the lord of prayer." A priest himself, he is the god of priests, and his importance grows with theirs. He is even styled the divinest of the host of the gods. Indra could not be a favorite god with the priests, for he was the type of the warrior, the very god of battles. So, with all his impetuous comrades, he descends gradually to the second rank. As to the sublime Varuna, he was gradually pushed out and thrust below, until, at last, flung down from the lofty summit of his sanctity, he was cast into the infernal regions to reign amongst the demons. As the Greek Zeus was only a celestial Agamemnon, so Brahmanaspati was only a huge and heavenly Brahman. He is represented as the father of the gods, who blew them forth from himself as the blacksmith drives the sparks from the glowing iron. He is no sensuous thing, no idealized natural phenomenon, but a purely ideal creation, personified prayer.

Side by side with this priestly tendency went a metaphysical one. These people had always possessed the speculative instinct. But in the past, in the bright, active days of the people's childhood, as is always the case with children, the poetry had been more powerful than the speculation. The religious feeling, with its deep cravings and soaring aspirations, had clung to the gods, asking them to satisfy its vague yearnings after the infinite; even beseeching for pardon or restoration, and longing for moral good. But at last the inevitable question was put, "What am I?" or "Whence came I?" and not "What is it?" or "Whence came it?" "Had things a cause, or were they ever as they are now?" Now notice that this man had no idea of creator or creation to begin with. These ideas had to be acquired or discovered. To us that may seem strange. We have

been steeped in that notion since childhood. But the idea of a creator was not easily reached by the Indo-Aryan mind. It took even gifted Greece ages to grasp it, and then only after the splendid, almost inspired genius of Plato had shown it the way. But the gods of the Hindoo stood within nature, bound up with its conditions, its necessities, its fate. So when this thinker wished to find a cause, it was a cause, not only for nature and himself, but for the gods as well, for everything, in short, physical, human, divine. Even when this race was young, and its singers were pouring out the rapture of delight begotten in their souls by the beauty of earth and sky, we catch minor strains of sadness in their song expressive of a feeling after the great unknown lying beyond and above the veil of material things. This was the germ of the metaphysics which at last rent this rich ancient robe of poesy, in the effort to grasp the ineffable, mysterious cause of all.

The Hindoo mind had been for a long time steadily drifting towards a kind of dreamy pantheism. We see a marked tendency to confuse the gods with one another, thus depriving them of individuality. Even by the old poets each god in turn is sometimes endowed with supreme attributes. It seems as if, when they worshiped or praised any individual deity, all the rest, for the moment, disappeared from their vision, and he only, who is to fulfill their desires, stands in full light before their eyes. Sometimes it is said that Indra is greater than all the gods; then all the names and powers of other deities are ascribed to Agni; and even Soma is called king of heaven and earth, of man and gods, to whom even the other deities owe their immortality. The gods thus tend more and more to run

together, and to lose all their distinctive characteristics. The same stories are told of each, and the same feats are ascribed to each in turn. Some of the old poets saw what they were doing, and said distinctly that Agni is also Indra, and Savitri, and Pushan, and Rudra; nay, he is said to be all the gods. Sometimes they formed dual deities by linking names together, as Agni-Soma, Indra-Agni, Indra-Varuna. They even went so far as to comprehend all the gods under a common name, calling them "Visve Devas," all gods, and under that title to offer prayers and sacrifices to them thus collectively. Like one of those inaccessible peaks of the Alps, where all lines, before divergent, meet in a single point, so did these deities far up in the heights of thought blend into one.

These thinkers even went some steps along the road to the formation of an organized polytheism, with a supreme deity at the head. There was one epithet sometimes applied to the greater deities, which meant "maker of all things," "Visvakarma," and another meaning "lord of all men," "Pragapati." These two epithets, after a time, were apparently turned into names of new deities. There are few hymns to these, but what there are almost remind us of the language of the Psalms, and we almost expect that they are about to rise into a rational monotheism. Visvakarma is called "the one god whose eyes are everywhere, whose mouth, arms, feet, are everywhere." He is called "the father that begat us," "the ruler who knows the laws, and all the worlds, he who alone gave names to the gods, all other creatures go to ask of him." But then they go on to raise the question, "Beyond the sky, beyond the earth, beyond the devas and the asuras, what was the first germ which the waters bore, wherein all gods were

seen?" The answer is, that the waters bore that first germ in which all the gods came together. That one thing in which all creatures rested was placed in the lap of the unborn. You will never know who created these things; something else stands between you and him. Involved in mist and with faltering voice the poets walk along, rejoicing in life.

Thus we see hints that the mysteries about the ultimate cause of things awed their mind; made it humble in the very hour of its sublimest flights; and prevented it from venturing really to name the ultimate power, the source, the cause, of the wondrous sea of Being whose mighty tides ebb and flow in ceaseless succession. One of the sublimest of the hymns of the Rig Veda brings this out. "In the beginning there arose the golden germ; he was the one born lord of all this. He established the earth and this sky. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? He who gives breath, he who gives strength; whose commands all the bright gods revere; whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is death. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? He who through his power is the one sole king of the breathing and slumbering world; he who governs all, man and beast. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? He through whose power these snowy mountains are, and the sea, they say, with the distant river; he of whom these regions are the two arms. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm; he through whom the heaven was established, nay, the highest heaven; he who measured the space in the sky. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? He to whom the heaven and earth, standing firm by his will, look up,

trembling in their mind; he over whom the rising sun shines forth. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? When the great waters went everywhere, holding the seed and generating the fire, thence arose he who is the life of the gods. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? He who by his might looked even over the waters which held power and generated the sacrificial fire, he who alone is god above all gods. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice? May he not hurt us, he who is the creator of the earth, or he the righteous, who created the heaven; he who also created the bright and mighty waters. Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifices?"

We see what an entirely new development appears in this hymn. We have no longer Indra, the great storm-god; or Surya, the sun-god; or Agni, the apotheosis of the fire; or Soma, the deification of the intoxicating juice; but the source of the golden light, the golden germ, source of all that is. Though the hymn closes by saying, "O Pragapati, no other than thou embraces all these created things. May that be ours which we desire when sacrificing to thee; may we be lords of wealth!" and though Pragapati, in the popular speech, is another name for the sun, the idea is something higher and more abstract than the current notion we have previously considered. The repetition of the question implies doubt. This doubt sometimes extends to the very existence of the greatest gods of the Vedic pantheon. We hear one poet say: "If you wish for strength, offer to Indra a hymn of praise, a true hymn if Indra truly exist, for some one says that Indra does not exist. Who has seen him? Whom shall we praise?" Again: "Darkness is around us; we speak, not knowing

what we say." Again: "My ears vanish, my eyes vanish, and the light also which dwells in my heart, my mind, with its far-off longings, leaves me. What shall I say, what shall I think?" This doubt, mingled with terror, springs up because the shining pinnacles of the gods of light have vanished before the mysterious one who is the essence of all things.

There is another hymn, a remarkable and famous production, full of a sadder yet bolder spirit; the sadness known to him who feels overshadowed by the mysteries impenetrable, and bounded by utter ignorance: full of the boldness which can yet venture out into the darkness, and with strained eyes, search for the What, the Whither, and the Whence, of the world. Before the eyes of the poet there arises the eternal silence, the moment which makes speech impossible:

"Nor aught, nor nought existed; yon bright sky
 Was not, nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above.
 What covered all? What sheltered? What concealed?
 Was it the waters' fathomless abyss?
 There was not death—yet was there nought immortal;
 There was no confine betwixt day and night;
 The only One breathed breathless by itself,
 Other than It there nothing since has been.
 Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled
 In gloom profound—an ocean without light.
 The germ that still lay covered in the husk
 Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.
 Then first came love upon it, the new spring
 Of mind; yet poets in their heart discerned,
 Pondering, this bond between created things
 And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth,
 Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?
 Then seeds were sown and mighty powers arose,
 Nature below, and power and will above.
 Who knows the secret? Who proclaimed it here,
 Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?"

The gods themselves came later into being—
 Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?
 He from whom all this great creation came,
 Whether His will created or was mute,
 The most High Seer that is in highest heaven,
 He knows it—or perchance even he knows not."

Here we see that the religion had passed, in some minds at least, far beyond the spontaneous stage, and had reached the reflective. There is a vast distinction between the vivid, self-conscious, creative life, and the morbid introspection of one's feelings; between instinctive prayer and praise to the gods with whom the active imagination and the living heart peopled nature, and a meditation upon the problems of psychology and metaphysics. It is the distinction between the man who keenly enjoys the beauty of the rose and the one who sees in it chiefly something to pick to pieces and classify; between the man who pours forth the Oratorio, or sits entranced by its harmonies, and the musical critic coldly applying his tests, or discussing the philosophy of sound; between the man who sees in his mother's face something to love, and he who sees in it only something to dissect and describe. Certainly we do not think that the common people had any part in these transcendental abstractions, any more than the Roman Catholic peasantry now know anything about the philosophical speculations of the universities, or than the Protestant docker knows of Kant's philosophy or Bowne's metaphysics.

To the greater part of their worshipers, no doubt, the Vedic gods were as yet living and vivid realities, from whom were received protection, pardon, and all the good gifts of life. But it is none the less true that the daring thinkers who were already standing

on the dizzy verge of the fathomless abyss of the mysterious *One*, brought out forcibly the contradiction inherent in the religion of the Vedas, and prepared the way for the transition through Brahmanism to Buddhism. Many sincerely pious souls indeed, who did not rise to the chilling heights of these subtle metaphysics, were instinctively conscious of the inadequacy of their beliefs, and recognized the contradiction to which we have just alluded. Hence the touching aspirations, expressed in some of their hymns, after the perfect light and happiness beyond the tomb. We find this prayer addressed to Soma: "Where there is eternal light in the world, where the sun is placed, in that immortal, imperishable world, place me, O Soma! Where King Vaivasata reigns, where the secret place of heaven is, where these mighty waters are, there make me immortal! Where light is free, in the third heaven of heavens, there make me immortal! Where wishes and desires are, where the bowl of the bright Soma is, where there is food and rejoicing, there make me immortal! Where there is happiness and delight, where joy and pleasure reside, where the desires of our desire are attained, there make me immortal!" Another hymn says, "Thirst came up on the worshiper though he stood in the midst of the waters." What a pitiful and pathetic expression of the deep sense of unsatisfied moral needs! As he stood thus by the springing fountains of his religion, the son of Vedic India felt the burning thirst unassuaged. Another cries, "Who of all these gods will hear our cry and be favorable unto us? Who will come down and deliver us?"

The history of religions proves that when men are in this frame of mind it is a short step to asceticism. Men will try to appease their inward fever by religious

penances and all sorts of austerities. So it was in India. A body of men began to arise, who, retiring into the forest, preached and practiced that, while for the multitude, sacrifices, ceremonial, hymns, ritual, were necessary, for the elect few who could dare the forest and practice self-abnegation, there was a short cut to perfection and communion with the gods.

From this point the development into a huge, sacerdotal, dreary, and hopeless system was natural and easy. This development went on until the complicated and intolerable Brahmanism was reached, from which the noble soul of Gautama revolted. It took centuries to accomplish the doleful evolution, but the descent was almost inevitable, unless some clear revelation should turn back its course. The bright and natural religion of the early Vedas was transformed into a vast and gloomy pantheism and sacerdotalism, which kept man in misery here, and gave him no hope of happiness beyond the grave. This change was no violent revolution, but a gradual evolution through many years, from germs which were present from the beginning in this religion.

We now come to our closing question: What light can this development of the old Aryan faith throw upon the much mooted question of a primitive revelation of God to man? Ever since men began to read the story of the old religions of the world this question has been the standard around which the battle has raged. On the one side are the defenders of the Biblical story. They say, "In the beginning God made himself known to his human child, showed him his face, talked with him." Mr. Gladstone has even gone so far as to state six fundamental truths which were probably included in that primitive revelation. On the other

side is the whole camp of the evolutionists. They say, "Whatever your Bibles may claim, man came up from primeval slime, through plant and animal, to savage humanity, and thence he has marched and is marching onward and upward to the highest levels of human perfection." They take us by the hand, and, leading us to their anthropological museums, point out the evidences of a stone age, a better stone age, an age of bronze, an age of Lake-dwellers and Troglodytes; then, bringing before us specimens of the savages of to-day, say to us, "See there, from what we have all come. Behold the photograph of your grandfather." Then, since the religion of a person may be expected to correspond with the general level of his culture, his first religion, they assure us, was belief in ghosts, or in spirits of the fountains, rivers, trees; of winds and waves; or even of animals; and that, by the power of his reason, he has gradually risen from these low levels to the heights on which the most civilized races are treading to-day.

But now, let us walk back along the path which we have trodden in this lecture. Here, at the end of our journey, we see our cousins, with many intellectual misgivings, doubts, struggles, regarding the gods. Some are questioning the very existence of the deities of the older faith. Some are stretching forth lame hands of longings, yearnings, strivings for the good they comprehend not, "with their feeble hands and helpless, groping blindly in the darkness," pathetically telling us of their unassuaged thirst, even while they stand by the side of the gushing fountains of their old religion. We see religion tending more and more to a callous, dreary, frigid system of ritualism on the one hand, and asceticism on the other, with a dark ground of dreamy, abstract pantheism, which gives up the noble

idea of a living, energizing, sympathetic, conscious person, immortal, omnipotent, and wise; and takes in its place a barren, vague, meaningless abstraction, of which, in their intellectual pride, men in every age have babbled folly under the high-sounding names of the Absolute and the Infinite. It is no longer an age of spontaneity, but of reflection. There is no more the instinctive consciousness of the presence of God, but a painful, intellectual questioning about him.

Passing up the stream, we see, a little nearer the source, a bright polytheism. We see Indra, the great, sublime warrior god, with many glorious attributes, but, alas! tainted, too, with many human passions and weaknesses; with his wife and children; surrounded also by the circle of contemporary divinities, Agni, Soma, Surya, Savitri, Pushan, Rudra, the Maruts,—living gods whom the worshipers trust, to whom they pray in confidence, and from whom they seek, not chiefly, it is true, moral blessings, but fuller and more sparkling cups of temporal prosperity,—good wives, children, cattle, horses, crops, rich pastures, victory over foreign and domestic foes. Backward, farther up the years, we see the great Varuna upon his lofty height, endowed with unspeakable might, omniscience, omnipresence, immortality, and, what is more, with righteousness, moral glory, mercy; before whom men bow with intense consciousness of sin, yet with trust in him for pardon and moral renewal. Then, away up toward the very source, we behold the great Dyaus standing alone in his majesty, all-embracing, bright, glorious, in whose light his worshipers rejoice. That is, as we ascend the stream, the religion seems to grow clearer and purer, both as regards the number of the gods and their moral qualities, until we stand in the presence of a great Deity whom

his worshipers praise in gladsome song, and whom they address in words which we, their descendants, have been taught by our Redeemer to repeat, "Our Father who art in heaven."

What theory now will best account for these facts? The theory of natural evolution? If that were true, we should expect the stream to grow purer and purer as we descend. The gods ought to become fewer and fewer, their moral quality higher and higher. The earliest days should be fullest of magic and superstition, and belief in evil spirits and innumerable genii. But, as we have seen, the facts are precisely the reverse. The truth is, that the chief argument of the average defender of a natural evolution of man from a state of primitive savagery is, that to fit this theory, things must have happened thus and so, therefore they did so happen. The philosophy assumed demands that man should have begun his career at the savage state, therefore he did begin with it.

Yet we think that even the hypothesis of evolution does not necessarily demand that man began at so low a level. Professor Drummond, in his "Ascent of Man," apparently without being conscious of it, has given three hints that point out a possible escape from the conclusions often drawn by evolutionists from their theory. He takes us to the Arctic regions, where there is no such thing as liquid. All matter is in solid form. The temperature might be thirty-one degrees below zero or thirty-one above, without the slightest difference appearing in the aspect of the country. All is ice and snow. But suppose the temperature to rise two degrees from the point thirty-one degrees above zero. What a contrast! Whilst a rise of sixty degrees had made not the slightest change in the appearance of the land, the

almost inappreciable addition of two degrees transforms a world of ice into a world of water. So, says Drummond, in the animal world may a very small rise beyond the maximum of brain open the door for a revolution, "the passing of some Rubicon; the opening of some floodgate which marks one of nature's great transitions." In another place he says, "Progress can only start by one or two individuals shooting ahead of their species; and the life gain can only be conserved by their being shut off from their species, or by their species being shut off from them." In another place still, he shows how the prime factor in evolution is environment, and that this itself rises as the living being evolves. As when a man ascends a mountain, with every thousand feet of rise his environment changes until, emerging from the clouds, he stands upon the summit, under the radiant sun; so, by evolution, climbing upwards, the world of living creatures rises until, from the sense world at the mountain foot, it reaches the heights, where, with ennobled and ennobling faculties, it greets the sun. Now put together these three conditions; namely, the immense gains, mental and moral, possible from apparently small advances in organization; the shooting ahead of their species by one or two individuals, and the need of their isolation from the rest if they are to retain the gains achieved; and, finally, the growing grandeur of the environment as the creature becomes nobler, and you have all the conditions necessary for a garden of Eden, where the first man and the first woman walked in conscious fellowship with God. That these conditions were met in this way we do not affirm, but we do affirm that on the principles of evolution itself, one of its most eloquent expounders

being judge, the sacred story of old is not necessarily antiquated and untrue.

Read that story. There are the parents of our race. In their souls they have not only religious capacities, but also a vivid consciousness of the presence of God. In some way, it is not necessary to say in what way, the one personal, eternal, holy Father makes himself known to them. They live in glad fellowship with him. But, alas! on some fatal day sin enters and infuses its venom into their souls. Guilt scowls upon the conscience, and dims their spiritual vision. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge. They hide from his presence behind the trees of the garden. They are expelled from its delightful shade. Henceforth the retention of the knowledge of God becomes a matter of difficulty or aversion. Yet, through the divine mercy, they are spared some glimmering rays of hope, and are put under an economy of redemption. Rays of that primal glory still linger with them. So they still struggle after God, and still sometimes rejoice in his goodness; while yet, in their more sober moods, they shrink from him in consciousness of guilt.

“As on the White Sea’s charméd shore,
 The Parsee sees his holy hill
 With dunnest smoke-clouds curtained o’er,
 Yet knows beneath them, evermore,
 The low, pale fire is quivering still;
 So, underneath its clouds of sin,
 The heart of man retaineth yet
 Gleams of its holy origin;
 And half-quenched stars that never set,
 Dim colors of its faded bow,
 And early beauty linger there,
 And o’er its wasted desert blow
 Faint breathings of its morning air.”

Gifted with deep and keen sensibilities to the fascinations of natural phenomena, their lingering consciousness of God makes them look up in adoration. The golden-handed sun, dispensing, as the lord of heaven, his gifts of radiance and righteousness; the starry firmament, inspiring awe and deepening wonder; the freshness of the morning and the calm of the evening twilight, whispering in his heart of a supernatural presence; season following season, and one element mingling with another; the scorching wind; the lightnings, flashing forth in majesty and armed with speedy vengeance; rain and dew and drought,—these all, in turn, excited sentiments of pain or pleasure, joy or sorrow, confidence or apprehension. He saw in them tokens and symbols of a spiritual presence. But one by one were broken the golden threads which connected the invisible things of God, his power, his righteousness, his fatherhood, with objects that bewilder and bewitch the senses. The myth grew and became an object, not of fancy merely, but of faith. In their mind darkened by sin God tended to become gods, and the gods to disappear behind a vague and dreamy pantheism which makes God all things, and all things God. Will not this account for all the facts before us? Beams of truth from the past knowledge still lingering in the mind of man; the Spirit of God ever striving with him; man in sin and guilt, ever tending to corrupt the truth,—these forces together weaving this complex web of religious history would seem perfectly to explain the facts of the Vedic religion.

What, then, is there against this explanation? Little but the supposed demands of a philosophy which as yet is far from proven, or misunderstandings of what is

meant by primitive revelation. Certainly should the claim be made that into the brain of our first parents God put ready-made a whole system of theology, few would be found willing to defend so radical a proposition. But that is not the contention of those who argue for a primitive revelation of God to man. Or, when Schelling objects to the idea of primitive revelation because it would lead to the assertion that, before this revelation, man was without religion; that this would imply an original atheism in the human consciousness, while this natural atheism would make it incomprehensible how man could be receptive of the revelation, we reply, that even if man's consciousness of God had at first been latent until it was awakened by a definite manifestation of the eternal Father, he might have been just as receptive of that disclosure of the face of God as the baby, at first utterly ignorant of its parents, at length is fully conscious of their presence, and knows much of their nature.

We reply to Schelling, besides, that we regard the consciousness of God as begotten in the soul of man in precisely the same way as his consciousness of the external world. There was not first a period during which he lived without any knowledge of the world, followed by a revelation of that world to his consciousness; but, without having any theory of knowledge, the earliest man, on the Scriptural assumption or any other, as soon as he opened his eyes, found himself in contact with trees and flowers, solid earth and diamond-studded sky, and spontaneously, without reflection, felt himself in presence of something that was not himself. So, naturally, did he find himself with a consciousness of God which became clearer and clearer in the revela-

tions of his Father's face, until sin entered to obscure his spiritual vision and arrest the normal development of his soul.

In fact, elaborate attempts to show how man first came by religion and consciousness of God are as needless and futile as to inquire how he came by his belief in an external world, or how he acquired his appetite for food, his sense of the beautiful, his social impulse, or his attraction for the opposite sex. Certainly, if any theory implies in man an original atheism of consciousness, that theory does which attempts to show how man could come to religion through his senses alone. Max Müller, for example, says: "We want to reach the point where religious ideas take their first origin, but we decline to avail ourselves of the fetish theory on the left, and of the theory of a primordial revelation on the right, in order to arrive at our goal. We want to find a road which, starting from what everybody grants us—namely, the knowledge supplied by our five senses—leads us straight, though it may be slowly, to a belief in what is not, or at least not entirely, supplied to us by our senses,—the various disguises of the infinite, the supernatural, or the divine."

Similar statements are found again and again in his works. They all seem to assume that the human race lived sometime, somewhere, in full possession of the five senses, but without religion and without consciousness of God, and that then these were gradually developed. In fact, he tries elaborately to show how the conception of the Divine might have grown up through the influence of language. There was thus, according to him, a speaking man before there was a religious man, or even one in possession of the notion of gods or God. There is nowhere a particle of evidence for any

such man. There never was a man, even the most savage, who did not have in his soul vastly more than his senses furnished him. The truth is, that Professor Müller, with all his learning, seems to be in the bonds of a materialistic and antiquated theory of knowledge. The senses give no knowledge at all, they only provide the stimuli which arouse the soul to its constructive activity, in accordance with its own inherent laws that are a transcript of the eternal reason manifest in things.

But it is objected to the idea of primitive revelation that it rests on precisely the same evidence as might the savage's belief in his fetish. "Suppose we asked an Ashanti priest how he knew that his fetish was not a common stone, but something else, call it as you like; and suppose he were to say to us that the fetish had told him so, what should we say?" Or what should we say if he were to tell us that he could see in his fetish something beyond a mere stone, because he possessed an instinct of seeing it? Is it then impossible for God to speak to his child? so to speak to him, indeed, that the child shall understand his Father's voice? Must God remain forever dumb to his intelligent creatures, no matter how dire their need of a word from him? It is easy to throw up difficulties like these, but they will apply equally well to communion of man with man. Why should it be thought a thing more incredible that God should speak to his children, than that man should converse with man? When the mother speaks to her babe, or the orator to his audience, what is it but spirit addressing spirit? If it were body speaking to body, as well might a corpse speak to a congregation of the dead, or to a collection of chapless skulls. What is speech? In my soul there is first the invisible thought. By the power of the invisible

will, that thought is sent along its way on the telegraph of the nerves to the lips. Then what?

Here are many feet of blank space between me and my audience. There is no bridge or means of communication except invisible, senseless air. This can neither feel, nor see, nor listen; can neither inquire, nor reply, nor understand my words; yet, somehow, I am to send my thoughts and feelings across that space and get them into the minds of others. The best I can do is to set that air into wavy motion. Those waves strike the listener's ear; along the dumb, senseless nerve the thrill is carried, and, aroused by this, he reconstructs in his own mind my thought. How does he know that he has my thought? How does he know that the words came from me, and not from the organ behind me, or the chandelier in the roof? The simple fact is, that certain movements of the air have smitten upon his nerves, and by the very constitution of his mind he is compelled to refer them to me, and to give them a certain interpretation. Ask him how he knows, and, whether the simplest peasant or the most profound philosopher, the best that he can say is, "Why I feel, I know, that they come from you, that they are words from you to me." Surely, if man, by all this complicated apparatus can address his fellow, God, in primitive times, or in any times, could speak to his child, and be understood. The difficulty in question is simply *imaginery*.

Other objections are made to the idea of primitive revelation. It is confidently asked, "How could divine power communicate ideas to man as yet incapable of speech and thought?" as though it were perfectly proved that there ever was such a man, unless he were insane. Again it is said, "A belief which sprung from direct

divine instruction, would be the same among all peoples, and perfectly true and pure as far as it went;" as though sin could have no effect whatever to dim the spiritual vision, as though climate and condition of life could have no modifying influence upon thought, and as though history had not again and again demonstrated that peoples starting with the same ideas, ended as far as the poles apart. It is urged, also, that if, at the beginning, God could communicate pure truth concerning himself, he could have provided as well that this valuable possession should not be immediately lost. To which it is a sufficient answer to say, that it is not taught that the truth made manifest to our parents by the primitive revelation was wholly and immediately lost, but by sin obscured, and that this dimming of man's spiritual vision by sin could not have been prevented by God unless he had chosen to have a race of automata, rather than a race of freemen. It is objected, further, that knowledge could not be put thus ready-made into the mind of man, as though God could not have played the part to the first man which we play to our children; namely, that of spirit teaching spirit, or indeed which nature plays to us all. Finally, it is objected that "nothing which man's consciousness contains is a definitely-developed product, least of all his high spiritual ideas, which are the most elaborately prepared products of the long process in which the growing spirit actively appropriates the objective world, reason, etc. Yes, since man is a sinner, God has been in human history, striving by his Spirit against the downward tendencies, and by various providences, educating him back again into the blessed fellowship he forfeited, and by a great economy of redemption making that fellowship, in spite of guilt, a glad possibility.

In fact, on any tenable theistic faith, no valid objection can be raised to the idea that God, in the beginning, gave such a manifestation of himself to his human child that he felt the Divine presence, and bowed before his Creator in reverence and love as he recognized the Divine goodness, purity, and truth. Without possessing such notions as the Absolute, the Infinite, etc., why could not man receive his Father's self-revelation as sole Creator of the heavens and the earth, the one loving and holy God? Even so naturalistic a writer as Reville says that he would accept some such a statement as this: "God revealed himself in the beginning to man as soon as man had reached a certain stage of psychic development, so that, arrived at that stage, he must become sensible of the reality of the Divine."

What is that certain stage? Why might that not have been reached at the very beginning of his history? How could God have made this revelation? A clear answer to such queries as these would, we think, plainly indicate that there are no valid philosophical objections to any sober doctrine of primitive revelation such as the Christian Scriptures teach. Saussaye seems to leave the door open for such a doctrine when he says, "We regard religion as having proceeded out of the nature of man, under influences and circumstances in which the activity of God made itself manifest without our being able definitely to determine the form and relations under which that was done." At any rate, as we have seen, the facts revealed in the development of the Vedic faith would seem to harmonize far better with the doctrine of a primitive revelation than with any theory that makes man begin with the brute or savage, and gradually develop his spiritual conceptions.

LECTURE II.

THE CANDLE OF ASIA AND THE SUN OF THE
WORLD.

THE CANDLE OF ASIA AND THE SUN OF THE WORLD.

I N our lecture on the Vedic Faith, we saw in the last period a strong tendency toward a priestly, ritualistic religion, accompanied by a rigid system of caste. The Brahmans stood at the summit. They bound the people hand and foot with a thousand sacerdotal restrictions, and made their life heavy with burdens of ceremony grievous to be borne. By the side of this elaborate system of ritual and ceremony for the common people, a speculative, metaphysical tendency had also appeared, the drift of which was towards an all-ingulfing pantheism. Now this tendency went on for centuries with gradually-increasing momentum, until the aristocratic, priestly system became utterly intolerable. Then Buddhism appeared. It may be styled both an evolution and a revolution, or an evolution resulting in a revolution. On the one side, it was a revolt against the authority of the Vedas, also against the sacrificial and sacerdotal systems; on the other, it was a logical and practical development of principles, expressed or implied, in the great philosophies.

Pressensé has said with some truth: "Nothing could be less revolutionary than the teaching of Buddha in its original form. He connected it closely with the past, only breaking the husk which inclosed the fruit, not snapping the branches which bore it. For this divine fruit had ripened well upon the great tree of the religion of his forefathers, beneath which so many generations had found shelter. Buddha did not smite with the hatchet; the severance came later." Yet it is true

that the logical and necessary implication of Buddha's own teaching was, as we shall see, a great revolution in the religion of India. History furnishes plenty of analogies. Luther, for example, at first had no intention of creating a revolution in the Church, but none the less were these theses revolutionary, and the necessary result the turning Europe upside down. Buddhism has been well styled the Protestantism of the East. It protested, in the interest of humanity, against the oppression of a priestly caste; it established a doctrine of individual salvation based on personal character, and not a sacramental salvation in the hands of a sacred order. What caused this protest? How was it made? What was its relation to the Brahmanism from which it sprung, and against which it struggled?

In our time, especially amongst people of liberal culture, Buddhism has aroused greater and livelier interest than any other form of ethnic faith. Men often seek to atone for centuries of neglect by a generation of extraordinary reverence. Buddhism is just now enjoying the climax of this great act of atonement by the Western world. This fact springs, perhaps, as much from a quickened imagination as from an enlightened judgment. Theosophical societies have been formed, and in some quarters have become almost a fad. Such charlatans as Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky have gone out to India, and by the aid of the mysterious adept, "the brother" in Thibet, have tried to conserve the venerable faith, and to put the people on their guard against the machinations of designing Christian missionaries. Various causes have conspired to fix the attention of the Christian world upon the faith of Buddha. Our knowledge of it has of late been vastly increased.

A generation ago little was known in Europe of this great faith; but now many of its sacred books have been spread before the eyes of the world, and great scholars by the dozen have turned their penetrating gaze upon it. Then, the publication of Mr. Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" had a remarkable influence. Many who would have been instantly repelled by a dry-as-dust treatise upon Buddhism, were drawn to it by the charm of Mr. Arnold's mellifluous verse. Then, the extent of its dominion naturally awakened interest, as men saw that Gautama had made a stupendous conquest of humanity, his scepter ruling from Ceylon and Nepaul over the whole Eastern peninsula, to China, Japan, Thibet, Central Asia, Siberia, and even Swedish Lapland. Between three and four hundred millions of our race live and die in the faith of Gautama; forests of flowers are daily laid upon his stainless shrines; and myriads of lips daily repeat, with enthusiastic love, the formula, "I take refuge in Buddha." Another attraction consists in the numerous external resemblances between some forms of the Buddhism of our day and many features of Roman Christianity. There are monks and monasteries, nuns and convents; a celibate clergy; the worship of relics; the customs of tonsure and confessional; frequent similarities in vestments, as the miter, dalmatic, hood; a similar use of images, even the image of the Virgin with a child in her arms, holding a cross; also the rosary, bells, candles, incense, psalmody, exorcism, the censer of five chains, the worship of saints, fasts, processions, litanies, and holy water; the existence of a hierarchy, benedictions given by the Lamas by extending the right hand over the heads of the faithful, and the practice of a species of canonization.

So numerous are these resemblances that the first Roman Catholic missionaries were confounded, and thought that the devil had been mocking their sacred rites. When Father Bury, a Portuguese missionary, saw the bonzes tonsured, using the rosary, praying in an unknown tongue, and kneeling before images, he exclaimed in astonishment, "There is not a piece of dress, not a sacerdotal function, not a ceremony of the court of Rome, which the devil has not copied in this country." So real and striking are these coincidences, especially between the Buddhists of Thibet and Roman Catholicism, that a distinguished scholar of the last century exhausted the resources of what he believed to be comparative philology, to prove that Lamaism was a corrupted form of Christianity. How to account for these resemblances nobody exactly knows. The curious thing is that we have no literary evidence of contact, but the utmost similarity in result. Of course, that both should manifest an ascetic tendency is explicable enough. This is rooted in human nature, and appears in other religions. But when the similarity descends to minutiae, we are puzzled to know what to say.

But there are affinities also in thought. First, Buddhism, like Christianity, has at the heart an exalted, beautiful, beneficent personality. Gautama is a seeker after truth and righteousness, touched with a large compassion for suffering in man and beast; burdened with a sense of the universal sorrow; possessed, dominated by a passion to cure it; an impersonation, as it were, of the enthusiasm of humanity; willing to live or die for the good of man. The spirit that lives in him he creates in others, so that Buddhist ethics and

Buddhist missions are attempts to teach in theory and realize in practice the mind and character of Buddha. Because of the fact that both Christianity and Buddhism have, in the center, a great personality, their ethics are largely personal in their sources and motives; and, as we shall see, have many points in common.

Some timid souls in the Christian camp are disquieted when they see these resemblances, and tremble lest the evidences for the supernatural origin and authority of the Christian faith should be weakened. On the other hand, in many portions of the unchristian and so-called liberal camps ascends an acclaim of welcome. Our modern pessimisms, with their sense of human misery and love of annihilation; our aggressive and sentimental atheisms, which claim to improve and vitalize morality by denying immortality and God; the omniscient agnosticism of the new religion of humanity, which knows everything so well that it knows that nothing can be known; the positivism that forsakes God, that it may deify and worship man; the nihilisms which are secretly growing and disastrously working in Old World despotisms, which, long moldering, are almost as oppressive as the ancient sacerdotalisms of India; the evolutionary theories, which are the fad of modern science,—all are modes of thought which at one point or another are in close affinity with Buddhism. Since Buddhism is thus so closely related to the problems of our own and of all times, it is hard to look at it with the clear eye and the impartial temper of the historian and the critic. Yet we must have these if we are to understand its meaning. Only an eye clear enough to penetrate its heart can see its significance. Even the clearest eye will find it difficult to pierce the fogs.

Looking at the system as it lives to-day, one is compelled to wonder how it could ever bring a ray of light to a single human heart.

The first step is to get as vivid and true an image as possible of the historical Buddha, as he lived and wrought under the conditions of time, place, social order, religious feelings and beliefs. Then we must try to read through him the metaphysical and political system, the religion in action, acting on man and being acted on by him. Just as no one can understand Judaism without first getting a full view of Moses, Confucianism without learning Confucius, Mohammedanism without a biography of Mohammed, Christianity without a portraiture of Christ, so no one can ever hope to understand Buddhism without first getting into his mind a photograph of Gautama. The founder always remains a potent and active force in the religion he founds. Our purpose in this lecture is not to describe Buddhism as it exists to-day, but simply to set forth the Buddhism of Buddha himself, the Candle of Asia in comparison with the Sun of the World.

But in the attempt to get a true picture of the actual Buddha, we are met on the threshold by great difficulties. In the first place, an enormous mass of myths and legends have clustered about the name of Gautama. It is a natural tendency of disciples to idealize their master. His mind and heart are first embodied in the primitive faith. He quickens the imagination of his followers so that they transfigure and glorify him. This, in the absence of contemporary records, lends enchantment, making him mightier, diviner, surrounded by stories marvelous or even monstrous, yet in all its grotesqueness according with the idea of his character and expressing the belief in his

work. The real Buddha is the living face; the Buddha of the legends is the image reflected in the wondering and exaggerating mind of the credulous disciples. This idealizing process has a double sphere; namely, the historical, concerned with the life, words, acts; and the metaphysical, dealing with the person, its nature, and antecedents. The historical is carried on by the popular imagination, and lives in the popular discourses; but the metaphysical is conducted by the speculative reason, and lives in the schools. The historical creates wonderful stories, which tell how Buddha lived and what he did; the metaphysical relates the still more wonderful tales about his forms and stages of being, the deeds he wrought in the long ages past, and those he will do in the ages to come. So numerous and marvellous are many of these legends, that Professor Wilson feels constrained to doubt whether there ever was such a person at all, and some scholars, notably Senart and Kern, reduce the whole story to a form of the solar myth. But this is no doubt an excess of skepticism, and is rejected by an overwhelming majority of the ripest scholars. The legendary would never have existed without the historical Buddha; yet we may say that he is, as an acting and forceful religious power, mightier as he lives in faith than as he lived in fact. Then, the authorities from which we must take our information are very unreliable. There are the Buddhist sacred books, and there is a literature which is not regarded as especially holy; but we can not make either a safe foundation upon which to build a biography of Gautama.

As we saw in our last lecture, India utterly lacks the historical spirit. In the words of another, "For the when of things men generally in India have never

had a proper organ." The chronology is therefore utterly unsafe, and, indeed, a biography of Gautama was completely foreign to the consciousness of the time. Whether he lived in the fourth or in the sixth century B. C., in neither case do we have any contemporary history, written by friend or foe, which might, directly or indirectly, witness to so much as the existence of the Buddha or the manner of the early propagation of his doctrine. No one knows who wrote the earliest documents; and if we did, they contain neither a biography of Gautama nor even the slightest trace that any such work had ever existed. Even the legends of his birth certainly were not collected until long after his death, and the most celebrated work, containing the legend in its fullest form, is placed by the best authorities anywhere from six hundred to one thousand years after he passed from earth. Its value for constructing a life of Gautama is about equal to the apocryphal gospels, or, better, the legends of the Middle Ages, for constructing a life of Christ. It is agreed on all hands, even by the Buddhists themselves, that their traditions of Gautama, however old in themselves, were not committed to writing until about five hundred years after his death.

To feel the force of this, let us suppose similar conditions to be true of Christianity. What if the best scholars were uncertain whether Christ lived in the reign of Augustus, or, some two hundred years later, after that of Marcus Aurelius; if no written documents containing any tradition toward his biography existed until five hundred years after his death, a period as long as that between us and the days of Chaucer, nearly two hundred years longer than that between the birth of Christ and the reign of Constantine; if even the tra-

ditions about our Savior could not certainly be traced much nearer to his death than we are to the coming of the *Mayflower*,—would there not be a general feeling of almost hopeless uncertainty and practical ignorance as to the essential facts concerning what Jesus did and taught? How the infidels would triumphantly point to the sandy historical foundation and shout, “What do you know about the life of Christ at all?”

Now, with the memory of this uncertainty in mind, let us peer into the fogs, to discern, if possible, the outlines of the Buddha. About five or six hundred years B. C. there was born at Kapilavastu, about one hundred miles north of Benares, at the foot of the mountains of Nepaul, a beautiful child. He was not a Brahman, but belonged to the warrior caste. His father, Suddodhana, was king of an Aryan tribe called the Sakyas. His family name was Gautama; his personal name was Siddartha, which means “he whose aims are accomplished.” Later he was called the Buddha, “the Enlightened One.” Comparing him with Christ, we may say that Siddartha is the name which corresponds to Jesus; Buddha corresponds to Christ; and Gautama to the family of the house of David. His mother, Maya, had reached her forty-fifth year childless, when at length, to the great joy both of herself and her husband, this son was born to them. Seven days after his birth his mother died. His maternal aunt took the place of foster-mother to the orphaned child, and brought him up to manhood. Of his childhood and youth we know little. The accounts we have are so full of discrepancies and enormous exaggerations that no dependence can be placed on them. But he was probably endowed with gifts of genius, of physical strength and beauty also, easily outstripping even his masters

in bodily and intellectual strength. "In speech right gentle, yet so wise; princely of mien, yet softly mannered; modest, deferent, and tender-hearted, though of fearless blood." No bolder horseman than he e'er rode "in gay chase of the shy gazelles;" in the sports of the palace court, no keener driver of the chariot was seen than he. But from his childhood he was possessed, now and then, by a deep melancholy, from which nothing could divert him. As he grew older he pondered much upon the great problems of life. Hoping to keep him from such brooding thoughts, his anxious father surrounded him with the pomp of the palace, and made his life sweet with all manner of delights. But in vain. He grew ever more thoughtful, and all things tended to deepen his feelings as he thought over the mysteries that preyed on his soul. There are some exquisite touches put into charming verse by Edwin Arnold, which may have in them a germ of truth:

"Yet in mid-play the boy would oft-times pause,
 Letting the deer pass free; would oft-times yield
 His half-won race because the laboring steeds
 Fetched painful breath; or if his princely mates
 Saddened to lose, or if some wistful dream
 Swept o'er his thoughts. And ever with the years
 Waxed this compassionateness of our Lord,
 Even as a great tree grows from two soft leaves
 To spread its shade afar; but hardly yet
 Knew the young child of sorrow, pain, or tears,
 Save as strange names for things not felt by kings,
 Nor ever to be felt."

But one spring day his cousin, Devadatta, shot into a flock of wild swans, and brought down the foremost. With the bitter arrow fixed, and the scarlet blood staining its snowy plumes, it fell. With gushing tears, Siddhartha tenderly took it up, rested it in his lap, with

gentle touch soothed its fright, composed its ruffled wings, and calmed its quaking heart. Then he drew forth the cruel steel, "and laid cool leaves and healing honey on the smart." When his cousin sent to fetch the bird as prize of the chase, the prince laid its white neck beside his own smooth cheek, and said:

"The bird is mine,
The first of myriad beings which shall be mine,
By right of mercy and love's lordliness."

This was the first knowledge he had of pain or grief. But on another day his father, the king, asked him to go with him to see the gladsomeness of the spring.

"Fair is the season, with new leaves, bright blooms,
Green grass, and cries of plow-time."

They rode forth. All things spoke of peace and plenty. It was a land of wells and gardens; the rich soil rolled in dark waves back from the plow; the rippling waters twinkled among the palms, the banks bordered with balsams and spears of lemon-grass. Here the sower went forth to sow; there the jungles were musical with the nesting songs of happy birds, whilst all the thickets rustled with insect life, glad at the coming of the spring. From every well the blue doves cooed, and far-off the village drums beat for some marriage-feast. The prince saw and rejoiced. But he looked deeper, and soon discerned the thorns which grow on this rose of life,—the sweating, drudging peasant; the toiling oxen, trudging before the plow in the flaming heat, their velvet dewlaps blistered with the bitter yoke; the lizard feeding on the ant; and a long, bloody chain of slaughter stretching from bottom to top of animate creation. Everywhere "each slew a

slayer, and in turn was slain." What had seemed outwardly so fair, really veiled one "vast, savage, grim conspiracy of mutual murder." Sighing and sad, the prince exclaimed to his father:

"Is this,
That happy earth they brought me forth to see?
How salt with sweat the peasant's bread! how hard
The oxen's service! in the brake how fierce
The war of weak and strong! i 'th 'air what plots!
No refuge e'en in water. Go aside
A space, and let me muse on what ye show."

So, with ankles crossed, he sat under the jambu-tree, in great pity, for the first time to meditate upon this vast disease of life, what its source, whence its remedy? From that time the king used every device to banish from the mind of his beloved son such saddening thoughts. Yet ever and anon came back the shadows of his meditation, as the bosom of the silver lake is dulled by the passing cloud. At length the king called together his ministers, and asked them what could be done. The oldest of them suggested love as the cure of this distemper. "Weave the spell of woman's wiles about his idle heart. A girl's hair can lightly bind thoughts that brazen chains can not stay." The advice was adopted. A festival is proclaimed, in which the maidens of the realm should be competitors in the sports and the prince should give the prizes. Some trusted servants were to stand by his side when the lovely victors should pass before him, to notice which seemed to charm him most. It was done. The last in the lovely train was the young Yasodhara. As the radiant maiden approached, those standing by the prince saw him start with admiration. Full into his face she gazed, her stately neck unbent, and asked, "Is there a

gift for me?" He replied that the gifts were gone, but immediately loosed an emerald necklace from his own throat, and clasped it about her "dark and silk-soft waist." "Their eyes mixed, and from the look sprang love." So she was asked in marriage. But she had many noble suitors, and, according to the custom of the house, she must be won by the one who could excel in the martial arts. In contest after contest the young prince excelled, until all the people said, "Strive no more, for Siddartha is the best." The suitors themselves agreed, and the father of the maid said, "It was in our heart to find thee best."

The wedding-feast was held, and the fair Yasodhara was brought, with songs and trumpets, home to the prince's arms, and love was all in all. But the king would not trust to love alone. He built for them a gorgeous palace, surrounded by enchanting grounds and gardens, a very paradise. He filled it with every conceivable delight. Further, he commanded that within those walls no mention should be made of death or age, sorrow, pain, or sickness. If one of the maidens in the lovely court began to droop, her bright eyes to grow dim, or her limbs to fail in the dance, she was quietly taken away from that paradise, lest he should see her woe. Every morning the dying rose was plucked and the dead leaves hidden, all evil sights were removed. Around this pleasant prison-house, where love was jailer, far distant, a massive wall was built with three mighty gates bolted and barred, with faithful watchmen over each. These had received from the king the order, "Let no man pass, though it be the prince."

But every precaution was in vain. In his dreams Siddartha would sometimes start up and cry out, "My world! O, world! I hear, I know, I come." The de-

cisive day came at last. One evening a maiden of the court sang of distant and wonderful lands. When she had done, he sighed and said, "Is there so wide a world?"

"Is there a land which sees the great sun roll
 Into the waves, and are there hearts like ours,
 Countless, unknown, not happy—it may be—
 Whom we might succor if we knew of them?"

Often had he wished to go with the sun on his journeys, or that he had the vulture's plumes, that he might rise to the topmost summit of the mountains to strain his gaze with searching. He will now know what lies beyond his gates. He commands his horsemen to yoke his chariot at noon next day, that he may ride forth and see beyond. The king is informed, and gives his consent. But he sends out criers, with drum and gong proclaiming loudly through the city the royal will that there be seen that day no evil sight, that no blind, or maimed, or sick, or stricken in years, no leper and no feeble folk, should on this occasion go forth. None is to burn his dead or bring him out till night-fall. The streets were swept and sprinkled, the housewives strung wreaths of flowers before their doors, the trees were set thick with flowers, the idols were new gilded, until the city seemed like the capital of some enchanted land. With a great retinue, on a painted car drawn by snow-white steers, the prince rode forth. The people hurrabed and laughed out their gladness at seeing their prince. All the path was kept with gladsome looks and filled with fair sights, while joyous crowds thronged about the wheels, and threw wreaths of blossoms in the way.

But every precaution was in vain. He came across

a wretch, haggard and foul. His shriveled skin was tanned with the sun, and clung like the hide of a beast to his fleshless bones; his back was bent; his eye-pits red with the rust of ancient tears; his dim orbs bleared; his toothless jaws wagged with palsy. He was covered with wrinkles, bald; with one skinny hand he clutched a worn staff to prop his quivering limbs; the other hand was pressed against his ribs. With hollow voice he gasped out, "Alms." Then the cough choked him; but still he stretched his palm, and groaning amid his spasms, "Alms." Those standing near thrust him aside, saying, "The prince is here; get thee to thy lair." But the prince asked his coachman:

"Who is this so miserable, so horrible, so sad? Are men sometimes born thus?"

"Sweet prince," answered the coachman, "that man is sinking under old age. Fourscore years ago, his back was straight, his body strong, his eye bright. But the thievish years have sucked his sap away. His lamp has lost its oil, and the wick is black, the one little spark of life he has left is flickering for the finish. He is without support and useless, and people have abandoned him like a dead tree in the forest. Such is age, but why should your highness heed?"

"But shall this come to others, or is it something peculiar to this man's family?"

"Nay, it is the common lot of all if they live so long."

"What if I shall live so long, shall I be thus and Yasodhara?"

"Yes, in every creature, youth is defeated by old age. Your father, mother, all your relations, all your friends, will come to the same state."

"Alas! then are creatures so ignorant, so foolish,

or so wicked as to be proud of the youth by which they are intoxicated, not seeing the old age which awaits them? Coachman, turn back my chariot; take me to my home again. I have seen that which I did not think to see. What have I, the future prey of old age, what have I to do with pleasure?"

Without going to his park, he returned in sadness to the city. That night he would not taste the evening feast. The dancers strove in vain to charm him; even the presence of his adored wife only reminded him that they would both grow old, weak, and bowed. So all through the night he sat, sleepless and uncomforted. The king in sadness summoned his resources of enchantment to ensnare once more the heart of his son in pleasure, and set a double guard at the gates. But soon Siddartha wished to sally forth again. He asked his father this time to allow him to view the city as it was, and not specially prepared for his visit. He would see the lives that people live who are not kings. Knowing nothing better to do, the monarch gave his consent. So next day at noon the prince and his coachman, in disguise and on foot, passed the gates, and walked along the common way. They had passed many of the busy scenes, when from the roadside, they heard a mournful voice:

"Help, masters! lift me to my feet; O help!
Or I shall die before I reach my house!"

They looked. It was a man stricken with disease. His quivering frame lay writhing in the dust. His face was specked with fiery, purple blotches. Beads of chill sweat stood upon his brow, his mouth was awry with twitchings of pain, his wild eyes swam with inward agony. Gasping, he clutched the grass to rise,

rose halfway, and fell back again, with quaking, feeble limbs and scream of terror, crying, "Ah the pain; good people, help!" With tender hands the prince lifted the man, asked what was ill with him, and inquired of the coachman, "Why is it that he pants and moans and gasps and sighs so piteously?" He is answered that this man is smitten with some sore pest. He is afraid to die, and yet wants to die, but can not until the plague has done its full work on him. Again the pitying Siddartha asks if there are others thus, or if it may sometime be the same with him.

"Yes, it comes in many forms to all men."

"But do such ills come unobserved?"

"Yes, like the sly snake that stings unseen, or like the lightning that strikes as chance may send, these distempers come."

"Then do all men live in fear?"

"Yes."

"Then, alas! health is but the sport of a dream, and the fear of suffering must take this frightful form. Where is the wise man who, after having seen this, could longer think of joy and pleasure?"

But still other visions of the vanity of human things awaited him. He was driving to his pleasure-garden through the western gate when he met a band of wailing people, wending their way to the river bank. They were followed by a bier. On this lay, stark and stiff, feet foremost, lean, chapfallen, sightless, hollow-flanked, sprinkled with red and yellow dust, the form of a man. The friends stood about him, crying, sobbing, tearing their hair, covering their heads with dust, striking their breasts. They carried the corpse to the funeral pyre. The red flame flickered, blazed on high, while the body crackled in the heat, until at last the fire died,

leaving only a few ashes and scattered bones, all that seemed left of the man. Turning again to his coachman, Gautama said: "Is this the end which comes to all who live? Even so. Here is the common destiny of flesh. The high, the low, the good, the bad, must die. Then, so it is taught, they must live again, somewhere, somehow, and so again the pangs of parting and the blazing pile. Such is man's round." Then turning his eyes, glistening with tears, to the sky, and then with heavenly compassion to the earth, from earth to sky he looked, and again from sky to earth, as though searching for some solution of life's hard problem, and exclaimed:

"O suffering world!

O known and unknown of my common flesh,
 Caught in this common net of death and woe,
 And life which leads to both: I see, I feel
 The vastness of the agony of earth,
 The vainness of its joys, the mockery
 Of all its best, the anguish of its worst;
 Since pleasures end in pain, and youth in age,
 And love in loss, and life in hateful death,
 And death in unknown lives, which will but yoke
 Men to their wheel again to whirl the round
 Of false delights and woes that are not false.

The veil is rent

Which blinded me: I am as all these men
 Who cry upon their gods and are not heard,
 Or are not heeded—yet there must be aid!
 For them and me and all there must be help!
 Perchance the gods have need of help themselves,
 Being so feeble that when sad lips cry
 They can not save. How can it be that Brahm
 Would make a world and keep it miserable,
 Since, if all-powerful, he leaves it so,
 He is not good; and, if not powerful,
 He is not God?"

The coachman drives him home again. Henceforth the question ever present to his mind is, "How may man escape from sorrow? How escape from the life which is pain?" The answer came in a fourth adventure. He was driving through the northern gate on the way to his pleasure-gardens, when he saw a mendicant, who appeared outwardly calm, subdued, looking downwards, wearing with an air of dignity his religious vestments, and carrying an alms-bowl.

"Who is this man?"

"Sir," replied the coachman, "this man is one of those who are called blikshus, or mendicants. He has renounced all pleasures, all desires, all ambitions, all friends, all hopes, and leads a life of austerity. He tries to conquer himself. He has become a devotee, without passion, without envy, but walks about asking for alms."

"Good and well said," replied the prince. "Here is deliverance. This man is dead to the world, sorrow can not vex him, death can not disturb him, or friends weep for him when he dies. He has ceased to belong to his friends, and lives in solitude. He alone is happy, and he alone is wise. It shall be my refuge, and the refuge of others."

With these words he turned about his chariot and re-entered the city. His resolution was taken. Kingdom, glory, power, pleasure, wife, child, must be abandoned. He will shut himself up, to lead in the forest the life of an ascetic. So one night he bent over the sleeping form of his beautiful wife, thrice round the bed in reverence, as though it were an altar, he softly stepped with clasped hands laid upon his heart, and three times started to go, but three times came back for love of her, until at last, by a master effort, he tore

himself away. With tearful eyes raised to the stars, with lips close set in purpose of prodigious love, he went forth into the forest to become a pupil of the sages there. This act is known as "the great renunciation." A forest cave he made his home. Here he sat the scorching summer through, endured driving rains, chilling dawns, even wearing the yellow robe of the hermit, and eating in beggar's guise the scanty meal of charity. At night he would couch on the grass, while jackals and tigers yelped and growled about him. Many a time when he mused motionless, without interruption, from noon until sunset, he would become so wholly wrapped from self in trying to unravel the tangled threads of life, that he would sit on until midnight hushed the world in sleep. Then, after a snatch of slumber, he would be up with the dawn to become immersed in thought again. So far he had not gone beyond the practice of the Brahmans, for even they looked upon the life of the ascetic as the final goal to be reached.

To a man like Alexander the Great, or to our energetic Anglo-Saxon race, this seems to be madness. But Alexander's tremendous ambition and stupendous military triumphs, and our ceaseless energy, would have seemed equal madness to him. In a country like India, it were nothing surprising that a thoughtful and earnest man, surrounded with abject poverty, and often compelled to face the added terrors of famine and pestilence, should find the burden of the world's great sorrow an oppressive weight upon his heart, and feel sometimes ready to give up all in order to solve, if possible, for himself, if not for others as well, life's great mystery. Never has India, indeed, been without a generation of men who, from motives similar to those which

are said to have influenced Buddha, have, like him, gone forth to the homeless life, in the quest of that Nirvana which shall put an end to pain.

But this did not bring him rest. He needed still a philosophy of life to fortify his practice. He went from one illustrious sage to another, seeking the way that should lead to the cessation of pain. But it was of no use. They satisfied him not. Their wisdom was to him not wise. Then he took up the life of the most merciless and long-continued penance, in the hope that thus he might come into possession of the key which should unlock the gates of light. His body wasted away, his grace faded; the withered leaf does not bear less likeness to the soft greenness of the spring than he to the prince who once was the flower of all the land. To such an extreme did he carry these self-mortifications that, through his bodily weakness and mental distress, he at last fell into a dead faint, and was supposed to be lifeless. He revived, however, and seeing the uselessness of these penances to give him the unlearned secret of the universe, he gave them up.

The story says that a bevy of dancing-girls put him on the track of the truth. As, like painted butterflies, they tripped from glade to glade along the road, through the forest, the silver bells chiming soft peals about the small brown feet, they sang:

“The string o’erstretched breaks, and the music flies;
The string o’erslack is dumb, and music dies.
Tune us the cittern neither high nor low.”

When they had gone, he lifted his great brow, and said: “The foolish oft-times teach the wise. I strain too much the string of life, belike, meaning to make such music as shall save. My life is all men’s hope,

yet if I continue these penances I shall die." So he abandoned them. His few disciples forsook him. They said: "This man has not been able, even by years of penance, to obtain omniscience; how can he do it now when he goes begging from village to village, and takes material food?" And they went away.

At length, about six years after he made the great renunciation, the last decisive struggle came. Miserable, forsaken, he one day sat down under the famous Bo-tree in deep meditation. Long and deeply he thought upon the problem, "What is life? What is deliverance from life?" Then various temptations assailed him. A supreme moral conflict was upon him. Under that Bo-tree, or tree of wisdom, which has become to the Buddhist almost what the cross is to the Christian, he passed the solemn and crucial vigil. He was assailed by all the memories of his brilliant youth, the prestige of his royalty, the smiles and caresses of his beautiful wife; all that life has to offer passed before him in a winsome and delicious dream. All day he battled with the false enchantment, but when night fell he was victorious. He had found the truth, and the truth had now found him. He had become "the Buddha," "the Enlightened One." So, as in the east flamed the first fires of the opening day poured through the fleeting folds of night's black drapery, he rose, radiant, rejoicing, strong. Beneath the tree, lifting up his voice, he chanted his illumination. As it seemed to him he had grasped the mystery of suffering; had solved it; had learned at once its cause and its cure. He seemed to have gained a haven of peace, a certitude that could never be shaken. He had become possessed of the four noble truths which, expanded, form the whole system of doctrinal Buddhism.

As might be expected, this biography—no doubt here somewhat poetically adorned, but yet in substance probably true—is in the legends disfigured by all sorts of astounding prodigies. These stories make him to have been pre-existent. At an inconceivable period in the past he had lived as a rich Brahman, who, reflecting on the vanity and sorrow of life, determined to renounce his wealth and become an ascetic. Then, in order to attain his purpose of freeing man from sorrow, he gave himself through countless ages to the practice of the ten perfections. In this pursuit five hundred and fifty times was he born in various forms, as man and god, bird and beast. At length the time approached that he should be born as Siddartha.

The legend tells us how Queen Maya dreamed that she was carried by four archangels, the guardians of the world, to the Himalayas, and placed here under a great tree, twenty-one miles high. Then other queens came, bathed, anointed, and perfumed her, and carried her to a silver hill, into a golden palace, where they placed her upon a celestial couch. A white elephant, holding in his silver trunk a white lotus-flower, approached her, and, thrice doing obeisance, he seemed to enter her right side. Thus, we are told, was the Buddha conceived. The most stupendous prodigies attended this event. The blind received their sight, the deaf heard, there was a noise of clashing worlds shaken violently, the dumb spake together, the crooked became straight, the lame walked, all prisoners were freed from chains, in each hell the fires were extinguished, hungry ghosts received food and drink, etc. When he was born, there were also prodigious tokens. A venerable ascetic, who had gone to heaven to rest from the heat of the day, saw the heavenly hosts rejoicing, and,

learning the cause, hurried down to earth to see and bless the new-born child.

So every step of the Buddha's way was accompanied by the most extravagant marvels. His temptation under the Bo-tree, for example, is made the occasion for the most astounding statements. Mara, the tempter, came riding on an elephant two thousand four hundred miles high, like a monster with five hundred heads, one thousand red eyes, and five hundred flaming tongues. He had also one thousand arms, in each of which was a weapon, and no two of these alike. With him came also an army of hideous demons, of every conceivable, frightful form—an army so large that it extended on every side one hundred and sixty-four miles and nine miles upward, with weight sufficient to overpoise the earth. First, the tempter sent against him a terrific wind, which tore up the largest mountains; then a shower of swords and spears and all manner of sharp weapons; then a shower of burning charcoal, etc. But the wind moved him not; the rain only refreshed him; the burning mountains became garlands of flowers; the weapons, a shower of blossoms; the burning coals, rubies; the fiery ashes, fragrant sandal-powder; the burning sand, a shower of pearls; and the darkness, resplendent light. Compare all this tissue of grotesque wonders with the chaste and simple narrative of the Gospels.

Now to the four noble truths which form the essence of the Buddha's teaching. We can not rightly apprehend them unless we understand the relation of the Buddha to the religion of his land and time. Notice, then, that in the Brahmanism of the day, the priests were the religion. Their authority was built on the Vedas, which they alone had the right to teach.

Access to the gods was through them, and for them the gods existed. The deities were not willing helpers of man. Their favor had to be purchased by sacrifice, and their will stood revealed in the various laws that created the castes and protected them; that regulated the ceremonial, and prescribed the sacrifices. The gods therefore preserved no natural, deep, tender, true relations to men; did not lighten their sorrows or sweeten the bitterness of their life, but rather made its inequalities harsher, sterner, less flexible. The whole Brahmanical system had become a curse, good for the Brahmans who served the deities, or for the rich and prosperous who could bribe them, but of no use to others.

Now imagine a man like Gautama, with a keen sense of the world's misery; of this being that can not end; regulated by a caste and a system that will not spare the weak and the feeble. He lives in the shadow of its abiding sorrows; stands face to face with this, the creation of the religion. The religion thus could not comfort him; its gods could give him no joy. Then, he saw himself a member of the royal and warrior caste. In his family there probably lived traditions of a happier time when the Veda was as free to the warrior as to the priest, and he could make as well as sing the sacred song. Then, in the woods about his father's capital, in the forests that stretched far away towards Benares, hermits lived; men who had renounced the world, forsaken sacrifices, and who passed their time in meditation, seeking the truth. Priests were there, but also warriors, forming together a society of the devout above the need of sacrifice. There the philosophical books were read; there the great problems were discussed. These problems concerned chiefly knowing

and being, or the nature of man, his world and its cause. What life is; whence it is; what are the laws that regulate its coming and going,—these were the questions which deeply stirred those ancient Hindoo minds.

What, now, were the ideas common in these various schools?

