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VOLUME V.

ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

AND THEIR

RELATION TO UNIVERSAL RELIGION

BY

SAMUEL JOHNSON

INDIA

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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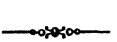
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II.

RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY.

(*Continued.*)



III.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITÂ.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITÂ.

THE date of the Bhagavadgitâ, or "Divine Lay," the most important episode of the Mahâbhârata, although uncertain, cannot be far distant on either side from the beginning of the Christian era.[1] It embodies, in the form of dialogue, a revelation by Krishna, as incarnation of the Supreme, to the hero Arjuna, on the field of Kuru; and the armies of two opposing dynasties, about to join battle, are drawn up in silence to await the close of this transcendental communion between the man and the god. Its initial motive is to remove the scruples of the prince against destroying human life, which have paralyzed his power to fulfil the duties of a soldier and a ruler. To this end it celebrates the sovereignty of the soul over the body, its eternal essence, which death cannot harm, and the fulfilment of personal duty as the way of life and the path of glory. The use of such arguments to reconcile men to the sternest obligations involved in a state of war is itself an impressive illustration of the power of ideal interests. It contrasts favorably with the use of arguments from immortality to justify the destruction of the heretic's body in order to save his soul from eternal woe, or to

The Divine Lay.

[1] Thomson's transl., *Introd.*, p. cxiv.; Lassen's *Preface*, p. xxxvi.

make the threat of future punishment more appalling.[1] The meditations of Arjuna before a Hindu epic battle contrast in many ways with the prayers of Cromwell's soldiers before a real English one. They are, however, alike in the recognition of ideal relations in the sternest actual work.

But this is incidental to the great purpose of the poem, which covers the whole ground of theology, philosophy, and ethics. It is the final flower of Hindu intellect and piety; the summary reconciliation and poetic fusion of the best elements that preceded it in the mystical, rationalistic, and practical schools.

It is better known to modern scholars than any other production of Oriental genius; having been again and again edited with rare critical industry, resulting in the statement of Schlegel, based on diligent comparison of a great number of manuscripts, that the differences between these are almost imperceptible; while Lassen, after a still more extended use of materials, adds but fifteen slight emendations.[2] The disagreement among translators and critics on here and there a passage[3] interferes in no degree with our sense of possessing an accurate transcript of this, the most important of all records of Eastern faith, into the languages of the West.[4] And the enthusiasm of its European students almost rivals that veneration which in India has assigned it a place not inferior in dignity and authority to the Vedas themselves.[5]

Wilhelm von Humboldt celebrates it as "the most

[1] See Matt. xii. 32; xxv. 41.

[2] *Lassen*, p. xxxiv.

[3] See especially Wilson's criticisms on Lassen and Schlegel (*Essays on Sanks. Literature*, vol. iii.).

[4] The translations consulted in the present chapter are Schlegel's Latin version, edited by Lassen (1846), and the English versions of Wilkins (1785) and Thomson (1855).

[5] *Lassen*, p. xxvii.

beautiful, perhaps properly the only true, philosophical song, that exists in any known tongue." Lassen shrinks from attempting to recommend it, lest he should imply that it has need of any praise of his. Warren Hastings notes a "sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction, almost unequalled;" and Schlegel closes his Latin version with a pious invocation of the unknown prophet bard, "whose oracular soul is as it were snatched aloft into divine and eternal truth with a certain ineffable delight."

It is indeed, though not without its imperfections like the rest, one of the grand immortal forms in religious literature; an eternal word of the Spirit in man.

It combines in broad and inspired synthesis the various points of view from which the Hindu schools had contemplated the union of philosophy and faith. Opening with the practical doctrine of duty, as conceived by the Yoga, it unfolds the Idea of God from the best side of the Vedânta, and the speculative analysis of man's spiritual relations after the formulas and in the freedom of the Sânkhya, and ends with the substance of mystical piety, — deliverance, through self-renunciation and devotion, into union with deity. Its comprehensiveness.

It adheres indeed to the system of caste; yet seeks to soften its injustice[1] by declaring perfection open to all who do faithfully their own work, and making this very dogma of natural subordination emphasize the call to every class to seek refuge in God. Even while, with the old contempt which Buddhism had repudiated so nobly, it once mentions women with the lowest castes, it yet declares that Its universality.

[1] A method not unlike that of the early Christian teachers touching slavery.

all who resort to God will reach the highest goal.[1] Krishna says: —

"I have neither friend nor foe: I am the same to all. And all who worship me dwell in me, and I in them."[2]

"To them who love me, I give that devotion by which they come at last to me."[3]

"The soul in every creature's body is invulnerable;[4] and none who has faith, however imperfect his attainment, or however his heart have wandered from right discipline, shall perish, either in this world or in another. He shall have new births, till, purified and made perfect, he reaches the supreme abode."[5]

"Mankind turn towards my path in every manner, and according as they approach me so do I reward them."[6]

Its god intimate with man.

Deity here is not abstraction, but speaks to man as Creator, Preserver, Friend. Krishna is the companion and intimate counsellor of Arjuna, revealing to him out of pure love[7] the law of duty and the path of immortal life; yet preserving the majesty and mystery of the Infinite. This is the "Supreme Universal Spirit," above and behind the universe, as well as its inmost substance; the Maker as well as the All. "I am the origin of all; from me all proceeds."[8] "Thou," says Arjuna, "thou only, knowest thyself by thyself, O Creator and Lord of all that exists, God of gods, most ancient of Beings!"[9] And Krishna says, "I am the soul that exists in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle, the end, of all things."[10]

The vision of Time as destroyer.

He is death as well as life; absorbing all forms, to the terror of the finite worshipper; yet the terror is not meant to be final. Arjuna would behold the whole infinite of deity with mortal eyes. His prayer is answered; and he sees what

[1] *Bk. G.*, ch. ix. [2] Ibid [3] Ibid., ch. x. [4] Ibid., ch. ii.
[5] Ibid, ch. vi. [6] Ibid., ch. iv. [7] Ibid, ch x. [8] Ibid., ch. x.
[9] The term is *Purusha*, or *person*, ch. x. [10] Ibid., ch. x.

mortal eyes *can* see, the onward sweep of atoms and worlds and souls from life to death. This is the terrible, all-devouring form under which the god appears. The mystery of time, whelming all objects of sense, is concentrated into One Visible Shape, clothed by the tropical imagination, which most dreads the power of fire, in terrors and splendors that no eye can endure. The transient, for ever vanishing into the bosom of the eternal, stands manifest in one immeasurable symbol. Flaming mouths and ventral abysses open to engulf it; down these, through rows of dreadful teeth, the human heroes rush, by their own will, as full streams roll on to meet the ocean, as troops of insects seek their death in the taper's flame.[1] Very apt symbolism it is, in view of the other and immediate purpose, to reconcile the hero to the dread necessity of carnage that fronted the assembled hosts.

As in the old Hebrew legends men fall upon their faces before the vision of Jehovah, so is it with Arjuna here. But this "awe is mingled with delight." And its cry of trust is, — Its friendly meaning.

"Thou shouldst bear with me, O God! as a father with his son, as a friend with his friend, a lover with his beloved. Be gracious, O habitation of the universe! show me thy other [more human] form."[2]

And the vision of destruction vanishes, when the divine *relations* of destruction are thus made plain, into the familiar shape of the companion and friend. Through the terrors of Death and Time, that eternal good-will has been abiding unchangeable; and the sublimest lesson of life is learned.

"Be not alarmed, nor troubled, at having seen this my terrible

[1] *Bh. G*, ch. xi. [2] Ibid.

form. But look free from fear, with happy heart, upon this other form of mine.

"That which thou hast seen is very difficult to behold; not to be seen by studying the Vedas, nor by mortifications, nor almsgivings, nor sacrifices. Even the gods are always anxious to behold that form. But only by worship, which is rendered to me alone, am I to be seen, and known in truth, and obtained. He cometh to me whose works are done for me, who holdeth me supreme; who is my servant only; who hath abandoned all consequences, and liveth amongst all men without enmity."[1]

Hindu and Christian incarnations.

This Hindu form of the faith that deity is present in human shape, to teach, console, instruct, and save men, and to make clear and sweet to them the mysteries of death and change, differs from the Christian idea of incarnation, as set forth in the gospel of John, in this respect among others, that it does not seek to confine the freedom of the universal and infinite to a single historic form. Krishna, incarnation of Vishnu, the all-pervading Preserver, is not claimed to be the only possible Word of God in the flesh for all time. Not once for all is this immanent life invested in a man.

"Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, and am lord of all created beings, yet in my command over nature as mine own, I am made evident by my own (mâyâ) power; and as often as there is a decline of virtue and insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, I make myself evident; and thus I appear, from age to age, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of evil-doers, and the establishment of virtue."[2]

This is the Krishna of philosophy; but it expressed a truth that lay deep in the religious instinct of the people.

Accordingly, for the worship of the "all-pervading Preserver," incarnation, or *avatâra* (descent), runs

[1] *Bh. G.*, ch. xi. [2] Ibid., ch. iv.

through every form of life, beginning in earliest ages with the creatures in which it was supposed that the primitive piety of mankind must have beheld deity, and passing on through a series of saints, heroes, redeemers, to a final judge, sō reaching to the bounds of time. In the latest Purânas no less than twenty-two of these avatâras are ascribed to this unfailing providence;[1] not all indeed of a noble or worthy quality, but such as the varying degrees of spiritual and moral intelligence in the worshippers compelled.

Avatâra system not due to Christian influence.

It has never been shown that any appreciable influence was exerted by Christianity upon the formation of this Avatâra system of the Hindus. Neither the Apostle Thomas, nor Nestorian Christians from Syria, nor a stray legend about some distant realm of mystical monotheists, that turns up among the leaves of the old epic, nor traces of very secluded and unimportant Christian settlements in later times upon the coasts of India, can be made available for refuting the claim of Hindu religious genius to uninterrupted assurance that preserving deity is manifested in constantly renewed forms upon the earth. Lassen, after a careful inquiry into the traditions of a Christian origin of this belief, reaches the conclusion that we cannot ascribe to missionaries of the church any influence whatever in shaping these religious conceptions of the Hindus.[2]

The Krishna Avatâra, in special, has been supposed, not only from the resemblance between the

[1] See Lassen's account of them in *Indische Alterthumskunde*, IV. 578–586. Also note on Thomson's *Bhag. G.*, p. 147.

[2] Weber (*Ind. Stud*, I. 400) and Hardwick (*Christ and other Masters*, I. 254) maintain the theory of Christian influence; but all its points seem to be fully met by Lassen, and no real evidence has been adduced in its defence. There is no proof whatever that the Apostle Thomas ever saw India, and none that Nestorian missions had any influence there before the fifth century.

names Krishna and Christ, but from certain correspondences in the later Purânic legends with those of the infancy of Jesus, to have originated in these relations with Christianity. But the resemblances are of slight import; and the belief itself goes back, at the latest, to the time of Megasthenes, three centuries before the Christian era. This writer describes Krishna as the Indian Hercules, who had "traversed the whole earth and sea, to purify them from evil;" and even identifies his worship with Mathura, the native place of Krishna in the legend.[1]

Origin of the Krishna Avatâra.

The similarity of the names, Krishna and Christ, is purely accidental. The word Krishna means *the black*. And it forms the pivot of a very curious tendency among the Aryan Hindus to venerate that very color which they despised in the aboriginal tribes of India, and which marked the lowest and most degraded of the castes. For, in spite of these antagonisms, strange symbols of a deeper brotherhood seem to crop out in several interesting myths, both philosophical and poetic. Here, for instance, in the Bhagavadgitâ, Krishna, or the *black*, is the intimate friend and divine counsellor of Arjuna, or the *white*, — a feature which cannot be accidental. And in the Vishnu Purâna, Vishnu sends two of his hairs, the one white, the other black, to remove by their joint virtue the miseries of the whole earth. I can hardly help believing that this respect for the dark skin points to very early recognitions of a common humanity; and it is not improbable that Krishna worship itself is the mark of some profound influence exerted on the faith of the aristocratic Aryans by the conquered tribes of India. The generally democratic character of this

Its possible relations.

[1] *Lassen*, I. 647; II. 1107.

wide-spread and deeply rooted form of worship would thus be explained. And the exaltation of a representative of the enslaved race as divine guide of their white master, in the noblest intellectual achievement his literature can boast, is a piece of fine poetic justice, which gives dignity to the whole history of the Hindus. And it associates the oldest with the latest phases of our Aryan pride of race, in a common lesson for coming time.

Its history.

From the early period above mentioned, down to the latest Purâna, the Bhâgavata, in the thirteenth century, Krishna comes constantly into view, in the utmost variety of forms, — as protecting hero; as saint and sage, mastering evil spirits instead of physical and outward enemies; as inspired shepherd boy, idyllic lover of the country maidens, and wonder-worker in the spheres of popular interests and pursuits; assuming in the epic mythology, where all the numberless rills of popular belief have flowed together, all imaginable powers and forms of character.[1] He says in the Bhagavadgitâ, "I am representative of the supreme and incorruptible, of eternal law and endless bliss."[2]

In the Bhâgavata Purâna he is exalted as the ideal centre of all virtues, human and divine; and saviour of men through the blessings he bestows on all who enter his spiritual being through meditation and holy discipline.[3] His worship is thus a purely native product of Hindu sentiment. And the sublime assertion, in the Bhagavadgitâ, of his incarnation whenever right needs to be re-established and wrong to be overturned, requires no other explanation than an intuitive

[1] Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol iv. [2] Ibid., ch. xiv.
[3] See Th. Pavie's *Krishna et sa Doctrine* (Paris, 1852)

faith in the intimate union of deity with life and the world.

Relation to pantheism.

We may further observe, as characteristic of Hindu religious development, an effort in the history of Krishna-worship to purify pantheism of its cruder elements. The pantheistic sense of divine immanence and universality naturally involves profound moral and spiritual meaning. With the advancement of thought, such better significance is brought to the interpretation of popular beliefs of whatever nature. Krishna is the common term which Hinduism has maintained as the thread of its religious tradition; and, in the heterogeneous web of the Mahâbhârata, all its meaning for the popular mind has been wrought over in the interest of the higher form of pantheism just mentioned. So that the Krishna of the epic presents the very noblest traits which the Hindu mind was able to conceive, as will be seen hereafter.

The play of illusion, under which his assumption of all forms of human sympathy and desire is believed by the more spiritually-minded to be masked, is frequently lifted away, revealing what is held to be his inmost reality, by which the often questionable phenomena are to be mystically interpreted; a process of compromise to which all distinctive religions have in their different ways, from time to time, subjected their sacred books. The substance of this higher pantheism is expressed in language like the following: —

"Know that Dharma (righteousness) is my first-born beloved Son, whose nature is to have compassion on all creatures. In his character, I exist among men, both present and past, in different disguises and forms. While all men live in unrighteousness, I, the

unfailing, build up the bulwark of right, as the ages pass. Assuming various divine births to promote the good of all creatures, I act according to my nature."[1]

Upon this grand postulate of the constant presence and watchful intimacy of deity with man, as guide and deliverer, the Bhagavadgitâ sought to unfold the sympathies of past and present forms of faith.

Sympathies of thought in the Bhagavadgitâ.

It declared that knowledge and action are one in worship.[2]

"Children only, not the wise, speak of the Sânkhya (rational) and the Yoga (devotional) religious systems as different. He who sees their unity sees indeed. The place which is gained by the followers of the one is gained by the followers of the other."[3]

"He who can behold inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise amongst mankind."[4]

"There are divers ways of sacrificing; and all purify men. But the worlds are not for him who worships *not*."[5]

For one to reach this higher point of spiritual recognition, the Veda, with the subtle questions thereon that have distracted the conscience, must have become secondary, and be held as transient means to a spiritual end.

Bible and mediators.

"When thy mind shall have worked through the snares of illusion, thou wilt become indifferent to traditional belief. When thy mind, liberated from the Vedas,[6] shall abide fixed in contemplation, thou shalt then attain to real worship."[7]

"Thou shalt find it in due time, spontaneously, within thyself."[8]

This freer treatment of the "sacred scriptures" de-

[1] *Mahâbh.*, XIV. [2] *Bhag. G.*, ch. iii. [3] Ibid., ch. v.
[4] Ibid., ch. iv. [5] Ibid., ch iv.
[6] So Thomson translates *nirveda*, which according to Wilson also (*Essays on Sanskr. Lit.*, III. 128) means "certainty of the futility of the Vedas." Schlegel translates the passage thus: "sententiis theologicis antea distracta" Only Wilkins differs: his reading is, "by study brought to maturity," which can hardly be correct.
[7] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ii. [8] Ibid., ch. iv.

serves notice, as showing how strong is the demand, even in a race whose faith naturally turns to the past, for escape from a bible-worship, which still dominates far more enlightened communities. In every great form of Hindu philosophy we find this opening upward into freedom from sacred text and rite. The Vedânta declares "the science of the Vedas inferior to the science of soul." The Sânkhya denies the eternity of the hymns, and asserts fullest liberty of interpretation. The Bhagavadgitâ holds real worship to be that in which the Vedas have no further place, having done their work, and given way to the vision and enjoyment of deity. The Ramâyâna and Mahâbhârata speak of themselves as equal to the Vedas. The Purânas, in general, go much further. The Bhâgavadgitâ says: —

Reactions against bibliolatry.

"As great as is the use of a well when it is surrounded by overflowing waters, so great and no greater is the use of the Vedas to a Brahman endowed with knowledge."

But the Bhâgavata Purâna: —

"Men do not worship the Supreme when they worship Him as circumscribed by the attributes specified in the hymns. Thou who strewest the earth with thy sacrificial grass, and art proud of thy numerous immolations, knowest not what is highest work of all."

The Brâhmanas speak of the limitations of the Vedas in the same tone. Even Manu perceives that the spirit must interpret the text, to make it of service. The progress of experience brought fresh inspirations that criticised the older ones; and there were bitter controversies between the supporters of the different Vedas, fatal to the pretence of inviolable authority in either.[1]

[1] See *texts* in Muir, III. ch. i.

The "spiritual knowledge" which is to be substituted for all written or traditional objects of faith, as the supreme end of life, is called *jnâna*.[1] The Bhagavadgitâ describes what it reveals as deity, in terms most clearly expressive of spiritual being: — Spirituality.

"It is that which hath no beginning, and is supreme; not the existent alone, nor the non-existent alone; with hands and feet on all sides, at the centre of the world comprehending all; exempt from all organs, yet shining with the faculties of all; unattached, yet sustaining every thing; within and without; afar, yet near; the light of lights, the wisdom that is to be found by wisdom, implanted in every breast."[2]

"The recompense of devotion is greater than any that can be promised to the study of the Vedas, or the practice of austerities, or the giving of alms."[3] Independence.

"Better than material sacrifice is the sacrifice of spiritual wisdom."[4]

"Men are seduced from the right path by that flowery sentence proclaimed by the unwise, who delight in texts from the Vedas, and say, 'there is nothing else than that,' covetous of heaven as the highest good, offering regeneration as the reward of mere performances, and enjoining rites for the sake of pleasures and powers."[5]

"The worship of *personages* as divine bestowers of all good seeks to propitiate such personages; and receives, *as from them*, its reward, which yet comes after all only from God. But the reward of these disciples of little mind is finite. They who worship gods go to their gods. They who worship me come to me. Only the unwise believe that I, who neither am born nor die, am confined to a visible form."[6]

While the power of attaining union with essential truth and good, independently of permanent or exclusive mediators, is thus affirmed as indispensable to the highest life, the ethical conditions of such attainment are not slighted. The authority of the moral nature has all due reverence. Ethical culture; action.

[1] Compare Greek γνῶσις, Latin *nosco*, Saxon *know*. [2] *Bhag. G*, ch xiii.
[3] Ibid., ch. viii. [4] Ibid., ch. iv. [5] Ibid., ch. ii. [6] Ibid., ch. vii.

What is the secret of duty? O Arjuna! the old eternal answer, — the soul knows no other: — Master the senses, and subdue desires. Of all actions the consequences are *bonds* determined and inevitable. What is the self-centred act, what the pleasure of mere physical contact, that comes but to pass again, leaving unsatisfied desire behind it, but "a womb of pain"? Is then all activity to be renounced? By no means.

"No one ever resteth a moment inactive. Every one is involuntarily urged to act, by principles which are inherent in his nature. Inertness is not piety. Perform, then, thy functions. Action is better than inaction."

"But as this world entails the bonds of action on every work but that which has worship for its object, therefore abandon, O son of Kunti! all selfish motive, and perform thy duty for God alone."

"Even if thou considerest only the good of mankind, still thou shouldst act. For what good men practise, others will practise likewise."

"I have no need of any good, that I should be obliged to do any thing throughout the three worlds; *yet do I for ever work.* For if I did not, — men follow in my steps in all things, and the people would perish."[1]

"But every work is comprehended in wisdom: seek thou this, by worship, inquiry, service."[2]

"Whoso abandons all interest in the reward of his actions shall be contented and free: though engaged in work, he, as it were, doeth nothing. The same in success and failure, even though he acts he is not bound by the bonds of action. His mind led by spiritual knowledge, and his work done for the sake of worship, his own action is, as it were, dissolved away."

"God is the gift, the sacrifice, the altar-fire; God the maker of the offering; and God, the object of his meditation, is by him attained."[3]

Motive.

"Let thy motive lie in the deed, and not in the reward: perform thy duty, and make the event equal, whether it terminate in good or ill. This is devotion."[3]

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. iii. [2] Ibid., ch. iv. [3] Ibid., ch. ii.

"He who puts aside self-interest is not tainted by sin, but remains unaffected, as the lotus-leaf is not wet, by the waters." [1]

"What is given for the sake of a gift in return, or for the sake of the fruit of the action, or reluctantly, is a gift of inferior quality." [2]

"Whatever thou doest, do as offering to the Supreme." [3]

"He who casts off desires, he into whose heart desires enter but as rivers run into the never-swelling, passive ocean, he is tranquil; and there springs in him separation from all trouble. He only whose thoughts are gathered in meditation can find rest." [4] Mastery of desires

"The wise are troubled to determine what is action and what is not. I will tell thee the path of deliverance. He is the doer of duty who beholds inaction in action, and action in inaction, free from the sense of desire: his action is consumed by the fire of knowledge." [5]

"As a candle placed in shelter from the wind does not flicker, so is he who, with thoughts held in devotion, delighteth in his soul, knowing the boundless joy that the mind attains beyond sense, whereon being fixed it moveth not from truth; and who, having attained it, regardeth no other attainment as so great as it is, nor is moved by severest pain." [6]

"Seek refuge in thy mind." [7]

"Let one raise his soul by his own means: let him not lower his soul; for he is his soul's friend or enemy. He who has subdued himself by his soul finds that self which, by reason of the enmity of what is not spiritual, might be a foe, the friend of his soul." [8] Self-respect.

"Draw in the senses from objects of sense, as the tortoise its limbs; for when the heart follows their roaming it snatches away spiritual wisdom as a wind a ship on the waves." [9] Spirituality of purpose.

Yet even in the practice of ascetic disciplines, commended to the devotee who would concentrate his mind on God alone, excess is discounten- Moderation.

[1] *Bhag. G*, ch v.
[2] Ibid., ch xvii.
[3] Ibid., ch. ix.
[4] Ibid., ch. ii.
[5] Ibid, ch. iv.
[6] Ibid., ch vi.
[7] Ibid., ch ii.
[8] Ibid., ch. vi.
[9] Ibid., ch. ii.

anced; and fanatical abstinence from food, sleep, recreation, action, are discouraged, — he only being a true devotee who is moderate in all things, and, above all, in his desires.[1] How these opposite tendencies are reconciled does not indeed appear. It has been supposed[2] that indifference to results was substituted for abandonment of action, from a sense of the necessity of modifying the strictness of ascetic practices, which is very probable.

Such are the cultures of piety, — contemplative mainly, and in their final aim. But practical virtues are held as equally imperative. Such are fearlessness, temperance, rectitude, veracity, a harmless spirit, freedom from anger, liberality, modesty, gentleness, benevolence towards all, stability, energy, fortitude, patience, purity, resolution, and the absence of vindictiveness and conceit.[3] These are enforced as positive duties. They are described, also, as the path of those who are "born to the lot of divine beings," while those who have them not gravitate the other way.

Practical virtues.

All actual conditions were, to the Hindu, profoundly retrospective. They must somehow find their ground in the determinations of a divine Order. There was more in moral good and evil than mere fruit of culture. And to be "born to the lot" of divine or depraved beings must of course have meant something beyond caste-distinctions. A sense of destiny came mightily down on the dreamer's vision, as he thought of the prodigious force of natural endowment in determining the paths of conduct. Virtues were upward tracks, for which, it was plain, some had

Natural destiny.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. vi. [2] Wilson, III. 110. [3] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xvi.

a kind of natural fore-ordination; while the birth-doom of others drove them in the opposite direction into correspondent vices. And here the poet's moral judgment seems too much absorbed in the sense of inevitable consequence to recognize that apparent injustice in such predestinations, which demanded solution. And he turns the evil-doers away[1] upon their downward path of bestial transmigrations, with as little apparent sympathy as is conveyed in that kindred sentence from another gospel: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Doubtless in the one case, as in the other, the special aspect under which moral evil was, for the moment, intensely conceived, excluded other and kindlier elements of faith, which elsewhere enter into both these gospels, though in different ways. With the Hindu, the deliverance from these bonds of destiny might surely be found in the all-embracing mystic unity of spiritual life, as with the Hebrew in the depths of the Fatherhood of God. And yet it is evident of the one as of the other gospel, that its central idea had not reached its own full significance, as a guaranty for the preservation and perfection of all spiritual forces, even in the mind of its greatest teacher.

But we must not overlook the fact, that this whole poem is intent on pointing out the ways in which the dark, bewildering, bestializing *gunas*, or organic qualities, might be "burned away in the fires of worship." It implies a certain inherent and absolute power in these disciplines and endeavors, to accomplish their purpose. They involve a higher freedom, which contravenes the apparent fatalities of evil.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xvi.

The path open to all.

And for all aspirations alike there was the One Life that animated all lives, an unfailing promise justification, and resource.

"Rest assured, O son of Kunti! that they who worship me shall never die. I am the pledge of their bliss." [1]

"Forsake all other reliance, and fly to me alone. I will deliver thee from all thy transgressions." [2]

"Even if one whose ways have been ever so bad worship me alone, with devotion, he shall be honored as a just man; for he has judged aright. He soon becometh of a virtuous spirit, and enteretl eternal rest." [3]

"He my servant is dear to me, who is free from enmity, the friend of all nature, merciful, exempt from pride and selfishness, the same in pain and pleasure, patient of wrongs, contented, of subdued passions and firm resolves, and whose mind is fixed on me alone.

"He also is worthy of my love who neither rejoices nor finds fault; neither laments nor covets; and, being my servant, has forsaken both good and evil fortune.

"He is my beloved who is the same in friendship and hatred, in honor and dishonor, unsolicitous about the event of things; to whom praise and blame are as one; who is of little speech, and pleased with whatever cometh to pass; who owneth no particular home, and who is of steadfast mind.

"They who seek this amrita [immortal food] of religion, even as I have said, and serve me faithfully, are dearest of all." [4]

Concentration of virtues in worship.

Here the independent witness-soul of the Sânkhya is combined with a Vedantic reverence for the One Universal Life, and a Buddhistic recognition of action and social duties. The meaning of this blending of stoical indifference, pious ardor, and human love, can only lie in the effort to consecrate the whole of life, to fuse every element of the human ideal in the one purpose of worship, as substantial unity with the Highest, as all-sufficing joy.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ix.
[2] Ibid., ch. xviii.
[3] Ibid., ch. ix.
[4] Ibid., ch. xii. (Wilkins).

"They who worship me dwell in me, and I in them."[1]

"By him who constantly seeks me, without wandering of mind, I am easily found."[2]

"Thinking on me, absorbed in me, teaching each other, and constantly telling of me, the wise are blessed. To such as seek me with constant love, I give the power to come to me. Through my compassion, while remaining in my own essence, I yet turn their darkness into light."[3]

"Most dear am I to the spiritually wise, and he is dear to me. The distressed, the seeker for light, the desirer of good, the wise, are all exalted; but the wise, whose devout spirit rests on me, I hold even as myself."[4]

"Though thou wert the greatest of offenders, thou shalt cross the gulf of sin in this bark of spiritual wisdom. He who hath faith shall find this; and, having found it, shall speedily attain rest for his soul. No bonds of action hold the mind which hath cut asunder the bonds of doubt. Son of Bhârata, sever thy doubt in worship, and arise!"[5]

And, on the other side, the inevitableness of moral penalty is as positively asserted. It rests not on any arbitrary decree, but on the essential qualities of conduct. It is associated indeed in certain aspects with the notion that the castes originated in these moral qualities, and their due subordinations;[6] for the Bhagavadgitâ does not attain the grand democracy of Buddhism. But the inherence of moral consequence according to purely moral quality is nevertheless strictly defined:—

Moral penalties.

"The pleasure that springs from serenity of mind is first like poison, and afterwards like the amrita of immortals; but the pleasures of the senses begin like amrita, and end as poisons; and the pleasure that is from sleepy sloth is the utter bewilderment of the soul."[6]

According to the quality that has ripened into predominance is the form the individual spirit assumes;

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ix. [2] Ibid., ch. viii.. [3] Ibid., ch. x.
[4] Ibid., ch. vii. [5] Ibid., ch. iv. [6] Ibid., ch xviii.

gravitating at death to the "imperishable place," or downwards, through lower forms of life, even to the "wombs of the senseless," or inorganic matter, if the deathly blight of *indifference* shall come to that at last.[1] "Threefold the gate of this hell, — avarice, anger, and lust."[2] Thus the bad are consigned, not to endless misery by one dread sentence, but to probations manifold; and, if hopelessly sunk, reaching at last a *quasi* annihilation, by laws of affinity alone; not to be preyed on by the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched; but, more mercifully (if that word be applicable at all), to become the clod or the stone, which testify that the capability to sin and to suffer are alike no more. So that hope ceases only with consciousness itself; for transmigration is a revolving wheel, and with every fresh birth comes fresh gift of opportunity for such intelligence as may still survive.

The blessed life beyond death.

"All worlds up to that of Brahmâ are subject to [the law of] return." But there is a state from which they who enter it do not need, as they cannot desire, to return.

"There is an invisible, eternal existence, beyond this visible, which does not perish when all things else perish, even when the great days of Brahmâ's creative life pass round into night, and all that exists in form returns unto God whence it came. They who obtain this never return."[3]

"They proceed unbewildered to that imperishable place, which is neither illumined by the sun nor moon; to that primeval Spirit whence the stream of life for ever flows."[4]

"Whoso beholds me in all things and all in me, I do not vanish from him, nor does he vanish from me; for in me he lives."[5]

"Bright as the sun beyond darkness is He to the soul that remembers Him in meditation, at the hour of death, with thought

[1] *Bhaç. G.*, ch. xiv. [2] Ibid., ch. xvi. [3] Ibid., ch. viii.
[4] Ibid., ch. xv. [5] Ibid., ch. vi.

fixed between the brows, — Him the most ancient of the wise, the primal ruler, the minutest atom, the sustainer of all, — in the hour when each finds that same nature on which he meditates, and to which he is conformed." [1]

"They who put their trust in me, and seek deliverance from decay and death, know Brahma, and the highest spirit (Adhyâtma), and every action (karma). They who know me in my being, my person, and my manifested life, in the hour of death know me indeed." [2]

Who is this that is so known?

"The Soul in all beings, the best in each, and the inmost nature of all; their beginning, middle, end; the all-watching preserver, father and mother of the universe, supporter, witness, habitation, refuge, friend; the knowledge of the wise, the silence of mystery, the splendor of light; and death and birth, and all faculties and powers; the holiest hymn, the spring among seasons, the seed and the sum of all that is." [3]

And whoso by inward worship of God overcomes the blind qualities and dispositions, by devotion shall enter at once into His being.[4]

Personal immortality.

These conceptions of a future life seem to hover between absorption into deity and revolving cycles of ever-renewed births. Yet, through all this indistinctness, a certain sense of permanence must have been felt by those whose minds dwelt so constantly on the thought of somewhat eternal in the very consciousness of spiritual being. We have already seen that the mystical Hindu mind did not demand so distinct an assurance of continued personal consciousness after death as does the intense individualism of modern thought. Such positiveness of prediction would have been associated with limitations rather than with freedom: always the longing of mystical faith has been to lose limit in pure self-surrender, and find freedom in absolute present trust.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. viii.
[2] Ibid., ch. vii.
[3] Ibid., ch. ix. x. xi.
[4] Ibid., ch. xiv. xviii.

Yet the Bhagavadgitâ recognizes the desire of continued being, as indeed it does not fail of recognizing almost every genuine aspiration. And when Krishna would allay the compassionate scruples of Arjuna against destroying human life, he points to the imperishable personality that resides in every soul. Its description fully corresponds with what we mean by that term. One with infinite soul, expanded to share the universal life, yet in a real sense distinct in itself, as being that in each soul which makes it real and eternal, it comes home to our experience as our own deepest sense of immortality, which transcends the thought of beginning as of end.

"As the soul in this body undergoes the changes of infancy, youth, and age, so it obtains a new body hereafter.

"Know that these finite bodies have belonged to an eternal, inexhaustible, indestructible spirit. He who believes that this spirit can kill, and he who believes it can be killed, both are wrong. Unborn, changeless, eternal, it is not slain when the body is slain.

"As a man abandons worn-out clothes and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn-out bodies and enter others. Weapons cannot cleave, nor fire burn it. It is constant, immovable; yet it can pass through all things.

"If thou hadst thought it born with the body, to die with the body, even then thou shouldst not grieve for the inevitable; since what is born must die, and what is dead must live again. All things are first unseen, then seen, then at last unseen again. Why then be troubled about these things?

"Some hold the soul as a wonder, while some speak and others hear of it with astonishment; but no one knoweth it, though he may have heard it described. The soul, in its mortal frame, is invulnerable.

"Grieve not then for any creatures, and abandon not thy duty. For a noble man that infamy were worse than death."[1]

"It is good to die doing thy own work: doing another's brings danger."[2]

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. ii. [2] Ibid., ch. iii.

The sense of immortality is here associated with the idea of duty, conceived indeed after a Hindu fashion. Wherever such connection is recognized as essential, there, under whatever special form duty may be presented, we may be sure that personality is involved in the idea of eternal life.

This "invulnerable soul" is in every one of the living beings before Arjuna on the battle-field of Kuru. "An imaginary thing can have no existence, nor can that which is real be other than a stranger to nonentity."[1] Is not this an implication of full faith in personal destinies? What limitation is possible to the sweep of this invulnerability of life through all special lives? What is it but the living path and the living goal, at once, for them all? It is a protest against the fate elsewhere in the Bhagavad-gitâ assigned to those who are fallen lowest in delusion and vice. The "wombs of the senseless" disappear before it. How can the soul die down into a clod, if soul is invulnerable? By this rescue of the substance, all that waste is made impossible. The higher "conservation of force," which resides in intelligence itself, forbids it. The "wombs of the senseless," like the "everlasting woes" of Christian theology, are, in fact, but mythological and dramatic fictions, in which the fears and hates arising from certain stages of moral development invest the idea of spiritual destiny. Intuitions of the eternal validity of that which is inmost substance and proper selfhood in every one, flash out by the side of these mythologic fancies, and reach beyond them, discerning the real purport of existence. This inmost personal life, rooted in essential life, contains all guaranties of good: whatever else dies out or

All destinies divine.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. II.

revolves through phases of matter, coming up again in vapor or tree, that which is called "soul" in each, the intellectual and moral quality, the sphere of aspiration and relation to the infinite, however it may change and develop, must escape such fate, — must abide, according to this philosophy, in the imperishable place of soul itself. Honor to pantheism for affirming the oneness of spiritual substance, for the sweep of its great circle that leaves no life homeless and wandering outside God.

Correspondence with the Sânkhya.

The recognition of an inmost personality, lifted in pure independence of all the change and loss involved in actions and their fruits, is as positive in the Bhagavadgitâ as in Kapila's distinction between Prakriti and Purusha. In fact, this distinction, with the whole Sânkhya system,[1] is here fully set forth; though as but a single side of an eclectic philosophy, and combined — Kapila would hardly say, reconciled — with that oneness of spiritual being to which he objected as opposed to individual claims.

"He who beholdeth all his actions performed by Prakriti, at the same time perceives that his âtma [self] is inactive in them. The supreme soul, even when it is in the body, neither acts nor is it affected, because its nature is eternal, and free of qualities. As the all-penetrating ether, from the minuteness of its parts, passeth everywhere unaffected, so this spirit in the body. As one sun illumines the whole world, so does the one spirit illumine the whole of matter, O Bhârata! They who thus perceive the body and the soul as distinct, and that there is release, go to the Supreme."[2]

Universality of the Gitâ.

This effort to combine the Sânkhya with the Vedânta is but one element of the vast synthesis of faith attempted in the "Divine Lay" which

[1] The reader will recall the explanation of this distinction, as suggested in the chapter on the Sânkhya in the present volume, p. 388.

[2] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xiii.

we are now studying. It has been described[1] as evading all great questions which divide the schools of belief, as hovering between faith and works, reason and devotion, the worship of the invisible and the worship of the visible God.[1] It is certain that the reconciliation of opposite tendencies is by no means clear or satisfactory. It is syncretism rather than fusion. It is intellectual recognition, rather than final system. But the breadth of this recognition is what deserves our admiration, the large justice done to every existing element of Hindu thought. Like its own Brahma, the Bhagavadgitâ is the *best* of every form, revealing its highest aspect, its spiritual purport. Faith is good, and works are good; but the goodness of each is in the subordination of one to the other. Absorption and transmigration are both real; but their meaning for the desire of immortality is in their respective meanings as the true end of life and the consequence of conduct. Not less real the worth of the Veda for the greater worth of *nirveda*, the divine certainty that lies beyond it. Sacrifices are good, yet only as the step to a higher service of God. The Sânkhya witness-soul is exalted; not less so the soul performing these duties that belong to its path in life. The *gunas*, or qualities of blind nature, have their tremendous moral issues; not less true are the all-dissolving Unity of Brahma, and the illusion of this universe that comes and goes, these worlds of life that are "subject to return." The eternal Substance abides, beyond all forms of existence, inconceivable, unknown. Yet every term by which the inmost personality of man is expressed is carried up into this divine substance, making it a fulness of life. It is

[1] Wilson, *Essay on Bhagav. Gitâ* (*Sanskr. Lit.*, III. 144).

Purusha, personal soul. It is *Purushottâma*, Ultimate Personality. It is *Adhyâtma*, Over-Soul, or Divine Self. It is even *Maheśvara*, the Great Lord. It is the Avatâra, the perpetual providence, ever manifest in visible form to save the world.

This boundless hospitality to existing beliefs indicates at least the force with which the religious sentiment was embodied in them all at the time when the Bhagavadgitâ was written. One element betrays the Brahmanical source from which it flowed, the maintenance, however modified, of caste. Brahmanism is here seen, surrounded by rationalizing independent tendencies, seeking to accommodate itself to their demands, while maintaining the unity of religious development as a whole. Like the somewhat analogous production of the Christian Church, the Johannic Gospel, it is the work of the highest spiritual genius, the most deliberate and careful constructive skill, the most earnest desire of religious unity, which the tendencies it represented had at their command; and a spirit is moving through its speculative deeps, that could not be bound within the limits of any creed, — the spirit of Universal Religion.

The maker of the Lay.

We cannot wonder that in a time of contending sects, and amidst the distinctions of caste, the disclosure of this "sublime mystery" to the reviler, the indifferent, the unspiritual, should be forbidden.[1] How indeed, leaving caste out of the question, could it be made known to such? No deep religious faith fails wholly of that wisdom which knows where not to cast its pearls. As the Hebrew reformer clothed his doctrine in parables, for those who hearing did not hear, and as the Greek philosopher veiled his in symbols, so

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xviii.

the Hindu mystic admonished his disciples that preparation was needed for receiving what only the eye of thoughtful attention could even behold. And was not this light of pure thought indeed shining in comparative darkness? Was it not on the heights of contemplation, in a region which the disciplined intellect alone could make a home? Yet we detect also behind these ethical and spiritual considerations the strict requirements of caste. Not here the broad humanity of Buddha, whose word was a gospel rather than a philosophy, and probably uttered with less of esoteric mystery or exclusiveness than that of any other teacher of the ancient world. The claims of the philanthropist differ from the claims of the seer.

Shall we not say with the latest English translator of this wonderful song, sung in the far East two thousand years ago, that "it is sufficient praise for the mystical old Brahman to have inferred, amidst darkness and ignorance, the vast powers of mind and will, and to have claimed for the soul the noble capacity of making the body and even external matter its slave?"

IV.

PIETY AND MORALITY OF PANTHEISM.

PIETY AND MORALITY OF PANTHEISM.

IF the Bhagavadgitâ is pantheistic, it is none the less theistic also. While these two terms in their extreme meaning represent widely different conceptions, here is a higher unity which seeks to include what is best in both. Whatever may have been the result of this effort, its comprehensiveness deserves special notice, in view of the demand of our civilization for a breadth and freedom which can appreciate every real element of human belief. In this spirit of the age, Goethe wrote to Jacobi that he could not be content with one way of thinking; that as artist and poet he was a polytheist, while as student of nature he was a pantheist.

The demand of the age.

All phases of religion appear alike imperfect, if defined as mutually exclusive systems. But their real affinities are coming to be comprehended in the unity of personal experience. We are learning to recognize theism, polytheism, and pantheism as legitimate parts of ourselves, to resume them under aspects which explain their power over races and times other than our own, and so to relieve the steps of human endeavor from disparagement by exclusive creeds.

Justice to pantheism needed.

There are phases of skepticism and phases of science which seem to turn from religion as well as intuition with sweeping denial. There are phases of superstition apparently blind to all rights of skepticism and science. But both science and religion in our day are to receive a republican breadth of meaning. They will not only guard the right of every faculty and every aspiration to plead its own cause, but respect the witness it may be able to bring in its own behalf from the confidence of mankind.

To how purely negative a criticism has pantheism been subjected! Yet there must be truth in a form of belief which has satisfied enduring civilizations, and which has reappeared in philosophy and ethics wherever these have reached a high development, without regard to the lines which separate recognized religions or even races. It has usually been through some form of spiritual pantheism that these distinctive religions have escaped their limitations, and risen into a universality unknown either to their founders or to the ordinary current of their history. We may instance the Sufism of the Mohammedans, the Neo-Platonism of the Greeks, and the Mysticism that preceded the Reformation in Germany and Italy, and showed a far larger and profounder spirit than that movement. Modern philosophy has received its strongest impulse from a similar tendency in German thought. And the unities of political, intellectual, and religious life, at the present time, make the relation of pantheism to the coming age a question of real moment.

Whatever inferior forms of experience may have received or assumed the name, it is of great impor-

tance to emphasize that special purport of pantheism which accounts for its frequent recurrence and its noble fruits. Our study of the Hindu schools of religious philosophy should help us to this result.

It is commonly insisted that all pantheistic systems are ways of confounding the Creator with the creation, and sinking the soul in the senses. This form of statement comes mainly from Semitic habits of thought inherited by Christianity. Pantheism could expect no other reception from their intense jealousy for the rights of an external deity, by whom the world is made out of nothing, and the human soul autocratically ruled.

What is Pantheism?

But, if pantheism *were* what this fixed impression of the Christian Church as a whole represents it, it would certainly be far from resembling the aspirations of those Hindu seers whom we have been studying in the preceding chapters of this volume. They, of all men, sought emancipation from the "wheel of the senses," and fervently believed in the possibility of union with the Absolute and Eternal.

In reality, pantheism, whether as sentiment or philosophy, is not the worship of a finite and visible world. In its nobler forms it is essentially of the spirit, and rests, as its name imports, on these principles: that Being is, in its substance, one; that this substantial unity is, and must be, implicated in all energy, though indefinably and inconceivably, — as Life, all-pervading, all-containing, the constant ground and ultimate force of all that is; and that the recognition of this inseparableness of the known universe from God is consistent with the worship of God as infinitely transcending it.