1. Being is one. The changing is not. All phenomenal things due to our sensuous experience are evanescent. How are we to name the abiding Being? We may name it Brahma, for Brahm is the secret soul and essence of all things. Or we may call it Atman, the soul, the self, the abiding self. Now the world and man are only the infinitely varied forms and modes in which Brahm or Atman manifests himself or itself; the mere foam upon the waves. The existence of the One and the Eternal is revealed in the multitude of the transient and the apparent. But now,

2. Whatever holds any of the essence of Atman is also eternal. Souls are therefore indestructible. They are not created when men are born, nor do they perish when men die. Thus transmigration reigns everywhere. But it reigns according to law. The soul is bound to the circle of phenomenal being; the ever-revolving wheel of transitory existence it must describe, until it can find the way back into Brahm. Then all its changes—that is, its phenomenal being—shall cease. As long as its personal existence continues, transmigration is necessary. Now, this continual circulation is a source of misery. What it may involve no one can tell. To-day an angel, to-morrow a serpent or a hog; to-day a prince, to-morrow, perhaps, a toad. There is perpetual horror and fear of the wheel of existence

that now bears him up, now plunges him down again into the lowest depths of misery. Now,

3. The great end of meditation is to discover the way back to Brahm. There are two methods of doing this. There is, first, the way for the vulgar crowd. It is the way of sacrifice and ritual and ceremony. Then there is the way for the elect, the way of meditation that comes through asceticism, through surrender of all that the delusive senses can give. Through this meditation alone final emancipation can be secured. The vulgar herd may qualify themselves for this by means of ceremony and sacrifice, but only as preliminary to the better way of asceticism and meditation. But even this last must proceed by dependence on the Vedas. Harmony with these is an absolute necessity. It was taught also that ignorance was the chief source of the bondage which binds men to the ever-revolving wheel, with all the miseries incident to its ceaseless and often most calamitous changes. This ignorance consists in taking illusion for reality. Works also contributed to this bondage. All kinds of action, whether good or bad, forge the chains. Good actions are better than bad, but not in themselves excellent, for they created merit. Merit was entitled to reward; the man entitled to reward must be held in being to be rewarded; and as long as he was in being, he was lashed to the wheel of revolution. But bad deeds still more could maintain existence; for if a man did bad deeds, then he had demerit. This must be punished; therefore he must be continued in being; therefore transmigration. From works as from ignorance, deliverance could come alone by knowledge, for this alone could bring the soul and Brahm face to face. When this was achieved, absorp-

tion, identity was achieved, the circle was broken, man was at peace. Whenever man knew what being was, he could cease from action, lose all merit and demerit, and vanish into Brahm. These were common and fundamental ideas in the various schools to which Gautama went. But there were also distinct and divergent types of thought. Thoughts borrowed from these schools he unified by elements supplied by his own moral and humane spirit. These thoughts, picked up in the forest schools, he so developed and applied as to deny the old religion.

Notice, now, his main ideas. We may make a three-fold division,—the metaphysical or doctrinal; the ethical or the way of salvation; and the political or ecclesiastical and social. The metaphysics are represented by the four noble truths which form the basis and summary of primitive Buddhism. Three of these are distinctly metaphysical, the fourth is ethical. The first is, the existence of sorrow, the identity of being and suffering. To be is to suffer. We saw the profound impression made upon Buddha's compassionate heart by the scenes of sorrow and pain which he witnessed in his four adventures. So he teaches as no other religion or system teaches, the misery, the impotence, the vanity of life. Conscious being is evil, and only evil. Hence it has been styled a pessimism, and modern pessimistic systems have been compared to it. But there are two points of distinction. Buddha accepted the world as he found it. He did not attempt to explain how it had come into being. In the schools where he had studied there must have been much discourse of the creation, but none of the creator, a free and rational being as its cause. But Buddha discusses no such lofty themes as the creation. Whether he ac-

tually said, "There is no God," or simply took the position of the agnostic, is uncertain. At any rate, he did deny the many deities of the older faith, and he did reject the doctrine of Brahma, the world-soul.

In one of the Buddhist books we find him represented as on one occasion saying to a priest, "I do not see any one in the heavenly worlds, nor in that of Mara, nor among the inhabitants of the Brahma worlds, nor among gods or men, whom it would be proper for me to honor." This use of the word "gods" is purely conventional. It applied to beings believed in by the rest of the Hindoos, or even perhaps tolerated by Buddha himself, but corresponding only to our term "angels;" superhuman beings, but not at all akin to the notion of deity. In fact, all Buddhist scholars agree in regarding Gautama as at best an agnostic. When he was asked by one of his disciples whether the world is or is not eternal, he made the inquirer no reply, because the question tended to no profit. Even Edwin Arnold, who in his poem goes to the very extreme in the ascription of noble ideas to Buddha, makes him say:

"Measure not with words

Th' Immeasurable; nor sink the string of thought
Into the Fathomless. Who asks, doth err;
Who answers, errs. Say nought!

Stars sweep and question not. This is enough,
That life and death and joy and woe abide;
And cause and sequence, and the course of time.
And Being's ceaseless tide.

This is enough to know, the phantasms are:
The Heavens, Earths. Worlds, and changes changing
them,
A mighty, whirling wheel of strife and stress,
Which none can stay or stem.

Pray not; the darkness will not brighten! Ask
 Nought from the silence, for it can not speak!
 Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains!
 Ah! brothers, sisters! seek

Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
 Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with food and cakes;
 Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;
 Each man his prison makes."

Thus Gautama simply faces the facts of life, without troubling himself about the gods; studies and interprets these facts in the light of the common Hindoo beliefs.

Now, what was the most striking fact, to him, of all in the world he found and faced? Transmigration. The soul was held in the iron grip of change. It revolved ever in dismal cycles of birth and death, rising now by its merit to be a god, sinking now by its demerit to be a devil; if in one life a lord, certainly in another to be a slave, or worse.

"Higher than Indra's ye may lift your lot,
 And sink it lower than the worm or gnat;
 The end of many myriad lives is this,
 The end of myriads that.

Only, while turns this wheel invisible,
 No pause, no peace, no staying-place can be;
 Who mounts will fall, who falls may mount; the spokes
 Go round unceasingly."

To the sensitive and generous soul of Gautama it seemed that life on such terms was a calamity. Continued being was continued sorrow.

Here emerges another distinction between Buddha's teaching and modern pessimism. Gautama hated sorrow, because he loved man. His aversion to existence

was due to pity for the existing. The doctrine that life is evil, that to be is to suffer, may be held for many reasons. The wasted epicure may preach it simply because pleasure has ceased to please, and the former capacity for joy become the mother of pain; the cynic may repeat, with growing bitterness, his favorite aphorism, "Vanity of vanities," simply because his dull eye can not see through the thin disguise of nature to the eternal, living God behind it. But Buddha's doctrine of sorrow expresses his pity, his sympathy with those who suffered but could not cease living; who were born only with pain, lived in pain, died in pain, yet only to be born with pain again, to live and die in pain again and yet again, with no hope of escape for evermore.

An incident may illustrate the man and his meaning. It is said to have happened before his illumination. A woman, with tearful eyes and hands uplifted, bending low before him in salutation, told him that a serpent had bitten her child, and that some one had sent her to him to ask if there could be a cure. With gentle eyes he gazed upon it, drew the face-cloth back, and said: "Yes, there is something that will heal the child if thou couldst fetch it. Go, find black mustard-seed; only mark thou, take it not from any hand or house where father, mother, child, or slave hath died." Claspng to her breast the babe now cold, she went. At each hut in the jungle she inquired; but all to no purpose. She returned to tell him in grief that she could not find a single house where there was mustard-seed and none had died. Therefore she had left her child, that would not nurse nor smile, beneath the wild vines by the river bank, to pray him to tell her where she could find this seed. He told her that in searching for what none finds she had discovered that better balm

he had to give her. What is that soothing balm? Nothing except that now she knows that the whole wide world weeps with her woe, that the grief which all hearts share grows less for one. In deep pity he tells her that he would pour out his heart's blood if he could stay her tears, and win the secret of that curse which makes sweet love our anguish, and which o'er flowers and pastures drives man to the sacrifice. He bids her bury her child; he is seeking that secret. Cold comfort? Yet we have heard, in a cultivated Wisconsin home, this story read by one who posed as an advanced thinker as the only consolation he could offer to a weeping mother who had lost her only boy.

What, now, is the second of these four noble truths? What is the cause of this state of misery? In studying this, we must not confuse primitive Buddhism with the developments of the later schools. There is no doubt that the latest of these schools was thoroughly nihilistic, but it is more than doubtful whether this radical nihilism was Gautama's own doctrine. He said that the cause of sorrow was desire, or the grasping after existence. The action of the world on the senses excites a craving thirst for something to satisfy them, or a delight in the objects presenting themselves. Either of these is accompanied by a lust of life. These are the causes of sorrow. But that we may understand just what this means, we must get at Buddha's notion of man, and of the system in which he lived. We have seen that he recognized no Creator; did he also deny the personality of the human soul? As we have stated, he did accept the doctrine of transmigration. Now, without doubt, in the later scholastic systems, a doctrine of transmigration was elaborated radically unlike the Brahmanical.

This later doctrine may be expressed thus: "The Buddhist is not, properly speaking, re-born; but another, so to speak, is born in his place, and is the heir of his good or ill desert. It is in order to avert the sorrow of existence from this other that he aspires to Nirvana." All hands agree that later Buddhism denies the existence of the soul. Rhys Davids says that it does not teach the transmigration of souls, but of character. But was this Gautama's own doctrine? Upon this point there is much difference of opinion. Max Müller thinks that it was a later corruption. Rhys Davids, on the contrary, strongly opposes this view. He makes the later doctrine perfectly harmonize in this respect with the earlier. Other eminent scholars are found on either side. The Buddhist doctrine of man is certainly very complicated, and hard to understand. But a discussion of three points will perhaps throw a little light upon the subject.

First, the doctrine of illusion or ignorance. This ignorance takes something to be where nothing is. Our ideas of the world are simply the baseless fabric of a vision, generated by the thirst for being, which thirst or desire is the essence of the ego. By quenching this thirst, existence is brought to an end, and with existence, pain. But is there a personal soul which is the subject of this ignorance or desire? Is there anything to which a man may say, "This is I myself, and this will pass into another being when I die?" To get even a glimpse of Buddha's teaching on this subject, we must study two other peculiar doctrines. First, the doctrine of the skandhas. Professor Childers describes these as the essential properties of every sensuous being, and says that when a man dies the skandhas of which he is constituted perish, but by force of the law of retribu-

tion a new set of skandhas instantly starts into existence, and a new being appears in the world, who, though possessing different skandhas and a different form, is in reality identical with the man just passed away, because his Karma is the same. What this Karma is, we shall see by and by.

We see here that it is said that the skandhas perish, while the being, in some way, survives. What, then, are these skandhas? It is a difficult word to translate. Its best meaning is, perhaps, what is clustered together; what stands in vital and organic relation to a living center as the branches cluster about the trunk. The chief of these skandhas are material qualities, which, like the foam, appear a moment and then vanish; sensations, evanescent as the bubble dancing on the face of the water; ideas, like the fleeting image in the sunshine; the mental and moral predispositions without firmness or solidity, like the plantain stalk; and, finally, the thoughts fleeting like a specter or magical illusion. But none of these, nor all of them together, constitute the soul. They are outgrowths of the will or desire. They are born with the subject, and grow with him, aggregating, as it were, about him as crystals about the stick, or as iron filings around the magnet. For example, your skandhas are different from mine. Ancestry, education, experience, all have had influence in making us what we are. Taken altogether, they create a man's outer world, and constitute his inner. Put in simpler phrase, we may say that what a man sees and hears and feels, depends largely upon what the man is.

Standing before Raphael's Sistine Madonna in Dresden, while some gazed and gazed with rapt face, we saw others come, indifferently glance, and move on,

no more impressed than an ox. One rustic was heard to murmur, "I should think she would have dressed her baby before having its picture taken." Or, stand with a savage on Mars' Hill or Calvary. How differently from a lover of the classics or a fervent disciple of Christ, would he look upon these historic and sacred spots! These illustrations may make plain what we mean by saying that a man's skandhas create his inner and outer world. Now these, according to Buddha's doctrine, are the creation of the central force or will to live. They aggregate about it. But is there, distinct from these skandhas, a subject of them or anything that can be called "I?" I do not think of my experience as my soul; it is an experience of my soul. We believe that there is an abiding ego, which remains permanent during all the changes of my experience and character. The later Buddhists said: "As the chariot is made up of various parts, not one of which is the chariot, but which yet by their union form the chariot, so also is man made up of various parts, and when these are united, we say, 'This is a man,' while yet it does not follow that, any more than in the case of the chariot, there is any essence distinct from this which we should call the soul." But the doubt is whether this was Gautama's own doctrine, or only a later corruption. At any rate, on any theory of transmigration, the old skandhas or conditions brought about by experience, must perish at death, or else death would work no change at all. The creature, re-born, would be furnished precisely as he was who died. Whether it be the soul or Atman as with the Brahman, or the will as with Buddha, that is declared permanent, the impermanence of the aggregated experiences must be affirmed; the skandhas transient, perishable; the central force

permanent. It is because the former always perish that the central force can go through successive lives under the illusion that it has never before been; that it may have innumerable existences behind, and yet live as though this were the first.

But to complete the survey, we must ask, what is Karma? It is the doctrine of the strictest, most absolute, invariable connection between moral cause and effect. It expresses Buddha's notion of a rigid, inflexible moral order, which everywhere, always, and to every one, sends good for good, evil for evil; so inflexible that it can not allow the slightest merit to escape reward, nor the slightest demerit to escape punishment. Every act that a man commits becomes a kind of providence to govern his future. Gautama did not believe in Deity, but he did believe in a moral law so absolute that every man must administer it for his own good or injury. When death dissolves the skandhas proper to one state of being, Karma creates another set proper to another state, according to the merit or demerit of the person. The Karma of the previous individual determines the faculty, nature, and future of the new one. In this, Gautama reminds us less of Schopenhauer than of the early utterances of Fichte, who in eloquent phrase pleaded that the moral order of the world was Deity. Do we not catch at least an echo of some such sentiment in Matthew Arnold's "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness?" At any rate this Karma is the most rigorous doctrine of retribution known to any religion.

"It will not be contemned of any one;
 Who thwarts it loses, and who serves it gains;
 The hidden good it pays with peace and bliss,
 The hidden ill with pains.

It knows not wrath nor pardon; utter-true
Its measures metes, its faultless balance weighs;
Times are as nought; to-morrow it will judge,
Or after many days.

The book says well, my brothers; each man's life
The outcome of his former living is;
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes;
The bygone right breeds bliss.

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!
The sesamum was sesamum; the corn
Was corn. The silence and the darkness knew!
So is a man's fate born."

Now what is the bearing of this upon the question of the transmigration of some ego, as the bearer of the merit or demerit that is to be awarded by Karma? Note that the Karma inherited by the new man must be his own. It is incapable of transference. Like guilt, it can not be passed on to another. So there must be in some sense continuity between the old being and the new. Moreover, in many of the oldest books, the being who is re-born is regarded as one with the being who had died, and whose Karma he inherited. The new person is simply the old one changed in faculty, condition, outer aspect, to suit his deserts. Perhaps it would be nearest the truth to say that the question of personality was not yet definitely raised, but that some kind of substantial soul was believed to pass on into the new being, is certainly implied. If there is nothing to transmigrate, there can be no transmigration. Perhaps the truth may be summed up in the words of Mr. Rhys Davids: "Buddhism regards the consideration of the question of the theory of the soul as worse than profitless, the source of manifold delusions and superstitions. It allows a kind of tacit assumption of

a soul or of some central force which aggregates the new skandhas, while it practically amounts to much the same thing as the denial of the existence of the soul, just as agnosticism is at best really an earnest and modest kind of atheism." At any rate, memory and the consciousness of personality were not passed over into the next life.

Next, what is the salvation that Gautama discovered in the moment of his enlightenment under the Bo-tree? What state of beatitude stood at the climax of his hope? We come here upon another perplexing word, Nirvana. Upon the meaning of this an immense literature has been written. There are three varieties of opinion upon it: (1) Some hold it to mean, rest; simply a state of calm beatitude; (2) Others contend that it is total extinction of being; (3) Some claim that it may mean such a state of calm beatitude and freedom from all desire in this life that at death the man's Karma no more begets a re-birth, and existence ends. Now, there is no doubt that Nirvana is sometimes spoken of as a state of soul attainable in this life. But when death comes to the man who has attained this state, what then? Professors Oldenberg and Saussaye tell us that this question was left undecided. The sublime Buddha did not reveal the answer. But the whole logic of Gautama's teaching would lead to the conclusion that extinction of being was the goal. Such is the natural climax of the whole Buddhist creed. As Professor Childers says: "A creed which begins by saying that existence is suffering, must end by saying that release from suffering is the highest good; and, accordingly, we find that annihilation is the goal of Buddhism, the supreme reward held out to the faithful observation of its precepts."

Look at the logical chain: Existence is sorrow; desire, or thirst of being, is the cause of existence; Karma is begotten by the will to live. This carries on the continuance of the being through transmigration; therefore salvation is extinction of desire, which ultimates in extinction of the being. The man who has reached Nirvana returns no more. His Karma is destroyed. It creates no new state of being. No new set of skandhas aggregates around the old ego or surviving will. The will surrendered, rest is won; existence ends. The highest authorities upon Buddhism at bottom agree in this. Thus Barth says, and the facts fully justify his language: "If there is a conclusion which asserts itself as having been that of Buddhism in all ages, which follows from all that it insists on and from all that it ignores, it is that the end to be sought is total extinction, and that perfection consists in ceasing to exist. The wise man finishes by extinguishing himself like the flame of a lamp." There are abundant statements in the Buddhist books to prove this. For example, a conversation is reported between Gautama and one of his disciples, who directly asks the question we raise. Buddha replies: "As a flame blown about by the violence of the wind, O Upasiva, goes out and can not be reckoned as existing, even so a wise man delivered from name and body disappears, and can not be reckoned as existing." Again: "By the destruction of thirst, attachment is destroyed; by the destruction of attachment, existence is destroyed; by the destruction of existence, birth is destroyed; and by the destruction of birth, old age, grief, lamentations, dejection, and despair are destroyed." Indeed, so plainly is this stated, and so logical and necessary a result is it of the first principles of Buddhism, that it would probably never

have been questioned except that it seems so utterly repulsive to the Western mind. Thus Mr. Arnold says that he can not believe that it means extinction, because he has a firm conviction that one-third of mankind would never have been brought to believe in nothingness as the issue and crown of being. In a similar strain, James Freeman Clarke declares that such a belief is not in accordance with human nature, and approvingly quotes Tennyson's lines:

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

'T is life whereof our nerves are scant,
O life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want."

So Charles Loring Brace exclaims: "Surely it could not be annihilation which could call forth that enraptured exclamation from Buddha when he had grasped the idea of Nirvana, where he sees the oceans of tears and blood of humanity dried up, the mountains of human bones removed, and the hosts of death destroyed. It is not nothingness which could inspire such pæans of praise and gratitude in different ages from devout Buddhists." Yet even he acknowledges that the meaning of the word is, "blowing out," and grants that there are texts in very ancient Buddhist sermons which point to annihilation.

You will notice that none of these denials are based upon a study of Buddha's teaching, but upon preconceived notions as to what is in accordance with human nature, and what Gautama must therefore have taught. But surely this is not historical investigation. Conclusions based upon the writer's notions of what must

have been meant, rest upon the sand. Besides, whether or not, to Western scholars writing in their cozy studies, surrounded by plenty and happiness, annihilation could seem desirable, it is absolutely certain that even in our Western lands, as the increase of suicide and pessimism indicate, cessation of being may seem to some a consummation devoutly to be wished. Even in Christian lands, at this late day, the question has in all soberness been raised, has been seriously discussed in books and reviews, whether life is worth living. Moreover, it is a stubborn fact that annihilation, if not of the essence of the soul, yet what practically amounts to the same thing, at least of self-consciousness and personality, has been the *summum bonum* offered in all the great Hindoo religions and philosophies. The form in which it is taught may vary; it may be pantheistic, materialistic, atheistic, agnostic, but the essential idea is there ever the same.

I frankly confess that, to me, there is no idea more repugnant than the idea of annihilation. With my view of God, I simply can not believe it. With my conception of man and the possibilities that are in him, to entertain it would fill me with despair; for it would suggest a universe that had broken down in the very hands of its Maker. But all this implies an utterly different standpoint than that from which Gautama viewed human affairs. Let us put ourselves in his place, fill our head and heart with the beliefs with which he began. Imagine a universe without God, or with only a fateful Brahma; with no heart tender to sorrow; no will inflexible in righteousness; no energies clothed in soft yet mighty grace. Imagine man in this universe, coming to it, it matters not how, doomed to wander round and round within it; met at every moment by sorrow;

crushed by grief in every form and cycle of being; deathless as was the wandering Jew, as the atom that changes but ever endures; every change determined by acts of the will performed in all unconsciousness of their fateful issues. Imagine a man living in a universe that is illusion, where the only realities are himself, his will, his sorrow, and the visions of infinite evil, with the possible frightful changes to him,—and can we deny that Nirvana, the surrender of desire and the termination of conscious being, may well seem the highest beatitude, and that his words seemed to the Hindoo mind the promise of a glad and longed-for salvation? If it brought nothing better, it did bring at least the faith that suffering was not necessarily everlasting. To millions there would be a sad comfort even in that. Much as extinction of being is repugnant to us, would we not rather have extinction than to live forever as millions are compelled to live in India and China; yes, or even in our land of plenty?

We pass to ask as to the means by which Nirvana may be reached. This brings us to the noblest part of the Buddhist faith. The way to salvation is the noble eightfold path. It is formed of Right belief, Right heart, Right speech, Right action, Right profession or means of livelihood, Right endeavor or spirit, Right memory, Right meditation. We observe that these eight paths, which form the one way to Nirvana, constitute a tolerably complete whole. The beginning is the basis. A man must know the truth if he is to be a true man. He must believe the right if he is to do it. Then, the person who truly believes the truth will have right feelings, will be true in heart. Where thought and feeling are right, speech will be the same,

and also action, which is the language of the soul as words are of the intellect. Where knowledge, heart, speech, deed, are right, the man will seek the right sphere in which to live and work, that whatever he does will be done in the right spirit, will be an endeavor towards the one great end. Then, where the relation to the present is made thus perfect, the relation to the past, which is realized in memory, and to the future, which is realized in meditation, will be no less perfect and holy. The man, in short, will be completely tranquilized, without self-will, without desire, equally prepared to be or to cease to be. But not every one can enter upon this path, and none, having entered upon it, can all at once, or in a single life, follow it to the end. The way is long and toilsome. There are conditions of entrance, and continuance, and permanence in the fulfillment of it.

“Manifold tracks lead to yon sister peaks,
Around whose snows the gilded clouds are curled;
By steep or gentle slopes the climber comes
Where breaks that other world.

Strong limbs may dare the rugged road which storms,
Soaring and perilous, the mountain's breast;
The weak must wind from slower ledge to ledge,
With many a place of rest.

So is the Eightfold Path which brings to peace;
By lower or by upper heights it goes.
The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All
Will reach the sunlit snows.”

There are therefore four stages in this long journey, corresponding, as it were, to four phases of the spirit in which man lives. The first stage is conversion. A

man must hear the law; must become, as it were, an auditor, a member of the congregation. Without this, he can not even set foot upon the path. Then, he must break three fetters: (1) The delusion of self, which leads him to say, "I am," "This is mine;" (2) Doubt as to the Buddha and his doctrines; (3) Belief in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies. He must cease seeking salvation by the old Brahmanical rites of worship. He who has broken these fetters is a new man; he has reached the first stage of the path. The second stage is that reached by those who will return only once more to earth. The converted man, freed from doubt and the delusions of self and ritualism, succeeds, in this second stage, in reducing to the minimum, lust, hatred, and delusion. But in order that he may get rid of them entirely, he must return once more to the world, a higher man in a better state of being. Then he enters upon the third stage, the path of those who will return to the world no more. Here the last remains of lust and hatred are conquered, not the least desire for one's self or wrong feeling towards others can rise in the heart.

"Lo! like fierce foes slain by some warrior,
 Ten sins along these stages lie in dust;
 The Love of Self, False Faith, and Doubt are three;
 Two more, Hatred and Lust."

There remains yet the fourth stage. It is that reached by the Arahats, the worthy ones, the saints. The man on this path conquers five more foes; namely, Desire, or thirst for being here; Desire, or thirst for being anywhere; Pride, which exalts self above other men; Self-righteousness; and finally, Ignorance, or the illusion which gave reality to the unreal.

“As one who stands on yonder snowy horn,
Having nought o'er him but the boundless blue;
So, these sins being slain, the man is come
Nirvana's verge unto.”

All life for him is lived, all deaths are dead. Karma will cause no more re-births for him; he has reached everlasting rest, cessation of being. Thus we see the predominantly moral character of this teaching. He calls it the middle path,—middle, because on the one side was self-indulgence; on the other, self-torture. His was the middle way, the way of virtue, of sacrifice of vice and wrong, of service to man. His ideal was rest, won by duty, and this he enforced by word and deed.

The moral teaching of Gautama remains his best title to honor. It was and is the real secret of his power. Though the goal was extinction of being, the way to it was infinitely better than the end. Many of his moral maxims are proverbially excellent, and breathe the most noble spirit. Note a few of them: “The real treasure is that laid up by man or woman through charity and piety, temperance and self-control. The treasure thus hid is secure, and passes not away.” “Better than sovereignty over the earth, better than going to heaven, better than lordship over all worlds, is the first step in holiness.” “If a fool be associated with a wise man all his life, he will perceive the truth as little as a spoon perceives the taste of the soup.” Again: “For never in this world does hatred cease by hatred; hatred ceases by love. This is always its nature. As the bee, injuring not the flower, its color or scent, flies away, taking the nectar, so let the wise man dwell upon the earth.” “One may conquer a thousand thousand men in battle, but he who conquers himself alone is the greatest victor. Let us live happily, then, not hating

those who hate us; let us live free from hatred among men who hate." "Let not man think lightly of sin, saying in his heart, 'It can not overtake me.' As the water-pot fills by even drops of water falling, the fool gets full of sin, ever gathering little by little." "He who formerly was heedless and afterward becomes earnest, lights up this world like the moon escaped from a cloud."

But Gautama recognizes that all are not fitted to enter at once upon the eightfold path. He therefore points out preliminary steps for the souls with unplumed wings, who must at first keep to the lower levels. To those to whom dear is the love of wife and child, pleasant the friends and pastimes of the world, he says: "If you must live such lives as these, make a golden stairway of your weaknesses; rise by daily sojourn with these phantasies to lovelier verities." Thus they may pass to clearer heights where the noble eightfold path begins. For these novices he gives certain precepts to guide them in their upward way. They should not destroy life, nor steal, nor lie, nor drink intoxicating liquors, nor commit adultery. Then, if they would go a little higher, they must avoid all sexual intercourse, nor must they eat unseasonable food at night, nor wear wreaths, nor use perfumes, nor sleep on a high, broad bed, but on a mat spread on the ground. Further, they must abstain from dancing, music, stage-plays, and from the use of gold and silver. The observance of these regulations will at last render life more tolerable, and help attain in the next life conditions more favorable for securing Nirvana.

But now, moral teaching does not always secure morality. Men and generations rich in ethical aphorisms are often vile in character. Lofty ideals are much

more easily made than realized. Moral teaching needs a sanction and an inspiring spirit, a power that can lift the offender into the gladly obedient; to whom service is joy and virtue is its own reward. What had Buddhism to offer for this? Simply the person of Gautama. But consider what this meant. He was the bringer of the law; on his authority it rested; by his word it had been proclaimed. It claimed to be, and was believed to be, the law of life. To the Hindoo there was nothing so dreadful as the ever-revolving wheel of being; now casting into hell, now lifting into heaven; yet only to throw him in some future state of existence into a deeper hell.

We know the Inferno of Dante, circle after circle in ever-descending series, each darker, more horrible, full of more hideous shapes, more desponding cries and unspeakable agonies, than the one before it. To us that is a work of imagination, and we study it as such. We admire its intense passion, the splendid hate that at once transfixes and immortalizes his victim. But the idea it embodied was no imaginative fancy to Dante's age. It was a fact which was intensely feared. As that idea to the Middle Ages, though in a far more intense degree, was the fear of the Hindoo of those ceaseless rounds of being. And from all this Buddha's method was to save. His law was the secret of life; obedience wrought deliverance. So he stood before his people as a deliverer, who, to discover this salvation for them, had made the great renunciation. His person became therefore to them an inspiration. They loved him for the good he brought them, and they served him out of love. In him, too, they saw his own law and the virtues he enjoined made personal.

But to return to Gautama himself. Once having

found the truth, he could not be silent. Sorrow was everywhere. The genius of his heart was vastly greater than that of his head. His pessimism and nihilism might easily have led to selfishness and indifference to the sorrows of others. He might have said: "Of what avail is it to concern myself for these myriads of insignificant beings, who appear only for a few short moments on the illusive surface of things? The life of the world is but a lightning flash in an unending night. Why not leave men to their brief illusion? It will soon be over, after giving haply as much joy as sorrow to those who are deluded by it." But not so did the pitiful Gautama reason. While he hated sorrow, he loved man. Heartsick with the horrors of our wretched existence, he could not leave his brother a prey to this cruel deception. If he could not draw his pitying love from any higher source, since he recognized no first cause of being, he drew it from his own compassionate heart. He was fired with an earnest desire to enlighten the ignorant of all classes. He had proved by experiment the futility of a stern, pitiless asceticism, and he had a compassion on the poor, the lowly, and the suffering. Thus this apostle of annihilation became the gentlest, most kindhearted of masters, even devoting himself by preference to those classes that had so long endured the cruel contempt of the Brahmans. He could not repress the speech by which alone man could be cured. So he became a preacher, the first preacher India had known, and a maker of preachers. He discovered the power of the sermon, the might that lies in the speech of an honest man possessed with an enthusiasm for the truth he believes.

His teaching he imparted in poetic form and in parables. The first sermon was so wonderful that his dis-

ciples later loved to imagine all nature standing awed and silent to hear: "The evening was like a lovely maiden. The stars were the pearls upon her neck, dark clouds her braided hair, the deepening space her flowing robe. As a crown she had the heavens where the angels dwell; these three worlds were as her body. Her eyes were the white lotus-flowers which open to the rising moon, and her voice was, as it were, the humming of the bees. To worship the Buddha and to hear his preaching this lovely maiden came." From this time on he lived for nothing else but his mission. Nothing could be imagined more pure and noble than this life of devotion to humanity, of generous inspiration and holy endeavor. He wished no other triumph than to know that good was done and the truth proclaimed, freed from all admixture of passion.

Five months after his struggle and victory under the Bo-tree, his disciples numbered sixty persons. He sent them forth to preach his new doctrine. He himself, with certain other disciples, went to Rajagriha, a place in the western valley of the Ganges, where, long before, he had gone at the first beginning of his pilgrimage. There for two months he preached to great crowds. He aroused great admiration, and almost evoked enthusiasm from the Rajah and his people. In the assembly of his first disciples, it is said, he codified his teachings. To those of his followers who complained that they were despised by the Brahmans, he replied that they had nothing to seek but the right way, had no other weapon but persuasion, and that they could gain adherents to his cause and theirs only by proclamation of the truth for the good of all.

The most touching episode related of this period is his interview with his father at Kapilavastu. Sud-

dodhana implores him to visit his native town, and not to neglect his father's hoary hairs. Gautama yields to the entreaty, but takes up his abode in a cave near the town, and goes forth only to beg from door to door. Hearing this, his father hurries indignantly to him, to ask why he does himself and his parent this dishonor.

"It is the custom of our house," replies Gautama.

"But," rejoins the father, "are we not of an illustrious race, of a race that was never known to beg?"

"You and your family may be descended from kings," replied Buddha; "but for myself, I am descended from the old prophets, who always begged their bread."

When a man has found a secret treasure, it is his duty to give his father his most precious jewel. That jewel was his doctrine. He had the joy of converting both his father and Yasodhara, the wife of his youth, who had never ceased to love and lament him. At last he felt his end drawing near. He had preached forty-five years since his enlightenment, and was now eighty years old. His last sickness was brought on, it is said, by eating unsuitable food. By the river bank, Ananda, who has been styled the apostle John of the Hindoo Messiah, received his last utterances. At the close of this conversation, Ananda broke down and went aside to weep. "I am not yet perfect," he sobbed, "and my teacher is passing away, he who was so kind." But Gautama missed him, and, sending for him, comforted him with the hope of Nirvana, repeating what he had so often said to him before about the impermanence of all things. To the rest he said, "Mendicants, I now impress upon you, the parts and powers of man must be dissolved; work out your salvation with diligence." Soon after uttering these words he became unconscious, and in that state passed away. The legend says that his

body was arranged and placed upon the funeral pyre, which, however, for seven days refused to burn, and then at last took fire of itself. When it had consumed the body, streams from heaven quenched the flames, and it appeared that only the bones were left. There was neither soot nor ash of any kind.

Such, as nearly as we can learn, was the life, teaching, death, of him who has in our days been extolled by a Christian poet as "The Light of Asia." Does he merit the name? How does he compare with Him whom we adore and extol as "The Light of the World?"

Our estimate of any person will depend upon our standard of measurement. We have no right to lay down the highest, absolute Christian standard, and measure the men of the past by that, condemning them in the degree by which they fall below it. Estimated in that way, patriarchs and prophets might present a sorry figure. Gautama may have been a great light for his time and people, while yet being no light at all for us. All depends upon the degree of brightness existing in his world before he came, and what illumination he threw into it. A little rush-taper, a single match, may be welcome in the outer darkness; but its little glimmer vanishes in the electric blaze, and this, again, in face of the dazzling sun. No one will despise the stars because they are snuffed out by the breaking day. We must measure their brightness, not only by the standard of the sun, but also by the darkness which they relieve. So, to get the true focus regarding Buddha, we must ask, both how does he compare with his times, and how do he and his system compare with Christ and the Gospel? Many a man of the past, whom we are inclined to look down upon, might well shame us into humility.

No fairer sentence was ever penned than that of Charles Kingsley, in which he speaks of our estimate of the fathers of the early Christian Church. He asks us to judge them by what they had, and not by what they had not, and to believe that had they lived now, and not then, they would have towered as far above the heads of this generation as they did above the heads of their own. Forgetting this is the mistake made by Mr. Kellogg in his able book on the subject of this lecture. Again and again he holds up to scorn the expression, "The Light of Asia," as applied to Buddha, as though to style him so were nothing better than a shallow mockery of the truth, and tended to rob Christ of his crown. As a healthy protest against setting Gautama side by side with Christ in some Westminster Abbey of the world's reformers and saviors, as an earnest, able refutation of the idea, in some quarters vaguely held, that Buddhism may be about as good as Christianity after all, this book has a mission. But, like most such books, it tends to extremes, and does injustice to one of the noblest souls that ever graced the world. It does not make Christ any greater to make other benefactors and heroes of humanity less than they really were. It robs him of no glory, frankly to confess that the world has had other benefactors and lofty spirits. Goethe, speaking of the supremacy of Christ in the doctrine of the Church, said that it was not fair, that it was indeed unrighteousness and robbery, to pluck all the beautiful feathers from the thousands of birds under heaven, in order to adorn a single bird of paradise. That is not necessary, thank God! Christ is great enough and beautiful enough in his own right, without robbing other benefactors of the world of their glories in order to decorate him.

Measured, then, by the darkness in the midst of which he shone, Gautama was not only a light, but a great light, a sun rising in the valley of the shadow of death. Mark, first, that the Buddha's teaching is in its very nature and essence a doctrine of salvation. This is its distinctive character. It did not begin by being a new religion, but a new doctrine of escape from sorrow. It was a doctrine of salvation, and it became a religion afterward. It is not a religion which has produced a doctrine of salvation, but a doctrine of salvation which has produced a religion. It could be a doctrine of salvation without having a God, but it could not be a religion without one. To Gautama's doctrine of salvation, the denial of the old Brahmanical deities, with the related theory of the universe, was a necessity. He could promise deliverance only by the negation of beliefs which made salvation impossible save on the intolerable terms of Brahmanism. So Gautama swept the heavens of the old deities. But the moment his doctrine became a religion, an object of worship was necessary. It was the discovery or creation of such that transformed the metaphysical and ethical system into a religion. We may say that the Buddha made the doctrine of salvation, but his followers, by deifying him, made the religion. He created the abstract beliefs, but they created the concrete object of worship.

Buddhism, instead of being, as is sometimes represented, a proof that religion can be atheistic, is just the most stupendous proof on record of the absolute necessity of God to religion and to the soul of man. It is an evidence that man, started afresh on his career with an absolute denial or ignoring of the Divine, will yet deify the denial, and make a god out of the person who denied

the existence of the gods. Buddha is himself the deity of Buddhism, invested with the attributes, the will, and, above all, the heart of a god. Without Gautama so changed, the system might have remained a powerful philosophy; it could never have become a religion, nor lived as one. If there had been no love of Buddha, no faith in him, no worship of him, there would have been no obedience to his precepts or realization of his ideals. In a word, there would have been no Buddhist religion, no means of winning converts, no translation of ethical doctrine into moral life. And who will say that it was not better to believe in a deified man with a noble, compassionate heart, such as his, than in the crowd of petty, cruel, or oppressive deities which he displaced?

Mark, again, that to the men of his time the salvation he offered was a very real and blessed thing. To minds so tossed about and in dread of future births of misery, the picture of a future state of beatific peace, which no storm could shake and no time decay, must have been attractive. Even if we grant, as is most probably true, that Nirvana meant to him ultimate extinction, that were certainly better than the life to come in which the Hindoo believed. To be unable to escape from this eternally existent; to be like an atom in chaos, not knowing what other atom would next collide with you, or what change it might precipitate; to feel that the one thing was the inexorable movement and change, through phase after phase and cycle after cycle of conscious being—being that never was far from the brute and ever stood in danger of worse than bestiality,—surely to such a compassionate mind as that of Gautama it may well have seemed that existence meant misery.

Was he wrong? I would rather say that he was the first of his countrymen to declare the truth that life on such terms is intolerable. A universe so constituted would be evil, and nothing but evil. Joy could not abide. The glad life of the moment that had miserable lives behind it, and still more miserable lives before; that was filled with seeds of past sorrow; that was sowing in the soul the germs of the sorrows that were to come,—such was not a life that could fail to have its every glimmer of sunshine darkened by despair.

This notion that made existence hateful to Buddha is incredible to us. But were it not only credible, but the one notion that so possessed the mind as to shut out so much as a dream of another, then we might ourselves find pessimism no abhorrent thing, but the fittest of all expressions of the truest humanity. The more we loved our fellow-men, the more should we hate the whole circle in which it was so horribly involved, and he who could promise to put a stop to the whole miserable process would be hailed as a savior. No wonder, then, that to the Hindoo of his time Gautama's doctrine seemed like a great salvation, and he to be worthy the love and reverence of those for whom he had found deliverance.

Then, the method of salvation was full of noble elements. As we have seen, it had a pre-eminently ethical character. On the one hand, it said to man, "Curb your passions, avoid self-indulgence, be not a slave to the world and the flesh;" and, on the other hand, it said: "Trust not for salvation in sacrifices, rites, ritual, nor even in extreme abstinence or self-torture. Travel in the noble Eightfold Path, the path of virtue and of service to man and beast. Seek salvation by performance of duty." Moreover, its spirit was eminently

rational. It appealed to the reason of man. Its great means of influence was the sermon. Gautama made his converts honorably, by rational appeal to the human mind. Its spirit was humane as well. It has unbounded charity for all. Many of the Buddhist injunctions and precepts are, in letter at least, identical with some of the noblest precepts of the Gospel. Yea, he even expounds the precepts in the spirit in which our Master, in the Sermon on the Mount, expounds the commands of the Mosaic Decalogue. Many of Gautama's maxims are beautiful, and as true as beautiful. Of high moral value, also, is the emphatic recognition of the inevitable connection between sin and penalty. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is nowhere taught with more clearness or force.

Buddha was touched and awed by his belief in Karma, the inexorable, inflexible law that bound together act and result, this life and the next. There is no form under which deity is so full of awe, so much an august power on whom man must depend, and whose will he must obey, as the form of the absolute Sovereign, the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth. Faith in Him, as such, has always created heroic man and heroic times. It has been the iron in the blood of nations in their sublimest moods. The Hebrews knew this faith, and it made them brave the world, and saved to the world a monotheism that was to enlighten and redeem the race. The Reformed Churches of Geneva and Holland, of Scotland and France, Pilgrim Fathers and Huguenots, John Calvin and William of Orange, Coligny and John Knox, Oliver Cromwell and Governor Bradford,—all held it, and it made them stern and righteous and strong, the makers of our civil and religious freedom. The Buddhist Karma was a moral

law as absolute and as universal, as certain in its judgments, as rigorous in its penalties and rewards, as even an Almighty Will. Buddhist atheism was not *moral* atheism. It was belief in an inflexible moral order, that was magnified and vindicated even through man's offenses.

Thus its direct tendency was to overthrow all the old, priestly caste system. Gautama did not derive, nor profess to derive, his knowledge from the authority of the sacred books. What the sages in the forest schools had said was true for them, he courageously preached to all. With resolute consistency, he carried out the idea that knowledge could save, but that sacrifices could not. In obedience to an intense human conviction, he broke with the institutions and traditions that had grown up through centuries into walls that built man out from God and the eternal sunlight of his face. The Vedas lost their authority. He taught not on their word, but on the verity of his own intense conviction. Then sacrifices ceased to have any function. As the gods of the Brahmans had vanished out of heaven, and even if they existed could not be bribed or persuaded to save men, sacrifices were no longer of any use.

An incident is related that, even before he became a Buddha, he was present once when the king stood in his hall of offering. On either side stood the Brahmans muttering their sacred songs, and feeding the roaring flames which blazed upon the altar. Bright tongues of flame flickered from scented woods. Round about the pile a slow, thick, scarlet streamlet smoked and ran, the blood of bleeding victims. One of these, a spotted goat, lay ready for the knife, when Gautama softly said, "Let him not strike, great king," and there-

upon loosed the victim's bonds. None stayed his hand. Then he asked to speak to the assembled throngs about the evil of sacrifice. His melting speech so conquered them that the priests themselves scattered their altar flames, and flung away the steel of sacrifice. Then, naturally, the priests, whose business it was to interpret the Vedas, offer the sacrifices, and persuade the gods, had no more place. Nothing is so fatal to the proud claims of a priestly hierarchy as the doctrine of individual salvation, without the mediation of sacrifices or sacraments. Logically, also, the whole caste system fell.

Buddha did not begin by warring against caste, but his principles naturally led him to disown it. The priesthood was the basis and apex of the whole caste system, and when the priesthood fell, the caste system fell with it. Gautama proclaimed religious equality. "The gift of the law," he said, "surpasses all gifts; its sweetness surpasses all sweetness; its delights surpass all delights." "It is not by birth that one belongs to the lower class. It is not by birth that one is made a Brahman. It is by his deeds that a man is degraded to the lowest class, by his deeds also he becomes a Brahman." "What is the use of plaited hair, O fool? What of a garment of skin? Your low yearnings are within you: and the outside thou makest clean." Thus every man could hear the law, and every man having heard, could teach. Under the old system a Brahman dared not teach a Sudra the Vedas, did not even dare to read them in his presence; but Buddha preached to all, saying, "My law is the law for all; there is no Brahman and no Sudra any more."

A characteristic incident is related of his successor, Ananda. The Hindoos believed that a member of the

so-called Chandala class was the lowest of mortals. His abode was to be outside the town; his sole wealth, dogs and asses. No man who regarded his civil or religious duties was to hold any intercourse with him. His work was to bury those who died without kindred, and to execute sentence of death by the royal warrant. Well, one day Ananda, the favorite disciple of Gautama, came to a well. A Chandala woman came to draw water. He asked her for a drink. She replied: "How can'st thou, being a follower of the blessed one, ask water of me, a Chandala?" He answered: "I did not ask after thy caste or thy family, but I asked thee for water." She gave him a drink, and became a disciple. Still another step Gautama logically took. He spoke to the people in the language of the people. The distinction between sacred and profane tongues thereby fell as caste did. Thus in these various ways he displaced the priest by the preacher, and through the preacher his great works were performed.

We must remember, further, that behind all this was the quickening, vivifying influence of Gautama's own person. He is there, making what has been termed an atheistic religion, in reality far more theistic than the polytheistic, pantheistic beliefs which we call Hindooism. It is more theistic, because penetrated and vitalized in all its parts by a single person, who is, to it, transcendental, beneficent, divine. To imitate him became the foremost duty; an ambition that made obedience not only possible, but a joy. Whatever Buddhism may be in its metaphysics, it is a mere juggle with words to call it atheistic. In the heart of it, it is far more theistic than Brahmanism, and for the best of reasons. Brahma was without moral qualities. Brahmanical deities were simply objects of worship, to be appeased

and flattered and coaxed by rites and ceremonies. But Buddha, in the eyes of his disciples, was a great moral being, gentle, humane, beautiful; and as such he placed before the imagination and the reverence of his people, as the highest object in the universe, a noble human heart. Surely in Gautama, the tender, the gracious, the self-forgetful, there was more of God, a truer image and symbol of the Divine, than in the passionless, abstract, inaccessible Brahma, whence man issued and into whom he was to be resolved. Where the ethical ideal is, as here, a man, the ethics will be humane, such as can be expressed in sweet and generous neighborliness, in true and strong manhood. Thus Christianity and Buddhism are alike in having the ethical ideal embodied in a human and historical personality. This likeness is the root of the similarities in moral idea and precept which so struck and surprised the early inquirers in this field.

Estimated, then, by what he brought to the darkness of his land and time, Gautama was indeed a light of Asia. His work was not, we may be sure, the work of the devil. It was more likely the Spirit of God who aroused him to do what he could to mitigate the sufferings of his fellow-men. His head might in some things be wrong, but his heart throbbed with pity akin to the love of Christ. Let us not rob the Buddha of a single ray of the glory that of right belongs to him. The world has ever had too few such men for us to make them fewer than they are. Let all the glory that belongs to them be recognized and held sacred for evermore. "He who called to the Chandala and the courtesan to forsake their sins and follow him in the path of virtue, and was obeyed;" he who gave up wealth, honor, and domestic joys for the sake of the poor, the

sinful, and the unbefriended; he who came to a race weary of life and shuddering at the horrors of an endless series of births and deaths that awaited them, at the awful, spiked, red-hot wheel of change to which they were hopelessly lashed, and whose ceaseless revolutions would torture them forever; he who to such gave a picture and a hope of a peace which no storm could shake and no time decay, though that peace were but the peace of extinction; "he who warned men that not in the clefts of the mountains, nor in the depths of the seas, nor in life or in death, can they escape the effects of evil deeds;" he who lifted up his voice against priestcraft, ritual, sacrifices, caste, and did much to overthrow them; he who, with the eloquence of intense conviction, preached in the ears of his people many of the sublimest moral truths, proclaiming even heart-purity and universal love as conditions of future blessedness; he who gave himself as the illustrious example of his noble moral teaching; he whose creed might be described, as it has been, as resting upon one principle, namely, "Mercy seeking to save,"—surely such a man deserves to be lauded as one of the world's benefactors, or even as a prophet with a mission from God. "To have listened once to his compassionate tones should have softened the hardest hearts; to have heard of peace and purity and blessedness from those lips ought to have changed lives for all coming years." It has changed the lives of millions. The faith of the Buddha without doubt helped civilize Eastern and Central Asia, caused the development of the arts in China, humanized the fierce tribes of Thibet and Mongolia, and did much to prevent the fierce irruptions of these barbarians over Eastern Europe in the early Christian ages. It became a religion for many peoples, and purified

the hearts and softened the lives of multitudes in various nations. Well done, noble prince; great was thy sacrifice, divine thy compassion, deep thy thought, not in vain thy work. Thou wert indeed a "Light of Asia," and in thy light many have lived, and loved, and hoped.

But how does he compare with the "Light of the World?" I believe that if the Buddha, with his compassionate heart, with his deep love of truth, with his unwearied activity for the good of his fellows in misery, with his noble and earnest moral spirit, could have stood face to face with Christ, and have known of his doctrine, he would have clasped our Savior by the feet in rapturous awe, exclaiming, "My Lord and my God, my King and my Redeemer, I crown thee Lord of all!" Gautama would then have seen that if he himself was a Light of Asia, at least a torch flickering in the pitchy blackness of the times, Christ is the resplendent Sun of the world, in whose light the Buddha was like a single match, lit up under the whole sky in a blazing, torrid midday.

Mark a few points of contrast. Bring before your eye these two lights. Look at them, first, as they appeared in the world. It would seem, at first glance, that Gautama would surely be the Sun of the world, if either was to be. He is the honored and only son of a powerful king. He has influence, wealth, education, dignity, everything that could make him happy and powerful. He passes his early years in a royal home, whence all traces of sorrow and pain are sedulously banished. Jesus, on the other hand, is the son of a peasant, a member of a despised race; born in the humblest ranks of life, cradled in a manger; has no connection with the rabbis of his nation; has no relig-

ious office or chance of securing one; everywhere meets the sneer that he is getting out of his station, that he has not even learned letters, and yet seemed to aspire to teach the nation's teachers. He has no opportunity that commanding social position would have given him to know his people, or to be known of them, or to make him an object of admiration and regard. He lives for thirty years of his life in obscurity in a little village of ill-repute, a common artisan.

Look a little further. Duration of life is of great importance to a religious reformer. The longer a life is continued, if a noble one, the intenser its power for good. The more numerous the men it directly forms, the greater the sources of its influence. The most potent lives in the moral and religious spheres have been long ones. Look at them. Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Mohammed,—all of them lived to a ripe old age. What if Saul of Tarsus had died within a year after he was stricken down on the Damascus road; if John Wesley had died at forty, Luther immediately after his call to Wittenberg, Wiclif in the year he was made Master of Balliol College; if General Booth had passed into the invisible as soon as he left the Methodist Church? The law is general, and Buddha was no exception. At least forty-four years after his great enlightenment, he lived the life of a teacher. All the time that he was teaching, his influence was gathering power. The men who formed his first disciples were old men when he left them; and the younger men that were growing up about him were full of a new reverence for their teacher, more wonderful than that which fills the hearts of the old. Thus he had his molding hands upon two successive generations of his disciples. At his own feet they stood, learned their lessons from

his own sacred lips. But how was it with Christ? His entire public life is limited to three hurried years. The men whom he chose came from his own rank, and were with him only those three short years. Yet how mighty the spell he threw over their souls! Without him they would have remained poor, untaught fishermen; with him, they changed the moral face of the world. Even of those three years, only about eighteen months were spent in Galilee with them; the rest of the time he was in public at Jerusalem, and in wanderings, broken, tormented, hated, and at last ignominiously nailed upon the cross between two thieves. Where is his chance to become even a candle of the world, much less its Sun?

Note, again, their relation to the intellectual conditions of their times. We see Gautama at first trying all kinds of self-torture, feeling his way by bitter experience towards the doctrine he preached. When he preached his new-found truth, it was only to make public and to offer to all substantially the same salvation which the hermit philosophers of the forest taught to those who gathered at their feet. The asceticism, which was an essential part of his system, was that of his people. His philosophy was the philosophy of their schools. He built upon the intellectual basis already provided for him. Take away those old Hindoo systems, and there could be no Buddha. This may be called the evolutionary element in Buddhism. His light was kindled at the little torches of others. But was it so with Jesus? What kinship did he have with the rigid, ascetic Essenes or with the hypocritical, formal Pharisees? Is he not in utter contrast, yea, conflict with them? To the prophetic element in the religion of his people he is the heir. He fulfills in his person all the inspired predictions of hope which had glowed

in their heart, and had fallen like soothing balm from the lips of Israel's prophets through the weary centuries. But to their schools he was in complete contrast. Nor had he anything in common with the Greek and Roman world, in which his greatest successes were to be won. Of Greek culture and Roman spirit he had none. Where was his chance of being even a rush-taper to them?

If we look now to the political side of Gautama's work, we find him here revolutionary. He accomplished the revolution of the member of the warrior caste become schoolmaster against the priest. He hated the ancient chains, and was the spirit of revolution in the form of a philosopher. In this he might expect popular sympathy. But Christ accomplished a far more radical change, without, as it were, political formulas. He had to face no caste system that must be broken down; no political enmities did he try to evoke or encourage; no favored political system did he offer to set over against the imperial world-power of Rome. All the force that he has lies in his person, and his religious and moral teaching. He was indeed to disappoint the most dearly-cherished hope of his nation. He was to come into the most uncompromising antagonism with the whole spirit of the time, and to wage unremitting war with the strongest, basest passions of the day. He derived no aid from accident, from social or priestly revolution. He simply proposed to change individual men, and leave them to change the world. What were his chances? If he should kindle a little spark, how long would it take to quench it by filthy tides of error, superstition, and prejudice, or by scarlet streams of blood? Yet to-day, after 2,300 years, the power of the Buddha is waning, while that of Christ,

after more than eighteen centuries of victory, is still waxing, and, in the consciousness of invincible might, is girding itself for the conquest of the world. The little star, that rose upon India at Kapilavastu, has long since passed its zenith, has never cast more than a dim and flickering light, has never even sent that beyond the limits of the Orient, is rapidly growing dimmer and dimmer, and is hastening to the horizon to rise no more; but the Sun that rose in Bethlehem to the jubilant chorus of heralding angels, is mounting higher and higher, is casting his radiant beams even now over all the earth; will soon reach the zenith, where he will stand to set no more forever, whilst the passing generations live and rejoice in his marvelous light. Before his supernatural splendor the light of that little star of Asia pales, and even seems to cast a black shadow in the contrast. Why? Let us see.

What is the most fundamental, pressing question in human thought? To all earnest souls it is and must ever be, "Is there a God?" Is the universe, if there be a universe, drifting aimlessly in an empty void? Does no Being know anything of its Whence, its Whither, its Why, or its Whereabouts? Is man tossed about in the midst of illusions? Does neither he, nor any one, know whence he is, why here, whither he is bound, nor how he may make his way thither? Is there no mind, Providence, no Being which knows anything about it? Any power that can guide man in his wandering and drifting, or the universe in the wide tossing ocean of time? Is there any mind higher than our own to think for us; any conscience clearer than ours to give eternal moral laws; any heart to love us when even father and mother forsake us; any will superior to these millions of clashing, selfish wills, that can bring harmony into

the heaving chaos and marshal even the nations under the banners of wisdom, justice, love? Can intellect, moral sense, affection, find anything, anywhere, like a creative and controlling mind, a perfect and immutable righteousness, an eternal heart of infinite love? If not, the nations might well sit down on the barren, burning shores of time, and mourn out their lives in despair, the courage of the most hopeful ooze away, and the cheerfulness of the most happy give place to uncontrollable anguish and wailing tears.

Give us no answer to this question, or give a negative one, and we should indeed sit in the valley of the shadow of death. To this supreme question of questions, which underlies every other problem of life, what does Gautama reply? We look into his eyes, and they seem full of sadness as he says, "There is no God," or at best, "I have no light to give upon that question. We do not know. Let us not discuss a query that has in it so little of profit, and which must remain, after all, unsolved." Is there any light in that? It freezes the soul, and makes it shudder. Yet let us remember that even this was light to those of Buddha's time. They knew only gods that were the slaves of the priests, and enabled these to make slaves of the people. Better far have no God than the old deities of Brahmanism. In such utter darkness were his people that even Gautama's atheistic or agnostic gospel was, to them, at least a little beam.

But hear the doctrine of Jesus. He ushers us into the presence of an omnipotent, all-wise Creator of the heavens and the earth, from everlasting to everlasting the same. In his hands the nations are as a drop in the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. He could mete out heaven with a span, com-

prehend the dust of the earth in a measure, weigh the mountains in scales. He upholdeth all things by the word of his power—an eternal, infinite conscience and heart and will and intellect at the helm as pilot of this vast universe, steering it safely through the limitless, heaving oceans to an assured haven of peace, on which forever he fixes his eye. Upon his heart he has the interests of every passenger on board, yea, even of the sparrows and the lilies; a Father who bends over every one of us with unspeakable love, saying in accents of sweetest tenderness, "Trust my fatherly love, my children; trust me." O wanderers in Brahman blackness! O! earnest, pitiful prince Gautama! there is light indeed in this.

We turn to another question. If Gautama had no knowledge of God, then certainly there was, in his mind, no revelation of God to men, no truth ever spoken in the world by a voice higher than human. Ascend to the heights, descend to the depths, take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, on Buddha's faith you find the universe everywhere left to find out what truth it can without help from God. Nowhere is there a divine voice to speak to man from heaven. Gautama would have to confess that, like all others, he was giving, in his doctrine, nothing but the fruit of his own thought and feeling. He had reasoned out, and by bitter experience and by his own compassionate heart had felt out, his four noble truths. He was simply, on his own confession, a plain man, seeking rest. Other men, by unflinching resolve, might attain to equal wisdom. His thoughts he believed to be true; but at best they were only the opinions of a loving and honest man.

But what does Jesus say? God has never left him-

self without witness in the world. At sundry times and in divers manners he spake to the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days hath spoken by Christ his Son. Jesus declares to all the ages: "My words are the very words of God; my life is the life of God manifest in the flesh. He that hath seen me hath seen God in the supremest act of his grace. Gaze upon my life, my love for the lost and suffering, my Gethsemane anguish, my crucifixion agonies; then gaze upward and backward to see me emptying myself of my divine glory that I might descend to this life of humiliation and sorrow. Then remember that, in all, you see a revelation of the heart of God. God so loved and so still loves the world." O trembling and groping denizens of the valley of the shadow of death! O noble, compassionate Gautama, with thy glimmering candle! here is light indeed, a very blazing Sun, light for the world!

Another query: What is the meaning of life, here or anywhere? What is there in it worth having, by either the individual or the race? Into Gautama's great, pitying eyes you look, and wait for an answer. Like a voice from the very innermost prisons of despair comes the response: "There is no meaning in it. It is all illusion and pain. It is a promise that is only a cheat, and the discovery can only bring new misery. Life begins in mistake, continues in mistake, and the only happy thing about it is, that it may be sometime ended by fully recognizing it as a mistake. For the individual there is no soul, no permanent heaven of incorruption, perfection, and bliss. The best thing possible is to shuffle off this mortal coil, and, taking another no more forever, sink utterly out of being. Existence is pain, and the best, yea, the only way to end the pain, is to end the being."

Could anything be more cheerless, humiliating, soul-crushing? To tell me that I am no reality at all, but a bundle of illusions that nevertheless cause pain; that I have no soul; that nowhere, in the possession of any being, from highest to lowest, in any world, is there happiness unalloyed, plenitude of enjoyment, unbroken peace, perfection of life; that I may live millions of myriads of ages, and that in none of these dreary cycles, nor in any portion of one, can I be free from apprehension as to the future until I lapse into utter unconsciousness; that even to attain this sorry relief I must turn away from all that is pleasant, lovely, instructive, elevating, or sublime; to tell me by voices ever repeated, like the ceaseless sob of the sea-waves upon the shore, that as long as I live I shall be subjected to sorrow, impermanence, and illusion, and that the only way out of gnawing disappointment and abiding sorrow is the way of extinction,—what a horrible creed is this! How it congeals the very spirit! How it gives the lie to many of our most deeply-rooted instincts and holiest feelings!

Then as to the prospects of the world as a whole, what? The best we can find in Buddhism is a dreary and awful prospect. As regards even his own mission, it was to end in failure. The decay and misery of earth would only be checked a little, but not stopped. When, at last, because of the wickedness of men, the world and all upon it shall be destroyed by fire, then there will be another earth, just like this, in which shall dwell, as now here, sin, violence, uncleanness, misery. Another race of men will go through the same long course of dreary and inevitable decline, which no Buddha ever to appear shall be able to prevent. Then again shall come another awful world catastrophe, wherein all shall

perish. So shall it be not once or twice, but in endless cycles of sin and retribution for ever and ever. Merciful God! and is this the meaning of the universe? But even that was better than India had before Gautama came with his little light. He did offer to individuals at least one sure way of escape, which was greatly more than the Brahmans promised.

Again we turn to Jesus. Master, what is thy light? Lo! a great glory floods the dark valley, and a voice sweet with the accents of eternal hope—yea, of divine, infallible promise—says: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." "No night is in that home of bliss; no night of bereavement or sickness, of poverty or disappointment, of shame or sin. There is an eternal, cloudless day of perfection and bliss." Christ even draws aside the veil a little, that we may see the great host that no man can number, with crowns and palms, faultless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, our departed loved ones amongst them, joining the rapturous acclaim of praise unto Him who has led them to that eternal abode of holiness and joy. Even their bodies, in weakness here, are there in power; here in dishonor, there in glory; and as those happy throngs strike their golden harps in ecstasy, they chant, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

But what does Christ say of the prospects of the world as a whole? In substance he says to us: "Well, the world is full of evil. Look not upon it with the

shallow optimism that sees no curse and no awful sin; that has not a heart deep enough to appreciate earth's great sorrow. But remember that it is your Father's world. That golden promise given in Eden's bowers is yet to be fulfilled. As ye have been taught to pray, 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,' believe that your prayer will at length be answered. The obverse side of that prayer is a promise from your Father. Holiness shall prevail so universally at last, that even upon the bells of the horses shall be 'Holiness to the Lord.' The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and though this earth shall at last pass away with a great noise, in consuming flames, there will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." In the words by which the exalted Savior revealed to his beloved disciple upon Patmos, in that sublime apocalypse, dark with excess of brightness, we see this planet in the full glory of a finished and complete redemption, in which even the very physical earth has been made to share, while among the last words that are borne to our listening ear are: "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Wondrous words! How blessed and full of hope for all whose hearts are heavy now with the burdens and woes of life! O trembling and groping souls in the valley of the shadow of death! O pitying Gautama, with thy little taper, trying to illumine that pitchy blackness! here is light indeed; here is the full shining Sun; here is light for the world.

We question the Buddha further. We turn to his moral system. This forms too vast a subject to treat fully here. We simply ask him a query or two. We

may say to him: "O pitying sage of Asia! we have heard beautiful and admiring praises of thy moral system. We have read in thy works, 'Rise up and loiter not, follow after the holy life. Who follows after a holy life rests in peace, both in this world and the next. Follow after a holy life! Follow not after sin.' But we see in the world appalling forms of moral evil; evil within our own bosoms, a conflict of desires in ourselves, and we know ourselves to be worse than we ought. Surely in thy moral teachings we shall find a great light; but many question press upon us. What is the foundation of good and evil? Why is one thing right and another wrong? What is law? What keeps it in operation and gives it sanction? Is it one and the same for all of us, or does it make upon some greater demands than upon others? What is the meaning of the word Right in thy expressions, 'Right doctrine, Right aspiration, Right endeavor,' etc., in the noble Eightfold Path? Why shall I do right and avoid the wrong? Is there any great motive to arouse me to virtue? Is there any living example of the ideal which I should pursue?" To such queries what could be Gautama's response? He would have to say: "The basis of the moral law is not in God or in gods, or in the nature of a race created by the divine; for the heavens, by my teaching, are swept clean of deity; there are no duties to God, because there are no gods of whom we know anything. The foundation of the moral law must therefore be something inexplicable in the nature of things; put there, we know not how, by some blind fate; something which we must obey if we would escape from misery. There is no Divine Commander to give commands or to enforce their claims; the sole sanctions of the moral law are your own interests, the

rigid rule of Karma, which came into things, we know not how or whence, inexorably to bind action and result, to make continually new bodies for us, and keep us writhing under the sorrows of existence; a kind of great, heartless, inflexible fate, an iron chain of doom with red-hot links binding the souls of men to their past and their future; not a law established and administered by infinite wisdom, power, and love. There is no one moral law for all classes and conditions of existence, but there is a double and even a triple standard,—one for the common man who is not yet willing to enter the noble Eightfold Path; another for the man who has entered upon it; and still another for him who attains Nirvana without needing to be re-born after his life on earth is done.

“By Right doctrine I mean my doctrine of ‘No God, no soul, no blessed immortality; that existence is sorrow, and that the best thing for all would be for it utterly to cease.’ By Right effort, I mean the effort to kill out lust of existence in this world or in any other, so that this being may sink into Nirvana. My highest motive to duty is self-interest, desire to get rid of existence, which can bring only misery. Yes, there is a living, historical example of the ideal human life. It is I, myself. Let my disciples imitate me. Let all who can, imitate me in my keen sense of sorrow and of the miseries of existence; in my gloomy, hopeless pessimism; in my pitying endeavor, in reality inconsistent with my own fundamental principles, to lighten it, that I may attain to Nirvana; in my abandonment of home, and in my renunciation of family ties, of State affairs, of the world in all its forms. Imitate me thus in my mendicancy, begging a meager support from those who stand on lower stages, but who must sometime stand

where I do now, if ever they are to attain the peace of Nirvana."

To all this what shall the Christian say? He can say that to those living in the Egyptian darkness of that time Gautama did give at least a few glimmering rays of moral light. He surely was right in declaring that the root of pain and misery is in the moral condition of man, and that if freedom from sorrow is ever to be attained, the path of moral transformation is the way. But, alas! what could his twinkling candle do to dispel the Stygian blackness of the time? O, if he could but have seen that resplendent luminary rising in glory upon the world, Jesus the Christ! He says: "The foundation of the moral law is an eternal, infinite, holy God, the living moral law itself upon the throne of the universe. All duty is primarily duty to him, the blessed and only Potentate. The great sanctions of retribution and reward are administered by his everlasting righteousness, wisdom, power, love. Society is not cleft in twain by any double standard of virtue; but the same law, one and unchangeable, is over all. It has no pets, and none whom it hates. The supreme good is nothing so horrible as extinction of pain by extinction of being; but the kingdom of God and his righteousness, the complete realization of the will of the infinitely good, wise, holy, almighty God,—that is the highest perfection and bliss of which mankind is capable. The highest motive is love to God. There is a living, historical example of the perfect life, Jesus himself, the living incarnation before the eyes of men of the life of God, who is the ideal of men, who are made to bear his image. Jesus says: 'Look at me. Imitate me in my hate of sin, which is the cause of the world's sorrow; imitate me in my love of the sinner,

love that will go to the extreme of self-sacrifice to save him; imitate me in my joy and hope, in my love not only of the living being, but of life itself—love that does not, like simple pity, strive to end suffering by ending being, but by mending it; in my enthusiasm of humanity; imitate me by holding all the relations of life sacred, in the home, the mart, the fields, the shop, the social circle, the State, the Church; in my healthy moral life in the world, but not of the world—a life that in one's providential station can do the will of God without fleeing to the cloister, or hating the body, or living on the mendicant's gathered alms.' Could Gautama have seen that light, how quickly would he have thrown aside his little taper, and have proclaimed to all his people, 'Look yonder, O my brothers in darkness and suffering, look to that Light of the world!'

Last of all we compare the respective doctrines of salvation. Gautama talked much of salvation; some have even called him, "Savior." He is said to save by his sacrifice. Salvation is a great word. From what does it save, and to what? Whom does it save? Is it brought to man, or must he gain it for himself? If it is brought to him, how must he appropriate it? If he must gain it for himself, how? Is there any help for him in his amazing task? Man has a vague consciousness of ill desert, at times a biting sense of guilt. May these be taken away; and if so, how? Listen once again to the Buddha's response: "The salvation I offer, my brothers, is attainment of rest by extinction of being; not the rest of the man harmonized with God and with his universe, but the rest of the graveyard, which will never see a resurrection morning. *From* sorrow it saves, but it saves *to* nothing. *From* death it saves, but not to life. Death itself is to be slain; not because life is to

be triumphant, but because, life having ceased to be, there will be nothing left upon which death may feed. Even this sorry salvation can be attained by only a very few without a long, dreary process of re-births and numberless lives of misery. Only those who forsake home-life, put on the yellow robe, take up the begging bowl of the mendicant, and enter the order of monks, can hope to escape the dread re-birth in other wretched lives innumerable. Every man must save himself; no one can lend him a hand. By one's self the evil is done, by one's self he suffers, by one's self evil is left undone, by one's self he is purified. Lo! no one can purify another. The only possible help is, that one can show to another the noble Eightfold Path, but no one can help his brother in his hard pilgrimage along it to the goal. Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. As for my being a savior, my sacrifice only discovered the path which will, I think, lead to Nirvana. The only help I can give to others is merely to show them the way, and arouse them, if I can, to follow my steps. I am a sinner like the rest of men. I have to seek salvation for myself, and so I practice the rules of the ascetic life. At death I shall enter Nirvana, and become the symbol of the highest good, the sage at rest. But I have no creative energies to impart to others. My people must live by retrospect, looking back upon my example, and looking forward to such a rest of extinction as I may attain."

Is this all? Is there, then, no other salvation for man than this, and is there no other Savior? How barren all this sounds! What Tartarean blackness would that seem to a Christian! Yet it was at least a candle's little light to the people to whom this message first

came. But what a contrast to the salvation offered in Christ Jesus. Listen once again to his blessed words of life: "I am indeed the Savior of the world. My salvation is not first of all salvation from pain, but from the great, blighting evil that is the curse of the world,—sin, the prolific mother of misery. My salvation is not to everlasting extinction of being, but to eternal bliss and holiness in the mansions of a city that hath foundations, the city of God. I am the resurrection and the life. I am come that men might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. My richest salvation is not for a few mendicants only, but for every humble, penitent soul who will receive it. I can point out, not some supposed path that leads to the mere negative peace of annihilation, but by my mighty grace can renew the soul, and can fill it with the conquering energies of the Spirit of God. I am myself the conqueror of sin and death, and I live for evermore to impart abounding life to all who will receive me. In that dark tragedy of the cross, I was giving my life a ransom for many. There I met the extremest demands of holiness against guilt, so that the holy God, who hates sin with everlasting hatred while yet he loves the sinner, can be both just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; and you may hear the voice of your Father, God, saying to you from the throne of his holiness, 'Peace be unto you; your sins, though many, are all forgiven you.' I reveal, O Gautama, not as thou dost, the struggle of the soul to find God, but God coming down to find the human soul. This salvation is possible to all upon conditions which all can meet; namely, surrender of themselves to me as King and Redeemer. When men worship me, they bow not to a mere romantic memory, not to relics only of the noble dead, but to the ever-

living, divine Savior, whose sacrifice makes manifest that God is such that, for the redemption of the world, he would be willing to embody himself in the flesh and to die, but who yet lives to fill the souls of his trusting ones with spiritual power, with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, which shall be a foretaste of heaven." O sad and weary and groping sufferers in the valley of the shadow of death! here is light indeed. O compassionate heart of Gautama, holding up in love thy little candle! here is the meridian Sun.

Could all these radiant truths, could this mighty Savior of men have been revealed in glory to those in that dismal vale, ages before the Buddha came, how entranced they might have been! How in ecstasy they might have shouted and sung, "Hallelujah! we who sat in the valley of the shadow of death have seen the great light!" Had Gautama himself been privileged to gaze upon the Savior's face, and to hear his words of wisdom and love, think you that, with his deep love of truth, with his boundless pity for man, he would not have flung away for very gladness his little tallow taper of speculation, have fallen at Jesus' feet, exclaiming in rapture, "My Lord and my God, my King and Redeemer. Help me, O Christ, to lift up thy light to all the world!" It was but a pitiful salvation he had to proclaim to his people—a salvation which ill deserved the name; yet with what earnestness, devotion, and self-sacrifice did he and his disciples herald it to man! With what zeal and sacred enthusiasm, then, should we be inspired to proclaim to all the world Christ's message, so eloquent of heavenly hope; point men, not to a Nirvana of apathy and final extinction, but to the complete and everlasting triumph of righteousness over sin, and of eternal life over death—a triumph bringing the

whole round earth into its scope, and bringing for us also, as individuals, the achievement of a blessed manhood, transfigured with the glory of the incarnate Son of God, and exalting us into a holy, blissful, never-ending fellowship with Him who alone is the eternal light and life, not of Asia only, but of the world—a light in whose dazzling brightness all lesser stars and torches are eclipsed. What shall we say, moreover, to those who pompously style themselves “advanced,” but who would substitute in these days the candle of Asia for the Sun of the World?

LECTURE III.

ZOROASTER AND MOSES.

ZOROASTER AND MOSES.

IN reply to a caviling, critical spirit, which delights to denude the world's great men of their glory by styling them products of their time, Thomas Carlyle exclaims: "I liken common, languid times, with their unbelief, distress, perplexity, their languid, doubting character, impotently crumbling down through ever worse disasters into final ruin—all this I liken to dry, dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of heaven which shall quicken it. The great man, with his free force direct out of God's own hand, is the lightning. All blazes now around him. The critic thinks the dry, moldering sticks have called him forth. They wanted him greatly, no doubt; but as to calling him forth—they are critics of small vision who think that the dead sticks have created the fire. To lose faith in God's divine lightning, and to retain faith in dead sticks,—this seems to me the last consummation of unbelief." We go with Carlyle against the critics. We believe in Divine Providence, and in providential men.

In our previous lectures, we saw the early Aryan gradually sinking into a dry, dead, formal religion, a cruel engine of oppression in the hands of a priestly caste. Then we beheld Gautama, "the Buddha," making the dead fuel about him blaze so that he poured at least a few rays upon the darkness of the time,—a great preacher, in the face of the metaphysical, ritualistic, priest-ridden, horrible Brahmanism, proclaiming "salvation by character, not by ritual; humanity more than caste; a heart purged from evil a better offering than slaughtered hecatombs." The positive truth he

preached was from God, a ray or two from that Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world. His limitations belonged to himself and to his times.

But centuries before Gautama preached his new doctrine to the millions of India, a greater than Gautama had arisen amongst that branch of the Aryan family which had remained north of the Himalayas, when their brothers had clambered over these majestic peaks into the plains below. Hundreds of years before Gautama, under the Bo-tree, became "the enlightened one," Zoroaster, an older cousin of his, saw further and with clearer eye, and bequeathed to his people a faith the purest, with a single exception, that has ever blessed the world. Though professed now by only a handful of humanity's millions, it at one time threatened to take possession of the earth. Let us try to make this seer's acquaintance. We will look at him as seen through the eyes of the different generations of his disciples.

See him, first, as pictured to us in the latest traditions. We stand with the Parsee people, living in the thirteenth century of the Christian era. Legend has, of course, been busy with his memory. He is here enveloped in a halo of mystery and miracle. His mother, Dughdha, is said to have conceived him in a semi-miraculous fashion. Before his birth, the importance of her coming son was made known to her in a remarkable dream. She saw a thick cloud, from which poured upon her tigers, wolves, dragons, serpents, and other noxious beasts. Amongst these was one larger and more frightful than the rest, planning to kill the coming babe. Whilst in great amazement she gazed upon this scene, she seemed to hear the voice of the child lifted up in consolation. Then a mountain of

light was seen to descend from heaven. Before this, a large number of the savage creatures of the darkness fled away. As the light drew near, there issued out of it a handsome youth, who held a staff in his left hand, and a manuscript in his right. At sight of this manuscript, all the remaining infernal beings except three withdrew. The other three—a wolf, a lion, and a panther—fled as soon as he inclined towards them the rod. Of this dream she sought an interpretation from the wise man. He asked three days to consider. At the end of that time he tells her that her son will be of immense importance to the world. The manuscript is the symbol of his prophetic dignity, the staff the emblem of the majesty of God. The beasts are his enemies, who will finally give way before him.

At last the day of his birth arrives. The first act of the common babe is to cry; that of Zoroaster is to laugh. But the demons immediately try to slay him. They intrigue with Duransarum, the king of the province and the chief of the magicians. He fears that if the child is allowed to grow up, his sorcery will be at an end. So he walks to the dwelling of Zoroaster's father, and draws a poignard to stab the boy. But his hand is paralyzed. Then the evil spirits secretly steal the babe from his mother, carry him to the desert, build a great fire, and throw him into it. But peacefully he sleeps, unharmed in the flames, and his mother recovers him without the smell of fire upon him. Next, by command of the king, the sorcerers take him, place him in a narrow path, and leave him to be trampled to death beneath the feet of a passing herd of wild oxen. But one of the hugest and fiercest bulls tenderly takes the babe between his feet, and prevents any injury to him. The same device is tried with a drove of wild

horses, with a similar result. Then the enemies find a den of wolves. The young ones are slain in the presence of the old, and while they are, in consequence, gnashing their teeth in fury, the child is thrown amongst them. But God closes their fierce and hungry jaws. Thereupon two celestial cows appear, and suckle him. Thus he grew up in spite of the bitter assaults of his foes.

His father chose for him a teacher famous for wisdom. But the wicked sorcerers could not leave him in peace. When he had reached his seventh year they brought forth, by witchcraft, terrible apparitions. All were startled, and took to flight except Zoroaster. Then he fell sick, and they gave him poisons instead of medicines. But he detected their deadly nature, and rejected them. In his fifteenth year, at a banquet, in presence of the king and the most notable magician of the time, he expressed in the strongest terms his hatred of magic. Henceforth the magicians trembled in his presence. His life was blameless. Having reached his thirtieth year, his trials were ended. He and his followers migrate westward. Coming to a sea, and having no boats, Zoroaster prays and the waters divide. Onward still, for a whole month, they march, until they reach the borders of Iran. Here a New-Year's festival is being celebrated, and he is invited to share. After the feast, he continues his march, crosses a river, and is on the soil of Iran proper.

Now begins his real prophetic career. An angel appears to him, and introduces him to the Deity, from whom Zoroaster receives permission to ask certain questions. He therefore inquires about God's best creature on earth, about the names and duties of the angels, and the nature of the evil spirit. He is favored, also, with

certain miraculous signs. He passes through a fiery mountain, but not a hair of his head is singed; his body is opened, his vitals are taken out and replaced without injury; molten ore is poured over his breast, but he feels no pain. Then he receives from God the holy book, the Avesta, with a command to go and proclaim the truth at the court of King Gushtasp, of Balkh. The chief angels then give him some counsels, and he departs to fulfill the divine behests. But the demons and sorcerers try to divert him from his path. They beseech him to renounce the Avesta; but he listens to them in perfect contempt, and begins to recite the sacred words, at which some are destroyed and others flee.

Received at the court of King Gushtasp, he disputes, in solemn council, with the sages of the realm. Thirty on the right and thirty on the left argue with him, but only to be put to shame. On the second and third day he is again victorious in the discussion, and then proclaims his prophetic mission. The king is disposed to favor him and his doctrine. But his trials are not yet ended. His enemies bribe the porter of the house, and in his absence bring in all kinds of unclean things—such as heads of dogs, cats, etc.—and hide them under his clothes. They then accuse him to the king of sorcery. The monarch in anger casts him into prison. But then the horses in the royal stable have their feet drawn up close under their body. Zoroaster is then called upon to heal them. He says, “Will you then believe in me and my doctrine?” “I will.” Then one of each horse’s feet is released. “Will you allow your son to consecrate himself to the propagation of the new faith, allow your queen to adopt the law, and give up to punishment those who maligned me?” These requests being all complied with, the horses were fully recov-

ered. Thereafter the king does nothing without consulting the prophet. By further miracles his power is strengthened, and the king builds a fire-temple.

Other legends say that a great Hindoo Brahman went to Iran with the design of refuting and conquering the prophet; but as soon as he had listened to the Avesta, he was turned from an enemy into a zealous disciple, and eighty thousand of his followers with him. By the Turanians, a people akin to the Chinese, he was killed in battle, when they swept down upon Balkh, took it by assault, and profaned the fire-temples and the Avestan faith.

Such does Zoroaster appear to us in the accounts written in Persia two hundred years after the Normans first set foot in England. Walking up the stream of the centuries, we pause again amongst the Greeks and Romans. Looking at Zoroaster through their eyes, we discern still a glorious form. Putting together what they say of him, we see that he was the son of the great Oromasdes; that he smiled at birth, and as soon as he opened his eyes, beat his head vigorously as a sign of coming wisdom; that he was king of the Bactrians; fought against the Assyrian Ninus and Semiramis, in which conflicts he was at last slain; that as founder of the Magian religion, he received the law he published as a revelation from God; that he inquired carefully of God as to the primal forces of the world, and as to the movements of the stars; that he changed the earlier forms of worship; that for thirty years he lived in the desert on cheese alone, and indeed during his entire life took no other food or drink; that from love of justice and wisdom he lived in solitude upon a mountain which blazed continually with fire from heaven, and when the king with his leading men approached the mountain to

offer sacrifice, Zoroaster came out of the flames unharmed, and said, "Offer sacrifice, for God has visited this place." The net result of these Greek testimonies is small, but they show us at least that before the time of Alexander the Great, and in the centuries immediately following, the Greeks knew that some remarkable personage by the name of Zoroaster had founded the religion of the Magi, that he belonged to Bactria or Eastern Persia, and that he had some connection with King Gushtasp, or Hystaspes.

Walking further toward the source of the stream, we look at our hero through the eyes of those who composed the later sacred books of the Parsee faith. Here he appears to us as a great, dogmatic personality, stripped of almost everything peculiar to human nature, and invested with a supernatural and wholly divine power, standing even above the archangels, exalted indeed to a place next to God himself. His biography begins long before his birth. All the great exploits of the heroes of yore have taken place mostly for the purpose of diminishing the sum-total of evil to such an extent as to allow of his beneficent advent. Not until the forces of good and evil were somewhat evenly balanced could Deity ordain the prophet's coming into the world. He is of kingly descent, and a hero like his predecessors, except that his work is spiritual. At his birth and growth the water and the plants rejoice, and the evil spirit runs away. By the promulgation of the law, Zoroaster brings it to pass that all the demons with supernatural bodies, who had previously been roving about the earth, have to hide themselves in the depths, so that the world may now follow its regular course.

The race that is entitled to count so glorious a being

amongst its members may deem itself highly fortunate. Of his youth these books say little. But here we see him in mature years, of majestic mien and supernatural might. He is the type of the good creation in general. He was the first who thought right, prayed right, acted right. He was the first priest and the first warrior; the first cultivator of the soil; the first to praise perfect virtue; the first to sacrifice to Ahura Mazda and the archangels. He is the typical hero who owes his power to the Haoma drink, and who, with the weapons of the holy formulas which he speaks, and of the holy law which he proclaims, chases into flight the evil demons. The future of the earth is also connected with him; for the last savior of the world, Sosiosh by name, is to be one of his descendants. He was also the great example to man in undergoing temptation. The story of his testing has some resemblances to that of the Buddha, but it is more spiritual. It is ethical and internal, rather than physical. The demons who assail him he encounters with the invincible weapon of prayer. The tempter says to him, "Renounce the good law of the worshipers of Mazda, and thou shalt have the boon of the ruler of the nations." But Zoroaster refuses, and prays aloud, "This I ask thee, teach me the truth, O Lord." The tempter asks him by what weapons he will resist the infernal creation. "By the sacred mortar, the sacred cup, the Haoma, the words taught by Mazda,—these are my weapons, my best weapons." As soon as he utters the holy word the demons flee.

There is an account here also of the communion of the prophet with the Deity, and of the revelation he received upon the blazing mountain. After that august event he held converse only with those who were most susceptible to truth and competent to deal with

the questions regarding the Deity. His uncle was the first to accept his religion. The question is raised here, "Why did he die?" The answer is, that when Zoroaster asked to be made immortal he was told by God that if he should be made immortal, the wicked Turbaratum would be immortal too, the resurrection would then be impossible, and mankind be left without hope. Then the Deity granted to him for a single moment the eye of omniscience. Thus beholding the delights of paradise and the miseries of hell, he was satisfied with the dispensations of Providence, and was resigned to die.

Advancing still further towards the source of the stream of tradition, we see him as he appeared to his contemporaries and immediate disciples. This picture is drawn for us in the most ancient records of the Parsee faith, the so-called Gathas, or chants. At last we seem to be on firm historical ground. Here the prophet speaks in the first person; elsewhere he speaks in the third. Here he stands in a circle of living, breathing, human persons. All scholars agree that in these Gathas we have the earliest portrait of the great reformer of Iran, and indeed almost all declare that here we have the very words of himself and his immediate disciples. How old are they? The trend of opinion is that they were certainly composed before the siege of Troy, while some of the best and most recent investigators push back the date to about the time when Moses was leading Israel from Egyptian bondage. The persons here speak as contemporaries of the prophet, whilst in the other sacred books of Persia they appear as belonging to a remote past.

What, then, is the picture of the prophet which we behold in these ancient chants? Unfortunately it is

quite dim, and is sketched in barest outline. No details of his birth, life, activities, death, are given. Only we learn that his family name was Spitama. On turning from the other books to these, we find ourselves at once in a different atmosphere. The complex, grotesque Zoroaster of the legends, with their stupendous miracles that we have given, is wanting. We are passing as from the land of fable into that of solid reality, like passing from the fantastic extravagances of the Apocryphal Gospels to the sweet simplicity of the evangelists. The fanciful, supernatural halo has vanished, the grotesque features have disappeared, the fantastic demigod is no more, all is sober and real. Except inspiration, no miracles are reported. We see, instead of a semi-divine personage, a toiling, suffering prophet of God; a man with the inspirations, exertions, passions of a living, struggling soul, acting a great and permanent part in the religious development of his country. He is a pure preacher of mighty speech, with powerful eloquence spreading his doctrine; meeting pain and difficulty, trusting only in God and in the power of truth, and the protection of his influential friends.

At times, his position seems precarious enough. He has to face, not only all forms of outward opposition, not only the unbelief and lukewarmness of professed disciples, but also the occasional misgivings of his own heart as to the truth and final triumph of his cause. The whole gamut of human emotions is swept in these songs,—now dark despair, now radiant hope; here, a firm faith in the speedy coming of the kingdom of heaven; there, the thought of taking refuge in flight. All is a living picture of a great, earnest soul, grasping mighty thoughts which he believes to be from God, and which he would impress upon his race for their

everlasting weal. Conflicts break out, the new faith struggles against mighty odds, gradually makes its way; the number of disciples grows from year to year, until at length they no longer appear as a maligned and persecuted people, but as victors and rulers of the nation. We hear him say: "The liar possesses the fields of the true man who protects the earth. None of the servants worship me, none of the lords of the land who are unbelievers; the dominion is in the hands of the priests and lying gods. Whither shall I go for refuge? To which land shall I turn?" King Vistaspa, the Gush-tasp of the later legends, comes to his aid. They prepare the right path for the faith of Ahura. He is the helper who has subjected himself to the law of Ahura, and has established his law in the world.

Again, we see the prophet arguing with his opponents, propounding to them his doctrine, and calling upon them to accept it. In one passage we behold him in the midst of a great concourse of peasants. He says: "I will announce it; now hear and understand, all ye who have come from near and from far." Then he proceeds to set forth the leading principles of his doctrine. Between the believers and the unbelievers, the husbandmen and the nomads, bloody conflicts break out. The prophet seems to urge his followers openly to the fight. "None of you shall listen to the words and precepts of the wicked; for into his house and into his village, into his estate and into his country, will he bring grief and death. Therefore, slay them with weapons." Before the princes the reformer proclaims his doctrines. Whether they will accept it, is the most important question to them, but yet they are not always inclined to yield. As a punishment for obstinacy, they are threatened with eternal damnation.

Such is the picture of the great reformer of Iran as painted for us in the later legends, by the Greek and Roman writers, in the later books of the Avesta and in the earliest books of the Parsee faith. Now, any one acquainted with the manner in which a certain kind of criticism has dealt with other great souls of the past, might safely have predicted that the biography of this great ancient reformer would be whittled down by these wise ones, until at last some one a little more daring in novelties than the rest would wave his hand with an air of authority, and declare the whole story to be a solar myth, a myth of the dawn or of the storm, the personification of some national peculiarity or series of events, or a number of comparatively little individuals whose mediocrity, in the aggregate, made a picture of greatness; some ghost or other without any genuine historical reality in it. Thus in the hands of the critics have fared Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, Samson, Gautama, Homer, even Shakespeare has had his narrow escape; yea, even Jesus Christ, monumental figure of all history as he is, has by some of these wise ones been styled a legendary being; by the hallucination of enthusiastic men and passionate women, adorned with a nimbus of divinity and miracle from which it is impossible to extricate the real person as he lived in history, if he ever did live. Naturally, therefore, the sage of Iran has had to submit to the same process. One makes him a travesty of Moses; another, a being purely mythical and sidereal, originally identical with the morning or evening star; another declares that he is the god of the storm, only this and nothing more.

Now, all this seems to us like a sorry business. Our human race has not had so many sage, saintly, heroic

spirits, that we must be needlessly robbed of the few great figures that do seem to tower in glory above the common horde, and to illumine mankind for centuries with beneficent light. James Freeman Clarke has some words of wisdom on this subject. Speaking of the attempts to dissolve the one great Moses into a number of little Moseses, he says: "As the telescope resolves stars into double, triple, and quadruple stars, and finally into star-dust, so the critics, turning their optical tubes toward that mighty orb which men call Homer, have declared that they have resolved him into a great number of little Homers. The same process has been attempted with regard to Shakespeare. Some have attempted to show that there never was any Shakespeare, but only many Shakespeare writers. So with Moses. Instead of Moses they would give us a mosaic. Criticism substitutes human tendencies in place of great men, does not love to believe in genius (except its own), and even appears to think that a number of mediocrities added together can accomplish more than one man of genius. Certainly this is a mistake. The easiest and most natural solution of wonderful results is the supposition of genius, inspiration, heroism, as their cause. Great men explain history. Napoleon explains the history of Europe during a quarter of a century. Suppose a critic a thousand years hence to resolve Napoleon into half a dozen Napoleons, would they explain the history of Europe as well? Given a man like Napoleon, and we can understand the French campaigns in Italy and Germany, the overthrow of Austria, the annihilation of Prussia, the splendid host of field marshals, the Bonaparte circle of kings, the Codex Napoleon, the Simplon road, and the many changes of States and Governments on the map of Europe. One man of genius explains

it all. But take away the man of genius, and substitute a group of small men in his place, and the thing is much more obscure and unintelligible. So, given Moses, the man of genius and inspiration, and we can understand the Exodus, understand the Jewish laws, understand the Pentateuch, and understand the strange phenomenon of Judaism. But instead of Moses, given a mosaic, however skillfully put together, and the thing is more difficult. Therefore Moses is to be preferred to the mosaic, just as Homer is to be preferred to the Homerids, and Shakespeare to the Shakespeare club."

To all of which we say Amen; and the same applies to Zoroaster. By a little skill in logical thimble-rigging and the play of a lively fancy, one can make an allegory or myth of the dawn or of the tempest out of almost anything. For example, Mr. Tylor, in his "Primitive Culture," throws ridicule on some of these attempts to explain almost all early history and legend by myths of the dawn and sunrise. The nursery rhyme, "Sing a Song of Sixpence," is obviously to be clothed with a typical significance. The four and twenty blackbirds are the twenty-four hours of the day. The pie that holds them is plainly the underlying earth covered with the overarching sky. Then how true a touch of nature is it that when the pie is opened (that is, at daybreak), the birds begin to sing! The king is, of course, the sun, and is counting out his money, the golden showers of Danae. The queen is the moon, and her transparent honey is the silver moonlight. The maid is the rosy-fingered dawn rising before the sun, her master, and hangs out the clothes, the clouds, across the sky. The particular blackbird who so tragically ends the tale by snipping off the maiden's nose is the hour of sunrise, when the dawn vanishes. By such a process you can

turn almost anything, or the events of almost any life, into a myth of something or other. Zoroaster a myth? Nay, verily. We go with the great majority of the best scholars, and believe that, as Buddha implies Gautama; Islam, Mohammed; Judaism, Moses; Christianity, Christ; so the Parsee faith implies the sage of Bactria.

As the most solid nucleus of reality, we may say that, probably, not far from the time when Moses was leading his horde of emancipated slaves from the land of their bondage, some eight hundred years before the Buddha received his enlightenment under the Bo-tree; before the Brahmans of India collected their sacred books into the Vedas, a babe of unusual promise was born of a noble house in Bactria. As a child he gave evidence of remarkable precocity; grown to manhood, he felt himself called of God to oppose the superstitions that were eating out the heart of his people; like Moses and Jeremiah, at first shrunk from his hard mission, but like them, too, felt the word of God beating in his bosom like a hammer, and glowing in his soul like the fire of a furnace; at thirty, no longer able to resist the voice of his conscience, began to proclaim his doctrine; in the face of opposition, heralded with commanding eloquence the word divine, until at length he reached the court of the king; of pure life and thought, speech and work, he suffered much for his faith, yet persisted, dared, conquered. His sphere was no narrow one. Provinces, no less than villages, concerned him; armies as well as individuals. He left the imprint of his moral and religious genius upon vast regions, various races, and long periods of time. He founded a religion the purest, with a single exception, which the world has seen; a perennial spring of joy and virtue to his people; as steel in the ethical blood of a large part of the race

for centuries; a religion which, when Persia stood face to face with Greece, almost promised to become world-wide. Here is a man in that remote past, when, save in one little spot of earth, no other human voice was speaking with wisdom such as his, uttering great truths, some of which are to-day the commonplaces of philosophy, but which then were revolutionary in the world of thought, the death-knell of superstitions well defended and hoary, and the promise of a brighter day for millions of men.

What, then, was his message? What the religious ideas against which he contended? Certainly he did not preach to a people whose minds were, before he came, a vacuum. If he brought in new ideas, we may be sure he had to contend against the old. Amongst that branch of the Aryan family which settled in India, had Gautama, with his strong ethical sense, his law of pity, his benevolence, only appeared five hundred years earlier, how different a country might India have been! Well, amongst the Northern branch of this family a great prophet did appear. What was his message?

First, as to the great idea which is the root of all others: what did he teach of God? We saw to what an extreme of dreary negation and uncertainty the Buddha was driven. But Zoroaster's doctrine of God was light indeed. With but one exception, no nation of antiquity attained such purity and sublimity of religious thought as the sage of Bactria and those whom he taught. Nowhere, save in Israel, is the notion of Deity so free from degrading human adjuncts; nowhere else is the spiritual conception wrought out with such exactness and precision. We see a great Deity standing alone, far, far above all other superhuman beings, ruler and king of the invisible as well as of the visible world. He is not,

like Zeus, merely the highest of some Olympian circle, but seems to have all the attributes of a single, majestic Deity. His name is Ahura Mazda, "The Wise Lord." It is he himself who has revealed his holy religion to Zoroaster. His most conspicuous attributes are holiness and wisdom. He is even addressed as "Ahura Mazda, the most blissful Spirit, Creator of the corporeal world, 'Thou Holy One.'" Again, "I declare it, I venerate the Creator, Ahura Mazda, the brilliant, the radiant, the greatest, best, most beautiful, mightiest, possessing best form, most exalted through holiness, giving profusely, granting much bliss. He created us, he maintains us, he is the most blissful Spirit."

Notice more in detail: He is spirit. He does not wear a human form. Though he is represented as thinking, speaking, acting, there is no passage in these books which authorizes us to assume that he was thought of as having any definite visible form, certainly not that of the human body. True, mention is sometimes made of the most beautiful body of Mazda, but such language, in harmony with the whole spirit of the book, must be understood symbolically. Even Jehovah is spoken of in the Bible as having hands and feet, of making bare his holy arm, of girding his sword upon his thigh, and even of covering with his feathers those who trust him. But no one thinks that, to the Hebrew mind, Jehovah had hands, feet, thighs, and was adorned withal by plumage. In the language of Zoroaster the sun is spoken of as the body of Deity; but no scholar understands this literally, any more than he does the metaphors of the psalmist, which call God a sun and a shield, a rock and a strong tower. Indeed, the anthropomorphisms in Zoroaster's words are rarer than in the Old Testament.

It is true that he is sometimes styled a father. Thus

Spenta Armati, a kind of spiritual being, the protectress of the earth and the genius of submissive devotion, is called his daughter; but is not this plainly a poetic expression, saying that piety of heart, like all other good, originates from Ahura? Mention is also made of his spouses, but the very names of such show that we are simply dealing with metaphors. Thus when it is said that Spenta (Devotion), and Asha (Holiness), are spouses of Mazda, we have only a poetical way of declaring their inseparable connection with his nature. So, by a change in the figure, they are sometimes styled his daughters. Peace, Plenty, and Salvation are also called his wives. Fire is sometimes said to be his son, but only because it is the holiest and purest element. As that which diffuses light and blessing, it is as a revealer and a visible image of the Deity, who is himself light and perfect purity. Similarly, when it is said that the sun is his eye. Above, in the heaven he has his throne. Thence, with his radiant eye, the dazzling sun, he looks down. His glance scares away the demons and the darkness in which they lodge; with it he also penetrates into the souls of men, and perceives what is good and evil in them. The sun is merely a symbol of the divine omniscience, which brings to light every sin.

Spiegel, one of the foremost scholars in this department of research, says: "To think that Ahura Mazda has a real wife and is the father of children, as was the case with the gods of other religions of antiquity, completely contradicts the exalted position ascribed to him, and is in antagonism to the whole spirit of the religion." He is the sovereign judge, sovereign excellence, sovereign knowledge, most beautiful, strongest, most intelligent, most graceful, and most holy. He is the uncreated and eternal, the author of all good, the

benign. Great gifts does he bestow upon the righteous man, who is upright in his thoughts, words, and deeds, but he punishes the wicked. Yet exalted as he is, he is still accessible to man. The prayers of the pious ascend to him, and are heard by him. "Thou art in holiness the blissful, O Mazda, who turnest away mischief. Of all beings thou art the source, O Ahura Mazda!"

But what is his relation to the world? Will the sage avoid that rock on which so many fine crafts of thought have split? Will he, like so many others, run his ship upon the breakers of pantheism? He rejects positively the idea of emanation for the origin of the world, and teaches distinctly a creative act. Hearken to a few strophes from the oldest books of this faith. They show us that the pious mind of Zoroaster and his followers beheld in all the wonders of nature the ever-working power of God:

"I ask of Thee, give me truly answer, O Ahura!
 Who was the Progenitor and Father of order from the beginning?
 Who made the courses of the sun and stars?
 Who caused the moon to wax and wane, who but thee?
 This, O Mazda, and other things I long to know,
 That I ask of thee, give me truly answer, O Ahura!
 Who sustains the earth and holds the clouds above it,
 That they fall not? Who made the water and the plant?
 Who gave swiftness to the wind and the fogs?
 Who is, O Mazda, the creator of the pious mind?
 That I ask of thee, give me truly answer, O Ahura!
 Who is the artificer of light and darkness?
 Who is the artist who made sleep and wakefulness?
 Who made the dawns, who made the days and evenings,
 Which remind the careful of their duties?"

Again the prophet says that to Ahura has he looked as the source in the creation of life, because he, rich in gifts, did establish the sacred customs and announced

the words. He willed that the spaces of the sky should clothe themselves with lights, etc.: "I regarded thee as the most excellent, O Mazda, whom thy people have to worship in spirit as the father of the pious, since I saw thee with my eye as the eternal lawgiver of the world, living in his works. In thee the holy earth exists, and the holy, intelligent frame of the body of the earth, O living Spirit, Mazda! Thou didst first create the fields, and didst devise the sowings by thy spirit, and the various kinds of knowledge. Thou didst then create this world of existence by holy acts and speeches." Thus Ahura Mazda existed before the world, which he called into being by an act of the will. He was from the beginning. He lives, uncreated, immutable, for all eternity. Notice one more hymn: "I believe thee to be the best being of all, the source of light for the world. Every one shall choose thee as the source of light; thee, O Mazda, most beneficent spirit! Thou createst all good, true things by the power of thy mind. I believe thee to be the primal cause of life to the creation."

Now, all this sounds very much like pure, ethical monotheism. Was it really such? Haug goes so far as to say that this conception of Ahura Mazda is perfectly identical with the notion of Jehovah held by Israel; the idea of God, the sole creator of the earthly and spiritual life; the lord of the whole universe, not only rewarding the good but punishing the evil. Certainly Ahura Mazda stands far above the deities of the Vedic pantheon, and can be compared only with Israel's God. By the ideas of no other people, Aryan, Semitic, or Turanian, was he equaled. But to make him rank fully as high as Jehovah would seem to be an exaggeration. He is less spiritual and more awful than Jehovah, but less remote from the nature of man. The

very ascription to him of health is an indication that he was conceived, after all, as having some kind of physical nature. Elasticity and brilliancy are ascribed to him in such a way as almost certainly to exclude the mere metaphysical sense. Moreover he was so predominantly the god of good things, so emphatically the source of blessings and prosperity, that he could scarcely inspire his votaries with any feeling of fear, without which there can be no genuine reverence. Mark three things which seem to throw some light upon this question:

1. Some naturalistic elements seem still to cling to this exalted personage. In spite of the spiritualism and the strongly-marked traces of abstraction which run through the early books, we do see also traces of the old, naive, unreflecting notions. It is true that the contests in nature and man are elevated to the position of strifes between truth and falsehood, and the service of truth is proclaimed as the highest command; but, on the other hand, it is the strong fire of Ahura Mazda which causes the light to be recognized, and gives the decision in battle. It is the "good sayings"—that is, the old magic prayers and incantations—which sustain the worlds by keeping away the evil, and by increasing the strength of the good spirits. The worshiper also insists upon his material reward. He desires twenty steeds, and at least one camel. He desires from Ahura Mazda continuous power, health, long life. There are some traits also which seem to mark Ahura as an exalted sky-god. As we have just seen, the ancient litanies and formulas know him as luminous and corporeal. They invoke the creator, brilliant, shining, fair, beautiful of body, white, luminous, visible from afar. Darmestetter says he is even called the most solid of the gods.

Another great scholar, however, De Harlez, declares that the word which Darmestetter renders "very solid," does not necessarily mean this. Yet De Harlez himself says, "Certainly the monotheism is not perfectly pure." We see in it some inconsistencies, some remains of ancient mythology; but in principle Zoroaster has one God, spiritual, eternal, infinitely powerful and wise, creator and preserver of creatures on earth and even of the celestial spirits. Moreover, the purest expressions of this faith are in the Gathas, the books which, if any, contain the very words of the prophet himself. In pronouncing upon this, let us not forget that some lynx-eyed critics declare that they see, even in Jehovah, traces of an old god of fire. He has been spoken of as coming down to the garden of Eden to enjoy the cool evening air, as coming to see what his creatures were doing, as enjoying the sweet smell of Noah's sacrifice, as coming down to inspect the rising tower of Babel, etc.; and pointing to these "anthropomorphisms," the sage critics say, "See there evident traces of lower notions still lingering about Jehovah." Orthodox Christians see a great deal less of the so-called naturalism in these expressions than the keen-eyed critics find there. Let us be as just to Zoroaster as we wish others to be with the Bible.

But, 2. Was not this exalted being surrounded by other divinities? Did we not meet in India with many noble expressions which, on the surface, seemed to imply faith in the unity, omnipotence, omniscience, wisdom, creative power, providential rule of Deity, whilst yet closer inspection revealed other gods adored in the very same terms? As though, for the time being, the god worshiped filled the entire horizon of the worshiper, while yet, in his cooler moments, he would have

to confess that the Deity to whom he ascribed such wonderful perfections was not the only god! Was it the same with Ahura Mazda? Well, we do find, as it were on the steps of his throne, a number of glorious, semi-divine beings, who share his functions. There are six of these, and they are styled Amesha Spentas or Amshaspands, "the blissful, immortal ones." They are said to live in eternity and to bless in eternity. They are styled well-ruling beings granting good, whose will is one with that of the glorious sun. They form a kind of divine council, a circle of ministering spirits to Ahura Mazda. Their individual names, "Good Might," "Best Holiness," "Desirable Sovereignty," "The Humble Sense," "Divine Beauty, Happiness, Health," "Long Life, Immortality," certainly are peculiar.

Surely these beings do not necessarily impair the monotheism of Zoroaster. They are not regarded as gods at all, but simply the most majestic creatures of the great, sole deity, Ahura Mazda; veritable archangels, shining only with splendor derived from him and executing his behests. They are simply lesser lights, planets circling about the sun, under his control, moving in orbits he prescribes, drawing from him not only their light and movement, but their very existence as well. Each of them has his own limited sphere of activity in the visible world. One protects the herds, another guards the fire, another is charged with metals, and the last two take under their care the realms of water and vegetation. But Ahura Madza holds supreme direction over all that exists. These glorious creatures no more militate against his sole deity, no more rob him of any of his blazing light, than do the morning stars and sons of God who sang at the birthday of this world—Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Gabriel, angels and archangels,

cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers—make Jehovah any the less, in the eyes of his worshipers, the sole, eternal King, immortal, invisible; the only wise God, blessed and only Potentate, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

We do find, however, a being who, certainly in later times, was a most popular object of worship amongst the disciples of Zoroaster. We refer to Mithra. To him abundant sacrifices were offered, and he seemed to assume all the functions and attributes of deity. He was a great god of light, illumining the world with his rays; going through the air upon his chariot, a mighty god of war, the armed watchman over his creatures, the enemy of the evil spirits, terrifying and conquering them by his might. He was regarded as the mediator between Ahura Mazda and man, judge of the dead, the impersonation of the redemptive powers of the world. In many points he thus resembled the Greek Apollo. Indeed, in the degenerate days of the old Roman religion, when the aching heart of man was sighing for redemption, and the world was turning to the Orient for light, Mithra worship became the chief, almost the only religion of the pagan world. By some of the eagle-eyed critics who are always ready to account for everything in terms of nature, even the Gospel has been styled a kind of Mithraism. One of the hymns in his praise says, "I invoke Mithra, the lofty, the immortal, the pure, the sun, the eye of Ormazd."

Ahura Mazda is represented in one of the later hymns as saying to Zoroaster: "I created Mithra, who rules over large fields, to be of the same rank and dignity as myself. The wretch who belies him spoils the whole country. To those who do not belie him he gives swift horses." He is spoken of as having a thou-

sand ears, a thousand eyes, always watching, without falling asleep over the welfare of creation. He is first of all the celestial beings who cross the eastern mountain where the immortal sun with his swift steeds is stationed. Through him the rulers build their high fortresses; through him are the high mountains, with their many pastures producing food for the animals; through him the deep wells have abundant waters. He brings light to the whole earth, and victory resounds in the ears of those who worship him. He punishes the wicked. He lives on Mount Alborz, where Ahura Mazda has built him a palace, where there is no night, no cold or hot winds, no smoke, no putrefaction, no fogs. As a gorgeous, warlike youth, he drives forth with his chariot drawn by four white, immortal steeds, which live upon celestial food.

But mark, great and popular as was this being in the later religion, he is always the creature of Ahura Mazda, and subordinate to him. This removes him to an infinite distance from the nature of the one sole creator of celestial intelligences, men, and worlds. Besides, as we walk up the stream of years, we find that the nearer we come to Zoroaster's own days, the less and less becomes his importance. His glory grows dimmer and dimmer, until, after seeing his name in the inscriptions of that Persian Artaxerxes who figures in the Anabasis, at least six hundred years on this side of Zoroaster's time, he disappears from the monuments, and we hunt in vain for traces of his worship in the earliest books of the Parsee faith.

We can not take the space to examine other semi-divine beings who swell the celestial retinue of the great god Ahura Mazda, and who, as well as he, received from men sacrifice and prayer. There is the great arch-

angel Sraosha, the teacher of the good religion, who instructed the prophet himself in it, who shows the way to heaven, who never slumbers, who struggles against the demons, and from whom they flee to hide themselves in the darkness; who brings to men the bliss which Ahura Mazda assigns them as their fitting portion; who protects the true faith, and, with Mithra, judges the dead, and conducts to Ahura Mazda the souls of the faithful when this life is ended. There, too, is Rashmu, the angel of justice, a kind of personification of the divine omnipresence; firm in spirit; hater of disorder and of every sort of wickedness; with Mithra and Sraosha, judging the dead; holding in his hand the balances in which the deeds of the dead are weighed, and inclining the balances not the hundredth part of one poor scruple, not the millionth part of a hair's-breadth, indeed, in favor of or against any one, good or bad, high-born or low, peasants or lords and rulers. Then there is Anahita, a great goddess, highly regarded in later times, extending her sway then over all Asia Minor, corrupted in that period also by traits borrowed most likely from the licentious superstitions of Babylonia; resembling, now Artemis, now Aphrodite, and in Greek and Roman times worshiped probably with impure rites. There was, besides, the worship of the rain-star Tistrya, the dog-star Sirius in the constellation of the Canis Major, the dispenser of the necessary rains.

Examining carefully all these and others, with the torch of history in our hand, tracing them back from the latest times to the earliest, we shall find their glory pale as we get nearer to Zoroaster's days, and be unable to resist the conviction that their worship was the product of degenerate times, when the pure faith which Zoroaster preached had been corrupted by compromis-

ing priests, and by contact with Semitic superstitions. In the oldest books, which give us the prophet's own faith, these are almost entirely wanting. We have therefore no more right to judge his message to his people by the corruptions of later times than we have to estimate the Gospel of Christ by the legends of the saints and the superstitious abominations of the Middle Ages.

But, 3. Another objection is sometimes made to the pure monotheism of Zoroaster. It has been called the rock on which he split. But when fully investigated it would rather appear that his followers ran upon that rock the craft which he quite skillfully launched. This sage of Bactria was one of those earnest moral spirits who are oppressed by the sight of evil. With clear eye he saw the two sides of the world—the radiant morning with its cheerful sun and freshness; and opposed to this, the clouds, the chilly, gloomy mist, the storms and darkness which swallowed up the brightness; on the one hand, the verdant meadows, the gay and fragrant flowers, mountains that gleamed like gold as the sunset kissed their peaks, leafy vales, groves nodding their heads to the zephyr, and fields golden for the harvester's sickle; and on the other hand, the reeking swamp, the burning desert, the barren crag and desolate rock, the dark, storm-lashed heights. He rejoiced in the genial rays of the spring sun, and shivered in the biting frosts of winter. He saw also the beautiful and useful animals of the world,—singing, happy birds; fat kine, pouring out for man the rich milk; the graceful deer; the noble horse; and, in contrast to these, wriggling serpents, annoying, disgusting parasites, poisonous insects, vermin of all sorts, hideous, crawling creatures, and wild, savage beasts. He saw also abortions, cripples, creatures, as it were, half-formed and imperfectly-planned,

whose lives were full of misery. Possibly great physical calamities had helped deepen and intensify his conviction.

It would appear that at about the period in which he probably lived, great geological convulsions had changed the climate of Northern Asia, producing bitter cold and biting frosts and furious storms, where before the skies had been genial and bright. We find hints of such convulsions and climatic changes in the Avesta itself. In Central and Northern Asia, as is well known, there are evidences of such. Every school-boy knows of the mammoth found on the banks of the River Lena, in latitude 70°, incased in a block of ice, entombed there for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years, yet with the flesh so perfectly preserved that it was immediately devoured by the wolves. Since then elephants have been found in great numbers in so perfect a condition that the bulb of the eye of one of them is in the Museum of Moscow. Lyell concludes that it is reasonable to believe that a large region in Central Asia, including perhaps the southern half of Siberia, enjoyed at no very remote period a temperate climate sufficiently mild to afford food for numerous herds of elephants and rhinoceroses.

But whether terrible convulsions of nature had helped develop and deepen his sense of evil, certain it is that Zoroaster did with unusual keenness feel the presence of evil in the world. Yet it was not so much outward evil that most made his soul to ache. Moral and spiritual evil seemed to him far worse than physical. The evil which has its origin in a depraved heart and a will turned away from goodness was, to him, an awful calamity to man. His meditations led him to the conviction that all the woe of the world has its root in

moral obliquity. As in nature he had found the charming and the repulsive, the fruitful and the poisonous, the storm and the sunshine, so in the world of humanity he beheld unselfishness and greed, love and hate, purity and pollution, truth and falsehood. Hence the great question confronted him—a question which always has had a fascination for the human mind—“How shall we account for the presence of sorrow, misfortune, death, and, above all, of sin and guilt in the world?” Often have men spent their energies more in trying to find out the origin of sin than in the endeavor to extirpate it; as some people at a fire go about asking, “How did it start?” instead of bending their efforts to extinguish it. Yet the question as to the origin of evil may have much to do with the momentous query how to get rid of it.

Now, it is plain that the more perfect the monotheism, the more exalted the idea of God, the more ethical he is, the more this question will press itself on the mind and clamor for solution. Hence, when Zoroaster said, “God is one, supreme, almighty, wise, holy Creator and Ruler of the world;” when, in spite of this sublime faith, his soul was so tormented by the presence of physical and moral evil in the world, the problem was inevitable, “How is evil compatible with the goodness, holiness, and power of God?” How his great soul must have wrestled with this formidable, almost insoluble question! Even in the full light of the Christian revelation it has sorely puzzled and almost baffled the best minds in every age.

Now, Zoroaster could not follow the pantheistic road out of the tangle. His ethical spirit was too strong and healthy, his aspirations too high and too pure, to allow him to rest in the monstrous solution which had

resulted from the pantheisms of the Nile and Euphrates valleys. We mean the solution which Heraclitus revived amongst the Greek philosophers, and to which Hegel makes a perilous approach; namely, the idea of the fundamental identity of opposites, good and evil opposed only in appearance, and developing through opposition. So Alexander Pope, amongst the poets:

“Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right as relative to all.”

“All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good.”

“In spite of pride, in erring reason’s spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.”

Emerson, Carlyle, Theodore Parker, sometimes set up a similar strain. But no such shallow optimism could satisfy Zoroaster. To his view, some things were radically, fatally wrong. The world was a scene of war, not of peace and rest. It seemed to him impossible that the God whom he conceived as eternal, good, pure, just, perfect, had created evil and thrust it into the world. How, then, had it come? If without the aid of divine inspiration, he did not attain a full and clear solution of this grave problem, one of the hardest of theological nuts, upon which thinkers of all ages have been grinding their teeth, can anybody wonder?

What was the solution he offered? He maintained that from the beginning there existed a dualism of primal forces or principles; one good and beneficent, the other evil and destructive. The good power is, of course, represented by the great god, Ahura Mazda; the evil one by *Angra Mainyu*, which means, probably,

“the murderous or destructive spirit.” The latter stood over against the former as a kind of twin-brother. Ahura Mazda was the author of all that is bright, shining, good, useful in creation; Angro Mainyu is responsible for the dark and noxious. The good spirit wakes men from slumber to their duties; the evil one lulls them to indifference and sleep. Life is produced by Ahura Mazda; extinguished by Angro Mainyu. As, in his conflict with evil, Ahura Mazda is surrounded and served by a glorious company of angels and archangels, so Angro Mainyu has his army of evil spirits and foul demons. He is called the bad spirit, the demon of demons, the much-possessing death, the bad Angro Mainyu, the evil-knowing one, the baneful, against whom Ahura Mazda must constantly struggle to maintain his empire. Creation had issued from the good being pure and perfect; but the wicked one had marred it all by his accursed influence. In the earliest books we read: “Announce will I the two spirits at the beginning of the world. Spake the blissful to the destructive, ‘To thee neither our thoughts, nor our commands, nor our intelligence, nor our belief, nor our subjects, nor our deeds, nor our doctrines, nor our wills correspond.’”

The question must be raised, is this dualistic conception compatible with the pure and exalted monotheism of which we have spoken? Let us remember, before answering this, that Christian doctrine—yea, the very words of the Gospel itself—show that it is perfectly possible to hold fast the purest monotheism whilst yet believing in the existence of a great and mighty devil, and in other infernal powers. Who held a loftier idea of God than Paul? Yet he says, “Put

on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Does he not declare that we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places? Does he not bid us be sober, be vigilant; for our adversary, the devil, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour? Is not this belief in wicked spirits and in one mighty prince of the realms of darkness found, indeed, inwrought, like a dark thread, through all parts of the Bible, in poetry and prophecy, in history and doctrine, and by none emphasized more than by Jesus Christ himself? Moreover, experience has shown that the more intensely ethical the Church has been, the more earnest and strenuous its struggle for righteousness, the more liable it is to have a strong belief in the existence and baleful work of evil spirits.

So cautious and philosophical a thinker as the great Danish theologian, Martensen, has said: "The way in which one speaks of the devil may be taken as a test and criterion of his views regarding evil generally." When Luther would test a preacher he would ask, "Does he believe in death and the devil, or is all mere joy and pleasure?" Some even of those theologians who deny the existence of Satan, yet favor the retention of him in the creeds, because, as they say, of the healthful, moral influence of belief in his infernal presence. It is easy for the thoughtless and frivolous, who have no earnest moral feeling, flippantly to deny and mock at the existence of Satan; but let a man enter heart and soul into the struggle against sin in himself and in the world, and he will be likely to cry out with Paul, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood." There is a bit

of doggerel rhyme on this subject, which runs about as follows:

“Men do n’t believe in a devil now as their fathers used
to do,
They ’ve forced the door of the broadest creed to let his
majesty through;
There is n’t a print of his cloven foot, nor a fiery dart
from his bow,
To be found in all the earth to-day, for the world has
voted so.

But who is mixing the fatal draught that palsies heart
and brain,
And loads the bier of each passing year with ten hun-
dred thousand slain?
Who blights the bloom of the land to-day with the fiery
breath of hell,
If the devil is n’t and never was? Won’t somebody rise
and tell?

Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint, and digs the pit
for his feet?
Who sows the tares in the field of time wherever God
sows the wheat?
The devil is voted not to be, and of course the thing is
true;
But who is doing the kind of work the devil alone
should do?”

Before we can say that a belief in a great devil who dare defy the Omnipotent to arms, or in a host of infernal imps, detracts from a pure belief in God, we must ask what is the supposed relation between them. So, before making up our estimate of Zoroaster’s faith, we must ask him some questions.

Is this evil being co-eternal with the good, independent of him, equal in power with him? We must acknowledge that there is no doubt that in later times

the Persians did tend to a rigid dualism of God and devil, to make the one a genuine rival and perfect opposite of the other, almost, if not quite, co-equal. They waged constant war with each other. At length philosophical speculation, trying to account for the existence of such opposite beings, put back of them both an abstract being called Zervan Akerane, "boundless time," from which both sprung. But notice that even the dualism was never really absolute. The evil spirit is always held to be in some sense subordinate. One of the best and most recent scholars declares that the title "dualism" is not strictly correct; that the reader will search in vain through the Avesta for any confirmation of it. The superiority of the God is expressed in the plainest terms, while yet the bad spirit holds the good continually in check. The wicked did indeed have a kingdom of darkness over which he ruled, but in this corporeal world he did not have an equal share with the great Creator, Ahura Mazda.

The world, after all, has not two creators, but only one. All that Angro Mainyu can do is to strive to mar and destroy what Ahura Mazda creates. Thus the wicked one has no independent power of creation, while Ahura Mazda possesses this in fullest measure. Whatever the wicked one does, presupposes the creation of the good Ahura as a basis of operations. He sends death, desolation, destruction, in the place of increase. One passage gives a whole series of lands which Ahura created good, and then enumerates the evils which Angro Mainyu brought into them. Into one he sent biting, freezing winter; into another, scorching heat and drought; into another, disease; into still another, beasts of prey. Take an example of this mode of thought: "Thus speaks Ahura Mazda, the holy one, unto thee, 'I,

Ahura Mazda, the maker of all good things, when I made this creation, the beautiful, the shining, seen afar, then the ruffian looked at me; the ruffian Angro Mainyu, the deadly root of all witchcraft, nine diseases, and ninety and nine hundred and nine thousand and nine times nine thousand diseases.'” Similarly, in place of moral good, created by Ahura, Angro Mainyu creates moral evil,—idleness, lies, lust, doubt, deception. An equally-poised power of two deities would have implied a direct contest between them, but this we find nowhere in the Avesta. They contend only for the increase or injury of the world and for the souls of men.

Again, there was always the hope of the ultimate victory of the good. The sound moral instincts of Zoroastrianism could not look upon the power of the wicked Angro Mainyu as eternal. Though both spirits co-existed in the eternity past, yet, in the decisive battle, evil will be at length overcome. It was a happy inconsistency which made the Avesta people thus believe in the superior power and permanence of the good. Evil is to be destroyed, the creation to become as pure as when on its birth-morn it came fresh and bright from the hands of Ahura, and Angro Mainyu is to disappear forever. The great blow to the kingdom of darkness was the birth of the holy Zoroaster himself. He brought to man the true faith and the right piety. At his birth the evil spirit, foreseeing his own destruction, burst into a cry of complaint and rage: “Born, alas! is the holy Zoroaster! How can we contrive his destruction?” But the great and final triumph is to be won through a son of Zoroaster, Soshyos, the divine combatant, who is to be born in the end of time. Then Angro Mainyu is to be destroyed, and humanity will rise again to find paradise at length regained. In spirit, if not in words, the

disciple of Zoroaster would have joined our own Whittier in the song,—

“I, too, am weak, and faith is small,
And blindness happeneth unto all.

Yet sometimes glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong, the eternal right;
And step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man.

Through the harsh noises of our day,
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking, calm and clear.

That song of love, now low and far,
Ere long shall swell from star to star!
That light, the breaking day, which tips
The golden-spined Apocalypse!”

Faint indeed, and sometimes faltering, were the whispers that promised an ultimate restoration, often a mere echo of instinctive longing, without historical basis; yet, in spite of its intrinsic weakness, and in spite of all the clouds in which it was enveloped by widespread speculations on the origin of evil, a belief in some such promise, in the superior majesty and might of truth, and in her consequent triumph at last, always lingered in the Persian mind.

One point more in favor of Zoroaster himself. In the oldest books we do not find *Angro Mainyu* so clearly a separate being, opposed to *Ahura Mazda*, as we do later. The nearest approach to absolute dualism was a later development. It was, in part at least, the result of a systematizing philosophy that inquired how there came to be such malevolent beings in a world made by a benevolent Creator. In the *Gathas*, *Angro Mainyu*

does not often occur as a proper name, much less is there any regularly graduated hierarchy of evil spirits surrounding the prince of darkness. We find here chiefly emphasized the contrast between good and evil, without speculation as to the origin of the latter. It is probable that Zoroaster himself did not definitely raise the question how *Angro Mainyu* came to be. There are obscure hints that moral freedom may be the ultimate cause of the distinction between the various beings. The probability is, that the prophet himself was so busy in helping the victory of the right that he did not bend his efforts to solve the speculative question as to the origin of the wrong. At any rate, if this religion did fail to solve the perplexing riddle of the ultimate origin of evil; if it did fall into a dualism of struggling forces almost co-equal and, at least in the past, co-eternal, the fact remains that it did make a noble and vigorous effort to cast off in practice this fatalistic error. If it could not get rid of evil in the material world, it did lift up a sublime protest against it in the moral sphere, in the history of man. We find also a record of temptation, moral conflict in the soul of man, victory over sin in man's own heart, implying freedom of volition. Putting all the facts together, the wonder is, not that a man in that far-off time should fail to grasp the whole truth, but that he should mount so high and see so far.

We can not take space here to look into the whole circle of beliefs of this remarkable sage of antiquity. We pass over his probable views as to the details of the creative process, the first man, the Golden Age, the Fall, etc., many traits of which show, at least in their later form, traits strikingly similar to the Biblical story. Of much more importance than these notions is the question, How was this great, holy, energetic Deity to

be worshiped? How must he be pleased? Was he an active factor in the lives of his worshipers, or only an august being to be set aloft on a glittering pinnacle of thought, but kept in the background far from the practical life of man? The religious ceremonial was comparatively simple. We saw the religion of India under the influence of a well-organized priesthood, transform a bright nature-worship of the early time into a vast, complex sacerdotalism, which crushed the soul of the people by a wearisome ritual, and put them under the heel of a priestly caste. The religion of Zoroaster saved the northern branch of this once united family from that dark fate.

In the first place, though, in later times, contact with other nations corrupted the disciples of Zoroaster, the religion as he left it was strongly anti-idolatrous. He was as pure in this respect as the Jews. We can almost imagine this ancient prophet proclaiming, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." No images of Ahura Mazda or of his archangels profaned the pure simplicity of this early worship. They did not even have temples, but sacrificial places on the mountain-tops, and consecrated fire-altars, where the sacred element was nourished and fostered by the priests.

Herodotus says of the Persians of his time: "Temples, images, and altars are not erected by the Persians, because, as it seems to me, they do not believe, like the Hellenes, that the gods have the form and nature of man." The only emblem of the great god was fire. This was kept constantly burning. It was fed with

dry wood and perfumes. Before it, as in a spot especially consecrated by the presence of the Deity, were performed the chief rites of worship. Fire represents all that is pure and divine, the material manifestation of Ahura Mazda himself, of the same nature and essence with himself, and nothing was allowed to pollute it. It was therefore the emblem of moral purity, and the strong weapon against the demons. Through the smoke and the crackling of the flame he spoke to his worshipers. As to fasts and penances and self-torture, they were unknown except as penalties for actual sin. But these people had their religious feasts occurring regularly through the year.

We do not have very full information about the sacrifices prescribed by Zoroaster. The idea of atonement is but faintly recognized. The purification from defilement caused by contact with impure beings is the prominent idea in such sacrifices as we find. There is no thought, as far as we can see, of expiation for the wrong done. Sacrifice has more the character of homage and offering than of atonement. One of the most frequent and prominent offerings was the libation of sacred Haoma juice. It was poured forth during the recitation of prayers. The priests, while praying, extracted the juice from the plant, presented some of it to the sacrificial fire, tasted some of it themselves, and gave the rest to the worshipers. You remember that the Hindoos placed great honor upon the intoxicating Soma juice. There are reasons for believing that Zoroaster at first opposed this Soma cult of his ancestors because of the revelry and licentiousness connected with it. But here the popular faith remained victorious. The attempt to extirpate it proved in vain. Yet probably the most offensive excesses were restrained. Since it

was extracted at the moment of the sacrifice, before it had time to ferment, it was not intoxicating. The ceremony seems to have been regarded, in part, as having some mystic force, securing the favor of heaven; in part, too, as exerting a beneficial influence upon the body of the worshiper from the inherent curative power of the juice.

Were animals sacrificed? Bloody sacrifices would seem to be incompatible with the spirit of this religion. Good animals were creatures of Ahura Mazda. How, then, could it be an act of piety to destroy them? To offer the good deity one of the evil creatures of the devil would be to insult rather than to please. Besides, to burn the dead body in the flames, would be to pollute the sacred element. Hence, if ever animals were sacrificed, it was only on the rarest occasions. The flesh was boiled, and a festal repast prepared from it. Thus the sacrifice had the character of a consecration to deity and communion with him, rather than of an expiation. When animals were thus offered, light-colored ones were preferred.

Regarding prayer, the conception was rather a superficial one. It was not so much internal elevation of soul towards God, nor the degree of devotion and fervor which makes it efficacious. To the words themselves belongs almost magical power. The mere recitation of them with faultless precision brings that power into action. They are to be recited, not only on particular occasions, or in times of imminent difficulty or danger, but even regularly, at fixed hours, as a kind of preservation, and in all constantly-recurring occupations and actions.