A theism of pure sentiment, following the Hebrew

prophetic consciousness of intimacy with God, yet, like that earlier Semitism, too monarchical in its theory to recognize how completely all manifestation must be one with its spiritual substance, was the religious inspiration of Jesus and his companions. Not less was this the limit for every form under which Christianity could appear. Even the Gospel of John — though a later product, drawing largely from Greek and Oriental fountains, and imbued with mystical elements apparently unknown to the original faith as it was in Jesus — stopped short, on this track, with limiting the *pure* immanence of God in the universe to the ideally constructed person of Jesus, as the "Word made flesh." All pantheistic forms or tendencies of distinctive Christianity have had the same limitation; and this obscures the universal element, which nevertheless underlay and in fact prompted them.

Limits of Christian theism.

The ideal demand of modern life is for fuller recognition than was ever before possible, that spiritual being is of one substance. All religions measurably express this truth, and their aspirations after universality imply it. But their distinctive tendencies have interfered more or less harmfully with its free development and just emphasis. With the knowledge of universal laws there enters a more genial and inclusive spirit.

Modern ideal of unity.

Philosophy now aims at complete expression of the essential unity of subject with object, in what Aristotle called "thought thinking itself;" thus reaching the ultimate conception of One Spiritual Substance embracing all being within the scope of its self-affirmation.[1] The Imagination of our time divines, beyond

[1] This is involved even in the "relativity of all knowledge," which might seem to make it void, since the conception of this relativity implies recognition of its opposite, the

this metaphysical conception, that the living universe is the play of deity, through all forms and forces, all dream and faith and action, all names, all symbols, all religions. Its Piety and its Humanity must be more than a mere *recognition* of what is eternally good and true, as an object of thought: they aim at the *expression* of this, as far as possible, in forms of which *it* shall be at once the productive cause and the inseparable life. Its Sciences must recognize that what lies beyond their tests and explanations is really the one master force involved in every step of evolution from lowest to highest forms, the substance of these force-factors out of which all constructions flow. Its God must be no mere Creator of a distinct universe, in the sense of maker, constructor, provider; but far more, even the inmost Essence and Principle of all. The age, in fine, is resuming, in the fulness of its experience, the ideal meaning of all spiritual motives profound enough to have acquired distinctive names, and to have entered into the classification of religious systems.

I am not then forgetting the larger light of science and practical relation in the civilization of the West, when I bring the "Hindu dreamers" to help towards a better understanding of the needs of our time. It is these very forms of intellectual maturity that impel us to seek fresh meaning in all ancient divinations of the Unity of Being.

The mystery which we are to ourselves, and find in all things around us, not only transcends our theological terms, but effaces all scientific landmarks and distinctions. It is *by thought* we know all that we call God, the world, ourselves; and in all

The mystery of being.

directions alike is thought incomprehensible to the thinker. Facts, phenomena, the operation of forces, we claim to understand simply because we employ them for our purposes, select them to meet definite demands, combine them in positive constructions. But of force we only know that it acts in certain ways, not *how* it can act thus, nor how act at all. And of the fleeting play of phenomena, what can we say but that the connection between mind and the physical organs through which they are perceived — nay, between mind and its own activity — is a mystery penetrable by no faculty that we possess. With a change in our mode of existence, the familiar universe would roll up as a scroll; though it were only to reappear in such new, unimagined form as may accord with new desires or needs, — so slight the hold of either our volition or our comprehension on the relations of our being. Yet we inevitably trust the reports of consciousness concerning its own objects. And how should this unison be possible, and this confidence and calm abide in the depths of the reason, but for an inmost *identity of essence, including within itself alike the truster and what he trusts?*

This presence of the unfathomable, in which all experience is involved, cannot be set aside on the ground that it is always unknown, and that a purely unknown factor may be eliminated from the problem. It *abides* everywhere: it is that which we *do* know most surely, even if we know nothing else, unless knowing means comprehending, in which case we should do well to drop the word altogether.

Nor can a universal element be eliminated and left out of the problem, — like a constant factor in arithmetic, — on the ground that it is constant and every-

where of equal force.[1] It is *dynamic*, not arithmetical. It enters into the substance of each experience, with special influences in each. Its presence affects the spirit and attitude of inquiry, shapes the definitions, and saves from absorption in the finite side of experience. "They who prize experience exclusively," said Goethe, "forget that experience is but the half of experience."

Our victorious science fails to sound one fathom's depth on any side, since it does not explain the parentage of *mind*. For mind was in truth before all science, and remains forever the seer, judge, interpreter, even father, of all its systems, facts, and laws. Our faculties are none the less truly above our heads because we no longer wonder, like children, at processes we do not understand. Spite of category and formula, of Kant and Hegel, we are abashed before our own untraceable thought. The stars of heaven, the grass of the field, the very dust that *shall be* man, foil our curiosity as much as ever, and none the less for yielding to the lens, the prism, and the polariscope of science ever new triumphs for our pride and delight. Not less mystical is mind because it will no longer be suppressed and stultified by mysteries of faith. True as ever is what Krishna says in the old Eastern reverie: —

The pantheistic side of thought.

"Some regard the soul as a miracle, while some speak of it, and others hear of it, with like astonishment; but no one comprehends it, even when he has heard it described."[2]

What know we of *matter?* Philosophy can define it as a form in which spirit manifests itself to spirit, a reflex of thought, an expression or mode of mind;

[1] This is Mr. Buckle's mode of historical computation: "The moral factor is con-

and so escape the dualism that would seem involved in its being an independent reality. The spiritual is its substance, is what it means, is what we are conscious of, after all. What, then, is spiritual essence? We cannot define it, we know not how, only *that* it acts; still less do we know what it is. To remember, to hope, to love: these we explain only by themselves again. *That they are* is itself the mystery, all-pervading, infinite, — *To Be*.

Into such transcendence the whole of life enters, and with it all science, matter, force, and form. By this one fact of mystery alone, though we should look no further, the infinite of mind is found inseparable from all experience. And this "Unknowable" is known to be not merely continuous with the human, nor interpenetrating it merely, as space is pervaded by light, — but more. As a man's mind is in his thought and his love, so is essential mind the unfathomable *life* in which all intelligent spiritual forces move.[1]

In ethics and faith.

And this truth has still closer relations with our *moral* and *spiritual* nature. The sense of limit that for ever besets the understanding, withholding from us the meaning of the world and the purpose of existence in a certain repulsion as towards aliens and strangers, necessitates a path upwards to the freedom of an all-embracing idea, an all-dissolving unity, in which our individual imperfections shall, ideally at least, cease to separate us from the whole. This dualism, as between one who seeks

[1] Spencer (*Psychology*, p. 110) regards such ideas as anthropomorphic, and so without authority. But if the substance of the universe is not mind, as we are mind who think it, then the very conception of existence, on which that of substance depends, is also baseless as resulting from our mentality alone.

and one who shuns, can yield only to a sense of inmost identity. The soul must gather the world and itself under one conception. It must see the whole, in other words, in God. Only the inseparableness of finite from infinite can assure our life of an origin and purport adequate to its nature. "Because God is," saith the soul, "therefore I am and shall be, — in God."

But to this assurance there is no other path than that of moral consecration. The reconciliation, the freedom, the unity, come only with absorption of the conscious self into the truth of principles, convictions, ideal aims; with finding, in the best moments, somewhat of thought or feeling, which "having been must ever be;" with participation in somewhat of divine nature and endless promise, through an absolute love and service: so that it shall no longer be the private self, but soul *as soul*, which affirms within us, and once for all,— "I am."

"O grace abundant, by which I presumed
To fix my sight upon the light eternal,
So that the seeing *I* consumed therein!
I saw that in its depth far down is lying
Bound up in love together in one volume
What through the universe in leaves is scattered;
Substance, and accident, and their operations,
All interfused together in such wise
That what I speak of is *one simple light*." [1]

Such experience is limited to no age nor race. Through such paths as these, in such form as was possible within his special horizon, as I believe, the Hindu saint arrived at his pantheistic faith. This is the substance of the process, with whatever errors

[1] *Paradiso*, XXIII (Longfellow's trans'.).

mingled, by whatever superstitions marred. Through such experiences not the saints and seers only, but simply earnest people, through much imperfection, have in every religion reached the certainty of infinite good, under whatever name, as inseparable from their own inward being.

Its ethical value.

These are truths not of the reason only, however they may accord with its higher processes; but primarily of religious sentiment, and especially in its dealing with the facts of moral and physical evil. For the root of all effective force against these facts as *actual* is in holding the good to be the one reality; in finding fast anchorage in this *ultimate, essential* fact which they are bound to subserve; in being sure that the whole process of life is somehow contained within the infinite rectitude of God. The Hindu dreamer, seeking to abolish evils by *thinking* them away; and the practical worker, in practical races and times, more effectually battling them down by *action*, — alike assume that the real and essential are to be found only in the good. Both seek to reach true being by denying the claim of evil to be positive and permanent; to read the world with clearer insight of its meaning; to affirm for the actual its ultimate significance in the ideal, in God.

We master the despair with which the prevalence of evils would otherwise overwhelm us, by assuring ourselves that evil is properly "good in the making," a condition of finite growth. This is but recognizing the fact that our philosophy cannot possibly be sound and healthful so long as it does not explain the finite by the infinite, and interpret the life of man in its wholeness as manifestation of God.

The best and bravest souls have always treated evils

not as if their depressing side were the substance of their meaning, but as involving issues of all-reconciling good. This mystic faith, that things seen but in part are seen in illusion, and that they *are* seen but in part till they are brought out into relations that accord with ideal good, is as practical as it is speculative. Science itself can offer no other interpretation than this of the physical evil, which "final causes" and "special interferences" only aggravate by their implication of a divine intention. Its help is for the sternest and bitterest lot. It is an instinct of cheerful hope, where it has not yet become a clear perception of the reason. It inspires the will, where it finds no hold in the understanding. Its secret assurance is perhaps strongest in the simplest natures that are least perplexed with casuistry or doubt. It is apt to find clear and hopeful solutions of duty, whether men are dealing with their own sense of wrong-doing or with outward and social wrong.

We must *act* upon the testimony of the practical consciousness; hold common sense sacred; ignore no facts that life teaches; neglect no function of the understanding. But there is need of a philosophy in which the ideal only is seen as real; of hours when the eye is opened with vision of the divine alone. Alas for common sense itself, if our ideals have taught us no more than our understandings; if banks and ships and railroads do not sometimes dissolve as illusions in the white light of noble dreams; if even the woes and sins of the world, which permit no rest to the eyelids of faithful men, could never vanish before their sight into the infinite depths of Divine Order; never melt, even for an hour of happier inspiration, into the mystery of all-embracing good!

Relation to fate.

But is not this pure Fatalism, and destructive to the moral being? To this question we must reply that, while destiny or fate in the sense of absolute external compulsion would certainly be destructive not only of moral responsibility, but of the personality itself, yet religion or science without fate, in another sense, is radically unsound. The word properly means "fixed, settled, irrevocably spoken;" that is, it notes the final truth and substance of things. To make it mean only hostile sovereignty — what is desperately bad, and rendered so by a dead, mechanical, motiveless, yet external power — is to misapply it. Rather should it signify what is impregnably certain; and if good is so, — things being regarded in their inherent and ultimate meaning, — then good, not evil, is fate. Is not truth itself, then, fate: — truth, which is but another name for the sanity and integrity of nature and law; truth, which is the health and sweetness of universal order; truth, which is therefore interchangeable, as to its meaning, with good? Why should not the very perfection of the moral and spiritual laws, whose benignity it is no part of our liberty of thought or will to alter or suppress, to make or to mar, stand to the soul as its fate? Subject as we surely are to organization, heredity, conditions innumerable, shall we not hold that the ideal *good* also, which we dream of *beyond* these limitations, is our ultimate destiny? We cannot separate perfection and fate. Deity, whose sway is not destiny, would not be venerable, nor even reliable. It would be a purpose that did not round the universe, a love that could not preserve it. Theism without fate is a kind of atheism. And a self-denominated "atheism," yet holding justice to be the true necessity, or fate, is properly theism, though it refuse the name.

Sovereign right and good at the centre of soul and nature, what is that but God?

So that destiny should not be defined as hostile sovereignty or suppressive decree. But we must go further. It cannot be pure outward force, compelling man, even to his good. Even worshipped as the dearest ideal, even cherished as the power of God to set aside human defect and guarantee the best, it would still abolish liberty, the substance of the soul, — if it were this. The impelling forces therefore represent not foreign mastery, but natural growth. God is the *inmost life* of the human, not the external will that shapes it as the potter moulds his clay. The fate that man must accept is but the real law of his own nature, whereby it is in accord with the universal life. It is thus not only consistent with freedom, but coincident with it. While he resists his own essential humanity, while he fails to express or to seek in his individual purpose that harmony with the universal order, his will can in no proper sense be called free: it is enslaved to illusion and bound to failure, and can reach nothing he really needs or can intelligently love. Liberty itself can be found only in knowing essential good to be the moving force of his own spiritual being. This unity is the true self; in this is personality; therefore it is spontaneity, joy, health, success. The fate that abolishes individual caprice is the seal of freedom. Hence the inspiration that comes in self-abandonment to an idea or a duty. It identifies our fate with our freedom. All great aspiration brings the sense of destiny, because it frees from inward conflict, from the resistance of finite caprice to infinite good; and in this deep natural alliance and harmony of forces the doubts and fears are dissolved.

Freedom reconciled with fate.

Even in the less enlightened forms of personal energy, we note that the sense of destiny comes in, wherever there is unity of the motive powers, allowing entire concentration of purpose. This is the condition of valor, assurance, authority. The vivacious Norse Sagas are full of fatalism, and every storming Viking believed that his destiny was written in his brain at birth. "Odin," says the Heimskringla, "knew beforehand the predestined fate of men, or their not yet completed lot." "No soul can die unless by permission of God," says Mohammed in the Koran, for the encouragement of his followers. "Every man's fate have we bound about his neck." Better still, fate is the refuge and strength of Greek Prometheus in that sublime martyrdom which he endures as the penalty of his love for man. It is freedom and justice approaching in the future, to dethrone the tyrannical gods of the past. And this divine myth of the identity of fate with noble will is a normal type of all ethical and spiritual inspiration.

The heroes and the saints are fatalists, and read doom and triumph alike by one token: "for this cause came I unto this hour." The Stoic schools, both Greek and Roman, have proved that spiritual pantheism, as the essential unity of the human and divine, is reconcilable with the strongest conviction of moral freedom;[1] affirming in theory, and carrying out into actual life, a degree of personal independence and self-respect as remarkable as their confidence that fate and providence are one.[2] The pantheistic followers of the Bâb, a modern Persian heretic, have

[1] See Zeller's *Stoics*, pp. 170, 205, 227.

[2] *Stobæus Eclog.*, I. 179; *Seneca de Benef.*, IV. 7.

met incessant persecutions of the most barbarous kind with astonishing courage and enthusiasm.[1]

And why should the fact be otherwise? Immanent deity, become intensely real for the consciousness, should not only consecrate the whole life to duty, but should give the powers that freedom of aspiration which a universe so consecrated cannot but guarantee to all its own natural and proper forces. "It is an error to suppose," says Heine, "that pantheism leads to indifference. On the contrary, the sense of his own divineness will stir man to reveal the same, and from that moment really grand actions and genuine heroism will enter and glorify this world."[2]

The life and death of the pantheistic Fichte were full of noble service, both patriotic and humane. Spinoza was the harbinger of free thought and scholarship, the Columbus of ethics and theology as well as of philosophy. The mystical "Friends of God" in the Middle Ages were the fathers of modern philanthropy: their "Theologia Germanica," Luther tells us, first brought him inward light and peace. From the spiritual closet of a pantheistic dream issued the Reformation. And every time the world is about to move a fresh step forward, there is somewhere in seclusion a mystical brooding sense of all-mastering and all-absorbing deity, that holds in its bosom the germinant religious and social revolution, and sends forth the earliest witnesses and purest martyrs in its cause.

It must not, then, be supposed that Hindu Pantheism and Fatalism were wholly irreconcilable with moral earnestness, or even energy. I cannot admit, for instance, that Mr. Banerjea, Hindu Pantheism and the moral sense.

[1] See their history in De Gobineau's *Relig. de l'Asie Centrale*.

[2] *De l'Allemagne*, I. p. 103.

a Hindu convert to Christianity, has furnished convincing proofs that the Vedânta, making the universe and the soul identical with God, destroyed the idea of duty. The same was said of Spinozism, by Jew and Christian. Yet Spinoza himself, cast out of the synagogue with curses as the sum of all wickedness, was, in morality, piety, and spiritual earnestness, far in advance of all his accusers, then or since. Moral purpose in the Hindu was apt to take inward, rather than outward, directions: this was incident to his ethnic and climatic conditions. But how large a degree of such purpose was involved in the effort to overcome self and the senses *by his method!* It was contemplative indeed, not social. He watched the flow of change as it swept through all forms, as one watches in reverie the waves of a running stream, or the drift of clouds across the sky; and the thought that he was himself but part of the current made him feel himself profoundly a child of fate. And he was fond of such sayings as these: —

"Life, death, wealth, wisdom, works, are measured for one while on his mother's bosom."

"Their fated allotments the very gods must bear. As pieces of drift-wood meet in ocean, and remain together a little time only; as a traveller sleeps under a tree, and the next day departs, — so friends and possessions pass: there is no return." [1]

"When his time is come, the bird who can see his food a long way off cannot see the snare."

"Birds are killed in the air; fishes caught in the sea: what help in choice of place?"

"When I see the sun and moon in eclipse, and the wise man in want, then I say, Fate is master." [2]

"Where are the princes of the earth with their chariots and armies? The earth that saw them perish still abides."

[1] *Ramâyâna.* [2] *Hitopadeśa*, I. 44–46.

"Who sees not that this body passes away every moment? Like a pot of clay in the water, it falls in pieces."

"So many dear ties as man may form, so many thorns of sorrow are planted in his heart."

"Foolish is he who would lay up riches in a world that is like a bubble."

"As waters flow away and come not back, so the days and nights of mortal men."

"The society of the good, which brings us a little joy, is bound to the yoke of pain; for it ends in separation.

"And there is no healing for the heart that is wounded with this sword." [1]

But the inference shows that the wisdom to draw help from these necessities was not wanting.

"Therefore be thou resolved, and think no more of sorrowing: here is the healing for thy wounds." [2]

"Every thing on earth has its pleasure and its pain. Death comes to all that is born, and new birth to all that dies. Grieve not for what must be." [3]

And what was this intense feeling of the transient but equally intense suggestion of the eternal? Did not the lower fate point to a higher? If change sweeps over all, what makes the changes but a changeless law? [4] What makes a changeless law but an eternal life? Vicissitudes pass, God is. And we are, — *in God*. So, with all his moral energies, the devotee of contemplation strove to reach permanent peace, at the heart of a restless world.

The old lawgivers found no lack of moral sanction here.

[1] *Hitop.*, IV. 67–77 [2] Ibid., 82.

[3] *Ramâyâna; Bhag. Gitâ*, &c.

[4] "Anaxagoras, Epicurus, and Euripides agree that

——'nothing dies;
But different changes give their various forms.'"

Plutarch, *Sentim. of Nature.*

"If one considers the whole universe as existing in the Supreme Spirit, how can he give his soul to sin?" [1]

"He who understands divine omnipresence can no more be led captive by crime." [2]

A Upanishad says: —

"Such a one, who beholds the soul in the infinite soul alone, him sin does not consume: he consumes sin; becomes free from doubt, and is pure." [3]

Trust.

The pantheistic bias of Hindu thought does not exclude a trustful and hopeful spirit. Through most Indian poetry there flows a delicate sense of divine benignity in the natural processes of life. The Hitopadeśa, the people's ancient Book of Precepts and Fables, whose choice sentences are gathered out of all the Hindu classics, says: —

"Hear the secret of the wise. Be not anxious for subsistence: it is provided by the Maker. When the child is born, the mother's breasts flow with milk. He who hath clothed the birds with their bright plumage will also feed thee."

"How should riches bring thee joy, which yield pain in the getting, and pain in the passing away, and turn the head of the winner with folly? What trouble so great, in this life of many cares, as the for ever unsatisfied desire? That only which one no longer seeks with anxious heart has he really attained." [4]

The Vedânta says: —

"As birds repair to a tree to dwell therein, so all this universe to the Supreme One." [5]

"He, the All-wise Preserver, dispenses the objects of our desire. To know Him is to be free: there is no end of misery but through this knowledge of God. To him whose trust is in God reveal themselves the mysteries." [6]

Says the Divine One in the Gîtâ: —

[1] *Manu*, XII. 118.
[2] Ibid., VI. 74; so Spinoza.
[3] *Brihad*, IV. iv. 23.
[4] From Müller's version, I. 170–179.
[5] *Praśna*, IV. 7.
[6] *Śvetâśvatara*, VI. 13–23.

"I am the Preserver who watches in all directions. Be not alarmed at having seen me in the terrible shape of all-destroying Time. Hasten to look, free from fear, on my human and friendly form." [1]

Another text, of frequent recurrence in the philosophical and ethical books, makes mortality itself the ground of spiritual faith: —

"From what root springs man, when felled by death? Say not, 'like a tree, he springs from seed.' If the tree be destroyed with its root, it grows not again. If then man be cut down by death, from what root shall he spring to life again? It is God, the highest aim of one who abideth in and knoweth Him." [2]

In the Ramâyâna, Bhârata is adjured by the sages not to mourn too bitterly for his dead father: —

"O wise Bhârata! grieve not for the departed. He is no longer an object for grief, and too many tears may bring him down from the heaven to which he has gone." [3]

And Arjuna, permitted to ascend, though living, to the heaven of the just,

"Follows the path unknown to mortals, where no golden sun nor silver moon divides the time, but the mighty hosts of men shine with the splendor of their own virtue, in a light which we afar off think to be the tremulous fires of stars.

"There sees he the good kings, the brave and faithful men who were blessed with glorious deaths, and holy prophets, and pure women in chariots that wing the heavenly spaces." [4]

In the absence of historical and biographical facts, we are obliged to infer the ethical ideal and attainment which Hindu civilization permitted, from the prevailing maxims and proverbs; the wisdom that has been circulating for ages, in sentence and in song, among the masses of this immense empire. Ethical illustrations.

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xi.
[2] *Brihad*, III. ix. 28.
[3] *Ramây.*, B II.
[4] *Mahâbh.*, III.

Here, for example, is manly diet, from the Hitopa-
The Hitopadeśa. deśa, for the believer in fate: —

"Twofold is the life we live in: fate and will together run:
Two wheels bear the chariot onward: will it move on only one?"

"Nay, but faint not, idly sighing, 'destiny is mightiest.'
Sesamum holds oil in plenty; but it yieldeth none unprest."[1]

"Fortune comes of herself to the lionlike man who acts. It is the abject who say, 'All must come from fate.' Forget fate, and be brave. If thou failest, having put forth all thy force, the blame is not thine.

"The deeds done in a former life are what is called fate. Therefore let one exert himself with unwearied energy in the present.

"As the potter shapes the clay at his will, so a man shapes his own action.

"Though he see his desired good close at hand, fate will not bestow it on him: it waits the manly deed.

"A work prospers through endeavors, not through vows: the fawn runs not into the mouth of a sleeping lion."[2]

"Take good and ill as they come; for fortune turneth like a wheel.

"Frogs to the marsh, birds to the lake, so all good to the man who strives for it: as one who seeks him, so hastes it to the hero who dallies not, is virtuous, grateful, and a faithful friend."[3]

"By his own doings one rises or falls, as one man digs a well and another throws up a wall."[4]

"Seek not the wild; sad heart! Thy passions haunt it.
Play hermit in thy house, with will undaunted.
A governed heart, thinking no thought but good,
Makes crowded houses holy solitude."

[1] *Hitopad. Introd.*, 29, 31. The verses are from *Arnold's* pleasant abridgment of this old *Book of Good Counsels* (Lond. 1861), and are literal translations. The prose passages are selected from *Muller's* German version (1844) I have also carefully compared with this the French version of *Lancereau* (1855) and the English by *Sir William Jones*. This last is hardly trustworthy, and Müller thinks it cannot have received the author's entire elaboration. Such liberties are taken by the native copyists of the Hitopadeśa, that, in Müller's opinion, no *true* edition is possible, and each translator must select the special text he will follow. This fact helps to explain the very marked difference in these versions.

"Thine own self, Bhârata, is the holy stream, whose shrine is virtue, whose water is truth, whose bank is character, whose waves are sympathy. There bathe, O Son of Pandu! Thy inward life is not by water made pure."[1]

"Better be silent than speak ill; better give up life than love harsh words; better beggar's fare than luxury at another's board."[2]

"Only that life is worth living which is free. If they live who depend on others, who are dead?"[3]

"He has all good things whose soul is content: the whole earth is spread with leather, for him whose own feet are well shod."

"He has read and heard and acquired all things, who turns his back on hope, and expects nothing."[4]

"Do not rage, like a cloud, with empty thunder: the noble man does not let the good or ill that foes have done him be seen."[5]

"What is a brave man's fatherland, and what a foreign country? Wherever he goes, his strength makes that land his own."[6]

"A bad man is like an earthen pot, easy to break and hard to mend. A good man is like a golden vase, hard to break and easy to mend."[7]

"Disposition is hard to overcome. If you make a dog a king, will he not still gnaw leather?"[8]

"A gem may be trodden under foot, and glass be put on the head: yet the glass is only glass, and the gem is still a gem."[9]

"How shall teaching help him who is without understanding? Can a mirror help the blind to see?"[10]

"It is to no purpose that the bad man says, I have read the Vedas and the Laws. His character rules him, as it is the property to milk to be sweet."[11]

"Wise men seek not things unattainable: grieve not over the lost, and stand firm in time of trouble."[12]

"In the poisoned tree of life grow two sweet fruits, — the enjoyment of the nectar of poetry and the society of noble men."[13]

"Integrity, self-sacrifice, valor, steadfastness through all changes, sympathy, loyalty, and truth are the virtues of a friend."[14]

[1] *Hitopadeśa*, IV. 83, 86 From the *Mahâbh.* [2] Ibid., I 129 [3] Ibid., II. 21.
[4] Ibid., I. 135, 137. [5] Ibid., IV. 91. [6] Ibid., I. 96.
[7] Ibid., I. 86. [8] Ibid., III. 58. [9] Ibid., II. 67.
[10] Ibid., III. 117. [11] Ibid., I. 15. [12] Ibid., I. 161.
[13] Ibid., I. 145. [14] Ibid., I. 89.

"By whom is this jewel created, this word of two syllables (Mitrâm, friend), wherein we pour the joy of love, which guards us from sorrow and foes and fear? A friend who gladdens the heart, sharing one's pleasure and pain, is hard to find. Friends in prosperity, self-seekers, abound; but misfortune is their touchstone."

"Be hospitable to thine enemy when he comes to thy door: the tree withdraws not its shade even from the wood-cutter.

"Good men are compassionate to the lowest beings. The moon refuses not its light to the hut of the Chandala.

"A guest who departs from a house disappointed, leaves his own sins behind him, and carries away the virtue of its owner.

"Even a low-born man who comes to a Brahman's house must be honored: the stranger is on the same footing with the gods."[2]

"He alone is to be praised, he is blest, from whom the weak and suppliant go not away with hopes destroyed."[3]

"The friendship of noble persons endures to the end of life; their anger is quickly appeased; their liberality is without self-interest."[4]

"Only the foolish ask, 'Is this one of us or an outside person?' To the noble the whole world is a family."[5]

"One should spare his neighbor, thinking of the pain one feels when he sees that he must die."

"O sacred earth! why dost thou endure the false man, who returns noble and trusting kindness with evil treatment?"[6]

"This life, which is like a wave trembling in the wind, is in a right cause to be sacrificed for the good of others."[7]

"Let the wise man give up his goods for the sake of his neighbor; for the sake of the good let him even give his life."[8]

"As life is dear to thee, so is it to other creatures: the good have mercy on all, as on themselves.

"He who regards another's wife as his mother, his wealth as vain, and all creatures as himself, is wise.

"Give to the poor, O son of Kunti! not to the rich. Medicine is for the sick, not for those that are well.

"The gift, bestowed with right purpose, at right time and place, on one who cannot repay it, is to be called a real gift."[9]

[1] *Hitopadeśa*, I. 203, 204.
[2] Ibid., I. 52–57.
[3] Ibid, I. 183.
[4] Ibid., I 180.
[5] Ibid., I. 64.
[6] Ibid., I. 61, 73.
[7] Ibid, III. 140.
[8] Ibid, I. 38.
[9] Ibid., I. 10–14.

"Between virtues and the body there is infinite difference: the body perishes in a moment, virtues endure while the world lasts." [1]

"The wise will follow duty, as if death were already grasping his hair." [2]

The following are from the Panchatantra, a still older collection of tales and sentences, whose relation to the Hitopadeśa is not yet very clearly understood: — Pancha-tantra.

"In all actions, to be like one's self is the praise of the wise: this makes smooth the right path, so full of hindrance." [3]

"When the just falls, it is like a ball of feathers, but the wicked falls like a clod." [4]

"A noble person never fails in protecting others, even in his extreme need; as the pearl loses not its whiteness, though it have passed through the flames." [5]

"The storm blows down the strongest tree, if it stands alone; but not the well-rooted trees that stand together." [6]

"He who is kind to those that are kind to him does nothing great. To be good to the offender is what the wise call good." [7]

"A good prince is eye to the blind, friend to the friendless, father and mother of all who do well." [8]

"Where he is honored who is unworthy of honor, and he despised who deserves respect, there come three things, — famine, pestilence, and war." [9]

The fact that these popular "Books of Wisdom" are mainly of Buddhist origin [10] does not weaken their testimony to the union of practical morality with pantheistic sentiment. The Hindu masses who have rejected Buddhism as a system of negations cherish these manly maxims as the true philosophy of life. They are heard on the lips of the poorest people, and circulate freely through city and village. As in the

[1] *Hitopadeśa*, I 43.
[2] Ibid., *Introd*, 3.
[3] *Panchat.* (Benfey's German transl.) B. III.
[4] Ibid., II.
[5] Ibid. IV.
[6] Ibid., III.
[7] Ibid., IV. ix.
[8] Ibid., I. xii.
[9] Ibid., III. x.
[10] See Benfey, *Einleitung z. Panchatantra.*

gnomic literature of other races, so here, the higher ethics are combined with maxims of prudential and even of selfish quality, though these last are very rare.[1] Plaints of poverty, and policies that secure success are quaintly mixed with admonitions on the brevity of life and the vanity of riches. And, as with Buddhist teaching generally, the inculcation of good will sometimes runs out into extravagant forms of self-sacrifice. These fables are in fact an honest picture of human life, and proverbs are not wanting which answer to every human quality represented therein. That those of sense and shrewdness should abound is but another proof that pantheism does not exclude practical capacities and aims.

Bhartrihari, a very ancient gnomic poet, whose "sentences" on human life and conduct are very popular in India, begins with the praise of love and beauty, and ends with the praise of devotion: —

"Wisdom is a treasure thieves cannot steal. It grows by spending, and it cannot pass away. The wise are the rich; and ye, O princes! will never become their equals."

"Without the wisdom that burns away our sins, the Vedas are nothing but men's trading wares."

"Virtue has no need of penances, nor a pure heart of washing in the Ganges, nor a true man of human protection, nor magnanimity of any ornament, nor the wise of any treasure but wisdom."

"Though thy efforts fail, be steadfast, and thou shalt be exalted. The torch thrown on the ground goes not out."

"He who has given himself to virtue, and felt the joy of obedience to duty, will give up life, but not his purpose."

"If the thistle has no leaves, is the spring to be blamed; or the sun, if bats fly not by day; or the cloud, if no drop of rain fall into

[1] The worst of these in the Hitopadeśa are suggested by the good mouse (B. I.) — purely for the purpose of testing the heroic professions of the king of the doves, who begs him to gnaw his subjects out of the net before himself, thus preferring their safety to his own. The selfish maxims are promptly rejected, and answered by others of the opposite quality: whereat the mouse praises this wisdom of self-sacrifice as worthy of a king.

the cuckoo's beak? So blame not fate: not so wilt thou change its path."

"Go not aside from wisdom: then shall fire become as water, and the sea as a well; Meru shall be as a hillock, and the lion as a gazelle; poison shall be sweet as nectar, and serpents a crown of flowers."

"As shadows in the morning is friendship with the wicked: hour by hour it wanes. But friendship with the good grows like the shadows of eve, till life's sun shall have set."

"The drop of rain falls on glowing iron, and is no more. It falls on a flower, and shines like a pearl. It sinks into a shell at the happy hour, and becomes the pearl itself. Such the difference between kinds of friendship among men."

"To do good in secret, to conceal one's good act, to help the poor when he comes, to be moderate in prosperity, always to speak kindly, is the path of wisdom." [1]

I add a few selections of similar ethical purport from other popular Hindu writings:—

"In thy passage over this earth, where the paths are now low, now high, and the true way seldom distinguished, thy steps must needs be unequal; but fidelity to thyself will bear thee right onward." [2]

"Let thy motive lie in the act, not in the reward. Having subdued thy passions, do thy own work, unconcerned for the result. Then shalt thou stand untainted in the world, as the lotus-leaf lies on the waters unwet." [3]

The Mahâbhârata says of Arjuna that—

"Neither lust nor fear nor love could tempt him to transgress his duty, or to do evil:"—

and Râma in the Ramâyâna that—

"As birds are made to fly and rivers to run, so the soul to follow duty."

"As the fragrance of a blossoming tree spreads far, so the fragrance of a pure action." [4]

[1] *Bhartr.* (Von Bohlen's Latin vers.) I. 13; III. 72; I. 45, 75; II. 100; I. 89, 78, 50, 57.

[2] *Sakuntalâ.* [3] *Bhagavad-Gîtâ.* [4] *Mahânârâyana Upan.*, II.

"As the stars disappear, so fades the memory of a kindness out of an evil heart."[1]

"Our senses are like lattices, at which the deities keep watch. And if the soul unconsciously leaves them open to the poisonous air of temptation, sincere prayer to these heavenly guardians will save the precious light."

"How can he who loves all men be torn by affliction? Or he who hates be free from terror? or the voluptuary from misery? How can he fail who acts wisely? How can he be happy who murmurs at Providence? Who can be glorious without virtue? who truly dishonored without blame? And how without justice shall the kingdom stand?"[2]

"He who lives pure in thought, free from malice, contented, leading a holy life, feeling tenderness for all creatures, speaking wisely and kindly, humble and sincere, has Vasudeva (Vishnu) ever in his heart. The Eternal makes not his abode within the heart of that man who covets another's wealth; who injures living creatures; who speaks harshness or untruth; who is proud of his iniquity; whose mind is evil."[3]

"Men are ever seeking, never attaining, bliss. They die thirsting. The whole world is suffering under triple affliction. Why should I hate beings who are objects for compassion? why cherish malignity towards those who are more prosperous than myself? I should rather sympathize with their happiness. For to suppress unkind feelings is itself a reward."[4]

"It is the duty of the good man, even in the moment of his destruction, not only to forgive, but to seek to bless his destroyer, even as the sandal-tree sheds perfume on the axe that fells it."[5]

"Heaven's gate opens to the good without a gift: the gate shut fast to the wicked, though he bring hundred-fold offerings.

"Put a thousand horses in the scale, yet shall virtue be the heavier weight.

"The sweet scent of flowers is lost on the breeze, but the fragrance of virtue endures for ever.

"Whatever men do of good or evil, they shall reap the fruit in due season.

"The foolish, like a child, knows not if things grow better or worse; and while, drawn by the roses, he lets the orchard go, he will mourn over the fading flower, and lose the golden fruit."[6]

[1] *Hindu Play* (Wilson). [2] *Ramâyâna*. [3] *Vishnu Purâna*, III. vii.

And so we may judge whether Manu is not justified in claiming what he does for the religion of his race. "Of all duties the first is to know the Supreme. It is the most exalted science, and assures immortal life. For in the knowledge and adoration of God, which the Veda teaches, all rules of good conduct are comprised." "Wisdom," says the Hitopadeśa, "is the highest good of man; for it cannot be sold nor taken from him, nor can it ever die. He who hath it not, the destroyer of doubt, the mirror of the unseen, the eye of all, is blind."[1]

The intuition of life as one.

The belief that the substance of life is one and divine has its forms in all ages, — recognitions, more or less enlightened, of a constant spiritual fact; to which thought is again and again remanded, under broader and clearer aspects, as man advances to new forms of culture. And this better knowledge comes mainly from doing justice to the balancing fact of difference, or individuality.

In the Hindu mystic, a child of religious instinct and dream, the unity of life was an exclusive consciousness, an all-absorbing wonder and delight. For the religious sentiment of itself is not analytic, but integrative; absorbed in what it loves, it sees not parts, but wholes; it dissolves antagonisms and distinctions, just as it does doubts or fears, in its own fervent heat. While the understanding is undeveloped, this mystic sense of oneness is of course blind to the capabilities of life, and the meaning of its relations. As in Brahmanism, it even helps to eternize social wrongs; either ignoring them as illusion, or else accepting them as elements of a divine order, and reconciling them in its all-dissolving dream.

[1] *Hitop., Introd.*, 4, 9.

Yet this dream is divination also of a central truth, whose practical and social meaning grows with progress, and appears in the latest science and faith.

For these are really the goal involved in that mystic point of departure, that intuitive ideal of the unity of life. The course of history justifies and reaffirms it on a broader plane, having at last developed its human values. We can here but sketch this process.

Its historical evolution.

In the Oriental philosophies, unity is for the most part a religious abstraction, an ideal of contemplation. But with Greek and Roman the understanding comes to its rights. The individual asserts his validity. The human and finite are marked off, as against the infinite, and studied, in and for themselves. And in this polarity or antagonism come liberty and progress. Man recognizes his own regulated powers to be the path to truth, beauty, good It is no longer the unlimited, but *limit*, that is divine What Kapila and his Sânkhya reaction on Vedantism showed in germ thus reaches maturer expression under more favoring skies, in more energetic races. Here all is relation, contrast, difference.

With the Greek comes the triumph of dialectics, the clear analysis of ideas and principles, the keenest sense of individual purpose. With the Greek appears duality of matter and mind; also of matter and number. Pythagoras determines the harmonious relations of finite things. Xenophanes, who pronounced unity to be the ultimate fact, as distinctly as the Vedantists, and who recognized the illusion of the phenomenal world as fully, yet not the less insisted that all visible things should be studied, and had his own natural history of their origin and development. So the Ionian cities first thoroughly distinguished politics

from theocracy; and Greek life emancipated government, making it a separate independent science. And the first great step was taken towards freeing men from religious bondage when Xenophanes pointed out the fact that they made their own gods.

"The gods have not given every thing to man. It is man who has ameliorated his own destiny."

The Prometheus of Æschylus, resisting Jove for the sake of mankind, and predicting his downfall at the hands of the son of a mortal woman, illustrates the same protest of the human, against an overwhelming sense of infinity. Taine has admirably pointed out this quality of the Greek mind. "The Greeks have no sentiment of this infinite universe, in which a generation of people is but an atom in time and place. Eternity does not set up before them its pyramid of myriads of ages. The universal escapes them, or at least half occupies them, or remains in the background in their religion."[1] In Rome, on the other hand, the universal was everywhere pursued, yet always in concrete and human forms, — as political organization, as jurisprudence, as world-wide sway.

Even in Greece and Rome, however, we still find the religious sentiment to be, on the whole, inclusive of all human spheres and functions. It gives man and nature their meaning for art, science, philosophy, domestic, social, municipal life; so that there is still a sense in which life might make the impression of a divine unity. But the process advances.

Aristotle has defined; analyzing man and nature as he could. Bacon goes further; plots the sciences on a map, and marks the regions yet to be filled. Men botanize, dissect, unroll the earth's pages, loose the

[1] *Art in Greece*, p. 38.

bands of Orion, and resolve the galaxy into myriads of worlds. It is telescope and calculus, instruments of analysis, that are divine. We learn the mechanics of religion, politics, commerce, art. Men search out the cunning workmanship of the universe. They are all eye to detect *how it was contrived* by a Being who plans, devises, manipulates, constructs like themselves. In this inspection of definite processes the immanence of the infinite gradually recedes from thought, and religion enters the phase of a more or less external deism, oscillating between the Paleys and Voltaires; knowing God only as a manipulator of materials provided for him from without, just as one knows an architect by the style of his house, or a watchmaker by his watch. It is not strange that analytic science, elated by its discoveries in this realm of definable relations and palpable mechanism, and inattentive to the infinite substance that must condition all phenomena, should concentrate its homage at last on the processes by which it achieves its triumph. Analysis, in fact, by its own function of taking the world to pieces, instead of receiving the impression of its unity and integrity, is reduced to holding this critical process as the essential thing, the vital fact of the universe. Mind and nature become in its theory simply objective material for testing and reducing, mere *hylic* mass for manipulation by its forces; whether to afford them discipline, or to give scope to their energies, or to reflect their praise.

This merely analytic process is quite incompetent to reveal truth in the form of *life*. To dissect its objects, it must *destroy* them. It slays that beautiful unity of functions and relations, in which life is mysteriously shrined. In the heap of dead fibres and organs, on

which it has operated, and which it displays in their mere outward mechanism, what resemblance is there to the living, breathing, inspired body? What resemblance to the former life can you get by putting them together again? Phosphorus in the growing grain is food for human brains: extract this phosphorus by chemical process, and it is poison. Being must be seen in its natural and vital relations, *in its integrity*, or it is not seen at all. Under the power of mere analysis, science would become pure autopsy, and nature have no informing soul.

The genius of scientific and practical races has therefore not been without its tendencies to transform the living universe — which for the contemplative spirit is thrilling with a mystic divine pulsation, and which Plato even called a living creature — into a well-devised machine. Their vast capacities, under the lead of analysis, have developed its definable uses, rather than felt the mystery of its life. As one after another they have unfolded its flowing activities, its unfathomed forces, they have seemed to claim these by right of creation quite as much as by that of discovery; to throw off the Infinite as a separable element, and then refuse it all place in the triumph of the very powers which it conditions and supplies; writing on each freshly won field, "God is not here, but, *if anywhere*, behind and beyond;" insisting all the time, observe, that the idea of God as a distinct external power is the *only* idea of God, being that which *analysis* must report. Their physical science goes further still, and in its search for physical origins of life has often quite overlooked the substance for the processes of nature, and mistaken the mechanism of life for its explanation and cause.

Through mature science.

But science cannot penetrate far on her divine path without discerning that it *is* divine. Science has no commission to take the mystery out of nature, to exorcise from its laws the life that preserves them from being fathomed by progressive thought, or marred by imperfect will. So much is clearly discerned by the broadest scientific minds of the day.

Science solves no problem but by recognizing another and more interior, disclosed by the solution itself, as a flower within its opening sheath. The freest explorers of nature not only see most clearly the unity of the universe, tracing its laws through their relations to each other and to the whole, but also the *infinitude of these relations*, inexhaustible for every atomic fact. Not less is the unity of life revealed in the wonderful gradations of its forms; in the comprehension of all lower stages within all higher ones; and in endless subtle affinities, transitions, transformations, that forbid absolute lines of separation between these stages of ascent. And the whole drift of modern science is towards the recognition of what has been described by one of its ablest exponents as "one harmonious action, underlying the whole of nature, organic and inorganic, cosmical, physical, chemical, terrestrial, vital, and social."[1]

Yet this unity is, it must also be observed, of a purely transcendental kind. It is not explicable, or even expressible, by the processes of science, which can but trace the order of phenomena, and must therefore confess herein the immanence of the infinite throughout its fields of research. Science, then, must inevitably bring fresh tributes to mystic contemplation, and reconcile liberty and knowledge with that

[1] Mivart, *Genesis of Species*, p. 239.

old eternal longing of the soul for the unfathomable One.

Of this whole process, miracle is of course the intolerable negation. If it were possible for the notion that the course of natural law can be violated or suspended to hold its ground, it would utterly abolish the power of science to reveal immanent deity, and even the idea of deity as infinite intelligence. Logically, there could be no science, and no religion; only observations of phenomena that point to no universal or reliable basis of belief. How could these observations really reveal One who may contradict them to-morrow? But such contempt of nature and distrust of its orderly laws is not properly Aryan. With races of this stock science hastens to fulfil its religious function. The Semitic mind also has learned to greet this form of revelation as freely as the Aryan.

Through rejection of mirac'es.

Oriental faith in miracles knew no bounds. But miracle was as universal in the East as law with us, and so that stupendous mythology had meaning for the religious sentiment. There was no vain distinction made between *miraculous* and *natural* revelation; but the whole actual or possible of nature and life was, as it were, insphered in deity. In a child's wonder at all he sees, special wonder-working counts for no more than plain nature.

The scientific conception of invariable law comes, then, not to destroy this divine dream that the universe is in God, so dear to contemplative minds in every age, but to interpret and fulfil it. Man has been learning to reconcile freedom, even in deity, with orderly and unchanging ways, and to clear his own ideal of perfection from every element

The mission of science.

of exclusiveness or divided power. He has been learning that the closest study of mind and nature does not free him from the conviction that infinite intelligence is the inmost ground of finite, but confirms it by all the certainties of law. The mystic faith which, while yet an infantile instinct, sang of Brahma, as the All, and of the world of forms as his divine play, has thus permanent meaning for man; and all its phases in history have been pointing beyond themselves to a maturity which only science could bring. Clothed in new knowledge as in new names; interpreted by things natural and practical, and giving these a sublime reach of relation and promise; set to largest social uses, and inspiring them with universality, identifying religion with the free growth of every human faculty, with labor and with life, and so emancipating it from dependence on mediator or miracle, — this mystic faith in the oneness of God and man reappears at last as a freedom and intelligence, which neither distinctive Brahmanism, Judaism, nor Christianity could express.

Spiritual relations of science

I perceive no power either in the friends or foes of science to resolve it into spiritual negation. It can neither become the slave of superstition nor the bar to sentiment and ideal vision. It refuses to be ruled by the hostile supernaturalist, who imagines that a development theory must involve atheism. It must no less distinctly decline the proposal of the student of nature to banish, in the name of law itself, "what we call spirit and spontaneity," from human thought.[1]

For a law, physical or psychological, is no mere automatic machinery. It is a *mode of action*, so

[1] Huxley on *Physical Basis of Life*.

orderly, so harmoniously related to other laws, so expressive of what we most reverence in thought, that to divorce it from mind would be to refuse belief in the ideal forms of those attributes which most dignify mind; those highest functions to which intelligence, as we find it in ourselves, clearly points upward. Instead of being apart from mind, the constancy of natural law implies an inseparable mental force, none the less real because without the limitations which human intelligence involves. Its universality does not make it the less, but the more divine. A man may make wheels, springs, and levers his agents, and withdraw; for inertia and weight do not depend on his fingers, and the machine will get on for a while without his aid. But deity cannot leave the laws of the universe to work alone, since they are simply forms of divine energy; the activity of the law being nothing else than the instant energy of immanent mind. That this energy transcends all we experience as personal consciousness does not alter the fact that it is a form of mind.

What serves it to remand this wisdom and power to a distinct sphere, and lay it quietly aside as "The Unknowable"? How indeed can that be unknowable of which we know that it exists, and of which, if we are to allow ourselves competent to science in any form, the very meaning for us is constant self-manifestation in phenomena?

The mind and heart of man still fail not to entertain the never solved, yet never wholly unanswered questions which a secret intuitive assurance will not suffer him to dismiss.

What is this instant intelligence whereby the universe becomes unity and order and growth? What

harmonizes nature and man? What brings the atoms together each moment to form the coherent globe, and yet holds them at the same moment apart, so that two shall never touch? What lifts each separate billow of the sea, yet binds it to obey the tidal swell?

Discussion as to which is the one great force in material atoms, attraction or self-repulsion; or whether all things come to pass through action and reaction of the two, — makes no difference to our questions, which go deeper.

What is that in conscience which is so at one with gravitation and affinity and light? What mysterious sway makes recollection and hope, past and future, alike our servants? What directs the remedial retributions, silent and sure, to bring us back to nature and right?

What is that most minute attention which guards the pulsations of the heart; keeps thought, affection, will, coherent and untroubled; buoying up individual existence on the unfathomed sea? And what makes the deep that brought us hither, and into which we return, to be in all its mystery a home into whose care we entrust what is dearest to us with such wondrous calmness?

Questions these as old as mind and heart, earlier than the study of natural laws, and not set aside thereby. And what of the answer? Was it only because he had so little knowledge of the definite processes, the delicate distinctions which science reveals, that the Hindu, pondering over these mysteries, solved all questions by pronouncing the one word *Adhyâtma*, — Over-soul? Was it his ignorance that spirit and spontaneity must be dismissed, upon the discovery of law, that prompted the answer, "Mind is all"? Yet

it would appear that our science of invariable harmonious law itself can give no other answer; and we must still demand what invisible life is plying at this seamless warp and woof of "evolution," "natural selection," "metamorphosis." Is it we individually, we collectively, who do it, — we who can neither make nor mar one of these laws, and who advance only by accepting and rightly using them according to laws of reason and love? Is it, as some dream, spirits wiser than we, a hierarchy of diviner insights and powers? We gain not a step by such ascent, towards reaching the constitutive force of law. Spirits themselves are not less truly expressions of this force in their mental energies, for being also free, productive, personal. Their spontaneity itself rests on this mystery of orderly law, like the movements of atoms and of suns. Morality is personal liberty; but it is no less the movement of immutable law, transcending the individual, while it lifts him into the freedom and strength which belong to universal truth.

We call the intelligence, of which universal law is the movement, God. But in reality we have no name for it, because no name can cover the whole. Law, Life, Love, Unity, Fatherhood, Brotherhood, this religion, that religion, all are waves of the One Divine Sea.

None of these syllables have quite expressed the truth that is found only in the whole. They yield but fragments of a sense that was never sounded, of a growth that cannot end.

The Vedantic worship of One Life in all was darkened by idolatry of tradition and of caste. Escape from limitations. Yet it should be noted that caste and tradition were held to be steps only, to higher unity of being

which should dissolve them away. After all, the relations of the devotee with his ideal of the Supreme were felt to be personal and direct: *his own* sacrifice, his own disciplines, not another's, were relied on to make his illusions vanish and reality appear.

All special religions have, in like manner, presented obstacles of their own to that free recognition of the infinite which they sought. Especially is this true of their pretensions to supernatural revelation, which science is so thoroughly setting aside in the name of law. In the lower stages of culture, supernaturalism is indeed a reaching forth to find God: it means that there is at least a divineness in things exceptional or wonderful, for those who have not yet learned what sacredness there is in things familiar and near. It is, primarily then, a form of spiritual progress, and satisfies real needs. But, when prolonged into scientific ages and enlightened races, claims of this kind practically teach that God is not in man, in nature, in history; but *out* of man, *against* nature, *behind* history; entering the world once on a time, with what men are expected to receive as truer than truth, more legislative than law, more loving than love. They teach that spirit is to be held the more divine for secluding itself in the prescriptive claim of one or of a few. They teach that the infinite is the better recognized for confining its manifestation to a class, an epoch, an individual life. All this limitation of universal forces, this prescription of divine paths, this foreclosure of inspiration, the liberty of our day holds to be no better than sarcophagus or shroud. It will choose rather that pantheism of the Spirit that finds God instant and informing in all history, experience, law, and work. What Eastern

contemplation could foreshadow, Western vigor and grasp of things will have to deliver out of its limitations, old and new, by bringing the unities of races and sciences and faiths, to serve, now that *their* day too has come, this eternal desire of the soul.

Never can man, with whatsoever motive, even in theory separate himself from God. Theology has vainly attempted it, under promptings of fear and self-contempt. Even the noble sentiment of humility has been pressed by a sense of imperfection and inward evil, to the point of imagining a gulf positively separating the divine from the human. It has thus attempted what would divide deity itself, and abolish at once both human and divine. This also was in vain.

It is the virtue of modern culture, intellectual and moral, that it educates man in self-respect; so that he shall no longer think himself bound to deny the validity of his own nature, in order to affirm the reality of the divine. It does not hesitate to assure him that it is only where he finds his own real being that he is finding God.

V.

INCARNATION.

INCARNATION.

THE literal meaning of Incarnation is that deity assumes a material body, in order to be clearly recognized as present in the actual world. Substantially, the belief implies a profounder truth, which its various forms imperfectly express; — that Life is in its inmost sense one with God. It is essential to the religious sentiment, and has as many forms as there are religions in the world. God must be not abstraction, but life. Somehow the world must manifest the Highest Spirit. Philosophy affirms that it must be so, by the very nature of being, notwithstanding the conditions of relativity and imperfect vision under which we must behold this manifestation. The heart pleads that it is surely so, because God loves us, and nothing will satisfy this love but to take our nature, that he may be among us as a friend. The disciples of every positive religion insist that it *has* been so, in this or that exalted personage who has appeared, to found a faith. The devout thinker says: It is so, now and always; for what *is* God but the life of the universe, as of the soul?

Universality of the idea.

No race of men, in other words, is satisfied to think of the world as separate from ideal good. And every religion devises some special way of bringing the one into the other, even though it may overlook or deny

some completer way; because all instinctively divine that the two are essentially one. Of course the form chosen is noble or otherwise, according to the character of the civilization; but the endeavor is not anywhere wanting. Even where little inspiration or faith is left, religions throw themselves back upon past ideals, which are believed to have exhausted the sources of truth. And this idolatry becomes the more anxious and jealous, the feebler the faith in revelation through living consciousness and present opportunity. The manifold superstition that hastens to call itself "inspirational" proves at least the need of being somehow assured of a divine presence. Lacking the heavenly form, men will grub within the earth for substitutes. Nor is there any creature so insignificant, down to beetle and worm, but it has been somewhere supposed to guest a god. And if science delights to discover the forces of gravitation and repulsion in every atom, and the mysterious dynamics of life in every organic molecule, may not the religious instinct well have sought to greet the divinity in every form of being from the loftiest to the least?

Incarnation in man.

The highest type of the idea is of course that of incarnation in Man; and this also is not exclusively revealed to any race, nor in any person. It is human, as is also the faith that deity is in sympathy with man, and uplifts him through experience of his needs and desires.

Of this assurance how various the forms in human history, all more or less imperfect expressions of the idea. For the Hindu, it was God manifest in the Brahman, or divinely absorbed man; for the Hebrew and Mohammedan, in the prophetic man; for the Greek, in the Delphic man or woman, oracular

and ecstatic; for the Celt, in the Druid man or woman; for the modern Persian mystic, in the Bâb, or man who represents the open "gate" of God; for the Christian, in the Christ, or man supposed to have been the one only possible Form of God, or else exclusively "anointed" to be the central life of humanity, or nucleus of its faith in God. Then for the Roman Catholic, to meet the needs of that great organization which had followed logically on the submission of mankind to this central Christ, it was inevitably the papal man.

But there are far broader and more spiritual forms than any of these, — into which the idea of incarnation is now steadily advancing. God becomes incarnate through the eternal principles that underlie the *conscience* and the *affections* of man; in his reason and his faith; organized into character as intellectual light and noble love. And again God is incarnate in the *social* man, in humanity itself, developed at once in the individual and in the race, as is possible only through the free intermingling and mutual balance of all human elements, and inspiring institutions with those principles of personal freedom and moral order by which the human becomes one with the divine. We are henceforth to find this unity in actual life; in wise, productive labor of brain and hand; in an integral culture of the individual and the race, instead of reading it as a tradition of the past, veiled behind mythology and philosophy, as an idealization or a divine dream. For all the lofty sentences of Eastern wisdom do not tell us how far men lived according to the best; and it would also seem that the more the New Testament is studied in a genuine spirit of historical research, the less can be affirmed with certainty about

that personal life which Christians have been taught to adore.

But everywhere in some form recurs the assurance that God is manifest in man. Ever since man, made in the divine image, came to conscious spiritual life, he has felt the necessity to find his nature indeed divine; to behold deity in it, transfiguring its outward part in the shimmer of miracle, or else its inward and spiritual part, and thence the body and its uses, in the real splendor of truth and love. The aspiration never dies out of the soul, because God and the soul are essentially one.

And this, which Oriental instinct divined, was recognized in many noble ways, not only in its relation to the desire of progress, but as balance to the sense of moral evil and spiritual need.

Aryan incarnation.

Emile Burnouf[1] thinks that incarnation in the complete sense is pre-eminently an Aryan belief; that it is easier for an Aryan to conceive God as incarnated in man than to conceive prophetic inspiration in the Hebrew sense.[2] This is but to say that the Aryan religious sentiment is pantheistic. And the statement is true. There is a breadth and absoluteness in its conception of the unity of all truth, which is not satisfied with leaving man outside divinity, the mere recipient of gifts from a source apart from his nature. The divine desire in the soul implies the divinity of the soul. The object of worship is more than object: it pre-existed in the worshipper, and prompted the aim and the prayer. The yearnings

[1] *Art. on the Science of Religions*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

[2] As an illustration may be mentioned the Persian sect of Bâbists, already referred to, which has spread over a large portion of Persia, and, like Sufism, engrafted upon Islamite theism a pantheistic faith. See Gobineau, p. 477.

of the spirit are more than a sense of need: they are the strength of an inward ideal seeking its own. And the perception of this truth is eminently Aryan. The tendency of Indo-European philosophy to identify subject and object in the processes of existence is but the *speculative* form of a profound instinct in this race, which demands that culture shall express by its freedom and fulness the essential unity of the human with the divine.

Burnouf fails to appreciate this philosophical scope of the fact he has attempted to state, when he ventures to infer from it that the dogma of the *divinity of Jesus* will stand permanently for all Aryan races as a truth of positive religion. It is mainly from *Aryan* idealization indeed that the dogma in question has proceeded. Jesus himself was of *Semitic* descent: the earliest records of his life are of similar origin, and form no exception to the instinctive reluctance of the Semite to ascribe pure deity to the human. To effect this, they required to be clothed in purely Aryan conceptions from Greek and Oriental sources. And they were in fact so transformed, in the Christian consciousness. The ideal demand thus proved itself independent of specific historical or biographical truth. But the fact that it has been so at last becomes manifest, by the progress of inquiry, to all; and then the *absoluteness* of this special personal symbol can no longer be maintained. It was provisional and temporary; representing one stage only in the development of that Aryan demand for incarnation in man, which passes on to broader levels and maturer sight.[1]

[1] This is fully recognized even in Bâbism, which Gobineau describes (p. 326) as definitely affirming that God has not willed humanity to believe that revelation had reached its limit, or that its *own* revelation was shut up within a single personage.

Incarnation as Saviour.

Of all personal incarnation that which man has most loved in all ages is God manifest *as Saviour;* and it has as many forms as there are stages and epochs in his comprehension of his own spiritual and moral needs.

The Christian belief that God was incarnated *once for all* for this purpose, undoubtedly contained, in its earnestness and concentrative power, the germs of broader and maturer conceptions than itself. These have always been apparent in efforts, more or less successful, to escape the limitations which as *dogma* it affirms. The time has come when these efforts have learned their own significance, and resulted in an idea of incarnation, consistent with Universal Religion.

To all such exclusive forms of the idea succeeds the nobler faith that incarnation is the permanent fact of human nature, and comes into special view wherever beautiful and beneficent lives are lived, or thought is uttered, in earnest accord with its universal laws; and that the "saving" power, which is neither more nor less than the educating, humanizing power, and coincident with culture, is, as power of God, one and the same thing in them all. Whenever any part of the world, spiritual or material, is redeemed to its natural and so divine uses, there God, as man, becomes Saviour. And who shall fathom how much of this there has been in past human lives, or how much there is in present ones?

The conception of this movement comes to absorb into its unity, one by one, the manifold stages of human progress; and we apprehend deity as manifest in each age under such forms as its knowledge of life and nature have enabled it to recognize.

In periods when a sense of degeneracy inevitably possessed men, and they turned their faces backward to find golden ages in the past, because there was as yet no foothold for practical construction through the intercourse of energetic races; when the outward world therefore repelled them as illusion, and refuge in the inward became a necessity, — it is refreshing to find the belief that deity becomes manifest as deliverer *whenever man's needs require, or his aspirations and devotions enter the ever open door of a mystic union with omnipotence.* The Hindu ideal.

This instant access to the best was not through all sainthood and heroism only, as these were then conceived by the traditional ideal. In the oneness of all life, Hindu faith beheld everywhere the Supreme sacrificing himself for all;[1] "through devotion" taking on himself the whole possibility of human misery and want. Brahmâ is in the form of every element, every creature. He is their unity, and it is his sacrifice that consecrates them all. Its universal elements.

It was a redeeming element of Hindu caste itself, that it constituted every saint an incarnation of Brahmâ for the preservation of the world, in virtue of his fulfilment of the ideal of sainthood. This equal opportunity, even within the limits of a hereditary class, was at least the recognition that fresh access to union with deity by discipline and faith could never be wholly foreclosed. Nor was any past form of sainthood regarded as in permanent possession either of supreme and final virtue, or of invincible authority. Its throne was held provisionally, and liable to pass to a stronger master in the sphere of "devotion."

[1] See Śankara's *Commentary on the Brihad Upan.*, where the Brâhmana is quoted at length.

This democratic element in Brahmanical holiness has already attracted our interest. Under favoring circumstances, it would have reconciled incarnation with liberty and progress. Although such instincts of growth had little practical opportunity, and cannot here receive the living meaning which a more energetic civilization would put into them, they were nevertheless not wholly a dream. Their influence is traceable through the whole course of Hindu religious history.

The moral defects of an unrestrained play of the idea of incarnation, in races and ages of imperfect culture, are obvious. And, on the other hand, the very limitations of this idea in the Christian consciousness, its confinement to a single historic form, severely simple and ethically noble, has been temporarily of great service in sobering the sensuous imagination and guiding the moral sentiment of mankind. Christian mythology, cautious and tame beside Hindu, is proportionately purer. The virtue of a mythology, however, considered as play of the religious imagination, lies not only in ethical purity, but in freedom and scope also. Full justice to the religious nature of man will recognize both these sides, and find germs of permanent service in both.

Breadth of human relation.

As representing the freedom of deity to assume living forms of manifestation, Christian mythology is certainly tame beside that of India. Its Virgin conceives her Child through the miraculous overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. But the wives of Daśaratha in the Râmâyana conceive and bear sons who are gods, simply by eating sacrificial food. And Sitâ, who is the celestial Lakshmi in human form, arises from the Earth in a silver vessel turned up by

the plough in clearing a place for sacrifice; for Sitâ is the *furrow*, and her worship as wife of Râma, the incarnate preserver, divinizes the bounteous earth and the labors that redeem it; as her separation from him, and disappearance in the arms of the earth itself, amidst a divine flame that issues from the cloven ground, expresses the sowing and death of the seed. In similar recognition of physical uses, the gods churn the sea of milk, throwing into it every kind of medicinal plant that grows; and out of the *amrita* or immortal food that comes of this divine toil ascend goddesses that bless mankind.

Oriental civilization being based on the family, we are prepared to find much of the incarnation-lore of India centering in the functions and destinies of kindred. These may, in fact, almost be said to constitute its tragedy and triumph, in epos and drama and sacred song. Strife and reconciliation, duty and sacrifice, penalty and reward, find their divine expression in the idealization of these simple relations. And Kâlidâsa, with entire simplicity, describes the four sons of Raghu shining by division of their father's being, as justice, use, redemption, and love descended from heaven to become incarnate in four human lives.[1]

Vishnu as Saviour; Rama.

Râma, as incarnation of Vishnu for human deliverance from evil, is hailed by aged saints, who die gladly when their eyes have seen the long expected One.[2] He supplants all the older gods, who pour on their heads the dust that is under his feet. He absorbs all their powers into himself; but it is because *he represents all functions and demands of life.* He passes through every phase of the Hindu sense of personal duty. He fulfils every relation recognized in the

[1] *Raghuvansa*, X. [2] *Râmây.*, III.

Oriental ideal of service and of command, assuming in succession the three stages of student, married, and hermit life. He suffers all injustice, even to complete deprivation of his natural rights. He condescends to wear the bark dress, and to dig roots with a spade, though born to a throne; and this through obedience to filial love and duty, that a father's word might not be made void. His conviction is his life and strength and immortality. He brings out by his self-sacrifice a soul of tenderness and magnanimity in his relatives; "overcomes mankind by fidelity, Brahmans by generosity, preceptors by his attention to duties, and all enemies by the sword and bow." His forgiveness of injury is not less perfect than his power to punish it. He pays funeral honors to his bitterest foe. He cherishes no anger against the false queen who has deprived him of his crown, driven him into exile, and brought his father to untimely death. He even seeks excuses for her, and commends her to the care of his brother, on whom she has forced the crown that belonged of right to himself. One who mourned excessively for a lost brother he admonishes thus: —

"Man must not be carried away by grief, but hasten to a better mind. Thou hast shed tears: it is enough. Necessity is lord of the world. But let man never forget the good on which he should fix his eyes; for fate embraces in its movement duty, use, and joy. We have given what we ought to grief: now let us do what is becoming."

His virtues are exaggerations, and conformed to Oriental ideals and motives; but, whatever its faults, we must note, as the special nobility of this poetic incarnation, which enters profoundly into the popular faith, its effort to embody the whole duty, at once of

[1] *Râmây.*, IV.

a king, a husband, a son, a brother, a hero, a saint, a deliverer of mankind from moral evil. He is adored as "protector of the defenceless, extending mercy to the oppressed."[1] Even his foe, whom he is obliged to slay, commits his son to his care in perfect trust, at death.[2] When counselled to obtain the throne by treachery, he replies: —

"Far from me as poison be a gain, even were it of the throne of heaven, which is obtained by the iniquity of destroying a friend."

A victor over his enemies by his superhuman powers, he generously ascribes his success to his companions in arms.

Râma's absolute sacrifice of his own interests to his father's authority is an exaltation of the patriarchal ideal above the Brahmanical. Social relations are here shown to be amenable to a higher law than caste. Here, as Michelet has enthusiastically said, "is a new revelation; God incarnate in a non-Brahmanic caste; the ideal of holiness transferred to a Kshattriya; as later, in Europe, St. Louis, a warrior, a king, becomes the spiritual ideal, of whom a contemporary exclaims, 'O holy layman, whose deeds the priests should emulate!'"[3]

Râma is indeed the universality of the divine life. The arrow with which he slays the Satan of the epic, Râvana, is "made from the spirit of all the gods." He is intensely human. Overwhelmed by his afflictions, he is consoled by the gods. "Having appeared on earth in human form, his actions must accord with those of human beings." Human he is to the point of yielding to temptations now and then for the mo-

[1] *Adhyâtma Râmây.* (the Vaishnava version of the epic). Wheeler, II. p. 308, 404.
[2] *Râmây.*, IV. [3] *Bible de l'Humanité*, p. 52.

ment. Thus he puts away Sitâ after all her fidelity, merely because her virtue had been exposed to peril while in the hands of her demon ravisher, and suffers her to enter the fire to prove her innocence; a dramatic invention, to bring out the national sensitiveness in regard to female chastity, at the same time that it affords Râma the opportunity of naively reproaching himself for injustice to her, and so makes his very weakness inspire new affection, and associate him with human and even childish experience.

"His face became like the moon in the month of snows: if he had sent his queen from his palace for fear of evil speech, he had not been able to banish her from his heart."[1]

There is at least a democratic touch in this feature of the story. He explains the act by saying, "I knew she was true; but I put her to the test lest the people should blame me" for lack of respect for the purity of wifehood. So when in irritation he slays a Śudra, the victim is transported in a beautiful form to paradise.[2] Râma at last ascends to heaven from the banks of the Sarayu, resuming his divine essence, amidst all holy persons, revelations, powers, elements, in sight of all the people and even the lower animals. In the heavens appear all the gods, in infinite splendor, amidst fragrant winds and rain of flowers. As Râma enters the sacred waters, Brahmâ from the sky pronounces the words: —

"Approach, O Vishnu! enter thine own body, the eternal ether. Thou art the abode of the worlds."[3]

Deliverance from sin.

By the blessing of Râma's name and through previous faith in him, all sins, according to Vaishnava belief, are remitted; and "every

[1] *Raghuvanśa*, XIV.
[2] *Adhy. Râmây.* (Wheeler, p. 393).
[3] *Râmây.*, VII.

one, whatever his iniquities, whether a Brahman or a Chandâla, a king, or a beggar, who shall at death pronounce this name with sincere worship, shall be forgiven." The gods, conversing together of the repentance and restoration, in this way, of an evil spirit who had sought to compass the ruin of Râma, say: —

"Behold how this sinner has been saved! Such is the benevolence of Râma. What good actions has this demon performed that he could deserve such happiness? He has, from having resigned his life at Rama's feet and beholding him, been absorbed into him."[1]

Hindu theology understands even better than Christian how to shift off the burden of an evil conscience, by trust in vicarious merits. This offence against the moral laws in either case we are not commending to an enlightened age. Yet in its origin the idea has very plain relation to the sense of an omnipotent power and purpose to relieve from crushing burdens of moral and spiritual penalty. In the expression of absoluteness in divine good-will, no form of incarnation has attempted so wide a scope as the Râma of this epic mythology, whose worst enemies, while they are punished, after Hindu fashion, with much outlay of terrific penalty, are yet all taken up into heaven at last, through such force of good as may have once been in them, and the all-embracing benignity and mercy of the god.

These liberal and benignant elements are reproduced in the modern Vaishnava sects, founded on the worship of Râma: such as those of Râmânanda and Kabir, of Rai-Dâs and Dâdu, of which further notice will be taken hereafter. These teachers were for the most part men of the lowes

Democratic and human elements

[1] *Adhy Râmây.*, p 287.

castes; and the mythology that has already gathered about their names centres in the democratic reaction against caste and ecclesiastical authority which has gone steadily on throughout Hindu history. Of this element Vishnu, *as Râma*, is the constant representative.

The relation of this humanitarian spirit to the worship of Râma is illustrated by the charters of land granted by the later Hindu kings, and written on metallic tablets, which are constantly coming to light. Their stereotyped phrase quotes Râma as declaring that "to give away land is to cross oceans of sin; while to resume or reappropriate it is to fall back into hells of transmigration."

Krishna.

The incarnation of Vishnu as *Krishna* is of a more complex character, and covers a still larger ground of historic relation; embracing in the diversity of its phases the whole compass of Hindu experience. In Krishna every popular and every speculative ideal, every instinct and every conviction that sought religious sanction, has found its embodiment; each in turn assuming this traditionally consecrated name. In its service therefore, as well as in its sound, the name corresponds with that of Christ in the religious history of the Western nations. It has represented every stage of progress, every degree of enlightenment, or of the lack of it, in Hindu history. It is the divinization of desire and hope from lowest to highest level, the sport of the superstitious fancy and of the devout imagination alike. They have made it mean whatever they would. It is vain therefore to look for moral or speculative unity in what is plainly but a common name for the whole of Hindu aspiration, exclusive only of its most rationalistic side; a thread by which it has

given some semblance of continuity to its past. In this respect it does not differ from the endless discordance of high and low ideals, which Christianity, through its ages of sectarian strife, has comprehended under the name of Christ, reaching back indeed through the earliest records of his life. If all these had at some epoch been brought together into one vast Christian Bible, in which the Church had ever since been seeking by repeated elaborations and mystical reinterpretations to preserve the continuity of its faith, through the one term common to the whole, — the name of Christ, — it would be analogous to what has happened in this Krishna-worship of the Hindus. An indefinite expansion of the name of Christ, to cover all stages and forms of recognized faith, and all sacred records on which they rest, is really the fact of Christian history, although the whole process is not concentrated in such a Bible as has been suggested. So true is this, that the name has long since ceased to be of service for conveying an idea of the actual religious belief of its confessors.

Now the Mahâbhârata is for the Hindu masses a Bible somewhat of this description, though by no means exclusively in honor of Krishna. It is an immense ocean, into which almost every stream of Hindu faith and feeling has by one path or another found its way. Age after age, barbarous, heroic, or ecclesiastical, has contributed its popular traditions, its religious speculations, its morality and its faith, to swell this colossal epic; and it embodies, on a prodigious scale, every element of dramatic, intellectual, and spiritual, as well as popular and national interest familiar to the Hindu mind. It has probably undergone frequent readjustments to fresh experience under

The Krishna Bibles.

the influence of the religious classes. From time to time fresh fragments of ethics and philosophy have been interpolated, often in the strangest context: the profoundest spirituality flows from the lips of dying barbarians, and metaphysics are sounded to their depths in the intervals of internecine strife.

The Bhâgavata Purâna[1] is another vast body of incarnation myths and traditions, more especially devoted to the worship of Krishna, whose manifold births and forms are traced through all cosmogony, theology, philosophy, and who here becomes the universal absorbent and solvent of traditional beliefs. Both Epic and Purâna are the free play of Hindu imagination and fancy, and turn past, present, and future into song. They connect the national life with the simple ages of minstrelsy, purporting to come from the lips of bards.

Krishna mythology.

The Krishna of the Epos might seem to be imperfectly defined as an incarnation, to the religious sense. He seems sometimes to be man, sometimes God of gods. At one time his divinity is denied, at another he seems unaware of it. He is opposed, slighted, assailed, wounded. Even as incarnation, he is but a hair from Vishnu's body. But in the Purânas, he is the Supreme alone.[2] He is Vâsudeva, God with the world, in all beings, and without appeal. He combines all exalted appellatives and powers, and many that we should hold as quite other than exalted. But through all incongruities the religious interest is held fast to the person of Krishna, as central incarnation of protecting and retributive deity, as well as

[1] Translated by Eugène Burnouf.

[2] In the *Brahma Vaivartta*, he is adored by all the gods. See Wilson's analysis in *Essays on Sansk. Lit.* I. 94.

the embodiment of ideals and delights essentially human. That much of personal biography is to be discerned through this immeasurable haze of fable is improbable enough. It seems quite as impracticable to construct a positive basis or nucleus of historical fact out of the mythology of the cowherd boy, or the Kshattriya hero, as out of the supernaturalism of the god. And certainly the moral value of the Krishna faith is in no degree determinable by tracing it back, upon mythical authority, to somebody who was "originally a mere cowherd, stealing butter and performing similar pranks when a boy, and rendering himself famous by his amours when a man"![1]

The democratic character of this faith in its original form has already been inferred[2] from the relation of the name Krishna (or *the black*) to the color of the lowest caste and of the aboriginal races of India. Its suggestions of an ancient sense of brotherhood, and of a powerful influence on Aryan faith from the side of conquered or enslaved tribes, as well as the poetic justice of which this worship of the black by the white is a historic landmark, seem to me very impressive.

The idyllic legends of the Krishna-Govinda (or cowherd), his boyish pranks, his miraculous feats, and amours among the cowherdesses, are evidently based on the folklore of rude country tribes, like those of the patriarchal Hebrew age. Their grotesque humor reminds us of the miracle plays of the Middle Ages, in which the New Testament myths, grown too familiar to be venerated, were freely handled for the general amusement; and this wild jungle of tropic fable has far more than the animal exuberance and lawless

[1] Wheeler's *Hist. of India.* [2] See chapter on the *Bhagavadgîtâ.*

sportiveness of the "Arabian Nights." Doubtless the coarseness of its natural meaning was spiritualized away by the later, more enlightened, Krishna-worshippers,[1] just as the barbarities and sensualities of the older Bible legends have been by later Jews and Christians.

Noble functions of Krishna.

But in the main body of the epos, Krishna assumes a nobler function. Through all the fratricidal horrors of the great war between kindred Pândus and Kurus, the most tragic tale ever told in song, he enacts the part of mediator and consoler: he is not a warrior, but a peace-maker; interferes in the strife purely in the interest of justice, and mourns with the love of a brother over the fearful consummation of evil-doing which all his efforts fail to prevent. Though a Kshattriya in his human form, and though other passages relate his tremendous exploits in destroying the wicked, he refuses to fight in this unnatural war; will be only Arjuna's charioteer, on the just side, if war *must* be; and Arjuna chooses his presence, as of itself more than armies, and as fullest assurance of victory. Though able to compel obedience, he respects the freedom of those who choose to disregard his wise and humane counsels, while he strives to compose the bitter feud between brothers. Warned that the attempt would be useless, he says:—

"To deliver the world from all this preparation for strife is the highest of duties; and it is right to give all one's efforts to such a duty, whether they succeed or fail."

Sent to the hostile Kuru princes with this intent, he is received with divine honors, in festival raiment, with offerings of sandal-wood and perfume; carpets are

[1] *Bhâgav. Purâna*, X.

strewn in his path, and the king goes out on foot to meet him. Yet his advice is rejected, and his person threatened. And when his hopes that kindredship would have enabled him to save the infatuated Kuravas from destruction are proved vain; when his tender and noble appeals, and his prophecies of coming desolation, alike fail, he returns sorrowing, after embracing the noblest of these fated ones, with tears over the bitter future that must come to them all.

When the multitude of Brahmans crave of him forgiveness for sin, he answers, "If your hearts be pure and single before God, there is hope of forgiveness from Him." He consoles Arjuna for the loss of his son, saying: "His fame will endure for ever, and it might be said that he is still alive. Children, like worldly goods, are given to us by God; and he can resume them at his pleasure."

He comforts a woman for a similar bereavement by reminding her "how happy a mother should be whose son has met so glorious a destiny." At the end of the war he bids the victors administer justice to all the oppressed, and promises them reward for their good deeds in another life.

After the doom has fallen upon his people, and his brothers and companions have perished, as he sits alone in his sorrow in the forest, he is fatally wounded by a careless hunter, whose remorse he seeks to allay in the hour of his own death, saying, "Go thy way: thine is not the blame." We should not expect that very exalted moral standards would be found interwoven with a movement of warfare so brutal and ferocious as that of the Mahâbhârata, where the world seems given over to the nemesis of wrathful and destructive passions; yet it really abounds in noble

reconciliations, in heroic self-disciplines, in the loyalties of tender affection. And in this epic Krishna is, in his relations to the Pandu war, a redeeming presence of justice, magnanimity, and mercy, which, spite of all the monstrosities of supernaturalism, flows in a golden thread of providential purport through the retributive woof of wrong and pain.

Participation in the whole of life.

This ideal incarnation aspires, therefore, to include all nature and life, and to divinize all human duty by the direct participation of deity in its manifold spheres.

"Priest, teacher, marriageable man, householder, and beloved companion, because he is all this, therefore has Krishna been honored. Generosity, ability, sacred wisdom, heroism, humility, splendor, endurance, cheerfulness, joyousness, exist constantly in this unfailing one. It is Krishna who is the origin and end of all the worlds. All this universe comes into being through him, the eternal Maker, transcending all beings. And he enlightens and gladdens the assembly, as a sunless place would be cheered by the sun, or a windless spot by the wind."[1]

Krishna, in short, represented the genial and happy sense of unity for all finite relations with the infinite and eternal. The universality of the religious instinct, shown in this combination of the cosmical with the manifold human in one divine personality, is an element of very great interest.

In absorbing the universe into their divinity, the Krishna of Eastern, and the Christ of Western faith are in their diverse ways analogous. The Christian incarnation, however, while superior in spiritual elevation, does not attempt to represent that *direct personal experience* of actual social functions which makes the special interest of geniality and breadth in Krishna. Resting its claims on actual history, not on

[1] *Mahâbh.*, VI.

mythical license, it has to recognize its own limits in the biographical fact, that Jesus was eminently individualist in his ideal, isolated in his personal relations, and negative in many of his precepts and beliefs towards social and public interests; nor has it ever been able to free itself from the positive limitations of its human scope, which belong to that historical form in which it still centres. It is an old proverb that "no man is so great or wise as all mankind."

I do not forget that the Christ has been believed to be mystically formed within all true believers, *whatever functions they may fulfil*. But this faith does not exalt the *functions themselves*, as actual human relations, with the dignity of divine personal participation in them. It has ever been apt to mark, instead, a withdrawal from the secular life into an interior pietistic sphere. Our modern ideal does indeed claim such participation, in a real sense, for all becoming human relations, all the "works and days" of our life. If God is manifest anywhere for us, it is in these. But such faith rests on that large respect for life, which is of recent origin. It could hardly have derived its sanctions from a personal incarnation, whose worshipper would be shocked to conceive him as having been a father, a husband, a lover, a householder, a genial associate, or a faithful citizen, accepting the real emergencies of society, and bearing his part in them. We have seen that such complete union of deity with life is hinted in the childish mythology of the Krishna faith. The maturer form of this belief which mankind has now reached is due not only to purifying limitations by the Christian ideal, but to the secular energy, science, and respect for practical uses, natural to the Western races.

Krishna as unity of human and divine.

It is no part of my present purpose to follow the course of Krishna-worship into the wilderness of the later Purânas, where its pathless tangle of mythology and speculation reflects the whole inner world of Hindu character, at its best and at its worst. It is sufficient to refer here to the completeness with which it expresses the unity of the divine and the human in the speculative passages of the Mahâbhârata, of which the Bhagavadgitâ is the noblest illustration. As a specimen of these, I quote the words ascribed to Brahmâ in witness of the supremacy of this later divinity, who has supplanted him, as Christ has supplanted Jove and Jehovah in the West: —

"That Being who is Supreme, who is to be, who is the soul of all beings, and the Lord, it is with Him that I have been conversing, O deities! He of whom I, Brahmâ, master of the whole world, am the son, is by you to be adored. This Being is the highest mystery, the highest sphere, the highest Brahma, the highest glory. He is the undecaying, the undiscernible, the eternal. He is called Purusha [personal spirit]. He is hymned and is not known. He is celebrated as highest truth, power, joy." [1]

Significance of the Vishnu Avatâras.

But it is as continually reborn for the restoration of mankind, that Krishna hints of largest spiritual meaning. In this he represents Vishnu, who, as perpetual Saviour, embodies in the universality of his incarnation the religious postulate of the unity of all life. The *avatâras* of Vishnu pass through all ages of time as well as all grades of existence; the lowest grade being referred to the earliest epoch in time, the highest to the present and future. He is Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man Lion, Dwarf, Soldier, Brahman, Krishna, and finally the Kalki or Judge at

[1] *Mahâbhârata*, B VI.

the last day. He is even recognized, by the popular faith, in the humane, all-loving Buddha. No age, no form, exhausted this ever-present redeemer; ever waiting at the doors; ever reappearing with fresh underived forces and higher embodiment, through the æons of an imagination, to which a thousand years were but a day. The *moral* symbol also shines through this as it shines through the poetic mythology of incarnation in all religions. These *avatâras* are all for what were regarded as humane, remedial, or morally judicial ends.

"There is nothing thou hast not already in thyself: and the cause of all thy births is nothing else than thy love for the world." [1]

Thus as the Dwarf, Vishnu redeems the whole earth from the impieties that have mastered it. The gods being allowed by their enemies only so much as this dwarf could cover when lying down, the whole earth is overspread by his miraculous expansion: it is thus shown to be an altar for sacrifice, and won for the true worshipper.[2] The highest hidden in the lowest, deity in the most despised, — this is the mystery of moral power. And always around this plays the mythologic faculty. The dwarf's three miraculous paces that span all the worlds, and win them for the good; [3] the wisps of straw in a saint's peaceful hand that discomfit the hosts of a self-idolatrous king; [4] the two mere hairs, black and white, from Vishnu's body, incarnated to remove the burdens and sufferings of the earth; [5] the human form, alone of all possible ones forgotten in

[1] *Kâlidâsa's Raghuvanśa*, X. So the Harivanśa distinctly affirms that they are all for the good of the world (CXXIX. Langlois's Transl., II. 26).

[2] *Śatapatha-Brâhmana.*

[3] See Muir's *Sansk. Texts*, IV. ii. 4; *Bhâgav. Purâna*, VIII. 20.

[4] Muir, ibid. 5; *Mahâbh.*, V. [5] *Vishnu Purâna.*

contempt by the demon Râvana (who had obtained the boon that he should be slain by no being he should name), becoming thereby the one guise under which Vishnu can enter the world to deliver it from his power; [1] — these and many other similarly suggestive fancies in the incarnation-lore of India are the child's play of that moral instinct which discerns strength in weakness. God felt in the atom makes the whole world divine.

But it is as Krishna, the god-man of the Bhagavad-gitâ, that Vishnu speaks the grand affirmation which really lifts this Oriental faith in divine presence into universality: —

"Although I am in my own nature incapable of birth or death, and lord of all created things, yet as often as vice prevails over virtue, so often I become manifested, to protect the good, to punish the evil. I am present in every age to establish right." [2]

In truth, all the great Hindu reformers, as they came in turn, — Kapila, Buddha, Sankara Âchârya, Chaitanya the Vaishnava teacher, and the rest, — have been held to be incarnations of Vishnu the preserving God. Ever on the serpent whose venom is destruction reposes Vishnu, as if to guarantee that those terrible coils are folded beneath him in lowly subjection; and "on the thousand-hooded heads the sign of good fortune is written."

And so through dream and superstition and childish fancy, as well as thoughtful meditation, shines more or less clearly the faith that God abides in the world, and that moral evil itself enforces the assurance of infinite restoring love.

But have we not here overlooked the difference

[1] *Râmâyana*, I. [2] *Bhag. Gitâ*, ch. iv.

between *real* incarnation, and that which is mythological only? On this point it is worth our while to consider to what extent the difference itself is real, and how far it has bearing on the substance of religion.

Mythical and "real" incarnation.

More or less of mythology must always invest all belief in special incarnations. When the religious imagination finds a point of attachment for such a belief, it pays indeed some regard to historical and biographical fact, accepting its influence for a time. Yet it uses this positive element very freely in the main, and more so continually to serve its own desire and need. And it is impossible that the past should be served otherwise. No historical person can contain all that the aspiration to find the infinite in human life really means.[1] Having this scope, incarnation, as an idea, has no dependence on biographical facts, however it may limit itself for a time by centering in them. And so when the facts are positively known, or when the divinized person is disclosed and classified, it simply takes new flight, winged with its new meanings, finding fresh expressions for that which can, by its very definition, accept no form as final. This result is inevitable; as true of Jesus as of Gotama; as true of incarnation, claimed for a real personage, as of that which, like the avatâras of Vishnu, is purely ideal and mythological.

The "reality" of God in Man cannot be confined within *any* definite person, whether historical or mythological. It covers all ideals, whether of thought or of life. But it points forward to far more than these, as yet unrevealed in the depths of human nature.

[1] This is, as I have said, recognized in Bâbism, which affirms eighteen personal manifestations of God in history, and looks forward to a future Bâb.

To its infinite promise, history and mythology, imagination and fact, faith and conduct, all lead the way.

Whether the faith in a special incarnation has for its object a mythical or a historical person, the effect is substantially the same. To their respective worshippers, both the one and the other are equally real, and even equally historical. Equally valid, too, for the soul is her own ideal, whether its realization can be shown past dispute to have actually come to pass or not. For her experience, at least, it is actual.

Rights of the ideal over the historical.

It is in the ideal itself that value inheres, not in its having a historical type or source. It cannot be made dependent on sanctions from the actual world, since its free desire is the very power by which alone the actual is lifted into a step of progress. In other words, it is only through the freedom of the ideal from all definitive historical times and persons, that incarnation, which as manifestation of the Infinite can only consist in endless progress, can be realized at all.

A grand historical figure has always its value as element of human dignity, and aid to human growth; but it must inevitably be brought to the impartial tests of that Spirit which cannot be exhausted nor confined. And it is the *Idea* which sways a civilization, however expressed, that proves how far it has really incarnated the divine; while the question whether it has a theological faith in some God-man, which claims to rest on historical fact, is one of minor importance.

That Jesus was a historical person, and Krishna but a mythological ideal, if that be so, does not *of itself* make the Christian idea of incarnation more "real," more valid, more enduring than the Hindu. Krishna, for the Hindu, is as real to that sense of the

divine to which incarnation must ever appeal, as if he had actually lived, instead of originating in the religious imagination and faith of his worshippers.

Thus it would be vain to present the "historical evidences of Christianity" to the Hindu mind, in order to prove its exclusive incarnation-dogma, by showing Jesus to have been a fact of history, while Krishna was only a myth. Were these evidences ever so strong, they would be to little purpose: since the circumstance that an ideal had *once* actually a form in a personal life would carry no stronger proof of incarnation than the circumstance that another ideal has *now* actually a form in *human faith and zeal.*

In like manner the discovery by Christian scholars, in their study of Hindu religion, of what they may regard as faint heathen "foregleams and dim presentiments of Christian truths," — such as trinity, atonement by the saint for the sinner, and salvation by the merits of the saint, — justifies no expectation that the *Christian* forms of these beliefs, as "based on truth instead of dream," must be recognized by the heathen mind as that for which it was yearning, and for which its way has been prepared. The resemblances simply show that, even as believers in such conceptions and doctrinal forms, the Hindus can satisfy their desire through their own sacred books, legends and dogmatic constructions, without resorting to the Christian.