Great emphasis was laid upon the ceremonial purity. Fire and water, springs, streams, rivers, as well as the

human body, must be scrupulously preserved from pollution. The sun, moon, and stars shine unwillingly on the polluted man. He takes away prosperity, and causes increase of sickness, disease, and death. Yet if the purifications and penalties are performed, the god wipes away all impurities. Slight pollutions are removed by washings with pure water, accompanied with prayers and imprecations on the demons. The more serious ones require an elaborate ceremonial. The most efficacious of all is a complex series of ceremonies, too elaborate to be detailed here, called the purification of the nine nights. The simpler forms of purification could be performed by the layman for himself; the more complex required the attendance of the priest, who was to receive thanks and a moderate price for his services. A deep sense underlay this ritual in the teaching of Zoroaster, but it was choked by the tendency to extremes which later appeared.

There were priestly families, but amongst the followers of Zoroaster the priests never gained the position and power grasped by the Brahmans of India. There were no Sudras, the languishing remnants of the old population; there was no supposed divine incarnation in the priestly caste; no gradations of society in which the divine essence existed in a more or less pure condition. The priests, in the Zoroastrian faith, were simply leaders in the struggle against the demons and wicked men. They perpetuated their knowledge in their families; but they had no right, on the score of high birth, to bar other families out, or to forbid their own members from marrying into other orders. Their theoretical and actual position was modest. They had no special income except what they received for their services, and which was regulated by law. They had

no exclusive right to perform the purifications. Nothing but their instruction was really necessary in the matter. Their chief business was to watch and nourish the sacred fire, to praise the good spirits, to offer sacrifices and purifications, and to study carefully the sacred books. They are to be patient and content, and satisfied with little bread. They are divided into different classes; but the distinction rests only on the various acts which they perform in the sacred rites. They never manifested that inordinate desire for power which the proud Brahmans displayed. But priests and preachers were to be distinguished by certain symbols which they always carried. The band was to be worn about the mouth when he was sacrificing, lest he sully the sacred fire with his spittle or his breath. He carried an instrument for killing impure animals, and a bundle of holy twigs. But the Avesta expressly declares that these external marks do not make the priest. He must be one in his heart.

But the chief means of pleasing Ahura Mazda are not ceremonial, but moral. Man is here, in alliance with God, to take part in the great moral conflict. Nor were his weapons carnal. All mere ritual observances are subordinate to a pure and high morality. The moral rests upon the religious, and all the duties flow from the fundamental principles of the faith, and are regulated by the revelation which the deity has given to the prophet. Nor was it a mere superficial virtue which was demanded. Zoroaster would have said, "Make the tree good, and his fruit good." The soul must be kept free from pollution. "There is many a one, O holy Zoroaster!" says Ahura Mazda, "who wears the patidana of the priest, but who has not girded his loins with the law. When such an one says, 'I am an Atharvan,' he

lies; do not call him an Atharvan, O holy Zoroaster!" Piety in thoughts, words, works, was the great precept.

What ethical insight is here displayed! In some of the hymns to Varuna we may find, as we saw, occasional flashes of the sense of sin and the need of reconciliation with the deity, but they are only isolated gleams. Here, however, it is settled and established doctrine. No other nation of heathendom approached the followers of Zoroaster in keen moral insight and ethical earnestness. No virtue, it was taught, deserved the name but such as was co-extensive with the whole sphere of human activity, including thought as well as word and deed. The consciousness of an unceasing moral conflict, part of whose battle-field was here and in men, in whose armies every man must range himself on one side or the other, kept alive the habit of discrimination between moral light and darkness, and produced in the heart a deep hatred of evil, together with a resolute struggle for good and a strong yearning after it. And all were called to this struggle. No class was dissevered by impassable gulfs from all below them. Not only, as in Brahmanism, to the possessor of some recondite knowledge or the lordly founder of some philosophical school; not to the ardent devotee alone, who, recoiling from the din and business of the world, seeks in the silence of the jungle, in self-torture or meditation, a sure refuge from its perils and seductions, is purity possible, but to every man, from the pinnacle of the social temple to the lowest stone in its cellar walls.

The great, underlying principle of Zoroaster's moral system is the preservation and extension of life, the domain of Ahura Mazda, and the correspondent depletion and destruction of death. Man's sole business here is, in alliance with his fellows and with the great

Ahura, to preserve and extend the good creation. Thus his body is to be kept pure, strong, healthy. It is not to be regarded as a prison-house of the soul, to be wasted and deadened by austerities. Zoroaster could indeed have joined Tennyson in his declaration that—

“T is life whereof our nerves are scant—
More life, and fuller, that we want.”

The Buddhist's dreaming of Nirvana, the fanatical austerities of the Fakirs of the Hindoo forests; or the horrid mortifications of the flesh that have given Stylites a pre-eminence in fanatical folly,—such would have been to the prophet of Iran unintelligible and wicked. Much better would he have appreciated the words of our Savior, “My father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Energy is holy. Laziness and sloth are wicked; they pollute the soul. The pious man rises early, and goes about his work. The great angel, Sraosha, sends chancleer to cry out at early dawn to those who are still in their beds: “Friend, up, arise! Praise purity. The demons will flee away. Long sleep, O man, is not good for thee!” The pious man should be industrious and work. But what is the best work? Naturally, that which furthers the increase of life in the world, and diminishes death—agriculture.

Says Ahura Mazda: “He is the holy man who has built a habitation on the earth in which he maintains fire, cattle, his wife, his children, and flocks and herds.” He who makes the herds produce, he who cultivates the fruits of the soil cultivates virtue, defends the law of Ahura Mazda as much as though he had offered a hundred sacrifices. To reduce thorn-patches and wastes of weeds to fertile soil; to reclaim tracts over which Angro Mainyu has spread the curse of barrenness; to

make two kernels grow where only one grew before; to make the desert blossom as the rose; to bring forth the myrtle in place of the brier,—this is well pleasing to Ahura Mazda.

Recall the closing scene of Goethe's *Faust*. Under the lead of Mephistopheles, having tested the whole circle of human delights, at length the old man devotes himself to reclaiming waste portions of the earth for the abodes of free, energetic, happy men. In vision, he beholds the noisome pool drained; green fields and fertile; men blent with cattle; life, beauty, and fertility, where was before only waste; busy crowds of free people upon a free soil, and exclaims:

“In the presentiment of such high bliss,
The highest moment I enjoy—'t is this.”

With such a sentiment, inspired by such a cause, Zoroaster could perfectly have sympathized. For the same reason man must take care of the good animals, the horse, sheep, cow, also the dog, because he is a scavenger, killing off the evil animals and the filth, and because he protects the flocks and herds. The cock also must be preserved as a good creature, because he wakes man to his work. On the other hand, the worshiper of Mazda must destroy loathsome animals, sloths, serpents, all creatures that live in holes and dark corners, lizards, scorpions, toads, frogs, rats, gnats, mosquitoes, lice, and flies. For the expiation of sins the destruction of a certain number of these noxious creatures is again and again prescribed.

On the same principle of increasing the domain of life rests the obligation and honor of marriage and the family life. Celibacy was reprobated. Large families are a blessing from God. Happy is the man about whose

table the olive-branches grow and flourish! "I declare," says Ahura Mazda, "that the married is before the unmarried, and the father of children before the childless." Some modern matrons who find exquisite delight in match-making would have found themselves very much at home amongst the disciples of Zoroaster; would have found themselves, indeed, in high honor; for to bring about a marriage was a meritorious deed; on the contrary, forcibly to hinder one was a grievous sin. Prayers were offered by maidens that husbands might be secured. Girls, however, must not be married until their fifteenth year. They must be of spotless reputation. Chastity was held in high regard. The earliest books look at marriage in a pure and lofty spirit. It is spoken of as an intimate union based on love and piety. From the marriage-day the wife appears as the mistress of the household, more as the equal of her husband than as his dependent. So far from being his slave or plaything, she is his companion, entitled to all the privileges of the home, sharing with him in the direction and management of the household. Yet her proper sphere of action is indoors; private, not public. Respect of children for their parents was very great. The son might not remain seated when his mother entered, and resumed his seat with her permission. Even as late as the times of the Persian monarchy we see the queen-mother occupying a high place and exercising vast influence.

Did Zoroaster sanction polygamy? A plurality of wives and a great number of children would be a natural conclusion from the fundamental principles of Mazdaism. Yet the Avesta speaks constantly of only one wife. The rich people probably did have more than one wife, though the poor, from force of circum-

stances, had to be content with one. The trend of the evidence is that polygamy was not forbidden by Zoroaster. Probably every one was free to do as he liked. The precepts of the religion leave the question wholly untouched, because the matter of its right or wrong had not then emerged. Polygamy was in vogue before the prophet, and had he prescribed monogamy, since this would have been in conflict with previous custom, there would certainly have been no lack of passages forbidding plurality of wives.

Another shadow-side of the family relation we must notice. It would appear certain that marriage between near kindred was thought desirable. There was a proverb that marriages amongst cousins are made in heaven. Some even go so far as to assert that marriage between brother and sister were countenanced. But the sacred books give no authority for this. Certainly the prophet himself did not give such incestuous marriages the benefit of his example, either in his own case or in that of his children. It was sometimes, no doubt, practiced by the Persians; but the extent to which it was practiced, and the extent to which it was sanctioned by the religion, are two different things. The examples we have are usually from the royal families, and these are never types of universal custom. The marriage of cousins probably sprung from the desire to keep the nation and the religion pure in its earliest youth.

Of the other virtues, truth was especially admired. Ahura Mazda is himself the truth, the father of the truth. Angro Mainyu is the father of lies. Sincerity, faithfulness to the plighted bond, sacredness of contracts, were strongly enjoined. The light of truth should enlighten and fill the soul as it does the moral creations of Mazda. Lying is a most cowardly and dis-

graceful practice. Kings kept their contracts and promises, no matter how much they might wish to break or recall them. The unchangeableness of the law of the Medes and Persians was founded upon this horror of falsehood. Even towards enemies of the Mazdian faith truth was to be observed, if not for their sake, yet for the sake of the worshiper of Ahura Mazda himself. This Persian love of truth was a favorite theme with the Greek travelers, noticed all the more because of its bright contrast with their own *finesse* and deceit. Debt was also to be avoided, because the debtor is inevitably tempted to shuffle and lie.

Courage was another prime virtue. The valor of the Persians was acknowledged by the Greeks at Plataea and Thermopylae, and Æschylus deservedly terms them a "valiant-minded people." Charity also has its place. The moral idea becomes expanded, and, as it were, quickened with a principle akin to love. "Carry succor to the poor," say the sacred books. "See that he who is in want, wants no more." The true worshiper of Ahura is he who gives food to the hungry. Yet this charity has its limits. It is restricted to the followers of the true faith. This is perfectly natural and logical on the principles of Zoroaster. To give succor to an unbeliever would be to strengthen the dominion of the devil by strengthening and sparing his followers.

Many other interesting traits in the sphere of social and family life, marriage and funeral customs, etc., we must omit. Enough has been said to show the intensely ethical spirit of the teaching of this great prophet. Certainly, we must not expect to find, in that far-off time, deep spiritual ideas of the nature of sin and grace, which have been brought to light only by the Gospel of Christ. We should expect, rather, to find work-

righteousness, and the idea that offenses can be wiped out by rites of purification, punctiliously performed. Yet, on the whole, Zoroaster and his followers stood upon a plane vastly higher than that occupied by any people except the Jews, before the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World.

One other topic of the prophet's teaching remains. By what sanctions were these religious and moral precepts enforced? Were these sanctions of the earth, earthy, or did the powers of the world to come enter in? Zoroaster did certainly believe in the distinction of soul and body. Expressions are used which mean precisely what we mean by "earthly tabernacle" and the "spiritual occupant," and others which signify what we intend by "this life" and "the life to come." Indeed, nowhere does belief in a future life stand out with greater prominence, nowhere are the ideas regarding it worked out with more detail, than amongst the followers of Zoroaster. Death is the separation of the immortal spirit from the perishable material in which for a time it has been lodged. This doctrine is indeed only a natural result of the fundamental principle. If all the powers which contend on earth for the mastery of the kingdom of light were doomed to extinction, the conviction of the divine justice would be lost. But no; the believer belongs to the spiritual world; he shall enter it. The corporeal is only a transitory scene of his activity, of his delights, of his joys, of his temporary trials.

In that life after death there is to be a testing-time. The earnest injunctions to be pure and truthful, active, charitable, and just, blossom out here into the conception of the judgment to come. Later times developed this idea into its details. Look at the picture. On the

third day after death, when rosy-fingered Aurora opens the gates of day, the soul passes the Chinvat bridge, over which it is to travel. If it has been a righteous soul, strong angels stand by to support it. Vengeful demons try to seize it. Rashmu, the just, holds the scales in which the good and evil deeds are weighed over against each other. In that balance, kings and princes find no more favor than the indigent and obscure. Mithra and Sraosha intercede in behalf of the soul, whilst evil spirits accuse it. If its pious deeds outweigh the bad, it is allowed to pass the bridge in safety towards paradise. To it the bridge is wide, and as it passes across, it is regaled by a fragrant breeze from the celestial gardens.

In this spicy wind there appears to the soul its own conscience in the shape of a charming maiden, a beautiful symbol of the peace, quietness, loveliness of soul which are the possession of the good man. With astonishment, the soul asks, "Who art thou, O maiden, that seemest to me more beautiful and fairer than any maiden on earth?" "I am thine own doing, the embodiment of thy good thoughts, words, and works, and thy pious faith." It then recounts all the good works which the soul accomplished in its earthly career. Having crossed the bridge, the spirit enters successively higher and higher circles of paradise, until it reaches the fourth stage, the region of imperishable splendor, the delightful paradise, the House of Hymns, where Ahura Mazda dwells with the angels and blessed spirits, and with the pious dead of earth, in perpetual virtue and joy. As he enters, one of the highest archangels, and all the celestial spirits, rise from their golden seats and question, "How camest thou here from the world of mortality and misery to this world of eternity and

enjoyment?" But the great Ahura replies, "Question it not; it comes on the awful path of the separation of body and soul." Thereupon the dead is received into the blessed company. He is conducted to the throne, adorned with gold, and entertained with the most costly viands. There he remains forever in holiness and bliss.

The fate of the wicked is, of course, the precise opposite. In helpless and despairing anguish, the wicked wanders about for three days and three nights near the corpse. Even now it feels the weight of all the torments and horrors that await it in hell. The demon of death drags it forth in fetters, and when near the bridge, the formidable sentence is passed upon it, "Thou art weighed and found wanting." It slips off the razor-like bridge into the flood beneath, and is swept to the regions of the damned. A foul wind meets it, and in that wind it perceives its own conscience in the shape of a hog, the embodiment of all beastliness of soul and the torments it feels. Shuddering, it asks: "What art thou, O maiden, that appearest to me more ugly than ever an earthly maiden?" He replies: "I am thy own doing and acting, the embodiment of thy evil thoughts, words, and works, and of thy false unbelief." It then enters hell, into ever lower and lower circles, until it reaches the region of eternal darkness; into the terrible, dismal abyss, filled with suffering, the abode of the great devil and his infernal followers. Here it is received by the demons with scorn and mockery. The prince of hell causes the lost soul here to be furnished with the most foul and nauseous edibles, loathsome to the taste of man. We have no evidence that any such elaborate scheme as this was preached by Zoroaster himself; but the essential doc-

trine was all his, and belongs to the oldest parts of the system.

We have already seen that the conflict between good and evil was to end in the final triumph of the good on earth. According to the later books, the last great conflict will be ushered in by three great prophets, each to be supernaturally begotten by Zoroaster. Since by the invasion of the evil spirits, the earth has been corrupted and disturbed, its transformation and renovation is to go hand in hand with the triumph of the good. There is to be a new earth, if not a new heaven. Before the conquering hero all the demons will bow with fear and terror, and will rush away to darkness. He will purify the world, make those who are alive at the time immortal, wake the dead from their slumbers, and put an end to decay and death. Then will come the great, final judgment of the world.

This idea of a great and general judgment is only in apparent contradiction with the thought of judgment at death. Immediately after death the soul alone is judged. But now it is the soul and the risen body together. The body will henceforth to all eternity share the destiny of the spirit. Was this doctrine of the resurrection of the body, like the rest of the eschatology, an integral part of Zoroaster's own system? All the evidence tends clearly to show that it was really a part of the teaching of the great prophet himself. Thus it was propounded by him long before it was in any other religion in the world. The Egyptians had faith in a future life; but the doctrine of the resurrection was not taught by them, nor by any other faith of the world at this early date.

Such, in outline, was the wonderful message to which Zoroaster consecrated his life—with all its im-

perfections and incompleteness, a sublime message! What a thirst for purity and light! What a noble ideal of life as a victorious conflict with evil! What a glorious alliance for the triumph of the good could man have with God! The harvest-laden earth was his temple, and the home where the family was growing up the sanctuary to feed the poor. With what true greatness and serious beauty was existence endowed when regarded as a sacred conflict, under the orders of the God of light, power, truth, against every form of evil! Would you see its influence? Look at ancient Persia before conquest and luxury corrupted it. Look at the few Parsees to-day, amongst the noblest people outside the Christian fold. Well does Von Ranke say: "The monarchy of Persia fulfills a high mission. It has other aims in view than mere conquest and plunder. It rises far above the cruel Assyrian monarchy. Its deities, pure and shining ones like the host of heaven, demand neither images, hecatombs, nor the rites of prostitution. They are not imitated by the destruction, but by the increase and development of life. If they make war, it is not from motives of cruelty or ambition, but to triumph over the powers of evil, and to assure the final victory of the God of life, who is also the God of truth, purity, and justice." No wonder that the prophets of Israel looked with such favor upon Persia, and that Isaiah, speaking for Jehovah, says of Cyrus: "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure;" calls him "Jehovah's anointed," a man whose right hand Jehovah has holden to subdue nations before him. When the followers of Moses and Zoroaster met, no wonder they felt themselves to be worshipers of the same being. Hence the favor of Persia to the Jews, and the fidelity of Israel to the monarchs of Iran.

What a contrast between Gautama and his older brother Zoroaster! Though the same blood flowed in their veins, and though the religion of both had its roots in the same soil of the old Aryan faith, they stand at precisely opposite poles. Each of them was a recoil from the older faith in the interest of humanity and ethics. But they look at life from entirely different angles, and reach conclusions, in many respects, exactly opposite. Zoroaster bases his law on the eternal distinction of right and wrong; Gautama his, on natural law and its consequences. Zoroaster's demand is justice, conformity to the whole law; Gautama is moved by the spirit of pity. The sage of Iran sets on high, truth, duty, right; the sage of India, compassion, hate of suffering in man or beast. Zoroaster says, "Divine providence;" Gautama, "Human prudence." Zoroaster aims at holiness, Gautama at quietude. The former says creation; the latter, inflexible law. As James Freeman Clarke says: "Both are moral reformers; but the one moralizes according to the method of Bishop Butler, and the other after that of Paley." Though Gautama has of late been lauded so freely, and set on so lofty a pedestal, Zoroaster stands on a religious and moral eminence immeasurably higher. Sakyamuni ignores or denies God; Zoroaster affirms, as the basis of his whole system, an eternal spirit, God of light, truth, beauty, holiness, the creator and preserver, the providential ruler of the world, who will assure the ultimate victory of the right. Buddha has little consciousness of sin; Zoroaster keenly feels evil, and awaits in the future a mysterious son of the great champion of righteousness; a hero divine, though born of woman, who, under the leadership of the great God, will complete the work begun, and inaugurate an era of bliss, endless and un-

alloyed. Gautama says: "The world is evil and full of miseries; life is only sorrow, vanity of vanities; the best thing one can do with life is to get rid of it." Zoroaster says: "Yes, evils are in the world; but they are the work of the devil. It is our business, in the strength of Ahura Mazda, to fight against them; nor are we engaged in a losing war." Buddha says, "The highest good is Nirvana, cessation of conscious being." Zoroaster declares that increase of life is increase of blessing, and shouts in triumph, "Immortality, judgment, resurrection, and a renovated world!"

Strictly followed out, Buddhism leads directly to quietism and monkery; the teaching of Zoroaster to mighty energy for the right. With his ideal, Gautama had to adopt a double standard of morality—one good for the laity of the outer circle, another for the monks of the inner; but Zoroaster would have said to all: "In the great armies of the deity of light and truth, of purity and power, you may all have a place. Whether you are a drummer-boy, a private soldier, a captain or general, an infantry or cavalry soldier, a scout or in the regular ranks, toil in the commissary department, serve as an army chaplain, hospital nurse, or recruiting officer,—whatever place you occupy, if you are on the side of life and truth, you have a share in the great warfare of God for the salvation of the world, and you may finally be glorified in his presence with eternal joy." Surely, if Gautama can be called the candle of Asia, Zoroaster deserves the name of her electric-light.

There is only one great religious reformer and leader of antiquity whose light does not pale in face of the radiance cast upon the blackness by this prophet of Bactria. To whom can we refer but to that great deliverer, reformer, lawgiver, first prophet of Israel, who

stands in the highest niche in the chosen people's temple of fame—Moses, the servant, champion, friend of Jehovah? In many respects, Moses and Zoroaster offer striking resemblances and equally striking contrasts. Though about the form of Moses never clustered such fantastic fables as around the head of the Bactrian prophet, both forms were, in later stories, incrustated with grotesque myths, that disfigure the real man. We have seen how this was true in case of the sage of Iran. So later writers add many inharmonious features to the majestic character of Moses, as portrayed in the Pentateuch. It is said that his birth had been foretold to Pharaoh by the magicians, and to the child's father, Amram, by a dream, as the destroyer of the Egyptian king and the deliverer of Israel.

At birth his size and beauty were astonishing; he refused the milk of Egyptian nurses. As he grew older, such was the luster of his beauty that the passers-by stopped, bewitched by the enchanting vision, and laborers would leave their work to come and steal a glance. When he was three years of age, Pharaoh playfully put the crown upon his brow; he seized it, and trampled it into the dust. He invented boats and engines for building, instruments of war and hydraulics; got rid of serpents by turning a basket of ibises upon them; led an expedition into Ethiopia, conquered it; founded a city to celebrate his victory; charmed the heart of the king's daughter, and carried her back with him to Egypt in triumph as his bride. Many plots to assassinate him were formed, but all invariably failed.

The account of his death is especially embellished. It is said: "He withdrew amid the tears of the people, the women beating their breasts and the children giving way to uncontrollable grief. At a certain point in the

ascent he made a sign to the weeping multitude to advance no further, taking with him only the elders, the high priest, and the general, Joshua. At the summit he dismissed the elders, and then, as he was embracing Eleazar and Joshua, a cloud stood over him, and he vanished into a deep valley." One legend says that when he had gone up the mountain, he met three men who were digging a grave. He asked them, "For whom are you digging this grave?" They replied, "For a man whom God will call to be with him in paradise." Moses asked leave to help in digging the grave of so holy a man. When it was finished, he asked, "Have you taken the measure of the deceased?" "No, but he was of thy size; lie down in it." Moses did so. These three gravediggers were the three angels, Michael, Gabriel, and Sagsagel. The angel Michael had begun the grave, Gabriel had spread the white napkin for the head, and Sagsagel that for the feet. Then Michael stood on one side of Moses, Gabriel on the other, and Sagsagel at the foot. Then the majesty of the Lord appeared above his head. The Lord said unto Moses, "Close thine eyelids." He obeyed. Again the Lord said, "Press thy hand upon thy heart." He did so. Then the Lord God addressed the spirit of Moses, and said: "Holy soul, my daughter, for one hundred and twenty years thou hast inhabited this undefiled body of dust. But now thine hour is come; go forth and mount to paradise." But the soul, trembling with pain, answered, "In this pure and undefiled body have I spent so many years that I love it, and I have not the courage to desert it." "My daughter," replied God, "come forth! I will place thee in the highest heaven, beneath the cherubim and seraphim who bear up my eternal throne." Yet the soul doubted and quaked. Then the Lord bent over the

face of Moses and kissed him, and the soul leaped up in joy, and went with the kiss of God to paradise. Then a sad cloud draped the heavens, and the winds wailed, "Who lives now on earth to fight against sin and error?" And a voice answered, "Such a prophet never arose before." And the earth lamented, "I have lost the holy one." And the angels sang, "He is come in peace to the arms of God."

Yet in spite of such legends, some of them, like this account of his death, containing some charming traits, though Zoroaster, as we saw, was by his later followers sometimes raised into a great, dogmatic, and theological personality, indeed almost to the rank of a divine being, it is one of the most striking testimonies to the superior greatness of Moses that, in the memory and traditions of his people, he always remains simply the man of God, the great deliverer and legislator; that he so infused into their constitution his own spirit that never, at any time and under no provocation, was the attempt made, either in legend or dogma, to raise him above his simple humanity.

In their fundamental character the men were much alike. Both had a nature, at bottom, stern, strong, inflexible, fiery. As was said, we do not have a full, authentic portrait of Zoroaster, but what we do see of him, in the Gathas, shows him to have been a great soul, of puritanical soberness and inflexibility, consumed by an ardent love of purity and a burning zeal for the true and the right. Of such stuff are reformers and leaders of men often made. Savonarola and Wiclif, Knox and Cromwell, are common types. In Moses we see a similar element of sternness and fire. One verse in the book of Numbers says: "Now, the man Moses was very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth."

But certainly meekness, as that term is commonly understood, was not his distinguishing trait. A better translation would be, "disinterested," the spirit that prefers to suffer wrong rather than to do wrong. Never, save in the one case of the Lord Jesus, has great meekness been married to such tremendous energy and such consuming zeal for the right. His sudden killing of the Egyptian; his fiery breaking the tables of stone; his stern command to cut down the idolatrous people who had danced about the golden calf; his slaughter of the Midianites who seduced Israel to sin,—these are not the deeds of a man by nature meek, as the word is commonly understood. After years of reflection and discipline had calmed his impetuous heart, it was only on rare occasions that the inner fire broke forth, as sometimes the hot lava will burst from the sleeping volcano and roll down into the gardens and fields of grain. Or, to change the figure, as another has said, "We see the natural genius and temperament of Moses breaking out again and again throughout his career, as the rocky strata underlying the soil crop out in the midst of the fertile fields. The basis of his nature was the hardest kind of rock, with a surging, subterranean fire of passion beneath it."

But, at the same time, Moses was generous, tender, disinterested. Even in his young, impetuous manhood, before he had been chastened by life's stern discipline, we see him, drawn by his sympathy for his suffering kinsfolk, visit them in their lowly abode, and look with indignation upon their oppression. Accustomed to the wealth, luxury, honor, brilliant prospects, of the palace of the Pharaohs, he could not forget his father and mother drudging as serfs. Had he thought only of his own prospects, he would never have gone

near the Israelites at all, but, enjoying the honors of the Egyptian priesthood, would have lived quietly in the regal mansions. But he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Educated in the house of Pharaoh, adopted by his daughter as her child, taken by the powerful and learned priesthood into their favored ranks, sharing for years their honors and emoluments, nevertheless, whether amidst the serene seclusion of the temple cloisters of On or the splendors and pleasures of the palace of Tanis, his heart yearned toward his brethren in the land of Goshen, and he could not forbear visiting them in their suffering and bondage. And when he saw an Egyptian taskmaster torturing a Hebrew slave, forgetful of self, in righteous wrath he smote the oppressor.

The tenderness of his heart coupled with his sublime unselfishness appears again after the sin of the golden calf. When the tide of his holy indignation had ebbed, and a great wave of sweet pity had rolled up in its place, he returned into the mountain alone to meet Jehovah and pray, "O this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; but if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Again, when one overzealous for their leader's honor, came running to him with the news that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp, and said, "Master, hinder them; if they prophesy, what will become of thy authority?" his generous unselfishness shone out. We can almost see the venerable head reverently incline as though in fervent prayer, while he says: "Indeed art thou zealous for me; but would that all the Lord's

people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!"

Watch him as he stands, just before he ascends to Pisgah's top, in the midst of a great throng, whom he has raised from a horde of slaves into a disciplined host, the sifted seed for a nation. Listen to his tender words as he says to them, without fear of contradiction, that he has borne with them as a nurse bears with a sickly and fretful child; that he has taken nothing from any one of them, and has injured none. Indeed, his habitual love, his constant self-oblivion, had given him over them the supreme authority of reverence and affection. As far as we can judge, Zoroaster fell below Moses in this. We find in the Iranian prophet the strength and sternness, the fire and inflexibility, that made him a great leader and reformer of men, but we have no signs of that unusual mingling of sweetness with power.

But they were alike in their intense ethical spirit. This was, perhaps, the deepest spring, the most essential feature of both. Both had a keen conscience, an acute sense of the righteousness that is rooted in Deity, embodied in law and in the nature of things. Both believed that this law was to be freely chosen by man. The whole policy of both rested on this. Their whole ceremonial was built on the basis, not of temporary expediency, but upon the righteousness inherent in God; on the eternal distinction between right and wrong, and the everlasting hostility between them. In his great statue of Moses, the sublime genius of Michael Angelo seems to have caught the true Mosaic spirit, and to have embodied it in the congenial marble. As it has been well described by another: "The statue is as stern as law itself. It sits in one of the Roman

churches between two columns, the right hand grasping the tables of the Decalogue, the symbolic horns of power protruding from the brow, and the austere look of the judge bent on those upon the left hand." Yet there is an indefinable something, a touch of tenderness which softened that nature of strength and fire. The iron will, the blazing zeal, the rooted sense of justice so strangely flavored with utter unselfishness and with tenderness toward his people, like that of a father toward his children,—all are here, as though living again in the eloquent stone. That same figure might well serve for Zoroaster, if only that touch of tenderness were left out or made less impressive.

In their ideas, both were strict monotheists. Research is showing, more and more, that behind every ancient faith there hovered at least a vague monotheism. The dim outlines of a Supreme Being are visible through the thick clouds of polytheism. But usually he recedes into the background, while the multitude of other deities are the objects of the real worship. But both the sage of Iran and the lawgiver of Israel said, "God is one, ever present, and the only God." Says Jehovah to Moses, "I am that I am," the self-existing One, the mysterious Fount of all life. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," the eternal Maker and Sovereign of heaven and earth; a Being invisible, immaterial, too great to be represented by image or statue; a God of truth and righteousness. Zoroaster would have perfectly agreed. No wonder that when the followers of Moses and the disciples of Zoroaster met in Persia, they seemed to each other as worshipers of the same God. The captive Israelite found no idols worshiped by his masters; they addressed in prayer the Unseen. Sun and fire were symbols of Ahura Mazda,

but he himself was hidden behind the glorious veil of being. And does it not almost seem as though Israel needed this support from the followers of Zoroaster to aid them as a people to rise above the tendency to embody Deity in material forms? Until the captivity, Israel was continually backsliding into idolatry; but after their contact with another nation hating images, they never fell into that snare again. No doubt this was in part due to their severe chastisement; but who will say, when Zoroaster took the hand of Moses, giving his witness to the same truth, the result was not a strengthening of the Hebrew faith that God is not to be represented in stone or wood, in silver or gold?

We did find in the creed of the prophet of Iran something of anthropomorphism, or rather of anthropopathism; for it is less the form of Deity that is concerned than his feelings and thoughts. We find the same thing in Moses. In fact, how can this be helped if we are to speak of God intelligibly at all? If man has been made in the image of God, then God can not be a heartless sphinx of stone, with wide-open, lidless eyes, gazing without emotion across the desert sands. He must be a living, personal, feeling, willing Spirit. Great seas of emotion must roll in his being's depths, akin to those that ebb and flow in our little hearts of dust. Jacobi has profoundly said: "If in creation God theomorphizes man—that is, makes man like God—then man must necessarily anthropomorphize God; that is, ascribe to God more or less of the qualities belonging to man." To do otherwise may be speculative theism, but it is practical atheism. If our spiritual nature is akin to that of God, then personality, holiness, providential guidance, must be expressed in terms that bear a human impress.

Yet closely akin as were these two spiritual leaders of men, there were at least three respects in which Moses stands upon the loftier height.

(1) Moses put Jehovah at such an immeasurable, infinite distance above every other being, visible or invisible, that the elevation of any other to a place even on the steps of his throne, could be only by a lapse from his great doctrine. All the future prophets of Israel kindled their torches at his central splendor. All the other gods were as nothing to Jehovah; and he stood out so alone, supreme, universal, holy Lord of heaven and earth, that no angel or archangel, cherubim or seraphim, could ever be, to the Jewish mind, anything else but creatures, far, far below him, mere ministers of his, to do his pleasure; they could never be thought of as objects of worship. But on the other hand, as we have seen, there is always in the background of the Zoroastrian system a number of exalted beings that one may style demigods, and which in later times were worshiped even by orthodox Zoroastrians themselves. Such were Mithra, Anahita, Tistrya, and the whole body of the so-called Yazatas. How far the prophet himself was responsible for allowing these lingering remnants of polytheism to remain in the background of his system, it is impossible to say; but certainly he did leave behind him a less severely monotheistic impression than did Moses.

(2) Both Ahura Mazda and Jehovah are Gods of truth and righteousness; but Jehovah, as proclaimed by Moses, is also a God of mercy. When in a cleft of the rock the great lawgiver of Israel beheld the radiant cloud descend, from it there came a voice proclaiming the name of the Lord. What was the burden of the proclamation? "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and

gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." What a combination of love and righteousness is here! Here, in germ at least, is the idea of that God who can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. No such expression of the divine love can be found in words of Zoroaster.

Again, (3) The sage of Iran did not sufficiently guard his doctrine against a dualism which made his devil to be almost the equal of his God. We saw that, most likely, he did not himself teach this, but he certainly did pave the way for it. There can be no doubt that the later Jewish religion, and through it Christian theology, has been in no small degree influenced by the Persian doctrine of Angro Mainyu and his wicked hosts. In the Manichæism and Gnosticism also that troubled the early Christian times, notions taken from Persia had a prominent place. Even to-day many exaggerated notions of the devil's power and greatness have more in common with Zoroaster than they have with Moses or Christ. Moses would have shrunk with horror from ascribing to any evil spirit creative power, even of a subordinate kind, nor have the Jews ever felt the necessity, as the later theologians of Persia did, of finding some mysterious obscure background of original being, the primary source of both evil and good. Jehovah, to them, was upon the throne of the universe, the eternally holy and the enemy of sin, yet able even to make the wrath of men to praise him and the wiles of devils to be subject to his purposes. Were not the words of Jehovah, through his prophet Isaiah to Cyrus, a protest, precisely in the spirit of Moses himself, against this dualism, which placed a devil, as it were, upon the

throne as a sort of rival by the side of God? "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things."

On another important point we find a striking difference between these two great souls. It seems at first to be an almost unaccountable one. The balance in this respect appears to be decidedly in favor of Zoroaster. We have seen that he distinctly taught the future life, judgment, resurrection, heaven, hell. But search carefully through the Pentateuch, examine the laws of Moses with a microscope, and you find a startling absence of this doctrine. His rewards and punishments were inflicted in this life. Retribution, individual and national, took place here. Now, remember that Moses had been brought up in Egypt, was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, that no ancient people had so elaborate a belief in a future judgment and in rewards and punishments as the Egyptians, and the conclusion seems inevitable that this omission by Moses of the doctrine of immortality could not have been from ignorance or accident, but must have been of set purpose. What shall we say to this? Shall we accept Warburton's syllogism in reply to the Deists, that no merely human legislator would have omitted such weighty sanctions as the future life can furnish; that Moses did omit them; that therefore his legation was divine? With all its wealth of learning and brilliant argumentation, this work, it is safe to say, has probably never convinced anybody. Yet is it not true that people

may be at such an intellectual and moral level that an elaborate doctrine of the future life would not be fitted to their needs? May not the life to come sometimes too much overshadow the life that now is? It probably did so in Egypt. The chief thing with Moses seemed to have been to beget and to keep alive in Israel an intense consciousness of God in the present; a faith in his providence; a fear of his holiness; a trust in his love. And is it not true that such a view of God awakening, arousing the soul of man, and filling it with life, is, after all, a better way of creating a consciousness of immortality than any formal doctrine in mere words? Fill the soul with life, and it will not believe in death. Thus, though Moses did not frame and hand down to Israel an elaborate doctrine of the invisible world, yet Israel did believe in immortality because they did believe so strongly in the righteousness and providence of God.

Looking at the ritual side of the laws of Moses, we find one difference between him and Zoroaster that needs to be set in clear light. We saw that the sacrifices of the Iranian prophet were not as a rule bloody, and that when a sacrifice of blood was offered, the idea in it was consecration rather than expiation. In Moses we find both. Expiation comes first; consecration is its glad result. If God is a holy God, his law is a holy law, the place of his worship a holy place. But what, then, of an unholy people? Look at the Mosaic ceremonial in the light of the great ideas which shine through it, and it is wonderfully glorified. To believe in and to feel the holiness of God, that he loves the good and hates the evil; that in the sight of a holy God sin means guilt; that guilt in the face of a holy God, who is and must be a blazing, consuming fire against

evil, means death; that yet somehow the sinner lives, and may even be at peace with the ever high and holy One, because of a vicarious sacrifice; then, by reason of this marvelous mercy, the soul to be moved to glad consecration,—here, in germ, is the stately tree of the Gospel of Christ, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. These features of the teaching of Moses are more characteristic than either his ethical monotheism or his moral code. How far Moses was conscious of the inner meaning of the elaborate ceremonial, it is impossible to say; but whatever he knew of their significance, they were in reality long, long thoughts, and did point to the Lamb of God who should take away the sin of the world.

We know that some sorts of criticism, whose chief feature is aversion to the supernatural in the history of man, deny to Moses these ceremonies and these thoughts; but the critics are far from having proved their case, and most of their arguments fall away with the assumption on which they are built. At any rate, in the Zoroastrian faith we find no thoughts like these. A sense of sin is there, but no atonement nor hint of a redemption of the individual from its guilt and power. Man must win immortal blessedness for himself by his victorious struggle with evil. There is no redemption for him unless his own good deeds overbalance his evil in the final weighing.

True it is that, centuries later, both the disciples of Moses and those of Zoroaster looked forward to the coming of a Messiah. Long and sore was the conflict between good and evil to be, but the victory would come at last. Both religions looked for a great leader under whom peace and righteousness were to reign on earth. A writer of the liberal school has said, "Here

was a deep and real point of union between the two religions, and this makes the profound meaning of the story of the Star in the East, which guided the magi of Zoroaster to the cradle of Christ." That is true, and good as far as it goes. Christ is to fulfill the dream of Zoroaster of a renovated earth and a kingdom of God victorious here; but this view overlooks, as the liberal school always must, another and equally important half of the truth. Indeed, without this other half, the former would be impossible; for if Christ is to be the conquering champion of the forces of righteousness in the world, it is because he is the Lamb of God sacrificed for its sin, a Redeemer of the individual as well from the guilt as from the power of sin—a Redeemer from the power because, first of all, a Redeemer from the guilt. Towards this Mosaism looked, perhaps with filmy eye, scarce knowing what it saw; but from first to last, Zoroaster and his disciples were utterly blind to it.

An elaborate comparison of the entire moral, economic, political teachings of these two prophets of old would furnish ample material for a volume in itself. Suffice it to say that here Moses stands vastly higher. Considering the people for whom these laws were framed, the epoch when given, their ultimate purpose, their success in achieving that purpose,—we must say that, as economist, statesman, religionist, Moses stands without a rival or a peer in ancient or modern times. Look at his Decalogue, which needs only to be a little spiritualized to cover the field of Christian ethics. Let the historian or lover of liberty look at his free institutions, and hear him "proclaim liberty throughout the land to the inhabitants thereof;" at his just and regular system of taxation; at his recognition of the rights of the poor and the obligations of the rich; at his land-

tenure; and, above all, at the whole ceremonial law so well adapted to form a necessary hedge about a peculiar people of God, to help keep them separate and enable them to fulfill their high religious mission to mankind.

The sacred kernel of truth was kept unharmed in this horny husk, until, in the fullness of time, the shell was broken, and the kernel sunk into the genial soil to become the great Gospel tree, under whose spreading branches the nations of the world will one day stand, and whose leaves and fruit are even now for their healing. The little nation, founded out of a horde of escaped slaves by Moses, settled in a narrow country, the very heart of the world, surrounded by great nations, conquered and overrun in turn by Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Syrian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, was kept distinct, and became the purveyor to mankind of its richest moral and spiritual pabulum. The religion of Zoroaster, also, for many centuries fertilized the souls of men from its sacred springs, handed down many great truths which enter even into the Gospel faith; by the decree of Providence helped toward the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, of light over darkness. But to-day it has almost perished from the earth, and no impartial student of history would think of comparing it for one moment with Israel in its spiritual mission to mankind.

There is one other respect in which the light of Moses far outshines that of Zoroaster. The mission of the Bactrian prophet was to reform the old faith; that of Moses chiefly to liberate an enslaved people, and out of them to found an enduring nation which should be depository of the greatest spiritual truths for the race. A question much discussed is, "How did Zoroaster acquire his religious ideas?" The earlier

theory, championed especially by such scholars as Haug and Lassen, was that, on the soil where the forefathers of the Hindoo and Persian dwelt together, a social and religious quarrel sprung up. This at last ended in a separation, one party saying to the other, "Your gods are my devils, we will live with you no longer." According to this theory, Zoroaster, the leader of the nobler party, would be a Brahman whose ethical earnestness could not endure the wild-growing nature-worship and polytheism that was springing out of the ancestral faith.

This notion of a quarrel and a schism has been entirely rejected by some very able scholars of late. Some of these, as always happens, go to the other extreme, and make the entire Zoroastrian system a mere natural and slow development from the myth of the storm and the shine. The more sober students, however, believe that the truth probably lies between the extremes. It is certain that both theories, by leaving out of sight opposing facts, can find arguments for their support. We do find, on the one hand, evidences of conflict. The earliest books of the Avesta plainly show that there were religious troubles and strifes, and that Zoroaster had to contend against bitter opposition to his faith. Moreover, just as the early Church fathers and the converted Germans relegated their old gods to the rank of devils, so the followers of Zoroaster applied to the infernal tribes the very word *deva*, by which the Hindoo designated his gods, whilst, on the other hand, the Hindoo applied the word *Asura*, or *Ahura*, by which the Iranian designated his one great God, to the demons, though, at an earlier time, with the ancestors of both Hindoo and Iranian, Ahura had a good sense. We also find amongst the followers of Zoroaster a great demon named Andra, corresponding to Indra, the great storm-

god of India. Then again, though the gods of India are absent from the earliest sacred books of Persia, some of them appear later, precisely as some of the old heathen notions crept back one by one into the Christian Church. On the other hand, we can easily see how the sublime Ahura Mazda might have been developed from the great, shining heaven-god, Varuna, and we do find many analogies of name and myth and custom between the Hindoo and Persian faiths.

The true student will keep his eyes on all the facts, and will adopt a view which, as far as possible, grants to all the facts their rights, and reconciles them with each other. We must remember that all ethical religions have personal founders or preachers. Great personalities, as Gautama, Confucius, Moses, Mohammed, stand at their fountain-head. Yet these religious leaders never invent outright the religions they found. They do not and can not cut themselves off entirely from the past. They may rearrange, inspire with a new spirit the old, but they must work with materials furnished them by the past. Thus, as surely as we can not understand Buddhism without studying the Brahmanism out of which it sprung, and which, in some points, it antagonized; as certainly as we can not understand Protestantism without studying the Romanism that preceded it, and against some features of which it protested: so we can not understand Zoroastrianism if we do not know the beliefs of the prophet's immediate ancestors and contemporaries.

Looking back, then, to the time when the fathers of Hindoo and Iranian dwelt together, as all agree that they sometime did, we find in their religion evil as well as beneficent powers, light as well as darkness. The metaphysical is there no less than the ethical. Here

are the germs of both the later developments. There was a time when the coalescence and harmonious development of the metaphysical and ethical which lay wrapped up in the old Aryan faith, might have produced a religion that would have changed the face of the earth. Had Hindoo and Iranian kept together, the one with its strong tendencies toward unity and depth of metaphysical thought, and the latter with its intense ethical earnestness, they might have achieved more for the progress of the human race than the Greeks and Romans combined. But, alas! they separated, each to go his own way,—the Hindoo on to Brahmanism and Buddhism; the Iranian to Zoroastrianism. The former became slaves of priestcraft, and at length gave rise to the dreary creed of Gautama; the latter grew up into a race of earnest puritans, but with a tendency to dualism.

How did this happen? Most likely they separated at an early date without any conscious religious antagonism or violent rupture, before the diverse elements that lay hidden in their common faith had produced their respective fruits. But the climatic and other conditions of the land into which the northern division emigrated, tended to develop one side of the older faith, while that of India developed the opposite. In the home of the children of Iran, blooming plains, shaded by thick groves, were surrounded by hot deserts of sand. If vegetation ran riot on the fringe of the Caspian Sea, fever and noisome reptiles infested the marshy plains. Life was a conflict against the fierce summer heats from the south and the chill winter from the mountain heights. If the stars shone serenely in the clear air, the violent winds sweeping across the steppes brought mists and clouds of dust. Then there were, on the one

hand, the peaceful agriculturalists; on the other, savage and warlike tribes of nomads, continually making fierce irruptions into the settlements of the industrious farmers. Hence the conception of the struggle between evil and good became intensified until it took a decidedly ethical turn, and tended more and more to form the basis of all the religious ideas. Probably for centuries the development went on, the fire-priests leading the way to a more and more ethical conception, until at last Zoroaster, himself a fire-priest, appeared as the last and greatest of a procession of religious teachers, and prepared the way before him, who was to give idolatry its death-blow and banish it forever from his native soil. As before Luther came Wiclif and Huss, Savonarola and the German mystics; as before the Reformation, reform was in the air, until Luther struck the blow which crystallized the elements, so probably was it in the times of Zoroaster. Eloquent in speech, earnest in soul, intensely moral and spiritual, he spoke the crystallizing word, added much and left out much, and led the crusade for the ultimate triumph of the nobler faith, until we have a religion almost at the very antipodes of the Hindoo faith, though both were born of the same mother.

Moses also built on old foundations. The inspired father of his people, Abraham, the friend of God, had made the principle of his life faith in God as a Supreme Being; a Being who, though almighty, was yet willing to be the personal friend and protector of man. Whilst the peoples about him were becoming more and more blinded to the shadowy Supreme Being who hovered in the background of their polytheistic systems, Abraham had kept his eye on the almighty God, and clung to him with all his soul. He lived buoyed up by faith

in God's power, wisdom, and gracious will. That sublime idea he had handed down as his most precious legacy to his children. What, then, was the work of Moses? Not chiefly to proclaim a new idea of God, but to make vital and conquering that older faith which was in danger of being lost to the world through the servitude of Abraham's sons in the valley of the Nile. "The burning bush of Horeb was as a sacred and spiritual fire glowing through his being, and kindling in the world inextinguishably the light of the true religion. See him there, alone in the desert at the mount of God. What long wrestlings of soul! What ponderings upon the mysteries of nature around and above him! What mental struggles with the teachings of his Egyptian masters! What contrasts of the gods of the Nile Valley with the traditional faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the one true God, until Jehovah stood out alone supreme, universal, as the holy Lord God of the heavens and the earth!"

The God revealed to him there was, it is true, the God of Abraham, but revealed with greater fullness in his relations to mankind and in the mysteries of his own eternal being. God had been known to his forefathers by names used more or less by kindred peoples—El, Elohim, El Shaddai. They had also probably used the name Jehovah, but its deeper import had not been revealed to them. But henceforth the fathomless abyss between the true God and the idols of Egypt and of all other nations should be forever fixed by the name Jehovah in its fullest, deepest meaning, as expressive of the mysterious, only fount of life and being. Then he was, besides, to go forth to proclaim to his suffering brethren that this mighty Being, mindful of his covenant with Abraham, was about to deliver them from

oppression and speak to them from the holy mount. The chief part of Moses' work, however, was not to proclaim Jehovah so much as it was to found a nation that should have an inspired history; to give it such religious, moral, social, political laws as to fit it for its high mission as the depositary of the oracles of God; to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah of all mankind, and to give that Messiah to the world.

What a task! No wonder that, like Zoroaster, he shrunk from it. No wonder that he hesitated to go until he had the assurance of Jehovah's constant presence. Compared with his mission, the work of Zoroaster sinks into comparative insignificance. Behold him after the great deliverance on the Red Sea shore! There he stands at the head of a disorganized horde of newly-emancipated slaves, degraded by centuries of servitude; jubilant at its escape from the rod of the Pharaohs to-day, but ready to-morrow to murmur against and stone its leaders at the first pinch of suffering or the first obstacle in the way. Out of such an untrained and impetuous rabble to form a nation; to give it social and political laws that should keep it a nation through the centuries until it had fulfilled its high mission; to create a noble national life; to fit it for the conquest of a home suited to its mission,—surely such a task demanded the greatest intellect. He must unite the highest qualities of statesman, legislator, organizer, general, theologian; do this on the grandest scale; combine with these the sublimest patience and the most complete oblivion of self. That amazing task Moses wrought out. No wonder that he stood a man apart from his fellows. No wonder that he was so immeasurably above them that the very remembrance that such an one had stood at the cradle of their nation gave to

all its subsequent generations a powerful impulse to a noble life.

Go through the world's Westminster Abbeys and Temples of Fame, where are honored the sages, heroes, prophets of humanity:

“Proud names, who once the reins of empire held,
In arms who triumphed, and in arts excelled;
Chiefs graced with scars and prodigal of blood;
Stern patriots, who for sacred freedom stood;
Just men, by whom impartial laws were given,
And martyred saints who taught the way to heaven.”

Search for the highest niches and posts of greatest honor; looking far above the busts of kings, conquerors, poets, artists, historians, lawgivers,—we see the great reformers and prophets of humanity. Amongst the very highest we find the Buddha, who, in sublime self-sacrifice, carried his little torch into the blackness and darkness of India; far above him, if not in self-sacrifice for humanity, yet surely in the greatness and truth of his message, Zoroaster; above him the Jeremiahs, Isaiahs, and Elijahs of Israel; and then, far, far aloft, the glorious form of Moses, the man of God, the great torch-bearer for mankind, deliverer, statesman, general, lawgiver, social reformer, inspired prophet of the Highest. Every mosque is his monument, every synagogue is his monument, every Christian church is his monument, and every soul brought to God and saved through the Messiah of Bethlehem is a star in his crown of rejoicing.

LECTURE IV.

THE RELIGION OF ABRAHAM'S BOYHOOD
HOME.

THE RELIGION OF ABRAHAM'S BOYHOOD HOME.

THE traveler in Southern Chaldæa, at about one hundred and twenty-five miles from the mouth of the Euphrates, and about six miles from the western bank, stands on a dead flat, broken only by a few hills of sand. So low is it that when the river swells each year, the whole region becomes a lake. A small island is then in the midst, which can be reached only by boat. In the dry season, from May to October, the soil, where not marshy, is scorched by the blazing sun. What was a little island when the river overflowed is now a large mound, everywhere strewn with remains of brick cemented together by bitumen. From this fact it takes its modern name, Mugheir, "the town or mother of bitumen." That mound is a heap of ruins buried by the sand. The whole space covered by the débris is a large oval, one thousand yards long by eight hundred broad. It consists principally of a number of low heaps, inclosed by a sort of wall about four miles in circumference.

The most conspicuous pile of rubbish is near the northern end. As partially unearthed by the spade of the archæologist, it is seen to be the ruins of a temple. Like all Chaldæan temples, this was built in stages or terraces. Two of these still remain. The whole structure is in the form of a right-angled parallelogram. It was composed of brick, some of which were baked in a kiln, and some dried in the sun. These are bound together to a rocky firmness by bitumen, the only mortar of these regions. The building is one hundred

and ninety-three feet long by one hundred and thirty-three broad. The lower story is now twenty-seven feet high, but in earlier times it must have been at least forty. It has an entrance eight feet wide. How must the slaves and prisoners of war have toiled under the eye of great kings to rear this structure! The whole surface is cased to a thickness of ten feet with kiln-burnt brick, inclosing a dense mass of others dried in the sun. It was once diversified to the eye by a number of shallow buttresses eight feet wide, with slits or air-holes on the sides, whilst a staircase nine feet wide, with buttresses of three feet, led to the top of the first story. Above this was another stage similarly shaped, one hundred and ninety-five feet by seventy-five at the base. Its position upon the lower story is exactly true as respects the angles, but it is seventeen feet nearer the northern than the southern end. The present height of this second stage, including the rubbish on the top, is nineteen feet; but in earlier times it was no doubt much higher.

When this building was discovered, in each of its angles near the foundations were unearthed inscribed cylinders, which seem to have served the same purpose as the documents which are now deposited beneath the foundation-stones of our great buildings. Also in the ruins have been found inscribed tablets revealing the names of kings, pieces of tile, glass with blue enamel, copper nails, and other objects. Around these ruins, filling a large portion of the inclosed space, are graves, whilst outside the wall, for hundreds of yards on every side, is a cemetery choked with the dead. The whole scene is now solitary, dismal, dead, the very abomination of desolation.

Standing in thought on that dreary flat, imagine

the scene to change. We are transported into the past about four thousand years. What an amazing contrast! It is like passing suddenly from Hades into Elysium. No longer do we stand in solitude in the midst of a barren or marshy plain, broken only by heaps of *débris*, but in a land of astonishing fertility, occupied with throngs of intelligent and busy people. The waters do not, as to-day, at one period of the year flood the country, whilst at another they stagnate in spots in flat marshes that reek with the stream of death, at the same time that other portions are parched by the blistering sun. Irrigation, already at this early period reduced to a science by a system of reservoirs, sluices, dikes, in a network of sparkling canals and rivulets, carries the life-giving fluid to the roots of every tree and plant, and gives to the whole landscape the fruitfulness of a garden. Pigeons, herons, hawks, bee-eaters, kingfishers, and other birds, in bright and varied plumage, fly about and utter in gladness their several cries, whilst flocks and herds rejoice and grow fat in the green pastures and by the still waters. We look in vain, it is true, for the fig, olive, or vine, but the lovely palm grows almost in forests on every hand. Its rich clusters of fruit of semi-transparent amber and gold, a pleasure to the eye, a delight to the palate, nourishment for the body, the food of the poor, and a luxury to the rich; its very kernels broken to furnish provender for the goats; the incisions in the stem yielding a stimulating beverage; the crown, pith, and inner fiber boiled and eaten; its leaves furnishing material for mats, baskets, ropes; its trunk made into pillars, roofing, furniture,—it was one of the richest gifts of the soil.

Here, too, we see luxuriant fields of wheat. The

plant grows with such vigor that the leaves are as broad as a man's hand, that it has to be mowed twice, and then pastured by cattle, so that it will not all run to blade instead of ear. Here, also, are tamarisks, acacias, and pomegranates with their scarlet flowers. Here are fields of millet, sesame, growing to a fabulous height, and all kinds of cereals yielding two or even three hundred fold.

No longer are we at twenty miles from the sea, but near the coast at the mouth of the Euphrates. On the banks of this river the city at this early period stands. It is a great commercial emporium, with many ships at its wharves. Yonder vessel has just returned from a voyage to Africa; that one near by has been even as far as India's coral strand, to fetch gold for the decoration of the temples. Entering the city, we find that the rude huts of reeds and wattled branches, in which their fathers lived, have given place to solid houses of brick. The better of these, like the temple towers, stand on raised platforms. They have very thick walls to shut out the heat, are cross-shaped but irregular. The rooms are long, narrow, somewhat gloomy, and open into one another. A central arch forms the entrance from without. The floors are paved with brick laid in bitumen. The windows are narrow and well up toward the top. The exterior is adorned with fanciful designs on enameled tiles, or with terra-cotta cones set in plaster or soft mud in various figures. The whole house is surrounded by shady groves.

On every side we see a busy populace. They practice the arts of peace. Here a potter with his hands shapes the clay into huge jars twice as great as any that potters make to-day, or with his potter's wheel fashions lamps, vases, drinking-vessels. Here we behold a cabi-

netmaker and wood-carver, manufacturing elegant furniture; here the artist, with his simple skill stamping forms of animals and men upon tablets of clay; the stone-engraver, carving designs of divine or human figures on cylinders of serpentine, jasper, and other stones, to serve as seals; the manufacturer of delicately-striped and decorated textile fabrics; the hatmaker, making head-gear that might easily be mistaken for one of our own felt hats; the dressmaker fashioning the linen and other fabrics into robes with sleeves, embroidery, fringes, flounces; the tapestry-maker, manufacturing, besides other things, tasseled pillows for the dead. Here, also, we see the maker of arms and tools of stone, but as well the metallurgist, the smith, and the jeweler. They have no silver, zinc, platinum, but they do work in gold, copper, tin, bronze, providing field, camp, house, and person with implements, weapons, utensils, ornaments. Here, too, is the coffin-maker, fashioning his wares, not of wood, but of clay, shaped sometimes like huge dish-covers, and, again, like two large jars placed end to end and cemented by bitumen.

This people also read and write. Writing has gone far beyond the picture stage, and has reached the well-known wedge-shaped style. The science of numbers, too, is well advanced. Merchants keep their accounts with accuracy. Poets compose hymns to the gods, and epics recounting the mighty deeds of heroes. Patient scribes stamp on the soft clay tablets the books which are stored up in great libraries, to be opened again in our far-distant time to the eyes of a wondering world. There are sun-dials to mark the flight of time, and the day is divided into hours as we divide it now. Yonder is the palace of the king, and not far away are two or three elegant structures for the worship of the gods.

But the most conspicuous object of all is the great tower temple in three stages, rising from seventy-five to one hundred feet above the surrounding plain. Over the highest story arises the sacred observatory where we see the watchers of the heavens, the oldest astronomers of the world, ever busy in putting together the intimations of the stars for the guidance of the king and people in their public and private life. The clear sky, the dry atmosphere, the level horizon, the lack of variety in the landscapes of the earth in that country, attract man's gaze to the heavens, and make these people the best astronomers for ages. Numerous priests, in their flowing and embroidered robes, chant liturgies, offer sacrifices, interpret omens, march in long procession during religious festivals, and preside in the temple precincts over courts of justice.

The city, before the time at which we visit it, has been for many years a great political center, a royal seat, and a commercial metropolis. It must have been amongst the most splendid of the whole district. But many other great cities studded the land. There, thirty miles away, was Larsa, with its great temple-tower crowned by a glittering shrine of the sun-god; fifteen miles further, Erech, with huge earthen walls six miles in circumference, while houses reach to the east fully three miles beyond. There, high above mansion and palace, could be seen the tower-temple of the goddess Ishtar, a structure so huge that more than thirty million bricks must have been used in its construction, and whose ruins even to-day form a hill one hundred feet high. Sixty miles further northwest, are Calneh and Nippur; then Borsippa, with its tremendous tower; and fifteen miles further Babylon itself, with towers and palaces and wide gardens—a very sea of houses shut in

by lofty, encircling walls; whilst between all these great and prosperous cities stretched a plain of boundless fertility, interlaced by countless rills and canals of irrigating waters.

Such were the scenes actually before the eyes of Abraham in his boyhood home. Whether his father, Terah, lived with his family inside the city of Ur, in one of the brick houses such as we have described, or pitched his tents, as Arabs still do, outside the gates, we can not now say. But since the family, like others of the same race, was devoted to pastoral life, and somewhat nomadic in its habits, it probably lived outside the city itself. Nor was Terah a native of Ur, or its vicinity. Possibly whilst his children were still very young, and most likely before some of them were born, forced, it may be by some invasion from the north, or induced by the rich lowland pastures, following the example which, by others of his race, had been set for centuries, he had left his home in the mountains of Southern Armenia, and migrated to the rich lowlands that bordered the Persian gulf.

Here, as the head of a little clan, having around him his boys, Haran, Nahor, and Abram, with Sarai his daughter, and several grandchildren and a number of servants, Terah lived in the midst of this splendid civilization until Abram had reached his early prime. Now, what was the religion of these highly-civilized peoples amongst whom the father of the faithful spent his youthful years? In whose honor were erected those magnificent temples, most conspicuous objects in every city? Were they for the worship of one God, or of many? What was supposed to be the nature of the Deity or deities worshiped there? By what ceremonies, sacrifices, songs, prayers, processions, if any, were they

adored? How was their favor sought? How did man feel himself related to them, and how did he believe them related to the world? What were the prevalent ideas of the origin of the world and of man? What kind of a moral character did the religion beget, and what did these busy people think of the life beyond the grave? Answers to these questions will be of no small help to us in appreciating the character and religion of Abraham himself.

To what does this man owe his abiding and ever-brightening fame, and his lofty, yes, his unique place amongst the highest saints, heroes, sages, prophets of men? Look at him. There in his tent he sits at the gates of this magnificent city of Ur. Or he pastures his flocks and herds on the adjacent plains. What is there about him that shall make his name to live and be revered four thousand years after his bones are dust? Gone the houses of the people and the palaces of the kings; gone the temples and libraries; gone the rich crops, the bursting warehouses, the places of manufacture, the wharves and the shipping; gone, without leaving so much as a name behind, the busy multitude, the privileged priest, the poet and singer, the merchant prince and high official; gone even the mighty kings, whose names the archæologist with difficulty makes out from some defaced inscription on a broken tablet that he has dug from the dust; but there stands Abraham, in the eye of the world, one of the most conspicuous men of the ages, majestic, shining with a radiance which, in spite of the critics who deny his existence, grows brighter and brighter with every century that flies. Look at him, I say, as he stands there amongst his flocks and herds. He is no great ecclesiastic, ascetic, learned sage, deep philosopher, mighty warrior, or

powerful king. He is a simple shepherd. During his father's lifetime he is only one member of a little tribe of immigrants, dwelling in tents by the gates of Ur. Later, he is but the chief of a nomad band, wandering to a distant home. Why, then, has his name lived and his character and person grown more and more majestic through the ages? Why is he set on high and venerated by Jew, Mohammedan, and Christian alike, as though the millions of each owed some great blessing to him? Because of his religion; only this and nothing more. With clear and tenacious faith he held on to God, the one Being above all and the Source of all. With passionate love and deep humility, he adored this "Most High God," Maker of the heavens and earth. So genuine and lofty was his faith, that the most powerful and most religious of the foreign races in the midst of whom he wandered were ready to acknowledge that God was with him, and therefore they sought the friendship and blessing of this stranger at their gates. Indeed, so great was his devotion, and so trustful his spirit, that men in wondering awe said, "Abraham is the friend of the Most High God." The Holy Spirit has given his sanction also to the phrase. So perfectly just has it seemed that, in all Mohammedan countries, the words, "El Khalil Allah," "the Friend of God," or simply, "El Khalil," "the Friend," has entirely superseded his personal name, Friend of God!