'Preparation for Christianity'

VI.

TRANSMIGRATION.

TRANSMIGRATION.

THERE is another side of the Hindu conception of life and nature which we have as yet hardly touched. Hindu idea of life.

The devotee strove to extirpate the senses, to dissolve the external world in illusion. But do not suppose that this effort represents his spiritual limit. Do not infer that his religious instinct was incapable of touching the opposite pole of experience. Nature will not be abjured. The Yogi may will it a dream, or the Calvinist pronounce it accursed. But the denial enforces its own antithesis. And in the East a path lay open to reaction in behalf of the senses, through that principle which we have seen to be the soul of Hindu faith; namely, that all life is, in its inmost essence, one and the same.

It has been believed by many, that Hindu poetry represents the aspirations of the lower castes as distinguished from the highest, or nominally religious, class. But this cannot be admitted. If intuitive imagination, intense ideality, and a deep, all-absorbing sense of the mystery of being are qualities of the poet, then the philosophy and religion of the Hindu schools are eminently poetic. They are not only so in substance, but in nearly all their great products even choose the poetic form. That whatever genuine Its poetic capabilities.

imaginative power they have tends to freedom and universality is obvious from the nature of imagination itself.

Even asceticism, however relentless, could not suppress the enthusiasm of this poetic sense for the beauty with which a tropical nature surrounded and beset it. Through hymn and precept and philosophic discourse, through Veda, Upanishad, and Purâna alike, flows the perpetual symbolism of day and night, of the rivers, the mountains, the sea. Dawn and eve, the flow of seasons, the stir of life and the habits of creatures in those solemn Indian forests, are described in the epos and mythic tale with a delicacy and tenderness hardly to be expected from a people whose instinctive disposition, even where it did not reach philosophical expression, was to regard nature as illusion.

Love of nature.

The Râmâyana especially abounds in what we may call mood-painting of nature, in which every feature of the scene is harmonized into one sympathetic and responsive relation with the special human feeling for the time in contact with it.[1] So that the visible world seems graciously made to lend plastic atmosphere and expressive voice to all private meditation and friendly communion. While Anasuya, the wife of a forest saint, listens at twilight to the story of Sitâ's youthful love, she seems suddenly to awake, as by some mysterious and magnetic outward touch, to a sense that the beauty and peace of the hour is expressing, better than all words, what both their hearts find in the tale.

"See, O bright one! the sun has set: the gracious night, set with stars, has been drawing on. The birds, scattered by day in search of food, are now softly murmuring in their nests. The

[1] Kâlidâsa's *Meghaduta* (Carriercloud) illustrates this perfectly.

sages are moving homeward from their ablutions, their evening sacrifices are offered, and the blue smoke ascends from the hermitages, tinged with the hue of the dove's neck. The trees are darkening all around, and distant objects growing dim; while the night-loving beasts of prey are prowling, the deer are sleeping peacefully by the altars and sacred places. The moon clothed with brightness rises in the sky." [1]

It is so natural to these dreamers to find nature responsive to the human sentiment or mood of the hour, that they constantly fall into instinctive recognition of the fact. The poet thus describes the impression made by the first experience of natural scenery upon Râma and Lakshmana on their way to the wilderness: —

"They found the lakes eager to serve them by the sweetness of their waters, the birds by their delicious warbling, the winds by the fragrant dust of flowers which they bore along, the clouds by their refreshing shadows." [2]

Pointing out to Sitâ the scenes of his exile, and describing his pain at being separated from her, Râma says: —

"These creepers, which could not speak, but which had pity on my grief, showed me by their broken branches which way the Rakshasa had carried thee off, affrighted. I knew not whither thou wert gone; but the gazelles, forgetting to graze, and holding their heads lifted, directed me southward, with their eyes. The clouds poured down fresh rain on the mountain while I was shedding tears at thy absence. At this season, when the wet earth sympathized with my weeping, I could not bear the sight of the early spring buds, that seemed seeking to rival thy eyes." [3]

And again as they pass a hermitage, he asks: —

"Do not the grand forest trees, under which the hermits have plunged into deeps of meditation in the open air, seem to have been themselves transported, by their own serene tranquillity, into the divine life, in God?" [4]

So when the arch demon Râvana approaches Sitâ,

[1] *Râmây.*, III [2] *Raghuvansa*, XI. [3] Ibid., XIII. [4] Ibid

to carry her away captive, all nature is paralyzed with fear: —

"As he moves, the breeze is still with dread, the tree shadows thicken; the twigs stiffen, and beasts and birds stand mute; and the waves of the river tremble with terror." [1]

The universe was peopled with subtle intelligences, whispering presentiments and warnings, and assuming every form and sound by turns with sportive freedom, unrestrained by that sober sense of limit and definite function which shaped the divinities of the Greek. Millions of spiritual beings moved in the winds, the waters, the trees, the clouds: the living creatures were but their masks, half-hiding, half-revealing this weird possession of each form by the infinite productivity of nature. Hosts of fairies and demons, troops of dancers and singers, Apsaras and Gandharvas, hovered in the sky, rained flowers on the altars and the festive crowds, or filled the air with sweet and solemn music. Life was a stream that flowed through endless transformations; and it was the delight of this mystical fancy to trace the protean play from shape to shape, through all the changes of natural birth and death, in man, in the lower animals, in the vegetable and even in the mineral world; and to associate them by ideal identities, as earnestly as modern science traces the atom through all the transmigrations of its history.

Source of the idea of metempsychosis.

The senses asserted their rights. And the incessant efforts of the devotee to escape their sphere only turned his thoughts the more intently, at intervals, on their importunate addresses. And this is a source of the extraordinary proportions assumed in Hindu thought by the idea of me-

[1] *Râmây.*, III.

tempsychosis. The belief that each human soul passes through a succession of lives, in different bodily forms, visible or invisible, and in ascending, descending, or revolving series, — human, animal, vegetable, or even cosmical, from the plant to the star, — has perhaps been accepted, in some form, by disciples of every great religion in the world. It is common to Greek philosophers, Egyptian priests, Jewish Rabbins, and several early Christian sects. It appears in the speculations of the Kabbalists, of the Neo-Platonists, of later European mystics, and even of socialists like Fourier, who elaborates a fanciful system of successive lives mutually connected by numerical relations. It reaches from the Eleusinian Mysteries down to the religions of many rude tribes of North America and the Pacific isles. Not a few noble dreams of the cultivated imagination are subtly associated with it, as in Plato, Giordano Bruno, Herder, Sir Thomas Browne; and especially notable is Lessing's conception of a gradual improvement of the human type through metamorphosis in a series of future lives. Its prominence in the faith of the Hindus affords ample material for studying its natural grounds and conditions, as well as its significance for the universal experience.

Its higher elements.

Metempsychosis, as an idea and a faith, has been substantially the effort to express certain imperishable intuitions and organic relations.

Immortality.

At the root of it lay first the sense of immortality: the idea of life as not only transcending death, but as multiplying itself through successive forms of transient being, as if to emphasize and affirm its own necessity *again* and *again;* an entity which no

bonds of material investment could hold fast and no dissolution destroy, however low it might descend in the scale of nature. The sense of immortality is indeed always in some sort a sense of *inherent existence*, and looks backward as well as forward, behind birth as well as beyond death; infers *pre*-existence as well as *post*-existence. It shrinks as much from an absolute beginning of our being as from an end of it; and so must either leave the soul it is tracing backward, in an impenetrable mystery, content with noting its emergence thence, at the moment of what we call birth, "trailing clouds of glory from God, who is our home,"—or else follow its earlier adventures with the eye of faith, through previous forms of being, forgotten or dimly recollected. And so the contemplative imagination of the Hindus loved to brood over these possible forms of successive births *in both directions*, from the island of this present life through boundless oceans of the past and future. It was at least a serene and immovable presumption of immortality that made this dream-voyage through the spheres of existence attractive and even possible.

Then there was the profound faith in immutable laws of moral sequence. "Action," says Manu, "verbal, corporeal, mental, bears good or evil fruit, according to its kind: from men's deeds proceed their transmigrations."[1] In the philosophical language of the Hindu schools, the "bonds of action" are but another name for the endless consequences of conduct. It was natural to explain in this way those present moral as well as physical inequalities among men, their differing characters and destinies, which could not be accounted for by the data at hand. The

Moral sequence.

[1] *Manu*, XII. 3.

sense of justice demanded that there should be found adequate grounds for these differences, in antecedent good or bad conduct; which of course could only have made their marks in earlier states of existence. Such speculations have been common in the Christian world also; as solutions to justify not merely these actual differences in human destiny, but even those imaginary ones of theological invention, for whose infiniteness there seemed no rational ground in men's actual doings in this world. From Origen down to Edward Beecher, the solution of this "conflict of ages" has been sought in *pre-existence*, which one or another theory of human nature and destiny had made a necessary hypothesis, upon these constantly recognized principles of moral continuity and sequence.

We cannot wonder that the ancients satisfied their instincts of justice by similar explanations of the mysteries of good and evil, both physical and moral.

Ethical demand for pre-existence.

It is the force of this ethical demand that every gift or defect shall find its ground in positive desert, shall point to some way in *which it was earned*, — that so frequently causes great personal virtues or powers to impress the imagination as spiritual resources that only pre-existence can explain; as heaped-up harvests of former lives, spent in noble disciplines and toil; while excessive forms of vice seem to require similar accumulations of *evil* tendency through lives of correspondent tone.

Hereditary transmission is indeed the only answer of science to these problems, — and this, in fact, *is* transmigration of qualities and destinies, if not of souls; but it does not satisfy that demand of the moral nature, which pre-existence, as we have seen, was better suited to meet; and so the solution of the in-

equalities in question goes over with us more wisely, among the possibilities of the life to come. Our oracle is not memory, but growth.

The inadequacy of these backward-looking solutions is shown especially in the *injustice* of supposing that the evil in men's characters or circumstances is punishment for sins committed in a previous life, and consequently is simply their *desert*. It would seem to forbid kindness and mercy as interferences with such appointed retribution. It would seem to eternize such conditions of evil, and to make their abolition a crime. Some have even traced the persistence of caste in India to the force of this transmigration-faith, and its associated theory of evil. The idea that evil is always the sign and punishment of past sin was not, however, peculiar to the Hindus, nor to the belief in transmigration. It was held by the Hebrews also; and the protest of the natural heart and mind against it is the central idea of the sublime drama of Job.

In fact the grand humanities of Hebrew thought combine with those of Buddhism to prove that men have not always allowed their belief in this theory of evil as the punishment of sin to produce its logical consequences by paralyzing the desire of moral progress and hardening the heart. We even find that the sources of belief in transmigration reveal germs of a quite opposite character, of which we shall presently speak.

A presentiment of scientific truth.

In truth, neither hereditary transmission nor metempsychosis can explain these mysteries of gift and defect, or happiness and misery, which depend on causes inconceivably subtle and past fathoming. But not the less truly was the old wide-spread belief in manifold births and lives an

earnest attempt to solve them on the principle of inviolable moral consequences. And there is a sense in which ancient dream and modern science are here blended in a higher unity. Thus an Upanishad, relating to birth, contains a description of the embryo soul, as remembering former births and deeds, "having eaten many forms of food and drunk at many breasts;" and as then, upon entering the world of separate existence, losing the memory of these, while yet the consequences remain.[1] It would be hard to find a fairer statement than this, at once of what we know and what we dream, concerning the mystery of our endowment from the past.

Unity of life.

But the sense of immortality and the conviction of inviolable moral sequence had in India a soil to work in, of which metempsychosis was the natural and inevitable fruit. In the consciousness of the Hindu, all life was included under one conception, in one essence; one ocean where individual forms and grades of vitality were but transient waves that rose and fell; or, while holding their distinct and definite being, were yet of like substance with the whole. It was not so much that these individualities, or their continued existence, could be actually denied; but rather that the emphasis was laid on *life itself*, as idea, as common ground of all lives; *life*, the mystery in them all, the fullness, the freedom, the infinite capacity of metamorphosis, of protean play.

In this mystical brooding over the unity of all life, this sympathetic affinity, and sense of even inmost identity with the whole, there lay of course a powerful motive to the love of all living creatures. "The

[1] *Garbha Upanishad*, in Weber's *Indische Stud.*, II. 69, 70.

Indian, united with all nature by ties of brotherhood had his ears open on every side to the voice of compassion."[1] And here was the reaction from idea dreams to interest in the visible outward world, of which, as I have already said, the transmigration theory of the Hindus illustrates the naturalness and even necessity.

The animal world.

Why should not the quiet anchorets, dreaming on this unity of all living and even lifeless forms, on this common experience that like the light came back in myriad reflections from them all to the dreaming mind and heart, suppose the brute creatures bound to themselves by human ties? They stood in much closer intimacy with these lower forms of being than St. Francis of Assisi, who praised God "for our brothers the sun, the wind, the air and cloud, by which Thou upholdest life in all beings;" who is said to have made literal application of the text, "Go preach the gospel to every creature," and to have loved to linger along his way, that he might join his "sisters, the birds, in singing praises to the Maker," and even remove worms from the path, lest they should be crushed by the traveller's foot. The Hindu hermits fed and tamed the forest creatures, and learned their language. "The gentle roe-deer, taught to trust in man, unstartled heard their voices."[2] They saw that upward striving towards man, on which modern science itself hesitates to draw a line that shall separate instinct and reason, and on which its comparative biology founds the largest unities. They pitied the dove torn by the eagle, the antelope fleeing from the tiger. They saw tenderness in the eye of the bird; and august serenity in the step of the elephant.

[1] Fr. v Schlegel. [2] *Śakuntalâ.*

The Raghuvaṅśa describes a good king as "conjoining qualities which ordinarily interfere with each other, in pure accord, as the creatures lay down their natural antipathies when they come to the peaceful hermitage of a saint." The alarm of one of these pet antelopes at sight of the royal hunter's arrow is thus depicted by Kâlidâsa:—

"Aye and anon his graceful neck he bends
To cast a glance at the pursuing car;
And, dreading now the swift-descending shaft,
Contracts into itself his slender frame:
About his path, in scattered fragments strewn,
The half-chewed grass falls from his panting mouth;
See, in his airy bounds he seems to fly,
And leaves no trace upon the elastic turf."

The hermits interfere, and save their pretty charge.

"Now heaven forbid this barbèd shaft descend
Upon the fragile body of a fawn,
Like fire upon a heap of tender flowers!
Can thy steel bolts no meeter quarry find
Than the warm life-blood of a harmless deer?
Restore, great prince, thy weapon to its quiver.
More it becomes thy arms to shield the weak
Than to bring anguish on the innocent."[1]

The mystery of animal instinct might well inspire a certain awe and tender sympathy in such students of it as these anchorets were; so unerring is it, so finely attuned to nature, so rich in presentiment and omen, so magnetic in its fascinations. Montaigne quaintly says:—

"It is yet to be determined where the fault lies that the beasts and we don't understand each other; for we understand them as little as they do us; and by the same reason they may think us beasts, as we think them. From what comparison do we conclude

[1] Williams's transl of *Śakuntalâ*.

the stupidity we attribute to them? When I play with my cat, who knows whether I do not make her more sport than she does me? We mutually divert each other."

It is worth while, in view of this old and wide-spread instinct for metempsychosis, to read his very suggestive record of the points in which we must confess that brutes are beyond us.[1] What wonder is it that the eager soothsayers everywhere pried into the flight of birds, the howling of dogs, the cackling of geese, the hooting of owls, the cawing of crows, and searched the very entrails of beasts, to get at the secret that places them in such *rapport* as they evidently inherit, with human life? There was not a little true science blended with the dreams and arts of the old haruspices; and there was still more of respect for the fine truth and wisdom of instinct, in that persistent faith of the people by which these auguries were sustained. Instinct knows its path; is not deceived; halts not, nor wavers between opinions; has the wisdom of artists and lovers, of councillors and soldiers; listens and divines like genius; obeys an unseen guide through solitary ways we cannot trace, "lone wandering, but not lost." Man himself — whose mature vision sees here the sweet symbol of an invisible care, that "in the long way that he must tread alone will guide his steps aright" — hastened, even while ignorant of natural laws, to honor and consult this mysteriously sympathetic oracle. He explored this hieroglyphic of nature, even before he could read his own thought. We can well understand how the oldest wisdom should have found its place in the mouths of the brute creatures. It was man's early recognition of the sacredness of life in general, and specially of that veiled life

[1] Essays, II. xii. (*Apology for Raimond Sebonde.*)

whose inarticulate speech was itself a kind of silence, and intimated with double force the mystery that pervades and limits every form of language and communion.[1]

We must remember, too, that the first preaching of Nature is in types and symbols of man. She is the endless and ever-present parable of his experience. And long before he understands how to cultivate patience, fortitude, trust, and love, as recognized forms of virtue, they shine before him in divine symbols that reflect his own spontaneous instincts, out of the unfailing endurance of the beasts of burden, the loves and labors of the birds, the peaceful accord of the wild creatures with those orderly laws of nature which prescribe their roaming and their rest. Even the wide-spreading, sheltering trees are human to these poetic ethics, and the grass of the field has a life beyond itself, and the waterfalls and rocks are souls. An older Sermon on the Mount was *in man*, and made him hearken gladly to worded lessons from the lilies and the fowls; for the voice of the teacher was but an echo from his own childhood. There is transcendent truth in the Hebrew myth that makes it man's first dignity to divine the sense of the living creatures, and to give them names.

Sympathies of man and nature.

The oldest books that delighted men, and gave life a genial aspect, were the Fable Books. And so richly and creatively did the imagination flow in this direction, at the very outset, that most of our present stock of fables are somehow traceable

Fables

[1] See Plutarch's Essay on *Land and Water Animals* (Goodwin's Plutarch, vol v.) The interest inherent in the subject is illustrated by the fact that Professor Abbot, in his invaluable *Bibliography of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, gives account of nearly two hundred works concerning the "Souls of Brutes."

back to primitive Eastern apologues. The oldest known collections in the world are of Hindu origin. The Sanskrit Hitopadeśa, or "Good Counsels" of Vishnu Sarma, and the still older Panchatantra (with which recent discoveries are tending more and more fully to identify it[1]), have been freely translated into most languages of the East and of the West, and have made the name of Pilpay, or Bidpai, the beloved physician, to whom they are mythically ascribed, immortal, and everywhere at home. The far East is thus an ever-present teacher of civilization, appealing in the simplest and most effective way to the plastic mind of childhood, an unfailing fountain of practical and humane wisdom. The Hindu works just mentioned form the basis and type of most literature of this kind, although Greeks, Hebrews, Teutons, and other races, have each a stock of primitive gnomic apologues and maxims, of a more or less original cast.[2]

It is most interesting to note that the earliest real wisdom of life, the opening of its practical and social meaning, has been also an expression of human sympathy with the animal world. The morality of the Hindu fable-books is, as we have already seen, of good quality; and their hearty common sense redeems Indian literature from the charge of being competent to sentimental and speculative interests only. Their frank and manly dealing with the facts of common life make them a democratic protest, and an appeal

[1] See Benfey, in *The Academy* for April, 1872.

[2] Deslongchamps (*Essai sur les Fables Indiennes*) and Benfey (*Einleit. z. Pantschatantra*) carefully trace the relations of Western apologues and tales to these popular Hindu works. Lassen, IV. 902, even ascribes the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* to Hindu sources. Weber (*Indische Studien*, III.) has endeavored to separate a portion of the Indian fables from the rest, as derived from Greece; but he does so only to assign them, further back, to a Semitic — still an Oriental — origin.

against social inequalities, in spite of their devotion to royalty and other traditional institutions; all of which they admonish, rebuke, and instruct, with a fearlessness and authority that is more refreshing than that of the Hebrew prophets, in so far as it stands wholly on the ground and in the strength of familiar ethical laws. The half-humorous indirectness of these protests and appeals, sent through the lower creatures, is as genial as it is sincere, and touches our sympathies more strongly than sterner tones of denunciation.

The Persian compiler of the Anvâr-i-Suhaili, which consists of the substance of the Hitopadeśa and the Panchatantra, translated into Pehlevi in the sixth century, describing the original Indian work, says, —

"In the time of Kasra Nushirwân this intelligence became spread abroad, that among the treasures of the kings of Hindustan there is a book which they have compiled from the speech of brutes, — of birds and reptiles and savage beasts; and all that befits a king in the matter of government is exhibited within the folds of its leaves, and men regard it as the stock of all advice and the medium of all advantage."[1]

These "Good Counsels" of the Brutes concern all matters involved in social and personal relations, but their special bearing is on the duties and opportunities of kings. "The Fable, with the Hindus," says Professor Wilson, "constitutes the science of *Niti*, or polity; rules for the good government of society in all matters not religious, the reciprocal duties of members of an organized body; and is hence especially intended for the education of princes." This is true not only of the Hitopadeśa and the Panchatantra, but to an extent of the epics also, which have even been called *nitiśâstras*, abounding as they do in political teaching, and

[1] *Anvâr-i-Suhaili*, Eastwick's transl., p. 6.

especially from the animals. For these old monitors, kings are divinities; but it is, after all, only the *ideal* ruler that has honor, all unworthy kingcraft being severely handled both in the fables and maxims. How significant a fact, that the teaching of practical ideals should have been referred to this world of lower creatures, which we have been taught to regard as without gift of choice or power of progress!

The use of the Apologue under despotic governments in the East as well as in the freer West (where it is illustrated by the old German epos of Reynard the Fox), to convey satire and rebuke without offence to established powers, — or, in Oriental phrase, "that the ear of authority may be approached by the tongue of wisdom," — has been often exaggerated, though to an extent real. But it is hardly possible to overstate the freedom of play allowed the imagination by these half-human spheres of a strange unfathomable life. The strictly ethical purpose of the Fable indeed imposes certain limits upon the passion for hyperbole,[1] as does also that strong positive realism of animal qualities and habits, which constitutes its material. But in a religious and moral direction there was abundant room for idealization in these mysterious fidelities and powers.

Animal symbolism.

And so we can easily understand how the later mythology and popular poetry of India came to represent the deities in their incarnations as assuming the brute even oftener than the human form, while yet maintaining therein the noblest human virtues, or manifesting spiritual capacities vainly sought

[1] Not always obeyed in these old fables, which are occasionally extravagant in their descriptions of moral disciplines and sacrifices, — an argument, with Benfey, for their Buddhistic origin.

among men. Thus that strange, long-lived, heavy-winged creature, the crow,[1] was held to be older than years could record. Perched on a rock or tree, he is the most venerable of devotees, meditating on the marvellous lives he has passed through, and dispensing to the eagle, monarch of birds, lessons of eternal wisdom for the government of himself and his empire.[2] The clumsy condor, sailing on massive wing over Chimborazo, was held sacred by the Incas and carved on their sceptres, as the eagle on those of the Cæsars. No wonder the heavy crow, who climbs among everlasting snows, is equally a wonder to the Hindu. The Sanskrit language gives him no less than seventy names. The serpent, worshipped by the aboriginal Hindu tribes, and symbolic to the Aryans of wisdom, healing, eternity, has a hundred names.[3] There were legends that consecrated the habits of the vulture,[4] that careful and thorough effacer of all revolting signs of decay and death; and of the fish, pathfinder and leader of man through the watery wastes; and of the tortoise, broadbacked supporter that no burden breaks down. The monkeys, those semi-human, self-asserting proprietors of the primeval forests of the Dekkan, become in the epics divine guides and deliverers of man in his explorations of their pathless expanses.[5] The mythologist gave his god of wisdom an elephant's head; mounted the avenging goddess on a tiger; strung the bow of his Cupid with a thread of honey bees; inwove the habits of every creature with the protean metamorphoses of divinity. As the Assy-

[1] Michelet, *The Bird*, p. 161.
[2] *Râmây.*, VII.
[3] Pictet, *Orig. Indo-Europ.*
[4] See the beautiful tale, in the *Râmâyana*, of the chivalrous attempt of the vulture king to protect Sitâ from Râvana, which costs him his life.
[5] *Râmây*, IV. V.

rian made and hallowed his cherubim, and the Egyptian his sphinxes, by means of this sympathetic sense of the unity of human and brute life, so the Hindu took the ox and the cow as representative of the sanctities of labor and beneficence; an instinct of special veneration common to India and Persia and Egypt and the Teutonic North.

"May he who has done wrong to my brother Râma," says Bhârata in the epic, "be the messenger of the wicked! May he kick his foot against a sleeping cow!"[1] To this day the country people in some districts of India put blades of grass between their teeth when they would deprecate anger, to remind those whom they fear, of the human protection and regard to which the cow is supposed to appeal.[2] This honor to the cow is the most ancient and universal form of devotion to animals known in India. The patient, faithful, bounteous creature was so essential and dear to the Vedic herdsmen that they made her attend the dead on his journey to the world of the fathers, to help him across the deep river, to guard him from all foes.[3] Even the gradual degeneracy of mankind was quaintly enough symbolized by this sacred animal standing in the golden age on four legs, in the silver on three, in the brass on two, and in the iron on one.

The zebus, or humpbacked cattle of India, are indeed very beautiful animals, and may well have inspired reverence among a primitive people. They have mild, intelligent eyes, a kindly expression, and their sides are covered with satinlike hair. As working, and as milch cattle, they are of admirable

[1] *Ramâyana*, II.
[2] Elliott's *N. W. India*, I. p. 241.
[3] See Pictet, II. 519; Müller in *Zeitsch. d. D M. G.*, IX. Append.

quality; and their walk is almost as fast as that of a horse.[1] The primal gratitude and veneration has continued throughout Hindu history. Kâlidâsa describes in a poetic strain the devotions rendered by a king to the sacred milch cow of a hermitage, in recognition of her "bearing in her full breast the means of paying the offerings due to guests, to manes, and to gods." All this was certainly natural enough to the Indo-Aryan, from the earliest Vedic times when the heavens and the earth were one great pasture ground for his divine herdsmen, who milked the rain-clouds for his support, down to the days of hermits whose still, patient, dreamy, ruminant life irresistibly suggests the image. Even the intolerable divine cows and bulls of Benarés testify of what was once a mingled sentiment of natural sympathy, gratitude for bounty, and religious awe.

Plutarch says the Egyptians called their sacred bull Apis "the fair and beautiful image of the soul of Osiris."

That the animal symbolism of the Egyptians and Hindus was associated with agricultural interests and astronomical signs is unquestionable. But this simply indicates how profound was the impression made by these relations of the animal world with the blessings of the earth and the sky. It may be, too, that the epical incarnations in bears and monkeys, and the popular avatâras of Vishnu in the shapes of fish, tortoise, lion, and boar, were, as a recent writer suggests,[2] connected in some way with the *pre-Aryan* worship of animals among the native tribes of the Dekkan, as was certainly the case with the widely spread veneration

[1] See *U. S. Agricultural Report* for 1865. [2] Wheeler's *Hist of India.*

for the serpent in India; and that their celebration in the Râmâyana was but part of the appeal of Neo-Brahmanism to popular beliefs for the purpose of expelling Buddhism. But behind all these incidental causes lies the deeper *religious* instinct which must explain such traditional worship itself. This is the ground of that striking difference which characterizes the literatures of Europe and Asia, in their treatment of brute nature. In the Hindu fables we find it instinctively idealized: its *best* elements are gladly brought out, and even the lowest treated with geniality. In the Teutonic epic of Reynard the Fox, on the other hand, the *lowest* are emphasized, and even the best have little respect. In the East the brute world belongs to religion; in the West, to satire. In Brahmanical legend, it has spiritual and moral validity in itself: in the Christian and Jewish, its worth stands mainly in its ministry to man, or as with the beast shapes of St. Anthony's tempters, and the gargoyles of Gothic architecture, as affording convenient masquerade for evil powers. It has been noted, too, as a difference between the Hindu fables and the Æsopic or Greek, that the former makes free use of the animal world indiscriminately for the representation of human character and feeling, while the latter employs the creatures in a more critical spirit, according to their special traits.[1] Yet this distinction may easily be carried much too far for the truth.

It is not without reason that Michelet, pointing to the functions of the cow and the ibis, the one to support human, the other to destroy reptile life, says: "That which has saved India and Egypt through

[1] Benfey, *Kindeit u. Pantsch.*

so many misfortunes, and preserved their fertility, is neither the Nile nor the Ganges: it is respect for animal life by the mild and gentle heart of man." [1]

"God made all the creatures, and gave them
Our love and our fear:
To show we and they are His children,
One family here."

The beautiful Isis-myth of Egypt binds the human, animal, and inanimate worlds in common ties of tender sympathy with the divine. The goddess is guided in her sorrowful search for the lost Osiris by the divination of little children, and by the instinct of the dog; while the ark that holds his sacred body is protected by the loving embrace of a growing tree. And so all three forms of natural life are consecrated through powers of service faithfully used, and held dear to the heart of man by their sympathetic relations with the gods.

In the Egyptian Isis-myth.

So, in the Hindu epic, hosts of gigantic bears and apes, endowed with magic powers to change their forms at will and control the forces of nature, devote all their energies to aid the holy cause of Râma in recovering his stolen Sitâ. There is no obstacle too vast for their passionate zeal and might to surmount, no service too noble or too delicate for their love to render. The Indian poet dares ascribe to the beasts of the forests, under this inspiration, all the chaste and heroic virtues of chivalry; and no Minnesinger ever celebrated an ideal of purer honor or nobler loyalty than "god-like Jatâyus," the vulture-king, or the titanic ape Hanuman,[2] who nevertheless tears up whole mountains in his arms,

In the Hindu epos.

[1] *The Bird*, p. 148.

[2] *Râmây.*, V.

destroys myriads of foes single-handed, and expands his bulk at will, ten leagues at a time. And these surpassingly helpful brutes are incarnations of gods; associated too with the elements, and forms of nature, as sons of the sun, of the sky, of fire, of the wind. So that the Hindu epic, like the Egyptian myth, makes religion a bond of sympathy between the brute, the human, and the natural worlds.

The Râmâyana even beautifully interweaves this tenderness towards the lower animals with the origin of its own rhythmic movements as poetry. The hermit Vâlmiki, seeing the distress of a female heron whose partner has been shot by a hunter, utters a reproof to the wanton sportsman for destroying the bird that murmured so softly as it went; and the gods made that rhythm which the words of sorrow (*soka*) spontaneously assumed the metre (*śloka*) in which he should celebrate the praise of Râma.

I recall nothing in English literature that resembles this delicacy of poetic sentiment, so much as Walter Savage Landor's idyl of the peasant, who, striking impatiently at a buzzing insect, "breaks the wing of a bee and the heart of a hamadryad at once."

In the Mahâbhârata legend of the exile of the Pândava princes, one of these brothers, who are divine incarnations, dreams that the wild creatures of the forest come to him trembling and weeping, and implore him to spare what few had escaped the terrible hunters, that they might be free from terror, and multiply their race once more. And he is moved with pity, and tells his brothers how the creatures had implored his mercy; whereat they depart from the forest, and dwell in another place.[1]

[1] *Mahâbh.*, II.

"Beneath human castes," exclaims Michelet again, who may be called the literary apostle of a new gospel of sympathy with the animal creation, "there lies an immense caste, the poor brute world, to be delivered, to be lifted up. This is the triumph of India, of Râma and the Râmâyana. Hanuman is the Ulysses and Achilles of this epic war. More than any one else he delivers Sitâ. After the victory, Râma crowns and celebrates him. Between the two armies, before men and gods, *Râma and Hanuman embrace.* Talk no more of castes. The lowest of men may say, Hanuman has freed me."[1] Modern science, we may add, in the hands of our development philosophy, may yet enforce from the physiological side the genial lesson of this ancient song.

A lesson from the East.

The mercy due from man to the brute life dependent on his care, or ministering to his desires, is indeed only to be learned of the East. It is a touching and noble bequest she has laid up for ages, and gives over at last to the proud civilization that in other respects has outrun her, — in proof that she is still able to inspire and advance mankind. Judaism indeed had many noble humanities of this sort; but Christian teaching — almost, if not altogether, absorbed in man — has seldom emphasized a tender brotherhood with nature in her humbler living forms. "To bring these things within the range of ethics," says Lecky, "to create the notion of duties towards the animal world, has, so far as Christian countries are concerned, been one of the peculiar merits of the last century, and for the most part of Protestant nations. However fully we may recognize the humane spirit transmitted to the world, in the form of legends, from the

[1] *Bible de l'Humanité*, pp. 59, 75.

saints of the desert, it must not be forgotten that the inculcation of humanity to animals on a wide scale is mainly the work of a recent and a secular age; and that the Mohammedans and the Brahmins have in this sphere considerably surpassed the Christians." [1]

After eighteen centuries of barbarity in this sphere of our relations, — the revelations whereof, in its actual condition, are to the last degree revolting, — the civilized West is just beginning to awake to the duty of protecting our "dumb neighbors," [2] and to ask whether the "beasts that perish" do not turn the tables, in the argument of immortality itself, upon the master, whose cruelties towards them mock his own special claim to be made in the image of God. We may yet appreciate Landor's tender tribute to his dog: "few saints have been so good-tempered, and not many so wise."

A mission for art.

And in this point of view Art has a mission, never accepted, as it should have been, by Christian schools. It is interesting to note that Ruskin, who regards sympathy with the lower animals as one of the "great English gifts" in art, but admits that it is yet "quite undeveloped," expresses the hope that "the aid of physiology and the love of adventure will enable us to give to the future inhabitants of the globe an almost perfect record of the present forms of animal life upon it, of which many are on the point of being extinguished."

The masks of the gods

Under these larval masks, as the old philosophies affirmed, hide the dear and venerable gods themselves, or the spirits of men, who shall

[1] *European Morals*, II. 188.

[2] There are now in Europe, as appears from a recent address at Philadelphia, between one and two hundred societies for the protection of animals, composed largely of eminent men and women; and the number is rapidly increasing.

one day reveal their ancient lives, now under a transient spell of oblivion. And is not our own science inquiring at this day, in pure respect for what education is doing for the brute mind, and by the simple logic that demands compensation in a future state for unrelieved miseries in this, — if the brutes are not immortal?

Origin of animal worship.

It is not easy, probably it is not possible, to discover the *special* grounds which led to the consecration of each form of animal life. The symbolism of the living world is past exhausting, and cannot be dogmatically defined. Cicero's theory that utility was the basis of animal worship is inadequate: the utility of a creature can never fully account for its becoming an object of adoration. Plutarch's divinations of its meaning in special cases are often ingenious, but as often fanciful and unsatisfactory. The faith of the Egyptians, according to Diodorus, was that the gods, having while weak found refuge from danger in animal forms, made these sacred out of gratitude, when they came to their thrones.[1] This is at least an intimation of belief in sympathetic relations and moral ties reaching from the highest to the lowest forms of life. Plutarch ridicules the legend; but his own theory goes further, and more philosophically, in the same direction. While condemning the excess to which animal worship was carried in Egypt, he touches what was doubtless the spiritual fact rudely expressed by this form of religion, in the following passage from his Isis and Osiris: "On the whole, we should approve those who honor not so much those creatures as the divine in them, and hold them as clear and natural mirrors, the instrument and art of

[1] *Diod.*, I. 86.

the all-ordaining God. Whatever nature lives and sees and has motion in itself, and the knowledge of what is proper for itself and for others, this nature derives, as Heraclitus says, an efflux, or portion, from that Ruler whose wisdom governs all."[1] And Herodotus confirms this hint of a universal idea, when he tells us that *all animals*, both wild and domestic, were alike sacred in Egypt.[2]

Herbert Spencer's idea,[3] that the habit of *nicknaming* men from their resemblances to animals would naturally result with their descendants in the notion that these animals were in fact the ancestors, and hence deserved religious honors, goes but a little way in accounting for the piety of the ancients towards inferior creatures. The processes here described involve the very sentiment which they are adduced to explain. We might as well suppose it to be due to the equally ancient as well as modern habit of naming animals for men, either in irony or whim, as we dub dogs and birds; or for honor, like the great names of famous race horses, formed upon those of their owners, which we find recorded in old Latin inscriptions; or for protection, as the old Latian herdsmen used to name duly every sheep or heifer, sometimes after the most noted families in Italy. In fact such solutions merely illustrate the closeness of the ties which have always united man with the brute creatures. They do not go to the root of the old piety, which is explicable only as a natural instinctive disposition in man to feel respect, not alone for what is stronger, but for what is weaker than himself. The

[1] *De Iside*, LXXVI. [2] *Herod.*, II. 65.
[3] *Recent Discussions in Science.* So Lubbock, *Origin of Civilis.*, p. 178.

lowest tribes of savages have the custom of apologizing to the animals which they kill.[1]

The conditions required for a sympathetic and religious feeling towards the animal world, which have been described, were all supplied by the mystical faith of the Hindus in the unity of life. All creatures were one; one in the sacredness of life as such, in its very idea;[2] one in the thread of intelligence that traversed its unbroken chain of forms, and could not well be severed anywhere; and one in those delicate relations and affinities which give ground for ethical and spiritual symbolism. In these aspects, intensified by the love of suppressing distinctions and melting barriers and blending forms, the unity of life gave ample scope for the play of metempsychosis, or the transmutation of vital forces. We may perhaps define this almost universal belief of races without scientific culture as the earliest analogue of our modern doctrine of the unity and correlation of forces.

Hindu sense of the unity of life.

The transmigration-faith was, therefore, so widely spread in the elder world, because it had its roots in natural and profound aspirations. It combined the twofold intuition of immortality and moral sequence with that mystic sense of the unity of being which is a germ of the highest religious truth. And just as in early Christianity, which tended to reject the outward world, and confined its sympathy to the human and the angelic spheres, Origen had his transmigrations and "circuits" of souls, — but through those spheres only, — so in Hinduism a larger reach

Résumé.

[1] Lubbock, p. 184.

[2] See remarks on the unity of life, as conceived by the Egyptians, in H. Martineau's *Eastern Life* (p. 212), one of the most remarkable works of the present century.

of the sense of oneness through the whole universe made transmigration a circuit that swept animal and even vegetable life also. And we are to bear in mind also, how imperfect was the sense of individuality in the mystical Hindu consciousness. It was only too easy here to infer one's private destiny from the infinite convertibility of forms in nature, the ceaseless flow, and shift, and lapse, the protean play that seemed to resolve all into one.

Relation to individual life.

How the Hindus solved the subtle question — whether that state could really be regarded as a continuation of the personal existence, in which all traces of the past were effaced in new relations of being, and only the consequences of previous conduct were retained as determining destiny — is not at all apparent. But the imagination solves all problems that perplex the understanding. A certain delight in illusion itself is the life of the transmigration mythology, and has everywhere associated it with magic, witchcraft, and the power given by talismans and spells to assume animal forms at pleasure.[1] And it is not probable that the forward look beyond death became less real and earnest for these anticipations of what to us would seem so like positive annihilation. Doubtless with the Hindus as afterwards with Pythagoras, Plato, and the Alexandrian philosophers,[2] this whole belief hovered, in poetic dream, in the blending lights of mythology, rather than stood definite for the understanding, or in that rigid application to details which modern habits of thought would require. Yet it was not for that reason less real, or less powerful to move the fears,

[1] See Apuleius's *Golden Ass*.

[2] Simon, *Hist. de l'École d'Alexandrie*, I. 446, 590.

the desires, or the affections of the masses of men. It was not reserved for Tertullian[1] to reveal the fact that the self-contradictions of a religious mystery make it all the more fascinating to an unreasoning faith.

Regarding all life as at heart one and the same with that which stirred within him, — and profoundly impressed by the sense of moral retribution, — the thought of immortality, too, brooding over him past escape, — it was simply natural for the hermit saint to cherish the belief that these lower creatures, with their mysterious instincts appealing to him in so many ways for protection, learning in so many ways to comprehend his thought and fall in with his habits, were the souls of his fathers and friends, who, having yielded to the power of the senses, had sunk into correspondent forms, and were now yearning back in mournfulness or remorse to the upright manhood they beheld in him. At the same time a certain awe of brute life as possibly incarnating deity, the exploration of it to find intimations of spiritual truth, of duty, and of love, prevented this actual animal world from seeming a *mere field of retribution*, and threw transmigration for its harsher penalties where Christianity also went for its hells, into vaguer *invisible* spheres, in a world that might with more propriety be called *future* than these animal purgatories could be.

Imprisoned souls.

It is important that we should note these influences which associated transmigration with other ideas and interests than those of retribution; since the natural tendency of its fatalism would be, if not counteracted, to make the present life itself appear to be merely a process of expiating past of-

Expiation and probation.

[1] "*Credo quia impossibile est.*"

fences, ignoring its invitations to future excellence. Such stern bondage to foregone lives does not enter into the theory of Christianity; its place being supplied in the creeds by a similar bondage to reward and penalty in the *future* life, through the belief that the essence of the present is but "probation." In neither case is free validity accorded to the living moment, as the sphere and opportunity of the spirit. Both in the East and the West, the affections have not failed to make earnest protest, in divers ways, against the disparagement. In this point of view the tender regard of Brahmanical religion for the animal world, in which it saw the fatalities of transmigration, is deserving of special attention.

Incidental relation to penalty.

Metempsychosis, indeed, had no necessary connection with penalty, in ancient thought as such, but covered a broad cosmical conception; namely, that of *the Unity of Life*. In Egypt, for example, it was conceived as a natural and orderly circuit of soul through the various forms of life, to return again to a human body after three thousand years.[1] And in the funereal inscriptions of that country it is nowhere found unmistakably associated with the idea of punishment.[2] Pythagoras and Empedocles allude to it as a natural rather than a retributory process. The former "recognizes the voice of his friend in the howl" of a beaten dog, and interferes to protect him. And Empedocles declared himself to have been "a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird, a fish," in illustration simply of the general truth that "the soul inhabits every form of animal and plant."[3] Plato comes nearer the notion of penalty; yet in no wise of arbitrary punishment, but of natural moral gravitation. Among the

[1] Herod., II. 123. [2] Kenrick, *Anc. Egypt*, I. 403. [3] Diog. Laert., B. VIII.

"souls that have lost their wings," those, he says, come first to full recovery who in the circuit of their human births have insight and will to *choose* the nobler lives. And he makes the same law preside in the passage through *lower* forms of animated life; each soul, after a thousand years, choosing such form, bestial or human, as it pleases.[1] This sense of moral gravitation, or of the natural consequences inherent in character, tends to interweave itself with all theories of transmigration; and we can frequently detect a natural connection between certain types of character and the special forms of animal life to which the law books consign these types after death.[2] Yet we can by no means do so as a general rule, for the reason that this is only one of many elements in the composition of the idea as a whole, which goes back upon a far deeper ground for sympathy, as well as for hopes and fears. The *unity of life*, more or less recognized by all races, made metamorphosis easy and simple; a free field for all spontaneities of human expectation and desire. Thus negro slaves transported to America sought refuge from their miseries in death, in the hope to be born again in the body of a child in their native land. Various North-American tribes believe that the soul of a dying person may be drawn into the bosom of a sterile woman, or blown by the breath into that of the nearest relative, and so come again to birth in the way that the receiver desires.[3] It is of course needless to do more than refer to the beautiful mythology of metamorphosis in which Greek poetry and Hindu fable so thoroughly delighted, in illustration of the freedom

[1] Phædrus, c. 61.
[2] See *Yâjnâvalkya*, III. 210.
[3] Brinton, *Myths of New World*, p. 253.

of this field of human sympathy from all necessary relation to retributory suffering.

In Hindu poetry, every creature that appears in the vast tropical jungle of illusion through which you are led is a soul in disguise; a mask assumed by magic spell or in personal caprice, for purposes good or evil, or in pure love of changing one's form, and wandering through the wide chambers of life. The special genius of the poet is shown in the surprise effected by the fall of the mask, the swift escape into a new one; in the flit from life to life, as of a spirit everywhere at home; and in the swift revulsions of pleasure and pain caused by the play of such illusion upon human emotions. And this takes off the edge of the tragic *furore* which makes so large a part of these old epics, and which is carried to such a pitch of destructiveness that nothing but a constant sense of illusion could render it endurable. Here too, as in Veda and Upanishad, the perpetual lesson is the indestructibility of life, the resilience of the soul from death, and its power to pass unharmed through all the fires of elemental change.

Hindu theory of penalty.

Yet, as has been already said, one inevitable tendency of the contemplative life in India was to regard this convertibility of forms through the oneness of being, in its specially moral aspects. The poets who unfolded laws of spiritual emancipation, and the ascetics who sought to fulfil them, would naturally emphasize penalty in connection with bestial transformation, assigning the future of human vices and passions to those forms of animal life to which they seemed to bear a resemblance. And the point most worth our notice is, that, looking upon life in so

many of these forms as symbolical at least of punishment, they yet showed a tenderness towards them which could have no other cause than the desire to alleviate this remedial pain, and to help on the process of purgation, that the imprisoned souls might at last be freed.

I speak of the Hindu Inferno as remedial: I do not deny that the punishment of the worst is often spoken of as if final. Herder's idea of a threefold division of the forms of transmigration into ascending, descending, and circular, will not serve as a basis for the classification of systems. In the Hindu faith we find all three combined. But the result of this very fact is that the idea of *ascent and final unity with God* is predominant. The very notion of circuit and return implies that the basis of penalty is preservation; and the absorption of the whole into a divine unity points clearly to an instinctive resolution of evil into good.

The Hindu imagination indeed, like Christian Dante's, brooded over the capabilities of penal suffering in the spiritual organization of man.[1] Manu represents the vital spirit of the wicked, as furnished with a coarser body, expressly provided with nerves susceptible of extreme torment; while that of the good shall have a body formed of pure elementary particles, as closely related to delight in the celestial spheres.[2] And according as the qualities of goodness, passion, or darkness prevail, do these spirits become deities, or men, or beasts, after death. In proportion as sensual desires are indulged, does the acuteness of these sheathed and preparatory senses become intensified.[3]

[1] For the dismal record of transmigration penalties, see *Manu*, ch. xii. and *Yâjnavalkya*, III. 206–215.

[2] *Manu*, XII 20, 40.

[3] Compare Buckle's account of Calvinism, *Hist. of Civil.*, vol. ii.

Its limits.

Eastern imagination herein, as in other matters, allows itself freer scope to paint the horrors of penalty, from the fact that it is so unconscious of any thing like literal and practical intention; a palliative more or less admissible in the case of any religion, when we would interpret its dogmas of future retribution. In addition to this last, perhaps questionable, protective element, a certain tenderness and plasticity of the natural sensibilities comes in, to save the Hindus from affirming everlasting penalty as a complete and conscious principle of faith.

To say nothing of the inevitable return of the universe, through whatsoever "wombs of pain," to the bosom of the Supreme, emphasized by the mystical Vedânta as the substance of faith, the Law of Manu itself in one passage distinctly affirms the "restoration of the wicked." [1] Yâjnavalkya also describes the return of the vicious through these purgations to their original better status and to new opportunity.[2]

At worst this Inferno of Transmigration, with all its fantastic torments and their inconceivable durations, has not so relentless a spirit towards the offender as is involved in the developed Christian dogma of endless punishment. And it is by no means so likely to suggest itself to the reader of the Vedas, the philosophies, the epics, or the dramas, that deity was held to be glorified by the joy of saints over these penal miseries of the wicked, as that a certain compassionate love, as of a protector, and deliverer, was thought due from man to the lower creatures; though they must have been regarded as representatives of a doom justly inflicted upon human vice.

[1] *Manu*, XII. 22. See Elphinstone, quoted in Allen's *India*, p. 430.

[2] *Yâjnav.* III. 217, 218.

On the other hand, as the system became more and more elaborate, it must, like analogous schemes in other religions, have lent abundant material for the purposes of the priesthood; whose control over these tremendous mysteries of a future life secured them mastery over mind and conscience in the present.

Bishop Heber, in view of these and kindred superstitions, denounced the Hindu religion as the worst he ever heard of. Yet he has himself paid high tributes to the virtues that could grow in its soil. And the records of Christianity might well make us beware of judging a whole faith by its least creditable fruits. It may help to a fairer judgment, even of metempsychosis, to recall the fine Mahâbhârata legend of King Judishthira; who, after the woful strife of kindred chiefs is over, striving to reach separation from the world by journeying to the holy mountain, and seeing all his noble brothers fall by the way, because not redeemed by their sufferings from pride, or ambition, or overweening affections, reaches the presence of Indra, followed only by his dog: heaven opens before him, but he will not enter without this faithful companion.

"Away with that felicity whose price is to abandon the faithful.
Yon poor creature, in fear and distress, hath trusted in my power to save it.
Not for e'en life itself will I break my plighted word."

Admitted by Indra, he finds his lost relatives are not in heaven, but consigned to the regions of torment; whither descending he bids the angel leave him, that he may share their misery; then wakes to find the spectacle an illusion, to test the constancy of his love.[1]

Hardly less significant is the mythical account, in

[1] *Mahâbh.*, VI. The story may be found in Alger's *Oriental Poetry*, with a striking translation of the passage.

the same epic, of the renewal of human life itself after the great Deluge of Manu, through the tenderness of this saint towards the lower creatures. He saves a little fish pursued by larger ones, which proves to be Brahmâ in disguise; and after transferring it from place to place as it grows, till at last the Ganges cannot hold it, he receives from its gratitude the reward of his labors. The now gigantic fish warns him of the coming destruction of mankind, and guides his ark through the great waters, from which he emerges to repeople the earth.

Spiritual significance.

We have indicated the origin of this profound Oriental belief, in genuine religious and moral instincts. How far other experiences of a more subtle character may have helped to suggest it, — such as the peculiar sense of reminiscence and recognition, as of former states of being, which physicists ascribe to the double action of the brain, — it is now impossible to determine. But, whatever its relation to a future life, transmigration, or at least metamorphosis, is certainly a spiritual fact, true of the present life. "Be not," says Sir Thomas Browne, in his quaint way, "under any brutal metempsychosis while thou livest and walkest about erectly under the form of man. Leave it not disputable at last, since thou art a composition of man and beast, how thou hast predominantly passed thy days." "When men lose their virtue," asks Boethius still more plainly, "do they not also lose their human nature? You cannot esteem him to be a man, whom you see transformed by his vices. Whoever leaves off to be virtuous ceases to be human. And, since he cannot attain to a divine nature, he is turned into a beast." [1]

[1] *Consol. of Philosophy*, IV. iv.

That the lower types of animal life are somehow taken up as constituent elements of the human is an instinct of sentiment and a fact of scientific observation. Embryological stages alone might almost warrant a literal truth to that old mystical philosophy which makes every man carry a beast within his body, "wherewith, being plagued or else amused, the captive soul doth bring itself into a bestial figure."[1] Dire possibilities suggest themselves in the reflection that we are equally ignorant how the brute came to exist outside us, as an express image of our rude instincts, and how it came to appear within us, as larval phase and moral quality. That there are limits in human nature to actual transmutation in the descending line may fairly be presumed, at least so long as science fails, with all its intimations and inferences, to show us even the *animal* man in the act of *ascending* out of the brute. And more than this: our personality is a spiritual essence that resists solution; a mystery as indefinable by science as by superstition; a secret that has not yielded either to the dream of metempsychosis or to the study of specific origin, to divination of the future or to exploration of the past. Darwin may track it this way, or Manu that: the subtle genius will not be hunted to its lair.

But the interweaving of the higher and lower lives, the divine and the bestial, remains: it was as real to the earlier as to the later consciousness of man, that he is the microcosm of life, from the god to the worm. There was evermore a warning instinct, the ceaseless providence of a secret whisper, "Beware the beast thou bearest within."

[1] Jacob Behmen's *Mysterium Magnum*.

Half in insight, half in fear, he wove his impression into dogma; and on that arose metempsychosis. Its colossal system of powers and penalties weighed heavily on his soul. For its round of ages and forms was a bitter one to travel; its claim for all types of life to exercise influence on his destinies was an overwhelming demand; and his constant yearning was to escape this circulation through the manifold stages of existence, and to mount at once by a directer path to immortal good. Brahmanism and Buddhism, with their kindred philosophies have sought to provide such ways of escape, as Christianity also has had its fine evasions of its own dismal lore of eternal punishment.

But metempsychosis had its nobler side. It associated itself with all the tenderness of yearning and regret. It served to bring out man's kindly sentiments, and expand them through the whole world of animated forms. And it must have quickened the æsthetic and poetic sense by teaching him to trace the paths of that tender mystery of creative genius, which is one and the same in the weaving of a sparrow's nest and the transitions of human birth and death.

Sanity of nature.

I return to the point which I proposed to illustrate. This circuit of metempsychosis is the clearest possible evidence, for our study of the early world, before practical science was, that man cannot withdraw himself, even by religious influence, from a saving balance, inherent in his own spiritual tendencies and demands. The Hindu, dreamer as he was, was forced, as we have seen, to recognize the visible world he repelled, and to find religious purpose

in its forms and forces, after all. He could not make the living universe flow into the divine life, without acknowledging the flow of deity through the whole living universe. Such the sanity of nature, justifier alike of soul and sense.

VII.

RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALITY.

RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALITY.

CHRISTIANITY indulges the hope of absorbing other historical religions, and sinking their sacred names and symbols in its own. This anticipation demands our notice, as bearing directly on the interests of Universal Religion. Christian expectations.

It means, substantially, that Christianity has confident faith in its own adequacy to meet universal needs. A like self-reliance is to be noted in all great historic religions. They would not be religions, had they not this instinct of universality. In proportion to the earnestness of its conviction has each refused to hide its treasure, and hastened forth with the glad tidings of one all-sufficing gospel. Judaism made the world ring with its cry to the nations to come up and serve Jehovah. Buddhism has swept a third of mankind into its wide-open folds of brotherhood. Confucius sways an empire of empires, and China entitles herself the "Central Kingdom." The religions of Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, — religions of the Desert as they are, summoning men apart to intense concentration on personal needs and exaltations, to a burning thirst for living waters, — have transformed their passionate egotism into a boundless absolutism, claiming divine

right by "special revelation" to impose their formulas upon all mankind. Even Persian Bâbism parcels out the nations of the earth already, by anticipation, among its ambitious chieftains.[1]

All great religions involve this assurance of a right to master the world; and the method is now the sword, now love and sacrifice, now prophetic affirmation, now the proclamation of a dogma or a name. However delusive the hope, there is a deeper truth than its own exclusiveness allows it to apprehend, seeking expression in its dream.

For what all these religions are really affirming, however unconsciously, is the adequacy of the human faculties to find whatever, as spiritual forces, they require. The confessors of each faith hold their own mode of satisfaction to be valid for all men, only because they know that all men have one nature. But this implies that the power and the right of obtaining such satisfactory solution cannot be limited to themselves. So that when the instinct of expansion which impels them comes to be really comprehended, all beliefs that assume the common human nature to be inadequate should drop away; and all exclusive claims on the part of distinctive religious traditions and symbols to represent it should be resigned.

And this time has now come, more fully and effectively than at any former period, in the progress of mutual recognition between the diverse religions of mankind. Such claims are now a real bar to sympathy, and can form no element of that unity which all our experience expects. All distinctive religions — and Christianity in the whole history of its relations with Judaism and other faiths has assumed itself to be

[1] Gobineau, p. 193.

one of these — are fragmentary and imperfect: if not in certain ideal aspects, they are yet positively so when regarded as alternatives to each other; that is, when claiming the right of supplanting and excluding each other's definite names, symbols, and historical associations in the world's regard. Civilization acknowledges its debt to each, respects the validity of each as aspiration on the same ample basis of a common spiritual nature; but holds them all in abeyance before those universal ideas and that complete human culture, of which their specialities, whether personal, dogmatical, or mythological, were but germs. No distinctive religion can fulfil the universal functions of our civilization. The plea that it is itself *identical* with civilization, or exclusively entitled to speak in its name, cannot now be entered even by the best of these special organs of the religious sentiment. It cannot monopolize truths implicitly contained in all great forms of faith; and, however natural the desire to make it cover all that is for the "glory of God," it cannot ignore the history of man. Here the zeal of the Christian disciple confounds things different and unequal. The terms Christianity and civilization are not identical; since civilization reports the whole experience of mankind, whereof this concentration on the person of Jesus, whether in its recognized or its heretical forms, is but a fragment. Distinctive Christianity has in fact had little or no success outside the Aryan family of nations; and in the most advanced of these it is losing its hold, and passing on into a freer theism. Only the blindness of an exclusive faith can expect that the hundreds of millions of the Oriental world, now brought to our doors, are to bow down to the name of Jesus, and adopt Christian symbolism; and this at a

time when historical criticism is claiming for Judaism much of that very ethical and spiritual wisdom which has hitherto been supposed original with the prophet of Nazareth. As well expect Christendom to worship God under the sole name of Brahma, or Mahomet as His only prophet.

The very fact that Christianity makes exclusive claims in the name of a central historical person, to say nothing of positive church or creed, proves that it cannot become the universal religion. Nothing indeed is more irrational than to expect old civilizations to exchange their ancestral scriptures and mediatorial names *for those of other races*. It is as nearly impossible as any change can well be. They will escape their own idolatries in this kind, not to fall into others, but to be freed into that religion of universal and eternal truth which transcends all such limitations. "This is my religion," said a Siamese nobleman to a Christian missionary: "to be so little tied to the world that I can leave it without regret; to keep my heart sound; to live doing no injustice to any, but deeds of compassion to all." To convince him that he had so sinned as to need salvation through Jesus Christ was beyond the power of the proselyter, who succeeded only in making him the more certain that his own religion was the better of the two.[1]

Inadequacy of distinctive religions.

I can conceive no reason for believing that either the Jews, the Chinese, or the Hindus are destined to become members of what is called the "Body of Christ." The Spirit has something better in store for mankind than to hang fastened on one historical name or idealization. The various religions, like the various races, are brought together at

[1] Bowring's *Journal of Embassy to Siam*, I. 378.

last, to rebuke conceit of special claims, and secure the largest appreciation of God in Man. To stand where this appreciation is possible is the first of duties. "The leaves of God's book," says a Moslem proverb, "are the religious persuasions." It is time to read that book with open heart and mind. And there is no enforcement of the lesson more convincing than that which is coming in the almost total failure of missionary effort in the great empires of the East.

Christian missions in India.

Poor Abbé Dubois, after thirty years' devoted missionary labor in India, not only pronounced his belief that the Hindus could not be converted, and that Christianity had done its work in the direction of heathenism, — but confessed, "with shame and confusion," that he "did not remember any Hindu who had embraced Christianity from conviction and from disinterested motives," and that those converts who continued in the church were "the very worst in his flock." That the Protestant missions have even less to boast of than the Catholic, in the matter of past success or present promise, will be sufficiently clear to any one who glances over the pages of Tennent, Anderson, or Kaye.

I do not propose to enter into this special topic further than to notice what is generally admitted, — that the converts to Christianity in India come almost exclusively from among that miserable portion of the population which is naturally open to the influences of any missionary enterprise, of whatsoever faith. Mr. Wheeler says [1] that the current of national religious ideas, "flowing in channels unknown and unappreciated by the Western world, has rendered Christianity less acceptable to the civilized Hindus of the plains than to

[1] *Hist. of India*, II. 661.

the barbarous aborigines who inhabit the hills." "Of the one hundred and twelve thousand converts in the whole of India," wrote Monier Williams in 1861, "ninety-one thousand have been obtained in the south, and of these not more than three thousand belong to the race of Hindus proper. The greatest missionary success has been among the Shanars, a low caste not Hindus by race or religion, whose business is to extract the juice used for toddy from the palmyra palm."[1] "In all Bengalese converts not a Mohammedan is on record."[2]

On the intelligent and reflecting class Christianity makes little or no impression. "Though the Hindus respect the precepts of Christianity," says Miss Carpenter very candidly,[3] "and hold the morality of the Bible in high esteem, to the reception of Christianity they feel insuperable difficulties. Their faith in their own sacred writings having been shaken, they do not willingly accept any other revelation," — naturally enough, we should say. "It is impossible for them to accept miracles under any circumstances," — a still more obvious necessity, having had quite enough to do with them already. "And they regard a Christian convert as a renegade," — very much as a Christian sect regards those who abandon it for another, it may be. But in these and other ways this estimable philanthropist, whose efforts for the practical education of the Hindus, and especially for the emancipation of women from their present deplorable condition, are deserving of all praise, endeavors to explain the undeniable failure of missionary efforts among the better classes in India.

[1] *Lecture on the Study of Sanskrit*, p. 39.
[2] Tennent's *Christianity in Ceylon*, p. 64.
[3] *Six Months in India*, II 71, 72.

Mr. Kaye points to another serious obstacle to these efforts, which simply proves what intelligent Hindus have had good chances to learn, the vanity of all pretensions on the part of special religions to monopolize "saving" power. "During the first century of our connection with India, not only was nothing done for Christianity, but much against it. We found the name of Christian little better than synonyme for devil. Compared with the lives of our own people, those of the natives really appeared to glow with excellent morality."[1] If it be true that, as an intelligent American traveller observes, "India is rising from degradation through intercourse with Christian nations," while yet "the dealings of England with India have been any thing but Christian," — it is certainly natural that the Hindus should discover that the good which Western civilization is bringing them does not depend on the power of its special religious doctrines over the conduct of their confessors. What divine authority to rule men can they ascribe to a religion which forbids caste, — while the Englishman, pluming himself on its monopoly of God, contemns their wisest men for their heathen birth and culture, or expects every Hindu to "make him a salaam" as he passes by?

Absurd and irrational dogmas, assumptions of divine right to prescribe forms of belief and personal allegiance, are as readily detected by intelligent Hindus as by other men; and, when enforced by the threat of eternal punishment by a foreign God for non-belief in a Christ who is made their representative, must be in the highest degree repulsive and even contemptible to all thoughtful people in India, whether

[1] *Christianity in India*, pp. 41, 43.

believers in the national religion or not. I pass over this cause of missionary failure, as too obvious to be dwelt on.

The discord of Christian sects probably stands in the way of missionary success as much as the character of Christian dogma. When the Protestant preachers represent the Catholic as little better than the heathen, the Hindus honestly ask, "Why should we become Christians, when you tell us that three-quarters the Christian world have adopted a creed no better than our own?"[1] The Jesuits forged a Veda, which they called Ezourvedam. The Dutch cut off the nose of the statue of St. Thomas the apostle, presumed founder of Christianity in India, knocked it full of nails, and shot it out of a mortar. Denouncing each other's creeds, Christians have been ready to make money out of the heathenism they agree to pronounce fatal to the soul. "Little brass images of Krishna before which Hindu women bow come from Birmingham."[2] The East India Company took tribute from the festivals of Jagannâth. Add to the pronounced enmity between Catholics and Protestants the mutual animosities of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and the bitter strife waged by the sects on the soil of India and Ceylon, and the expectations of the Christian Church will appear preposterous indeed[3]

Deep roots of native faith.

Mr. Wheeler says that the influence of the epics alone on the masses is infinitely greater than that of the Bible on modern Europe. They are represented at village festivals; their sto-

[1] Bevon, *Thirty Years in India*, II. 290; Tennent's *Ceylon*, I. 545.
[2] Carleton's *New Way round the World*, p. 165.
[3] See Tennent's *Christianity in Ceylon*.

ries are chanted aloud at almost every social gathering, and indeed form the topic of conversation amongst Hindus generally. "They are all that the library, the newspaper, and the Bible are to the European; whilst the books themselves are regarded with a superstitious reverence which far exceeds that which has been accorded to any other revelation, real or supposed. [?] It is the common belief that to peruse or merely to listen to the perusal of the Mahâbhârata or the Râmâyana will ensure prosperity in this world and eternal happiness hereafter. At the same time they are cherished by the Hindus as national property, and as containing the records of the deeds of their forefathers in the days when the gods held frequent communion with the children of men."[1]

In truth, though there has been scarcely an age in Hindu history which has not been marked by religious ferment and change, no revolution of this kind has ever made a deep or lasting impression on the Hindu mind which has not been of native origin. So vigorous is the natural growth that it refuses to be grafted. According to the statements in Anderson's recent work on Foreign Missions, the thirty societies interested in the conversion of India, with their five hundred and eighty missionaries and four hundred stations, have, after this long period of British sway over these vast multitudes, resulted in about fifty thousand communicants, and two hundred and sixty thousand "nominal Christians," with one hundred thousand children in the mission schools.[2] And this in a population of one hundred and fifty millions! Perhaps even these figures are too large. Mr. Ward (India and Hindus) estimated in 1851 "that the whole num-

[1] *Hist. of India*, I. 4. [2] Also Sir J Bowring's *Journal*, I. 352, 378.

ber of converts, exclusive of the Roman Catholics, cannot exceed ten thousand." We can hardly wonder that the Calcutta "Christian Observer," describing a conference of missionaries, held in that city in 1855, should admit that "an air of sombreness overspread the whole, and that the lesson it emphatically conveyed was that of showing how little we could do."[1]

Present religious reform in India.

After this review of Hindu philosophy and faith, we cannot wonder that at the present time, as ages ago in the great Buddhist reformation, the religious genius of this race asserts its capacity for progress. The influence of Western missions in setting aside Hindu for Christian forms of religious association and doctrine has been infinitesimal; but the all-sufficient germs of pure theism contained in the national mind, and its normal activity, from earliest times, are now bearing fresh fruit, in efforts to overthrow the degenerate polytheism of the modern Hindus and the miserable social institutions that accompany it. It is on these purely Hindu associations that many sects have recently arisen in India, which denounce the popular divinities and the social inequality and barbarism now prevalent; "substituting a moral for a ceremonial code, and addressing their prayers to the only God."[2]

Rammohun Roy.

It was the ancient faith of the Vedas and the Upanishads that Rammohun Roy sought to restore, when in the early part of the present century he attempted to purify the religious life of his people. He translated the substance of this grand theism of his fathers from its original Sanskrit into the languages of the masses; unfolding a philosophy and piety which

[1] *Missionary Intellig.*, VIII. 288.

[2] Wilson, *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, II. 76.

amply justified him in declaring that "the superstitious practices which deform the Hindu religion have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates."[1] "Though Vedas, Purânas, and Tantras, frequently assert the existence of a plurality of gods and goddesses, and prescribe modes of their worship for men of insufficient understanding, yet they also have declared in a hundred other places that these passages are to be taken in a figurative sense."[2] In his subsequent controversy with Dr. Marshman, who depreciated his faith, upon the ground that he did not accept Christianity in its trinitarian form, he manfully maintains not only the substantial truth and purity of his Hindu theism, but even for the low popular conceptions of it equal reasonableness with those affirmed in the Christian trinity. If Christians affirm God to be One, though in three persons, "they ought in conscience to refrain from accusing Hindus of Polytheism; for every Hindu, we daily observe, confesses the unity of the Godhead," even while making it consist of "millions of substances assuming offices" according to the various forms of "Divine Providence."[3] It should be noted that Rammohun Roy, while devoutly admiring the "Precepts of Jesus," which he translated into his native tongue, did not admit them to be in any wise inconsistent with the spiritual faith which he drew from native fountains; and that he never "broke with Hinduism nor adopted Christianity by any *outward* act or rite, even to the directions given for his burial;"[4] and this while in sympathy with the English Unitarians in their devotion to the person and teachings of Jesus. And, even

[1] Pref. to *The Vedant*, or *Resolution of the Veds*.
[2] Ibid., p. 86.
[3] *Appeals in Defence of "Precepts of Jesus,"* p. 172.
[4] Frances Power Cobbe, *Hours of Work and Play*, p. 69.

while carefully avoiding any thing like denial of the New Testament miracles, he was equally careful to insist on the impossibility of using them as evidences of Christianity, to the mind of a people who had records of much more wonderful miracles, handed down, upon what they regarded as unquestionable authority, from their own traditional saints.[1]

Subsequent reformers.

There can be no question that the personal isolation of Rammohun Roy in his own country, and the hostility aroused by his zeal for religious and social reform, drove him into closer relations with Christianity as a specific faith than his *spiritual* needs required. The numerous religious reformers, who have sprung up in the same line of thought since his time in India, have not followed his lead in this respect; having found ample grounds for their movement in the national mind and its traditional instincts, while advancing beyond its bibliolatry and traditionalism into the domains of free, universal religion. Thus the Râja Râdhâkânta Deva Bahâdur — whose moral attainment was as remarkable as his intellectual, the earliest native helper of the education of woman, and the first to provide school books for the people, of whom it was said that he not only never made an enemy, but earned the love and admiration of all — remained a Hindu in his religious faith.[2]

The theistic movement.

Most writers and observers have recognized a strong disposition in the modern Hindus to independent religious criticism, to rationalistic investigation and a free acceptance of the principles of natural religion. They have described it in various

[1] *Appeals*, &c, p. 226. Rev. J Scott Porter, in his funeral discourse, affirms that Rammohun Roy, before his death, expressed his entire faith in the New Testament miracles. *Last Days of Ram Roy in England*, p. 226.

[2] See *Proceedings of R. A. S. of Bengal* for May, 1867.

ways, each from his own point of view. Thus Dr. Allen tells us, in his valuable work on India, that there are many deists among the educated Hindus, many who have no faith in the Sâstras; that their libraries are furnished with English deistical works; that they discuss Christianity and treat Christian doctrines with levity; that they control the native press, and propose an eclectic system of faith from all religions, adapted to the present state of knowledge.[1] According to Dr. Anderson's work on Eastern Missions, "the Hindus have discovered what it is to be intellectually free; and, confounding distinctions of right and wrong, antagonize the truth of God [*i.e.*, the dogmatic theology of the missionaries]. There is cause for anxiety lest educated Hindus, ceasing to be idolaters, become stereotyped in skepticism."[2] Editorial tourists notice that "the educated Hindu usually throws over idols, and becomes free-thinker; that he does not adopt Christianity, which would lead to ostracism, but rationalism rather; since by rejecting myths and superstitions he does not lose social position."[3] These subtle brains slip easily out of all nets of conversion. The earliest result of the Anglo-Indian college of Calcutta, an institution for the instruction of the Hindus in English branches of study, was the importation and rapid sale of a thousand copies of Paine's "Age of Reason," whose market value quintupled on the hands of the sellers.[4] Miss Carpenter reports in general terms that "educated Hindus acknowledge One God and Heavenly Father," and that they always responded to her "appeal to Him." "The *Prathana Samaj*" [pure theism],

[1] Allen's *India*, pp. 581–584. [2] Anderson, pp. 237, 238.
[3] Carleton's *Round the World*, p. 209. [4] *Christian Missionary Intelligencer*, IX. 98.

says a Bombay journal, "is destined to be the religion of the whole world."[1]

Fusion of religions.

We must here take into view the inevitable result of that intermixture of races and beliefs of which modern India has been the theatre. Islam has doubtless done much to concentrate religious feeling, and give it definiteness of moral and democratic purpose. The full religious toleration established by the Mogul emperor, Akbar, opened India in the sixteenth century to the largest freedom of speculation and faith. Akbar was a believer by conviction in the rights of mind and the sympathies of religions; and no nobler words than his, to this effect, have been recorded by history. Under his government that legacy of thirty centuries, the old Aryan schism, ceased; and Persians and Indians were reunited in a common worship. He was the great peacemaker, the "guardian of mankind." On account of the free discussion of beliefs by the learned men of all religions whom he brought together to speak before the people, the custom of publicly reading comments on the Koran was laid aside, and the sciences became current in its place.[2] It was said of him that "he mingled the best and purest part of every religion for his own faith." His preference was for the Zoroastrian system; but we see in him quite as strong evidence of the capabilities of Oriental Islam for religious hospitality and fusion. Of this tendency the Dabistân, composed in the next century after Akbar, is a wonderful monument; and its charming review of all the great religions of the time is conceived in the broadest and most genial spirit. Its author, Mohsan

[1] *Six Months in India*, II. 70, 71.

[2] *Dabistân*, ch. x.

Fâne, declares truly that he writes to give the "outward and inward meaning of all beliefs, free of all party spirit, without envy, hate, or scorn."

"The varieties of the rules of prophets proceed only from the diversity of names. The time of a prophet is a universal one, having neither before nor after, neither morn nor eve."[1]

The fusion of Semitic monotheism with Aryan dualism and pantheism in the East has developed a degree of religious universality yet to be appreciated. The Purânas, especially the Vishnu and the Bhâgavata, have in many respects spiritualized the popular creeds and mythologies of India, and absorbed them into vast mystical unities with boundless scope of affinity, in accordance with the genius of the race. This wealth of material for a native breadth of religious sympathy is strikingly illustrated by the later "Vaishnava" sects, which are widely extended in Central and Northern India, and of which a fuller account will be given in another section of this work. Those especially of Râmânand, Kabir, Dâdu, have been described by Professor Wilson in his very interesting essay on the Religious Sects of the Hindus. As might be expected from their origin in the traditions of the old worship of Vishnu, these schools for the most part teach universal toleration, and have sought to unite the different race-elements in Hindustan in religious sympathy. This was eminently the aim of Nânak also, the founder of the Sikh religion, in the fifteenth century, whose peaceful and humane philosophy combined an almost Vedantic mysticism with practical benevolence and brotherhood. It was only under the influence of later *gurus*, or teachers, and of

[1] *Dabistân*, ch. xii.

Mohammedan persecution, that the Sikhs were transformed into a nation of soldiers, with aspirations for material conquests. Nânak said: —

"He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just, and he only a good Mohammedan whose life is pure." — "Be true, and thou shalt be free. Truth belongs to thee, and thy success to the Creator."[1]

The Sikh Bible says: —

"God will not ask man of what race he is. He will ask what he has done."

"Heed not the command of the impure man, though among the nobles; but of one who is pure among the most despised will Nânak become the footstool."

"Put on the armor that harms no one. Let thy coat of mail be reason, and convert thy enemies to friends. All founders of sects are mortal. God alone endures for ever. Men may read Vedas and Korans, but only in Him is salvation."

It was said that, "when men listened to Nânak, they forgot that mankind had any religion but one." So when Kabir died, the Dabistân tells us, both Hindus and Mohammedans assembled, the ones to bury, the others to burn his body, each supposing him to have been of their own faith. At last a fakir stepped into the midst and said, "Kabir was a holy man, independent of both religions; but, having during his life satisfied you, he must also, after death, meet your approval," — whence the proverb: —

"Live so as to be claimed after death to be burned by the Hindus, and to be buried by the Moslem."

The followers of Bâbâ-lâl, who unite elements of the Vedânta with the mystical devotion of the Sufis, adoring One God without confinement to forms of worship, say, "God is the creed of those who love

[1] *Dabistân*, ch. ii.

Him; and to do good is best, for the followers of every faith."[1]

The fine speculative quality of the Hindu brain is in natural affinity with the freedom of inquiry which animates the present age. This native genius, quickened by opportunities of dealing with the largest philosophy and boldest criticism of modern time, and finding abundant analogies for these in the literature already familiar to it, is rapidly emancipating Hinduism from the degradation and lethargy of the past. Frances Power Cobbe, a most competent authority on the subject, has called attention to the facts, that "the common tendency of conquered nations to adopt the religion of the victorious race exists very slightly, if at all, among the educated Hindus;" and that, in the words of the "Contemporary Review," there is even "a growing silent alienation of the younger generation of Englishmen in India from Christian worship and communion;" and this, too, among those "whose lives are pure, who exhibit least of the worldly self-seeking spirit, who are among the most thoughtful and cultivated."[2] Whatever feelings these facts may excite in the missionary, or distinctively Christian mind, nothing could afford more impressive proof of the power of native Hindu genius, speculative and religious, to regenerate the national character by its own natural methods, without adopting an alien form of religious faith. It is finding its own way out of special exclusive confessions into the open day of Universal Religion. It has been said that the Gâyatri, the morning and evening prayer of all Brahmans, "might with slight alteration be converted into a Christian prayer." It needs *no* alteration whatever to become a part of

Ethnic qualities.

[1] Wilson, I. 352.

[2] *Hours of Work and Play*, p. 64.

the free Bible of Humanity. "Let us meditate on the excellent Light in the divine Sun, and may his beams illumine our minds."

The Brahma-Samaj.

There is unmistakable evidence of all this in the growth of the *Brahma-Samaj*, or "Church of the One God;" certainly a movement, which for noble and generous purpose, for profound earnestness of religious faith, and for significance in the present epoch of intellectual and spiritual transition, is unsurpassed, and which deserves the name of inspiration as truly as any thing in history. By this statement I do not mean to exaggerate any of its actual merits, any more than I would affirm the absence of defects which a distance of half the circumference of the earth may hide from us. Its essential meaning and purpose demand no less a tribute than I have accorded it. Here is a perfected theistic faith, growing up on purely Hindu grounds, and rapidly expanding throughout India; inheriting the grandest affirmations of the Vedic Scriptures, yet nowise bound thereby; blending the old mystic fervor with the purest practical morality; aiming at the entire religious and social regeneration of India, at the abolition of caste and polytheism, at the elevation of woman, through the reform of marriage customs and domestic servitudes, and the largest opportunity of culture and occupation. Its spirit is thoroughly democratic, and it demands of the Brahman that he throw away at once the sacred thread that designates the twice-born man of the elect caste, and consecrate himself to the service "not of the wise and gifted, whose lives have already been a boon, but to the poor, the stupid, and the sinful." Originating in the pious scholarship and benevolence of Rammohun Roy, in his effort to return to the sub-

stance of the old Vedic faith, and to engraft thereon the universal ethics of love and justice, it has placed itself on a broader basis than even he expected; recognizing that the aim should be not to become merged in Christianity as a specific faith, nor in the centralization of religious union in a discipleship of Jesus; but, in the words of its present enlightened and enthusiastic leader, in his letter to the "Free Religious Association" of American liberals, to "propagate the universal and absolute religion, whose cardinal doctrines are the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and which accepts the truths of all scriptures and honors the prophets of all nations;" and by "promoting the intellectual, moral, and social reformation of individuals and nations, to make theism the religion of life."[1]

Keshub Chunder Sen.

The practical earnestness and profound conviction of this remarkable man has done much to bring to clear and strong purpose the vague yearnings of the intelligent classes in India, and direct the ferment of reform into productive channels. Unwearied in his missionary and literary efforts, founding churches all over India, and inspiring his co-laborers by the pulpit and the pen for ten years past, he has found the fields ripe for his harvests, and with prophetic faith recognizes the tendency of the age in India to be, as elsewhere in the civilized world, towards free and natural theism. Upwards of sixty of these churches already exist in the various provinces of India; earnest missionaries, supported by voluntary contributions, are preaching these pure ethics and spiritual intuitions to the masses; several periodicals are maintained and widely circulated; and,

[1] See *Proceedings of Free Relig. Assoc. for* 1868 (Boston, Adams & Co.).

if we may accept the testimony of one who has earned the highest credence on subjects of this nature, "all the educated youth of India (save a certain number wholly skeptical in their tendencies) are in sentiment favorable to Brahmoism, and gradually fall into its ranks as the indulgence or death of their fathers may permit them to abandon Hindu rites."[1] The "skepticism" here referred to is, in most cases, the free rationalism of positive science, or that large personal liberty that finds its sphere outside all church organizations.

Promise of India.

Thus approaches the final justification for whatsoever has been of best promise in Eastern wisdom and faith; a new dawn after centuries of comparative death and night. It is nothing less than such a grand form of religion as this, very far in advance of the prevailing creeds of Christendom, that now reaches its spiritual hands across the seas of race and mind — just as the electric wire is encircling the material globe, just as all the relations of trade and science and politics are becoming œcumenical — to our own natural religion in the West, now escaping the Christian and the Judaic dogma, as itself has the Brahmanical, upon the ground of those inherent, inalienable, and immutable relations that unite Man with God. It is through such elements as these that the future faith of the world is germinating in the mysterious unities of progress; the new spiritual climate of science and freedom; the communion of races and beliefs.

I gladly add the ardent words in which Chunder Sen announces this common prophecy of the East and the West: —

[1] F. P. Cobbe, *Hours of Work and Play*, p. 78. Similar testimony was given by the students of the Presbyterian Colleges in Calcutta, in reply to questions put them in turn by the correspondent of the *London Times*.

"The future religion of the world which I have described will be the common religion of all nations, but in each nation it will have an indigenous growth and assume a distinctive and peculiar character. No country will borrow or mechanically imitate the religion of another country; but from the depths of the life of each nation its future church will grow up. In common with all other nations and communities, we shall embrace the theistic worship, creed, and gospel of the future church. But we shall do this on a strictly national and Indian style. One religion shall be acknowledged by all men; one God shall be worshipped throughout the length and breadth of the world; the same spirit of faith and love shall pervade all hearts; all nations shall dwell together in the Father's house; yet each shall have its own peculiar and free mode of action. There shall, in short, be unity of spirit, but diversity of forms; one body, but different limbs; one vast community with members laboring in different ways, and according to their respective resources and peculiar tastes, to advance their common cause, 'the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man.'"

III.

BUDDHISM.

I.

SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLES.

SPECULATIVE PRINCIPLES.

IN defining the Hindu mind as the Brain of the East, I have not intended to deny that it possesses muscular and nervous elements also. These are relatively in defect, while the cerebral is in excess. But nature always seeks true balance. This brain is of Aryan substance; and we have already found its quality suggestive of most forms of Indo-European development, many-sided as that is. We have seen that the practical energy which belongs to this family of nations under cooler skies is hinted by many vigorous reactions both in earlier and later times upon the mystical quietism of Indian life. Of this nature were the belief in active incarnation from age to age, as often as virtue needed reinstatement by discipline, strength, or love; the interest felt by Brahman hermits in living creatures; the sympathetic realism of poets in describing the more subtle phenomena of nature. Such aptitudes are the more striking, in view of their association with philosophies which turn the visible world into dream. We may add to these the national taste for dramatic and gnomic literature, the exuberance of its flow into proverbs, fables, and plays, as well as the acknowledged skill of the modern

Balance of nature.

Hindus in many difficult and delicate handicrafts, and the business tact and enterprise conceded to the merchants of Calcutta and Bombay.

Martial and democratic qualities.

The earliest Aryans were, as we have seen, an independent, energetic race. The later hero of the epic wars resembles those of the Scandinavian sagas and the Homeric poems, in his bold bearing towards the gods. He demands protection as a right: he does not hesitate to defy fate, and to unsheathe his weapons against the lightnings of angry deities. Still later the belief prevailed that not only Brahman devotees, but Kshattriya chiefs, could awaken the jealousy of these superhuman masters, and even force them from their seats. The Mahâbhârata declares that neither penitence nor wisdom can bestow such bliss as they attain who die on the field of battle. "Remember," says the mother of the Pândavas to her sons, "that you are Kshattriyas, — not born to till the ground, nor trade, nor beg for bread, but to use the sword, to slay or be slain; and that it is a thousand times better to be slain with honor than to live in disgrace. Prove to the world that Kunti is the mother of a noble race." The modern Sikh or Râjput, who worships his sword and his shield, is a true representative of the epic Pându and Kuru chiefs. The heroic deeds of Krishna and Râma were sung by rhapsodists at the courts of the petty Indian kings long before some Hindu Pisistratus gathered and arranged their effusions, to be stamped with the symbolical names of Vâlmiki and Vyâsa.[1] In fact the whole history of the martial element in India, ancient and modern, strikingly resembles the growth of the same element in Greece and Northern Europe.

We have seen, further, that the ancient system of independent village communities, which has held its ground in India down to the present time, was a system replete with vigorous germs of self-government. We have observed that the constitution and usages of the caste system bear resemblance in certain respects to those of the ancient Germanic tribes, especially in the independence of each caste in matters which concern its own organization and internal affairs;[1] and we have traced the democratic forces which have disintegrated the system itself.

It is a long way from Indra, the lightning-God of the old Veda, to Brahma, the contemplative Spirit adored in the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgitâ. But, at every step in the transition, the practical and energetic side of the Aryan character, of which Indra was the typical deity, maintained its ground, in some form of reaction on the tendency to inertness and dream.

We pass to the most important of all these reactions in belief and institution, to that 'most impressive movement in all Asiatic history,' 'where the practical philanthropy of the West may find itself anticipated within the most abstract philosophy of the East, — the Buddhist Reformation.'

Every positive religion begins in a natural aspiration, which is also a true inspiration. It is embodied in the *Prophet*, who is wont to be a poet, and lover of men. Gradually it gathers about it the machinery of organization. The common understanding among its believers becomes a principle of mutual supervision to protect its interests and assure its triumph. The common faith ceases to be one with all life and law, the free growth of the person, and is

The process of religions.

[1] See Buyers's *Recoll. of Northern India*, p 457.

set off as a special commandment from without and from above, to comply with certain conditions and accomplish certain objects. It is embodied in a Church with holy names, books, fixed creeds, formulas, symbols, all of which have become fetiches at last; also in the functionary of the same, the *Priest*. But fresh aspirations are aroused by the process itself, since the soul cannot be driven into permanent dotage; and these strike off from it, finding their way upward, pushing aside its forms, and even its name. A new meaning will first be sought in the old formulas, nearer, it is fondly dreamed, to their original meaning. But it is soon found that the new wine is not for the old vessels; that the age is not content to give its new children the quaint names their grandfathers were called by, out of the old Bibles; and so the dead labels are thrown aside, as having served their purposes in the world. So there come to be many religions in human history, though all go back to a common root and an inmost identity.

Somehow the veil of priesthood is rent; the divine right of special names, creeds, and persons, is exploded; and the people make fresh way for themselves, with new affirmation of what is human and universal. Theology is converted into gospel. This third stage is embodied in the *Spiritual Reformer*, whose inspiration is not less real because it is not exclusively his, but belongs also to his age. He is reformer of the old paths, prophet of the new. This is the historic law.

Such was the history of Judaism, and the passage thence into Christianity; of Catholicism, and the escape into Protestantism; of each Protestant Church and the churches that came out of it. Such is now the history

of Christianity itself and the universal religion that supplants its distinctive claims; as yet taking no name, let us hope; and, as identical with all true human life, surely needing none. We are now to trace the analogous process in Brahmanism.

That contemplative religion began in a profound sense of the mystery of existence. It was absorbed in the incessant recurrence of growth and decay, the endless transitions of life and death, the solemn flow of all things into the unseen, till it was possessed by a sense of unreality and dream. But this weight forced up the opposite pole of thought; the very restlessness guaranteed rest; the doom of change pressed home the sense of the eternal. So sound is nature in man: he sees how all things pass away; he will live for what cannot pass away. This the aspiration of Brahmanism, — an inspiration of faith in the everlasting. Brahmanism; the aspiration

We found this even in early Vedic hymns which taught the mystic unity of the gods; in later thoughtful musings on the origin of the universe, and its return into the bosom of the life whence it came; in the devout poet's philosophy that saw and felt all things and all beings as for ever in God. It sent the saints of Brahma to their aspiring penance and ascetic triumphs under those shadowy banyans, whose innumerable descending boughs and ascending roots, interlaced in one living whole, were a mystic symbol of spiritual being as masked by the manifold ties of life and bonds of action; and it held them there in patient effort to lose definite desires and thoughts in perfect union with the one infinite and eternal life which these but veiled. Remote as its method was from what now becomes us, it was an inspiration of

thought and sacrifice and prayer; and so it has left to the ages those sublime responses that make amends for all extravagance and superstition in its devotees. The seers to whom we owe the Upanishads were none the less true believers in their vision, for the Brahmanical absolutism that was growing up around them.

Organization.