What a fullness of truth is here embodied! Can mere nature, or a pantheistic soul of the world, be called a friend? Then God must be a personality with intellect, will, heart. Though almighty, far above all mortals and all created things, will he be a personal protector and friend of man? So it says. Here, then, is the sublime condescension of love. With this august

Being can we be on terms of intimacy? Then, here is a basis for true communion of person with person; here is a Being, who, loving, can himself be loved; here is religion resting on its true foundation in the heart. Friend of God! Then to serve him is not simply to go through some empty and dead ceremonial, but to give him the loyal devotion of the soul and the whole man, a devotion that transforms the worshiper into the spiritual image of him he delights to adore and obey.

Well does Herder say: "Men have sometimes communed with gods, genii, and departed heroes, but not with God, the one God of heaven and earth, in a way so calm and trusting. The stranger has no other Friend than he who has brought him into this remoteness; he whom he possesses as the Friend of friends. What tender passages are there in the intercourse of God with him! How he comforts, directs, cheers him with future hopes; gives him now the pledge of a covenant, now the sign of friendship, now a new name, now symbols to impress his heart, and demands now this, now that return of love to himself!" Moreover, his faithfulness in molding the faith of his household by his own, thus founding the true kingdom of God which never died is mentioned to his everlasting honor. "I know him, that he will charge his children, and his descendants after him, to keep the way of Jehovah, and live righteously and justly, and because of this, Jehovah will fulfill what he has promised respecting him." No wonder that Paul sets him on high, and crowns him as the father of the faithful. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Not that he yielded simply an intellectual assent to the sublime proposition that God is one sole, holy, loving personality, but that he rested his whole life on that truth,

as a building stands immovable upon a rock. He leaned on God as weakness leans on strength, reposed an undoubting trust in him as a child rests in its mother's arms. His faith was no intermittent fever, but abode before God as the stream from a never-failing fount. "No delay of fulfillment made him waver; no difficulties or discouragements ever made him doubt. His was a faith not content with mere passive graces, with simply avoiding harm, but a faith coloring his whole life and character, his wanderings, settlings, hopes, fears, purposes, details of daily duty. No wonder if such faith was counted unto him for righteousness! It was as fitting to count it so as it is to see in the bulb the potency of the flower just blooming from it."

That faith which made his own life so sublime he bequeathed as his best legacy to his children. As a result, the three greatest religions of the world, which together well-nigh fill the earth, and which agree in striking as their keynote the unity of God, all run back to him. A few years since, it was the fashion, set by the brilliant Rénan, to attribute this tenacious monotheism to a monotheistic instinct in the race to which Jews and Arabs belong. Rénan's own words were: "The Indo-European race, distracted by the variety of the universe, never by itself arrived at monotheism. The Semitic race, on the other hand, guided by its firm and sure sight, instantly unmasked Deity, and, without reflection or reasoning, attained the purest form of religion that humanity has known." But no scholar now accepts such a position. There are too many facts against it. Years ago, Professor Max Müller, who will not be accused of bias toward orthodoxy, pertinently asked: "Can it be said that a monotheistic instinct could have been implanted in all those nations which adored

Elohim, Jehovah Sabaoth, Moloch, Nisroch, Rimmon, Necho, Dagon, Ashtaroth, Baal or Bel, Baalpeor, Beelzebub, Chemosh, Milcom, Adrammelech, Anamelech, Nibbaz and Tartak, Ashima, Nergal, Succoth Benoth, the sun, the moon, the planets, and the host of heaven?"

Even the Hebrews themselves were continually lapsing into idolatry and polytheism, yet always recovering themselves, until, after a bitter discipline of suffering and captivity, they turned with enthusiastic devotion, never to be shaken, to the worship of Jehovah. Nor can it be said that the Hebrew people worked out this great truth by a profound philosophy. Until very late in their history, they had neither philosophy nor philosophers. No contrast could be greater between the Jewish mind and that of other nations of antiquity than the utter absence of metaphysical speculation, in which many other races delighted.

Look at the matter candidly. Where has there been amongst the Semitic races a true and living monotheism except amongst the Jews and Mohammedans? Well does Müller continue: "Did Mohammed invent monotheism? Did he invent even a new name for God? Not at all. And how is it with Christianity? Did Christ come to preach faith in a new God? Did he or his disciples invent a new name for God? No; Christ came not to destroy but to fulfill, and the God he preached was the God of Abraham. And who is the God of Jeremiah, of Elijah, of Moses? We answer again, 'The God of Abraham.' Thus the faith in the one living God, which seemed to require the admission of a monotheistic instinct grafted in every member of the Semitic family, is traced back to one man—to him in whom all families of the earth shall be blessed. And if, from our earliest childhood, we have looked upon

Abraham, the friend of God, with love and veneration, his venerable figure will assume still more majestic proportions when we see in him the life-spring of that faith which was to unite all the nations of the earth, and the author of that blessing which was to come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. And if we asked how this one Abraham passed through the denial of other gods to the knowledge of the one God, we are content to answer that it was by a special Divine revelation, granted to one man, and handed down by him to Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, to all who believe in the God of Abraham. We want to know more of that man than we do; but even with the little we know of him, he stands before us as a figure second only to one in the history of the world." Certainly these are glowing words of high tribute. Are they just? We can measure their truth the better as we see clearly the religion of Abraham's father and of his boyhood home.

The traditions of the Jews certainly represent that religion as polytheistic. In the apocryphal book of Judith we read: "This people (the Hebrews) are descended of the Chaldæans, and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers which were in the land of Chaldæa. For they left the way of their ancestors and worshiped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew. So they cast them out from the face of their gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia and sojourned there many days. Then their God commanded them to depart, and to go into the land of Canaan." If we go much nearer to the fountain-head we shall find Joshua saying, in his farewell address before Israel assembled at Shechem: "Your fathers dwelt on the

other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. . . . Now therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord." How far do modern investigations sustain these statements, and what kind of a polytheism was this? Our purpose here is not to give a history of the religion of Chaldæa. That would be matter for a volume rather than a lecture. We wish simply to describe the religion of this people as it probably presented itself to the eyes of Abraham. We take our position thus many centuries on this side of its origin.

We described, in the beginning of this lecture, the great temple of Ur, the most magnificent structure in the city. Let us suppose ourselves, with Terah and his sons, on some morning as they leave their tents to enter the city. They approach the sacred fane. It is at the time of a great religious ceremony. We see numerous priests, with clean-shaven face, dressed in flowing robes embroidered with religious emblems. Upon their head is the miter or high cap, or their brow is encircled by a richly-ornamented fillet. Their arms, wrists, neck, ears, glitter with jewelry. Some are offering sacrifices of the choicest parts of oxen, sheep, gazelles, or of meal, while others pour their libations of wine upon the altars or the victims. Now, preparatory to the feast in which priests and people will eat those portions of the sacrificial animals not consumed by the flame, the

priestly choirs, in measured chant and antiphony, sing the praises of their god. Listen to their words:

“Lord and prince of the gods, who in heaven and earth alone is supreme;

Father, lord of the firmament,

Lord of the gods;

Merciful one, begetter of the universe, who foundeth his illustrious seat among living creatures;

Father, long suffering and full of forgiveness, whose hand upholdeth the life of all mankind;

Lord, thy divinity, like the far-off heaven, filleth the wide sea with fear;

Father, begetter of gods and men, who causeth the shrine to be founded, who established the offering.

First-born, omnipotent, whose heart is immensity, and there is none whom he discovereth;

Lord, the ordainer of the laws of the heaven and earth, whose command may not be broken.

Thou holdest the rain and the lightning; Defender of all living things.

There is no god who at any time has discovered thy fullness.

In heaven, who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme.

On earth, who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme.

As for thee, thy will is made known in heaven, and the angels bow their faces;

Thy will is made known upon earth, and the spirits below kiss the ground.

Thy will hath created law and justice, so that mankind have established law.

King of kings, whose divinity no one resembleth, look with favor on this thy city of Ur.”

What, even heathen people in that far-off time chanting psalms like this? Here are ideas of lordship, supremacy over other deities, divine mercy, preservation of the life of man. Here is a lord whose majesty spreads awe of him far and wide as sea and sky; his

presence filling the wide sea, his hands holding the rains and the lightning; a god who ordains the laws of heaven and earth, who establishes justice, who is adored by prostrate spirits above and by spirits below; a god who raises himself by humbling the proud; the self-produced being who issues from his home, and pours forth ever-brightening light. What god is this so highly praised? The primeval seer, fixing the doom of distant days, whose blessings, ever-flowing, never cease; the leader of the gods, who from depth to height, bright piercing, opens the gate of heaven; a god in whose praise hymns are sung, that sound as though we were listening to a psalm in honor of the Jehovah of Israel? He was the great moon-god, whose temple lifted its head on high above the city. There, from his observatory on its summit, the Chaldæan astronomer turned his gaze toward the nightly heaven, and as he saw the silver moon walking majestically amongst the thousand stars that sparkle like diamonds in that clear air, he said, "That is god." "We will call him Sin, the god of the month." Here in Ur, for at least one thousand years before Abraham's day, he was honored as the patron deity of this great city.

At first it would have sounded strange to Terah to hear the moon spoken of as a masculine deity. Amongst the people of Abraham's race, so far as they were given to the worship of the heavenly bodies at all, the moon was a goddess, and the sun was a god. But though many centuries before Terah had migrated from his Armenian home, many of his kinsfolk had swarmed into these river plains, first as settlers, then as conquerors, yet the older race, the real founders of the civilization in the Euphrates valley, perhaps two thousand years before Abraham's day, had conquered to

some extent the conquerors, and modified their whole religious belief. One effect of this had been to make the moon a male deity rather than a female.

But now, we must not conclude too easily, from these fine phrases of this hymn, the monotheistic character of this religion. We hear these same priests who have so highly lauded Sin, the moon-god, and the same people who had no doubt joined in these chants, speak of his father, Mul-lil, the god of the lower world. They speak also about his wife, "the supreme lady," a very shadowy being, of whom little is said, and as well of his son. Moreover, they seem to talk as if this deity, so highly exalted, has yet some limited, fixed province in which he is especially active, and certain industries of which he is patron; namely, that of brickmaking and architecture. We must therefore not be too hasty in setting this god up on high, or in saying that he resembles Jehovah. We go to visit some of the other cities of the land; first to Larsa, across the Euphrates, and thirty miles to the northeast. There stands its great temple-tower, crowned with a glittering shrine. It has stood on that spot one thousand years before the time of our visit. With Abraham we are here on another sacred day. We find similar priestly processions, sacrifices, feasts upon the remains of the sacrificial food, and we hear them, in antiphonal song and accompanying music, praise their god: "Sun, thou shinest in the deepest heavens. Thou openest the bolts which close the highest heavens; thou openest the gate of heaven. Sun, thou raisest thy head above the countries. Sun, thou stretchest vast heavens above the countries like a covering." Or, "O Sun-god, king of heaven and earth, director of things above and below; O Sun-god, thou that clothest the dead with life delivered by my hand;

Judge, unbribed director of mankind,—the mercy is supreme of him who is lord over trials. Creator of all the universe, the Sun-god art thou; O Father supreme, I am debased, and walk to and fro, with scourges and in expiation I beat myself. My littleness I knew not, the sin that I committed I knew not; I am small, and he is great; the walls of my god may I pass.”

He seems to be much more human than the deity which we heard them praising at Ur. He is not only light, radiant and glorious, but he is, besides, the truth itself. He makes the lies to vanish. He shines in the highest regions of the heavens, dispelling the darkness. He is a great protecting god, a great enemy of the demons of the darkness. “O Sun, I have called unto thee in the bright heavens; in the shadow of the holy cedar art thou; thy feet are on the summits. The lands have longed for thee. They have longed for thy coming, O Lord. Thy radiant light illumines the countries. Thou makest lies to vanish, thou who destroyest the noxious influence of portents, omens, spirits, demons, and evil apparitions; thou who defeatest wicked plots; thou who leadeest men and countries to perdition who abandon themselves to sorcery and witchcraft, do not allow those who cast spells and are hardened, to rise. . . . May the great gods who have created me take my hand! Thou who curest my face, direct my hand; direct it, Lord, light of the universe, sun.”

What a sublime vision this old poet of Chaldæa has of his god! He sees him come radiant through the portals of heaven. The archangels bow before him, whilst the earth looks on with rapture. From the height of heaven he rules the children of men, shedding down upon them a ray of peace, and healing their sufferings. But mark, it is not the moon this time, but

the sun that receives highest homage. You say to the priest: "O servant of the sun, at Ur, just across the river yonder, we heard chants and choral song celebrating Sin, the moon-god, as supreme lord of the gods, omnipotent begetter of the universe, the ordainer of the laws of heaven and earth; but here all your hymns are to Samas, radiant god of the sun. Your great temple seems to be for his worship alone. Does Sin, the god of Ur, then, have no worshipers here, and is the sun not recognized as deity there?" "Yes, the moon-god we recognize all right enough, and the people of Ur acknowledge the sun; but each great city has its own patron deity. Him they chiefly honor while not denying the rest. Indeed, our glorious god we recognize as the son of the moon-god, and, though we call him judge of heaven and earth and ruler over all, we style him also server of two other gods, Anu and Bel, with whose emergence he opens the portals of heaven, and brings light and righteousness in his train."

But leaving the city of Larsa, we go fifteen miles northwest, and come to Erech. Here is a vast royal palace, with many courts, chambers, and halls, richly adorned. But lifting its head high above warehouses, palaces, and smaller shrines, is the great temple. As we enter the city, as it is called, the seat of the gods Anu and Ishtar, we find ourselves in a city of the choirs, and the festal girls, and the consecrated maidens of Ishtar. We learn that "in the house of heaven"—that is, in the house built for the goddess—dwell her eunuch priests, who have devoted their manhood in order to adore her. We meet some of these men carrying, for some purpose, swords, razors, flint knives. These men spend their lives in ministering to Ishtar, to cause reverence to her glory. We go with the crowd to the

temple. What is that symbol of the goddess? A nude female form. What means that song about the festal girls and consecrated maidens of Ishtar? Why are those be vies of women loitering about the temple? Ah! we must turn away our eyes and veil our faces in shame at the awful truth. Here, animal sacrifices, and libations of wine, song, and prayer, do not suffice for worship. Here is demanded the sacrifice of female purity as a religious act. This great temple of this splendid city is rendered forever infamous by the obscenities of its religious rites. Here, as a pious duty, chastity is laid upon the altar, and the slimy wages of prostitution are dedicated to the service of the goddess. Here the fiercest passions of the Orient find one of their most shameful expressions. We find even to-day engraved on the clay tablets the evidences of her shame. We read most solemn imprecations upon the consecrated prostitute who does not render her shameful service. Certain it is that later, and there is little doubt that it was so in this early time, the temples of this goddess were filled with victims of licentious passion and religious frenzy, and that her festivals were scenes of pious orgies.

This was the worship which, spreading westward, in later times so polluted Phœnician rites; in the Ash-toreth ceremonies tainted Israel, so that prophets had fiercely to denounce the abominations committed in honor of Baal and Astarte even within the sacred walls of Jerusalem itself; that made the early Greek travelers stand aghast at the violations of social decency enjoined as religious duties on the adorers of the Oriental Aphrodite; and later corrupted Greece herself so deeply that she, too, had her unchaste orgies in the worship of the golden and laughing goddess of love. The black fount of these streams of filth was here at Erech, no doubt in

Abraham's day. Alas! alas! that with high and sublime expressions of praise to God should exist such a monstrous worship as this!

But who is this goddess in whose honor such shameful rites are practiced? One of the most popular deities of the land; distinguished by her resplendent nature and high rank; an anomaly in this pantheon; a goddess masquerading in the garb of a god. She is the deity of the morning and evening star; the companion and herald of the sun, sometimes styled his wife, sometimes his daughter, and then again said to be the daughter of the moon. Attributes apparently the most contradictory are ascribed to her. She is essentially a deity of love and productiveness. A brighter side of her character is that of the divine mother, watching over the family bond and caring for humanity with a mother's love. She has also a sterner aspect as goddess of war.

Walking amongst the people on this festal day, Abraham might have heard all kinds of myths about her, passing from lip to lip in song and story. One tale represents her as a faithful wife, enduring even death for her husband beloved, while another speaks of her as the most capricious and cruel of coquettes. Here one is singing of her love for the human hero, Izdhubar, or Nimrod; tells how he slighted her affection and loaded her with reproaches because she had been so cruel and destructive to all her previous lovers, whether kings or slaves; how thereupon in rage she cursed him, and, mounting to heaven, went to her father, Anu, to plot the hero's ruin; how, like another Potiphar's wife, she accused him of doing precisely that which he had refused to do; how she persuaded Anu to punish him by making a huge ox for his destruction; how Izdhubar, nevertheless, secured help from a creature,

half bullock, half man, called Heabani; how this creature and the hero together slew the divine bullock, sacred to Ishtar, and dragged its body in triumph through the streets of the city; how, then, in wrath, she set all heaven and hell in motion to seek satisfaction for the dishonor done to her; how, to accomplish this the more perfectly, she resolved to make a journey into the nether regions to arouse unearthly powers against Izdhubar, where, after undergoing still further humiliations at the hands of the hero, she at length finds succor in her mother, Anatu, who slew Heabani and afflicted Izdhubar with loathsome sickness.

Or Abraham might have heard another version of the story which put her in a little better light as the self-sacrificing wife. This song would tell how she loved the young and beautiful sun-god, Tammuz; how, when he was slain, cut off in the flower of his years, she descended into the lower world to secure the healing waters which should restore her beloved bridegroom to life. What a contrast between these stories of the gods and those sublime hymns, which we heard the priests chanting in the great temple at Ur! Yet the same people accepted both. But we said that this city was the special seat of the god Anu as well of the honored goddess Ishtar. We hear them laud and magnify his name as father and king of the gods, lord of all lands, lord and father of the universe, who leads onward his host of spirits or sends them to do his service. We hear the people speak of the numerous posterity which this god had by his wife, Anatu, among which children are Gibil, the fire-god; and Ramman, the Rimmon of Naa-man, god of the atmosphere, the boisterous, passionate god; the god of the clouds and refreshing rain, of the storms and thunder.

Anu is himself the heaven-god. He corresponds in some respects to the Hindoo Varuna. In earlier times his domain was the visible blue; but in Abraham's day it was the invisible heaven, beyond the firmament we see, the far-off, serene, and cloudless heaven, to which the gods fled when the great flood broke up the lower sphere. As they chant his glory, we hear them declare that, from his seat on high, he fixes the places of the other gods in the lower heaven; Samas, the sun-god, here; Sin, the moon, yonder; Ishtar, the evening star, over there. They praise him in terms more glowing than even those which we heard the people of Ur apply to their glorious god. At times he seems to fill their entire horizon, as though a vague memory of a great and only God was struggling through the gathering mists of polytheism, or as if they were trying to retain in mind the lingering, but vanishing outlines of a noble dream. At other times he seems to be the universe itself, or a great pantheistic god, of whom the rest are but transient phases or manifestations, as though the mind of these early men, in its struggle for unity, was unable to keep fast hold of this without sacrificing the personality.

Now look at the list of deities we have already found,—Sin, Samas, Ishtar, Anu, with their spouses, sons and daughters, all divine, all worshiped. Had we gone to the most ancient city of the whole region yonder at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, we should have found a place, Eridu by name, which was most likely the starting-point of the civilization of this entire valley. Here we should have seen a temple with marble steps, traces of which are visible to-day. In this temple we should have beheld the crowds assemble to worship their god Hea, the deity of the primal waters, celestial

as well as terrestrial; a beneficent being who taught men the magical formulæ for driving away the wicked spirits; a deity who is the soul of every animated creature; who sustains everything and makes everything live and move; himself eternally begotten in the bosom of the celestial ocean above the firmament; the god of science, knowing all the subtle stratagems of the evil spirits and the magic secrets by which they can be baffled and repulsed; having as his symbol the serpent, thought by some to be a vague memory that the serpent was the most subtle of all the beasts of the field.

Continuing our journey northward from Erech, the city of Ishtar and Ann, we come to another town, Nippur by name. Here still another god seems to absorb the attention of the worshipers. This is Bel, sometimes called the older Bel to distinguish him from the younger Bel of Babylon, with whom he was in later times confused. This Bel, to be afterwards known but too well by the descendants of Abraham as Baal, was the god of the scorching summer heat. With his fierce power he blasts every green thing, and sinks with glowing face into the darkness of the lower world, to be the god of ghosts. We hear the people of Nippur address him as "the light of the gods," "the lofty one," "the father of the gods," "the creator." If we go to the city of Calneh, not far away, we shall find a great temple to his consort Beltis or Belit, whose name means about the same as the French *Notre Dame*, "Our Lady." We should find her worshiped in many other parts of the land, with much pomp as the mother of the gods, and having attributes which combine those of the classical Juno, Ceres, Bellona, and Diana.

But not tarrying here, we push on to the northwest. There rises to view a tremendous tower. We are draw-

ing near the great Babylon. This magnificent temple, not in three stages only, but seven, is in the suburb Borsippa. The temple is called the House of the Seven Saviors of Heaven and Earth, the Seven Planets. Each stage is painted to represent the colors symbolical of the seven planets. It contains a most holy place called "The Supreme House of Life." Standing under the shadow of this lofty pile, we listen once again to the people chanting their religious hymns. But these holy songs are to a deity different from any we have met elsewhere. They style him "the first-born Baal," "the proclaimer of the Word," "the prophet." He is the patron of writing and culture, the god of science and literature, the creator of the written tablet, the author of the oracle, the creator of peace, "the opener and enlarger of the ear," the bond of the universe, the overseer of the angel hosts of the heaven and earth. He is the god of the planet Mercury. He is called the son of Marduk and Zarpanit, and he has a wife named Tasmit. We hear the people sing to him: "O lord of Borsippa, no power is like thy power; no house is like thy house, Ezida; no city is like thy city, Borsippa; no province is like thy province, Tintir. Thy weapons are a fierce wolf, in whose mouth is poison never ceasing. Thy commands remain immutable as the heavens; in heaven thou art exalted."

Tarrying here no longer, we walk on a few hours' journey to the great Babylon herself. Here we behold lofty, encircling walls, towers and palaces, wide gardens, a wilderness of houses, and a teeming population. A very ancient city even in Abraham's times, it was making its way rapidly to that proud eminence which it occupied under the late Chaldæan kings. We will suppose ourselves here on a New-Year's evening in

company with Abraham. We make our way at once to the temple. In later times, under Nebuchadnezzar, this was the greatest religious edifice in the whole country, the glorious center of the national worship, and one of the wonders of its capital. Nebuchadnezzar tells us that he restored the temple, so that it most likely existed in splendor in Abraham's day. As it was later, and perhaps at the time of our visit with the patriarch, we see first a grand court 1,156 feet by 900. In this court, in the open air, are huge basins filled with water for purposes of purification. Within this great inclosure is another, 1,056 feet by 450. This has six gates, which lead to another space or platform, also walled and entered through four portals. The temples at Ur and Erech had their angles facing the cardinal points of the compass, but this has the walls facing them. In the midst of this inmost space rises a gigantic tower. It is in seven stages of gradually-diminishing size. The bottom one is 300 feet square and 110 feet high, ornamented by buttresses. The topmost story is the special shrine of the god, 80 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 50 feet high. The whole magnificent structure lifts its towering head 300 feet toward the stars. At the extreme end, veiled from the eyes of the profane herd by a curtain, was the holy of holies, where, according to Nebuchadnezzar, was the holy seat, the place of the gods who determine destiny, the spot where they assemble together, the shrine of fate, wherein on the great festivals of the eighth and eleventh days of the new year, the Divine King of heaven and earth, the Lord of the heavens, seats himself, while the gods of heaven and earth listen to him in fear, and stand bowing down before him.

There may have been also in Abraham's time, as

there certainly were later, about the base of this huge structure, smaller temples and chapels of a large number of deities, a kind of Babylonian pantheon, where the worshipers of all were accustomed to gather together. In the shrine of the great temple could be no doubt found a golden image of the god, with a golden table in front of it. As we said, we suppose ourselves present here with Abraham on the first day of the new year. It is a universal holiday. The priests are here in their most splendid robes, the multitude in their holiday attire, everywhere is the sound of merry music. In the palace the king entertains his lords, and in private homes is music, dancing, and revelry.

Now the time for the religious ceremonial has come. The priests have gone through the preliminary change of dress, anointing, purifications, and now move forward about the temple. What is that upon their shoulders, carried by means of staves passed through rings at the four corners? It is a rectangular sacred box or ark. In it are borne images and symbols of the gods. What do I say? Images of the gods? Alas that we must say it! in spite of the many sublime expressions in the hymns, the deadly nightshade of idolatry is striking its baleful roots deep and wide, and its poison is being wafted over the land. In the various temples we have seen, there are images of wood, stone, clay, metal, and sometimes of wood or clay overlaid with gold or other metal. As the priestly procession moves forward, these symbols and images are exhibited to the adoring gaze of the populace, while from the holy choirs the hymn peals out: "To-day the god has been made. He has caused the holy festival to be fully kept. The god has arisen among all lands. Lift up the glory. Adorn thyself with heroism, O hero, perfect of praise!

Bid luster surround this image; establish veneration. The lightning flashes; the festival appears like gold; in heaven the god has been created; on earth the god has been created. This festival has been created among the hosts of heaven and earth. The festival is the creation of god, the work of mankind; bid the festival be fully kept forever according to the command of the valiant golden god. This festival is a sweet savor even when the mouth is unopened, a pleasant taste even when food is uneaten and water is undrunk."

With music and dance and exhibition of the images of the deity, the procession circles around the temple. Numerous victims, oxen, sheep, gazelles are slain, laid upon the altars, and burned in honor of the god, and—alas that we must confess it!—most likely human sacrifices stained those altars with their blood. There is no doubt that, coming down from a hoary antiquity, the evil practice of human sacrifice still lingered, even the oldest son of a family being sometimes laid upon the altar as a costly offering for the family sin. During the burning of the sacrifice vast quantities of frankincense are sprinkled upon the fire, as a fragrant offering to the god. When the ceremony is ended, the people go back again to their merriment. Wine is freely drunk. Passion is excited, and even before nightfall the wildest orgies set in, and female virtue is freely offered up as a religious rite.

Meanwhile the priests retire to feast in their homes. These are either in the temple precincts or in the immediate neighborhood. Here, with their wives and children, the priests live, supported from lands belonging to the temple or by the offerings of the people. At night one of them is detailed to watch the temple. A part of his duty when so engaged is to chant a hymn,

the first fourteen lines of which are alternately in the most ancient language of the country and in the modern, as though we were to sing a hymn, one line in the English of King Alfred and the next in the English of to-day. As the text says: "In the month Nisan, on the second day, and the first hour of the night, the priest must go and take the waters of the river in his hand; he must enter the presence of Bel, and putting on a robe in the presence of Bel, shall address to Bel this hymn: 'O Bel, who in strength hast no rival; O Bel, king of blessedness, lord of the world, seeking after favor of the great gods; Bel, who in his glance has destroyed the strong; Bel, lord of kings, light of mankind, establisher of trust; O Bel, thy scepter is Babylon, Borsippa is thy crown, the wide heaven is the habitation of thy liver! O lord, thine is the revelation and the interpretation of visions. O father of lords, thee they behold, the father of lords. Thine is the glance and the saying of wisdom. They magnify thee, O master of the strong! They adore thee, O king and mighty prince! They look up to thee, showing unto thee mercy; cause thee to behold the light that they may tell of thy righteousness. O Bel, lord of the world, light of the spirits of heaven, utterer of blessings, who is there whose mouth murmurs of thy righteousness, or speaks not of thine exaltation, and celebrates not thy glory? O Bel, lord of the world, who dwells in the temple of the sun, reject not the hands that are raised to thee. Show mercy to thy city Babylon; to E Saggil incline thy face. Grant the prayers of thy people, the sons of Babylon.'" With this song chanted by the watching priest at night, the New-Year's festivities and religious rites conclude.

Now, who is this god worshiped with such splendor

in a fane so stately, and with such ardent expressions of praise? Still another deity, Marduk, the Bel of Babylon, god of the planet Jupiter. He was the product of an assimilation of a very ancient god of the south, the son of the water-god Hea, to a solar divinity; namely, the particular sun-god worshiped at Babylon. Thus he combines elements of both, besides arrogating to himself many of the functions enjoyed in earlier times by the older Bel, whom we saw worshiped at Nipur. George Smith styles him a kind of Babylonian Prometheus. He is a god of war, but not like Ares or Mars, rejoicing in blood and destruction. His victories are victories of righteousness. The enemies he fights against are dangerous monsters and furious demons. He overcomes the huge, scaly dragon, Tiamat, and repels the assault of the seven wicked spirits against the moon. He is the revealer of the will of his great father, the intercessor between gods and men; goes about the world collecting information, and, under commission from his august sire, setting right on earth things that are wrong. His wife, Zarpanit, is little more than his female shadow.

We will not push our journey further northward to Cutha, with its fierce war-god, the Ares of Chaldæa, and with its temple to the moon; nor to Sippara, where the sun received great honor; nor to any one of the towns springing up at this time in the country to the north, and which by and by will form the mighty Assyria. We turn our faces again in the direction of Ur, and, without tarrying in any of the numberless little towns on the way, reach again the great temple of the moon, whence, with the strains of the sublime hymn to the god Sin sounding in our ears, we started forth to learn the religion of the land. As we heard this ex-

alted song, it seemed that it must be uttered in praise of one almighty, most high God, Maker of heaven and earth. But from our tour through the land, we come back disappointed and sad at heart. We have seen that here, after all, are gods many and lords many—Sin, Samas, Bel, Ishtar, Anu, Hea, Marduk, Nebo, Nergal, Rimmon, and others, with their spouses and children. Here, too, is idolatry striking its poisonous roots deeper and deeper; here are polluted rites and religious orgies; here may even, now and then, be witnessed the horrors of human sacrifice.

We go to one of the high priests of Ur, and ask him: "What means all this? How can you join in these lofty strains to this great god of your city, if you recognize at the same time the rest? Do you accept all these as gods? and, if so, how can you lift up your voice in such high praise of your own city god, Sin?" He replies: "Yes, each city of the land acknowledges, at least in theory, the divinity of all the gods; but in actual worship, each city takes some one great god as its patron deity, sets him on high, and gives him almost exclusive homage, while not denying the existence of the rest." Note, that difficult as it is for us children of the nineteenth Christian century to understand this phase of religion, it is yet one that we find, again and again, in different parts of the earth. We find it here in early Chaldæa; we meet with it in Egypt and in India, and traces of it are not wanting in Greece, Italy, and Germany of old. It is something entirely different from the Greek Olympus, with great Zeus, king of gods and men, on the supreme throne, and by the whole of the land acknowledged to be there. It is as though, for the time being, the god worshiped, fills the whole horizon of the worshiper. It is a phase of religious

thought to which, more than forty years ago, Max Müller gave the name of *Henotheism*. He defines it thus: "In the Veda one god after another is invoked. For the time being, all that can be said of deity is ascribed to him. The poet, while addressing him, seems hardly to know of any other gods. But in the same collection of hymns, even in the same hymn, other gods are mentioned, and they also are truly divine, truly independent, or it may be, supreme. The vision of the worshiper seems to change suddenly, and the same poet who at one moment saw nothing but the sun as the ruler of the heaven and the earth, now sees heaven and earth as the father and mother of the sun and of all the gods."

The instinct of worship is to put the deity at the time adored at the head, just as some biographers or historical lecturers always make their hero without a peer. This phase of thought may exist either when the mind is gradually losing, whilst it struggles to retain, the bright memory of the one only God, the vision of whom is gradually fading from the human spirit, or is being obscured by the blinding mists of superstition and sin; or it might be a step upward from the grossest polytheism towards the belief in the one, eternal, invisible, almighty King; or it might spring up, again, from a large number of early local worships of the same god under different names, as if some papal villages, lapsing into ignorance of their Christian history, should think, at last, of *Mater Amabilis*, *Notre Dame*, or *Regina Coeli*, as different personages. In the case of the Chaldaean religion, most likely the first and the last of these three causes account for the facts.

To return to our priest of Ur. He continues: "Yes, we acknowledge the existence of all the others, and

indeed we priests have drawn up a kind of State religion, in which the different deities are arranged in a sort of hierarchy of celestial powers. See, here is our scheme: We have arranged our divinities into two triads and one group of five. The first triad consists of Anu, Hea, and the other Bel of Nippur. The second triad is our moon-god, Sin; Samas, the sun-god; and Ramman, the god of the atmosphere and the stormful sky. The group of five comprises, Adar, god of the planet Saturn; Mar-duk, of Jupiter; Nergal, of Mars; Ishtar, goddess of the planet Venus; and Nebo, divinity of the planet Mercury. Each of these has an appropriate spouse by his side. Then, besides these great gods, we recognize in our theological system, and the people in a much more practical way, legions of minor divinities, even thousands of them. These form a kind of confused nation of gods, never reduced by our theology to any kind of order. Then below these again, we reckon three hundred celestial spirits, and the six hundred terrestrial spirits, not exactly gods, but as great angels, partaking of the divine essence. Below these again, four classes of protecting genii, some of them like human-faced oxen; others like eagle-headed men; others still like human-faced lions, and others in complete human form. Below these still are hosts of demons and hobgoblins and bad spirits of every sort.

“Of course, though to the superstitious vulgar all these are real gods, with a local habitation and a name, to us learned priests many of them are only phases of the same god. Indeed, O nomad stranger, in our highest thought, we sometimes seem dimly to behold, back of these polytheistic groups of gods, a great Being, who comprehends all in himself, and manifests himself through all these divinities and through the changing

phenomena of the world. We call him *Ilu*, the same as you call your god *El*. Clearly to keep before our minds his personality seems well-nigh impossible. He appears too vast and all-comprehensive to receive any definite form or distinct adoration from the people, or even from ourselves. He seems too remote to excite in us any real or hearty interest. He has no temple now, though *Babylon* is named from him, and means 'the gate of *Ilu*.' Such might have been the explanation of the faith given by a high priest of *Ur*. He might have chanted a hymn to this great god who was at this time so high, yet so far in the background: "In heaven who is great? Thou alone art great. On earth who is great? Thou only. When thy voice soundeth in heaven, the gods fall prostrate. When thy voice soundeth on earth, the spirits kiss the dust. O thou! thy words who can resist? Who can rival thee? Amongst the gods, thy brothers, thou hast no equal. God, my creator, may he stand by my side! Keep thou the door of my lips. Guard thou my hands, O lord of light. O lord, who trusteth in thee, do thou benefit his soul!"

Leaving, now, the priestly circle, let us go amongst the common people of the city. It is not in any land, in the State religion and the learned theology of the priests, in public religious processions, feasts, and ceremonial, that we can best see the actual, practical religion of the people. You can not judge of the religious life of the Roman Catholic peasantry by witnessing some splendid religious pageant in Rome, or by reading the works of Thomas Aquinas or the decrees of the Council of Trent. So, to get a complete view of the religion of Abraham's boyhood home, we must mingle with the people themselves in their every-day life,

Here we find, then, a group of ordinary folks. Looks of mingled terror and hope are upon their faces. In the midst of them is a sort of medicine man, or priest of sacred magic. He is muttering spells and incantations, while they look on in anxious hope or terror. Now and again in his mutterings, you catch the words, often repeated, "Spirit of heaven, conjure it; spirit of earth, conjure it!"

To increase the power of the spell, the holy sorcerer goes through acts of purification, ties magic knots, swallows enchanted drinks, and mutters mystic numbers, of which seven is the chief. We see upon different parts of the body of the person to be benefited, or upon his garments, furniture, house, long bands of white or black cloth, covered with written formulæ. These are talismans of magic virtue. Or we see the people wear upon their necks amulets of hard stone or of other materials, engraved with images of divinities or genii, and with mystic spells. Or they are carved into the most horrible shapes; as, for example, a figure with the body of a dog, the feet of an eagle, the claws of a lion, the tail of a serpent, the head of a human skeleton half decayed, but adorned with goat's horns, and the eyes still remaining in their sockets, and lastly, with four great expanded wings. Also before the house, or in different parts of it, we see images of the good spirits, with vessels of food and drink, upon which the guardian genii will pounce like flies for their sustenance.

What means all this? Ah! in this religion of Abraham's boyhood home there is terror, baleful superstition, despair. From of old these people have felt themselves surrounded by the power of evil, that pursued them with relentless malice. It lurked in the bowels of the earth. Its poisonous breath arose from

every fissure. It haunted the river banks, was borne upon the wings of the wind, rushed hither in the storm, and, like a subtle miasma, crept into the veins with deadly fever or chill. The great maleficent power is due, they think, to a vast number of evil spirits who haunt the deserts, the mountain-tops, the sea, the marshes, the black gulf beneath the earth, always ready to swarm out and torment suffering man. They make women barren, chase the mother from her home, and drive her into the desert with her child. They stop the flight of the birds in the air, and drive the terrified swallow from her nest to wander wildly through space. Invisible hunters, they pursue and strike down the ox and the lamb. They go from house to house. No door can keep them out. Theirs is the voice of slander, ruthlessly destroying the peace of man at home and abroad. Intruding even into high heaven, they are deaf to prayers and supplications. They are the adversaries of the gods on earth, and labor to destroy their work. They are, *par excellence*, "the enemies," struggling even against the great gods in alternate triumph and defeat. At their head are the seven fateful spirits whose dwelling is in the ocean's depths. Their baleful power is thus described: "Seven are they! Seven are they! In the depths of the sea, they are seven. In the brilliancy of the heaven, they are seven." They proceed from the hidden depth. Following is the poetic translation by Professor Dyer:

"Man they are not, nor womankind;
 For injury they sweep from the main,
 And have no wedded wife but the wind,
 And no child have begotten but pain;
 Man are they not, nor womankind.

Fear is not in them, nor awe;
Supplication they heed not, nor prayer,
For they know no compassion nor law,
And are deaf to the cries of despair;
Fear is not in them, nor awe."

"Conjure them, spirit of the earth; conjure them, spirit of the heaven!" At the head of them all are the Maskim, fierce demons, living in the hollow of the earth, and the gigantic Lamma, their companions, swarming up from below. Under these terrible leaders the evil horde sweeps forth, to spread pestilence, famine, pain, ruin, over the earth. They must be opposed by incantations and holy magic, mystic forms of exorcism, and imprecations. These talismans of cloth are like snares in which the evil ones are taken. As the people say, "He who passes the boundary of the talisman of the gods, the boundary of heaven and earth will never let him go again." The hideous-shaped amulets are representations of the demons themselves, so monstrous in form and feature that it was thought that if they should once get a look at their own picture, they would flee away in alarm.

But the great secret of deliverance is not incantations or magic, not enchanted drinks, not muttering of sacred numbers, not decorating the person or the home with talismans or amulets. The great secret of help is the pronounciation of the powerful, ineffable, hidden name which no man can hear. Everything in earth, in heaven, and hades, bows before this name. It alone can conquer the malicious Maskim, and the infernal seven with all their hordes. It alone can stop their powerful ravages. By this name even the gods themselves are enthralled, and to it they render obedience. But who is able to obtain this revelation, and

thus to impart this benefit? The great god Hea alone knows this divine, mysterious, supreme name; but Hea is so great, so far away, that his son Marduk is the mediator between him and our feeble race. To his great father he carries the appeals and tears of men. To him, for the benefit of men, the great god unfolds the mystic word which can insure the demon's defeat and bring deliverance to the suffering man. As we saw, he conquered the huge, scaly dragon, Tiamat, and successfully repulsed the wicked assault of the infernal seven against the moon.

Do we not see here a trace, even amongst the vulgar crowd, of that vague, monotheistic intuition, or the lingering rays of that primal light, which streamed upon earlier man, from the Light of lights, the one, ineffable God? Do we not see also here a pathetic confession of the need of knowing this divine being, of the necessity of a mediator between God and man who might lay his hand upon them both? Does it not seem as though we have here fragments of revealed truth handed down from primitive days, but which were slipping, slipping out of the minds of men? Harken to a prayer addressed to this great mediator and heavenly benefactor of men:

“Thine the depth of the ocean;

Thine are all human beings, all who breathe, all who
bear a name and exist on the earth's surface;

The whole of the four regions of the world, the arch-
angels of legions of heaven and earth, how many
soever—

These are thine.

Thou art the Life-giver!

Thou art the Savior!

The merciful One among the gods!

Cure thou this plague!”

Again:

"How sublime art thou!
 What transitory being equal to thee!
 O Benefactor amongst all the gods!
 Thou art the Rewarder!
 O Lord of battles!
 Merciful One amongst the gods!
 Generator who bringest back the dead to life!
 Beneficent King of heaven and earth! . . .
 To thee is the life of life,
 To thee belong death and life!"

But, as we go amongst these people, do we find anything nobler than this prayer for deliverance from temporal calamities and from these evil spirits which cause them? Does man blame *himself* for his misfortune? Does he acknowledge his own sin, guilt, and need of moral renewal? We pause at a door, and hear some one at prayer: "The cursed thing of my god unknowingly did I eat. The accursed thing of my goddess unknowingly I did trample on. O lord, my sins are many; my transgressions are great. O my god, my sins are many, my transgressions are great. O god whom I know and whom I know not, my sins are many, my transgressions are great. The sin that I sinned I knew not. The transgression that I have committed, may the wind carry away! Strip off my manifold wickedness as a garment. O my god, seven times seven are my transgressions. Forgive my sins! Forgive my sins; may thy ban be removed!" Here we see a strange mixture of superstition and truth. The man is clearly conscious of his sin. That he is suffering pain is to him evidence that one of the gods is offended with him. But he seems to think that the offense was in eating some accursed thing, or in trampling upon

something that was under the ban. Therefore the wrath of heaven burns against him.

But we listen further. Now he is mounting higher. The stings of conscience force from his lips the cry of penitence and the prayer for deliverance in strains that remind us of the impassioned cries of a David himself. His utterances now are the cry of a soul feeling what a pure god is, and by comparison, how black is human sin. Apart from the fact that more than one god is sometimes mentioned in them, these bitter cries from a stinging conscience and this plea for mercy might be uttered even by a convicted soul of to-day:

“Lord, my faults are very great!
Very great are my sins!

The strength of the anger of the Lord is kindled against me!

I am cast down, and there is none to stretch out a hand to me.

I am worn out and languishing, and there is none to deliver.

I draw near to God, who shows mercy, and I pour forth bitter lamentations.

Mother goddess, forgive my sins;
Let thy heart be appeased, like the heart of a mother who has borne a child.

Thy child is full of lamentations; his heart is torn with sorrow;

He mourns in silence, like a turtle-dove;
He has implored, like a child, the mercy of his own God.”

Further:

“If thou dost receive me favorably;
If thou dost grant thy protecting favor to man, he lives again.

Ruler of all things and of all men, thou merciful Deity who dost restore,
Thou dost receive our lamentations.”

Or we hear a prayer for regeneration:

“May my transgression be cleansed!
Let the yoke be unbound, the chain be loosed;
May the seven winds carry away my groaning;
May I strip off my evil—
Burn up my evil, knit together my life.”

With this clear consciousness of sin, did this people ask any questions or have any traditions as to its origin? Whatever Abraham himself may have been taught, by his father, of the ancient traditions brought with them from the north, he would hear, in his Chaldæan home, legends passing from lip to lip about it, and see pictorial representations of the dire event. He might have seen, on bas-reliefs, pictures of the sacred plant guarded by genii; might have learned that the oldest name of great Babylon itself was *Tin-tir-ki*, which signified “the place of the tree of life;” on cylindrical seals might have seen the image of a tree, with a man and woman on either side, their hands stretched out toward the fruit, while the serpent was coiled up behind the woman as though tempting her to sin. He might have heard, also, a story of the revolt and punishment of evil spirits; a story describing how the god of life divine sat supreme and beneficent amid thousands of adoring spirits, who were chanting his praises in celestial songs, when suddenly a loud cry of discord broke up that holy harmony, spoiling, confusing, and confounding that hymn of praise. Then, so the story would go on to narrate, he of the bright crown wound a powerful blast upon his trumpet. It was such a blast as might well wake the dead. He overcame these rebel angels, consigned them to punishment, and in their place created mankind.

Does not all this remind us of the verse of Milton,

in which he portrays the celestial hierarchies as singing in heaven in high jubilee, when the Almighty Power had hurled headlong, flaming from the ethereal sky, with hideous ruin and combustion, down to bottomless perdition, in adamantine chains and penal fire, the rebel angels, and declared his resolve to re-people heaven by making a new world?

“Glory they sung to the Most High, good-will
 To future men, and in their dwellings peace;
 Glory to him whose just avenging ire
 Had driven out the ungodly from his sight,
 And the habitations of the just; to him
 Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordained
 Good out of evil to create; instead
 Of spirits malign, a better race to bring
 Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse
 His good to worlds and ages infinite.”

Abraham might also have heard, here in Ur of the Chaldees, stories of a great deluge, which had come upon the earth in ages past because of the wickedness of man. The legend, as it lived in song and story, was that the great god Hea said to his son Bel, “Let the sinner expiate his sin, and be thou propitious unto him.” Then the pious Chasisadra was summoned by the deity to leave his house and build a ship of prescribed dimensions. In this, when finished, with his substance, servants, family, he must take refuge. Cattle and wild beasts of the field were accordingly brought under the protecting roof to preserve the seed of every kind. Whatever was needful for their sustenance was also stored in the ship. Though he had said to the god that when the people should see him building they would deride him, he had nevertheless obeyed. According to instructions, he had carefully overlaid the

wood within and without with bitumen. At last he entered, closed the door, and intrusted the vessel to the helmsman. Then from the base of heaven the gods of the subterranean waters brought overwhelming floods. The god Rimmon thundered in the dark clouds. Other deities, as well, took part in the destructive work, and universal darkness came on. At this fearful calamity, both gods and men were in consternation. The former fled from the awful sight, and took refuge in heaven. The goddess Ishtar then took heart, and in grief interceded for the hapless race. The rest of the gods wept in sympathy for her.

Six days and seven nights the flood and tempest swept the earth and overwhelmed it; but on the seventh day there was a calm. The sea retired, the evil wind hasted, and the flood ceased. In his boat Chasisadra traveled a tossing sea, on whose dark bosom floated corpses like trunks of trees. He opened the roof-window, and as the light streamed over his face his tears freely flowed. Wheresoever he directed his gaze he could see nothing but the corpse-covered waves. The ship sped to the land Nisir, where a mountain held it fast. Then Chasisadra waited until the waters assuaged and the earth was dried. At the dawn of the seventh day he sent forth a dove. It flew hither and thither, but finding no resting-place for the sole of its foot, it returned. Then he took out a swallow, and let it fly. It, too, flitted hither and thither; but finding no resting-place, it also returned. Then he sent out a raven. The raven went to the corpses on the water, began to eat them, swam away, and did not return. Then Chasisadra went forth from the ship, erected an altar on the summit of the mountain, gathered herbs in sevens, and spread under them sweet calamus, cedar,

and spice. The gods inhaled the fragrant savor, and, like flies, gathered over the sacrifice. Then Ishtar censured Bel for causing such a destruction. A dispute amongst the gods ensued, until at length Hea interposed, and demanded that henceforth every man shall atone for his own sin, and suffer the penalty that accrues to him. Then Bel descended to the ship to Chasisadra, bore him and his wife aloft, and with a blessing announced to them that they should be translated to a distant spot, and be exalted to the gods. Then the hero and his wife were carried far away to the mouth of the two rivers.

Similarly, mingling with the people, may Abraham have heard the old creation story of Chaldæa! It is true that the accounts, as they have come down to us, bear a later date than the patriarch's time. Yet the elements out of which they were composed were no doubt floating about as traditions long before they were put into a connected story, such as we find them, several centuries later, recorded on seven tablets. They spoke of a watery abyss, the chaos, over whose dark bosom may have hovered the mystic creative spirit; of successive creative acts, beginning with the production of the gods themselves, and going on to the establishment of the foundations of the earth and of the vault of heaven; of the creation of the heavenly bodies, or of their arrangement, by the god Anu; of the creation of the cattle of the field, beasts, and creeping things.

The correspondences between this account and the story of Genesis have been often exaggerated; but though the stories which Abraham heard in the Chaldean cities were, in simplicity and grandeur, immeasurably behind the Biblical narration as written by Abra-

ham's great descendant, Moses, yet some common, primitive tradition may easily have been, and most likely was, the original source of both. Noting the surpassing grandeur and spiritual purity of the account in Genesis, yet carefully marking resemblances between the two, one is easily led to the conviction that, by some favoring Providence, the Scriptural history has preserved the true narrative of which the Chaldæan is a corruption. Whether there was a belief in Chaldæa in successive creative days or not, it is certain that, long before Abraham's day, with these people seven was a sacred number; that they had a seven-day week; that, besides many sacred days and days of feasting, fasting, thanksgiving, or prayer, days lucky and unlucky, they had also a regular seventh-day Sabbath—a kind of Puritan Sunday, in fact, in which no work was to be done, in which not even the king must ride out in his chariot, eat forbidden meats, or violate a long list of minute restrictions. This day they called a "day of rest for the heart."

There is one question more: Would Abraham hear amongst these Chaldæans anything of a future life? He would have heard them speak of the soul flying like a bird to heaven—to heaven, a place above the deep blue of the visible firmament, the true home of the gods and blessed spirits, but whither none could ascend until death and the grace of Bel had freed him from the shackles of the flesh. He might have heard some Chaldæan neighbor praying that "the sun, greatest of the gods, may receive the saved soul into his holy hands." He would have heard them speak of a judgment to come, in which the sun would be upon the judgment throne. He would have heard them speak of the beneficent god Marduk as he who raises the dead to life.

When their fluttering heart should be still in death, they hoped to go to the land of the silver sky; there, in company with the blessed, to quaff the pure water of life out of pure vessels, and, fed by the gods themselves, to eat celestial food, with oil unceasing and the wine of blessedness. One tablet has been discovered which pictures the lower regions, whither the wicked are banished, as occupied by two fearful monsters that represent avenging tormentors, while above, upon the earth, a dead man is placed between two protecting gods, as though man, in his weakness and moral impurity, had fled to the gods for escape from the horrors of the pit.

Such, in barest outline, was the religion of the land in which the father of the faithful probably had his birth, and where, under the shadow of the far-famed temple of the moon-god of Ur, he passed his years until his manhood's prime. What a mixture of the noble and the base; of glorious truths, exalted faith, and hideous superstition! Now, as by fitful flashes, they discerned a Divine King, far, far higher than all the gods of the daily worship; and these gods would be now and again transfigured, but soon all would be lost again in the blackness of idolatry. Now we hear the cry of conscience mounting up to the true God, whom it was feeling after and seeking; now we are repelled by the slavery to magic, and horrified with the orgies of a sensual worship. Would this nomad at their gates remain unpolluted? Would he cling to the purer faith, or rise above the spreading idolatry to an unshaken trust in the one most high God? It would appear that the seductive influences did win over his father so that he bowed down to other gods than the El Shaddai, the mighty God, whose worship he had brought with him from his far-off northern home.

Look at Abraham! Wherever he turns, idolatry, superstition, magic, sensual rites seduce him. His father's house, lured away, apostatizes; a thousand temptations to compromise or relax his hold daily assail him. But there he stands, a majestic figure, another Abdiel, faithful alone among the faithless, holding fast his convictions. He turns resolutely away from all that is degraded or degrading, from all that is superstitious, false, or unclean, in the beliefs and practices amidst which he lives. Like a strong magnet, he singles out and holds fast all that is divine or pure, braves personal danger for the sake of his convictions, and at length, abandoning his home, wanders to unknown lands, there to find a home where he can better train his children and his household in the faith and fear of the Lord. Thus he founds the purest monotheism known to history. How came he by this stalwart faith, this inflexible principle, this passion for monotheism? Like a pure white lily he lived, unsullied by the muddy, miasmatic waters in which he grew. As another has said, his tent was like Noah's ark, preserving the hopes of the world in a wild ocean of moral and religious degeneracy.

Was it due, as Max Müller said, to a divine revelation? That depends upon what we mean by revelation. It is possible so to define revelation in a case like this as to rob the man of God of the crown of glory and gratitude which rightly belongs to him. When we think of a Homer or a Sophocles; of a Socrates, a Plato, an Aristotle; of a Phidias, or a Praxiteles,—we recognize the immense debt of gratitude which the world owes to their splendid work. But sometimes, through our jealousy of the rights of revelation, we forget the rights of the human. Thus men like Abraham and Moses have been so treated that they drop out of the

rank of free human personalities, and become mere passive tools in the hands of Providence. We say, it was God that wrought in them, and not themselves that wrought for God. Thus they become so far removed from us that they seem less like real, tempted, suffering men, than like some superior creatures with an unearthly nimbus about them. But, whatever their relation to divine inspiration, they were first of all men—men of like passions as ourselves; men with hearts and nerves; men open to the seductions of the world, the flesh, and the devil; men, not stony images, impervious to every human influence, but men struggling with endless temptations and seductions to sin, sneered at by their friends, facing danger from their enemies, meeting persecution for their faith, yet holding fast their integrity, and by their faithfulness winning victories for all succeeding generations. Thus they stand, by their own regal manhood, at the fountal springs of human progress.

What is revelation? James Freeman Clarke says: "If by special revelation is meant a grand, profound insight, an inspired vision of truth so deep and so living as to make it a reality like that of the outward world, then we see no better explanation of the monotheism of the Hebrews than this conviction transmitted from Abraham, through father and son, from generation to generation." Yes. But whence came this profound conviction in the soul of Abraham himself? Why did not others than he receive it, and hand it down to their posterity? It is true that Abraham was not absolutely the only one in all that region who clung to the purer faith of earlier days. There may have been other pilgrim fathers who migrated to the west from the banks of the Euphrates in the interests of piety. Certainly,

Melchizedek was a noble priest of the most high God, and even the Canaanitish king of Gerar seems to have been familiar with his name.

But why was it that their lights went out, whilst Abraham's faith shone with such a steady brightness that it has been as a torch from heaven to all the ages since? We must hold firmly together the divine and the human side in revelation. As Principal Fairbairn puts it: "On the side of God revelation is creative and communicative; on the side of man it is receptive and responsive. The phenomena correspondent to the former are those of revelation, to the latter those of faith and worship. The man who has most clearly and certainly heard God, has done more than hear him for himself. He has heard him for the world, and the world ought to be able to hear God in the man. And may not the word which God has spoken to another become a word directly to me, yet which I should never have heard but for the older man of finer ear and clearer soul? . . . Are there not persons who have acted and still act like a personalized conscience for the most cultivated peoples?"

But mark, according to this it is the man of finer ear and clearer soul who receives the word. In some man God sees a grandeur of spirit, an instinctive perception of the true and the eternal, a clinging to the right and the true, a high religious feeling, a firm courage, such greatness of moral stature and such inflexible moral strength, that he can make the man an organ of revelation for the world; and the man, receiving the revelation, freely stands by it, builds it into his own character, and hands it down to his children and the world. How that revelation comes to a man, whether by some voice audible to the mortal ear, in burning

bush or pillar of fire, in rainbow across the cloud, or in vision of smoking furnace and burning lamp, or by a profound conviction in the depths of the soul, it is all the same at last. Not the accidents that make God known, but the knowledge of God it is that constitutes the revelation.

There are men who have just as certainly heard God's voice in their inmost spirit, saying, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," or "Go preach my gospel," as though they had seen his flaming fingers write the message in words of fire upon the stars, had heard it spoken in articulate thunder from some burning bush, or from the lightnings on some holy mount. Just as, when we speak to each other, all that passes between us is some invisible movement of the invisible air, which, knocking at the door of the listener's brain, is taken in and read, begetting a conviction that he can not escape, and which he can not explain that we have spoken the word, so all revelation, however given, must, in the last analysis, take place in the soul of the man. In whatever way soever God may see fit to impart to him the truth, it can be at last nothing more than an intense conviction, of which he can not rid himself, that the voice of God has spoken the truth to his heart.

Jewish tradition represents the patriarch as faithful to Jehovah even from childhood. One beautiful story somewhat fancifully describes him as having lived in early boyhood in a cave, and as coming out only after he was a growing lad. When he first left it, looking up at the heavens over him and around all, and about upon the earth, he began to think, "What could have created all this?" Presently the sun rose in splendor, and he thought, "This must be the maker of the universe," and then threw himself down before it and

worshiped it the whole day. But when evening came the sun sank, and Abraham now thought, "This could not be the creator of all." Then the moon rose in the east, and the countless army of the stars came forth. "Surely, the moon is the lord of all, and the stars are the hosts of his servants," cried the patriarch, and bowed before the moon in worship. But the moon went down, the light of the stars faded, and the sun lifted his glowing face again above the edge of the sky. Then he said: "Truly, all these heavenly bodies together could not have created the universe. They listen to the voice of an unseen ruler, to whom all owes its being. Him alone I will henceforth worship. Before him, the only One, I will henceforth bow."

The tale goes on to relate that, when fifty years of age, he returned to his father's house. He was sore distressed at the false worship, and set himself to teach his kindred the better way. In various ways he showed them the utter folly and worthlessness of idol worship. One day a woman came with a dish full of fine meal, and asked that it be set before the gods. As soon as she had gone, he took a stick and broke in pieces all the idols except the largest. In the hands of this he put the stick. When his father came back, and found his gods destroyed, he asked in wrath who had done this. Abraham replied: "Why should I deny it? A woman brought a dish full of fine flour, and asked me to set it before the gods. But hardly had I done so, before each wanted it. Hearing them thus clamoring for it, the biggest of them took the stick and broke the rest in pieces." "How can you mock me?" retorted Terah. "Have idols reason?" Then Abraham answered, "Do not your ears hear what your mouth speaks?" But Terah in anger took him to Nimrod,

the king, who lost patience with him, and ordered him to be bound for burning upon a huge pile of wood. But the flames were instantly extinguished by a fountain which gushed up from beneath. The wood changed into blossoming fruit-trees, a delightful garden grew up all around, and angels were seen sitting in it, with Abraham in their midst.

We smile at such stories; but may they not be only the rough husk surrounding a kernel of historical truth? A faith so stalwart and unflinching as Abraham's would be more than likely to arouse opposition and persecution at the hands of the idolatrous Chaldæans, if not from his own family, whose polytheism he must have felt under obligation to reprove. Can we conceive of him as clinging with such passionate devotion to his trust in Jehovah, as so utterly repudiating the spreading polytheism and idolatry of the land, yea, as determinedly inducing the tribe to leave this fruitful home, without his meeting great opposition, if not attempts upon his life? Does not Isaiah speak of God as having redeemed Abraham, or, as the word frequently means, as having delivered him from death; as if, in his earlier career, he had been in danger of a death from which his God had delivered him? At any rate, when the rest of his kindred were lured into sin, he dared to stand alone and champion the honor of the one true God. Even after he had left his boyhood home, and had pitched his tents more than six hundred miles away in Haran, he would not rest. There, too, he found a religion similar to the one which he had left behind him in Ur. There a temple of the moon-god rivaled that of his early home, and here a simple cone of stone, above which blazed the star of the moon, was the object of worship. His father and brother might be contented

there; but his pure and lofty spirit craved something better than rich pastures and multiplying flocks. So, under a holy impulse from on high, he started forth in faith upon that journey that was to make his nomad tent the fountain of spiritual life for the world.

Did you ever try to stand alone?—to be like Joseph in Egypt, like Daniel in Babylon, like Jeremiah in backsliding Jerusalem, like Savonarola in Florence, Wiclif in Oxford, Luther at Worms?

“Then to side with Truth is noble when we share her
wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 't is prosperous
to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward
stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had
denied.

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes—they were souls
that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious
stone;
Stood serene and down the future saw the golden beam
incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith
divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood, and to God's su-
preme design.”

Well, that is just what Abraham did. He was one of the first and greatest of the mighty line. Nor did he so stand alone for the truth because God compelled him to; but because his glorious soul was fit to receive the word divine, God revealed it unto him. Then, because he lived true to the truth he had received, he received it in greater and greater fullness. Well done,

noble and majestic spirit! Well done, thou who didst by thy unfaltering faith, so fan the flickering spark of a truth rapidly dying from the world that it flamed into splendor to become as a blazing torch before the eyes of men; yea, to be a pillar of fire to guide the upward march of man. Well done, first great pilgrim father, in obedience to the voice divine, abandoning thy native land, and thy father's house, to wander into unknown lands and face hostile peoples in the interests of truth and righteousness. Father of the faithful, well done!—so charging thy children and thy descendants after thee to keep the way of the Lord, and to live righteously and justly; so burning into their souls the living truth of the personality, unity, holiness of God, that in spite of desert wanderings, Egyptian bondage, wilderness journeyings, the seductions of Canaanitish heathenism, the Babylonian captivity, that truth shall never be effaced from the mind of thy posterity, until, shining with continually increasing splendor through the ages, it becomes, from the day of thy son Jesus, as a great sun in mid-heaven for all mankind.

LECTURE V.

THE SPHINX'S CRY FOR LIGHT.

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AT the base of the great Pyramid has stood, for almost six thousand years, the colossal Sphinx. Nearly ninety feet long, seventy-four feet high, the face, measured from chin to crown, twenty-six feet, cut from the solid rock on which it rests, it has profoundly impressed spectators from age to age. Persian, Greek, Roman, Englishman, Frenchman, American, have in turn been astonished, not to say awed, by this striking spectacle. Many extravagant praises have been lavished upon it, and many profound reflections have been called forth by it. Its huge figure, as all who have seen it bear witness, does have a startling effect. It looms upon one as an eternal specter. "The stone phantom seems attentive." One might almost say that it listens and gazes. "Its great ear seems to be gathering in the sounds from the past; its eyes, looking toward the rising sun, peer, as it were, into the future." It would hardly surprise one should it burst out with the cry of the dying Goethe, "Light, light, more light!" Hegel, with his usual penetration, says that it is in itself a riddle. An ambiguous form, half brute, half human, it may be regarded as a symbol of the Egyptian spirit. "The human head, looking out from the brute body, exhibits spirit, as it were, beginning to emerge from the merely natural, to tear itself loose therefrom, and already to look more freely around it, without, however, entirely freeing itself from the fetters nature had imposed." Again he says: "The hidden meaning, the spiritual, emerges as a human face from the brute, indicating that the meaning of the spiritual is a problem

which the Egyptians proposed to themselves, as the enigma generally is not the utterance of something wholly unknown, but the challenge to discover more clearly, implying a wish to be revealed."

The whole life of Egypt bore the impress of this confused vision, as though the people saw men as trees walking, but was rubbing its eyes and straining them if perchance it might acquire a more perfect view. Upon its sculpture, painting, architecture; upon its science, religion, social and political customs, we see this stamp of the enigmatical. Through all speaks the muffled voice of a struggling spirit, a spirit full of energy and life, but as it were with an iron band about its forehead; a spirit involved in contradictions, yet proposing to itself seriously the problems which these contradictions imply. Since religion, in the words of Edward Caird, "sums up the ultimate attitude of man to his universe," these antagonisms in the Egyptian life, as might be expected, are brought out with especial strength in the religion.