We have seen that large freedom of discussion and speculation prevailed in the Hindu schools from very early times. And it is obvious from the nature of thought that this mystical worship of the One and Everlasting could hardly have embodied itself in a sharply organized Church. Yet caste involved the distinction of priestly and lay classes. The spiritual relations of men became vicarious. The dogma grew definite. The Hymns, preserved in official memory as verbally inspired, were laden with comment and ritual that swelled into new Veda as sacred as the first. The ascetic rule became more systematic and relentless: the original contempt of the saint for the changing world grew into contempt of all social relations. Caste, not organized by the priesthood, was elaborated by that class, in its own interest; and the uninitiated classes were rigidly excluded from reading or teaching the Veda. The Brahmanical caste was debarred by its limits as a hereditary body from any effort to enlarge its own membership. The fewer its numbers, the diviner would it seem; and the higher would be the prestige of unity. Like the priesthoods of all religions, it cherished its spiritual light as too precious to be trusted to the untaught mind; holding it in custody of a mediatorial authority, by whose service its virtue was to be made effective for the common salvation. The multitude was its footstool

on earth, and its dominion reached on through the life to come. Brahmanism was not a system to recognize the necessity of proselyting. It was the effort of the individual to lift himself out of illusion into real life, and its only associative principle was that of caste. Far from having any idea of proselytism, it was aristocratic and unsocial; the climate suppressing practical energy in the thinker; and the contemplative spirit tending to personal isolation. It had its fraternities and schools, and numberless hermitages sprinkled the forests of India; but these schools were not founded to share the light of Brahmanical wisdom with other than the higher or "twice-born" classes, nor were hermitages planted in the spiritual interest of the aborigines, except in so far as, being admitted into the body politic as Śudras, these lower races were to be saved by the meritorious disciplines of its priestly devotees. Its steady tide of monasticism, setting southwards into the wilderness, measured the force with which it repelled the social sympathies. Christianity, it is well known, had a similar monastic phase in its history. There were elements of Brahmanism, however, which helped to counteract or weaken this tendency to isolation: some of these have already been mentioned in our section on the Laws. Buddhism, notwithstanding its democratic spirit, used the name of Brahman with respect, as representative of purity and the true path of life;[1] and defended it from discredit at the hands of those who claimed exclusive title to it. Many circumstances indicate that the system had hardly reached the stage of strict and effective organization, when it began to be checked by the definite protest of Buddhism; to which it

[1] *Dhammapada.* See also Sykes, in *Journal Roy. As. Soc.*, vi. p. 406.

yielded so readily that a few centuries seem to have sufficed to give the latter religion the control of Northern India.

Reaction to universality.

The social sympathies cannot be abolished. Under whatever national or climatic conditions, practical democratic instincts will make themselves heard. No race nor religion has the monopoly of forces so essential to the justification of human nature. To some vigorous spirit the abstract truths of contemplation will become forces of his own active realism they will become hands and feet, and demand to be used. Organized into his moral being, these meditations, these divine dreams, carry him straightway out of his spiritual cell, to say to the whole world: What is mine is yours also: the great all-reconciling light that shone down to me on the mountain-top, in the desert stillness, in the night of self-abandonment to the best, this was not for me, it was for all mankind. Then the spiritual aristocracy has to learn that the truths it was hoarding are greater than itself; that they refuse its patronage and custody, and go home to the universal heart. It has to deal as it best can, even in these finer and subtler spheres of thought, with democratic reform.

That a practical, humanitarian spirit has been the natural outgrowth of mystical and pantheistic devotion has been already noted in previous pages of this volume. In Brahmanical history, this justification, so early and rapid that it indicates the great strength of these elements in the Hindu mind, was Buddhism. And Comparative Religion hardly affords a more interesting study than the process by which its healthful reaction struggled forth out of the abyss of abstract ideas and ascetic disciplines.

From what has now been said it will be readily inferred that to define Buddhism or assign a date for its origin is far from easy. 'It is an element, rather than a special movement; and perhaps we should not greatly err if we used the name to designate the ever-varying forms of a protestant, democratic, humane quality in the Oriental mind, as natural to it as the contemplative, and usually interwoven therewith.' Scholars are agreed in tracing it, as a philosophy, back to Kapila and the Sânkhya, which may yet prove to have been the oldest of the great Hindu systems.[1] Buddhist tradition itself refers the birth of Gotama Buddha to Kapilavastu (the dwelling of Kapila), and throws the old rationalistic philosopher back into a very remote era. We have already seen that Kapila was, in all essential respects, at variance with Brahmanical exclusiveness, with idolatry of traditions and texts, if he did not absolutely refuse all authority to the Vedas; that he insisted on the validity of individual being against absorption into the universal; and that he had a democratic reliance on the adequacy of the human faculties to test and reveal truth. These are certainly germs of the liberty and humanity of Buddhism, if not of all its speculative tenets. The birth-time of the Sânkhya has never yet been found. We may reasonably trace it back to primitive qualities in the Aryan race; to the independence and self-reliance conspicuous both in the Rig Veda hymns, and in the self-governing communities that have so firmly held their own, as a necessity of Hindu life. This theory is confirmed by Buddhist tradition, which identifies Gotama, both as to descent and to the early scenes of his

Buddhism a constant element.

[1] Lassen, *Ind. Alt.*, II. 60; Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 248.

mission, with the heroic Kshattriya race of the Śâkyas, and with the localities of the epic wars.

The Vedânta, as well as the Sânkhya, shows germs of Buddhism. They appear in its devotion to abstract speculation, and in its recognition that the soul needed the Vedas but for a time, and could be satisfied only by a life in the eternal, where all distinctions of rank and caste would of course be lost for ever. And, more than this, the Buddhists are even charged by the Brahmans with plagiarizing the idea of universal brotherhood from *their* sacred books, and then turning it against them.[1]

Anti-ecclesiasticism

The protest against ecclesiastical authority as embodied in the priesthood, reappears at every stage of Hindu history. The Vedic legend of Viśvâmitra, or *the people's friend*, and his contest with Vasishtha, or *the best*, a superlative which means orthodox sainthood, has a development co-extensive in time with the national religious literature. Many other vestiges point to a struggle of some kind in early times between the sacerdotal and secular classes. This schism, of which some account has already been given, was probably a continuous one, commencing as soon as the two classes became distinctly organized for political and religious ends; and of this the warfare waged by Buddhism against the whole caste system, in the interest of the humblest classes as well as of woman, was but the extension.

Certain "atheists and scorners of the Veda," whom Manu expels from the company of the righteous, as addicted to heretical books, are supposed to have been Buddhists by those who ascribe a comparatively late origin to the code.[2] With more probability they may be

[1] Muller, *Sanks. Lit.*, p. 85.

[2] Wheeler, I. 451; *Manu*, II. 11.

said to prove that the rationalistic tendency was active some centuries at least before Buddha.

Buddhism has a twofold aspect, practical and speculative; and great injustice has been done by judging it from one or the other point of view exclusively. In its earliest definite form, it was mainly, a *moral* and *philanthropic* reaction. Yet it had also its spiritual aspiration and its metaphysical basis. The Chinese Buddhists say of the two schools which, upon the whole, have represented respectively the metaphysical and the moral sides of this religion, that "as the water is one though the vessels are different, and as the illumination is one though the lamps be many, so with the schools of the *Great and Little Vehicles*." That Buddhism is thus consistent with itself will clearly appear from the studies to which the reader is now invited.[1] We shall begin with its speculative principles, which cannot well be separated from its original impulse, since they grew naturally out of the existing soil of Hindu thought.

Buddhism twofold.

It carried the belief of Brahmanism concerning true and false being to its logical ultimates, reducing it to negation by putting it through dialectic processes which neither spiritual intuition, nor the mystic sense of the infinite and eternal, is suited to bear; yet it was not its purpose to destroy either of these. As it started from the same experience of in-

Speculative Buddhism

[1] Of the *Pitakas*, or "baskets" of the Law, the *Abhidharma*, or metaphysical portion, must be later than the *Vinaya* (ethics) and the *Sutras* (discourses). Yet the terms and phrases in which it expresses the substance of Buddhist experience are also found in these, though in less developed forms. See passages in D'Alwis's *Buddhist Nirvâna*. Some of the older Sutras combine, with their simple counsels against opposite extremes of worldliness and self-discipline, the whole philosophy of pain and release, tracing the one to the five *Khandas* (mainly mental faculties) and the twelve *nidânas*, or special causes, and defining the other as the perfect wisdom and rest of nirvâna. See Leon Feer's careful *Études Bouddiques* in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1870.

constancy and illusion, so it sought the same end, the real and eternal, as spiritual foothold and rest, by the same process of *thinking away* those transitory phantasmal elements. It employed logical dialectic as the test of their destructibility, as a fire that should leave nothing unconsumed, save what could not perish. Utterly to abolish illusion and death down to their subtlest disguise, it used similar mental weapons with those afterwards employed by mediæval schoolmen to establish Christian dogma; only that the method was *destructive* of conceptions, as in the latter case it was defensive and apologetic. A completer parallel is found in the well-known negative dialectics of the Eleatic and Megaric schools of Greece. Its three steps were affirmation, denial, and abolition of both. A thing may be proved to exist, yet it may also be proved to have no existence; finally, it neither exists nor does not exist: hence all phenomena should be looked at from a state of pure detachment.[1] The perpetual self-contradiction, which elusive, intangible cognitions like time, space, matter, form, and motion, can be put through, is familiar to logicians. Here it but made part of an earnest application of every method by which the fact of impermanence could be shown, to the whole substance of experience,[2] by the moral and religious sentiments, intent on overcoming the mystery of pain and death, and in the name of humanity itself.

The logical ordeal.

Whatever definite faith in the phenomenal world remained to Brahmanism after its own mystical renunciation, was swept away by this unsparing logical ordeal, which, for thoroughness,

[1] See Burnouf., *Introd. to Hist. of Buddhism*, p. 457–461.

[2] See passages in Wuttke, *Gesch. d. Heidenth.*, II. 536.

might be called the Calvinism of Brahmanical doctrine. The postulate of all profound philosophy from Democritus to Fichte, — that the highest knowledge is conditioned by a conviction of ignorance, — it carried out more thoroughly than the system it sought to supplant. Brahmanism, having done its utmost to abolish all pretence of reaching knowledge through transient forms, or reality in phenomenal existence, had found compensation and rest in its intuition, its fervor, its poetic affirmativeness, its mystical awe, and its devout self-surrender to the One. Regardless of these elements, Buddhism applied its rationalistic tests to the definite conceptions they still protected, and confidently struck out for an ideal goal, even beyond that silent sea of Brahma.

How did it deal with the forms of belief which it found in the way of its purpose?

The burden and release.

We must recall the fact that Hindu consciousness was pervaded by a sense of the unity of all life. Under this inspiration, it had conceived the continuity of personal existence as transmigration through countless forms and changes of being. It was an immeasurable pilgrimage for the soul to contemplate, and saddened throughout by the same doom of pain and death which made the present life seem a burden and a dream. Gotama, besought by his father to give up his purpose of renouncing his throne and the world, with promises that he should receive whatever he desired, answers: "O king! grant me four things, and I will remain with you: to be free from old age, from sickness, from decay, from death; and if you cannot give me these, then accord me another not less needful, to be free from transmigration when I die." [1]

[1] St. Hilaire, *Le Bouddha*, p. 17.

And here is his joyful cry of release at the moment of becoming *The Buddha*, or Enlightened One: —

> "Through many births have I run,
> Seeking the maker of this tabernacle.
> Painful is birth again and again;
> But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen.
> Thou canst not build for me another house:
> Thy rafters are broken, thy ridgepole destroyed;
> I have reached the extinction of desire."

The thought of endless duration, of immortal destinies, brooded over these contemplative minds, just as the idea of present material and social opportunity possesses the modern world. With what weary sense of bondage must the imagination, thus bound to the one ever-recurring idea, have dwelt on these innumerable returns to birth; these inevitable and endless "bonds of action," these consequences of conduct transmitted from world to world and form to form; of which death was again and again only a fresh resurrection, and every new phase of existence the thrall! It was this heavy burden of care and pain — this monotone of thought, pursuing an endless coming and going and coming again, a bondage to decay and death, through immeasurable time — from which both Brahmanism and Buddhism sought escape, and from which each found deliverance in its own way. But it is plain that the *unity* of all forms of existence, admitted by both, allowed of no escape, but to *transcend* them all. Existence itself, in a certain sense, must be overpassed. In other words, emancipation could come only through a purely *ideal* conception, illumination, absorption, the substance whereof must be, — to think away from, to work out of, to discipline, purify, exalt one's self from, *existence* in the

sense given the word by the doctrine of transmigration; that is, existence in the sense of dream, of bondage to decay, death, and return; existence in all conceivable forms of transient life, as being *not* really life, not inalienable certainty, but obliged to point for these beyond itself. To the Vedantists this transcendent liberty from changing form, this ideal bliss over which transmigration had no sway, was *immortal life in Brahma*. To the Buddhist, who boldly refused to except Brahma, as a form of existence, from his logic of negation, it was *nirvâna*.

Transmigration was *pravritti*, a state of change: freedom was *nirvritti*, no more change. The Buddha represented intellectual essence, "perfect knowledge;" and the *nirvritti* at which he arrived was therefore *mind* independent of matter,[1] of embodied shape, of the perceptive faculties in their conceivable relations with the world, in which they are necessarily conditional and finite. This was not *essentially* different from the Sânkhya idea of the "independence of Purusha," though with an absoluteness of protest against the mutable, which Kapila would not have allowed. It means a witness-soul, which he also affirms; but, so absorbed in the fulness of its emancipation, that it refuses to be defined by positive conceptions of existence, all of which would remand it to dependence on what is transient. Hence the fascination of tracking these fugitive conceptions through all phases, in the confidence of a power beyond, to criticise and dissolve them. The most metaphysical form of Buddhism makes the wisdom of the saint nearest nirvâna to consist in "*not* seizing the form."[2]

[1] Hodgson, *Trans. R. A. S.*, II 249.

[2] *Prajnâ Pâramitâ*. See Burnouf's *Introd.*, p. 470.

From law to gospel.

That a law of bondage forces man into a gospel of freedom is the inspiring fact that continually appears in religious history. As in the Judaism of Paul, so here, it was an overwhelming legalism that enforced deliverance by its pressure. It was the "bonds of action," those inexorable sequences of penalty, that made the burden of transmigration intolerable. To believe that the wrong deed bears only evil fruit, and this for ever; that its results pass over through an unending succession of lives, — is absolute slavery and despair of finding release; *unless* there enters, to complete the conception of spiritual laws, the assurance that there is some divine chemistry, some redeeming leaven, to which that inexorable rule of like from like is subordinate. How man shall thus find escape from the moral burden of every imperfect action in his past, and in the sum total of human life, which has gone to make his present, — and which in this aspect may be called *his own* "*past lives*," — how he shall offset the strict application of such moralism to the endless detail of conduct, in works done wrongly or to be done rightly, in sins of omission and commission, — depends on his special ethnic constitution and the peculiarities of the stage of civilization at which he has arrived. But that he does find such emancipating force, and hold it as one of the very deepest and surest of forces, one of the substantial laws and facts of spiritual being, is a truth of universal religion. Of course a purely *speculative* ideal, such as a contemplative race must form, is of itself inadequate to this end; while the Christian dogma of salvation by the merits of another person is not only inadequate, but, to human reason at least, essentially irrational and vicious. But it must not be forgotten that nirvâna as

a speculative ideal does not represent the whole of the Buddhist vision of emancipation, just as the dogma of atonement does not cover the whole Christian conception of "salvation," even in the great body of believers who make it the central point of their creed.

The peculiar form under which Buddhism, at least in its later forms, conceived the process of *transmigration*, was an effort at once to recognize its moral values, and to step forth from the bondage of its stern legalism. Those fateful fetters of endless sequence, penal issues from actions, "the wombs of pain;" those recurring births and deaths, which expressed the continuity of moral law and life; that solemn ring of each stroke of conduct upon the whole future, — it did not admit merely, but carried out to their fullest requirement. The Buddhist *karma* is the whole moral effect of one's (supposed) past lives, concentrated in his individual organization; a presiding genius or destiny, determining the form personality shall assume.[1] Sooner or later the tree of conduct thus transmitted from seed to seed bears its own full fruit. Though, as Gotama is made to say in one of the sutras, *during the process* a man who has done good may be brought into a place of punishment because of certain evil deeds, and one who has done evil may be found in one of the heavens by reason of certain good ones, yet sooner or later both the good and the evil ripen in his experience.[2] But, impossible as it might seem, an escape was effected from this stern legalism and this interminable bondage. For the earlier Buddhists there was a form of release in the assurance of nirvâna, of which I shall speak farther

The new soul.

[1] Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, 394. 445 *Karman* means action or work.
[2] Koeppen, *Religion d. Buddha*, I. 301.

on. But the *later* form to which reference is here made was by a step which is to me incomprehensible, except as what we may call a declaration of independence; a bold counterstroke of the spirit in behalf of its invaded and captured liberty; a reprisal of spontaneity upon fate. It can hardly be other than a direct severing of the logical knot, an appeal from the processes of the understanding to that mystic realm of ideal power in which all spiritual release is guaranteed. That step was to declare that the individual thus invested by *karma*, thus positively constituted by the moral order, was *not the same as before, but a new soul;* its personality being a transmission indeed of the old unpaid account with the moral laws, yet in such wise as to be properly a new independent force, and *somehow* distinct from the former product of the good and bad habits in question, who is there only *as a new creation*.

Karma.

It is a strange and subtle thought, the meaning whereof must be thoughtfully considered. "Transmigration," it was well said, "here becomes transformation, and metempsychosis metamorphosis."[1] But it cannot mean literally the release of one individual from the consequences of conduct by creation of another out of his cast-off bonds and dues; nor, on the other hand, can it mean that all personal existence perishes at death, which would contradict the whole spirit of Buddhism and its theory of the attainment of nirvâna. It cannot mean to abolish moral responsibility in the act of attaining spiritual release, to contradict the very idea of moral order in

[1] Koeppen, *Religion des Buddha*, I. 302. A valuable and comprehensive work, unsurpassed, if not unequalled, in the literature of the present subject. See also Bigandet's *Legend of the Burmese Buddha* (1866), pp. 21, 468.

stating its process. The fact of responsibility is not lost sight of through this apparent change of personal identity; and, if the former self-consciousness is in a sense denied passage to the new form of being, the *moral* identity at least is carried forward thither, and enters its claims to represent the substance of personality itself. Indeed the Buddhist saints are constantly spoken of as maintaining personal identity through all stages of their progress through successive births.[1] It must be remembered, in order to arrive at the meaning of *karma*, that, as the whole sense of individuality hovers vaguely in the Hindu mind, the same character must be found in its sense of transition from one form of life or world of forms to another. Terms expressive of this are in fact used with great mystical freedom and breadth of meaning. The "new soul" involved in this Buddhist *karma* can mean nothing else than *a new starting-point*, a reaction of some sort on the inevitable and indispensable bonds of former conduct; some hint, perhaps a real instinct, that there is more in man's spiritual experience than the consciousness of past merit or demerit *as his own;* an effort, in short, to affirm that spontaneity in his spiritual essence which he must not press the fact of responsibility so far as to ignore; the liberty that resides in every moment to cast off the burden of the past, and begin reconstruction of experience itself.

Moral relations of Karma.

With this assertion of freedom, if I am right in interpreting it as such, the Buddhist idea of *karma* sought to combine full acceptance of the facts of moral order. It is the inextinguishable vitality of the moral seed, passing beyond the harvests of a single lifetime, that is here insisted on,

[1] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 398.

as not negatived by the fact that *we have no consciousness of a previous state of being*. We are "new souls," yet not the less are past lives now living on in ours, and we in a sense take up their accounts with moral and natural laws, where these left them. *Karma* means that the continuity of the race, the endless succession of its births, is really a form of the perpetual productivity of moral causes. We have here then an instinctive Oriental presentiment or analogue of the modern science of heredity; except that the parentage it deals with is primarily *moral*, not physical, and that it pushes the truth that we are ignorant as to the past grounds of our present organization to the point of apparently making us the *mere consequence* of a series of acts unknown, and by us unknowable. It even presumes a creative power in them adequate to produce our consciousness itself. But this is the imaginative form in which a deep conviction of the omnipotence of moral laws was expressed; and we have already noted how decisively the rights of spontaneity came in to counteract a too absolute determinism.

"The practical tendency of the Krishna faith has its counterpart in the Yâtnika school of Buddhism, which teaches that all obstacles can be mastered. While the Swâbhavika school yields itself with resignation, in the faith that the Supreme Essence [Fate] governs all, the Yâtnika admonishes to energetic action, since, though man cannot withdraw himself from *karma*, he can nevertheless influence its course. The ripened fruit of conduct must be eaten; but it depends on the will to sow such seeds, that a pleasant fruit shall grow up, or such, as falling from the tree of life, shall give assurance of immortality." [1]

The reader will recall a very similar tone in the proverbial philosophy of the Fable-books, which are

[1] Bastian, *Reisen in China*, p. 618.

largely due to Buddhist influences, and show how elastic to the demands of freedom are even this strong sense of the transient and unreal, and this stringent assertion of moral destinies.

It is not meant that this intuition of moral order, this veneration for moral cause and consequence, left full scope for human freedom. Destiny was more or less master of the Oriental mind. But while we recognize this, we must not forget to inquire what elements of freedom lie in the very conception of destiny, what power this master has to *arouse* and *initiate* mastership in its subject. There is recognition of divine necessity in every great step of protest, in all philosophy of reform. Hero and saint are free only through the inevitable, the predetermined, the irresistible; through the all-absorbing and supplanting Right. Fate is the principle of progress in all religion; and in India as in Greece, in Buddha as in Prometheus, this, as supreme Moral Order, calls the old forms of deity to judgment, and leads forward to new fields of faith. It is in and through a sense of destiny, a genius neither to be ignored nor disobeyed, that the soul ever and again substantiates its freedom afresh; enforces the right of its new vision to unmake the creeds and masters that old wants had made for it; affirms its lien on the resources of the universe, its right of eminent domain in its own household of worship and work. And so the time came when all the divinities of Brahmanism, even up to the "eternal Brahma" himself, had to meet the unsparing logic of an idea, the very substance of which was necessary law.

Freedom in determinism.

Buddhism put the whole faith of the time through this crucible of *karma*, or moral order and destiny. This explains its later cosmogony and mythology. The revolutions of matter,

Omnipotence of moral order in Karma.

the destructions and renovations of the universe, with which it marked the track of endless ages, were but the play of this transcendent force, the product of moral determinations. Out of these imperishable germs of essential right, these loyalties of time and force to eternal law, comes the wind that breathes in the spaces of desolation from all sides, to renew the worlds; out of these the primitive energies which at enormous *kalpa* intervals destroy the "worlds of form" up to the very borders of "the formless," nearest nirvâna the supreme abode; and through the *kalpa* of "emptiness" which intervenes between this destruction and the new birth of things, these *moral destinies* endure, the only germs of reconstruction.[1] They are like the Scandinavian "golden dice of destiny," found again, and unharmed, after the "Twilight of the gods," in the growing grass of a new-risen earth.

Its idealism.

This is stupendous fatalism; but how it clings to those eternal distinctions by which the conscience lives! It is at least pure idealism: it makes sense the outcome of spiritual fact and experience; and the energy of its protest, criticism, and reconstructive power will show us that it was not such a fatalism as must of itself abolish freedom.

Negation for positive ends.

The older Sutras speak of the gods as rejoicing at Buddha's revelation. Their heavens trembled, when the great light shone through them; yet Brahmâ told them the glad tidings of release, which were for them also, and a cry arose, "The might of the gods increases, the might of the *asuras* (evil powers) fails."[2] The legend shows at least the geniality with which Buddhism did its work.

[1] Koeppen, I. 268–284.

[2] *Dharmaśâstra Sutras*, in *Journal Asiatique* for 1870, p. 377.

But its work was a radical one. Its pungent logic invented even more destructive terms for the illusoriness of phenomenal life than Brahmanism. Its founder himself, as a visible person, was made to issue from the womb of the beautiful Mâyadevi, the "Perfection of Illusion." It exalted the dignity of Buddhahood as the attainment of truth, far beyond the recognized sainthood or what it adored. As Brahmâ had supplanted the Vedic gods, so the stern logic of time and death now supplanted Brahmâ. Accepting without difficulty the whole series of divinities, popular and speculative, as phenomena, Buddhism swept them all into that common category of subjection to change and death, from which Brahmanism had excepted the world of Brahmâ alone. All names and forms with which definite conceptions had become associated were alike summoned to receive their sentence, and yield to a greater than themselves.

For within this unsparing logic of negation there was a positive faith: a sense of eternal being made it bold to affirm wherein all these names and forms failed to satisfy the highest demand. The Buddha, the "illumined, awakened" man, alone could know, in *nirvâna* beyond them all, the purpose and goal of life.

The Brahmans, it is true, soon came to regard the new movement as atheism. And this was natural; since it does not appear that Gotama and his earliest followers spent their thought on defining or even conceiving a *new* form of deity. It was precisely the absence of such definite form that their religious sentiment itself demanded; and they preached their ideal good simply as independence of the limits they criticised. It was counted atheism in Kapila when he denied an Iśwara,

an external Lord and interfering Providence. And here were others who dethroned all existing forms under which deity was conceived; who denied that even Brahmâ could offer an asylum in his own nature from the sorrowful doom of change and death that swept through all existence. To every recognized form of being; to every conception which had become fixed by usage or by instituted worship within definite lines of meaning, they applied one test, and the answer was always the same. They could admit no definite idea of deity, therefore, and no Name. But what was it, again let me ask, that could have *applied* this test of transiency, but an ever-present sense of the eternal? Of not less moment is the question: Does belief in deity reside essentially in definite ideas or names?[1]

No absolute atheism.

It does not yet appear that there is any just ground either in historic fact or rational thought for attributing absolute atheism to any people. Behind the most positive assertions of it, even in speculative philosophy, there seems to be very clear indication, or else implication, of the necessity, in every sane mind, to recognize a moral order, and an eternal principle of Rightness in some form sovereign in the universe, and competent to at least every result

[1] D'Alwis (*Buddhist Nirvâna*, p. 13) thinks that the doctrine of Buddhism from the outset was "*point-blank Atheism.*" Yet he admits that the belief in a First Cause is ineradicably "implanted in the soul;" that the savage and the Buddhist thinker are alike conscious of it; and that Buddha himself "did not ignore it." This First Cause, however, is (p 60) "nothing"(!) In other words, the representative of an ineradicable necessity for believing in something is — nothing at all; and that for a quarter of the human race. I, of course, would neither misrepresent the views of this evidently accomplished scholar, nor ascribe to them a manifest absurdity. The incongruity of the statements above quoted arises, I presume, from limiting the idea of God, which *is* ineradicable, to that of a definite creator (Iśwara) or Beginner, at a *first* moment of time; an idea which is as certainly quite outside the Buddhist line of vision, and is by *no* means ineradicable.

which we are wont in ordinary speech to ascribe to intelligence, and to intelligence alone.

Koeppen, himself an important authority on the history of Buddhism, gives a long list of co-authorities who affirm that it has "absolutely no trace of the idea of a God."[1] And this is the prevailing opinion of the Christian world. But writers who speak of *a* God will always be found to have given a meaning to the idea of God which involves more or less distinctly the Hebrew and Christian theory of an original creation, proceeding at a given time from a divine pre-existent Will. Buddhism, on the other hand, recognizes no such beginning, either to the chain of transient causes and effects, or to the revolutions of the worlds; and is therefore, by the theory in question, pure atheism.[2] But we must reflect that Mind considered in the former sense — as historically pre-existent to manifestation, and choosing it at a definite moment in its continuous life — is in reality thereby represented as *subject to the conditions of time*. It is not eternal in a true sense, since eternity knows no Before nor After. And such creative act at a definite moment, as the aforesaid critics insist on, would be, as Buddhism replies, but one of a series of acts *in time*, itself requiring a previous act, and so cannot reveal an original nor an eternal cause. And Buddhism may go further still. It may maintain that its own conception of a limitless *process of becoming*,[3] a manifestation of cause and effect without beginning or end, — although excluding creation in the Semitic

Buddhist "atheism."

[1] Koeppen, I. 228. See also Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters*, I. p. 229.

[2] Its attribution of birth and form, as such, to *avidya*, or ignorance, does not seem to be the admission of a first cause; since this reasoning has relation only to the generation of *conceptions* in the human mind. On the other hand, see *D'Alwis*, p. 15.

[3] Koeppen, I 230.

or the Christian sense, as well as an *Iśwara*, or individual Lord, — does not in any sense exclude *eternal Being*, which must, on the contrary, be assumed as ground for the endlessness of the Becoming. So much for the metaphysics of the question.

But, however other religions and civilizations may interpret their speculation, the Buddhists as a whole do somehow find their way to the satisfaction of an instinct which we may properly call universal; of which, at all events, we cannot, without the strongest evidence, conceive whole races and generations to be destitute. Koeppen has himself quoted passages in which the Buddha is addressed as "God of Gods, Brahma of Brahmas, Indra of Indras, Father of the world, Almighty and All-knowing, Ruler and Redeemer of all." [1]

The same writer asserts that the earliest Buddhists offered no prayer, because Buddha had entered nirvâna and could not hear; and that their so-called prayers were really only formulas of confession, hymns of praise, pious ejaculations, blessings, and uttered longings.[2] But devout aspirations are the proper substance of prayer, and are none the less recognition of a source of strength higher than human, for not consciously defining this in objective personal form, nor even taking the shape of direct invocation or address. There is more religion in one divine desire than in many beseechings. Later, as Koeppen himself concedes, the "Thou" was added; and the northern Buddhists, especially, have abundant forms of prayer, in which either Gotama Buddha, or the divine Triad of later ecclesiastical origin, or the earlier Buddhas

[1] Koeppen, I 430. So Hardy, *Manual*, pp. 360, 384, 386.

[2] Koeppen, I. 554, 555; Wuttke, II. 544. Also *Schlagintweit, Buddhism in Tibet*.

of this *kalpa* (age of the world), are addressed as conscious hearers of their worshippers; and it is added that a very slight alteration would render these effusions suitable for Christian worship.[1] In illustration, a Mongolian prayer is quoted,[2] of which I give a portion: —

"O Thou in whom all creatures trust, Buddha, perfected amidst countless revolutions of worlds, compassionate towards all, and their eternal salvation, bend down into this our sphere, with all thy society of perfected ones. Thou law of all creatures, brighter than the sun, in faith we humble ourselves before thee. Thou who completest all pilgrimage, who dwellest in the world of rest, before whom all is but transient, descend by thy almighty power, and bless us."

Every attribute of deity, the creative only excepted, is freely ascribed to the Buddha by his worshippers: omnipotence, omnipresence, perfect love and bliss.[3] The modern schools of the south generally believe in "absorption into the supreme and infinite Buddha."[4] Ritter does not hesitate to affirm the essential feature of Buddhism to be, that a man, freeing himself from obstacles of nature by holiness, may save his fellow-man from the corruption of the times and become supreme God."[5] Here, just as in Christianity, the religious sentiment, while concentrating itself on a human deity, nevertheless really invested his humanity with an infinite meaning. So far indeed as the concentration is exclusive in either case, exacting worship as the due of this *one* man, in absolute distinction from all other actual or possible men, it indicates imperfect recognition of that divineness of the human, on which

[1] Koeppen, I. 554, 555; Wuttke, II. 544. [2] *Pallas*, II. 386.
[3] Franck, *Études Orientales*, p. 46.
[4] Bigandet, *Legend of the Burmese Buddha*, p. 320.
[5] *Hist. Anc. Philos.*, I. 94–96.

it substantially rests; and this defect only freedom and intelligence can correct. But in none of these crude forms of belief can the idealization which puts a historical person in the place of the Infinite be properly called atheism. To the Buddha of the East as to the Christ of the West were really ascribed those powers which made up the popular conception of *Deity*.

It is to be observed, further, that Buddhahood itself is held to be perpetual reproduction of an eternal fact. An endless succession of Buddhas must associate the idea itself with infinity, and lift Buddha-worship above the evanescence that will attach to all these personal forms in their *individual* capacity. The particular Buddha must be to an extent lost, for the worshipper, in the exhaustless productivity of that Intelligence of which he is but one expression.

This deeper logic of faith cannot, it is true, wholly overcome the tendency to concentrate worship on some one personage; a tendency which is found in all positive religions, and is associated with natural gratitude and love. Yet Buddhism has been fertile in the production of *new* centres of worship, adapted to different ages and races. Its later mythology in the north is not wanting in names of *ideal* saints, *Dhyani Bodhisattvas*, who have been venerated like Gotama. The most important of these are *Amitabha*, or Everlasting Light; *Mandshuśri*, the mild Holy One; and *Avalokiteśwara*, the "Lord who looks down on men:" to whom it is believed the Thibetans address their sacred formula, *Om mani padmé hôm*, — "*O the Jewel in the Lotus.*" [1]

Avalokiteśwara is the manifested deity in Thibetan

[1] Koeppen, II. 20–28, 60.

Buddhism; who vows "to manifest himself to every creature in the universe; to deliver all men from the consequences of sin, and never to arrive at Buddhahood till all are born into the divine rest, receiving answer to their prayers." "He himself hears and answers every prayer, and they who trust in him are secure."[1]

Buddhist trinities.

It is interesting to notice how similar are the forms which an immature theism has assumed in the efforts of very dissimilar races to fix the religious ideal in one personality, and develop its faith and cultus around this centre. Thus a divine triad has been adored by the Buddhists both of the North and of the South, from comparatively early times. Just as the first Christians combined their devotion to Christ with veneration for his gospel and his apostles, so Buddha was united with *Dharma*, the Law, and *Samgha*, the teachers, or the Assembly.[2] Out of these elements was developed a metaphysical trinity: Intelligence; Law, as its manifestation; and the unity of the two in Holiness.[3] Cosmological triads also are found in northern Buddhism; such as mind, matter, and their unity.[4] In Nepâl and Thibet the forms of trinity become distinctly personal; and some of them startle the European traveller by their resemblance to the ontological speculations of the later German schools,[5] as well as to forms of the Christian Trinitarian dogma.[6] Koeppen calls these theories "Buddhistic but in name," as derived from Sivaistic or other influences; but they

[1] Beal's *Catena of Buddhist Scripture*, pp. 376, 406.

[2] Lassen, II. 1084, Koeppen, I. 373; Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, p. 209; Bigandet, p. 1. Most Buddhist works begin with invocation to these three.

[3] Abel Rémusat, *Sur la Relig. Samanéenne.*

[4] Cunningham, *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 36.

[5] Koeppen, I. 550–553. [6] *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures*, pp. 103, 104.

are certainly made up of Buddhist elements; and, if not found in the earlier phases of this religion, they are none the less natural growths within it, accompanying its metaphysical canon, and tend to refute the charge that it involves, of necessity, even *speculative* atheism.

Âdibuddha.

Indo-Scythian coins and the temples of Nepâl afford proof that the belief in a supreme, all-seeing Buddha, represented by two Eyes as symbols of intelligence, was current in those regions at least as early as the beginning of the Christian era.[1]

The Nepâlese say that "*Swayambhu*, the self-existent, called Âdibuddha, was when nothing else was. He wished to become *many*, and produced the Buddhas through union with his desire. Âdibuddha was never seen. He is pure light."[2] In the topes dedicated to this deity, no deposits of relics have been found; but the symbolic Eyes were placed on the sides or the crown of the edifice.[3] Lassen even believes that the recognition of supreme Mind can be traced back by these vestiges alone to the earliest Buddhists.[4] The school which worships Âdibuddha is perhaps confined to regions where external influences have been active.[5] Bastian, however, in his recent work on Central Asia, an immense collection of personal observations, tells us that the Buddhists generally, in that part of the world, worship *Abida*, as the highest God, to whom all perfections are ascribed. "Abida's thought is almighty. All spirits of thought are subject to his sway. He, the father of the gods, knows all, past, present, and to come."[6]

[1] Lassen, II 1084. [2] Hodgson in *Transact. R. A. Soc.*, II. 232, 238.
[3] *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 8. [4] *Ut supra.*
[5] Koeppen, II. 28, 29, 366; Wilson's *Relig. of Hindus*, II. 361.
[6] Bastian, p. 567. See also, for theistic sects, Salisbury's Essay in *Hist. of Buddhism, in Amer. Or. Journ.* for 1849.

That later Buddhist metaphysics sometimes, as in the *Prajnâ Pâramitâ*, press the sense of transcience and illusion to the point of declaring that "even the highest names are but words, not signs of realities," is true.[1] One school affirms Buddha's personal appearance to have been illusion, as the Docetists did that of Jesus. So their dialectic, as we have seen, deals in the antinomies of the understanding, and shows plainly enough that logical processes cannot establish certitude. Nihilism.

These metaphysical portions of the canon are as thoroughly nihilistic as words can make them. But the words give a large margin for interpretation, and we must read between their lines. Buddha says in the Prajnâ Pâramitâ: "I must conduct to Nirvâna the innumerable creatures; yet there exist neither creatures to be conducted thither, nor creatures to conduct them." "*Not less*," he adds, "*are all these creatures to be conducted there.* How is this? Because an illusion constitutes them as they are."[2] In other words, the illusory present existence, and the reality of *nirvâna*, are alike to be recognized and acted on, as *facts*. The same work says of the saint, who has risen above "seizing the form," that he "has not attained nirvâna because he has not reached the eighteen distinct conditions of a Buddha."[3] Eighteen distinct conditions, after having laid aside the whole conception of definite forms! Is it not plain that this negative phraseology has but little of that strictness of meaning it would have with us?

But there is another element in the question. Metaphysical or logical processes, however skeptical

[1] See extracts collected by Wuttke, II. 536, and Wilson, II. 364.
[2] Burnouf, p. 478. [3] Ibid., p. 470.

or even nihilistic, do not necessarily imply positive atheism; since the protest of the *moral* nature against that conclusion may be such as to transcend all *speculative* objections to the idea of God, and is not to be set aside in any case by arguments drawn from the understanding alone. Such negative processes in fact do not imply even *speculative* atheism, but may become the very ground on which deity is affirmed to be the only essential reality.[1]

The Alexandrian philosophers, for instance, tracked the phenomenal through every possible form of its conception with their probe of metaphysical negation; yet only to reach beyond them all, beyond reasoning, or the thinking faculty, beyond reason itself as an active force (ἐπεκεινα τοῦ νὸν), one indivisible, eternal Substance, whereof nothing real or perfect could be denied.[2] And for the attainment of real being they affirmed the necessary condition to be a divine exaltation (ἐκστᾶσις) of the mind through this abdication of the selfhood, this negation of all finiteness. The Buddhist *dhyanas*, or stages of contemplation, and the so-called "formless worlds" which are the nearest stages to *nirvâna*, answer in many respects to this ecstasy of Platonic mystics. The parallelism is remarkable, and points to the conclusion that nihilistic speculations should never be conceived as having satisfied the whole spiritual demand of those who have pursued them, never be made the gauge for testing the possibilities of a religion to which they may be referred.

"Take away nihilism," it has been said, "and you

[1] There is, however, no evidence that the statements of the *Prajnâ Pâramitâ* are those of Buddha himself. Burnouf, *Introd. to Buddh.*, p. 483.

[2] See especially Plotinus, *Enneads*, V. iii, vi.

take away the only remedy, to the Buddhist, for the danger of existence."[1] This depends, of course, on the meaning we give to terms. It is at least equally true that if you *allow* nihilism, you take away all motive in the Buddhist for seeking freedom from existence. "Life," says the same writer, "arises [in Buddhist belief] from absence of knowledge. Call it ignorance, or what you will, it is nothing."[2] But, here again, we may say: the "life" that arises from *absence* of knowledge must be of that nature which its *presence* would abolish; and therefore cannot be life in an absolute sense, since the presence of knowledge *without* life is a self-contradiction.

It is certain, whatever may be true of metaphysical statements, that neither nihilism nor atheism characterizes the mass of Buddhist literature, the rites of the Buddhist Church, or, as a whole, the sects into which it has become divided.[3] It would indeed be fatal to our hopes for human nature, if we could be forced to believe that four hundred millions of at least partially civilized people have made a religion out of the love of nonentity, or indeed out of mere negation in any form. The apparent atheism of the Buddhist is, in substance, opposition to the idea of an external God, limited and individual, acting in imperfect human ways. This view is illustrated by a work, recently translated from the Siamese, written in defence of Buddhism against Christianity, by the minister of the late king of Siam, and called "The Modern Budd-

[1] D'Alwis, p. 21. [2] Ibid.

[3] Burnouf (*Introd.*, p. 441) thinks the *Svâbhâvika* School of Nepâl deny a spiritual principle. Babu Râjendralâl Mitra says (*Journ. Bengal As. Soc*, xxvii.): "The Buddhists are theists, and believers in immortality." He even seeks to point out affinities between Buddhist and Odinic trinities.

hist."[1] "If God," he argues, "makes the rain, he should make it fall equally all over the earth." "If fever is a visitation of God, there would be no running away from it." It is evidently the capricious God of the Christian missionaries who is here disproved upon their own ground. Again, his apparently antitheistic statement — that "the divine Spirit is but the actual spirit or disposition of man, good or evil" — refers to the *karma*, or moral law, as sovereign in every human soul, the expression of a divine unchangeable Order, dealing with the characters of each. This statement in reality emphasizes the inward unity of God with man. And in inviting "comparison between the idea of a divinity going about in all directions, and Buddha's idea that the divine all-knowing Bestower of rewards and punishments is merit and demerit (karma) itself," the writer is but exalting the eternal sway of justice, as against the arbitrary God of Christian dogma.

Müller's view.

Müller agrees with Burnouf and St. Hilaire, men nowise comparable with him in spiritual insight and recognition, in pronouncing Gotama an atheist. Yet he admits that tradition is an unsafe guide, and that the "atheism," whatever it might mean, did not consist in any distinct denial of the existence either of gods or of God.[2] In his Introduction to the Dhammapada, however (p. xxxi.), this eminent authority quotes from Spence Hardy's "Legends of Buddhism," and Gogerly's translations of the Sutras, in proof that such absolute denial can hardly be doubted. Yet these passages are apparently but affirmations of superiority to all the old deities, and refutations of the claims of Brahmâ in special, placed

[1] Alabaster, *Wheel of the Law.* [2] *Chips*, I. 287.

in the mouth of Buddha by his disciples. At most their negation seems but to cover the idea of a purely external creator, a distinct and separate cause; and they are not inconsistent with a pantheistic recognition of infinite Intelligence immanent in the worlds and forms of being. It is singular that the excellence of Gotama's moral doctrine and the purity and nobility of his life, which forbade Müller to believe that he could have "thrown away so powerful a weapon in the hands of a religious teacher" as the belief in immortality, should not have seemed to him a sufficient answer to the charge of atheism also.[1] And the positiveness of Müller's statement on this point is the more surprising, from the fact that he finds no authority for believing that Buddha really instituted the metaphysical doctrines ascribed to him, or had other than a very simple popular philosophy of life.[2]

What refutes the charge?

Just here is indeed the real answer to the indictment brought by Christian theism against the faith of more than a third of the human race. For all its penetrating sense of a doom of sorrow and death attached to every conceivable form of life, for all its weariness of the endless recurrence of transmigrations and the "bonds of action," Buddhism did not consign men over to the sensualist's "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." It drew a different conclusion from its premise of pain. It said in substance: "So be it then. Yet shalt thou not despair, but freely accept destiny, and abandon desire for things that cannot satisfy because they cannot endure. Release thyself from such desire: release others, release all men; and believe that thou canst do this,

[1] See articles on *Buddhism* and *Nirvâna*, in *Chips*, &c, I. 234, 287.
[2] Ibid., p. 225. So also Weber, *Vorlesungen*, p. 253, 267.

and that it is well worth thy while and theirs that it be done. And do this by self-sacrifice, mercy, justice, trust in each other; by every form of moral discipline, every possibility of love. Let the very burdens of the common lot lift you to such high faith and purpose, such energy of mutual help."

"What is the *fruit of the Bodhisattva's thought?* — Answer: Higher morality, higher perception of truth, great love, great pity." "A spirit exempt from anger; a spirit of compassion for the wandering; a spirit which forbids falling away from wisdom; a spirit of perseverance to the end."

"What is his *rule of duty?* — To attach himself with high desire to all laws of virtue; not to despise the ignorant; to be a friend to all men; to expect no more from transmigration."

"What his *bliss?* — The joy of having seen a Buddha; of having heard the law; of not repenting in giving; of having procured the good of all creatures."

"What his *health?* — The sound body; the mind not drawn to perishing things; bringing all beings into right and equal condition; freedom from doubt, on every law."

"To what should he adhere? — To meditation, to beneficence; to compassionate love; to the disciplines of wisdom.

"Since consciousness, body, life, self, are illusion, *therefore* is there perfection in morality, in ecstasy, in wisdom, in release." [1]

The substance of religion.

Truth, justice, love, — these at least were real. Through abysses of "nihilism" itself, if so it be called, certainly out of the dreary bondage of transmigration, man reached upward to grasp these, undoubting; nay, more, with ardor and zeal.

"The worlds may be blown away in a storm; the sun and moon may fall; the rivers may turn back to their sources; the sky may be rent, the earth destroyed; Mahâ Meru be broken to pieces: but the Buddhas cannot utter an untruth." [2]

[1] *Doctrine of the Four Perfections*, from *Sutras of the Great Vehicle*. See Feer, in *Journal Asiatique* for 1867, pp 279-316 Yet writers of ability and a liberal spirit speak of this faith as having its root in selfishness, and meaning only self-absorption!

[2] *Legends of Buddha*, in Hardy's *Manual*, p. 332!

The eternal light of morality shone clear, rendering an idea of destiny nobly productive, in which other religions read grounds for despair only. If such faith is atheistic, then must we allow to one form of atheism, at least, the meaning of worship. In the theoretic denial, what practical affirmation of deity!

It is indeed the truth of all time, and deep as human experience, that he who holds fast to moral realities is at one with the eternally real itself. One may disclaim all knowledge of God, yet his adherence to these shall preserve the loyalty which is absolute trust and faith, and possess the substance of freedom and truth. Is it not plain that deity may be verbally and intellectually disavowed, simply because too intimate and familiar to be outwardly observed; because, in fact, no other than the seer's very eye itself, by which he sees?

Value of Buddhist ethics.

The more absolute the theoretic negation of deity, then, the more positive would become the religious value of a moral idealism, associated with it, in some respects unsurpassed in human history. What if Buddhism be found to have swept all conceivable objects of faith into an "abysmal negation"? Yet so earnest, so believing, so devout was it in the pursuit of this, that the very negation flushed into life; became a positive ground of faith, an *entity* real and divine. This is perfectly conceivable. And it is also certain as a matter of history. Practically, the negation which the devout Buddhist pronounced against existence was somehow resolved, for him, into a best, a highest goal; in a word, *into deity*. For what else is that which men long for, cherish, love, adore? What else shall we call that which stirs them to generous conduct, to ideal aspiration, and bears fruit in pure morality?

We come then to the word by which Buddhism expressed the end of human striving, the issue of all good. This "*nirvâna*," confidently supposed to have been nothingness, — how can it have been so to those who conceived it definitely as the eternal fact of the universe; and who affirmed positively all their lives, "*nirvâna is*," striving with all their might to reach it, and to help other men to do the same, by all the love and sacrifice they could devote? I am persuaded that this all-reconciling home — whose depths, filled with the saints of innumerable ages, invited all hearts to the fulfilment of their best desire — better deserves the name of deity than of nonentity; of Life than of "the Void." Grant the passivity of the Oriental ideal; yet ideal it is, or it could never have roused Oriental passivity to such a movement as Buddhism. Ample testimony to the truth that man loves to affirm more than to deny; that in some form he has ever kept his intuition of God.[1]

[1] Hints of this have not wholly failed to strike such writers as Hardwick, who, though seeking for contrasts with what he regards as revelations peculiar to Christianity, admits that northern Buddhism "has retained the lingering idea of some great Being, superior to the highest created entities and the source of ultimate felicity. The very Buddha who persisted in ignoring the Creator was sometimes raised to this dignity, while Nirvâna itself was changed by popular imagination into a paradise." And Muller, a more impartial scholar, who believes that "the feeling of dependence, which is the life-spring of religion, was completely numbed in the early Buddhist metaphysicians," grants that it "returned with increased warmth." Hardwick, II. 95. Müller's *Chips*, I. 284.

II.

NIRVÂNA.

NIRVÂNA.

WE may illustrate by this term the practical impossibility of pure negation. Etymology at least fails to bear out the confident assurances of Burnouf, Koeppen, Weber, and others, that its "extinction of the lamp of existence" means absolute annihilation. Nirvâna is from *nir*, separation from, and *vâ*, wind.[1] The simplest and most natural meaning seems to be, not "blown out," but "no more waving," as from presence of wind, no more restlessness and change. It is familiar to Brahmanical literature as synonymous with words signifying release, emancipation, the highest good.[2] It is similarly defined by the intense longings of devotees, who seek nirvâna as "the further shore;" "the port beyond the ocean of pain;" "the medicine that cures all disease;" "the water that quenches all thirst;" "complete fruition and salvation;" "the city reached by the path of universal knowledge, blessedness, peace."[3] Every word that can mean beatitude as a positive state comes to hand

Nirvâna a positive state.

[1] See the *Sanskrit Dictionaries* of Burnouf and Monier Williams

[2] Müller, *Chips*, I. 282. He gives the word the meaning *blown out*, following Hindu lexicographers. Yet he does not find it used in the sense of annihilation in the older parts of the Buddhist scriptures. *Introd. to Dhammapada.* Colebrooke defines it as "profound calm." *Essays*, I. 402.

[3] Koeppen, I. 304; Burnouf, 442.

in description of this apparent negation. Figurative as they are, these expressions imply that what they describe was an object of supreme desire. It has inspired the imagination; it has allured the affections; it has aroused the moral sense; it has stimulated to incessant watch over the passions. It has translated itself into psalms; it has flowed into mythology; it has planted, and builded, and civilized, in missions that are miracles of zeal and toil. Philosophical treatises distinctly aver that, "to him who attains it, *nirvâna* exists."[1] Indubitably so, we should say, or why should he *seek* to attain it? Why are millions travelling its "paths," that shine with the hope of salvation?

Testimony of the Dhammapada.

But we can go back to more positive testimony. The *Dhammapada*, or "Path of Virtue," is perhaps the oldest record of Buddhist faith.[2] As such it is believed to have come to the hands of Buddhaghosha, a Brahman convert of great learning, in the fifth century, in Ceylon. In his translation of the oldest commentaries on the law, out of Singhalese into Pâli, its sentences are referred directly to Gotama Buddha himself; and the circumstances under which they were uttered given in detail. They formed part of an ancient collection, transmitted, it was believed, by the son of the great Buddhist king, Aśoka, after being established as genuine by the famous council held (B.C. 246) at Pâtaliputra. They are referred to in the monumental inscriptions left by that monarch, the most trustworthy data in Hindu history. The style is plain and direct, the morality free from tech-

[1] *Milinda Praśna*, quoted by Müller, *Chips*, I. 289.

[2] D'Alwis (p. 29) regards it as a collection of sentences from the Pitakas, which are compilations, in the main (page 17–18), of Gotama's discourses, by his disciples.

nical or mythological accretions; and the whole work bears marks of having originated in the early ages of the faith. It is not possible to assign its first appearance in a written form to a later period than the first century B.C.[1] The testimony of this best of witnesses to the substance of primitive Buddhism establishes the fact that *nirvâna*, far from meaning annihilation in an absolute sense, was positive exaltation and blessedness, expected to follow upon deliverance from special forms and embodiments, through detachment from the *khandas*, or elements of individuality, regarded as grounds of successive births (*sansâra*), from grief, impurity, disease, selfishness, passion, sin; in other words, a reality, which nothing in all this fateful sequence of transmigrative existence could express; an open door of freedom and release, into unknown and unimagined good; if a dream, certainly *not* a dream of death, but of escape from death.

"Patience is the highest *nirvâna:* this the word of the Buddhas."

"They who are of a thoughtful mind, constant, ever putting forth a wise energy, attain this, the highest bliss."

"Health is utmost gain; content, the best wealth; trust, the best friend; *nirvâna*, the highest joy."

"Tear away attachments (self-love) from thy being, as an autumn lotus with thy hand; and make thy way open to *nirvâna*, to rest."

"Hunger is the worst disease; embodiment, the greatest pain; to know this is *nirvâna*, the highest joy."

"He who has thoughtfulness and insight dwells near to *nirvâna*"

[1] This is the opinion of Dr. Weber, who has given a careful version of the work in German (*Ztsch. d. D. M G.*, 1860), compiled from the Pâli text of three manuscripts, aided by the commentary of Buddhaghosha. He attaches great value to the tradition of its extreme antiquity; and regards it as "in the highest degree probable that a large portion of these strophes are either verbally Gotama's, or contain his precepts put into metrical form by his disciples." Similar views as to the date of the work are expressed by Muller in the introduction to his translation (1870), which I am glad to be able to compare with Weber's before printing the extracts made from the latter, in preparing the present volume. See also Lassen, IV. 283.

"If like a trumpet when it is broken, thou art not roused [to speech], thou art near *nirvâna*: anger is not known in thee [or, there is no noisy clamor to thee]."

"The true sage is he who knows his former abodes, who sees heaven and hell, who *has reached the end of births*, and is perfect in wisdom."

"He who pays homage to such as *have found deliverance*, and know no fear, his merit cannot be measured."

"They who have given up attachments, and rejoice without clinging to any thing, whose frailties have been conquered, and who are full of light, *are free*, even in this world."

"He who has deep insight and wisdom, who knows the right way and the wrong, he who *has attained the highest goal*, him call I a Brahmana."

"He who has given up pleasure and pain, indifferent to both, who is *without ground* (*or germ*) *for new birth*, who has overcome all worlds, him call I a Brahmana."

"I have conquered all, I know all, in all conditions of life I am free from taint; I have left all, and through destruction of thirst I am free: having learned myself, whom shall I teach?"

"Reflection is the path of immortality: they who reflect do not die."[1]

Nirvâna is "the uncreated, the ineffable, the immortal;" "the place of repose and bliss, where embodiments cease;" "the other shore, beyond the power of death, where one is thoughtful, guileless, free from doubt and from all desires, and content."[2] The

[1] *Dhammapada*, vv. 184, 23, 204, 285, 203, 372, 134, 423, 195, 196, 89, 403, 418, 353, 21.

[2] Ibid., 383, 218, 21, 374, 114, 368, 423, 85, 86, 384, 414. D'Alwis translates these phrases somewhat differently from Müller and Weber, in accordance with his belief that nirvâna is nonentity. The difference consists in turns of expression, which are more capable of negative meaning, yet without really requiring it. For "immortality" he substitutes *non-liability to death*, as meaning escape from such liability *into nothingness*; for "place" he reads *lot* or *state*, as more suitable to the metaphorical intention of the Pâli term. It is not very apparent how (v. 221) the forsaking of *rupa* and *nâma*, "body and soul" (*lit.*, form and name), involves the "distinct denial of a soul," in any absolute sense. Mr. D'Alwis's careful enumeration of forty-six words descriptive of nirvâna is of great value; but their literal meaning, even as he gives it, fails to convince me of the justice of his conclusion. Here are some of them: "To shine;" "island, whence lot or state, of safety;" "destruction of desire;" "freedom from annoy;" "the dreadless [state];" "the endless;" "protection;" "sleep;" "the path;" "the other shore." To some a negative sense is ascribed by what seems to be a materialistic assumption. Thus "the formless" is further defined as

Dhammapada is full of exhortations to detachment from perishable things, and to the taming of passions and selfish desires, as well as to practical goodness, in order to attain its joy and peace and liberty.

It is observable that *nirvâna* is always coupled with the active experiences of virtues, and powers over sense. Relations of the word

"He who has entered the *void* (or, who knows the uncreated), *and* has renounced all desires."

"He who has attained the end, *and* who is fearless, having demolished the thorns of existence."[1]

To similar effect is a passage from the Vinaya, which D'Alwis (p. 35) translates thus: —

"He who has cut off the roots has made himself nonentity, and has acquired the nature of freedom from regeneration."

The same critic quotes this passage also as proving *nirvâna* to be pure negation: —

"In nirvâna, of which the mind alone can form a conception, which the eye cannot see, which is endless and every way glorious, there is neither earth, water, fire, nor air, small nor great, good nor evil; and vijnâna (consciousness) is extinguished."

It is obvious that extinction and negation are here conceived in a sense not inconsistent with invisible spiritual life, real enough to be "endless and glorious."

"that which is invisible to the senses, — *a nonentity;*" "not well brought together" as "*non-being;*" and "the unseen" as "that which has no example and no existence;" a synonymy which the authority of the most capable scholar could not induce us to accept Nirvâna is promised in *this* life; whence Mr. D'Alwis infers that there must have been an *imperfect* form of nirvâna. The promise would seem at least as competent to prove that true nirvâna was believed to be consistent with life. The use of phrases implying a positive state he explains by the necessity of metaphorical language for all definition. But unfortunately the metaphors do not even *suggest* nonentity. Childers also (*Notes on Dhammap*, *Journ. R. A. S.*, 1871) argues that there were two forms of *nirvâna*, a partial and a complete; and that the word is used in both these senses: which may be quite true, yet does not make it probable that the complete form was something diametrically contrary, in its very essence, to the incomplete.

[1] Ibid., 97, 351.

Other testimonies.

We should naturally expect a greater emphasis on the negative side, a deeper sense of the perishableness of forms, in the *beginning* of this great protest against them, than when later familiarity with the thought should bring in the natural longing for positive issues of life, and results of moral endeavor. It is therefore especially significant that even in this earliest record of Buddhism we find such intense aspiration after *reality* through whatsoever sacrifice of phenomenal existence. Later stages of the faith are believed to show *nirvâna* still more definitely as a positive state. The "Lotus of the Good Law" tells of saints who have not only entered it in the present life, but reappeared in after ages to listen to the preaching of its tidings;[1] and the legends represent the Buddha himself as rejoicing at having attained this extinction of desire, and afterwards travelling from place to place, needing no other food than "the fruition of nirvâna."[2] In his youth he says: "When I have reached supreme wisdom, I will assemble all living beings, and show them the *path of immortality;* withdrawing them from the ocean of creation, I will establish them in patience, and give them the pure eye of the law."[3] And before his death, he promises to reveal to his followers his shining form, after having passed from them into final beatitude.[4] Even centuries afterwards, he is still looked to as worker of miracles, and addressed as beholder and guide of human affairs. St. Hilaire's explanation, that there are two forms of nirvâna, a complete and an incomplete, does not meet these

[1] *Lotus*, ch. xi. See also the legend of Kâsyapa. *Journ. R. A. S.*, XX. 203.

[2] Hardy, *Manual*, pp. 179–182. Müller, *Chips*, I. 233. The meaning of these references, however, does not seem to be very clear.

[3] St. Hilaire, p. 11.

[4] *Lotus*, ch. x.

instances, where the *supreme end* of sainthood is represented as positive and active existence.

"In nirvâna" [with the northern Buddhists], says Bastian, "is no longer either birth or death: only the essence of life remains. Nirvâna is nowhere (in no special place), only because it is all-embracing and all-pervading."[1] "Far from being annihilation, as such, it is in fact annihilation of delusion, and therefore the real itself."[2] Baur gives a similar interpretation: "Nirvâna is the purely immaterial and absolute; the state to which the soul attains, when it has freed itself from all relation to material forms."[3]

"No one," says Bigandet, of the Burmese, "openly admits in practice that *ncibban* and annihilation are synonymous terms: the perfected being is believed to retain his individuality, but is merged, as it were, in the abstract truth, in which he lives and rests for ever." The same writer, however, thinks that annihilation is plainly taught in the philosophical works.[4]

Sangermano gives an account of the laws of Gotama, drawn up by a Burmese talapoin in 1763, in which *nirvâna* is defined as "a state exempt from birth, old age, sickness, and death. Nothing can give an idea of it; but exemption from these and a perfect security are the things in which it consists."[5]

"The Siamese," says Alabaster,[6] "always refer to *nirvâna* as to something existing. It is a place of comfort, where there is no care." "Lovely is the glorious realm of *nirvâna*, the jewelled realm of happiness." But the ordinary Siamese do not trouble

[1] *Reisen in China*, p. 490. He mentions also works which specify two kinds of *nirvâna*
[2] *Die Weltauffassung der Buddhisten* (Berlin, 1870), p. 22.
[3] *Die Christliche Gnosis*, p. 58.
[4] Bigandet, p. 321.
[5] *Descript. of the Burm Emp.*, p. 80.
[6] *Wheel of the Law*, p 165.

themselves about it: they believe virtue will be rewarded by going to heaven.[1]

Chinese works describe this "condition in which is neither birth nor death" "Nirvâna is not like the pitcher not yet made, nor like the pitcher's nothingness when it is broken; nor like the hair of a tortoise, something imaginary. It is nothingness defined as absence of something different from itself; of covetousness, aversion, delusion."[2] The Chinese Buddhists translate nirvâna by a word that means *absolute stillness* and *rest*.[3] The Thibetans all interpret it as "emancipation."[4]

Gotama is recorded in the Lalitavistâra to have learned from a *Brahman* the way to "the place where there are neither ideas nor the absence of ideas;" and the Brahmanical descriptions of "deliverance" deal in similar negations of all possible forms of cognition. In view of all this, it is but reasonable to believe that we have, as the ideal of this Buddhist extinction, more or less clearly conceived, a complete *absorption* into freedom, from which all definite form was excluded more rigidly than in the Brahmanical, as possibility of bondage to death; a state of absolute security from renewal of a life subject to fatal changes; an escape from the limitations of consciousness and the illusions of separate existence into that ineffable life in the eternal, which to mystic faith in all ages waits *beyond* such death.[5] It is certain that "extinction" and "absorption" were left equally undefined in Hindu faith, and the distinction between them may have consisted in an intenser sense of the facts of

[1] *Wheel of the Law*, xxxviii. [2] Beal, *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures*, p. 174.
[3] Neumann, *Catechism of the Shamans*, p. 40. [4] Burnouf, p. 19.
[5] Franck, *Études Orientales*, p. 40.

sorrow, pain, and death on the part of the Buddhists than of the Brahmans; prompting them to stronger emphasis on the *negative* aspect of deliverance from these woes, on the hope that these should be *no more*, and at the same time to more earnest philanthropy in proclaiming the deliverance to mankind.

What *nirvâna*, his divine relief, was, Gotama himself does not seem to have attempted to explain.[1] How was it possible, save in the general way of absolute trust in its all-sufficiency, as shown in the sentences of the Dhammapada? And all the negations of his speculative followers do but serve to point us back to some deeper sense of infinite reality which no forms could satisfy and no terms define. It is but the old inevitable cry of renunciation, and its answering prophecy and release.

"Stop the stream valiantly, drive away the desires, O Brahmana! When you have understood the destruction of all that was made, you will understand that which was *not* made."[2]

The steps by which, in later developments of the contemplative life, *nirvâna* was to be attained, indicate that these negations were very far from being conceived in an absolute sense. In his spiritual progress, the ascetic passes through the four *dhyânas*, or "powers of abstraction," which correspond with the *gnosis* of the Greeks, and may be defined somewhat as follows: (1) satisfaction in processes of reasoning; (2) withdrawal from these into the peace and joy of contemplation; (3) gradual release from definite forms of self-consciousness and from limitations of memory, through indifference to them, into the infinite illuminating power of the faculties, still accompanied

Testimony of the dhyanas.

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 132. [2] *Dhammapada*, v. 383.

by enjoyment of the soul's relations to the senses; (4) perfect fulfilment of these energies, with escape from all dependence on the senses. — So far, we have steps in the "world of forms." After these follow the "formless worlds," through which the ecstatic contemplation of the saint leads him upward, in succession: (1) The infinity of space; (2) of intelligence; (3) non-existence; (4) non-existence of ideas, and the nothingness even of that fact; (5) the hindrance; (6) "nirvâna."[1] Impossible as it is to follow Oriental reverie through these regions of its flight, it is yet certain that the saint passes through "nonentity" again and again, yet is in a state of contemplation still. What can the "extinction" be to which such "non-existence" can lead? The shadowy word-play can prove only that entity and nonentity had no such strictness of meaning in this contemplative devotion as they have in the analytic mind of the West.

Meaning of these stages of devotion.

The endless repetitions and recurrences of *numbers* in Buddhist mythology are not to be taken in a literal sense: they indicate simply the perpetual *monotone* by which the dreamer's imagination is limited, and to which it perpetually returns. So these successive stages in the path of liberation, ever returning to some new formula of the same constant idea of "nonentity," and again and again attempting closer approximation to the statement of it, can hardly be supposed to indicate real processes of transition, a definite order and series of experiences. They seem to mean that the dreamer's soul was for ever haunted by boundless discontent with all definite forms under which life could present itself to

[1] For these stages, see account given in Koeppen, I. 587–592. Burnouf's *Lotus*, 814, 543, 824. St. Hilaire (p 158) omits the fifth stage.

minds without practical knowledge of the laws of nature, in their dealing with hereditary belief in endless transmigration and "bonds of action." They mean the inevitable, ever-recurring aspiration for release from this sad cadence which marred every utterance of the past, present, or future. In every one of these stages, in the last as well as the first, in the innermost ultimate forms to which the "nothingness" of ideas and of worlds could be traced, there still remained *the soul itself:* contemplation was still the fact of facts; and "deliverance" was a living hope till it became a full fruition.

But we have other evidence to the same effect. The nearly perfect saint, on reaching "the hindrance," may be impelled by his own nobler desires — then more than ever active and inspired, as it would seem, with the love of life's uses and opportunities — to return into new paths of discipline; and this after passing through so many forms of "nonentity"! Beyond him are other classes of saints, some of whom have delivered *themselves* from the "bonds of existence," and others have freed multitudes of their fellow-men. Yet whoever has reached the brink of fruition can, if he will, forego it for the benefit of mankind, and pass again through the sorrowful bondage with his brethren, to share with them the sure release. Now these *Bodhisattvas* (essential saints), thus able, at their own will, did they but choose to exert it, to pass into extinction at a step, after all these stages of approximate "nonentity," are found possessed of what qualities? "Morality, contemplation, wisdom, patience, compassion, energy!"[1] If this is an approach to "ex-

Return from the verge of Nirvâna.

[1] Koeppen, I. 424. These are the "pâramitâs," or six "transcendent virtues."

tinction," it is manifest that the word must take quite other than its current meaning in our modern speech. Does it not refer us rather, once more, to the "beatitude" of the old Christian mystics, who loved to say, "In nothingness is all"?

Intelligence of the arhat.

The intense, unqualified language of contemplative piety, which knows no shades of degree or kind, describes the *arhat* (advanced saint) as one "whose virtues have lifted him above all the worlds;" as "looking over, at death, into nirvâna, free from all attachment; regarding gold and dust as alike; knowing no difference of great and small; turned away from existence, from honor, pleasure, gain, yet worshipped and blessed by all divine beings."[1] How does he indicate that the "lamp of existence and intelligence" is about to be "extinguished," after all these preparatory steps to that end? By the ebbing away of the last waves of dying mind? The very opposite. He is "acquainted with all science, and possessed of perfect insight." Here are his gifts. The science of transformations, or occult powers; the divine eye, beholding all beings and worlds at a glance; the divine ear, hearing all sounds in all worlds; knowledge of the thoughts of all creatures; remembrance of all earlier forms of existence; foresight of all future births.[2] And these powers are acquired by the combination of "indifference with intense attention!"[3] All this may be a child's dream of omnipotence, or a glimpse of man's infinite relations, or a hyperbole of man-worship which only Oriental habits of thought can explain. But it cannot be believed that a path which culminated in this could have been believed *to lead on, with one*

[1] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 38; Koeppen, I. 406. [2] Ibid. [3] *Lotus*, 819.

step more, into the nirvâna of Burnouf and St. Hilaire.

In fine, I must say that Bunsen seems to me to come much nearer the satisfactory solution of the ideal goal of Buddhist faith, when he calls nirvâna "*inward peace*," and even maintains that no thought can be farther from it than that of annihilation of being, as we should understand this.[1] The author of the "Catena of Buddhist Scriptures" admits that "the idea of nirvâna as annihilation must be confined to one period in the history of the system, during which scholastic refinement *sought to define the condition of the Infinite.*" The schools have certainly pursued the negation of forms, qualities, experiences, through every path accessible to thought; a boundless dissatisfaction with their limits, often reaching out into mere gratification of the logical faculty in this direction by giving it free play to net the worlds through and through with its threads and webs of denial. Yet no religious mythology has so peopled them with swarming life, nor piled them in such endless series through infinite space. The earliest *nirvâna* is the "place of the freed soul:" the latest is the "paradise of imagination." The inexpressible good.

It is plain that our language cannot convey to us the actual sense of the conception, as it shone in the Oriental mind: a divine antidote, compensation, refuge, release; the redemption from those oppressive dreams of human destiny, which more energetic and practical races have escaped. This, however, is to me quite certain. The beatific crowning vision, which lay spread before the Buddhist like a waveless sea, was

[1] *God in History*, p. 348. A very appreciative view of Buddhism is also given in Alger's *Hist. of the Doct. of Fut. Life* (Part II. ch. vi.).

positive, not negative. The devotee might liken nirvâna to the "blowing out of a lamp," or insist on its vacuity and its pure nullity ever so strongly. His very delight in the process of freeing himself from recognizing the reality of conceptions which imposed the "bonds of action and transmigration" *was itself a reality, and refilled every vacuum* which he created by that process in the very instant of its creation. It is but a little way that metaphysical terms can go towards fathoming the experience or stating the necessities of the spirit. Not "extinction," not even a dreamless "rest," can define a *highest good*, that had only to be presented to millions to be hailed and accepted. Forever true is it that men do not spend their lives in preaching, laboring, proselyting, in love and sacrifice, — in behalf of what has no positive substantial being for them to lay hold on. Despair of existence and longing for torpidity cannot inspire them with the love of uses and the ardor to help and deliver mankind. That for which they invent a name, to be glorified, even as it is elsewhere a praise to glorify the name of God, must not be thought "the horrible faith that worships nonentity"[1] Let us do better justice to a spiritual phase, which modern habits of thought are but too likely to misjudge.

Outward grounds of Buddhist negation.

But *why* this discontent with the conditions of existence, this rejection of all its relations, this insistence on misery as universal? It is easy to see what made the Hindu conception of life a burden. Transmigration, that endless monotone;

[1] St. Hilaire, *Buddha et sa Relig.*, p. 140. It must appear singular, on this hypothesis, that such elaborate compends as the *Prâtimoksha* (*Ritual of Chinese Buddhists*, *R. A. S.*, vol. xix.) should not have one word expressive of the blessings of being annihilated

transmission of moral consequence through an interminable future, not lighted by the hopes that social progress inspires; caste and superstition, overshadowing all thought, motive, and labor, dominating this life and the future; the barbarities of law and of sacrifice, cheapening the estimate of life; absence of personal liberty and social opportunity; no scientific comprehension of those benignities of natural law, which alleviate the common lot of disease, decay, and death; depressing languors of a tropical climate; its incidents of cheap food and rapidly multiplying population, and the results in enormous rents and interest rates, and the lowest possible wages; crises of famine; extremes of social condition; the accumulated social oppression and misery that weighed upon the life of India for centuries, — these surely were adequate outward motive for the mighty protest of Buddhism against the conditions of human existence. It was the instinctive reaction of the soul against these issues of ignorance, inactivity, and wrong; its unconscious cry for science; its appeal to the ideal, the infinite, the inconceivable even, for the liberty denied it in every attainable form of actual life. It was, further, the nemesis of an inveterate contempt for things visible and concrete; the old Brahmanical notion of their unreality brought to its ultimate terms; driving man's ideals of contemplation from a world they had no power nor will to use; pronouncing a world on these conditions to be, *as a form of cognition*, thoroughly null and void; yet only to reinstate it in a new form; to justify it on another plane; to make it real as a field of uses, 'through the power of humane sentiment and the might of moral purpose.' The unity of all

being, which had before meant the common insignificance of each and all, now meant the one appeal that came to every heart from a universal sorrow and need. What contemplation had to surrender, pity saved.

Analogies.

This reaction from overwhelming social misery to a spirit of humanity, to pity, forgiveness, and moral consecration, has a counterpart six centuries afterwards in the birth of Christianity, and its call to brotherhood amidst the political and spiritual miseries of the Roman Empire. Other points of relation are no less impressive. Both religions had their rejection of "this world," turning from hopeless conditions (as they seemed) to an invisible ideal refuge, "the other shore." In Christianity the call to forsake all and follow the Master grew into an asceticism as thorough as the Buddhist. As a goal of human destiny, *nirvâna* in its utmost supposed negation is not the saddest conceivable. Annihilation is a blessing compared with everlasting penalties and pains; and the "atheism" of Buddhism, were it as absolute as it has been supposed, would be piety compared with the worship of a God who could inflict them.

As refuge from the vanities and miseries that in all ages have turned so much of human life into weariness and utter failure, whirling it away like chaff, all great religions have pointed to some form of spiritual rest. Nor can I think the *nirvâna* of the compassionate Buddha all unrelated to that inward calm, that divine release, which the voice of a noble woman has made so real and so genial for all of us: —

"O earth so full of dreary noises,
O men with wailing in your voices,
O delvèd gold the wailers heap,
O strife, O curse that o'er it fall! —
God makes a silence through you all:
He giveth his beloved sleep."

Pourna, the son of a freedman, become a disciple of Buddha, determines to convert a wild tribe to the law of peace and love. Buddha, having suggested to him the perils in this enterprise, and finding him prepared to meet them in the spirit of absolute self-sacrifice, dismisses him with these words: "It is well, Pourna, thou art worthy of this work. Go then; having delivered thyself, deliver others; *having reached the other shore, bring others thither; arrived at complete nirvâna, cause others to arrive there like thyself.*"[1] The affirmation.

No dreamless sleep in this ideal of duty; but perpetual return from the brink of fruition to the sacrifice and service, whereof none can see the completion; constant obedience to the impulse to teach and share and save, through worlds on worlds. Wearisome it may be to think, even, of this eternal sense of tasks unaccomplished, of this endless didactic function, this unremitting manipulation of the moral element in all mankind; but it is at least vital and positive, and fills immortality with meaning and demand. It gives, I think, adequate answer, in its very definition, to the judgment of Müller, that *nirvâna*, in Buddha's mind, "if not annihilation, was yet nothing but metaphysical selfishness; a relapse into that being which is nothing but itself."[2]

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 97.

[2] *Chips*, &c., I. 287.

And even the *dhyanas* — which, like the "gnosis" of certain Christian heretical sects, claim to be paths for the liberation of the soul through interior vision — become, in the light of this practical earnestness and ardor, enduring gates, not into "nonentity," but into wisdom; though it be of the Oriental, not of the Saxon nor the Hebrew kind.

III.

ETHICS AND HUMANITIES.

ETHICS AND HUMANITIES.

WE pass from the speculative to the practical aspect of Buddhism.

"The Four Supreme Truths are Pain, the Cause of Pain, the Extinction of Pain, and the Way to the Extinction of Pain."[1] To "turn the wheel of these four truths" is the sum of virtue and power, of the Buddha's word and work.[2]

The tragedy of faith.

"Birth is pain; sickness, sorrow, death, are pain; union with the hated, separation from the loved, not to reach what one desires, all that makes perception, is pain; the passing away of all that is born is pain."[3]

Pain the very substance of life! Absolute renunciation of attachment (*upâdâna*) to forms of existence, the only path of release! Release itself definable by no definite form of human joy! Was not the salvation sadder than the doom from which it freed? Had not this Hindu dream-work ended logically in practical despair? It has seemed so to most observation from Christian points of view. But let us look further.

[1] Burnouf, p. 629.

[2] This phrase was probably used in contrast to the "wheel of transmigration," whose endless revolution of births the counter-movement of the law of Buddha should arrest. Leon Feer in *Journ. Asiat.* for 1870, p. 438.

[3] Ibid. (p. 367), from *Dharmaśakrasutras*. So Wuttke, II. 537.

Buddhism has well been called the most tragical of human faiths. It accepted the brooding sense of change and death, into which science and social energy had not yet entered, to give foothold for ideals of progress. It would not evade the facts. Is the world then nought? *Is* "the body like foam; sense a bubble; consciousness a circle on a stream; action the shadow that falls on it; knowledge the play of illusions"? Let us accept the consequences of that truth, though all the old landmarks of faith be swept away, and the gods above, with their heavens, turn to mortalities like the rest. Transmigration shall go to the tests of moral order, and end in a truth deeper than itself. That test at least shall abide, though the interests of personality disappear, and not a chink be left open for freedom. If there is no smile in the universe, let us make the most of the frown, nor fear but good ending shall come of that; nay, turn the *frown* itself into a dream, and so overcome the world.

This is tragedy; and it is heroism also, which is an essential part of tragedy. Out of an unfathomable loss, an absolute renunciation, to win not stoical resignation only, but a purpose that should fill life with present good, and so disprove the premise of despair!

"Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us: let us dwell free from hatred among men who hate."

"Let us live happily, free from greed among the greedy."

"Let us live happily, though we call nothing our own. We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness."

"He who has given up both victory and defeat,—he, the contented, is happy."

"He who applies himself to the doctrine of Buddha brightens this world, like the moon when free from clouds."[1]

[1] *Dhammap.*, vv. 197–201, 382.

But life meant more than happiness. It was not enough for the Buddhist to emancipate himself from pain. The universal doom of sorrow must touch his heart with a sympathy as universal. He could not rest till he had taught the whole world the secret of reconciliation with destiny. Suffering, in that early day also, led out into a gospel of universal love. And so the substance of what seemed lost — of personality, of freedom, of faith — was, in one sense at least, saved.

For the Buddha came, as all Buddhas had come, "to save the human race" from its miseries; and Buddhahood itself lay open to every one. Gotama, it is constantly affirmed, knew but one human nature, and all men as brothers. The gospel of love.

"My law is a law of mercy for all."[1]

"Proclaim it freely to all men: it shall cleanse good and evil, rich and poor alike; it is large as the spaces of heaven, that exclude none."[2]

"Whoever loves will feel the longing to save not himself alone, but all others. Let him say to himself: When others are learning the truth, I will rejoice at it, as if it were myself. When others are without it, I will mourn the loss as my own. We shall do much, if we deliver many; but more, if we cause them to deliver others, and so on without end. So shall the healing word embrace the world, and all who are sunk in the ocean of misery be saved."[3]

All; for the Buddhist scriptures teach that even in the hells there are "heavens of refuge" for souls that are expiating their sins, in which they are preserved from catastrophes that befall the world as a whole, at the end of a kalpa-period. There is ever a Brahmâ in the universe, even though a Buddha be not living in the kalpa; and "he protects his abode."[4]

[1] Burnouf, pp. 198, 205–211.
[2] Koeppen, p. 130, from Thibetan collection.
[3] *Tsing-tu-uen* in Wuttke, II. 563.
[4] *Mahâvansa* (Upham), note to ch. xix.

Gotama compares himself to "a father, who rescues his children from a burning house;" to "a guide who leads a caravan to fortunate lands;" to "a physician who cures the blind with herbs brought from the holy Himalayas;" to "the friendly cloud, that brings rain to thirsty plants." [1]

Religious democracy.

It was pure democracy.[2] The veil of the Hindu temple was rent. Eternal principles brought class privilege to judgment; and the unity of an idea swept the field clear of all exclusive claims. Gotama took his disciples from the lowest, as readily as from the highest class. This prince came down from his throne, and walked with poor and outcast people; joined the hands which caste forbade to touch each other; reached out his own to the pariah, who forthwith arose out of the dust, the equal of kings. Did not Śudra and Brahman stand under one destiny, one law of right and wrong, one reward and one penalty? For all one path of duty, — "to live poor and pure."

"Look closely, and you shall see no difference between the body of a prince and the body of a slave. What is essential is that which may dwell in the most miserable frame, and which the wisest have saluted and honored. The Brahman like the Chandâla is born of woman: where see you the difference, that one should be noble and the other vile?" [3]

Moral distinctions effaced all others. All tests merged in the test of character: all words found honor or shame in this ordeal alone.[4]

"The talk of 'high and low castes,' of 'the pure Brahmans, the only sons of Brahmâ,' is nothing but sound: the four castes are equal." [5]

[1] *Lotus of the Good Law*, ch. iii. v. vii.
[2] Lassen, II. 440.
[3] Burnouf, p. 209, 376.
[4] See *Dhammap.*, ch. xix.
[5] Sutras, quoted in Hardy's *Manual*, pp 80, 81.

"It has been said that it is better to give alms to a Brahman than to a man of mean birth. But Gotama denies this, saying, 'As the husbandman sows in wet weather on the hills, and in dry weather in the valleys, and at all times in the ground that can be at all times watered, so the man who would be blessed in both worlds will give alms to all; nor do birth and eminence make the right to be honored." [1]

"He is *vasala* [a low person], who cherishes hatred, torments living beings, steals or kills or commits impurity; who does not pay his debts, maltreats aged parents, or fails to support them; who gives evil counsel, hides truth, does not return hospitality nor render it, exalts himself and debases others, ignores their virtues, is impatient of their success. Not by birth, but by conduct, is one a *vasala*."

"A *chandala*, by his virtues, was born in a Brahma world; but the Brahman who is vicious is in shame now, and suffers hereafter; and his caste shall not release him." [2]

"Ânanda, one of the earliest disciples [and a very noble character], sitting once beside a well, asked a drink of water from a Chandâla woman, who was drawing from the well. She answered, 'How dost thou ask water of me, an outcast, who may not touch thee without offence?' Ananda answered: 'My sister, I ask not of thy caste: I ask thee water to drink.' And Buddha took her among his disciples." [3]

The equality of the sexes in Buddhism [4] is ascribed to the influence of Ânanda over his master, who is said to have conceded to women the right to enter the religious profession in the twenty-fifth year of his teaching.[5] But it is not easy to see how, upon his principles, he could have opposed it in the first. No distinction of sex more than of castes could have been valid, for such a gospel.[6] The following legend is from the Singhalese Sutras: —

[1] Hardy, p. 80.

[2] Sutra, quoted by D'Alwis, pp. 123–125.

[3] Burnouf, p. 205.

[4] With the one exception of the Buddhaship itself, which is a privilege of males. Christianity, too, allows pure Christhood only to a man. Hardy's *Manual*, p. 104.

[5] Burnouf, p. 278; Koeppen, I 104.

[6] Franck, *Études Orientales*, p. 39.

"The wives of five hundred princes, whose husbands had become disciples, desired to follow their example; and the mother of Buddha requested of him their admission. It was clearly seen by him that former Buddhas had admitted women; but he feared it would give occasion for speaking against his institutions [so his disciples interpreted him], and did not at once accede to the request. Then Prajâpati (his mother) said to them: 'Children, Buddha has thrice refused to "admit us to profession:" let us take it on ourselves, and then go to him; and he cannot but receive us.' So they cut off their hair, put on the proper robe, and taking earthen bowls journeyed with painful feet to Buddha. And Ananda, seeing them, was filled with sorrow, and again brought their petition to Buddha, who said: 'Are the Buddhas born only for the benefit of men? Have not Wisakha, and many others, entered the paths? The entrance is open for women as well as for men.'"[1]

In the "Lotus," the Buddha appears on his holy mountain, surrounded by multitudes of deities and disciples; and among them are six thousand female saints. In the legends generally, he admits men and women alike to the bliss of nirvâna.[2] Although, in one or two of these, a female becomes a male in order to obtain sainthood, such individual case must not be taken as representing the Buddhist idea of equality.[3]

There are rules in the Sutras commanding kindness to servants, and even the emancipation of slaves after they shall have labored a given time.[4] The Mahâvanśa describes a damsel of supernatural beauty, who, though born of the lowest grade of outcasts, was loved and espoused by a prince, and who had acquired her charms by such good works as sweeping and cleaning the floor at the foot of a banyan, for the sake of worship.[5]

[1] Hardy's *Manual*, p. 310.
[2] Ibid., 314; *Lotus*, ch. xi.
[3] See Bastian, *Reisen in China*, &c., p. 586. Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, ch. xvii.
[4] Hardy, 482.
[5] *Mahâv.*, ch. xxxiii.

What possibility of exclusive distinctions in a creed which affirms that the most degraded person may one day become ruler of the highest heavens; that the loftiest king may sink below the least of his subjects; and that more than thirty saints have transmitted the true doctrine from the time of the Buddha, belonging indifferently to all the castes?

Like other religious reformers, Gotama appealed to the poor, both from sympathy and tenderness and as finding them more open to his word.

"Hard it is for a rich man to know the way, easy for a poor one."

"A poor man filled his scrip with a handful of flowers; but the rich poured in thousands of bushels in vain."

"Of all the lamps lighted in his honor, one only, brought by a poor woman, lasted through the night."[1]

It would appear from the study of the earliest Buddhist writings, that, while the philosophical teachings of the school were delivered, as we should suppose them likely to be, in the sacred language of the Brahmans, whenever specially addressed to them, — the people were taught the moral and spiritual substance of the faith of the reformers in their own different dialects, and in a thoroughly popular style.[2] And we may be sure that this gospel had its pentecostal gift of tongues for all the waiting tribes of northern India. This assumption of the people's cause, this direct appeal to their mind and heart, which constitutes an essential part of the prophet's inspiration in all religions, was probably the main element of Gotama's personal work. Fifteen hundred years afterwards Dante wrote his great poem, —

[1] Koeppen, 131.

[2] Lassen, II. 492; Duncker, II. 194; Weber's *Vorlesungen*, 258; Muir, *Sansk. Texts*, II.

wherein day broke on the ecclesiastical slavery of the Middle Ages, as it rose in Gotama's gospel on that of the East, — in the people's own Italian, not in the learned tongue. The preachers whom Buddha sent out to lay open a long sealed life and hope to the people, and to rebuke the indolence and exclusiveness of the clergy, remind us of Wiclif's itinerant "poor priests," sent out for a like purpose in England when two thousand years had gone by. And this was the burden of their prophecy: —

"Forsake all evil, bring forth good, master thy own thought: such is Buddha's path to end all pain."[1]

There is an old ballad literature of Buddhism, called the *gâthâs*, — fragments of which appear throughout the great Sutras of the faith. They are in an obsolete language of mixed dialects, and are believed to be the production of ancient bards, probably successors of Buddha, who went about singing the new gospel in these simple strains, which must have come from the heart of the people and gone straightway to it. They are always quoted with great respect, in later writings.[2] So natural and so genial the impulse of Buddhism that it flowed at once into song; and in the earlier works, like the Lotus and the Lalitavistâra, the doctrine first stated in prose is always repeated in poetic form.

Universal love

It was an impulse to convert the whole world to a philosophy and a faith that should bring deliverance from the woes of life. The Lotus says: "it is much less criminal to do injury to a Buddha for ages, than to say an unkind word to a simple

[1] Koeppen, I. p. 224; *Dhammapada*, ch. xiv.
[2] See Muir, II. 125.

teacher who is instructing any one in the law." There is no parallel to this missionary zeal, this boundless pity and love, but in Christianity; nor yet in Christianity in its earliest form; but only when Paul's protest of ethnic sympathy broke down the wall between Jew and Gentile, bond and free. In Buddha was neither Chinese nor Mongol nor Hindu; neither Brahman nor Chandala, prince nor slave. What injustice we shall do to this immense purpose which swept over all Eastern Asia, if we imagine it was only a gospel of self-annihilation and miserable despair, after all, that these apostles had to offer! Do not tell us that mere love of self-destruction, or despair of life, will make men take the whole world into their hearts, and forsake the meditations in which they place their own salvation, to share their truth with all other men. A similar ardor has been held to be sufficient evidence to prove that the early Christians were sustained by a glorious hope. The Brahmans charge Buddha with saying, "Let all the sins ever committed fall on me, that the world may be saved." [1]

"As a mother, so long as she lives, watches over her child, her only child, so among all beings let boundless good-will prevail. If a man be of this mind, as long as he is awake, whether standing or walking, or sitting or lying, there comes to pass the saying: 'This place is the abode of holiness.'" [2]

The four virtuous inclinations, according to the Siamese Buddhists, are: (1) seeking for others the happiness one desires for himself; (2) compassionate interest in all creatures; (3) love for, and pleasure in, all beings; (4) impartiality.[3]

[1] *Kumârila*, quoted by Müller, *S. Lit*, p. 80.
[2] *Kuddakapatha*, in *Journ. R. A. S.* (1868)
[3] Alabaster's *Wheel of the Law*, p. 198.

Buddhism and Christianity originated in ages of despondency, when men, having few recognized civil and political interests, turned naturally to personal sympathy with each other, and the desire of rendering moral and spiritual help. In both cases, such circumstances tended to produce contempt for the outward world, and a certain subjection to the darker side of life; an eye to destructive, or saddening destinies: — for the one religion centering in a sense of transiency in every form of being; for the other, in a sense of moral evil, of "sin" at the root of every soul. The history of these two great gospels of love has, of course, revealed the effect of such excessive forms of discouragement, on the quality of spiritual methods and promises of deliverance.