If ever there was a nation on earth to which the words of Paul, addressed to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, could be particularly applied, that nation was the ancient Egyptians. They were in all things exceedingly religious. So struck was Herodotus with their extreme piety that he declares them the most religious of mankind, surpassing all others in the reverence which they paid to the gods. All Egypt bore the impress of this intense religiousness. Not only in the numerous sacred ceremonies and holy pomps; not only in the magnificent religious fêtes and numerous hallowed days; not only on idol, amulet, and holy book; not only in vast sanctuaries and stupendous tombs, do we see this stamp of religion, but on the entire life that mark appears. Its

writing was so full of sacred symbols and allusions to the mythology, that to employ it for a purpose purely secular was almost impossible.

Literature and science were only branches of theology; art labored in the service of worship, to glorify the gods or some great king who had become a god. So numerous and extended were the religious laws and precepts that it was impossible to exercise a profession, or even to provide for one's household, without continually calling to mind the priestly regulations. Even medical works, which descend to minute details about extracts, and even receipts against vermin, are essentially religious, so that the medical prescriptions are entirely subordinate to the prayers and religious rites which give them their healing power. They contrived, no small achievement, to make even mathematics religious. Everything, from the beetle and grass-blade to the overflowing Nile and the rising sun, seemed to say to the Egyptian, "Think of the gods, and hallow them." From early times down to the latest, religion was their intensest passion. We may be tempted to smile and to think this people simple, when we see them, in the days of the Persian rule, hot in revolt against the viceroy of Darius, yet allowing their wrath instantly to cool and turn to praise as they meekly placed their necks again under the yoke, because the king made them a present of one hundred talents with which to purchase a new holy ox in place of the one that had just died. Yet surely a people that could be so controlled by religion, though it be a superstition, stands higher than the imbruted populace of Rome, willing to bear any degree of hardship or extreme of tyranny if only they could have plenty of cheap bread and bloody shows.

Still, though in Egypt religion was so all-pervasive, it presents to the student great difficulties. It is literally packed full of contradictions. Like the Sphinx, it is immense, listening, gazing, half human, half brute. In studying it, we hear, now sublime hymns and exalted prayers that breathe forth a consciousness of the spiritual nature of the divine Being, and express faith in a sole, living, almighty, personal God; now we are led into the presence of a vast pantheon, with its host of deities, and with its symbols so gross and its images so monstrous that we seem to be looking at the religion of a savage tribe of fetish-worshippers. The more one gets into it, the more he feels like echoing the sentiment of a great French scholar, M. Chabas: "In contemplating the doctrines of ancient Egypt, we are seized with a kind of giddiness, like one on the verge of a bottomless abyss. No mythology ever possessed so great a store of fantastic and complex notions engrafted on a simple principle like monotheism." It is not our purpose here to attempt a complete, systematic description or history of the rise and development of this religion. We aim simply to set forth some of its salient points.

To do even-handed justice to such a religion is not easy. One is in constant danger of exaggerating, either the lofty ideas on the one hand, or the crude symbolism and gross mythology on the other. To understand it, one needs a clear eye, an impartial temper, and a continual recollection that he is dealing, not with the wild lucubrations of monsters with a nature utterly alien to our own, but with the most sacred beliefs of men who lived, wrought, loved, hated, rejoiced, wept, hoped, feared; with men, in numerous respects, able, even brilliant; men who anticipated by thousands of years many

of our arts and sciences; men with reason, conscience, heart, and yearnings after God. We must recollect, also, that the external aspect of a religion as presented to the eyes of a stranger ignorant of their language and their symbolism, can not often be implicitly trusted. To understand a people, we must get their point of view, try to look as through their eyes, to feel with their heart, and to symbolize with their imagination. We must hear them pray and praise, and voice their theological thoughts in their own words. The very last person fitted to understand a faith different from his own, is the theological controversialist, bent upon showing that he has all the truth, and that no other religion ever had any.

Let us, with Charles Loring Brace, imagine so appalling a catastrophe for mankind as that some violent persecution in the fifth or sixth century had swept the Christian Gospel forever from the world. Suppose that not only the Bible, but also the works of the Church fathers and every utterance of Christian song had been hidden, had perished, or that the language in which they were written had been utterly lost. Suppose, further, that we, two or three thousand years later, were scholars trying to learn something about that faith. What kind of an idea should we get of Christianity? We should read in the pages of the purest and noblest Roman historian that this dead religion was a detestable superstition. Another would tell us that its followers indulged in shameful orgies of lust, and even practiced human sacrifice. We should find representations of the Christians worshiping an ass, and, as Jews, seeming to hold sacred, if not to adore, even the swine. From those of highest moral character and purest moral sympathies living at the time, we should not hear a word of its

doctrines, its marvels, the wonderful life of its founder, or of its power to ennoble those who held it. True, in the pages of Pliny might be read that he had made an investigation of this strange faith, even by tortures forcing confessions from some of its official women, and that the result of the inquiry was, that here was a boundless superstition, spreading like a conflagration, not only in the city, but in the country as well; that these people solemnly affirmed that it was the custom to meet on a stated day before sunrise, and sing a hymn to Christ as God; and that they bound themselves, further, by an oath never to commit any crime, but to abstain from robbery, theft, adultery, never to break their word; and that then they would separate to meet together again in the evening, to eat in company a simple and harmless meal.

Going, then, to its own symbolism and art, the investigator of this dead religion would naturally infer that its central deity had the figure of an aged man, with flowing locks and a noble and venerable countenance; that its followers worshiped also a goddess of fair appearance with a wonderful child; that they believed in the marriage of this divinity with a higher deity; and that they adored, besides, a sad man of suffering who had been executed as a criminal. The student would be almost sure to discover animal worship, or at least fetishism, in the adoration of the lamb, dove, or sacred fish. In the pictures of beings of frightful aspect who contend with others of benignant face, he would be very likely to detect a picture of the struggle of the good and evil principles. He would find pictures of heaven which were nothing but the continuance of the pastoral scenes of Italy and Germany. He might even go further, and, following in the footsteps of many

wise theologians of to-day regarding other religions, resolve the whole into a solar myth. Even the name which its supposed god had given to himself, "The Light of the World," would plainly indicate the solar origin of the story. Then, how easily the twelve apostles would make the twelve months, or the twelve signs of the zodiac; the day of the nativity, the day of the sun's return northward; the opposition of Christ to the scribes and Pharisees, the struggle of the bright sun against the demons of darkness; his death, an eclipse; his resurrection, his emergence from the deep shadow, or the bursting forth of the spring with the light and life which follow it! But what if, just when this theory of Christianity was triumphant, there had been discovered, read, and published, the New Testament, a collection of the Church fathers, and a number of early Christian hymns? What a flood of light would have been thrown upon the Christian faith; what a revolution in the theories concerning it!

Now, both Christian fathers and heathen writers heap all kinds of scorn upon some aspects of the Egyptian religion. The heathen Herodotus, Diodorus, Juvenal, Antiphanes, Anaxandrides, no less than the Christian Origen and Clement, flung their gibes at it. For example, Clement writing against the follies of fashion indulged in by Christian ladies, compares those who elaborately decorate their bodies while neglecting the soul in which the image of God should be enshrined, to the Egyptians, who have magnificent temples, gleaming with gold, silver, and amber, and glittering with Indian and Ethiopian gems. "Their shrines," he says, "are filled with embroidered hangings. But if you enter the holy of holies of the inclosure, and, in haste to behold something better, seek the image that is the

inhabitant of the temple, and if any priest of those that offer sacrifice there, looking grave and singing a pæan in the Egyptian tongue, remove a little of the veil to show you the god, he will furnish you with a hearty laugh. For the deity that is sought, to whom you have rushed, will not be found within; but a cat or a crocodile, or some such beast, unworthy of the temple, but quite worthy a den or a hole in the dirt. The god of the Egyptians is revealed, a beast rolling on a purple couch."

The heathen were not less emphatic in their ridicule. The comic writers of Greece make themselves merry on this subject. One of them, in a comedy, says of the Egyptians: "You worship the ox, but I sacrifice him to the gods; you consider the eel a mighty demon, we think him by far the best of fish. You worship a dog, but I thrash him whenever I catch him stealing meat. You weep if you see a cat ailing, but I like to kill and skin him. A shrew-mouse is an object of great consideration with you, not of the least with me." All classical scholars are familiar with the satire commonly attributed to Juvenal: "Who does not know what monsters demented Egypt worships? One part adores a crocodile, another quakes before an ibis gorged with serpents. The golden image of the sacred, long-tailed ape glitters where the magic chords resound from mutilated Memnon, and ancient Thebes lies in ruins with her hundred gates. There, whole towns venerate cats, here a river fish, there a dog, but no one Diana. It is impiety to violate and break with the teeth a leek and onion. O holy races, to whom such deities as these are born in gardens!"

Now, this ridicule found abundant justification. Had you visited Egypt ages before the time of Abra-

ham, or had gone with him thither to escape the famine in Canaan, or had lived there when Joseph was Prime Minister, or when Moses stood with his "Thus saith the Lord," before Pharaoh; had gone with Solomon to fetch his Egyptian wife, or with Jeremiah after Jerusalem had fallen, traveled with Herodotus, or with Joseph and Mary when they took thither the infant Jesus,—you would have found at any time in the whole period of four thousand years a phase of religion which gave keen point to the stranger's most biting sneers. This was the extraordinary veneration paid, throughout the length and breadth of the land, to brute beasts.

With each passing century the superstition increased in power over the popular mind. The cat, the sparrowhawk, bull, crocodile, hippopotamus, rats, owls, swallows, the crested bird bennu, the jackal, dog-headed ape, ichneumon, ram, vulture, wolf, and even beetle, all had their adorers. It is true that not all of these were worshiped in all parts of the land. Some were sacred in one province, but treated as common articles of food in another. Each town was extremely jealous of the honor of its own favorites; and sometimes when religious fanaticism flamed high, one city or province would assail with open violence or contempt the holy beasts of another. In each province, where any kind of animal was sacred, some individuals of the species were attached to the principal temples. Here they had their special shrines, a piece of holy land whose products were devoted to their sustenance and to their train of priestly attendants. High as was the rank of the priests, they did not scruple to feed, clean, and look after the comfort and health of these beasts. As though proud of their duty, as the highest to which they could attain in the service of the deity, they performed these holy

offices in the presence of the multitude; with special symbols of distinction went through town and country, while those who met them bowed the knee in homage. When the animals died, they were carefully embalmed, and with pomp and ceremony deposited in mummy pits.

So intense was this feeling of reverence for the sacred beasts, that the person who should kill one of them, even through accident, had to pay such fine as the priests imposed. If the slain animal was a hawk or ibis, whether killed purposely or not, the man must die, and if he killed any of them with malice aforethought, his life must go for the life of the beast. Not even a Roman citizen could escape the fury of the populace when he had killed a sacred cat; and when Cambyses ranged in front of his invading army a number of sacred animals, the Egyptians fled without resistance for fear of injuring their holy beasts. When a cat died in a house, all the people shaved their eyebrows, and in conflagrations the Egyptians bent all their energies, not to quench the flames, but to save the cats. If by some dire accident, in spite of all their efforts, a cat leaped into the fire, a wail of lamentation went up from every lip.

In some cases it was an individual animal only of a species that was worshiped. At other times, when they could not certainly distinguish the particular one of the species that was especially sacred, they would adore the whole tribe rather than run the risk of injuring the divine one. In most parts of Egypt the crocodile was hated and killed. But in visiting the Fayoum with its artificial lake, one could see the divine crocodile. It was quite tame, and no wonder. Herodotus tells us that it was decorated with graceful and golden earrings, and rings on its forefeet. Strabo describes his

visit to the place. He says: "Our host, a man of distinction in the city of the crocodile, who showed me the sacred things of the city, took cakes, roast meat, and drink mixed with honey, and went with us to the lake. On the shore lay the crocodile. The priests went up to him. Two of them opened his jaws, and the third put in first the cakes, then the meat, and last of all he gave him the drink. With an air of calm resignation, he swallowed the sacrifice, ran into the water, and swam off to the opposite bank." This beast was supposed to have the prophetic gift. When, one day he refused to listen to King Ptolemy, and refused even to hear the priests, that was a sign of the monarch's speedy death. When the animal died, it was carefully embalmed, put into a sacred sarcophagus, and laid away in a subterranean chamber of the labyrinth. This strange worship lasted for two hundred years after the birth of Christ.

The climax of this astonishing adoration of beasts was reached in the worship of the goat of the city of Mendes, the Bull Mnevis at Heliopolis, and especially the sacred Apis at Memphis, which stood at the head of this remarkable superstition. This animal was recognized by peculiar marks, sometimes given as twenty-nine. Amongst them were a black color, a white quadrangle or triangle on the forehead, upon the back a white figure resembling an eagle, a half-moon on the breast, in the tail two kinds of hair, under the tongue a fleshy substance in the shape of a beetle. It was supposed to be a divine incarnation, born of a virgin cow impregnated by a ray of light from heaven, and never the mother of a second calf. When the old Apis died, search immediately began for another. The priests hastened through the whole land, examining the cattle.

Sometimes they had to hunt a whole year before discovering the precious beast. When it was found, a rich reward was granted to the owner, and a great sum of money, sometimes as high as one hundred talents of gold, was bestowed upon the priest who discovered it.

Then he was kept for forty successive days in the city of the Nile in Lower Egypt, where he was properly fed and trained for his high destiny. Then, at the rise of the moon, he was placed into a golden shrine on a holy bark, and carried down the Nile to the temple of the great god at Memphis. Received there with the clamors of the rejoicing crowd, he was bathed, anointed with the richest perfumes, and installed as deity. It was a time of great rejoicing, of salvation, and peace on earth. In that glad time, even the beasts of prey were harmless. A splendid court had been built for him; and here, in the time of Strabo, the visitor was privileged to see him springing about, or might even have a glance at him through the window as he stood in his hallowed stall. His mother also was lodged in the vestibule, and treated with highest honor. Henceforth he never left these holy precincts except on certain fixed days, when he was led in procession through the streets, while the population poured out to meet him with songs and jubilee. Luxuries appropriate to the highest monarch were lavished upon him. He was fed with most religious care; anointed with the choicest unguents; provided with mates of spotless beauty; regaled with most precious frankincense, which was constantly burned before him; furnished with most costly garments; and everything was done to show him supreme regard. Even the most distinguished people were glad to spend vast sums upon his care. Moreover, he was very wise. His oracle was renowned. The

questions put to him, he answered in various ways, as by sending dreams, through the words of children, etc. When he licked the dress of the astronomer Eudoxus, it signified the great man's death, and the same fate was prophesied to the Roman Germanicus when the animal would not eat out of his hand. If he reached the age of twenty-five years, he was not allowed to die a natural death, but was drowned by the priests. Yet, whether he died a natural death or was killed, the whole country was filled with mourning, and loud lamentations filled the air. The funeral was celebrated with a magnificence greater than in the case of men, costing sometimes as high as fifty talents. His embalmed body was placed with much pomp in a sepulchral chamber excavated at Memphis for this purpose.

These tombs of the holy bulls, unearthed by Mariette, have been described by Dean Stanley in his usual vivid phrase: "Long galleries hewn out of the rock, and opening from time to time, say every fifty yards, into high arched vaults, under each of which reposes the most magnificent black marble sarcophagus that can be conceived; a chamber rather than a coffin, smooth, and sculptured within and without; grander by far than ever the granite sarcophagus of the Theban king; how much grander than any human sepulchers anywhere else,—and all for the successive corpses of the bull Apis! These galleries formed part of the great temple of Serapis, in which the Apis mummies were deposited; and here they lay, not in royal, but divine state. The walls of the entrance were covered with *ex votos*." But when the bull died, he did not therefore cease to exist. The god, as such, did not die with him, but reincarnated himself at once in another similar form. Yet the dead one was regarded at the same

time as a divine animal in the other world, living there in the same condition as it had lived here. The difficulty that, in this way, there were in the other world always several Apis bulls, which all possessed unlimited divinity, did not disturb the faith of the Egyptians. They never sought to bring their notions of the invisible world into a system, and so these logical contradictions did not trouble them.

Now, what did this strange, this inveterate worship mean? Did it have any significance, or was it just a mere vulgar superstition? How shall we account for its remarkable permanence and ever-increasing power, through more than forty centuries, over this ancient race? How could a people, in so many other respects so gifted, be enslaved to a superstition apparently so monstrous? Were the Church fathers right in perceiving here one of the most appalling aberrations of the heathen spirit? Were the Christian apologists and classical comedians right in holding it up to scorn and ridicule as a boundless folly? Or, on the other hand, were the Greek philosophers right, when they found therein a symbolical doctrine of especial profundity? As for us, we believe that no superstition, however foolish, dark, or monstrous, could live in power over a race in so many respects so bright, for so long, unless in the heart of it there was some truth for which the hearts of men were crying. We believe that, like other errors, it was a muffled cry for light; a groping in the gloom for some passage which, perchance, might lead up into the day. Before trying to decide for what truth or truths the Egyptians were feeling in this apparently stupendous folly, let us listen to the worshiper in the Nile valley in his prayers and holy songs.

What is it he is saying? Can we believe our ears?

Is this man, who thus pours out his soul in exalted supplication and enraptured hymn, the same person who yesterday was joining in the adoration of ape or bull, cat, crocodile, or mouse? It seems impossible; yet he is indeed the same. As we hear him pray, we seem to be carried to the very antipodes of religious thought. He appears to be speaking to some one great Being, powerful, illimitable, incomprehensible, eternal, behind all the phenomena of the universe; above and behind all the personalities of the mythology; the One awful beyond expression, enduring while all things change, filling immensity and eternity, self-created, the one original, before whom was nothing, and in whose presence the earth and the heavens are as a morning cloud. He lives in truth, is truth itself, the essence of righteousness; terrible to evil-doers; yet merciful, benevolent, and full of love. To him must be submitted the will of man. In life he guides and blesses them, and the happiness of eternity is to be in union with him. To the sun he says, "Come to us." This great Being seems to be to the universe what man's soul is to his body. He is a spirit, dwelling in this material house which he has built. The worshiper says: "Thou art one, and millions of beings proceed from thee." "Thou hast made everything, and thou alone hast not been made; the only being who has not been begotten."

One of the greatest masters of the English tongue, Cardinal Newman, in writing what he means by God, says: "I mean, then, by the Supreme Being, one who is simple, self-dependent, and the only being who is such. Moreover, that he is without beginning, or eternal; that in consequence he has lived a whole eternity by himself, and hence that he is all-sufficient; sufficient for

his own blessedness and all blessed, ever blessed. Further, I mean a Being who, having these prerogatives, has the supreme Good, or rather is the supreme Good, or has all the attributes of Good in infinite intensesness; all wisdom, all truth, all justice, all love, all holiness, all beautifulness; who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent; ineffably one, absolutely perfect; and such that what we do not know and can not even imagine of him is far more wonderful than what we do and can. I mean, moreover, that he created all things out of nothing, and preserves them every moment, and could destroy them as easily as he made them; and that, in consequence, he is separated from them by an abyss, and is incommunicable in all his attributes. And further, he has stamped upon all things, in the hour of their creation, their respective nature, and has given them their respective work and mission, and their length of days, greater or less, in their appointed place. I mean, too, that he is ever-present with his works, one by one, and comforts everything he has made by his particular and most loving providence, and manifests himself to each according to its needs; and has on rational beings imprinted the moral law, and given them power to obey it, imposing on them the duty of worship and service, searching and scanning them through and through with his omniscient eye, and putting before them a present trial and a judgment to come." A sublime and very full description, indeed, of the Christian God. Yet Renouf, than whom no better judge can be found, declares: "Now, as I carefully examine each paragraph of this beautiful passage, . . . I am obliged to acknowledge that single parallel passages to match can be quoted from Egyptian far more easily than either from Greek or from Roman religious literature. I am not

speaking of philosophy, which both in Greece and Rome was generally subversive of the popular religion."

On the staircase of the British Museum is an ancient Egyptian papyrus which reads: "The great God, Lord of heaven and of earth, who made all things which are." Another prayer reads: "O my God and Lord, who hast made me, and formed me, give me an eye to see and an ear to hear thy glories." There is one phrase which constantly occurs in the Egyptian texts, "*Chepera, cheperot sef.*" Renouf declares that no words could more distinctly express the notion of self-existent being. Hearken to an Egyptian pray in his own words: "Thou art Lord of eternity, King of the gods, of many names, of holy transformations, of mysterious forms in the temples. From thee the celestial ocean derives its waters; from thee come the winds; for thee the ground brings forth its abundance. In obedience to thee is the upper heaven and the stars, and thou didst open the great gates. . . . Thou dost maintain law in the universe, and dost place the Son in the seat of the Father. Thou hast made the world with thy hands; its waters, its atmosphere, its vegetation and its flocks, all its flying things, all its fish, all its reptiles, all its quadrupeds. Thy diadem predominates at the zenith of heaven, and accompanies the stars. Thou art the might of all the gods. Thou art the beneficent in will and words. Thou art the praise of the great gods and the life of the inferior gods." Again: "Thou dost judge the world according to thy will; heaven and earth are subjected unto thee. Thou givest commands to men, to the generations, present, past, and future, to Egyptians and to strangers. The circuit of the solar orb is under thy direction. The winds, the waters, the wood, all plants and all vegetables; . . . all men are in ecstasy, all hearts in sweetness, all bosoms

in joy, every one in adoration. Every one glorifieth thy goodness. Thy tenderness encircles our hearts. Great is thy love in all bosoms." Once more: "Hail to thee, Lord of Hermopolis, self-existent, without birth, sole God who regulates the nether world and givest laws to those who are in Amenti." In one roll the deity is represented as saying: "I am the almighty God, the self-existent, who made heaven and earth, the waters, the breaths of life, fire, the gods, men, animals, cattle, reptiles, birds, fishes, kings, men, and gods." "I am the maker of heaven and earth. I raise its mountains and the creatures that are upon it; I make the waters, and the Mehura comes into being. . . . I am the maker of heaven and of the mysteries of the twofold horizon. It is I who have given to all the gods the soul which is within them. When I open my eyes there is light; when I close them there is darkness. . . . I make the hours, and the hours come into existence."

Another text, according to Renouf, says: "I am yesterday, I am to-day, I am to-morrow." "Hail to thee, O Ptah-tanen, great God who concealeth his form; . . . thou art watching when at rest; the Father of all fathers and of all gods; . . . watcher, who traversest the endless ages of eternity. The heaven was yet uncreated, uncreated was the earth, the water flowed not; thou hast put together the earth, thou hast united thy limbs, thou hast reckoned thy members; what thou hast found apart thou hast put into its place. O God, architect of the world, thou art without a father, begotten by thine own becoming; thou art without a mother, being born through repetition of thyself. Thou drivest away the darkness by the beams of thine eyes. Thou ascendest into the zenith of heaven, and thou comest down even as thou hast risen. When thou art a dweller

in the infernal world, thy knees are above the earth, and thine head is in the upper sky. Thou sustainest the substances which thou hast made. It is by thine own strength that thou movest; thou art raised up by the might of thine own arms. Thou weighest upon thyself, kept firm by the mystery which is in thee. The roaring of thy voice is in the cloud; thy breath is on the mountain-tops; the waters of the inundation cover the lofty trees of every region. . . . Heaven and earth obey the commands which thou hast given; they travel by the road which thou hast laid down for them; they transgress not the path which thou hast prescribed to them, and which thou hast opened to them. . . . Thou retest, and it is night; when thine eyes shine forth, we are illuminated. . . . O let us give glory to the God who raised up the sky, and who causeth his disk to float over the bosom of Nut, who hath made the gods and men and all their generations; who hath made all lands and countries, and the great sea, in his name of 'Let-the-earth-be.'"

So might we go on, page after page, quoting these sublime hymns and prayers to deity, hymns in which he has been declared to be the creator of all that has been formed, while he hath himself not been formed; the master of infinity, author of eternity, traversing millions of years in his existence. Let us quote just one more: "Author of the pastures which feed the beasts, and the plants which nourish man; he who feedeth the fishes of the river and the fowls of the air; he giveth the breath of life to the germ yet concealed in the egg; he feedeth the flying and creeping insects; he provideth food for the mouse in his hole and the birds in the forests. Homage to thee, Author of all forms, the One who is alone, whose arms extend and

multiply everywhere; thou who watchest over rulers when they repose, who lookest for the good of thy creatures! God Amon, who preservest all that is! Homage to thee because thou abidest in us (or because of thy immanence in us)! We prostrate ourselves before thy face because thou hast produced us. Homage to thee, by all creatures! Praise to thee in every region,—in the heights of the heavens, in the spaces of the earth, in the depths of the seas! The gods bow before thy majesty, and exalt the soul of him who produced them, happy that their creator abideth in them (or at the immanence of their generator in them). They say to thee, ‘Be in peace, O Father of the gods, who hast hung the heaven and planted the earth.’ Author of things! Creator of blessings! Prince supreme! Chief of the gods! We adore thy majesty at the moment in which thou producest us. Thou begettest us, and we cry out to thee to dwell in us!”

Nor was this exalted being sublime in physical attributes only. It is said that he listeneth to the poor that is in distress; that he is gentle of heart when a man crieth unto him; that he delivereth the fearful from the violent, and judgeth the poor and the distressed; that he wipeth away tears from all eyes, and careth for the abundance of blessing. He is the lord of wisdom whose precepts are wise; lord of mercy most loving, at whose coming men laugh, opener of every eye, proceeding from the firmament, causer of pleasure and light. Though it is said that truth is the essence and life of the divine being, and that he subsists by truth every day, yet the Egyptian heart melts as he thinks of the all-pervading love of the unseen deity. In impassioned prayer he says, “His love is in the south; his grace is in the north; his beauty taketh pos-

session of all hearts; his love maketh the arms to grow weak."

Here is a prayer of King Rameses II when in danger: "Who, then, art thou, O my Father Ammon (or Amon)? Doth a father forget his son? Surely a wretched lot awaiteth him who opposeth thy will; but blessed is he who knoweth thee, for thy deeds proceed from a heart full of love. I call upon thee, O my Father Amon! Behold me in the midst of many peoples, unknown to me; all nations are united against me, and I am alone; no other is with me. My many soldiers have abandoned me; none of my horsemen have looked toward me; and when I called them, none hath listened to my voice. But I believe that Amon is worth more to me than a million of soldiers, than a hundred thousand horsemen and ten thousands of brothers and sons, even were they all gathered together. The work of many men is nought; Amon will prevail over them." Is it not startling thus to hear this king, the very man who oppressed Israel, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick and in all manner of service in the field, praying in his own language, three thousand years ago, such sublime prayers as this?

Nor were humbler men wanting in the same confidence. In the Egyptian books of the British Museum you can read: "O Amon, lend thine ear to him who is alone before the tribunal; he is poor, and not rich. The court oppresses him; silver and gold for the clerks of the books, garments for the servants. There is no other Amon, acting as a judge to deliver one from his misery when the poor man is before the tribunal." "I cry, the beginning of wisdom is the cry of Amon, the rudder (of truth). Thou art he that giveth bread to him who has none; that sustaineth the servant of his house.

Let no prince be my defender in all my troubles. Let not my memorial be placed under the power of any man who is in the house. . . . My Lord is my defender. I know his power; to wit, (he is) a strong defender. There is none mighty except him alone. Strong is Amon, knowing how to answer, fulfilling the desire of him who cries to him." This great Being demands also moral character, purity, humbleness of mind, love, from his worshippers. The oldest manuscript in the world, composed, as the best judges assure us, not far from six thousand years ago, entitled "The Teachings of Prince Ptah-hotep," gives this instruction: "Be good to thy people, for that is well pleasing unto God. Be not proud of riches, for the giver of fullness is God. To obey, meaneth to love God; not to obey, to hate God." On the doors of the temple of Edfou we read that God finds his satisfaction in truth, that he is propitiated by it, and that he finds his pleasure in the most perfect purity; that he regards purity dearer than millions of gold and silver offerings. We shall see, by and by, that high moral standards were held up, and that the moral law was based upon the will of the Deity.

In connection with these exalted notions of Deity expressed in the hymns and prayers, let us ask, What was the fundamental meaning of the word "god" in the Egyptian language? In our description of the religion of India, we found that the word for god was *deva*, and signified "the bright, the shining one." The Egyptian seems to have a basal idea somewhat different. His word was *nutar*. It tells us what was their fundamental conception of the divine. It was formerly thought to mean the being who constantly renews himself; eternally young, because continually re-begetting himself. It would thus mean the active power which, in the period-

ical rotation, generates and produces things, lends them new life, and gives them freshness and youth again. But Renouf, after a very thorough discussion of the word, based upon a careful examination of every passage into which it or its cognates enter, comes to the conclusion that at bottom it means, "the strong," and that the expression *Nutar nutra* corresponds exactly to the Hebrew *El Shaddai*, the very title by which God told Moses he had been known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Of course, all scholars do not exactly agree with him; but no one has proposed anything better, and certainly he has a great many facts upon his side. There is an expression which means "the almighty power which is in heaven." But while *El* or *Elohim* was a proper name, *nutar* never was. In this sense it was like Hindoo *deva*. As we might say "the Divine," so the Egyptian said "*nutar*," meaning by it the Power.

Now, constantly a Power is referred to without a name or any mythological characteristic. For example, we read of the Power forbidding and commanding. From the ancient times such expressions as these are met with, "The field which the great Power, or the Divine, hath given thee to till;" "If any one beareth himself proudly, he will be humbled by the Power who mocked his strength;" "The magnanimous man is the object of the Power's regard;" "The Power, or the Divine, loveth the obedient and hateth the disobedient." A good son is spoken of as the gift of the Power. Again, "Praised be the Power for all his gifts." The Divine, or the Power, knows the wicked; he smites the wicked even unto blood. The sanctuary of the Power abhors noisy manifestations. It was in this style that, in all periods, the Egyptians spoke of the *nutar* in the singular number. Did not these ancient inhabitants of the

Nile valley, as they gazed into the depths of the tropical night, or watched the majestic course of the stars, or saw the sudden and resplendent rising of the sun over the silent desert-sands, receive the grandest inspiration that can come to a human soul from the unseen, even the thought of a Power illimitable, incomprehensible, eternal, behind all the phenomena of the universe? Was he not speaking of the true and only God, who is not far from any one of us; for in him we live, move, and have our being, whose eternal power and godhead are seen in the things that he hath made, and made known by that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world?

There is another word, which, if not exactly equivalent to deity, is most constantly associated with it. In our quotations, we heard the Egyptians speak of their deity as living in the truth, as being truth itself, demanding truth from the worshiper. The word, in these cases and others similar, has a deep significance. The Egyptian term is *maat*. The primitive notion of it is, right; as, a right line, straight. When used as a noun, it means a straight rule. It is a name for the regularity and order of the universe. We remember the Hindoo word *rita*, and the Zend *asha*, both having a significance very much akin to this Egyptian *maat*. Egypt is the very land, above almost all others, where we might expect such a conception to arise. The regularity and uniformity of nature is here remarkable. The existence of the people, yea, of the very country itself, depends so clearly upon the regularity of the natural phenomena that it could hardly fail to make a profound impression upon the people's mind. The apparently capricious in nature is here almost absolutely wanting.

The first Arab leader who conquered the land wrote

to the Caliph Omar: "Egypt is first a vast sea of dust; then a sea of fresh water; lastly, it is a great sea of flowers. The seasons are two. The Nile rises, with almost absolute regularity, at a certain time each year, to a height that seldom varies much. The same order characterizes the aspect of the sky. The blue is never clouded; the sun shines almost continuously in right royal splendor. Seldom does there arise a sudden storm. The light is never shrouded until evening, when the sun sinks into the purple west, in a glory which is a promise of the same returning brightness on the morrow. No sharp, snow-crested peak rises to break the uniformity of the plain. The whole land presents an aspect of calm immensity, where everything has an aspect of calm fixedness; where the universal struggle of life and death in nature is carried on as in a smoothly flowing dream, without sudden catastrophe." No wonder if, looking at his regularly, uniformly rising, shining, setting sun; at his sacred river, passing every year, at the very same time, through the very same movements which give life to his land,—he said, "I see order, law, in the world." Then he was led to believe that the Deity must love the order he so constantly maintained, and, rising still higher, believed that what the Deity loved in the physical realm he loved also in the moral. Then, in his thought, rising higher yet, he said: "The Divine himself exists through order; yea, it is of the very essence of his being. Therefore he demands order; *i. e.*, righteousness from his worshipers." By the Egyptian, thus, the word "law" was not used in a mere forensic sense of a command issued by a man or god, but as applied to the unvarying order which governs the universe whether in the physical or moral domain; an order which has its roots in the very nature

of the divine. Surely this was a great and noble conception.

Now, with the echoes of these sublime hymns and holy, exalted prayers in our ears, and before our eyes this vision of the great, almighty Power, who, upon a universal throne, sits ruling by law, and the very nature of whom is righteousness and truth, let us turn once more to that strange, grotesque superstition, the animal worship. How could a people with such exalted notions of Deity be for so many centuries so completely enslaved to a superstition apparently so monstrous? We repeat that we believe that the secret of its power, as of the influence of any widespread, long-enduring, error, was in the truth which, with stammering tongue, it was trying to express. It was the Sphinx's muffled cry for light. What, then, was the human heart trying to say in this? For what good that they comprehended not were those longings, yearnings, strivings—those blind gropings, with feeble hands and helpless, in the darkness?

Strange as this worship may appear to us, Egypt does not stand entirely alone in it. All mythologies teem with animal symbolism, and examples of sacred animals are sufficiently numerous. Cows and oxen were worshiped, not only in Egypt, but also amongst the Romans. They are to-day regarded as holy in India. By the Celts, Germans, Slavs, the horse was looked upon as sacred, and a number of these were kept at their temples, and were adorned precisely as the Egyptians decorated the holy crocodile. In the Book of Kings we read of horses and chariots of the sun, which even the backsliding kings of Judah kept at the doors of the house of Jehovah, and which Josiah, with true reforming zeal, took away. From Herodotus we learn of the

four white Nisæan steeds of the Persians which had a similar significance. The Germans preserved cats because they, as well as weasels, were skilled in magic. Like the Normans, they also made offerings to the wild birds to induce them to spare the grain and cattle. So, in Holland, the punishment of death was meted out to any person who killed one of the sacred swans kept at the expense of the State, and reverence for storks was common at The Hague. The geese of the Roman capital, kept there as symbols of fruitfulness and domesticity in honor of Juno, a benefit which they repaid by saving the city, are world-renowned. Even in Greece, poetry, art, and divination appropriated certain animals to certain gods; as the eagle to Zeus, the goat to Pan, and, in later times, the bull to Dionysus. Then, too, herds of cattle, exempt from the yoke and from all profane uses, fed in the groves and pastures of the temples, while the serpent of the temple at Epidaurus seems almost to have been confounded with the god Æsculapius himself. Yet, though there may thus be analogies and hints of a similar feeling amongst other peoples, nowhere else was it so universal, and nowhere did it assume such exaggerated shapes and monstrous adjuncts as in Egypt.

Many explanations have been given of this. Both ancients and moderns have tried their hand at the riddle. In the ancient times there were three popular solutions. Some said that the gods, being originally few in number, took the shape of animals in self-defense, and that when subsequently they rose to mastery they consecrated to themselves these animals in gratitude. With Diodorus, we must of course say that this is on its very face fabulous. Still others said that in former times images of animals fixed on spears as ensigns to

distinguish the different corps of the army, victory had followed, and hence the animal became sacred. This explanation too evidently inverts cause and effect. Yet it has been substantially revived in modern times by no less a scholar than Professor Sayce. He maintains that the animal-worship had its origin in early totemism, long before Egypt emerged upon the theater of history. Hence this superstition is a survival from a long forgotten past. These beasts were the sacred animals of the clans who first settled in these regions. But plainly this can never be proved, only pushes the question a little farther back, and does not account for the persistency and amazing strength of this worship in Egypt. Diodorus tells us that the priests alleged that the goddess Isis had commanded the people to consecrate some animal to the god Osiris, to pay the same honor to it as to him during its life, and give it the same reverence after death. This is evidently only a late explanation, made after the State religion was well organized. Diodorus's own explanation is, that one of the early kings introduced it to prevent the unification of the people so that he could govern them the more easily. But this guess has no foundation in history, and marks an age in which men not only theorize on the institutions of the past, but transport to them the maxims of the vicious policies of their own time. Nor can kings invent and by mere power enforce, during so many centuries, a worship so inveterate and mighty as this. Lucian explains it by the signs of the zodiac. But many of the sacred animals are not found in the constellations at all. Others have accounted for the whole practice by the motives of utility. Until metaphysical reasons were invented, this was the solution most generally re-

ceived by the ancients, and it has been revived in our time by as great a scholar as Wilkinson. On this theory the whole custom would be based on the prudence and foresight of the priests.

Some animals were held sacred to insure their preservation; others, to prevent their unwholesome meat from being eaten. It is possible that this feeling may have had something to do with the choice of this or that particular animal or species. The cow, the ox, the ibis, the cat, might have attracted attention to themselves on account of their indispensable utility. But there was no particular benefit to the people in the crocodile, hippopotamus, dog-headed ape, shrew-mouse, beetle, nor could there be great danger that the people without this religious sanction would have fallen to eating them. If the ichneumon and hawk were worshiped because they destroyed serpents and crocodiles, why were serpents and crocodiles themselves worshiped? Because they furnished food for the ichneumon? That is a circle which explains nothing. No; man does not worship from such every-day considerations. He worships because of some deep instinct, some abiding impulse. Such explanations mistake the track which may determine the course of the locomotive for the steam in the engine itself. Bunsen, amongst others, accounts for it by the belief in transmigration. According to this view, the human soul and that of the animal are essentially the same; therefore the animal is considered as sacred. But the Egyptians, except in the case of the deification of the kings, did not worship men. Why, then, worship animals, because they have the same essential nature as man? Besides, souls undergoing transmigration, if transmigration was believed in, were sup-

posed to be in prison and purgatory, and would not therefore be very liable to procure divine honors for the beasts in which for punishment they were dwelling.

Others, again, say that the similarities of the hieroglyphics to animal forms solves the problem. But many objections easily batter down this theory, and it has been so amply refuted by Pietschmann that no scholar of repute now holds it. Another class of investigators explain the entire matter by pantheism. The Greek philosopher, Porphyry, offered this solution. He says: "All living beings in their degree partake of the divine essence, and under the semblance of animals the Egyptians worshiped the universal Power which the gods have revealed in the various forms of living nature." But do the rank and file of the people ever have such refined, metaphysical notions? Besides, upon that theory, why were some animals, so far from being worshiped, actually scorned and hated?

Others, again, account for the union of sublime, monotheistic ideas with a beast-worship so gross, by saying that in Egypt there was originally a race of African fetish-worshippers. Then an invading band of monotheists from Asia pressed in and conquered these aborigines, but allowed them to retain their own religious beliefs and practices. Gradually the two races blended. Their faiths intermixed. By and by it became necessary to establish a harmony between this old fetishism and the lofty ideas of God brought in by the late comers. Then several of the sacred animals were identified with the gods themselves, others still were made the living creatures of the gods, while mysticism and symbolism were the bridges by which the passage from the lower to the higher was effected. The worship of animals, having once become naturalized in the offi-

cial religion, and having, by the help of all sorts of mystical explanations, taken on a varnish of apparent profundity, the tendency to multiply symbols and allegories, and also the nature of the hieroglyphics, combined perhaps with motives of utility and other influences, led not only to the multiplication of the sacred animals, but as well to intense zeal in the worship. Though the monuments do not tend to support the theory of such a mixture of races, but rather to break it down, there is no doubt some truth in the idea that the Egyptian animal-worship is at bottom closely akin to the fetish and idol worship of other peoples. But grant that some such theory accounts fairly well for the origin of this worship, it does not explain its remarkable strength and persistence with increasing power through the centuries. Besides, it simply pushes the question a little further back. We are still left to ask, Why should men ever have had such a faith in the beginning?

This strange religious phenomenon might be studied in still another light. All religions have their sacred symbols. Go into the Christian catacombs. There you will find, amongst the earliest, most common figures, the form of a fish. There are at least one hundred examples of it in the inscriptions of the first three centuries. It is rudely scratched on funeral slabs, painted in chambers of the dead, sculptured on the coffins, engraved on rings and seals, carved in mother-of-pearl and precious stones, cast in bronze and glass. In an ancient Christian cemetery at Autun in France, there is a remarkable Greek inscription, dating from about the year 400 A. D. The initials of the first five lines form the Greek word for fish, and the word fish is found four times in the body of the inscription, and the figure

of the fish was probably engraved at both the lower corners. It reads like this: "Offspring of the heavenly Fish, see that a heart of holy reverence be thine, now that from divine waters thou hast received, while yet among mortals, a spring of life that is to immortality. Quicken thy soul, beloved one, to ever fuller life, with the unfailling waters of health-giving wisdom, and receive the honey-sweet food of the Savior of the saints. Eat with longing hunger, holding Fish in thy hands. On Fish my hands are clasped; in thy love draw nigh unto me, and be my guide, my Lord and Savior, I entreat thee, the Light of them for whom the hour of death is past. My father, Aschandeius, dear unto my heart, and thou, sweet mother, and all I love on earth, oft as you look on Fish, so often think of me, Pectorius, your son." How easy, now, for some wise archaeologist to declare that this man worshiped the sacred fish!

But what did this really mean? It was a holy symbol, setting forth, with wonderful brevity and distinctness, a complete epitome of the Christian's faith regarding Christ. It was a profession of faith in the unity of the divine and human in Christ and in his redemptive work for man. It was simply a short way of saying, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior," the initial letters of which words in Greek make the word *ichthus*, or fish. The gospel has also other well-known symbolism. Christ is styled the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," or the Lamb. So, in the Catacombs, we find the sacred lamb with the nimbus about it. There are also the dove, the peacock, and even crowing chanticleer. We are so accustomed to these symbols that they no longer seem strange to us; but what right have we to demand that other people should have precisely the same symbolism with us? We may call a hero a lion, and a keen man an

eagle, without insulting them; but what if we dubbed our friend a dog or a fox? Who of us would like to be styled a crocodile or a young bullock? Yet the Egyptian poet in a song of triumph to one of the greatest of his monarchs applies to him these epithets. So to the Egyptian the cow spoke of fertility; the rays of the sun and the crescent moon suggested horns; and by him the hawk was admired for his rapid, lofty, unerring flight, his piercing vision, the irresistible force of his talons. With us, all this is mere poetry; but we must remember that all language is at bottom poetic, and that even our most abstract terms have hanging about them still some rags of their material significance. Thus language might have helped suggest and increase the symbolism, whilst the triumph of the symbol over the thought may have had some share in giving animal-worship its power. The Egyptians were essentially a symbol-loving people. As the Greeks loved art, as the American loves liberty, as the Hindoo loves metaphysics, as the Jew loves trade: so symbolism was of the very essence of the Egyptian writing, art, religion. The abuse of this, no doubt, helped keep the animal-worship in its place of power. But if, for the cultured classes, the beasts were simply living symbols of deity, popular superstition looked upon them as actual incarnations of the god.

To understand well this religious phenomenon, we must, I am convinced, study it in the light of the fundamental religious needs of man. Though some, and perhaps most, of the explanations given may have modified the direction of the movement, they did not give rise to it. It is one thing to guide an impulse, it is a very different thing to generate it. It was an infant's cry in the night for truth which should satisfy its deepest

cravings. The human mind is constantly oscillating between faith in the Divine transcendence and faith in the immanence of God; always, consciously or unconsciously, trying to hold both at the same time. In the first place, man instinctively feels after a God, great, almighty, wise, eternal, who has made all things; a Deity upon whom we all depend; a Deity great enough to give unity to creation and to control its tremendous powers for his creatures' good. So, in his prayers and hymns and philosophies, man rises to the thought of a majestic, transcendent God, far, far above the universe, infinitely greater than it and its deep mystery. But as he carries this to the extreme, his God gets so far away and becomes so awful in his sovereign majesty, so completely beyond the reach of man, that he no longer satisfies the heart. The soul craves a God nigh at hand, helpful; not so high but that he can care for even the insignificant pigmies upon this earth.

But the impulse to exalt God tends to put him so far above the world that he is at last altogether outside it. It is then simply a machine that he has made, and then left to work out its own future; as Goethe said, "An absentee God, who only gave the world a push from without, or let it spin round his finger." Then the aching heart, smitten by misfortune, quivering with sorrow, shuddering in the darkness, cries out like Job, "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!" God must be brought near again. The soul yearns for a God who is not only over all, but through all and in all. So by some device or other it strives to make the transcendent God immanent, omnipresent in the world. Thus the Egyptian, in the sublimest hours of his worship, saw God so awful and so far above him that he must needs bring

Deity back again to earth. This divine penetration of all things he represented by the animal, in which Deity had become flesh, and revealed himself in sensible, and at least semi-personal form.

We find something analogous even in Christian history. In her great struggle against the heretics, who would have made Christ a merely human Savior, or at best into a created being infinitely lower than God, the early Church exalted our blessed Lord so high that the idea of the God-man receded to ever more awful and abysmal heights. The age forgot his love and condescension in his power and majesty, until it seemed presumption to look directly to him for light or help. Then the needy, human heart filled up the enormous interval with the interceding Virgin and the pleading saints. On the one side, the worshiping heart, calling for a Savior divine enough to redeem the world, exalted Jesus to an infinite height, whilst yet it craved a Christ not far from every one of us. So it was in Egypt. In the exalted prayers and sublime hymns we hear the soul saying: "You must have a God transcendent, great enough to be above the world, great enough to create the worlds, great enough to control all their stupendous forces and to bring order out of all the tangled events." Then in the animal-worship we hear the cry, "O for a God close at hand, manifesting himself in clearness before my eyes!"

Recall Charles Kingsley's picture of the beautiful and earnest Hypatia,—in her lectures, talking glibly her philosophical transcendentalisms about the one abysmal Being, unseen and undefinable, itself uncaused, yet the cause of all other existence; the invisible infinite, central One, the Eternal, the Absolute, whom none dare name. Ah! it was all very well, in the days

of prosperity, to prate these high-flown philosophies on the lecture platform before applauding crowds; but when the hour of dire extremity came, then her weary heart ached for some revelation of the Divine. See her in her chamber, with her golden locks disheveled, gazing out into vacancy. "O for a sign, a token! O for the golden days of which the poets sing, when gods walked among men, fought by their side as friends! And yet are these old stories credible, pious, or modest? Who has shared more than I Plato's contempt for the foul deities, the degrading transformations which Homer imputes to the gods of Greece? Must I believe them now? Must I stoop to think that the gods who live in a region above all sense will deign to make themselves palpable to these senses of ours, which are whole æons of existence below them; degrading themselves to the base accidents of matter? Yes! that better than nothing. Better, better, better to believe that Ares fled shrieking and wounded from a mortal man; better to believe in Jove's adulteries and Hermes' thefts, than to believe that gods have never spoken face to face with men! Let me think, lest I go mad, that beings from that unseen world for which I hunger, have appeared and held communion with mankind, such as no reason or sense could doubt,—even though those beings were more capricious and baser than ourselves! Is there, after all, an unseen world? O for a sign, a sign!" See her go with throbbing temples into her chamber of the gods; gaze long and passionately upon the image of Pallas, her favorite divinity, as it stood there, the lips closed upon each other, as they had been from the beginning, in that stony, self-collected calm which was only not a sneer. Behold her clasp, in deep emotion, the knees of the cold marble, and bedew the feet with

her scalding tears. Hear her, in her agony, while all her fine philosophy for the moment forsakes her, exclaim: "Athene! Pallas! Adored! Ever Virgin! Absolute Reason, springing unbegotten from the nameless One! Hear me, Athene! Have mercy on me! Speak, if it be but to curse me! Thou who alone wieldest the lightnings of thy father, wield them to strike me dead, if thou wilt only do something—something to prove thine own existence; something to make me sure that anything exists besides this gross, miserable matter, and my miserable soul! I stand alone in the center of the universe! I fall and sicken down the abyss of ignorance, and doubt, and boundless blank, and darkness! O have mercy! I know that thou art not this! Thou art everywhere and in all things! But I know that this is a form which pleases thee, which symbolizes thy nobleness! I know that thou hast deigned to speak to those who—O, what do I know? Nothing! nothing! nothing!" And there she clung while there was neither sign, nor voice, nor any that answered. What was that but an unconscious wail for an incarnate God in Christ?

Just so it was with the Egyptian animal-worship. Not that I mean to say that the vulgar Egyptian peasant could have told this; not that even the cultured priest could have put it in just this way. But there are many yearnings in the human soul for the good the man comprehends not. So, in this beast-worship, we hear an inarticulate cry for a Christ, incarnating God before the eyes of man, and laying his hand upon them both. The Egyptian felt that he must have some visible god. Even in his writing he shows a lack of imaginative capacity. After the written word he will sometimes put the picture of the being intended; as, for example, after the word crocodile he will place the figure of one.

So he could not satisfy himself to speak his prayer into the vacant heaven, hoping for some invisible power to hear it. He would, instead, intrust it to the bodily ears of his god.

But still another question regarding this beast-worship remains. Why did not the Egyptian seek the incarnation in some other form than that of the brute? Well, to embody Deity in some living form would certainly seem nobler than to worship lifeless images of wood, stone, or metal. Better worship a living calf than a calf of gold, much less stocks and stones. Even some of the Christian fathers acknowledged, with all their prejudices, that the symbolical worship of animals denotes a far higher stage of religion than the adoration of inanimate things. The Egyptian mind was instinctively averse to vulgar idolatry. Then why not take the sun, moon, and stars as objects of worship? That might seem to be a far more natural adoration. Zoolatry is repulsive to us. The Egyptian did no doubt see in the sun one of the most glorious manifestations of Deity. Yet these heavenly bodies are so far away, their movement is so regular, as to suggest lack of freedom, blind fate, or mastery by some superior power. At any rate, it is certain that nations whose worship has been solar or astral have by no means stood at a higher level of general intelligence and civilization than these worshipers of the brutes.

But why, if they were to have living beings at all as incarnations of Deity, did they not take men? They did worship their kings. Even more than the sacred animals, these were the sons of the living God, the incarnation of the divine Being on earth. Sometimes this worship of royalty was carried to an extreme height. But there was not enough mystery in man for the

Egyptian to worship humanity as a whole or to any large extent. He knew man too well. He had too much respect for his god to bring him so close to his own level. He would have shuddered with horror at the Greek Olympus with its circle of divinities, who were idealized men and charming women. Then, to have worshiped men to the extent that animals were worshiped, would have endangered the stability of the State by deifying qualities which the sober mind must abhor. If he was to have some visible incarnation of God at all, what, then, was left? Only beasts. Here was hidden something mysterious enough to satisfy him. Here was activity, liveliness, apparent freedom of movement combined with uniform, instinctive life, so striking and unerring in its adaptation of means to ends that men looked on in wonder and awe. Did not custom blind our sense of strangeness, we could not look upon the surprising instinct of beasts without a feeling of wonder, if not of awe.

To the Egyptian, as we have seen, the conditions of his country made the thought of *maat*, "order, regularity," attractive. Yet, with this, the beasts seemed to possess a certain freedom of movement and individual choice, which contrasted with the lifeless uniformity of the world. This union of the type with the individual seemed to the Egyptian to correspond to the divine. Put with this that some of the animals were of great service to man; that some had special qualities of size, or strength, or apparent wisdom, or beauty, or some peculiar mode of life, and the matter would seem to be explained. Viewed in this light, it is not surprising that the utter absurdity which the Egyptian religion presented to strangers was modified on closer inspection. Even Philo, the philosophical Jew of Alexandria,

says that foreigners, coming for the first time into Egypt, knew not what to do for laughter at the divine beasts, but that the universal superstition finished by overpowering them also.

We pass now to another phase of this religion. We have seen, at the one pole, the worship of beasts; at the other, the adoration of one supreme, eternal, creative, almighty God, who delights in purity, and is gracious to those who trust him. But now another inconsistency faces us. We come upon a vast pantheon of innumerable deities. There were countless gods in heaven above and in the earth beneath. Every town or village had its supernatural patrons. Every month, every year, every day of the month, every hour of the day and night, had its presiding divinity, and all these gods had to be propitiated by offerings. It seems to be the deification of almost everything. Earth, heaven, sun, moon, stars, river, trees, air, the dew, the wind, the water, heat, drought, humidity, cloud, tempests, the living and the departed, and even abstract ideas, seem to have their gods. Simply to enumerate these deities, would be impossible, much less can we here describe them. Renouf says that he has several times attempted to index the divine names that occur in the texts, but found it necessary to abandon the enterprise. But we can look at a few of the most important deities. First of all is the great god Ra, the sun-god, recognized in all early Egypt as the great ruling world-power, with a personal character quite human, playing a prominent rôle in the early myths. Like the old Aryan gods of light, he fights against the demons of darkness. He is sometimes split into two personages,—Ra, god of the sun by day; and Harmachis, the sun rising again in splendor above the pearly, purple, and golden horizon. He is high over

all, yet sometimes described as offspring of another god, Ptah by name, whom he succeeds in the administration of the world. He is without a wife, is styled lord of all the gods, upheld by none of them, the lord of truth, the maker of man, creator of the beast, lord of existence, lord of eternity. Perhaps to the popular conception, he was the visible sun himself; but to the cultured, the soul of the sun, making that glowing orb his manifestation. In its fiery disk he journeys across the sky. He is a god beneficent to the good, but to be dreaded by the wicked.

Then there was the god Tum, simply another aspect of Ra. He is the sun-god in the darkness of the night; concealing himself, but alive nevertheless. Next there is Shu, one of the children of Ra, begotten by him, but having no mother. He is called "the young old," to express eternal youth. By him, righteousness and truth and order reign in the creation. He is also called "the outstretcher," because he lights up the vault of heaven. The wife of Shu is Tefnut, whose name means "humidity, foam." She is the personification of the great primal abyss of waters, out of which all that is came into being. She is represented as a living, divine being, but had a shadowy character, and was not much worshiped. Then there is Osiris and his family. To Osiris himself we will soon return. He is probably another form of the sun-god, meaning the sun at night, and is called by the loftiest titles, such as, "the chief of the gods," "the master of the gods," "the king of the gods," "the lord of life," "the lord of eternity," "the lord of the world," "the eternal ruler and creator of the world." In his circle are two divinities not much worshiped, but having a place in the mythology. One of these is Seb, the father of Osiris. He is the earth-god, and is

sometimes called the "great cackler," the goose who laid or hatched the golden egg out of which the world came forth. By his side is his wife, Nut, the goddess of the heavens, sitting in the heavenly sycamore-tree, pouring out the waters of life, or even a stream of all sorts of gifts, as flowers and fruits, upon her worshipers. Then there are two sisters of Osiris, who share in his adventures and form favorite objects of the popular worship. The former, Isis by name, was also the wife of Osiris. She had a very large number of adherents, and in the latter days of the nation's life her worship was so exceedingly popular that it spread even to Rome as the adoration of the favorite Egyptian goddess. It is difficult to draw a sharp line of distinction between Isis and her sister, Nephthys.

In the same circle was the evil god Set, whom the Greeks called Typhon, or the devil. He was the god of everything harmful and hateful, corresponding in some measure to the Zoroastrian Angro Mainyu, but yet possessing temples and worship. Feared and detested in later times, he was yet in earlier days worshiped with great honor, and was especially patronized by the foreign shepherd kings who made their way into Egypt. He is the bitter enemy of Osiris, plots and fights against him, and represents the antagonisms to the good in nature. Another deity of this Osirian circle was Horus, worshiped with great zeal in all parts of the land. He is sometimes called the father, sometimes the brother, and sometimes the son of Osiris. He is the god of the visible sun, and enemy and conqueror of Set. He is often almost identified with Ra. He is styled "the lord of truth," "lord of heaven," "lord of the crown," "helper of his father," "king of the worlds," and also, "supreme ruler of gods and men, beautiful, blessed, self-existent."

In this same circle was also Anubis, another son of Osiris, by his sister Nephthys. He has a mixed character, belonging partly to the diurnal and partly to the nocturnal regions. He represents, perhaps, the twilight. He is the conductor of the dead, the god of mummies and embalming.

We must also mention the great god Thoth, god of the moon. He is in many respects like the Greek Hermes. He is the god of time, the inventor of the game of draughts, of the arts and sciences as well, the fount of all knowledge; the god of letters and of priestly culture, and of the priests par excellence. He composed or inspired the sacred books, founded libraries, is the giver of immutable laws, and, in the lower world, advocate at the judgment for the good, securing their acquittal before the august throne of Osiris. His wife, Safech, is of little consequence.

But there is another great goddess, Hathor, whom it is difficult to distinguish from Isis, yet who had great temples dedicated to her, and enjoyed a worship very widely diffused and eager. The Greeks, with some reason, identified her with their golden, laughing Aphrodite. Nor must we overlook the mighty god Ptah. He, too, was highly exalted, called "father of fathers," "creator of the earth," "father of the gods and of all beings upon the earth," "father of beginnings," "the creator of the egg of the sun and moon," "lord of the gracious countenance," "lord of truth," etc. He was very popular in the worship, and was represented as a great artisan, who brought the world into shape as the carpenter might build the rude materials into the house. By his side is Bast, "beloved of Ptah," whose beautiful temple and the joyous celebration of whose festival is vividly described by Herodotus. She is the goddess

of fire, especially of the scorching heat of the sun. She is also the goddess of war.

Then there was another great goddess, Neith, sometimes called "the great divine mother of the gods," who brought forth the sun without a father. She is styled "ancient mother of the sun," "mother of the gods," "lady of Sais," "mistress of heaven." She is, with some reason, compared by the Greeks to their Athene, the goddess of profound wisdom and skill in war. In her sanctuary at Sais was the celebrated inscription, "I am that which is, that which was, and that which will be, and no one has lifted my veil."

Besides these, towering high above all the rest, after the early centuries, was the great god Amon, the chief deity of Thebes. At times in the worship he seemed almost to swallow up all the rest of the gods. It is to him that the most sublime hymns were sung. They exalt him to a supremacy over all, and at a vast distance above them. His wife, Mut, is only a vague, shadowy creature, and enjoyed comparatively little honor. Lastly, we mention another moon-god, Khonsu, a being very much like the great Thoth. There is further, Chem, a god representative of the generative power in nature, and Chnum, sometimes called "the great divine former, who created with his hands the gods and goddesses, and who formed the sun upon the revolving potter's wheel."

We might carry out the list much further. To explain how these and the numerous others had their origin, what they meant, and what stories were told about them, would need a volume, not a lecture. All of them had their mythology, which in general may be said to have had a solar cast; all had their temples, feasts, images, peculiar rites, special functions, hymns

and prayers, and many of them the cities where they were particularly honored. Thus, Ptah received greatest worship at Memphis, Amon at Thebes, Neith at Sais, Bast at Bubastis, and, in earlier times, Osiris at Abydos.

The priests, in their systematizing theology, sometimes put these gods into groups of three, eight, or nine. They made also three different orders of deities. At some temples the triad consisted of the chief deity of the place, associated with his wife and son; as, for example, at Thebes, Amon, Mut, Khonsu; at Abydos, Osiris, Isis, Horus. But now and then the second divinity in the triad was not a female. In each case the first of the three enjoyed the chief honors, and the worshiper seems to exalt him to the utmost conceivable height of power and majesty. So we find here the same phase of thought which we see in India and Chaldæa, and which Max Müller has styled *Henotheism*. We described it in our last lecture as the worship of one god after another, so that, for the time being, each god is to the mind of the suppliant as good as all the gods. In spite of the limitations, which to our mind a plurality of deities must entail upon each individual one, the deity here worshiped seems to have been, for the time being at least, thought of as supreme and absolute. So now we find Osiris addressed as "lord of eternity," "king of the gods," "excellent master of the gods," "he who has made the world," "the guide of all the gods." Then of Horus it is said: "The gods recognize the universal lord;" "He judges the world according to his will;" "Heaven and earth are in subjection unto him;" "He giveth commands unto men;" "The circuit of the solar orb is under his direction, the winds, the waters, the wood and the plants, and all vegetables;" "All men are in ecstasy, all hearts in sweetness, all bosoms in joy,

every one in adoration. Every one glorifieth his goodness, his tenderness encircles our hearts, great is his love in all bosoms."

But Thoth and Ptah seem to be just as exalted, just as supreme. Of such it may be said: "He gave birth to the gods; he made towns and organized provinces. All things proceed from him. . . . To him is due the work of the hands, the walking of the feet, the sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, the breathing of the nostrils, the fortitude of the heart, . . . of all the gods, and men, and of all living animals, intelligence and speech, whatever is in the heart and whatever is on the tongue." A tablet in the British Museum says: "Hail to thee, Thoth, lord of Hermopolis, self-existent, without birth, sole god who regulatest the nether world, and givest laws to those who are in the lower regions, and to those who are in the service of Ra." Still again, in a hymn which blends in one Ra, Tum, and Horus, we read: "Hail to thee, Ra-Tum-Horus of the double horizon; the one god living by truth, who makes all things which are, the greatest of all that exists, all beasts and men proceed from thine eyes; lord of heaven, lord of earth, who makest those who are below and those who are above; lord of all, king of heaven, lord of all gods. O supreme king, amid the society of the gods, almighty god, self-existent, existing from the beginning!" So, hymn after hymn, prayer after prayer, might be quoted in praise of this or that divinity, exalting each in turn to the throne of the universe and the place of the supreme god. Those hymns which contain the most numerous and most exalted expressions are in honor of the great Amon-Ra of Thebes. This is a phase of religion which we find it difficult to understand. It seems to the practical, logical, mono-

theistic Western mind so full of contradictions as to be absurd. Yet it has existed, at one time or another, in almost all parts of the earth. It is true that, to the cultured classes, the list of distinct deities was shortened by the observation that many of them were simply different names for the same divine personage. But to the people they were absolutely distinct. The devotee of Ptah, or Amon, or Ra, or Khonsu, etc., commended himself to their favors because he believed them to be well marked personalities; nor, in imploring Ptah, did he at that time count on the favor of Thoth, any more than a Roman Catholic devotee of our day, in placing himself under the patronage of St. Julian, would think that he was placing himself at the same time under the patronage of St. Anthony.

Then, nothing can be clearer than that, in the mythology, the bodies of the gods are spoken of as well as their souls. They have both parts and passions. They are described as suffering from hunger and thirst, from old age and disease, from fear and sorrow. They perspire; their limbs quake; their head aches; their teeth chatter; their eyes weep; their nose bleeds; poison takes possession of their flesh, even as the Nile takes possession of the land. They may be stung by reptiles or burned with fire. They shriek and howl with pain and grief. Even the great gods sometimes require protection. The great sun-god, Ra himself, though almost always invested with attributes of supreme divinity, requires the aid of the goddess Isis to get him out of danger. All the gods are liable, upon occasion, to be forced to grant the prayers of men through fear of threats which it is inconceivable that anybody but idiots should have believed.

Moreover, the forms in which the gods were repre-

sented were, some of them, to our taste, shocking enough. Chnum had the head of a ram, with two pairs of horns; the great Ra, that of a sparrowhawk surmounted by the disk of the sun, about which the adder is coiled; Isis and Hathor sometimes have the head of a cow; Anubis, of a jackal; Thoth, of an ibis; Tefnut and Bast, of the lion; while the form of Set was a strange combination. It was a figure with a monstrous head, half-way between bird and quadruped, surmounted by a pair of long, erect, square-tipped ears, a bill like a stork, a small eye and a large wig, forming altogether a figure so grotesque that one almost involuntarily burst into laughter at the sight.

So thoroughly was the existence of these different divine personages believed in, even by the higher classes, that a denial of them, or a reduction of all to one in practical worship, was regarded as a dangerous heresy. One of the kings, influenced no doubt by some Semitic kinship, tried to effect a religious reformation. He set up the worship of a single god, whose symbol was the disk of the sun. He caused the names of other gods, particularly of Amon, to be hammered out of the inscriptions, and changed his own name from Amenhotep to Chut-en-aten, "the glory of the sun's disk." As Thebes was the great city of the worship of Amon, he abandoned it, and tried to set up another capital. But his effort was futile. The people would not endure it. He passed as the great heretic king, and after his death his family went back to the old faith. Now, what was there heretical in his attempted reform? Nothing, certainly, in the style of the hymns and prayers. We hear him say to the great god whose symbol was the glowing face of the sun: "Thou living God, there is none other beside thee! Thou givest health to the eyes by

thy beams. Creator of all beings, thou goest up on the eastern horizon of heaven to dispense life to all that thou hast created; to men, to four-footed beasts, birds, and all manner of creepings on the earth where they live. Grant to thy son who loves thee, life in truth, that he may live united with thee in eternity."

Such language is perfectly orthodox for an Egyptian in addressing his deities. Their priests and kings could have sung and prayed precisely thus. The heresy consisted in refusing adoration to any of the other gods. Thus the polytheism, in spite of the exalted terms in which individual gods were addressed, was a very real and practical thing.

These numerous deities were indeed organized into a kind of State religion. From the earliest times they were grouped into clusters of nine. As far back as our earliest records take us, we find that the priests of On had formed such a group of great gods, with Tum at the head, while other localities had a similar grouping, but with their own chief divinity in the place of honor. These groupings formed the chief point in the State religion. The principal deity of a place is lord and king. The others form his court, support his rule in the world, and hence have a share in his honor. Some temples did not satisfy themselves with one group of nine, but had two such, called the greater and the lesser nine. Now and then the group was eight instead of nine. There is still another classification which we must notice, but upon which undue emphasis has often been laid. Herodotus when traveling in Egypt distinguished three orders of gods; the first cycle consisting of eight, the second of twelve, and the third of an indefinite number. The names included in each he does not give. The opinions of modern scholars have

differed widely about these cycles. Brugsch places them in a great abstract system as a fundamental dogma of the religion, while Maspero regards them as productions of different theological schools. James Freeman Clarke, without any warrant from the monuments, and by utterly mistaking the nature of some of the individual gods, forms out of these orders a philosophical system of cosmology held by the priests.

According to this scheme, the gods of the first order represent the hidden abyss of pure spirit; then the spirit in motion hovering over the dark and formless chaos; then the shaping of this chaos into form; next, generation, giving life and growth; then the female qualities of production; wisdom, light, completed by the sun-god, the last of the series. The second order are connecting links between the first and the third; children of the higher, parents of the lower; neither so abstract as the former, nor so concrete as the latter, and representing the powers and faculties of man, as the god of Strength, of Wisdom, of Love, etc. Last of all come the gods for the people. These deities represent the forms and forces of outward nature, the manifestation of the divine in the universe as we see it. This whole scheme is spun by Mr. Clarke out of his own fancy, and in some points utterly misrepresents the Egyptian faith. The fact is that this division of the numerous Egyptian gods into cycles was simply a matter for intellectual gymnastics of the learned priests, without practical influence on the life of the people.

I think, now, that we shall agree that this strange religion is sufficiently puzzling. To attempt a historical account of the origin, growth, modifications, as time went on, of this faith so full of contradictions, is impossible here. Suffice it to say that these various in-

consistent elements all existed side by side from the earliest days. One god might be placed higher by one generation, a different one by another; some new deities may have been introduced; the ceremonial may have become more and more pompous, the animal worship more exaggerated; but from the very first day of the emergence of this religion upon the field of history all the elements were here face to face. We ask, Why was it that a people rising to such sublime ideas of God should constantly sink back again into so gross and vast a polytheism? If the monotheism of the prayers and the hymns are the soul's cry, now conscious, now unconscious, for the vision of unity, wisdom, power, order, righteousness, in the creation and government of the world, what is the polytheism crying for?

Judaism and Christianity have given to the word "God" such a sublime meaning, expressing such a fullness of perfect attributes, that they can tolerate no thought of a second. To us this doctrine of many gods is totally false and intolerable. But to the mind of antiquity it was not so. The various gods of the worship might be great, wonderful, awful beings; but, after all, they were finite. Polytheism, in all nations, peopling the space above us, all the way from man to the Infinite and the Eternal, with superhuman and supernatural beings, testifies to the faith of the human soul that between our finite spirit and the Infinite One there are and must be moral and spiritual beings innumerable. We see all peoples with their great pantheons, even Greece and Rome, with all their culture, crowding the heavens and the earth. Not only did Olympus resound with the laughter and chatter of the great circle, but for them the woods also were full of dryads; the mountains echoed with the calls of oreads; naiads splashed

in the fountains; nereids and tritons rolled in the seas. By the fireside sat spirits, as the Penates or Vesta, and as Lares they guarded the home. And, after all, can we doubt that there are in the universe other beings higher than we? Is there no creature between the infinite, eternal God and ourselves? During the whole vast eternity gone, has God created no other spirits than ours? Look into your own bosoms. See the capacities and powers there in the germ, powers that may be indefinitely developed; see the wide abyss between the "baby new to earth and sky," who,

"What time the tender palm is pressed
Against the circle of the breast,
Hath never thought that "This is I;"

or the rude intelligence of the savage, up to the Shakespeares and Newtons of our race. What a tremendous distance between the moral powers of a besotted wretch or brutal criminal, up, up to the heroes and martyrs, who have counted it all joy to suffer and die for truth and the weal of man! Does the long ascent necessarily here come to an abrupt stop? May there not be creatures of God so vastly above us that our intelligence would seem but darkness to their brilliant light, our noblest virtue only like childish attempts by the side of their majestic fulfillment; creatures, however, of essentially the same nature with ourselves, standing far up an inclined plane, near the foot of which we are climbing higher to a place nearer them? As we look at it, it seems no longer mere possibility, but almost self-evident certainty. We think that polytheism everywhere is unconsciously trying to say something like that. It means to express the faith in the fullness of the divine creative Power; in the intimate communion of the Most High with the creatures he has

made; that there are beings so much nearer to God in love and sympathy and present capacity that they can receive more of his fullness than we.

Polytheism, in Egypt as elsewhere, was an attempt, unconscious but none the less real, the baby prattlings as it were, to say: "In Deity is unlimited fullness of life and creative power, and love of communion with his creatures. This the Christian doctrine, in its way, expresses by the Trinity, the Father, the perpetual Fount of life, going forth perpetually into the minds and hearts of his intelligent creatures by his living Logos; and the Holy Spirit as the universal presence of Him in sanctifying grace, to bring devoted souls into communion with each other and with Him." Thus the Egyptian heart, like the heart of man in all parts of the world, put spirit into all things, saw spiritual powers everywhere. Moreover, since the variety in the world seemed to them so great that it could not be expressed by the human form alone, since animals also are manifestations of divine thoughts, meaning something, hinting something, symbolizing something, they gave to some of their gods, with the human body, the head of bird or beast. All this we are liable to style superstition. But give me this rather than the lifeless machine world of mere matter and motion, of which some so-called science and philosophy proudly prates to-day. This is what Schiller meant when he sang:

"T is not alone
 The human being's pride that peoples space
 With life and mystical predominance,
 Since likewise for the stricken heart of love
 This visible nature, and this common world
 Is all too narrow.

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The fair humanities of the old religion;
 The power, the beauty, and the majesty,
 That had their haunts in dale or piny mountain,
 Or forest, by slow stream or pebbly spring,
 Or chasms or wat'ry depths—all these have vanished:
 They live no longer in the faith of Reason.
 But still the heart doth need a language; still
 Doth the old instinct bring back the old names."

Better, far better see all things instinct with God, supernatural powers everywhere, rather than nothing superhuman, no living God anywhere. Hence Wordsworth, in revolt against the mechanical, lifeless deism of his age, exclaims:

"Great God! I'd rather be
 A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn."

Nor can the human soul, as Edward Caird, in his "Evolution of Religion," has profoundly shown, rest in a monotheism which simply makes God as a subject among other subjects, though lifted high above them, the source of all their life, yet related to them as an external and independent will. He shows that "when Christianity attempts to present God to us as the absolute Being, and at the same time as a Logos or self-revealing Spirit, who manifests himself in a special manner in and to man as the source of his higher life, it is obeying a necessity which comes with the growth of man's thought in religion." Yet he shows also that this necessity seems, even for modern thinkers, to carry with it an impossibility. What wonder if the Egyptian of old failed to solve the intellectual puzzle, while yet his heart sought satisfaction in the only way that

seemed possible to it, the placing side by side in his worship many gods, whilst his spirit all the time was feeling after the one absolute Being who was the source and life of all?

But whilst the people appear content to have allowed these contradictions to stand face to face, the priests and cultured classes reconciled them by way of pantheism. If they could not be content to see separate divinities in each portion of nature, and could not rest in a nature without the perpetual immanent presence of God, they could see one life pervading all things, and that the one life of the great Being himself. So in the theological speculations, they made the innumerable divinities of the popular faith into mystical emanations or manifestations of the one divine essence. Thus was developed a doctrine of the essential unity of all the gods, who are only phenomenal forms, or indeed nothing but names for varying phases of the one great divine, universal Power, in itself eternal and unchangeable.

Listen to a hymn written on a temple wall. It is evidently as pantheistic as it well could be: "The gods salute his royal majesty as their Lord, who revealeth himself in all that is, and hath name in everything, from mountain to stream. That which persisteth in all things is Amon. The lordly god was from the very beginning. He is Ptah, the greatest of the gods. . . . Thy secret is in the depths of the secret waters, and unknown. Thou hast come on the road; thou hast given light in the path; thou hast overcome all difficulties in thy mysterious form. To thee, all things that are, give praise when thou returnest to the nether world at even. Thou raisest up Osiris by the radiance of thy beams. To thee, those give praises who lie in their

tombs, . . . and the damned rise up in their abodes. . . . Thou art the king; thine is the kingdom of heaven, and the earth is at thy will. The gods are in thine hand, and men are at thy feet. What god is like to thee? Thou hast made the double world, as Ptah. Thou hast placed thy throne in the life of the double world, as Amon. Thy soul is the pillar and the ark of the two heavens. Thy form emanated at first whilst thou shinest as Amon, Ra, and Ptah. . . . Shu, Tefnut, Nut, and Chonsu are thy form, dwelling in thy shrine under the types of the ithyphallic god, raising his tall plumes, king of the gods. . . . Thou art Mentu Ra. Thou art Sekar; thy transformations are into the Nile. Thou art Youth and Age. Thou givest life to the earth by thy stream. Thou art heaven, thou art earth, thou art fire, thou art water, thou art air, and whatever is in the midst of them."

Another hymn, copied by Brugsch and quoted by Renouf, sings "the mysterious names of the God who is immanent in all things, the soul of Shu (breath) to all the gods. He is the body of the living man, the creator of the fruit-bearing tree, the author of the inundation; without him nothing liveth within the circuit of the earth, whether north or south, under his name of Osiris, the giver of light: he is the Horus of the living souls, the living god of the generations yet to come. . . . Amon is an image, Atmu is an image, Chepera is an image, Ra is an image; he alone maketh himself in millions of ways. He is a great architect, who was from the beginning, who fashioned his body with his own hands, in all forms according to his will. . . . Permanent and enduring, he never passeth away. Through millions upon millions of endless years

he traverseth the heavens, he compasseth the nether world each day. . . . He travels in the cloud to separate heaven and earth, and again to reunite them, permanently abiding in all things, the Living One, in whom all things live everlastingly."

All this is but a higher mode of expressing the same thought as polytheism. It is a broken, stammering voice, trying to say what the New Testament clearly teaches, that God sends out his exhaustless life into nature as her all-powerful, perpetual Creator. There is a true pantheism, or rather shall we say, theoenpanism? There is a view of nature which can make the meanest flower that blows give thoughts "that do lie too deep for tears," and gives to the whole creation a glowing luster. This is what Wordsworth was saying when he sang of

"A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking beings, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

This is what Bryant saw when he looked at

"That delicate forest flower,
With scented breath and looks so like a smile:"

that

"Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mold,
An emanation of the indwelling Life;
A visible token of the upholding Love.
That are the soul of this great universe."

This is what Tennyson was trying to say in his Akbar's dream, when he speaks of

"That Infinite,
 Within us as without; that All-in-all
 And over all, the never changing One
 And ever changing many, in praise of whom
 The Christian bell, the cry from off the mosque,
 And vaguer voices of polytheism,
 Make but one music, harmonizing, 'Pray.'"

This is what Pope in his facile verse is reaching after when he speaks of that power which "spreads undivided, operates unspent." The Egyptian, inarticulately perhaps, but none the less really, was trying to say something similar, to say what Paul does say clearly and with full consciousness of his meaning, when he speaks of the "fullness of Him who filleth all in all;" that in God we live, move, and have our being; that from him and through him and to him are all things, and that by him all things consist. Christ, and Paul, his disciple, avoid the false pantheism into which, not only the priests of Egypt, but so many thinkers in all ages, fell,—a pantheism that says, "All things are God," but they held fast what these were with stammering tongue and dim eyes, trying to say and see, namely, that all things are full of God.

We pass to listen to another of the Sphinx's cries for light. We hear it in the strange myth of Osiris. As put together by Plutarch, the tale sounds crude and gross enough. But he expressly warns us that it must not be mistaken for history. He states, moreover, that there were mysteries in it which he could not explain, and which were known only to the Egyptian priests. His story is in substance this: Osiris was the child of Seb and Nut. At his birth there were extraordinary

omens. A voice was heard declaring, "The Lord of all things is now born." Grown to manhood, he became king of Egypt. He at once proceeded to civilize his subjects. He taught them agriculture, enacted laws for them, and instructed them in the worship of the gods. Not satisfied with this, he traversed the whole earth on the same civilizing mission. His sweetness was a continual charm to men, and his influence in taming the world was not by force, but by oratory, poetry, music. Spurred on by love of mankind, from land to land he went, passing far beyond the bounds of nationality, which, until then, had kept people wide apart. He calmed stormy passions, civilized savagery, and brought good news of human brotherhood and devotion to God. In his presence war and strife ceased. There was no need of arms, for his sweetness of life, together with the charm of his words and his music, melted all hearts. In his absence from Egypt, his wife Isis, who was also his sister, so wisely administered the regency that the evil Typhon could make no disturbance.

Typhon would have liked to introduce a different order into Egypt, and was angry because he failed. So, on the return of Osiris, Typhon headed a conspiracy against him. In company with seventy-two men of the Ethiopian queen, he made a richly-adorned ark just the size of Osiris. Then, at a feast, he proposed to give it to the one whom it should fit. Osiris got into it to make the trial, when Typhon and his associates instantly pegged and soldered down the lid, and threw it into the Nile. Down the river it floated to the sea. Then Isis and her sister Nephthys put on mourning, and filled the air with cries of sorrow and shrieks of despair. Isis, impelled by love, started out upon a

quest for her brother-husband. She met some children who told her whither the ark had floated. Then she found Anubis, who informed her how the ark had been floated to the Phœnician town of Byblus, and had become entangled in a tree-trunk which had entirely inclosed it, so that the king, amazed at the proportions of the tree, had caused it to be cut down and made into a pillar to support the roof of his palace.

Accordingly, the goddess went in mourning to Byblus, and there sat down in tears by a well. A woman accosted her. Isis stroked her visitor's hair, and fragrance proceeded from it. She was taken to the palace, and made nurse to the prince's child, whom she fed with her finger, and whom every night she put into the lambent flame, to burn away his mortal impurities. Turning herself into a swallow, she hovered about the pillar and bemoaned her widowhood. At length, making herself known, she begged the pillar, took it down, extracted the chest, and cried so loud that the younger son of the king died of fright. She then took the ark and the older son, and set sail. Arrived in a desert place, she opened the coffin, and with bitter tears embraced the beloved corpse. She then came to her son Horus, who was being nursed at the city of Buto, and there, for secrecy, she deposited the corpse. But Typhon, hunting there by moonlight, discovered the ark, took out the body of Osiris, tore it into fourteen pieces, and scattered them over the country. In a papyrus boat the disconsolate Isis went to look for the fragments. She discovered all but one, and buried them separately in the places where they were found. Then Osiris came back from the under-world, trained his son Horus, and prepared him to arise as the avenger of his father. Horus challenged Typhon, after a long contest

vanquished him, and took him prisoner. But Isis loosed his fetters, and let him go. At this Horus was so enraged that he tore off his mother's diadem. But Thoth replaced it by a helmet in the shape of a cow's head. In two more battles Typhon was completely conquered and slain. Osiris then became lord of the world of the dead.

What a strange and crude story! What can there be in it worthy a moment's serious thought? Before we toss it aside, however, with a laugh or a sneer, let us examine it a little. These people, we must remember, were neither savages, babes, nor idiots. They were men, capable of great deeds and great sacrifices. Then, note that the personages in this mythical story were gods, and that their worship was the most popular in the land. From the mouth of the Nile to the cataracts, Osiris and his wife enjoyed everywhere the most fervent devotion, homage, love, and reverence of the whole people. All Egypt recognized in Osiris the god before whom they must stand after death in judgment. Mark, further, that though without doubt Plutarch added some traits to the story, the main outlines of the myth are known to have existed from the earliest times, and to have endured through four thousand years. It was the oldest, as well as the most widespread, most generally believed myth in all Egypt. The whole history was sometimes represented in pictures or in writing on the temple walls. Nor was it like many of the Greek stories about Zeus, Hera, Apollo, and the rest, simply a myth without any practical influence upon the public life or the religious ceremonial. No! a symbolic liturgy recalled, in the popular worship, all his sufferings and death.

At stated seasons the whole land would flock to the

city of Busiris, as the Jews to the passover at Jerusalem. There the assembled thousands of men and women made lamentations for Osiris, and brought offerings to his faithful spouse. Amid prayers, the bull was flayed; the thighs and other portions were cut out, and the internal cavity was filled with bread, honey, and incense. These were drenched plentifully with oil, and set on fire. So long as the sacrifice burned, the people wailed. On the day that celebrated the slaughter of Osiris by Typhon, the land was in mourning, and amongst other things, as a sign of the sorrow of Isis, was exhibited to the people for four days a gilded cow covered with a black pall. Two days afterward the people went down to the seaside, pried out the buried chest, while the whole congregation cried, "Osiris is found! Osiris is found!" They also represented his burial, and the serpent was slain in effigy.

About the time of the winter solstice, to celebrate her search for her beloved, an effigy of Isis was carried seven times round the temple, and in later times the resurrection of Osiris was represented with songs and shouts of joy. Yet now, this personage, who was born into this world; who was a king on earth; who charmed by his words, sweetness, love; who suffered and died while blessing men, was a great deity. To him are ascribed the most exalted attributes. In the hymn to his praise he is called "the chief of the gods," "the master of the gods," "the king of the gods," "the lord of life," "lord of eternity," "lord of the world." That most ancient of human documents, the Book of the Dead, a collection running through many centuries, and containing prayers, invocations, and protecting spells, deposited with the mummy to guard the dead in his perilous journey through the nether world, is almost

one long prayer or ascription of praise to this mighty yet gentle and blessed Being. He is truth itself; he is love; "his heart is in every wound." His special name is Ounnefer or Unnefer, "the essence of goodness." Innumerable impassioned texts record the extraordinary feelings of reverence and affection for him. Above and behind the great luminary, he said even to the sun, "Come unto us." Another inscription says: "When the sun ariseth, it is by his will; when it goeth down, he contemplates its splendors. Hail to thee, whom thy name of goodness maketh so great; thou the eldest son, the risen from the dead! There is no god can do what he hath done. He is lord of life, and we live by his creation; no man can live without his will."

See what almost passionate love ruled their hearts for this great, beneficent god. "He judgeth the world. . . . The crescent of the sun is under him—the winds, the waters, the plants, and all growing things. . . . He giveth all seeds and the abundance of the ground; he bringeth plentifulness, and giveth it to all the earth. All men are in ecstasy, hearts in sweetness, bosoms in joy; every one is in adoration. Every one glorifies his goodness; mild is his love for us; his tenderness environs our hearts; great is his love in all bosoms. . . . His foe falleth under his fury, and the evil-doer at the sound of his voice. . . . Sanctifying, beneficent is his name; . . . respect immutable for his law. . . . Both worlds are at rest; evil flies, and earth becomes fruitful and peaceful under its lord." Some of the litanies speak of him as one having gone forth from heaven to offer a special sacrifice for sin. When we observe the duties he commands, we reign over sin, and there is no evil in ourselves. Through assimilation with him comes perfection of being, and the dream of union with him was

the dying hope of the Egyptian in every age. Upon grave after grave is the declaration that the dead has passed over to union with Osiris, the high and holy, who has kindled the light and woven the star-strewn path.

Now ask, "What gave this myth of a suffering and dying Osiris, in spite of all its grossness, its age-long and masterful power over the Egyptian soul?" Its historical origin and significance have been variously explained. We are less concerned, however, here to trace out its historical roots than to search for its inner meaning for the human soul. Whether it was originally a solar myth, intended to represent the setting and rising sun and its contest with the darkness; or indicated the rising and falling of the Nile and its struggle against the deadly drought; or was an allegory of the struggles, trials, sorrows, and self-recovery of the human soul; or set forth the perpetual opposition and conflict between good and evil, light and darkness, order and disorder, virtue and vice in the world; or was a poetical representation of the struggle of the productive against the destructive powers of nature generally,—it is not our purpose to consider. Any or all of these may have some truth in them. But what we want to know is, to what great fundamental need of the human soul did it so correspond as to give it, whatever its historical roots, such mighty and enduring power over the heart of man?

Look, then, at the ideas it involved! An incarnate god coming to earth for the benefit of mankind, winning men by love, not by power; an incarnate god suffering on earth, and suffering while doing good to man; an incarnate god who dies, but who yet is restored to life, and with his son conquers at last the evil Set-

Typhon, his foe and the foe of man; a god to whom even man may be assimilated, and with whom he may live in blessed union forever,—is there not here a baby's inarticulate cry in the darkness for the light from a divine Redeemer's face? for God stooping to man in sacrifice, manifesting the divine heart and redeeming man from evil? O, if Christ could suddenly have flashed the full glory of Bethlehem, Calvary, and the open grave upon their path, would they not have seen that they had been blindly searching for him all the while in their dreams? Might not the Master say to them: "O dim-sighted lovers of Osiris, groping for the day, as ye believe the marvelous, rude story of his sufferings and death in the struggle with evil, are not your hearts unconsciously crying for knowledge of me; of me, Jesus, the Christ; of me, incarnating God, manifesting on earth the life of the Eternal, the Atoner for sin, the Conqueror of the great serpent, the Victor over death, ascended in glory to the bosom of the Father, in whose hands is all power in heaven and upon earth, and who in redeeming might is with those who love him even unto the end of the world?"

Passing over many other interesting features of this ancient faith, we close our survey by a glance at its ideas of human destiny. As is well known, the Egyptians were firm believers in immortality. In fact, amongst no other ancient people was the doctrine of the future life so fully developed, and in none occupied so prominent a place in the theological system. Diodorus truly observes: "The Egyptians call the dwellings of the living inns, because in them they live so short a time. But the tombs of the dead they call eternal abodes." They had a peculiar notion as to the make-up of man. The gross material body of each person is at-

tended by what is styled his *ka*, or genius. It has the exact shape of his body, but is of much finer material. During life it exists in the body, and after death lingers about the corpse. It needs food and drink, and to it, by the kindred of the dead, such things are brought. It inhales their spiritual substance. You might call it a kind of ghost of the dead man. But besides this, each person has a soul, and this again is twofold. As the Greeks spoke of *nous* and *psyche*, or as we may say spirit and soul,—the soul the principle of life, and the spirit the intellectual and moral power,—so the Egyptians spoke of Chu and Ba. The Chu is a luminous and fiery substance akin to God, but should it in its fiery robe enter the body, it would consume the material substance. It is therefore wrapped in an inferior substance called Ba, which penetrates and animates the whole organism. Thus, in every man are two beings, body and soul, each of which is in turn twofold; the inner body of finer substance, with its gross envelope, and the inner soul with its external robe. Each of these doubles interpenetrate. Man alone has the Chu or *nous*; and it is this, wrapped in its earthly robe, which goes forth to judgment.

Though we have a great wealth of materials in the sacred books and monumental inscriptions regarding the future life, so vast and strange and sometimes so contradictory are the phantasmagoria concerning it, that it is difficult to get a consistent picture, in which all scholars will agree about it. Certain it is that death was regarded as merely a phase of life. To the dead man are addressed words like the following: "The joy of Amon is in thy heart; thy members are intact. Mounted on thy two-horse chariot, thou goest up on to thy bark of cedar, and thou comest to thy exalted abode, which thou

hast made for thyself. Thy mouth is filled with wine and bread and meat. Beasts are sacrificed, jars are opened. Sweet scents are before thee. The chief perfumer anoints thee with essence. Thy attendant brings thee geese. Thy fisherman offers thee fish. Thou art established, and thy enemy is overthrown. All that was said against thee is blotted out. Thou standest before the cycle of the gods, and comest forth acquitted."

After the body, with imposing ceremonies, has been placed as a mummy in the chapel of the dead, having by its side the sacred formulas written as a talisman against evil, that it may remain unharmed, the liberated soul has escaped through an opening left in the tomb toward the east. He enters that world which now is called "the hidden," or again, "the reversed world of the double righteousness," or again, "the land of rest," or "the divine under-world." There he must be judged. He enters the Hall of the Double Truth, named from truth and justice. Here is the supreme tribunal, supported by columns with capitals of the lotus-leaf. No one can pass to the abodes of the blest who fails to go through the ordeal successfully. This is the day of the "valuation of words," or the day of justification. There, upon a throne, Osiris sits, with a crown upon his head, in his hand a crosier and a whip. The throne is surrounded by the water of life, out of which springs the lotus-flower. Near by are forty-two accusing spirits, or assessors of Osiris, who live upon the blood of the wicked, and are ready with knives to inflict torments upon those who, weighed in the balances, are found wanting.

The deceased prays, "Lord of Abydos, grant that I may pass safely through the dark way, and join thy servants in the Elysian fields." Then Anubis, the leader

and keeper of the dead and director of the balances, and Horus, the conquering son of Osiris, take the scales, put into one pan the heart of the man to represent his whole life or his entire moral nature, and in the other the image of truth, or the ostrich-feather, its symbol. Thoth, the divine scribe, is there to write down the sentence. The soul must declare his own innocence. A catalogue of sins is presented to him, which, if he is successfully to pass the ordeal, he must be able truthfully to deny *seriatim*. If he denies any of which he really has been guilty, so that the balance inclines against him, one of the forty-two assessors or avenging spirits that personify the sin itself, notes it, and when the process is ended, springs upon him to torment him.

This catalogue which the soul is to deny, runs something like this: "I have neither done any sin nor omitted any duty to man. I have committed no uncleanness. I have not prevaricated at the seat of justice. I have not spoken lightly. I have done no shameful thing. I have not omitted certain ceremonies. I have not blasphemed with my mouth. I have not perverted justice. I have not acted perversely. I have not shortened the cubit. I have not done that which is abominable to the gods. I have not sullied my own purity. I have not made man to hunger. I have not made men to weep. I have done no act of rapine. I have not falsely accused another of rapine. I have not revived an ancient falsehood before the face of man. I have not falsified the weights and the balances. I have not withheld milk from the mouths of infants. I have not driven away the flocks from their pasture. I have not netted the ducks of the Nile illegally. I have not caught the fishes of the Nile illegally. I have not pierced the bank of the river when it was increasing. I have not extin-

guished the perpetual lamp. I have not added anything to the sacred books. I have not driven off any of the sacred cattle. I have not stopped the god (the sacred animal) when he goes forth from his shrine. I have not lied. I have not been a babbler. I have not been a listener. I have not made a fool of any one. I have not reviled the face of the king, neither have I reviled the face of my father. I have not uttered boasting words. I have not reviled God."

It would not be difficult to show that this catalogue includes all the precepts of the Mosaic Decalogue. But there is a vast difference in the spirit. The most minute observances of the ritual are put on precisely the same level as the universal moral principles. On grounds such as these he pleads for deliverance and the favor of the gods who dwell in the abode of truth and righteousness. If his heart has not been too light, and his soul is pure, he is acquitted, receives back from the gods his heart and other members renewed and deified, and the goddesses of life and the sky pour out upon him the water of life. If the sentence is one of condemnation, the soul must undergo a second death, and is delivered up to the tormentors. One of the gods, or one of the serpents, demons of darkness, cuts off his head. But the punishment does not end there. Consciousness was not supposed to be extinguished by that summary process. The victim is next cast into the everlasting flames, compelled to endure a never-ending death, to be torn and devoured by the evil spirit, and even to be transmuted into its filth.

There were many such punishments, and it would appear that there was a difference in the penalties according to the different sins of which it had been guilty; for hell had seventy-five compartments. The deepest

misery was frequently expressed by saying that the condemned see not the light, and are no longer kept in remembrance. Like a swarm of gnats, that darken for a few hours only the limpid air and then vanish away, so the wicked sink to hopeless destruction. To sit in everlasting darkness, and to be utterly forgotten, seem to have been the most dreadful ideas to the mind of the Egyptian, the friend of light; a man who, all his life long, had esteemed no toil too great to make himself immortal. But now, if, on the other hand, the spirit was acquitted, he was not immediately carried to paradise. He was obliged to be purified in battle and cleansed by fire. He must pass through fifteen or more portals, at which the most terrifying trials awaited him. He is represented as frozen with fear at the very prospect. It wrings from him cries of sorrow, and these are inscribed upon his tomb: "Back, O crocodile; back, O thou that keepest me from reaching the shore!" Huge, fearful monsters attack him; he is menaced by frightful dangers; nets are laid to ensnare him. At one time he is obliged to traverse desolate tracts, in which nothing grows, and which are under the dominion of the evil spirits. Then he must sail over the ocean of the sky, and in the voyage is in perpetual danger. Now he is caught in the meshes of a great labyrinth. But if he keeps steadfastly on his way; fights manfully with the sacred spear; and repeats the magical words of power from the sacred books and hymns, he will be able to strike down the evil spirits and foul monsters, keep at a distance all impurity, and reach at last the happy Elysian fields, the plains of Aalou, where a lordly banquet will be served to him.

The living, by their funeral rites and by their magic words and talismans, may help the dead in his strug-

gles. So these rites were multiplied, and into the coffin were placed for his instruction a copy of the Book of the Dead, or its most important passages, or else the sacred formulas were written upon the wrappings of the mummy and upon his coffin. The first chapter of the Book of the Dead was to be pronounced by the deceased on the day of his burial, when going forth from the grave at the western gate of the under-world. This was in order to find immediate entrance into it. Arrived safely into the glorious fields of paradise, and having partaken of the lordly banquet, thereafter he may cultivate the celestial fields and reap such fabulous harvests of wheat that single ears will be two cubits in length; or he may wander at will in the shady avenues, refreshed with balmy odors and bathing in celestial pools. He is illuminated with the glory of Osiris, and exults in the contemplation of the sublime god of light. As himself is now a spirit of light, he may accompany the sun in his bark, sailing over the heavenly ocean, or at night sparkle in the firmament as a star. He is now one of the saints, of the faithful, of the wise, and the rich. Thus to be with the deity, and to be like him, is the essence of salvation. That is a lesson which some Christians, who think chiefly of escape from hell, might do well to learn.

It has sometimes been said that the Egyptians believed in the transmigration of souls. Herodotus is responsible for the statement that the Egyptians believed that the souls of men pass into the bodies of animals of various grades, and after a period of three years are renewed with the body. The monuments do not teach any such doctrine. Herodotus probably formed his notion from the fact that the Egyptians did believe in the doctrine of the metamorphosis of the dead. The

deceased who had been justified might assume all sorts of shapes in order to trick his enemies and make his way in safety to the blessed fields. After his final entrance into glory, indeed, he has the range of the whole universe in any shape he may desire. But there is no proof that the wicked were thought to be punished for their sins by being compelled to pass their existence in animal bodies, as in torture chambers, until the day of final extinction.

Who will deny that in all this there is something of moral grandeur? Well might the life of a great people have been for centuries nourished by it. Alike for kings as for the meanest subjects, the moral law has its sanctions beyond this life. Is there not something impressive and grand in the spectacle of this mysterious people, grave and religious, standing on the banks of their sacred stream, and as their eyes peered into eternity, taking that river as the symbol of the mystic waters that should bear away the bark that contained their loved ones? In every rising sun they saw the sure prophecy of the resurrection, and as they gazed at the west, purple, crimson, gorgeous gold, beneath which the sun had sunk, it was with a look full of hope and a profound, abiding belief that the crown of immortality and blessedness should encircle the brow of the just, while the iniquitous should, beyond the grave, suffer the due penalty of his sins. Yet there were contradictions also here. From the bosom of these lofty thoughts, as well as from the Egyptian notions of deity and from the strange mythology, there comes the Sphinx's cry for light.

Look at the dead as he stands at the judgment-bar of Osiris. He seems to have the self-satisfied air of the Pharisee: "I am not as other men are; I am clean,

I am clean. I have not committed this sin or that." Egypt has been well styled the Pharisaic nation of antiquity. We listen in vain for the tearful chants and wails of penitence such as broke from the Chaldæan's soul. Nor does there seem to be any conscious desire or felt need of a future deliverer, of some hero who will put an end to this imperfect and miserable existence, and, triumphing over the evil, bring in a new humanity and a renovated world. Egypt knew no Messiah, inspired seer, or reformer sent of God. She looked for none. She seems to have been satisfied with the life on earth, provided she could be assured of its perpetuity and of a possible happy exit into the fields of the blest.

Yet, after all, we do hear, even in this connection, muffled cries of need. Conscience does seem to say, in spite of the inveterate Pharisaism: "I do need something more than my own righteousness to justify me at the bar of God." Is it not a pathetic touch, a confession of the need of mercy rather than of rigid justice, a fresh and profound insight, a momentary beam of inspiration, that the beneficent god, the god who suffered for man on earth, should be his judge at last? Does not the Christian, too, put Christ the Savior upon the judgment throne? Another striking feature: this great judge, Osiris, is a being touched with a feeling of our infirmities. What a lightning-flash of truth it seems when Osiris is represented as saying to the suffering creature, "Since I have myself received the great wound, I am wounded in every other wound!" What is this but a momentary gleam of the truth that our Judge is also our High Priest, who is able to succor them who are tempted and in sorrow, because he hath felt the same?

Again, notwithstanding the apparent self-complacency, conscience does lift up her voice to witness against the sinner. "O, heart, heart, which comes to me from my mother!" cries the dead; "heart of mine, necessary to my existence when I was upon earth, rise not up to witness against me because of what I have done before the gods!" "All these blemishes that are upon me are the things that I have done against the Lord of eternity from the day of my birth." He prays, "Take from me all defilement, cleanse me from all iniquity, that no evil may cling to me." The gods reply: "We take away thy faults. We cleanse thee from the defilement contracted upon earth to thy hurt. We purge away all thy remaining impurities." The dead exclaims: "There is no more evil in me, nor any more of the impurity of my mother. I am delivered." Is there not here a confession that man finds in himself those inborn tendencies to evil which Christian theology has sometimes, perhaps wrongly, termed original sin, and which, if they are to be got rid of, the gods themselves must wash away?

Then note once more, that, although the soul is supposed to stand in the judgment, relying solely on his own goodness, and can escape the doom of the wicked only when it can truly say, "I am clean, I am clean," yet some friendly aid is, after all, hoped for from the god Thoth. In the thought, also, that even after the judgment has been pronounced in his favor, he must still go through certain dangers, which he can safely face only by the help of sacred formulas and mystic words, is there not a confession that these Pharisaic people felt, nevertheless, that, after all, man can not clear himself nor make himself fit for heaven? And, finally, we come upon a striking statement that

when the lord of truth, Osiris, cleanses away defilement, evil is joined to the deity that the truth may expel the evil element. The god who wounds becomes the god of penitential comfort. Does not this remind us of the truth of our Christian faith, "He shall bear their iniquities;" "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed;" "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity?"

Such are some of the infant cries for light, which seem to break with unspeakable pathos from the sad lips of the Sphinx. The cry for a transcendent God, yet for a God immanent and self-revealing in the world; the cry for a God who does not leave the world as a lifeless machine, to run its independent course without care from him or life from him, but who fills it constantly with himself; a cry for companionship with beings above the world, and for an unseen world of great and progressive spirits; and, most of all, a baby's ignorant cry for an incarnate God, revealing in the world the life of the eternal; a God willing to stoop, suffer, die in the service of man; a God in the flesh dying in the struggle with evil, yet to rise again, and with his victorious heel to tread the serpent down; a cry for a judge upon the throne who tempers justice with mercy, for some one to lend man a hand in his struggle with defilement, for assimilation to God, for the vision of God, for immortal blessedness before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,—who but Christ, the Light and Life and Redeemer of the world, can be the one perfect and only response to the Sphinx's cry for light, as he is the answering voice to every yearning wail of the human soul in any land, in any age?

LECTURE VI.

THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL TO OTHER
RELIGIONS.

THE VOICE OF THE GOSPEL TO OTHER RELIGIONS.

UPON the holiest spot in the center of culture for the world stood a travel-worn stranger, stretching out his hand in earnest speech. His bodily aspect bore traces of weakness, toil, suffering, while on his face lines of anxiety and sadness mingled with the expression of dauntless will and unshaken faith. Approaching from the port, passing between the long walls, he had entered the city, traversed it, and now stood in public speech upon its most sacred spot. If he faced the south, he had before him the Agora, or market, where, not long before, he had been in a more private way talking with the people. That market, in the valley surrounded by heights, had been in the past the center of a glorious public life, when the orators and statesmen, poets and artists, had found here all the incentives to their noblest enthusiasm. Even at this time it was still the meeting-place of philosophy, idleness, conversation, and business. As he had stood there conversing with one and another, he had seen all about him glorious buildings, exquisite statuary, porticoes decorated with paintings, sculptured forms, and memorials of the thrilling history of the people. Contrasting with the beautiful green plane-trees that spoke of Cimon's enterprise, were the white statues of the illustrious sons of the city,—men like Solon, Conon, Demosthenes; also sculptured figures of deified heroes, as Heracles and Theseus; and of the legendary patriarchs after whom the tribes were named. With these were memorials of the older divinities of the place, figures of

Hermes, marble images of Apollo as patron of the city and deliverer from the plague, and, in the center of all, the altar of the twelve great gods, which was to Athens what the golden milestone was to Rome. Every public place and building of this inclosed spot was a sanctuary. The record-house was a temple of the mother of the gods; the council-house held the statues of Apollo and Zeus, besides an altar of Hestia. The theater at the base of the Acropolis, into which noble edifice the Athenians crowded to hear the words of their great tragedians, was consecrated to Dionysus. The place for the town meetings was dedicated to Zeus and the nymphs of the Demos. Even abstractions of the intellect were deified and publicly honored. Altars were there to Fame, to Modesty, to Energy, to Persuasion, and to Pity.

As this stranger traversed the city, his path had thus been amongst the forms of the great men and deified heroes, amongst the temples, statues, altars of the gods worshiped by the most cultured people on earth. What had been the effect upon him of all this grandeur and beauty? His spirit had been stirred within him. Why was he here? To proclaim a new religion. A new religion? Surely Athens had religion and gods enough already. Was not all Greece replete with objects of devotion, and were there not in Athens more gods than in all the rest of the land, so that the Roman satirist had said that it was easier to find a god there than a man? But, nevertheless, this Jewish stranger has come alone to herald a new religion. In the market-place, where the idlers gathered to seek the news; where, scattered under the plane-trees or grouped in knots under the porticoes, the philosophers, wearing the garbs of their several sects, eagerly discussed the questions of the day, ready for any new

theme on which they could exercise their subtlety or display their rhetoric, he had gone about, talking his new faith.

Some had derisively dubbed him a babbler; some, more serious or more curious, wished to hear more of it, and in a more formal way. So they had taken him up the flight of limestone steps, sixty feet aloft to the summit of the Areopagus, a spot superstitiously revered by every Athenian heart. From time immemorial had been determined on this spot a long series of awful causes connected with crime and religion. The dread recollections of centuries, therefore, centered about those stone seats hewn in the living rock. In the gay and frivolous city it was the one place of silent awe. What place more suited than this for a grave discourse on the solemn mysteries of religion? Did a vague recollection of the dread events which poetry and tradition associated with the hill of Ares, solemnize their minds as they crowded after the apostle up the stone steps, and gathered about him under the open sky to hear what his new doctrine was? What a dramatic scene! Straight before him, as he faced the south, was the Museum, on the further side of the Agora. To the west was the Pnyx, or slope of the town meeting, on whose elevated platform the people saw their peerless orators stand to thrill the assembled throngs with magic eloquence. To the east was the far-famed Acropolis, to the Athenian the very center of the world. There, just outside the gate, was the temple of victory. Then came the magnificent portal of Pericles, then a platform which was a veritable museum of art, history, and religion, one vast composition of architecture and sculpture dedicated to the national glory and the worship of the gods. It was a spot upon which the highest

genius in art that the world has seen had lavished with prodigal hand its treasures. At the entrance was a statue of Hermes of the gate; further on, within the vestibule of the beautiful inclosure, the graceful forms of Aphrodite and the Charities; here an image of Pallas Athene as the goddess of health, and a shrine of Artemis from the hand of Praxiteles.

Interspersed with these forms of the gods, were memorials of eminent men and great victories. There the statue of Pericles, his country's pride; here, a record in marble of a victory over the Galatians; and here, also, in Paul's day, statues of Agrippa and Augustus, and a temple in honor of Rome and the emperor of the Roman world. Tales from the mythology also found representation here,—Theseus contending with the Minotaur; Heracles struggling with the serpent; Gæa imploring showers from Zeus; Pallas Athene causing the olive to sprout; while Poseidon raised the waves; and there, chief monument of all, the glorious Parthenon, a monument of the proudest period of the Athenian history to the honor of their patron goddess, a structure which ages of decay have but partially defaced. Within was the colossal statue of the virgin goddess in ivory and gold, the work of Phidias, and, conspicuous over all the city, the huge brazen statue of Pallas Athene, made from the brazen spoils of the battle of Marathon, and, with spear and shield, rising in gigantic proportions above all the buildings of the Acropolis, and seen far out at sea.

Now look at it. Here is a single despised individual of a despised race, standing on the most sacred spot of this city most renowned for culture, art, poetry, religion, surrounded on every hand with marvelous works of genius in honor of deity, proclaiming a new

faith. Considering the man, the place, the people who were listening to him, the religion which he faced, and the religion which he possessed, and the address which he delivered, as, with ardent and enthusiastic eloquence, he poured out the feelings with which all that he had seen had filled his soul, the situation is full of impressive teaching for every age of the world. To those who speak and write of the faiths of non-Christian peoples, his discourse on that day is a classical model and lesson. What will he say of the faith they hold? Will he utterly despise and denounce it, give it high commendation, mingle denunciation with praise, or will he completely ignore it? The last certainly he can not do. If he has anything better for them he must be able to demonstrate it. He can do this only by comparison. It is not our purpose to analyze this great sermon of Paul on Mars' Hill, but simply to take from it some hints as to the proper Christian method of dealing with the pagan faiths of the world. Listening, then, to the voice of the Gospel to other religions, as uttered by this apostle especially commissioned to the heathen world, we note,—

It is, first of all, a sympathetic voice. Did Paul begin at once to castigate the Athenians for the willful errors and vicious practices prevalent in their religion? His spirit was stirred within him; yes, no doubt it was sickened by some things he had seen and heard. But think you his heart was hot with indignation only? Not if he had the spirit of his Master. Would a man who believed that Christ, though rich, for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might be rich; that being in the form of God, Christ emptied himself, came to earth in the form of a servant, in the fashion of a man, humbled himself unto death, even the death

of the cross, for the sake of sinful men; would a man who could almost wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake; a man who would spend and be spent, undergo bitterest hardships, and face death in a hundred forms that he might proclaim to the ends of the earth the blessed truth that glowed in his own soul; would a man who knew of the parable of the shepherd clambering over mountain crags, and crossing deserts wild to save a single wandering sheep, or the story of the prodigal son for whose home-coming the father yearned with such deep affection,—would such a man look upon these brilliant people of Athens, in all their sin, with hot indignation only? Nay, verily; having his Master's spirit, he must have looked upon these gay and brilliant children, in spite of all their errors, with sympathy and love.

Then, further, as he more than hints to them in his discourse, he remembered that they were not idolatrous heathen solely by their own fault. What if their religion had been one black tissue of falsehood, folly, and sin, without a single golden thread of truth to relieve its somber shade, had they in sheer wickedness woven it all? Was it not a garment which they had received from their fathers? He recognizes, in so many words, that they are in Athens by the providence of God. It is he who, though having made of one blood all nations of men who dwell on the face of the earth, hath also determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitations. They were no more to be blamed for first opening their eyes in heathen Athens than he was to be praised for opening his in Tarsus. They were no mere prodigal children, in sheer wantonness having left their Father's house for the swine-troughs in a far country. If they did have their dwelling

amongst the swine-troughs of a false faith, it was because they were born amongst them. They were just where they had been placed by their Creator. A man of Paul's clear intellect would not have to reason long to perceive that, had he himself been born of pagan parents in Athens, and one of those Stoics, of Jewish parents in Tarsus, Paul might have been amongst the listeners on that day, and this Athenian philosopher the Gospel preacher.

The apostle's doctrine of Providence and of the love of God would not let him believe that the Divine Father would leave his children to grope like moles at random in the darkness, and then eternally damn them because they could see no more. It is He who has caused some to be born in India, where they have never heard anything else but the monstrous ideas of Brahmanism; some to have their being in China, where they have heard of him only through Confucius, Lao-tsze, or Gautama; some in the isles of the sea, where, from childhood's morn, fetishes and magic have been before their eyes as manifestations of the divine. To teach that, through no fault of their own, they are born there into hopeless error, and then forever tormented because they had no better knowledge, would be the most horrible Calvinism, an atrocious libel, indeed, upon their Father, God. To none of his creatures is God such a Moloch as to curse them because of a chronology or a geography with which they had nothing whatever to do. So far, then, as the Athenians were involved in superstition and error through no fault of their own, the Gospel has sympathy for them more than biting censure.

But, further, the voice of the Gospel to other religions is a voice of sympathy for deep religiousness wher-

ever found. Paul revealed this in the very opening words of his great discourse. As his text he took the piety he found everywhere expressed. It is agreed on all hands now that to these men of culture, Paul did not use the insulting term "too superstitious." As the word employed literally signifies, he said rather: "I perceive in all things that ye are very deity-fearing," more religious than others. With the Parthenon-crowned Acropolis close at hand, and before his eyes the multiplied forms of the gods in every part of the city, what else could he have perceived? He seems to have been echoing the words of their own Sophocles, "Piety in you alone of men have I found." He was acknowledging that this great religionism of the people was in its essence good. Their zeal in religion was a real zeal in a great cause. He saw them evincing that very interest in religion which is fitting for man, and which he was trying everywhere to introduce. If, in our blind zeal for our faith, we will not acknowledge this, the whole force of Paul's sermon will escape us.

The Athenians, then, were right in being exceedingly religious, indeed in making religion the supreme concern in life. The Gospel sees in religion, of whatever type, not a meaningless freak of nature, which, by the way, is but another expression for the almost profane phrase, "caprice of God." In the religious soul the Gospel sees not a tormented Tantalus, deluded and mocked in his torture; in religion, not something imposed from without upon the man by shrewd priest or selfish king; not some fungus-growth foreign to his nature, which the sharp knife of culture will in time cut away; not a baseless phantom of his childish, wandering fancy; but the expression rather of innate reason, of spiritual, heavenly intuitions; of the natural hunger

of the human heart for the divine; of an indefinable restlessness of the soul half-blinded and entangled, and sometimes almost crushed by the finite; a sort of homesickness for the eternal; an incessant searching of the heart for something more than the finite can give. To those who say with Lucretius, "Fear created the gods;" to those who would reply, "Nay, it is the tendency of human nature to attribute soul to anything that moves itself;" to those who shout, "Not so, it is reverence for dead ancestors and awe of shadows and ghosts;" to those who exclaim, "None of these alone accounts for religion, but all of them together have begotten it,—fear, joy, illusion, nocturnal visions, movements of river, tree, or stars,"—to all the Gospel says, Away with your shallow sophistries! Religion is the spontaneous expression of the innate divine in man; the chief mark which distinguishes him from the brute. He is a religious being for the same reason that he is a thinking being, an æsthetic being, a social being, a being with loves and hates, appetites and aspirations, conscience and will. He is naturally religious simply because he has a religious nature given him by God. Try as he may to throw off religion, it presses upon him from every quarter, and through every pore enters into his heart; yea, whether he will or not, springs up from the depths of his soul as from a bubbling, never-failing fount. Emerson sings:

"Out from the heart of nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old.
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,
The canticles of love and woe."

Yes, and so out of the living heart of human nature have rolled all the expressions of religious faith. So, just as the æsthetic taste and the principles of art begat Parthenons, Madonnas, and Taj Mahals; as love of harmony and musical principles were the mother of oratorios,—so religion is the mother of the individual faiths and worships. As Lyman Abbott has well said: “It would be easier to kill the appetite of man and let us feed by merely shoveling in carbon as into a furnace; it would be easier to blot ambition out of man and consign him to endless and nerveless content; easier to blot love out of man and banish him to live the life of a eunuch in the wilderness,—than to blot out of the soul of man those desires and aspirations which knit him to the Infinite and the Eternal. In vain does the philosopher of the barnyard say to the egg, ‘You are made of egg; you always were an egg; do not try to be anything but an egg;’ the chicken pecks and pecks until he breaks the shell and comes to the sunlight.”

Religion has been the most potent and abiding factor of human history. It has wrought both weal and woe for our race. It has founded States, and overthrown them; unified empires, and divided them; inspired the most beautiful heroism and self-devotion, and alas! sometimes given its sanctions to customs cruel, atrocious, obscene. It has sometimes brought freedom, happiness, and peace to nations, but has at other times been the friend of tyranny and a forger of chains for the mind of man. It has been the inspiration of painting, sculpture, architecture, the mother of music, the incentive to science; from its clear fountains eloquence and poetry have drunk stimulating draughts; in it, philosophy has found her deepest spring. Indeed, it is highly probable that, if deprived of religious faith, man

would after a while cease to have any science, art, literature, music, poetry, philosophy, philanthropy at all. The mighty power which moves this world is faith in the other and higher world, and in the God who rules over both.

History has proved, if it has proved anything, that religion is the root of civilization. There is profound meaning in the Scriptural text about being without God and without hope in the world. Take from the human soul all the stimulus and all the hope which religion gives, and man would probably, in time, lose all interest in the present life. The laws under which he lives are too big for the earthly life alone, because this is not the measure of his whole life. Because he is so great, he soon tires and sickens of the finite, unless he can lay hold of the infinite. In a universe of lifeless laws and iron fate, of matter and force and motion that moves nowhither, without purpose and without love, man would most likely soon be too listless to pursue science, art, literature, or plans of benevolence. As another has said: "For a time, indeed, from force of habit, and from the acquired faith of the past, from habits of hope stored up in the soul, an atheistic community might continue to think and work as before. But they would be like people living on their capital instead of upon their income. The old stock of beliefs inherited from the past would soon be used up, and then the legitimate fruits of the death of faith in anything divine would appear in a steadily-increasing weariness and indifference to life. A train, from acquired momentum, will run some time after the engine is taken off, but it gradually moves more and more slowly, and at last stops." Better, far better, an imperfect religion, a religion tainted with never so much superstition; better,

immeasurably, the crudest faith of the most savage tribe, than a race without any sense whatever of the divine. Define religion as we may, it always makes some appeal, however ineffective, to something higher than the animal in man; appealing always to his instinct of reverence, it leads him to look up and not down; to the sky with all its stars, rather than to the polluting and blinding clay.

India may have been bad enough under the rule of Brahmanism and Hindooism; China, Thibet, Korea, Ceylon's fragrant isle, may be degraded enough under the reign of Confucius or Gautama; Turkey may be lustful and bloodthirsty enough under the sway of Islam; Africa, dark Africa, may be barbarous enough with her silly fetishes; Babylon, under Merodach, might be unchaste, and Assyria with Assur as king be hard, cruel, sensual; Greece with her great Father Zeus, Mother Hera, glorious Apollo, laughing Aphrodite, shrewd Hermes, severe Pallas Athene, and all the rest, might be pleasure-loving, frivolous children of the world; and Rome with her Lares and Capitoline Jove, be a huge iron hand in whose relentless grip the whole earth writhed,—but without the faiths they cherished they would have been immeasurably worse. Superstition, lust, cruelty, selfishness may sometimes compel religion to be their ally; but she is never their mother, and at bottom does make at least some feeble protest against their vileness. As one has said who has spent long years amongst the heathen trying to win them to a better faith, "Dim, dim and cold as yellow changeful moons, as twinkling, distant, cloud-obscured stars, as momentary falling meteors in the dark, dread night of humanity, yet from the darkness, the gloom, the terror and despair of no religion which is the death of

the soul, are they farther removed than they are from the crimson and gold of the dawning sky, and the splendor of the noonday sun which we behold in Jesus Christ."

Again, the voice of the Gospel to other religions is a voice of sympathy for their underlying intent. At bottom, what is religion? It has been defined by different thinkers, in different ages, from varying points of view, and the result seems to be a puzzling mass of conflicting statements. But whether we define it with Seneca as "to know God and imitate him," or with Cicero as "reverence before the gods;" with Kant, as "knowledge of our duties as divine commands;" with Matthew Arnold, as "morality touched by emotion," or with Drummond, as "morality touched by life;" with Hegel, as "knowledge acquired by the finite spirit of its essence as absolute spirit"—a most profound statement; with Schleiermacher, as "the sense of absolute dependence;" with Huxley, as "reverence and love for the ethical ideal and the desire to realize that ideal in life;" with Gruppe, as "belief in a state or in a being which, properly speaking, lies outside the sphere of human striving and attainment, but which can be brought into this sphere in a particular way, namely, by sacrifices, ceremonies, prayers, penances, and self-denial;" with Carlyle, as "the thing a man does practically believe, the thing a man does practically lay to heart and know for certain concerning his vital relations to this mysterious universe and his duty and destiny therein;" with Max Müller, as "the faculty for the perception of the infinite, the struggle to conceive the inconceivable, to utter the unutterable, a longing after the infinite, the love of God;" or, better than all, with Reville, as "the determination of human life by the

sentiment of a bond uniting the human mind to that mysterious mind whose domination of the world and of itself it recognizes, and to whom it delights in feeling itself united,"—define religion as we may, there is one underlying aim, not always present clearly to consciousness, but none the less there, which all must recognize as its inmost essence.

What is the ultimate aim of the Gospel, for example? The impartation to man of eternal life. And what is eternal life? "This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." That is, to know God by reception of his grace, by direct communion, by spiritual assimilation, that brings the soul more and more into his likeness; union of the soul with him; union of will, union of heart, of conscience, of intellect; union in blessed fellowship. Precisely that is the intent, conscious or unconscious, of every form of religion,—union with the Divine. All religions are wise or foolish, orderly or disorderly, successful or useless, attempts to establish harmonious fellowship between the Being or beings worshiped and the worshipping spirit. Any system of thought or action inspired and pervaded by this sentiment, though that sentiment be little understood, is religious. Nothing else is. Without this, a system may be a philosophy, a social scheme, a political plan, an ethical effort, or scientific theory, but it is no religion.

This is the meaning of sacrifice and prayer; of self-torture and penitential psalms; of symbolic imitations of the deeds of the gods; of the chanting by sacred bards of holy hymns; of meditation, magic, sacraments. All are voices proclaiming the aspiration of the soul for union with the divine. Whether we look upon man bowing before his fetish in the jungles, or offering his

sacrifices on the mountain-tops; go with the Egyptian to his solemn, columnar temples, with their avenues of sphinxes, and their sacred beasts; join with the Chaldean in his processions about his terraced fanes, or hear him by the magic spell trying to drive away the evil powers; watch the Canaanite offer his bloody human sacrifice to Moloch, or the Mexican pile up his heap of skulls as an offering to his god; mingle with the Greeks about their glorious Parthenon, or join them in their holy mysteries; or bow with the hard-headed Roman before his Capitoline Jove,—in every case we hear their human hearts crying for union with the mysterious, ineffable Power on whom man depends. With that fundamental intent, Paul and the gospel he preached profoundly sympathized.

But now the voice of the Gospel might be a voice sympathetic with the people involved in error and sin, sympathetic with the religious feeling in general, and with its fundamental aim, whilst yet being a voice of utter condemnation for the individual religions themselves. But not so. The Gospel has frank and hearty commendation for whatever positive truth may be contained in them. It is a voice of genuine catholicity. Did Paul on the Areopagus, after acknowledging in a general way the good of the religious feeling, proceed to denounce in unmeasured terms their whole system of beliefs and practices? Do we hear him deride the idea of Zeus? Nay, he stands on the truth they do believe, takes as his text the modicum of fact to be found in their religion. An inscription upon one of their own altars furnishes him a basis for his discourse; he reasons upon their own admitted principles, quotes from their own poets, and step by step leads to some conclusions which the keener philosophers at least would see to be

logical deductions from their own basal ideas. Had Christian apologists always heeded that lesson they would have saved themselves from many an ungenerous attempt needlessly to blacken human nature and darken the providence of God.

To show the need of the Gospel of Christ is it necessary to disparage every other religion? That Christianity should be of God, must every other form of faith except Judaism be wholly of the devil? That Christ may be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and his message the absolute truth and perfect religion for all the ages, must every other sage and saint and religious genius be only an impostor or dupe, and the religion he founded, or under which he lived, be without a grain of truth? To show that Christ is the Light of the World, the great, radiant Sun in heaven, must we snuff out every lesser light that is twinkling in the blackness of the heathen sky, or prove them to be delusive will-o'-the-wisps dancing on the edge of the morass, and luring men to the bogs of corruption and death? No! no! The dead religions of mankind have left something else behind them than bleaching bones and foul odors, and the living ones have something else in them besides fraud, superstition, and sin.

To the Athenians Paul said, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." Into the luxuriant groves of their faith he does not go with gleaming ax, with fire and spade and crowbar and dynamite, to chop down every tree, to burn root and branch, to remove every vestige even of the stumps. He goes rather with the graftsman's knife and slips off celestial virtue, to make these old, native stocks put forth sweeter, fairer fruit. However feebly, the sentiment of reverence and the sense of the divine were lifting their

souls at least some little distance toward its true object, and were guiding to some extent their groping hands. More than this, he connects the Christian thought of God with their abounding polytheism by a link which they had in common, the truth of the divine immanence. Above the world he puts God as its Creator and Ruler, but declares also that he is as well an immanent presence in the world. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being;" as though he would say to these worshipers of a multitude of deities: "You are right. The world is filled with a spiritual presence."

He went even farther. He asserts a principle, a glimpse of whose meaning the greatest philosophers of Christendom are beginning to see. Listen. Not only has God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth, but he has also fixed the boundaries of the nations, that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him. That is, God has himself so assigned and arranged their several nationalities, by lineage, language, manners, customs, by mountains, seas, rivers, deserts; so broken up the race into groups, that humanity should be in circumstances to seek and find its Maker, and that all separate and independent inquiries amongst the nations might tend to one result, leading them to find out God. Perverted as these national arrangements may have been by the wickedness of man, by having been made the cause of war between rival nations, and the pretexts on which one people has broken another into slaves, it might have been, and was intended by God to be, the best arrangement by which the whole race should be led at last to him.

Do we not see an illustration of this on a small scale in the family? What conceivable arrangement could

be more conducive to the purposes of religion and virtue than the division of men into families? On a larger scale, may there not have been some similar advantage derived from separation into tribes and nations? To this subject we will return by and by. We simply ask here, Shall we believe that this arrangement has entirely failed; that the divine purpose has been in this utterly thwarted? That would be a poor compliment to God. Such a view indeed, to my mind, would tend directly to atheism, to the denial of all providence in human history. Nay, the God without whose notice no sparrow falls, and no waterfowl is guided, as Bryant sings, in his flight, who never puts a jellyfish into the water or the insect of an hour into the air without providing for its nourishment and growth, surely has not made his children with capacities for himself, with conscience, reverence, hope, yearning for the infinite, and then left the majority, in spite of themselves, to hopeless starvation of soul. Paul intimates that as God has implanted in man a tendency to feel after him, he has furnished his child also with some capacity for finding him. The great apostle also connected Greek polytheism and Christian truth by another link which they had in common; the truth, namely, that there is in God something of human nature or in man something of the divine: "For we are also his offspring."

Now, all this mode of address was not on the part of Paul mere policy. This discourse was not simply a masterpiece of rhetoric. The apostle was no shuffling Jesuit, for rhetorical effect or to gain some momentary victory, playing fast and loose with the most tremendous subjects that can concern the human soul. What he said there were the most intense and deepest convictions of the man. In a similar vein he had told the

barbarians at Lystra that God has never left himself without witness, and in his longest epistle—which is no oration, but a logical and sober treatise setting forth his deepest convictions of Christian truth—he argues that the Gentiles do know God; that their knowledge is a divine gift; that in nature they have a revelation of the invisible God, of his eternal power, and Godhead, and providence. He declares as well that they have a law written in their hearts by which they shall be judged. Thus neither God nor his law was unknown. If he blames them at all, as he does, it is less for ignorance than for refusing to follow the light they had.

Now, in all this the great apostle to the Gentiles is in perfect harmony with the entire Scripture and with our Lord himself. The Hebrew Scriptures, in their highest and most spiritual portions, are charitable enough to recognize truth and right outside the covenant people. Where in remote antiquity is there a figure that looms up more grandly or more mysteriously than Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God? Did not even Abraham pay tribute to him? Yet he was no heir of the promise, no ancestor or kinsman of the heirs. Hagar and Ishmael, though but the bondwoman and her son, were still those whom God pitied, making the mother feel “Thou, God, seest me,” and foreshadowing the providential destiny of her son. Of all the books of the Old Testament, which is more sublime than the Book of Job; which more pathetic in its problem, more beautiful in its poetry, more charming in its whole? Yet the man it delights to honor, the perfect man who feared God and eschewed evil, is no son of Abraham, no child of the law, but an Arabian and an alien. It was then, as it always is, the priests who narrowed Israel, while the clear-eyed prophets, with their

divine universalism, anticipated the time when all they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense, and shall show forth the praises of the Lord. They could see even in the disciples of Zoroaster, in whose land they were captive, kindred spirits, and could think of the Persian Cyrus as in some sense a servant of the Lord.

But if the Old Testament was generous in its catholicity, the New Testament was more so still. Not without significance was it that those who followed the mystical star, amongst the first to come with adoration and precious offerings to the cradle of the Christ, were Magi, followers of Zoroaster. Christ found great faith in the Roman centurion and in the Syrophenician mother; and he declared that other sheep he had, not of the Jewish fold; that there should in time be one fold and one Shepherd, and that men are to come from the east and west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God. Even Peter, the straitened Peter, who shrank from the common or unclean, was led to formulate the great principle that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.

In the early Church the East was more generous than the West, and it owed this generosity mainly to its larger knowledge and deeper insight. In Alexandria, where Aristobulus and Philo had striven to wed Moses and Plato, a splendid series of Christian apologists arose, who assailed heathenism by developing Christianity; defended the Gospel, not by negative assaults upon heathenism, but as well by victorious positive construction of the Christian truth. Justin Martyr argued that the ancient thinkers had spoken well in the very degree in which they had been partakers of the *Logos*

spermatikos, the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He claimed that, whatever things had been rightly spoken by them, is the property of us Christians. In the eyes of Clement of Alexandria, philosophy, like the law, was a schoolmaster unto Christ. Every impulse of good came from God, and the philosophy that formed man to virtue must be of and from him. So he held that, as God willed the well-being of the Jews by giving them the prophets, so he called the most eminent amongst the Greeks that they might be the prophets of the people in their own language, and in the form in which they were capable of receiving his blessing. In later times, even Gregory of Nazianzen could confess that some far-seeing souls amongst the heathen, rejecting the tiresome mythology, conceived the unity of Deity and the presence of the Spirit, though they called it not spirit, but the soul of the world.

In the West we hear a different voice. Tertullian scorns philosophy as the father of the heretics; the demon of Socrates is to this fiery father of the Church an evil spirit. Yet even Tertullian declared that the soul of man is naturally Christian; that he is constantly, without knowing it, seeking the truth wrapped up in the Gospel. But in the great Augustine lived a brighter spirit, though dashed with darkness. Philosophy had been indeed to him a schoolmaster unto Christ; Plato had helped him to interpret Paul, and his experience made him generously recognize the truth which had existed amongst the heathen. All truth was, in his sight, God's, came from him, was revealed by his providence, and pointed to Christ. God had never forsaken man or ceased to speak to him. The Christian religion had been, in essence, in the world

before the days of Christ, even from the beginning of our race, only it was not then called Christian. These statements of Augustine are the more remarkable because in them he dared to be inconsistent. His insight and sweet charity were better than his dialectics.

Amongst the reformers, Zwingli was especially generous to other religions, and dreamed of a heaven where Socrates and Plato might hold sweet converse with Peter and Paul; while Vossius headed an army of Dutch scholars, trying to bind with golden cords of truth the religions of the past he revered with the belief in the Gospel which he sacredly held. Cudworth, the most many-sided man of his day, and his fellow-Platonists at Cambridge, declared that heathenism had a mission, and that its best thinkers were speakers of divine truths. Milton, More, Butler, and a galaxy of other brilliant and devout minds, assert the same thing. Moreover, when we see reformed Christendom making the Greek and Roman classics the basis of higher culture, the old intellects of Greece and Rome the teachers of the young world, what was it but a confession that, though not Christian, yet those men of old have a message even for us, and some help to bestow upon us? No strange thought, then, do we advocate here. It has been held by the wisest, most far-seeing, most charitable minds in every age of the Church of Christ. Men and Churches are always wisest when most generous, and they have never been wiser than when they recognized the truth of God in other times, other lands, other religions, than their own; when they believed

"That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened."

But, generalities aside, what are some of the specific truths which the Gospel may recognize as held by these heathen faiths? If each religion, in its own way, could think out, feel out, dream out, or sigh out some truth or truths, what are some of these? If the Church had paid good heed to the hint given by the apostle Paul, she might perhaps, generations ago, have found the key to the meaning of God in allowing these religions to run their several ways. It is becoming fashionable in some quarters to say that all religions say the same thing. For example, no less eminent a scholar than Max Müller said years ago, and has in substance repeated the same thing again and again since, that the essence of all religions is, "Be good, my boy, for God's sake." Such a statement is too shallow to fall from the lips of the brilliant scholar who uttered it, besides being in contradiction to many of his other declarations.

Such a view must regard all the features peculiar to each religion, everything which distinguishes one from another, as nothing better than barnacles on the body of true religion. Not one of the faiths of the world would have any special meaning, nor any special mission. Such a notion places the religions side by side, and says: "Well, after all, these are all essentially one, possibly some a little better than others; but all teach the same essential truths concerning God and nature, man and morality, immorality and retribution." Thus in an address on "The Sympathy of Religions," Mr. T. W. Higginson says that "The sympathy amongst all these vast structures of spiritual organization lies not in what they know; for they are alike, in a scientific sense, in knowing nothing. Their point of sympathy lies in what they have sublimely created through long-

ing imagination. In all these faiths are the same alloy of superstition; the same fables of miracle and prophecy; the same signs and wonders; the same preternatural births and resurrections. In point of knowledge, all are helpless; in credulity, all puerile; in point of aspiration, all sublime. . . . All look around for some human life more exalted than the rest, which may be taken as God's highest earthly reflection." Again he says: "Every race believes in a Creator and Governor of the world, in whom devout souls recognize a holy Father. Every race believes in immortality; every race recognizes in its precepts the brotherhood of man."

Now, all such talk is a delusion and a folly. Nothing is gained for the cause of humanity or of truth by such statements. Their utterance is their own refutation. The only grain of truth in so many bushels of chaff is the thought which we a few moments since stated, that the deep underlying intent of all religion is the same; namely, harmony with the divine. But that is far from saying that all religions are alike, or that they all say the same thing. Though it is true that there are striking resemblances in the religious thoughts of peoples far distant from each other both in time and place; though, for example, the doctrine of the unity of Deity is widespread; though a doctrine of an incarnation has been believed, in one form or another, by many peoples; though, as we look up the stream of the years, we see smoking, bloodstained altars on the one bank, as we perceive graves, graves, graves, on the other; though for the truth they have seen, men have sacrificed property, comfort, life,—yet it is utterly false and foolish to assert that they are all pretty much on the same dead-level of ignorance, and about alike in the quality of their religious dreams.

What truly thoughtful and informed man would think for a moment, for example, of saying that the glorious creed of Zoroaster and the rude belief of the fetish-worshiper had the same alloy of superstition, and in point of credulity were equally puerile; that the pitying love of a Gautama and his doctrine of self-extinction say the same thing as the lively religion of the gay and brilliant Greek, or as the strange faith of the land of the Nile? Who would say that the energetic, fiery religion of the Vikings was in any sense the same as that of the withered fakir, or of the conservative follower of Confucius? No, the true sympathy of religions does not consist in their all saying the same thing any more than an oratorio consists in all the singers striking precisely the same note in the same way. To be blind to great distinctions whilst searching for resemblances is to be blind to important criteria of truth. All trees are not apple-trees, nor do all bring forth the snow and gold of the orange because all have roots, trunks, branches, leaves. Paul says that God has put the race of men into nations and peoples, that each in its own way should seek after him. I, for one, do not believe that the plans of God have utterly failed in this. If it had not been best, on the whole, that these different religions should be allowed to go on their way, would an omnipotent, omniscient God, of infinite love, have allowed them to go on?

One need not travel far to see that, though God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, there are and have been such things as race and national types of mankind, and that these types have been to no small extent determined by the character and bounds of their habitation. When we speak the words Arab or Jew, Greek or Roman, Celt or

Teuton, Italian or Englishman, a distinct type of man is clearly pictured to the mind. How these types were originally formed, no one can tell. Certainly all is not to be attributed to climate and condition of life; for, though the power of these to modify types is without doubt great, many facts show that they never succeed in breaking down or in utterly changing the original quality of a race. Jews, Arabs, Celts, Mongols preserve the same characteristics through thousands of years and in different lands. As Clarke says: "The Irishman and German tilling their fields side by side in this New World, thousands of miles and centuries of time distant from their ancestral home, present exactly similar differences that were noticed two thousand years ago by Tacitus and Cæsar."

There seems to have been an inexplicable tendency to variety implanted in man, which causes humanity to branch into great races, just as the tree divides into limbs. Climate, condition of life, culture may change the size and quality, but not the fundamental type. It is true that out of these larger subdivisions which we call Aryan, Semitic, and, for want of a better name, Turanian, are formed by climate, circumstances, mixture of blood secondary varieties. This process, the student of European history sees going on under his very eyes. Thus we see forming themselves, through centuries of struggle and mixture of bloods, Italian, Spanish, French, English, and here in the New World is being fashioned a sort distinctly new to history, the American. Mighty and persistent are the influences of race. Nations themselves may grow and decay, but the qualities they developed they pass on to live in other forms.

Now, it would be indeed strange if peoples who show

such diversity in other traits, should not be diverse also in religion. Look, for example, at that glorious blossoming of human life which we style the Hellenic. Gaze upon its marvels of architecture and art, of poetry, eloquence, philosophy, at its active existence, its joy in the world. What had the world ever seen like it before? Contrast the Greek of the age of Pericles with the grave Egyptian amongst his sphinxes, solemn temples, and eternal tombs; or with the early Persian, serious, energetic in his hardy life. With a few lines one can sketch the portrait of each type so that they could be at once recognized anywhere. Now, would it not be strange, unaccountable even, if the religion did not bear the racial stamp? The religion of a people is the very blossom and fruitage of its life. It comes forth from the inmost heart as the ripest expression of the inward nature. In truth, the religion has always been amongst the most potent factors in developing and fixing the type of race. Every other department of thought and feeling reacts powerfully on it, and it, in turn, reacts upon them. Could the Buddhist faith by any possibility be engrafted upon a Mohammedan people, or the whole Egyptian system upon the Greeks? Now, what is it that distinguishes one type of man from another, and one type of religion from another? The emphasis of some property of human nature, or of some truth or truths, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the complete or partial suppression of some other quality or truth.

Thus every great faith has some underlying principles which stamp upon it its peculiar character. Whatever in it persists through the centuries may be supposed to be in harmony with this central kernel; what is not in harmony with it, or can not be assim-

lated by it, either lives a sickly life or dies. So it is that all religious systems center about some truth or truths, and these elements of truth in them it is which give them their enduring power. They emphasize some phase of the religious sentiment, hold fast certain elements of truth as to the Divine or human nature, throw light upon some side of the problem of existence, or satisfy some crying need of the human heart. Without these elements of truth they would have sunk, nay, would never have been born.

We can not set forth here with any fullness what were the kernels of truth in these religions of man. Since the days of Hegel, with his profound insight, many of the best minds of the race have been studying this problem, and some most valuable results have been reached. He tried to show that each great faith of the world had been necessary in its time and place, that they all formed requisite steps in the religious development of mankind. That was an extreme view no doubt, and was certainly at that time not susceptible of proof for lack of materials for the adequate study of the religions in question; but the presentation of such a thought to the eyes of man effected some splendid results. Since his day, more and more has been done each year, until now it is in some good degree possible to show what great spiritual ideas were present in them, or what spiritual needs were satisfied by them. We may say, in general, that the Semitic peoples—such as Jews, Arabs, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Moabites—see a God far above nature, a mighty, transcendent God; the Aryan—such as the Hindoo, Persian, Greek, Roman, Celt, Teuton, Slav—emphasize the thought of God in the world, the immanent Divine; and the Turanian, the variety of life. The first always tended to exalt one

great Being above all the rest; the tendency of the second was to polytheism and thence to an all-ingulfing pantheism; the third through polytheism towards atheism.

But, looking at the individual religions, for what truths shall we say they stood? We can imagine Paul, with clear eye, impartial mind, and the charitable spirit of his Master, as one by one these faiths of men march before him: First, the dreamy, contemplative Brahman. We hear the apostle say: "O Brahman, thou art right in thy assertion of the supreme reality of spirit as the only real and enduring substance; in thy declaration that the things we see are transient, but that, back of all, there is a Being who is through all things and in all; right in thy desire to be united to the great Being who is the life of all; in thy deep contemplation and in thy emphasis upon the importance of prayer."

Next comes the solemn Egyptian from his beast-worship, his majestic tombs and columnar temples. To him the apostle might say: "O worshiper from the banks of the sacred Nile, thou art right in thy assertion that all the events of life are properly sacred; that God is here in time and place; that in the wonder and mystery of animal life are symbols of thoughts divine; right in thy belief of the sacredness of the body, and that the life of the Divine is perpetually poured into every visible thing; right in thy anticipation of the judgment to come; in thy glimpse of an incarnate God suffering for the welfare of man; dying, rising again, to be the helper and judge of men."

There follows now the sturdy, conquering Assyrian, bowing before his mighty Assur, and him the apostle addresses: "O man of Nineveh, thou art right in thy exaltation of Deity to a place far, far above the world, and

in looking to him as thy leader and king; right in thy penitential prayers for pardon and for the removal of sin; right in thy wish for some divine mediator who can make known to thee the mystic name whereby the power of evil may be defeated, and his wicked spells be broken."

To the mild-mannered, pitiful Buddhist, he might say: "O follower of the compassionate and saintly Buddha, thou art right in thy declaration that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; in thy confession that the deep lying cause of evil and sorrow is a moral cause; that man must have some important part in his own salvation; that salvation can not be without character, and that redemption from the woes of time can come only through obedience to the truth; in thy search for peace and rest; in thy enthronement in the heart of thy religion of a compassionate human soul."

When the earnest, puritan Zoroaster comes with his disciples, Paul may well say to them: "Right are ye in your strong faith in a great, almighty God, maker of the heavens and the earth, a God to be worshiped, not through dumb idols, but by holy deeds; right in your assertion of the eternal distinction between right and wrong; of the duty of every man in union with his brother man and with Deity to contend with all his soul against the wrong, to extend on earth the kingdom of God; right in your belief that we wrestle not alone with flesh and blood, but against invisible principalities and powers; that life is not lazy rest, but earnest battle fought, not with earthly weapons, but with the free power of a righteous will; correct in thy firm faith in the ultimate victory of the right, the resurrection of the body, and a renovated world."

What would he say to the worldly and brilliant Greek, in love with beauty and with all the glory of human life? We think, something like this: "Men of Athens, ye are right in believing that God is manifested in man; in your faith in the beauty of the divine nature, that man is in the image of God, and that to develop yourselves to the utmost is well pleasing unto him; right in your sacred mysteries which would lead you to nobler views of salvation and immortality." To the practical, world-conquering Roman he might say: "O Roman, right art thou in penetrating with religion thy whole public and private life; in seeking earnestly to learn the divine will; in thy struggle for human unity and for a society organized by law." Could the Mohammedan have appeared before the apostle to declare, "There is no God but God," we can think of Paul as saying to him: "Disciple of the prophet of the desert, right art thou in thy strict monotheistic faith; in thy belief in the eternal, omnipotent will of God, and in our duty of absolute submission to his decrees."

So in all religions he could find some kernels of truth which have given them life and their power over the soul of man. The truths that made them precious were notes, one struck here and another there, all of which were needed to form the great oratorio of the universal religion for mankind. Not only so, but these faiths, though most of them dead, have left bequests to the living present. History is a teacher of God. By their history these faiths have set up bright lights along the path of truth, or red signals of danger, warning the future from precipices and bogs. But more than this, the history and life of the present are not the same as they would have been had these religions never lived. The truths which they developed enter into the warp

and woof of the present life of man. Had the religions of Assyria, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, never played their part, would the history of our own religion have been the same? God does work by development. Oaks do come from acorns, fragrant flowers from unsightly bulbs, diamonds from soot, sapphires from clay, opals from sand. So he makes these religions of the past serve a providential purpose. Great and fruitful principles, or a certain spirit, were developed, set free, and handed down, to be absorbed into larger and higher faiths, whose superiority was made possible in some cases, only because of those they displaced. Not that the religion of to-day has been made, as some seem to think, in the way a bouquet is made, by plucking and tying together the rarest blossoms from each religion of the world, but that the old furnished points of contact for the new, hooks and handles by which the new could grapple the souls of men.

Man never begins wholly afresh. He can not get away from his past. The new must always find some point of support in the old. Look once more at Paul preaching at Athens. He builds on their faith in the unknown God whom they ignorantly worship, and on their faith in the affinity of God and man. If there had been nothing in common between his faith and theirs, how could he have found a starting-point for his sermon, or any avenue of approach to their heart? Is it not at least possible that, as God did not reveal at once the full gospel of his Son unto his people Israel, but led them step by step towards the noonday until the fullness of time had come, so he may, in the interests of the whole human race for all time, have allowed these different peoples to develop their own phases of

truth and their own general spirit before the perfect religion should come?

Suppose a perfect religion to come. It offers itself to the different peoples. It gains the victory over them. Will not these different peoples bring into the new religion an emphasis upon that side of the truth which had penetrated their spirit before? In the final outcome, will not one of these fortify the other against one-sided views? Poor human nature is so dim-sighted, so liable to run to extremes, that, though the Gospel in itself be the perfect fullness of truth, yet to keep it from being torn into fragments by this people or that, each one receiving it needs to be fortified by the complementary truths grasped and firmly held by the rest. Did not Zoroaster, for example, help steady the followers of Moses? Turn to Christian theology. Read the pages of Harnack and Hatch to see the influence of Greek philosophy and religion upon the development of Christian doctrine and practice, and the pages of Rénan to be convinced that Rome also contributed no small share.

The Greek and Latin Churches of Christendom were as different as the Greek and Latin nations had been. Each developed that side of Christian truth for which it had the greatest affinity. The Greek thought upon the doctrine of God, the Trinity, the incarnation; the Roman, upon the doctrines of the Church, sin, salvation. Who will deny that the modern Church, the heir to all the treasures mined by these ancient workers, has a better and more comprehensive knowledge of the Gospel because of the union in it of the truths developed by these different types of mind? Not that they added anything new and true to the Gospel fullness itself, but

that each in its own way seized upon and developed and helped humanity to assimilate the truth, which all the time was there waiting for the appropriation by man. We are aware that the matter is sometimes so stated as though the Gospel itself had somehow been formed by a kind of gleaning process, that had taken the best of the older religions and made them into the Christian bouquet. James Freeman Clarke comes perilously near to that error. But this is something utterly different from what we here assert.

In like manner, the Egyptian spirit, mingling in Alexandria with the Greek, gave birth to a healthy realism, which perhaps saved the Christian Church from being completely swamped by a mystic Oriental spiritualism. And who knows but that the Buddhist, with his emphasis upon mildness and repose; the Brahman, with his stress upon the illusiveness of the world; and Confucius, with his reverence for the past, may yet have a mission in helping save Christendom by aiding to fortify it against a too intense external activity, a materialistic absorption in the world, and a revolutionary radicalism, which would break entirely loose from the ages past? Not that they have anything to add to the Gospel, but they may have a mission in helping the world comprehend and assimilate the whole unspeakable fullness of the Gospel. For such reasons as these, the voice of the Gospel to other religions is not a voice of utter condemnation.

But neither is it a voice of unqualified commendation. Not long ago the drift of Christian apologetics was extravagant, unmitigated reprobation. These religions, which have shown such power over the heart and life of man, were thought to be, in their source,

the work of human fraud or of the malice of devils; in their essence, corrupt superstition; in their doctrines, absolutely false; in their moral tendency, injurious and nothing but injurious; in their sum-total of influence, accursed. But the reaction has come. These extravagant criticisms are just now giving place to equally extravagant praise. In some quarters, panegyric of heathenism is becoming the fashion. The Vedas and the Avesta are talked of as though they are about as good as, if not better than, the Old Testament, while Confucius and Gautama are quoted as though they are spiritual authorities quite the equal of Paul or John.

In the Parliament of Religions, some so-called Christian speakers stretched courtesy and toleration so far as almost to put other teachers on about the same level with Christ himself. They out-Heroded Herod in the attempt to glorify pagan faiths, and to set them upon a pedestal of honor. One prominent writer said: "For most of us in America, the door out of superstition and sin may be called Christianity; that is our historical name for it. It is the accident of a birthplace. But other nations find other outlets; they must pass through their own doors, and all will come at last upon the broad ground of God's providing, which bears no man's name." The utterer of such words—for they are little else—would in modern times do what the Roman Celsus, centuries ago, offered to do, and what Alexander Severus actually did; namely, put Christ in a pantheon side by side with other of the world's sages and men of religious genius. The early Christians rightly rejected with scorn such shallow compromises. They would rather give their bodies to be torn by the beasts in the arena than to put their new faith thus on a level

with the old, which they knew but too well. One moment's thought should save any man from so frivolous an utterance as the one quoted.

Who can pretend that God can be as well or at the same time adored as Zeus, Jupiter, Brahma, Siva, Ormazd, Samas, Allah, Set, Thor, Ishtar, Jehovah, Pan, Osiris, Tezcatlipoca? Who believes that God can be pleased with deeds on the Hoang-Ho which would be abominations on the Thames, or that he authorizes on the Ganges or Nile what would be crimes on the Mississippi? What thoughtful man can believe that God has sent into the world, in the same sense, Moses, Gautama, Zoroaster, Confucius, Mohammed, and Christ? No such keynote does the Gospel strike. To other religions, as religions, it is not friendly, but utterly, inflexibly, eternally hostile. Paul at Athens, though recognizing the truths that lurked back of their mythology and religion, did not offer to the Athenians the incense of unstinted praise for their religion, nor leave upon them the impression that he believed that, after all, their religion was about as good as his. For many of its features he could have had nothing but unmitigated reprobation, if not utter disgust. It ministered to amusement and art, but did it always increase moral power? The bright spectacle to which the gay and brilliant Athenian awoke each morning might gratify his æsthetic taste; the excitement, kept up by festal seasons, pompous processions, and varied ceremonies, might be agreeable to him; but where was their strong tendency to make him holy, to give him victory over his lower self, or to bring him near to God? With its human gods, it was no doubt in some respects a better religion than the worship of brutes; but could it keep him from falling into deep moral degradation? It

made too much of this life, and not enough of the life to come. In its very songs a want of something deeper is expressed.

From Homer himself, who sang in the golden days of old, onward through the centuries, up through all the splendor of Greece, sounds a low yet distinct lamentation, attesting a dim knowledge that something essential had not been found. Even the divine Plato stood confessedly at the gates of light, endeavoring in vain to pry open, and uttering almost a wail for some one to lend him a hand. Besides, there was something here other than the darkness of mere ignorance. There was the deeper darkness of corruption and sin. By the works of art, splendid as they were; by the popular beliefs concerning the gods; by many of the ceremonies of the established worship, the most shameless profligacy was encouraged. As another has well said: "Not Socrates and Plato were the natural fruits of the State religion, but such men as Alcibiades, beautiful as the divine statues, brilliant as Apollo or Hermes, enthusiastic and fickle, versatile and profligate, able to admire the good, but hopelessly following the bad." This is one fact which thinkers, who read the religions of men in the light of a gradual, natural evolution from inferior to good, from good to better, and from better to best, are constantly forgetting. They will not see or acknowledge that there is in human history, besides the honest, earnest groping after God, also such a thing as willful sin and the darkening of the conscience and the mind by the free choice of evil.

We believe in an evolution of religion. We are satisfied that there is, and has been, a general upward trend. But we believe there has also been in all lands the mighty power of sin. If the hand of God can be

plainly traced in history, we need not search long to find, as well, clear footprints of the devil. Though no religion of man is entirely the devil's work, he would be a rash person that would say his infernal majesty has not had a hand in making or marring any. Every word of Paul's great sermon on the Areopagus is adapted to rebuke no less than to win. From the truth of God's illimitable nature he argues the insufficiency of temples, however glorious; from the divine self-sufficiency he shows the needlessness of sacrifice, and therefore of altars; from the infinite and spiritual nature of God he shows the folly of representing him by images of stone, however exquisitely wrought by art or man's device; and led them up at last into the presence of the Judge of all the earth to give an account, among other things, for their reception of the truth they were hearing that very hour.

What was the purport of the whole discourse? To excite or gratify their intellectual curiosity; to flatter them with smooth words about the truths they had grasped; to make a good impression upon them as a silver-tongued, affable, tolerant orator? Or was it to startle, search, pierce the conscience? Why was he there? Moreover, we must remember that this sermon is only a fragment. It is not just to the apostle, as is sometimes done, to take this as a complete statement of what he would have said that day. By the derision of some, and the polite indifference of others, he was suddenly interrupted, dismissed, and the assembly dispersed. What he had been saying was only the exordium, a magnificent, well-constructed porch to the cathedral he would have built. What he would have said, had he been allowed to proceed to the end, we can judge from what he has spoken. He had reached the

point of repentance, judgment, and the resurrection of Jesus. Judging from his epistles, the other strange things which he would have brought to their ears would have been the great plan of redemption by the sacrifice of the cross; the incarnation of the Son of God; the atonement made for the sinner; justification by faith; the tendencies to evil in the human soul; the need of regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Ghost. He stood over against the Parthenon, and face to face with the beautiful statues of the gods; not to admire them, but with the Gospel hammer to smite them to the dust. Not to prophesy "Peace, peace, when there was no peace," but to break down the whole brilliant, profligate system; to replace the images of the bright divinities with the cross of Christ,—this was his mission. In this he was in exact agreement with his Divine Master, and with the whole attitude of the faith in which he had been trained.

What had been the attitude of his ancestral faith, of its greatest prophets, kings, heroes, to the religions with which they came in contact? Hostile, inflexibly, implacably hostile. If there is a unifying principle in the story of Israel's life, it is that it was a history divinely ordered to efface from the Jewish mind, and to keep out of it, every vestige of faith in any religion except their own. For the Egyptian sphinxes and sacred beasts, for Bel and Assur, for Zeus and Jupiter, Israel had no toleration to offer. In this Judaism is the chrysalis of the Gospel, and is in perfect accord with it. Christ founded his Church, trained his apostles, sent them forth, baptized them with the Holy Ghost, all for what? That they should go forth and flatter the vanity of the heathen, and construct a world's pantheon, with himself in the midst? Nay, verily, but to

make his religion triumphant in the world. Triumphant how? By driving them with the power of his truth from the field. What purpose was more dominant in the heart of the Lord Jesus than that other religions should cease to be, and that his should reign alone? There is a picture called "The Feast of the Gods." The divinities of other faiths are about the board, where they have been gathered in joyous banquet. But upon the scene has appeared Jesus the Christ. In terror they gaze upon each other and upon him, and prepare to take refuge in flight. His very presence was their death-knell. But if they contain, as we have said, so much truth, why this hostility of the Gospel toward them?

First, because they are at best partial, fragmentary, one-sided. We said that the different religious types were formed as the race and national types are, by the emphasis of some quality or truth, and the corresponding suppression of its counterpart. Thus it happens that many of the greatest truths of life are not seen at all by any one of these unchristian faiths. If the Gospel could tell the Brahman that he was right in some things, it must also say to him: "Thou art wrong in thy denial of the rights of the finite; in thy oversight or slurring over of the eternal distinction of right and wrong; in thy ascetic self-denials and abstraction from life, on the one hand; and in thy voluptuous self-indulgence on the other." So to Buddhism the Gospel would say: "Wrong, grievously wrong, art thou, in not recognizing the living, personal God in whom the laws of life have their eternal seat; wrong in thy oversight of a blessed, conscious immortality for man in the presence of his infinite Father; wrong in thy morality with-

out piety, in thy dead legalism, in thy lack of hope for the world."

To Confucius it says: "Thou art wrong in thy lack of interest in the supernatural, in thy consequent morality without enthusiasm, in thy lack of vitality and progress and hope, in thy consequent ennui and moral death." To the Persian it might say: "Wrong art thou in thy lack of a unifying life, in thy notion of a wicked god, in thy perpetual struggle without peace." So Egypt was weak on the human side. It believed in immortality, in its inner, cultured circles at least; in the unity and spirituality of God; in the life of deity in organized nature; but not enough in man. But Œdipus the Greek answers the riddle of the Sphinx with the solution, man. Greece did stand for the "humanities." Yet the bright Hellenic race, in its turn, was weak on the divine side. The gods were too many; there was little centripetal force; they were too near to the people, too much like men in their passions and caprices. Familiarity with the deities begat contempt, and contempt in turn paved the way for moral downfall. There was, in spite of all the external brightness and gayety, always a secret pain gnawing at the Hellenic heart. Even a Sophocles could mourn,—

"Happiest beyond compare,
Never to taste of life;
Happiest in order next,
Being born, with quickest speed
Vanish again, to turn
From whence we came."

So Rome lacked the inspiration and the poetry of life. Its gods were too much like soulless machines. As Hegel says, they were gods made by the understand-

ing, even when borrowed from Greek story; coldly utilitarian, without adoring love. Its brazen rules choked out all life. Cicero considers the Romans to be the most religious of all nations because they carried their religion into all the details of life. It has been well replied by Mr. Clarke that this is true, but one might as well consider himself a devout worshiper of iron or wood because he is always using these materials, in doors and out, in parlor and kitchen and stable.

To Islam, finally, the Gospel might say: "Thou art wrong in making thy deity a mere almighty will, his decrees as an iron fate, and man, without free-will, a slave in chains." So might we continue showing that in each religion what is clearly seen and affirmed is often true, whilst yet the view is partial and narrow. In none of them does the pure white light of truth appear unbroken. By the human prisms it is broken up into differently-colored beams. There is an old Jewish legend that, when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden, an angel broke in pieces the gates of paradise, and scattered the fragments all over the world. These fragments are the precious stones. May not the story be carried further? Without advancing any theory as to the historical origins, may it not be said poetically, that these broken gems were picked up by the various religions and philosophies of the world, each little bit reflecting something of the light of heaven, but each set in foreign substances and incrustations of error?

This leads us to notice another point which makes it necessary that these faiths should die. Though it may perhaps be truly said that the corruptions and foul incrustations of falsehood are not of the essence of these faiths, yet all have so many corruptions bound up with them, and so many falsehoods clinging to their very

essence, that they are almost entirely deprived of moral power and ability to feed the starving souls of men. To separate the Greek polytheism and the obscene stories about the gods from the heart of the Hellenic faith; to take out the caste system, the idolatry, the Vishnu stories, from the Hindooism of to-day; to take the adoration of beasts and kings from the worship of Egypt; to strip the sexual vileness from the Ishtar and Mylitta worship of Erech and Babylon, would have been almost to take away the religions themselves. So interlaced and intertwined are the true and the false that to tear out the one would be to pluck away the other. They so lack recuperative power to throw off corruptions that gather about their very heart, that the poisons have entered into their very blood, infecting it beyond recovery.

A recent English traveler in Thibet, after describing an idol-room filled with pictures of battles between hideous fiends and equally hideous gods, many-headed and many-armed, says: "But among all these repulsive faces of degraded type, distorted with evil passions, we saw, in striking contrast, here and there an image of the contemplative Buddha, with beautiful, calm features, pure and pitiful, such as they have been handed down by painting and sculpture for two thousand years, and which the Lamas, with all their perverted imagination, have never ventured to change when designing an ideal of the great incarnation." Yes, but if the calm, pitiful features of the Buddha are there, there, too, are the horrible demons and the equally horrible gods. That idol-room, so far from showing the incorruptible power of Buddhism, its beauty and nobility of nature, is rather an evidence of its weakness and lack of self-recuperative force. It might well serve as a

type of the heathen religions of man,—a strange blending of the true and the false, of the noble and the base, of the beautiful and the monstrous.

Because these religions are thus partial and hopelessly corrupted, they never have been, and never can be, truly catholic. Indeed most of them are already dead or moribund. Most of the great faiths and worship of man have been confined to one race. Thus the faith of Egypt was for thousands of years limited to the narrow strip of land on the banks of the Nile; the worship of Assur to Assyria; the adoration of the Olympian Circle to the Hellenic race; the system of Confucius to China; Brahmanism to India; the religion of the Eddas to the Scandinavian or Teutonic peoples. Whoever heard of missionaries going abroad to proclaim Osiris and Isis, or on some foreign shore to establish the worship of the Apis bull? Indeed it became a maxim in antiquity that each man ought to worship according to the religion of his own nation.

A few religions, we may grant, have held truth enough to make them to some extent missionary religions. They have made converts outside their own race. Such was the religion of Israel. It had a deep confidence that the world would at last worship Jehovah, and that all the Gentiles would come to believe in him. So the more earnest of them would actually compass sea and land to make one proselyte. Such is the religion of Mohammed. Beginning as an Arab religion, it has converted Turks, Persians, Egyptians, Negroes, Hindoos, and other races. Such, too, was the religion of the Buddha, sending out missionaries from the very beginning, and converting people in Nepal, Ceylon, Thibet, Persia, China, Japan, and other lands. The Zoroastrian faith was also of this sort. The great

Cyrus himself, as Von Ranke seems to believe, was probably impelled in his glorious wars by religious zeal.

Mark, that these are all what may be styled prophetic religions. They have at their heart some great religious personality; as Moses, Mohammed, Gautama, Zoroaster. All were strongly opposed to polytheism, all insisted powerfully on the ethical side of religion; there is no complete divorce in them, as there has been but too often between piety and morality. But even these have been and are limited in their sway. A Kuenen may lecture on "National Religions and Universal Religions," and may classify Mohammedanism and Buddhism among the universal, but neither of them has been universal nor shown any tendency to become such. Nor have any of these non-Christian faiths manifested any such tendency. Look at those that have made most progress in that direction. The religion of Zoroaster was for a long time that of an Aryan tribe. After a time it became the ruling people amongst mankind. The Persians extended themselves through Western Asia, conquered many nations, but communicated their religion to none of them. It came into conflict with Greece and was defeated, was overwhelmed by Islam, and what is it to-day? Almost dead. So Buddhism, springing up in India has not been able to maintain itself in the land of its birth; has been driven thence; has never advanced with success beyond the Orient, and has found its chief adherents only amongst Mongolian races. Islam has succeeded in winning converts amongst Turks, Arabs, Persians, Negroes, Hindus, etc., but its conquests have been confined largely to the Eastern world. It has made subjects to the scimiter, rather than converts to its convictions, and, though here and there some weakling like Mohammed

Russell Webb may profess conversion to its creed, it shows no tendency whatever to make its way amongst Western peoples, much less to become a universal religion for all mankind. Even the Jew makes but few converts, and never has succeeded in making many from amongst alien nations.

Thus, while the faith of Zoroaster has almost vanished from the earth; whilst the religions of Gautama, Moses, Mohammed, seem to be arrested, what non-Christian faith or worship can make any pretense to being universal, or to have any tendency to become so? The best of them have been well compared to great vessels anchored in the stream. The current of time flows past them each year; each year they are farther behind the spirit of the age, and less in harmony with the demands of a developing humanity. As for the rest of the religions of the world, the great majority of them are dead. They perished with the civilizations that gave them birth, or which they helped develop, and with whose existence their own had to stand or fall. Where now are Samas, and Merodach, and Assur? where Baal, Astarte, and Moloch? where Ptah and Bast, Isis and Osiris, and the great Amon of Thebes? where Zeus and his brilliant Olympian family? where the great Capitoline Jove, the double-faced Janus, and the Lares of imperial Rome? Where are Odin and Thor, Baldur and Freya? Where? Dethroned, driven away, extinguished, cut off root and branch, and none so poor to do them reverence.

Further, the Gospel says to other religions: "Though not false in essence, in underlying aim, and in all particulars; though not inventions of priestly fraud or princely shrewdness; though not the products, as a whole, of human depravity or diabolical deceit, yet in

your central claim you are delusive. You seem to promise to the ear what you must break to the hope. By the truths you possess you may have conferred in your day some blessings upon man; but in your essential claim you are deceptive, and therefore those of you that still live must die." We must remember that a religion may be fallacious at heart without being utterly false and bad, as a person may be wicked without every minute, both in letter and spirit, violating every commandment of the Decalogue. In order to be a very sick man, a person does not need to have leprosy, and rheumatism, and typhoid fever, and small-pox, and cancer, and consumption, and paralysis, with every other disease known to medicine, without a single healthy fiber or drop of blood. So a religion does not need to be utterly and absolutely false and corrupt, to be very sick and smitten with the marks of approaching death.

What is the essential meaning and claim of religion—a meaning not always perfectly clear to the minds of those who hold it, but nevertheless the inmost claim and intent of every one? The religions are, as we have said, attempts to bring man into blessed union with God; to redeem individual souls and the world from the power of evil. This is what Mr. Wilkinson means when he says that the religions of the world are fallacious in their false offer of salvation. As he reminds us, our Master, sitting on the well-curb at Sychar, unfolding the truth to the woman of Samaria, in his calm, pregnant, infallible way, touched the heart of the matter when he said, "Salvation is of the Jews." That is, out from the cocoon of the faith held by Abraham and Moses, by Elijah and Isaiah, should come forth the winged gospel angel of redemption for the world. The obverse side of this must be that whatever other system

offers to save the world from its evil and to bring the souls of men into blessed union of conscience, intellect, heart, will, whole nature, with God, makes an offer it can never fulfill, and is therefore at heart a false and delusive faith. Thus the old distinction of true and false religions, a distinction at which, by many students of religions, it is nowadays the fashion to sneer, still holds good, without saying that no religion but the true one contains any truth.

The only religion that can hope to become universal, or that ought to become so, is not to be a bouquet artificially made by picking out the bright and fragrant flowers from every religion, living and dead, whilst leaving out all the poisonous weeds amid which they grew; not to be a mosaic made up of different bits of truth carefully selected from the rubbish and cleansed from their filth; not a piecing together again of the fragments of the broken and scattered pieces of the gates of paradise after all the foul incrustations of the ages have been removed; not an oratorio composed by a shrewd eclecticism, which listens to all these mingled discords and harmonies, picks out a note from this and another note from that, and with a kind of mechanical skill weaves them into the glorious symphony. This is about what some people mean when they prate about the religion of the future, the absolute religion, the elements of a universal religion, etc. No; the universal religion is now here. It is the religion of redemption. While no patchwork, it is a sublime creation, containing a fullness of truth; not an artificial bouquet, but a great spreading tree of life, with a unity of its own; an oratorio spontaneously born of genius divine, and containing in rhythmic unity every sweet strain of salvation truth which others, with stammering and lisp-

ing tongues, have been trying to sound. Its innermost nature is salvation through a living Redeemer.

This brings us to the last utterance of the Gospel to other religions. It is a voice of interpretation, of fulfillment, of celestial promise. It is a voice saying to all the world: "Behold the incarnation, the character and message of Christ, the cross, the open grave, the ascending Savior, the descending Spirit of God!" The proud, the vast claim which the Gospel makes is, that it, and it alone, gives perfect expression to the truths which the other religions were, with broken speech, trying to say, and furnishes a perfect response to every spiritual yearning and high aspiration of man. It comes to interpret the sighs and longings of the centuries, and, with living waters from eternal springs, to assuage the age-long thirst of our race. When Paul said, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you," he was proclaiming in the name of the Eternal that what they were trying to say in that pathetic inscription on the altar and in all their brilliant ceremonial, he would say to them clearly in the unambiguous dialect of the Holy Ghost. The substance of his message, there as everywhere, the proper goal of his great discourse, was Jesus and the resurrection; to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who were being saved, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God; to all who believe, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

The Gospel claims that it, and it alone, has certainty clear enough, truth full and sure enough, love broad and deep and high enough, life spiritual and abounding enough, hope bright enough, promise divine enough, to melt the icebergs, banish the darkness, and

fill with springtime vitality and richness the desert of the world. Christ, the Son of God and the Lamb of God, standing in its center, sends out his light and life to the extremest bounds. To these other faiths, that send their little taper rays into the blackness of the death valley, he proclaims: "Into this darkness upon which your flickering torches have feebly struck, I pour the floods of light, clear-shining, splendid, all-diffusive, kindled on high. I hold the keys to the gates of the everlasting day, and I can bolt and bar the massy, creaking portals of the kingdoms of darkness and death. Ye are but attempts, with half-blinded eyes and fumbling fingers, to discern the outlines of the great Architect's plan. I reveal the resplendent cathedral of saving truth fresh from the divine Designer's hand. Every ray of truth, every impulse of holy feeling, every feeble aspiration of pure desire, every glimmer of celestial hope, every noble deed and act of unselfish sacrifice, every spark of faith and every heart-throb of love, which have sprung from you and have enabled you to be of some service to men, to gain power over their heart, in reality came from me, the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. They all point to me as their fulfillment; all are meant to be porters to open the door for my entrance, heralds of the coming of my chariot. My right to rule rests upon my divine love and sacrifice, upon my power to satisfy every deep need of man, to brighten and quicken every noble quality, to comprehend the best in all the faiths of the world in my all-inclusive truth." For these reasons the Gospel fully expects to reach the throne of universal rule.

What an audacious claim! For eighteen centuries she has been making it good. With renewed youth, she is even now girding her loins for the final majestic

strides by which she will reach that seat of world-wide power. The pentecostal gift of flaming speech, varied according to the varying needs of men, but with the same glad message for all, is still in the Church. The revelation in Christ Jesus is being sounded in every language and in every land. His word has showed itself, and is still showing itself, capable of taking hold of and converting the most different types of men. In her earliest youth, the Gospel captured the Jew, the brilliant Greek, the solemn old Roman. Overflowing its boundaries in Eastern Europe and Western Asia, she made her way into Egypt, North Africa, Persia, and even into far-off India. She conquered barbarous Celt, Gaul, Vandal, Lombard, Frank, and Saxon. For eighteen centuries she has been showing herself adapted to every variety of the human race. The Gospel is the faith of the most dominant, civilized, progressive nations of to-day, and other peoples become progressive in proportion as they hear and heed her call.

Where are made to-day the discoveries in science and literature, in invention and art? Where were invented the steam-engine, the locomotive, the photograph, the telegraph, the phonograph, the spectroscope, and a thousand other discoveries which have given mankind the control of this world? Where are the best governments, in which the people are ruled by constitutions, and not by Cæsars; by well-established law, and not by the caprices of autocrats? Where can be found freedom combined with order, liberty happily wedded to law? Where are the only systematic, persistent, scientific efforts made to relieve the miseries of the human race, and to expel great wrongs from which it has suffered through many bloody and weary centuries? What religion impels fervent women and cool-headed men of

business to pour into the missionary work their treasures of money and of life, to make known its message to the ends of the earth? Which is the only religion which sets clearly before its eyes as its supreme work in the world—a work to be prosecuted until it shall be finished—its own complete, eternal victory over every other form of faith, over every blind superstition, over every hideous sin?

It is not partial, fragmentary, one-sided, but symmetrical and complete. Because it is so, it does find points of contact with each religion, and does find open doors into each. The Gospel can become universal, can unite all men into one family and one kingdom of heaven, because it is stronger than any or all on their strongest side, besides being strong and full where they are weak and empty. It can pour into them tides of moral life and spiritual peace, of which, even in their sublimest moods, they have never dreamed. Full as the love of God, broad and deep and high as his wisdom, how can it ever be swallowed up by anything broader, deeper, higher? Some talk much about the absolute religion that may sometime come, speak as though religious unity can be attained for the race only by a process of elimination. They say: "We must go back to the primal unity where man appears as a child of God before he is a Christian or Jew, Brahman or Buddhist, Mohammedan or Parsee, Confucian, Taoist, or aught beside." That would seem to mean that we must lay aside all disputed elements, no matter how manifestly true to us, no matter how beautiful and useful, so as to reach at last the simplest form of religious assertion in which all men can agree. But that would be to reduce all religion to its lowest possible type; yea, it would actually extinguish all religion, and

thus the universal religion would be no religion. As though one should declare with a flourish that we must seek unity in nature only in protoplasm, or in a homogeneous agglomeration of atoms, and not rather in the great all-inclusive purpose of God; as though we should be sent to school to the bit of Arctic lichen to learn the nature of vegetable life, or to new-born babes to study the essential nature of the mind of man.

Not exclusion, but inclusion, is the way to unity; not by laying aside all elements in which the varied faiths differ, but by an organic inclusion into one great Gospel of all that is true and beautiful and useful in every one. That is precisely what the Christian Gospel does. How does it accomplish this? Not, as is sometimes imagined, by simply teaching, in so many words, what had never been taught before; not by setting together piece by piece into one system what had been said in detached bits here and there before; not by simply revealing to man at an earlier stage of his career what he might have discovered for himself if he only had had time enough. It is true that "never man spake like this man;" that, as we have said, scattered here and there in the other religions of man are broken lights of the one great light; but the perfect religion is not made piecemeal, any more than the rosebush, crowned with living beauty, is made by picking out a leaf from one garden and a petal from another, and a twig from another, and fastening them together with wax and tape. The Gospel of Christ, indeed, is more, infinitely more, than any doctrine or set of doctrines.

We have seen that the greatest, most extensive, most moral religions—religions most tending to overleap boundaries of race or nation—are those that have their root and center in a personal prophet or inspired

founder. It is as though the soul of a great religious genius, like Zoroaster, Gautama, Mohammed, Luther, Wesley, is as a germ bringing forth, through the generations, plants and fruits after its kind. Wrapped up and latent in them is a whole system of truth and life, which is gradually evolved as the years pass. All that is essential in Islam was in the soul of Mohammed; all that was essential in Buddhism was in the soul of Gautama; all that was essential in Parseeism was in the soul of Zoroaster; all that was essential in Judaism was in the soul of Moses. They stand at the heart of their respective systems. So might we expect that the essentials of the universal religion would be in the soul and life of its great Founder, the spring of its overflowing fullness, the center of its radiating light.

The fullness of the Gospel is more than fullness of thought. The construction of an all-inclusive system of thought—a system large enough to include all the truths in all the religions and philosophies of the world—was the task at which Hegel wrought like a Titan his whole life long. Had he perfectly accomplished the stupendous task, he would have developed a perfect philosophy, perhaps; but it would still have been at an infinite distance from the Christian Gospel. We find in the New Testament nothing akin to that. To say, as some have said, that the words of the Lord Jesus must ever be regarded as the central glory of the Bible and the most precious heritage of humanity; to describe a complete classification of his sayings as a complete guide on the great subjects of faith and practice, and as the clear, complete, authoritative teaching of the Divine Head of the Church, implies a very imperfect conception of the relation which Christ sustains to the religion he founded. It is to take a few

rays of the sun for the glorious orb himself. Jesus did not say, "I am the *teacher* of the truth," but, "*I am the truth*;" not, "I am come to point out the way," but, "*I am the way*;" not, "I am a great torch-bearer for humanity," but, "I am the light of the world." Not simply to believe the words of Christ makes the Christian, but to trust in Christ himself.

The Gospel is not chiefly thought, but life—a fullness of life in the person, character, career on earth of Jesus, and as he is in the eternal glory of the Father; a fullness of life poured into the souls of those who surrender themselves to him in the consecration of love. If man as a thinker does need truth; if with a heart he needs an object of eternal love; if with a guilty conscience he needs pardon; if with tendencies to sin he needs moral renewal; if he needs law for his will, has hopes that clamor for assurance of fruition, and fears that cry for some one to calm their tumult,—he does not need these blessings as abstract principles brought him one by one, but needs them lived out in the vital unity of the living revealer of God and Savior of man. That is the essential Gospel. Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh; the living God on earth, manifesting truth in life; dying, but eternally living; the Lord and Savior of men,—he is the focus not only, but the radiant center of the whole, to whose advent all the fingers of light pointed before he came, and from whom, since his coming, all the brightness of the day has shone. So the Gospel comes straight from God. It is intensely alive with his power, charged full with his truth, resplendent with his light, a battery of his omnipotent energy; is musical with his message of salvation, regnant with his supreme authority, luminous with the brightness of his wisdom, throbbing with his love, and instinct with

his moral life. To every man, in every tribe, in every land, it has a mission and a message, deep as God, sublime as heaven, enduring as the eternal throne. Joseph Cook says, "Old and blind, Michael Angelo in the Vatican used to go to the torso, so called—a fragment of the art of antiquity—and he would feel along the marvelous lines chiseled in bygone ages, and tell his pupils that thus and thus the outline should be completed." So the Gospel, not old and blind, but eternally young and with eyes clear as the sun, says to every other faith: "You are fragments; but let your best features be carried out, and they would be a representation of the Christ of God."

Look at Christ as the revelation of God. Let the Greek look upon him. In place of his fair company of Olympian men and women, idealized and gracious, only a little way off and a little way up, immortal creatures of more than mortal beauty, but thrilling with human life and human sympathies, what has the Gospel to offer? It says to him: "Thou art asking for a God revealed in man, a God with a human heart, a God upon earth who has affinities with man; in whose image, indeed, men are made. Behold him then—Immanuel, God with us! Here, in the eternal Word made flesh, is the full meaning of thy human divinities. But, O man of Athens, there is no Olympian circle of celestials, no complicated polytheism to break up the unity of the world and of the life divine, but Christ manifests the one God, almighty, eternal, holy, with a heart of infinite love."

Let the Brahman come. Let him, too, gaze upon the Christ. To him the Master might say: "Yes, God is spirit, for ye are his offspring. Behind all is, as ye think, the one eternal, infinite substance; but he is a

living providence too; not absorbed in himself nor apart from the world, but a perpetual Friend and Father; dwelling in eternity, yet manifested in time; honoring and hallowing all individual souls by coming hither to redeem them."

Let the Buddhist come. To him our Master might say: "Thou didst well, O follower of the pitiful Gautama, to sweep the heaven clean of the old deities of India. They gave no help and offered no comfort. Thou didst well in putting a compassionate heart in the center of the universe; but learn of me to see a living and omnipresent God, a Heavenly Father, who has loved his children from the foundation of the world."

Let the Hindoo believer in Krishna and in the numerous incarnations of Vishnu, and the Egyptian with his faith in the Deity made flesh, come and gaze upon Him. To them Christ might say: "Yes, incarnation of God is a truth. It is true that Deity in visible form has walked this earth for the sake of man; not again and again in varying shapes, but once for all in Judea and Galilee. Now he is at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having glorified human nature and taken it with him to the throne of the Eternal."

Let the Zoroastrian come and gaze upon Him. To him the Master says: "Thou doest well, O earnest heart, in holding fast the faith in the Divine purity; in hating lifeless images of the Almighty, in struggling with energy against the reign of evil and darkness; but in me thou seest also the eternal power and Godhead, besides his eternal love and Fatherhood, before the eyes of men in visible form."

Let the proud, dominant old Roman come and gaze upon Him. To him the Master says: "O world-conquering Roman, mistress of the earth, hold fast thy faith

that the highest joy of the Divine is the service of his creatures; but believe as well that to him the highest service is for the spirit of man, and his sublime condescension from the everlasting glory to Calvary witness of his deep desire to render that service."

Let the Mohammedan come, and see that, as he thought, God is unfailing personal Will, but that he is as well unspeakable, paternal Love. Let all come, monotheist and polytheist, pantheist, hater of images, and worshipers of the sacred beast; those who cling fast to the transcendence of God, and those who find joy and blessing in faith that he is immanent,—let all come, and find fully manifest the deepest truth hinted at or groped for in their beliefs regarding God made flesh.

So let them come to him as the revelation of man. Let the world see in him, not only God with us, but also man with us; not only one individual man, but the *genus homo*, the complete humanity incarnate; the Son of the human race, blending in himself all races, all capacities, all temperaments; the archetypal man as he lived in the creative thought when the Creator said, "Let us make man in our own image;" the man illustrating at their highest point all essential human capacities and all virtues in perfect harmony and proportion; as another has said, "Blending in his pure whiteness all colors of manly virtues, and all hues of womanly grace, the reflection of the solar light in whose image man was made."

Confucius was a Chinaman, Zoroaster an Iranian, Gautama a Hindoo, Moses an Israelite, Mohammed an Arabian; but Jesus was a man of no temperament, but of all temperaments; of no type, but of all types; of no race, but of all races. Let the Assyrian look to him for vigor and strength of character. Let the Brahman

look to him for deep spiritual life, keen sense of the presence of the invisible Spirit, for abstraction from the world, for mighty aspiration for mystic union with the infinite. Let the Zoroastrian look to him for burning, intense hostility to evil, for emphasis upon the moral freedom of man, for earnest battling of every wrong, and for the increase of the power of life in the world. Let the follower of the pitiful Buddha come and look to him for gentleness and compassion, for the sense of responsibility and divine order in the world, with its consequences to the doer of evil. Let the disciple of Confucius look to him for the pattern of a true conservatism, that holds fast the gains of the centuries without being afflicted by the dry-rot of stagnation. Let the Greek look to him for interest in human life, for the spring and pattern of highest human development, and for keenest sense of the affinity of human nature with the Divine. Let the Roman look to him as the man in union with God, having power divine at his command for the highest purposes of life. Let the Mohammedan look to him for the example of deepest, most unquestioned submission to the eternal Will. Let any man of any race, or of any temperament, look to him as the type of whatever is noblest in any man, and the one who can supplement the defects of all.

Or consider the social side of humanity. His life and message was the proclamation of the kingdom of God, a society of men bound together by golden links of brotherhood, in league for the triumph of righteousness and love in the world. How such a conception, if understood, would have thrilled the soul of the sage of Bactria and of the gentle Buddha! How it realizes the vague dream of the mighty worshiper of Assur; the world-conquering Macedonian; the determined political

unifier, Rome; and the follower of the flaming Crescent,—all resolved to bring all men into one vast communion! Not only in his own verbal teaching, but in his life and death, what a proclamation that men are brothers by natural origin and affinity, and should be brothers in the kingdom of God! What a ringing trumpet tone is here, that men are not solitary atoms, but that the race is organic, the individuals members one of another! What a death to narrow, selfish individualism was there struck upon the cross! He would not save himself from pain and death because he would save others from sin and death. How better could the lesson of reciprocity, altruism, giving up one's own selfish, narrow interests for the real, supreme interests of human kind, be emphatically taught? No doubt you have read the lines quoted by a speaker in the Parliament of Religions:

“The parish priest,
Of austerity,
Climbed up in a high church-steeple,
To be nearer God,
So that he might hand
His Word down to the people.

And in sermon script
He daily wrote
What he thought was sent from heaven;
And he dropped it down
On the people's heads
Two times one day in seven.

In his age, God said,
‘Come down and die;’
And he cried out from the steeple,
‘Where art thou, Lord?’
And the Lord replied,
‘Down here among my people.’”

God in Christ amongst the people on earth for the people's sake, suffering and dying for the people, and all this the ideal for a true human life,—what a proclamation of the duties of the one to the whole! With how much greater emphasis could the message be spoken? Could the very lips of God speak it more clearly? Does not his very presence here, withal, illustrate the immeasurable contrast between the ideal nature of man as it lives in the heart of God and the actual nature as it exists on earth? What wretched, jagged bents we appear by the side of him, the glorious Forest King! As men stand in his presence, their deformity face to face with his symmetry, their vileness face to face with his radiant purity, their selfishness in presence of his unspeakable love, their guilty qualms contrasted with his ineffable peace, what an interpretation lives before our eyes of their aspirations to get above their lower selves; of their stings of conscience; of their feelings of depravity and bondage to sin!"

This brings us to the central, pivotal point of all. If through all the religions of man there has run one golden thread, sometimes almost disappearing, sometimes in plain view, revealed now in one way, now in another, but never entirely absent, it has been the thought of redemption from evil. Whether by magic or sacrifice, or by the dim, vague expectation of some deliverer, redeemer, restorer, who being man, should be different from and above the merely human, able by redemptive power to lift man above himself, the human soul has always, in its struggle for purity and peace, been feeling for some help from without the man himself. From the smoking, gory altars of expiation, Christ points to his cross, and says to the weeping, trembling worshiper, "There is the inner meaning of your bloody

sacrifices." To those who gather about the sacrificial meal, where, to restore the broken communion between man and Deity, men eat, as they suppose, with the gods, he says, "Through the blood of my cross I make both one." Here is redemption, here is God's own marvelous method of vindicating at once and forever his eternal hostility toward sin and his eternal love to the sinner, bending the very heavens to come down and save. From the cross flows pardon, peace, regeneration, for every trusting one. That sacrifice! In its full, profound, innermost significance it surpasses the comprehension of man. Yet how it throbs with celestial life! How it pulsates with mysterious might! Somehow it does have a vital relation to the whole Divine government. Somehow it does send the life-blood from on high coursing through history. Somehow it does give the Gospel its superiority, its vitality, its deathless vigor.

"Holy, holy, holy Cross!
 All else won I count but loss;
 Sapphire suns are dust and dross
 In the radiance of the Face
 Which reveals God's way of grace
 Open to a rebel race.

Ransom he, and ransomed we,
 Love and Justice here agree;
 Let the angels bend and see,
 Endless is this mystery:
 He, the Judge, our pardon wins,
 In his wounds our peace begins.

Looking on the accursed tree,
 When we God as Savior see,
 Him as Lord we gladly choose,
 Him as King can not refuse,
 Love of sin with guilt we lose,
 So the cross the soul renews."

Or, again:

“We are sinful and undone;
 God and man the Christ makes one;
 Rebels, perjured, lawless, we;
 Ransom, Ruler, Healer, he.”

Around the cross and the open grave the Gospel heralds can stand, and in the name of Him who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, proclaim to the listening souls of every kindred tongue and people, “The Light has dawned, the Redeemer has come.” In the spirit, and partially in the language of Pressensé, we may say: “The Redeemer has come,—he for whom the Chaldæan of old was yearning, when, with terror-stricken conscience, he offered his sacrifices, giving sometimes the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul; who called with trembling upon the spirits of heaven and earth to conjure away the seven wicked spirits that tormented him; who, weeping in penitential psalm over his sins, hoped for revelation by his god Marduk of the sublime, ineffable name, that could give him peace and moral power, longing thus for a Mediator between God and man who could lay his hand upon them both. The Redeemer has come,—he whom the Egyptian dimly foresaw when he believed in his incarnate Osiris, sweet, full of love, suffering, dying, for the good of man, yet the conqueror of evil and of death, a God wounded in all the wounds of his creatures; he for whom the Egyptian yearned when he put upon the judgment throne this being of divine compassion, and when he hoped that Thoth would not leave him entirely to himself in that dread day; he after whom the Egyptian soul was feeling when he looked for divine incarnations upon earth. The Redeemer has come,—he for whom the worshiper of Varuna looked, when, with penitential

sigh, he fled from the god against whom he had sinned, to the bosom of the same god for forgiveness and healing of heart; for whom the later Vedic people were panting when they were lifted for the moment above the dreary pantheism by the intuition of a holy God who could satisfy their burning thirst for pardon and moral cleansing, which none of the springs of their own religion could quench; for whom, in their fantastic waking dreams, they were blindly groping, when they believed that Vishnu for the sake of man had become incarnate again and again. The Redeemer has come,—he for whom the earnest followers of the Iranian prophet strained their eyes while looking for a Mithra or a Sosiosh, saviors greater than their great Zoroaster himself, whom they thought of as half divine. The Redeemer has come,—the true Son of God, who can destroy the foul Angro Mainyu, and renovate the world. The Redeemer has come,—he at whose feet Gautama would have fallen in admiring love; he who can have divine compassion on the sufferer, who can bless all who are desolate and oppressed without forgetting God or plunging himself and the world into the dreary sea of annihilation; he who can remove, not only sorrow, but as well sin, its evil root, and give to man immortal blessedness and holiness in the presence of God. The Redeemer has come,—he whom, perhaps, the Greek was trying to see when, in olden story, he dreamed that the superhuman Prometheus had suffered whilst benefiting man, and that at last he would be freed from his chains; he whom, in their solemn hours, these brilliant sons of gayety and culture prefigured at Delphi and Eleusis, the God who saves and purifies because he also has suffered; he for whom a Socrates was calling when he wished for some one to lend a hand from heaven to help

save men from the sensualism to which they clung. The Redeemer has come,—he for whom that heir of all the ages until her day, pagan Rome, was looking as she felt the thrill of a universal expectancy; an expectancy whose inspired voice was Virgil as he chanted his presentiments that some great crisis was at hand, that the Old World was to give place to the New; now fixing his hopes on some wonderful, unknown child who has left no trace in the memory of man, now soaring again with wider sweep into the unknown, and dreaming of a time when all traces of the crimes of men shall be effaced, and the earth be delivered from her overwhelming sorrow. We hear him say, “Lo, in the coming age all things rejoice.” The Redeemer has come,—he who was foretold in glowing prophecy, and foreshadowed in type and symbol and sacrifices of Israel, the Messiah of God, the great High Priest, who having made the sacrifice once for all, has rent the veil of the holy of holies, so that all the world may press in peace into the presence of God. He has come! We know him. We have seen him with the eye of the spirit. We have touched him with the fingers of the soul. We have felt the vitalizing touch of his hand. With the spirit’s ear we have heard his voice speaking peace. With the redemptive tides of his cleansing grace have our hearts been filled. He is leading his bannered hosts forward to the conquest of the world.

Can the world outgrow him? Must the evolution of thought at length carry the race beyond him? Will there be at some future time an absolute religion of which he will not be the center? Not until man can outgrow the power of God and the wisdom of God. Men may learn to understand better him and his message; may yet see more clearly the secret by which to

appropriate the fullness of his redeeming grace; but him as the revelation of God and man and redemption he will never outgrow; no substitute for his saving might will man ever find. He is himself the essence of the Gospel. To understand him, to consecrate the life to him, to experience saving grace from him, to live in blessed fellowship with him,—this is and will forever be the absolute religion. His is the kingdom. Heaven is full of his majesty, and earth will yet be full of his glory. There at the right hand of the Majesty on high he sits, the swordless Conqueror and King of the ages, the Prince of peace. Lifted up, he is drawing all men to himself. More and more they come from every land. As they gather about his cross, they cast aside their idols, their superstitions, and their fragmentary bits of truth; drop their filthy rags of sin, and receive the transfiguration robes of the saints; drop their spears, and wave their olive-branches; in exultant throngs ascribe unto him who has washed them from their sins in his own blood, and has made them a kingdom and priesthood unto God and his Father, glory and honor and dominion for ever and ever.

This is the voice of the Gospel to other religions—a voice of sympathy for those who hold them, of sympathy for deep religiousness wherever found; of sympathy for the underlying intent of all religion; of sympathy and recognition for whatever truth they contain. But it is also a voice of condemnation for their one-sided character, for their corruption, their lack of strong moral power and ability to bring universal man into a brotherly fellowship, yet a voice of heavenly interpretation and Divine fulfillment in Jesus Christ the Son of God and Son of man, the Redeemer of the World!

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