That the Buddhists preached sad tidings instead of glad ones, universal pain and utter self-abnegation, must not cover the fact that they preached liberty and humanity: we must, on the contrary, derive from this latter fact some happier interpretation of what seems enfeebling and even heart-crushing in their theory of life.

If this belief was indeed so hopeless, then it is only the more creditable to human nature that the sympathies should not have been paralyzed by it, but softened and expanded with tenderest pity. Let Christendom ask itself what would be likely to become of those affections which it claims to have unfolded and set free, but which its religious education makes so largely dependent on faith in a future heaven, if its confessors should be compelled to accept what they hold to be the *nirvâna* of Buddhist hope in place of these agreeable expectations. Yet nirvâna has given to millions of those heathen souls a peace which "heaven" fails to

supply for millions of these Christian ones. The less it promises of happiness, the more it throws love back on its own nobility for support. If "cold speculation," "lifeless negation," "atheism," "nihilism," can stir such vital warmth as Buddhism can show, is it not a stronger evidence of the upward pressure of the soul, than for faith in a personal Father, who watches over all his children, to stir much more? "I do not hesitate," says Burnouf, "to translate the Buddhist *mâitri* by the term 'universal love.'"[1]

Yes: we will call it tragedy, and of no mean sort. I know of nothing in the history of religion more pathetic; yet there are few things that should suggest such respect for the soul. This darkness of a dreamer's thought of change and death, what a pall it spread over life! "Once," says the legend, "Buddha smiled, and the beam of that smile irradiated the universe; but instantly came forth a voice saying, It is vain, it cannot stay." Religion indeed has not been wont to recognize pleasure as compatible with sainthood; and yet the smile is even further from the Buddha than from the Christ. But in this shadow of contemplation what unquenchable light shines!

Inspires respect for the soul

"Than Buddha," says even St. Hilaire, who believes it possible to construct his biography historically, and has attempted to do so, "there is, with the sole exception of the Christ, no purer nor more touching figure among the founders of religions. His life is without blemish: he is the finished model of the heroism, the self-renunciation, the love, the sweetness he commands."[2] Abel Rémusat grants that to call Buddhism the Christianity of the East is to give, on the whole, a good idea of the importance of

Testimonies of opponents.

[1] *Lotus*, p. 300.

[2] *Le Bouddha, Introd.*, p. v.

the services rendered by this form of religion to mankind.[1] Cunningham, who loosely styles it "an imposture," yet defines it as "an enthusiasm and a benevolence" [strange qualities for imposture]; and describes its "peaceful progress, illuminated by the cheerful faces of the sick, the crippled, and the poor, in monastic hospitals, and by the smiles of travellers reposing in Dharmasalas by the waysides."[2] "The Buddhists," says Wuttke, "are the only heathen people who have conceived of peacefully converting all mankind to one belief: theirs alone in heathen history is a religion, not of one people, but of humanity."[3] "The *only* heathen people;" yet, as he allows, apparently without noticing what the fact involves, a people far outnumbering any other body of heathen; and, he might have added, rivalling Christianity in the count of its disciples and its sects.

Its active elements.

This love of all beings, which Buddhism, like Christianity, declares to be the sum of its motives, is not the mere dreamy passive sentiment its aim at detachment from the world and life would, for our modes of thought, imply. It has been said to "reach beyond Christianity," at least theoretically, "since it embraces not men only, but all the creatures."[4] Its earliest commands, the first lesson to the convert, were indeed prohibitions only: not to kill, nor steal, nor commit unchaste actions, nor lie, nor be drunken. But these were initiatory to more positive duty. Its six cardinal virtues (pâramitâs) are compassion, morality, patience, energy, contemplation, wisdom.[5] And its moral disciplines were as positive as possible.

[1] *Mélanges Posthumes*, p. 237.
[2] *Bhilsa Topes*, p. 54.
[3] *Geschichte d. Heidenthums*, II. 563.
[4] Koeppen, I. 313.
[5] Ibid., 450.

"Never is wrath stilled by wrath, only by reconciliation: this is an everlasting law."

"Overcome evil with good, the avaricious with generosity, the false with truth."

"Thoughtful heed is the way of immortality: indolence of death."

"Attack vigorously what is to be done: a careless pilgrim only scatters the dust of his passions more widely."

"As the plant sheds its withered flowers, so men should shed passions and hates."

"One day of endeavor is better than a hundred years of sloth."

"Thy self is its own defence, its own refuge; it atones for its own sins; none can purify another."

"Watch thyself with all diligence, and hold thyself in as the spirited steed is held by its owner."

"Well-makers lead the water; fletchers bend the arrow; carpenters break the wood; and the wise fashion themselves."

"Master thyself: so mayest thou teach others, and easily tame them, after having tamed thyself; for self is hardest to tame."

"Never forget thy own duty for the sake of another's, however great."

"Give, if thou art asked, from the little thou hast, and thou shalt go near the gods."

"Haste to do good: the slothful in virtue learns to love evil."

"Rouse thyself: be not idle. Follow the law of virtue."

"Think not lightly of evil; drop by drop the jar is filled: think not lightly of good; the wise is filled with purity, gathering it drop by drop."[1]

These are sentences from one of the oldest of the sacred books of Buddhism, the Dhammapada. The Dhammapada. Its earnest dealing with life and duty may be noted in the titles of some of its chapters: "Reflection;" "the Fool;" "the Wise;" "Evil;" "Punishment;" "Old Age;" "Self;" "The World;" "the Awakened;" "Pleasure;" "Anger;" "Impurity;" "the Downward Course;" "Thirst;" "the

[1] *Dhammapada*, vv. 5, 223, 21, 313. 112, 377, 165, 379–380, 145, 157–159, 166, 224, 116, 168, 121.

Way." It rouses the moral sense to note the essential qualities and consequences of conduct. It tells those who are inclined to detraction that, "while they look after the faults of others, their own are growing;" that "body, tongue, and mind must be controlled." It tells the slayer, the liar, the drunkard, the thief, the man who covets his neighbor's wife, that they "pull up their own life by the root." It reminds the thoughtless that "his sin will come back upon him, like fine dust thrown against the wind; that the universe has no place where it will not find him out." It warns the self-indulgent that "what is good and wholesome for the life is hard to win;" that "the body and the royal chariot alike decay, but the virtue of the righteous, which makes us to know what is good, never grows old."

"Mean is the scent of sandal-wood: best to the gods is the fragrance that rises from the good."[1]

This "way of release" is indeed in detachment of the soul from all finite relations. The burden of its teaching is: — whoso loveth father or mother more than me, and leaveth not all desires to follow me, is not worthy of me. In its repulsion of the pleasures of sense, it goes so far as to say, "Love nothing, if thou wouldst be free from bonds."[2] Yet it can speak tenderly of human relations when it would enforce the immortality of virtue.

"As friends and kindred hail the long absent at his return in health, so when the just man goes from this world to another, his good deeds receive him, as friend greets friend."[3]

[1] *Dhammapada*, 253, 246–7, 125–7, 163, 151, 56.
[2] Ibid., 211. [3] Ibid., 219, 220.

Nor in the humanities which it inculcates does Buddhism fail to recognize either the full demands of all human ties, whether of kindredship or sympathy, or the delight that comes with their service. Buddhist humanities.

"As the bee, without destroying the color or perfume of the flower, gathers the sweetness with his mouth and wings, so the riches of the true friend gradually accumulate; and the increase is constant, like the growth of the hillock which the white ant steadily builds."

"The wise man searches for the friend thus gifted, as the child seeks its mother."[1]

The domestic virtues are far from being disparaged in Buddhist writings, or in the practice of Buddhist communities. On the contrary, they are strictly enjoined and enforced. Notwithstanding the sanctity of celibacy in his law, the great importance believed to have been ascribed by Gotama to filial sentiment, and indeed to every domestic duty, has been of great service in maintaining the moral inviolability of the family. He refused to receive into the ministry those who had not the consent of their parents.[2] The legends record his tenderness to his mother's memory; and his visit to the heaven where she dwelt, to teach her the "law of salvation;" and his declarations, that, "next to that law, the father and mother are, for a son, deity itself," — that "it is better for him to honor them than the gods of heaven and earth," — and that, "if he should carry them on his shoulders for a hundred years, he could not repay them for their care."[3] Buddhism discourages polygamy: so that throughout its dominions this custom The domestic virtues.

[1] Hardy, p. 484.

[2] Bennett's *Life of Gandama, from the Burmese* (*Am. Or. Journ*, III.).

[3] Koeppen, I. 473; St. Hilaire, p. 92.

is exceptional, endured rather than allowed, even in the rich and powerful; and in Ceylon, Siam, and elsewhere, monogamy only is legal.[1]

It makes the wife the companion of the husband, assigning her a freedom unknown to other Oriental religions, and she shares his public and private activity.[1] There is significance in the legend already mentioned, that Gopâ, the wife of Gotama, renounced the use of the veil as soon as married, on the ground that it was unworthy of a woman, who knew her modesty and virtue to be open to the gods, to hide her face from the world.[2] "Women in Burmah have the custody of their husbands' cash, and do the chief part of all buying and selling; and their intercourse with foreigners as well as countrymen is open and unrestricted. Private schools for girls are not uncommon, and no obstacle is placed in the way of female education. Females of the higher classes do not contemn industry, nor affect the listlessness of some Orientals."[3] In Siam, men of all ranks are greatly aided by the energy of their wives, especially in public affairs. Women retail goods and make trading voyages on their own account, and are as free in their movements as men.[4]

The *polyandry* of the Thibetan tribes is not a Buddhist institution: it is ascribed to the poverty of the steppes, which renders it difficult for one man to support a family; to the necessity of protection to the wife during the long absence of the husband on trading journeys, and to the inferiority of females to males in point of numbers.[5]

[1] See authorities in Koeppen, I. 474. [2] St. Hilaire, *Le Bouddha*, p. 9.
[3] Malcom's *Travels in Burman Empire*: Notes, ch. iii.
[4] *Journal of Indian Archipelago* (1847).
[5] Lloyd's *Himalayas*, Koeppen, 476.

No teacher ever accorded a higher place to modesty and to chastity than Gotama. His monks, in the extravagance of ascetic discipline, were even forbidden to look upon a woman, and, if they spoke to one, were to say inwardly, "In a corrupt world, I ought to be a lotus without spot." The Dhammapada declares that "so long as the love of man towards woman is not destroyed, so long is his mind in bondage." Yet, by a turn not uncommon in this Oriental preaching of superlatives and absolutes, these same monks are bidden to "treat older women as their mothers, those but a little older than themselves as elder sisters, and those a little younger as their younger sisters." Modesty and chastity.

The excessive care with which the relations of the sexes were guarded was indeed a part of the moral reaction of Buddhism on a social condition, the character of which may be inferred from the habit of the Brahmanical ascetics to go naked. Against this custom, Gotama protested with special energy. His mendicants must be clothed, however starved or destitute; and there are legends of very early date expressive of his indignation at the opposite custom.[1] There is a tone of satire in the language of the Dhammapada on these uncivilized ways of attaining sainthood. "Not nakedness, nor dirt, nor fasting, nor lying on the ground, nor rubbing with dust, nor sitting in one posture, can purify a mortal who has not overcome his desires."[2] In an old Buddhist legend, a damsel, seeing some of these offensive ascetics, cries out, "O mother! if these are saints, what must sinners be like?"

[1] Burnouf, p. 312.

[2] *Dhammapada*, v. 141.

Its admission of women into the religious life[1] enabled Buddhism to enforce these better ideas of social decency. It may here be observed that the very earliest notices we have of Buddhism — those of Megasthenes, and Clement of Alexandria — mention the devotees and philosophers of this faith as consisting of women as well as men.[2]

Friendship.

The Buddhist idea of *friendship* is thus given in Singhalese Sutras: —

"The true friend is he who is faithful in prosperity and adversity, a friend who brings his sympathy. He prevents you from doing wrong, urges you to do well; tells you what you did not know, and teaches you to enter the true paths; defends you when he hears you disparaged; saves you from low habits; soothes your fears; divides his substance with you."[3]

"When any one tells what he heard here or there, to put friends at enmity or sow dissension, or by insinuation leads friends to question each other's sincerity, it is slander, and will be punished in future births."[4]

As in Stoicism, so here, personal independence is made to teach the finer uses of companionship, and the real substance of mutual help.

"If a traveller does not meet with one who is his better or his equal, who is wise and sober, let him walk alone, like a lonely elephant, like a king."

"If one wise man be associated with another, he will at once perceive the truth, as the tongue a taste."

"He who has tasted the sweetness of solitude and tranquillity is free from fear. Trust is the best of relatives. [Yet] if he find a prudent companion, he may walk with him, overcoming all dangers."

"Friends are pleasant; pleasant is mutual enjoyment; a good work is pleasant in the hour of death; pleasant the state of a father, pleasant the state of a mother."

[1] See Hardy, *Manual*, 39, 311.
[2] Kruse's *Indiens Alte Geschichte*, p. 124.
[3] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 484.
[4] Ibid., p. 471.

"If you see a wise man who shows what is to be avoided, and who administers reproofs, follow that wise man."

"Have for friends the best of men, — men of pure life, who are not slothful."[1]

Gotama in the legends is perpetually serving others, in every kind of emergency; not the least frequent form of his service being the reconciliation of enemies, in accordance with the precept ascribed to him from the beginning, "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love."[2] He is indeed believed to have voluntarily endured infinite trials, through numberless ages and births, that he might deliver mankind; foregoing the right to enter *nirvâna*, and casting himself again and again into the stream of human life and destiny, for this purpose alone, — of teaching the one way of deliverance from pain into freedom.[3]

Buddha's humanity.

"This way was preached by me, when I had understood the removal of the thorns."

"And you yourself must make effort. The Buddhas are but preachers. It is the thoughtful that are freed from the bondage of Mâra (the tempter)."[4]

This persistent moral energy is the ideal held before the Buddhist devotee. Positive helpfulness, through real sacrifice and lowly service, is the core of the doctrine.

"One does not belong to himself: how much less do his sons and wealth belong to him!"

"The good delights in this world and the next; he delights in his own work; happy when he thinks of that which he does; happier still when going on the good path."

[1] *Dhammap*, 61, 329, 65, 204, 205, 331, 332, 76, 78, 378.
[2] Ibid., 5. See Hardy, *passim*; Buddhaghosha's Parables, &c.
[3] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 98.
[4] *Dhammap*, 275, 276.

"Like a well-trained steed, touched by the whip, be active; and by faith, virtue, energy, meditation, and discernment, you will overcome, perfected in knowledge and in conduct."[1]

It has been thought that earlier Buddhism shows no traces of a definite belief in future places of punishment for the wicked; that this dogma grew up with the growth of a hierarchy.[2] If such was the fact, it must have been so for the reason that the first apostles of this faith were too much absorbed in the zeal of pity to find room for prophesying wrath. But, while even the later forms of Buddhism do not assert the dogma of eternal punishment,[3] the opinion just stated is hardly confirmed by the documents of the earlier time which are within our reach. Buddhism found the transmigration-hells in full currency, in Brahmanical faith. The Dhammapada consigns the wicked thither after death with great directness of speech.[4] Yet, in all description of moral penalty, it refers the evil-doer to the essential quality and present effects of vice, not to an arbitrary punishment in the future.

"The evil-doer burns by his own deeds, as if burnt by fire."

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with evil thought, pain follows, as the wheel the foot of him who draws the carriage."

"Him who lives seeking pleasure and uncontrolled, the tempter will overcome, as the wind throws down a weak tree."

"The evil-doer mourns when he sees the evil of his own work. He suffers when he thinks of the evil he has done: he suffers more when going on the evil path."

"Thoughtlessness is the path of death. They who are thoughtless are dead already. An evil deed follows the fool, smouldering like fire covered by ashes."

[1] *Dhammap.*, 62, 16, 18, 144. [2] Koeppen, I. 239.
[3] Bastian, *Weltauff. d. Buddh.*, p. 18; Müller's *Dhammap.*, p. xciv.
[4] Ibid., v 140.

"It crushes the wicked, as a diamond breaks a stone: it brings him down, as a creeper the tree it surrounds."[1]

"The wrong-doer, thinking on his conduct, is constantly in fear. Even crimes committed long ago trouble him; as the shadow of a great rock reaches far into the distance at the setting of the sun."[2]

The extravagant strain in which the Master's self-sacrifice and humanity are described in later mythology must weaken the practical influence of the moral law on the lives of his followers; just as those elements in the New Testament representation of Jesus, which take him outside human experience and sympathy, have issued in much sentimental worship of a far-off preternatural ideal, in place of respect for the real laws of human character. Yet it is to be remembered that for Buddhism this exaggerated tone is not, as it is for Western civilization, out of keeping with ordinary, habitual thought, with common sense and real intercourse; and therefore creates no reaction of indifference, irresponsibility, skepticism, or contempt.

Its exaggerated tone

The Dhammapada emphasizes moral personality as strongly as Stoicism or Platonism; insisting on its independence and self-sustainment, on its authority as source of all other values, and on the bliss of its inward life.

Character.

"All that we are is the issue of our thought."

"Poison affects not one who has no wound; nor is there evil for one who does no evil."

"Not even a god, not Mâra, nor Brahma, could change into defeat the victory of a man over himself."

"Self is the lord of self: who else could be the lord?"

"Let no one forget his own duty for the sake of another's."

"Better than ruling the world, better than going to heaven, than lordship over all, is the reward of the first step in virtue."

[1] *Dhammap*, vv. 136, 1, 7, 15, 17, 21, 71, 123, 161, 162.

[2] *Singhalese Sutra*, Hardy, 485.

"The fields are damaged by weeds, and man by wishing."

"From greed comes grief, from greed comes fear."

"As a rock is not shaken by the wind, so the wise falter not in praise or blame: they are serene like a deep lake."

"The just man, who speaks truly, and does his own work, the world will love."

"The gift of the law excels all other gifts, its sweetness all sweetness, its joy all joys." [1]

It declares personality the substance of power also.

"The scent of flowers travels not against the wind; but the fragrance of goodness travels even against the wind. A good man pervades every place.

"The good, like snowy mountains, shine from afar: the bad, like arrows shot by night, are not seen." [2]

The motive power of love, which depends on its sense of opportunity, is most impaired by disparagement of man's moral capacity. But Buddhism said with Plato, — Only open the eyes, the will cannot refuse to follow the light.

"The taint, worse than all others, is ignorance." [3]

Nor has any religion more clearly separated morality from ritual, or more firmly emphasized the spirit of conduct, as compared with the form.

"He who would put on the yellow robe without cleansing himself from sin, disregarding temperance and truth, is unworthy to wear it.

"Better a moment's homage to a man of wise spirit than sacrifice for a hundred years." [4]

"It is not platted hair, nor family, nor birth, that consecrates thee a Brahmana. He in whom there is truth and right-doing, he is the blessed Brahmana.

"What will platted hair profit thee, O foolish one! or the raiment of goatskins? Within thee is the abyss, while thou art making clean the outside."

[1] *Dhammap*, vv. 1, 124, 105, 160, 166, 178, 359, 216, 81–82, 217, 354. [2] Ibid., 54, 304.
[3] Ibid., 243. [4] Ibid., 9, 106.

"Whoso has burst all fetters and is without fear; who guiltless suffers shame and smiting in silence; from whom desire and hatred, pride and envy, have dropped; who strives not for his own gain, and who doubts not when he has seen the truth; who has risen above all bondage to the gods, whose even spirit nought can ruffle; who has come to know the way that is without death; the manly, the hero, the conqueror, the pure, the awakened, him call I indeed a Brahmana."[1]

Among the parables ascribed to Gotama in the "Lotus" is one which teaches that spiritual light is better than miracle:—

"A man blind from birth denied the existence of the world which he could not see, until miraculously cured; when he went to the opposite extreme, and boasted that he knew every thing, despising all other men as blind. Thereupon he was rebuked by wiser persons, who proved to him that with all his outward seeing he as yet knew nothing, since no outward miracle wrought on his eyes could give him power to discern truth from error, or to dissipate the greater darkness within him. Ashamed of his vanity, the man desired to know the way of life, and obtained spiritual wisdom."

Gotama, charged by a Brahman with idling away his time instead of ploughing and sowing, replied: "I do plough and sow, reaping thence fruit that is immortal."—"Where are your implements, O Gotama!"—"My field is the law; the weeds I clear away are the cleaving to life; my plough is wisdom; the seed I sow is purity; my work, attention to the precepts; my harvest, *nirvâna*."[2]

The reader may judge from these illustrations whether it is just to call the morality of Buddhism merely negative or merely passive; and what to think of comparisons, common among Christian writers in treating this subject, of a character like the following:— Christian critics.

[1] *Dhammap., The Brahmana Chapter.* [2] *Milinda Praśna.*

"The Christian does wrong to no one, because he loves the neighbor; the Buddhist, because he commiserates the man. True morality seeks to create somewhat; but Buddhistic morality is mere renunciation and inaction: its virtue is in leaving undone."[1] "Vice had no intrinsic hideousness, and virtue was but another name for calculating prudence; while love was little more than animal sympathy. The Buddhist could only say, 'I must:' he could not say, 'I ought.'" (!)[2]

So St. Hilaire knows no end of charges against this faith of three hundred millions of souls. It is "skepticism, nihilism, atheism, materialism, fatalism; unbelief in the good in man, in the world; without notion of duty, or distinction of man from vilest matter."[3] Yet he is constrained to add, after all, concerning it: "By the way of pain, as by every other, man may arrive at God. The way is more grievous for our weakness, but it is no less sure."[4] How much wiser this word than those sweeping condemnations, without insight, sympathy, or faith!

Buddhism, on its side, may have something to say in regard to the morality of Christian and Jewish theology. And the conversations of the "Modern Buddhist," before referred to, with Dr. Gutzlaff and other missionaries, afford a good idea of the impression made by much of it on his simple rationalism.

"How," asks this modern Buddhist, "can we assent to the doctrine that a man can be received into heaven while his nature is yet full of impurity, by virtue of sprinkling his head with water, or cutting off by cir-

[1] Wuttke, *Gesch. d. Heidenth.*, II. 576–7.
[2] Hardwick, *Christ and Other Masters*, I 239.
[3] *Du Bouddhisme* (Paris, 1855). [4] *Du Bouddhisme*, p. 236.

cumcision a small piece of his skin? I do not see that any one who is baptized nowadays is free from the 'curse of Adam,' or escapes toil and grief, and sickness and death, more than those who are not baptized. So far as I see, the unconverted flourish; but the converted are continually in debt and bondage. They continually pray to God; but it seems nothing happens according to their prayer." He combats eternal damnation on the ground that "there is no being who has not done something good; and that it would be to deny to good works the same power of producing fruit that is ascribed to evil works."

"How," he asks further, "can we believe that God made this inconceivable multitude of immense stars in one day, yet required five days to make this little world, this mere drop in the great ocean?" "And why does your scriptural account of the creation differ from the teaching of philosophers who show that the world is a revolving globe?"

"The Lord Buddha taught, saying: 'All you who are in doubt whether there be a future life had better believe there is one.'

"'Do not believe merely because you have heard, but, when of your own conscience you know a thing to be evil, abstain from it. Do not believe because the written statement of some old sage is produced: nor, in what you have fancied, think that because an idea is extraordinary it must have been implanted by a divine being. You must know of yourselves.'"[1]

Proselytism

The proselyting energy of Buddhism is sufficient evidence that its moral ideal was far from being a merely passive one. Unquestionably its purpose was the taming of wild races by gentleness and endurance, and the deliverance of the masses in India from a social tyranny which violent resistance

[1] *Mod. Buddhist*, in *The Wheel of the Law.*

would have only made more cruel. In these respects, certainly, its passive qualities were not without their uses. All religions depend in large measure for their special elements on local and temporary circumstances. One of these conditions determinative of the tone of Buddhism deserves special study.

Inspiration of pity.

Its love, we must remember, has a vast background of pain. Pity was the inspiration of these early philanthropists. Buddha is filled with pity for the multitudes sunk in perplexity and pain; and it is this feeling of compassion which conquers his own fears, and even decides him to accept his mission.[1] That "helpfulness towards the neighbor, hospitality to the stranger, reverence before age, gentleness towards servants, forbearance towards conquered enemies," which made the burden of his teaching, flowed from a keen sense of the wants and miseries of human destiny. Hence the stress laid on kindness as due to the fallen and weak. "Of the whole two hundred and fifty virtuous deeds, the highest is to spare a living being."[2] Hence the legends of Gotama, as well as the Buddhist fable-books, which push this perception of the possibilities of suffering so far as to make light of all actual forms of it in one's own person. Their Oriental extravagance is not without a symbolic basis of dignity, absurd as it may look to us. Thus he is related to have met a tigress, too weak with hunger to attack him: whereat he tore off his own skin, and suffered her to lick the blood from it, and then put himself into her claws to be torn in pieces.

"When a good man is reproached, he is to think within himself: 'These are certainly good people since they do not beat me.' If

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 33. [2] Wuttke, II. 581.

they begin to beat him with fists, he will say, 'They are mild and good, because they do not beat me with clubs.' If they proceed to this, he says, 'They are excellent, for they do not strike me dead.' If they kill him, he dies saying, 'How good they are in freeing me from this miserable body!'"

Certainly persecution was wasted on resistance like this. "The Cynic," says Epictetus, also no sentimentalist, "must love those who beat him, as the father, as the brother of all."

The nobility of love.

We can easily pardon excesses in the mythologic play of this instinct of forgiveness, when we find that the spirit of love is really the one creative force of Buddhist literature. The legends of Buddha, in all their extravagance, are filled with a certain divine innocence, and a childlike love that seems to have no conception of any limit to its own power. We can afford to let childish fancy run its wild way, for the sake of the many refreshing stories of Buddha's mildness towards his enemies; overcoming evil with good, and reconciling hostile armies and divided friends.[1]

"When surrounded by all his retinue of followers, and glorified by the whole world, he never thought, 'These privileges are mine;' but did good, just as the shower brings gladness, yet reflects not or its work."[2]

What delicacy of sentiment is in these proverbs, ascribed to him!—

"The true sage dwells on earth as the bee that gathers sweetness with his mouth and wings, without harming the color and perfume of the flower."[3]

"The swans [wild fowl?] go on the path of the sun: they go through the ether, by their miraculous power [instinct]. So are the

[1] Hardy, *passim*. [2] Ibid., 374. [3] *Dhammapada*, 49.

wise led out of this world, when they have conquered Mâra (the tempter) and his train." [1]

"The heart of love and faith accompanying good actions spreads a beneficent shade through all the worlds." [2]

Fahian relates that Buddha, fleeing his Brahmanical enemies, met a poor Brahman asking alms. Having nothing to give, he had himself bound and delivered over to his enemies, that his ransom might serve as alms for this member of a class who were persecutors of his faith. The Burmese relate that, hearing all living beings singing his praises, Gotama called Ânanda, and said: "All this is unworthy of me: no such vain homage can accomplish the commands of the law. They who *do* righteously pay me most honor, and please me most." [3]

The endless process of love.

Passing into his *nirvâna*, this Master leaves his disciples assurance that there is a divinity in man that for ever works for universal and remedial ends. "When I am gone, O Ânanda! you must not think there is no Buddha. For my words shall be your Buddha."

He has uttered his song of triumph over the senses: —

> "Painful are repeated transmigrations;
> But now have I beheld the architect.
> Thou shalt not build me another house:
> Thy rafters are broken, thy roof-timbers scattered.
> My mind is detached from all.
> I have attained the extinction of desire." [4]

His accumulated merits, the *karma*, or embodied powers of his past moral attainments, flow forth, as

[1] *Dhamm.*, 175. [2] *Buddhagosha's Parables*, p. 16. [3] *Bigandet*, p. 299.
[4] Hardy's *Manual*, p. 180 "The architect" here is simply a poetic expression for the causes of successive births. Muller's *Dhammap.*, p. cii.

if set free from private limits, into the worlds, and renew all living creatures.

He passes away, and there is no return in the flesh.

> "Freed from illusions of joy and of pain,
> He comes not and goes not, He comes not again."

But not for that reason is the eternal law of release by love to fail. "Its substance exists for ever without change." Nirvâna cannot touch this essentially human and inevitable force. The process is repeated, after his assumption of it, as it had been again and again before his day. "One lamp is extinguished," say the Chinese Buddhists, "but the light is not put out; for the flame is imparted to another." Men press by myriads towards the goal of power, to the verge of Buddhahood, with like stress of redeeming sacrifice.[1] "Genuine Buddhism has no priesthood: the saint despises the priest, and scorns the aid of mediators."[2] Another and another Buddha comes, with the old blessing and promise. It is the prolific virtue of human nature that is here affirmed, the endless harvest of the heart. The millions of incomparable Buddhas are the throbs of its eternal love. So it was that the East conceived this love; and men rejoiced in it, dreamed of it, lived, toiled, and died, by faith in it.

Finally, incarnation itself, in the Buddhist system, is conceived as moral incentive, not as theological dogma. Gotama, like all the Buddhas before him, is originally a man. And in violation of all theories of mere outward fatalism, having attained deity, he *chooses* to throw himself anew into the chain of causes and effects, for the deliverance

Incarnation moral and free.

[1] See Wilson's *Essays on Religion of the Hindus*, II. 361. [2] Hodgson.

of mankind from pain. Love here pronounces itself lord of Fate. Buddha assumes human suffering and death with moral freedom, and from inward spiritual energy. The *Man becomes God again*, through self-devoting will. And this is not regarded as miraculous nor exceptional; but as natural power and law of life, since all other men may do the same.[1]

"There is no difference between the true saints and Buddha himself. All are Buddhas."[2]

The coming good

Nor is this faith without its forward look. *One* future Buddha is already foreknown, and all the sects have honored this hope of the ages. After five thousand years, Gotama will be followed by Mâitreya, the Compassionate One,[3] who will restore all that is lost in these sad deeps of illusion and vanity, and rehabilitate virtue and bliss.[4] Fahian found Mâitreya honored in India in the fourth century of our era; and Hiouen Tshang's prayer was that he might dwell in this redeemer's bosom, and love and serve him for ever.[5]

Compensation.

In fine, where we had been led to expect suppression of all moral energy, we find a heroic spirit of universal love. Must we not recognize that one and the same law of providential education covers all races and religions, when we see the crushing moral discouragements that are so commonly believed inherent in the Buddhist doctrines of fate and of merit thus counteracted and compensated, and the nobler powers saved?

As in previous reactions against the priesthood,

[1] Wuttke, II 567.
[2] Hodgson, *Sketch of Buddhism* (*Transact. R. A. S.*, II. 243).
[3] Compare Persian *Mitra* (mercy). [4] Koeppen, I. 327. [5] St. Hilaire, p. 293.

recorded in the Brâhmanas, the protestants had belonged to the Kshattriya race,[1] so Gotama also was a prince. We should infer from the earlier Sutras that he did not undertake the definite abolition of caste, which indeed does not seem to have been strictly organized in Magadha, where his preaching first found success.[2] But he ignored it in the choice of a wife and of disciples: he rejected its principle in the whole substance of his gospel; and the first compiler of his precepts, Upâli, was a Śudra. Caste, for Gotama, could have no meaning. It was simply not worth his recognition: it faded before the common destiny, the common need, the common hope. He aimed at no political revolution. His very philosophy was rooted, like the mystical banyan, in the natural soil of Hindu thought.[3] It developed this so as to show that the only solution of its dark and deep riddles was in love and labor. His protest proved that the severest social constraints must bring reaction to liberty and brotherhood in some form; that the brain cannot be kept from asserting its need of the heart. Thus, although a natural result of Hindu intellect, Buddha's gospel struck at all aristocratic foundations in Hindu society. So far as the latter had become organized in the form we find in Manu, it must have been speedily shorn, in large measure, of many despotic elements, by the immense energy of this levelling and humanizing force; and the state of India, as described by later authorities, Greek and Chinese, affords striking evidence of the fact. This thorough democracy fully rejected the theoretic basis on which castes were founded, and substituted others, which could allow them at best only a temporary

Relation to Hindu life.

[1] Muller, *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 80. [2] Weber, *Vorles*, p 250. [3] Ibid, pp 248-250.

authority. They were declared to have grown up accidentally, or else by free suffrage, setting individuals to special functions for the common good; all men being originally of one race, "all brahmas," and equally pure, — Śudras, for instance, being simply persons who chose to live by the chase, — and the later subordinations having no warrant in divine or human law.[1] They were also closely associated with a supposed fall of man from primal purity.[2] From the very beginning of Buddhism, the Śudra had equal honor, as a convert, with the Kshattriya or Brahman. All that the pride of thought had hoarded should go to the most despised. The more heavily an exclusive tradition presses, the more radical will be the remedy. The whole Brahmanical system was put to the test of practical service. Buddhism, as we have said, made democratic application of every product of Hindu thought.[3] It insisted that this demand of mankind and the age should be heard, and that the dead Veda should bury its dead. Buddha, musing in the shadow of his fig-tree, under vow "not to rise till he had found the way to end the misery of the world," learned that more was to be done than muse.

The celestial dream of strife subdued and hatred abolished, and the joyless return of the "bonds of action" brought to an end, and pain and death conquered for ever, should not come to a few dreamers, reposing under the banyans till moss grew over them, but was also for the miserable Śudras and Chandâla outcasts, who, hopeless of any release from their social destiny, came to gaze in awe at these absorbed saints and bring them fruits and herbs. So he arose, and

[1] See *Journ. R. A S.*, vol. vi. p. 361. Hardy, *Manual*, ch. iii.
[2] Wuttke, II. 534. [3] Lassen, II. 440.

went out to preach his "mercy to all;"[1] and bade all idle saints get up and come out of their ascetic seclusion, and do likewise. What a tocsin to ring in the old slumbering woods of India! The idle saints got up in dismay and came out, but it was for the most part, if the Buddhist Sutras and traditions report truly, not to preach a gospel, but to silence the bold reformer, by force of words, if not of arms. Doubtless there was effort, as there always is under such temptation for the functionaries of an old religious system, to excite the ignorant and fanatical against him, and to cast him forth, root and branch. And yet we must beware of ascribing too much of the spirit of violence and persecution to the Brahmanical priesthood. It would appear that, on the whole, the revolution was peaceful; its progress was extremely rapid, as if the soil favored it; in a few centuries it had mastered most of the Hindu states; and more than a thousand years elapse from the time of Buddha, before the persecution arises which expels his followers from India.

Brahmanical sympathies

In truth this radicalism was a powerful appeal to all that was earnest and real in the old belief itself, and naturally found a deep response. All the Buddhist books significantly record that Brahmâ himself sustained and encouraged Gotama when oppressed by the magnitude of the work before him, and urged him to open the door of *nirvâna* to the people of Magadha, who were benighted and despondent, expecting all things to go to ruin and nature itself to fail.[2] The new interpretation schooled the Brahman in principles which he had been affirming without com-

[1] Burnouf, p. 198.

[2] Feer in *Journ. Asiat.* (1866), p. 95; Bigandet, p. 105; *Lalitav.*, &c.

prehending them. The root of *his own* religion was in this democratic Buddha, after all; for eternal truths belong to human nature and must go to the people, and pantheism knows no essential distinction of souls. The brave preacher plainly convicted the Brahmanical fraternity of abusing their own doctrine: perhaps he reproved their leaders for hypocrisy and charlatanry,[1] with salutary effect upon the single-minded. He was a better Hindu than the best of them; for he saw that the principle of all Hindu philosophy — "knowing truth is in becoming it" — forbade monopoly, and honored mind everywhere. He was a better Aryan than the best of them; for he understood that right of mind to test the traditional gods which was hinted so simply when the Vedic herdsman called on Indra and Agni, in the olden time, to come down and sit beside him on the sacrificial grass.

Protest against authority

The hardest saying for functionaries of the Veda and of caste to accept, was doubtless his warning that the world did not want their exclusive mediation with eternal truth. Yet this also had been heard from Kapila and others, and rationalism has always found an echo in Hindu society. Buddha was clear and unmistakable on such points. "The Vedas," he must have said, "are no absolute authority for me; my truth is of my own experience; the old rishis cannot enlighten me much about my duties to this living, suffering world. I have probed their dogmas and disciplines, and find them inadequate. To *every* soul, not to the 'twice-born' only, its own burden; and through its own wisdom and virtue, its release.[2] Your laws forbid the people to read the Vedas; but better than all that books can teach is it to see that there is no

[1] St. Hilaire, p. 43 [2] *Dhammapada*, vv 165, 169, 380.

distinction of persons in the sorrow that besets human life; and this misery both you, and those you bar out from sacred things, must be taught to dispel. Come all who will, the saving truth is free. Your Brahmanical hermitages are not the best asylums: the truth that delivers men from evil, that is the best asylum.[1] Gather others to hear of the way to liberation; gather them into schools, fraternities, monasteries; gather them in the city and the country: let every soul be fed. Your fastings, sacrifices, repetitions of sacred texts, will not open your eyes nor loose your bonds: they are vain without love. Your animal sacrifices are against your own theory of mercy to all creatures, and the sacredness of the One Life in all life. You rank by caste: I proclaim the natural order, the oldest and best first. You are seeking your own deliverance: I demand the deliverance of mankind."

Burnouf has translated an old Pâli-Sutra, in which the reformer condemns the habits of luxury and the superstitious divinations for gain into which the Brahmanic priesthood had fallen, as well as the passion for the theatre and for games of chance; a very Puritan reaction it would seem.[2] His protest against intemperance and sensuality was uncompromising.

Such the substance of Buddha's criticism, according to the oldest Sutras, which go back, *in written form*, no further than to the time of king Aśoka, 250 B.C; but which were then, according to universal tradition, formed out of earlier materials by the Buddhist teachers, and unquestionably represent the purport of the teacher's gospel.[3]

[1] Burnouf, 186. [2] *Lotus*, p. 464.

[3] See Koeppen, I. 184; Weber, *Vorles.*, 253; Lassen, II. 8; Müller, *Sansk. Lit.*, 260–301.

If this aroused opposition, it must also have stirred much profound sympathy in the best of the Brahmanical schools. But that so searching a reform could have found foothold at once, and marched on to the ascendency it seems to have won within a few centuries in the greater part of India, is proof that *Brahmanical ecclesiasticism in no wise shaped the deeper currents of Hindu feeling and life.* The scope of its work can hardly be better given than in the language of Koeppen, to whose admirable volumes all future research on the subject must be incalculably indebted: —

"It put spiritual brotherhood in place of hereditary priesthood; personal merit in place of distinctions of birth; human intelligence in place of authoritative Vedas; the self-perfected sage in place of the gods of the old theology; morality in place of ritualism; a popular doctrine of righteousness in place of scholasticism; a monastic rule in place of isolated anchoret life; and a cosmopolitan spirit in place of the old national exclusiveness."

Signs of peaceful discussion.

That the strife of ecclesiastical Brahmanism against Buddhist reform must have been the main fact of Hindu history after the sixth century B.C. would seem to be obvious. Yet there is no positive record of its being stained with bloodshed; and what little we do know of the far-away thousand years of Buddhist history in India but confirms our faith that these preachers of peace and love knew how to master the world by fulfilling their own precepts; while, on the other hand, if the Brahmanical party appealed to violence to put down the heretical sect, they have destroyed all evidences of the fact. The Greek writers, who are our main authorities for the state of Indian society from the time of Alexander

down to the Christian era, give no hint of strife between the two forms of faith.

Their descriptions of the religious caste, or class, apply to the Buddhists as fairly as to the Brahmans; in some respects, even better. Arrian, for instance, reports that it was open to all who chose to enter it;[1] which would lead us to suppose that Brahmanical exclusiveness had quite given way to Buddhistic liberty. Nearchus, a companion of Alexander, relates that women took part in the philosophical discussions of the Brahmans; and this fact again would seem to bring the two religions upon common ground. Strabo simply speaks of the *Pramnæ*, a "disputatious [rationalistic]" sect opposed to the Brahmans.[2] Clement of Alexandria, in the second century, describes both by name, but, again, without intimation of hostility between them.[3] Coming down to the fifth century after Christ, we have the testimony of the "Chinese Pilgrim," Fahian,[4] followed by that of Hiouen Thsang in the

[1] *Hist Ind.*, XII.

[2] *De Situ Orbis*, XV. *Prâmânam* is logical proof, as opposed to revelation.

[3] *Stromata*, I. c. xv.

[4] Three Chinese Buddhists, Fahian, Soungvun, and Hiouen Thsang, traversed India at intervals of about one hundred years; and the information they afford us of the religious condition of that country from the fifth to the seventh century is of the highest value The destruction of Buddhist works in the Chinese civil wars led to the mission of Fahian, which lasted fifteen years, and covered thirty kingdoms (including a visit to Ceylon), all of which he describes with great simplicity and fidelity, especially whatever was consecrated by Buddhist tradition. His great work, the *Fokoueki*, is of the highest reputation in China; and the pious zeal that sustained him through great and continual perils places him beside the most devoted apostles of other faiths. His wonderful record has been brought before the western world by the labors of Rémusat, Landresse, and Beal, and is of inestimable value as a source of light on the progress of Buddhism, and as an epoch in Hindu history otherwise wholly in the dark. Of equal importance is the pilgrimage of *Hiouen Thsang*, whom similar Buddhistic needs in China sent forth in like manner, to the holy places of his faith, to obtain its sacred books and learn its fortunes The result was a more detailed, as well as a more extended, description than Fahian's; comprehending the whole of India, covering nearly twenty years of time (A.C. 630–650), and more than a hundred distinct states, of which he sought to give a full account, geographical, social, political, historical, and religious. His zeal in collecting sacred writings was prodigious. He is said to have returned to China with no less than six hundred books, translations of which were carefully made

seventh; between which two epochs Brahmanism seems to have been gradually advancing, though in no wise gaining the day over Buddhism. But Fahian does not speak of any thing like open collision between these religions. He finds the worship of Buddha everywhere flourishing; nearly all the kings of northern India honoring his priests, whose temples were magnificent, and whose numbers were, as Soungyun afterwards describes them, like "the gathering of clouds." The Brahmans were "heretics," but, except in Java, not, as a whole, offering serious resistance to the true faith. He even mentions the adoration of Buddha by Brahmans of "great wisdom and purity," in the old time, and ascribes to them zeal in the preservation of his relics; nowhere speaking of their heresy with bitterness or hatred. Soungyun did not hesitate to go to the Brahmans to obtain charms for the relief of his mind. And, in Hiouen Thsang's time, the two religions were side by side in all northern India, that of Gotama greatly in the ascendent. Still no report is given of any thing like physical strife; though the zealous apostle, upheld by Buddhist kings, found plenty of opponents, and gained great glory in refuting them. These opponents were in fact for the most part not Brahmans at all, but Buddhists like himself, though of a different school. And it is on their heresy

and preserved by imperial command. No reader of his life and labors can withhold admiration of the singleness and purity of their purpose, however clouded by superstition, and the beauty of the spirit in which he investigates the beliefs of others He was as familiar with the writings of the Brahmans as with those of his own faith, and as carefully collected them for the enlightenment of his countrymen. St. Hilaire calls him one of the "elect souls in history, few of whom have been able to carry disinterestedness so far towards that limit where nothing is known but the pure idea of goodness" The substance of his record has recently been translated by Stanislas Julien. These "Chinese Pilgrims" must hereafter be the main authorities, as regards both mythology and history, for the period just preceding the revival of Brahmanism and the expulsion of the Buddhists from India.

that he lays most emphasis, apparently holding the Brahmans as of smaller account.

But the most noticeable feature of the relations of these different faiths in the time of Hiouen Thsang is the absolute toleration and even mutual respect with which their controversies were conducted. They were in no sense a war of passions, but a sober and peaceful discussion, and bear the marks of an enlightened love of free inquiry and faith in its results. A "king of kings," we are told, assembles the rulers who paid him tribute, and representatives of all the different religions in his dominions, together with the orphans and the poor, upon a "Great Field of Alms." There he celebrates a high festival, at which vast treasures were distributed, according to Buddhist custom, among the needy. First the various forms of worship were solemnly inaugurated in due order, by their respective disciples, on successive days, with equal respect from all. Next came distribution of gifts to the poor of each, in proportion to their numbers,—to the Buddhists, the Brahmans, the heretics, the mendicants of far countries. This prodigal charity is described as lasting for weeks; its care for the most indigent and friendless classes, alone, occupying a full month. The same monarch, Śiladitya, holds a grand religious conference at which two thousand Brahmans are present, and free opportunity is given to all advocates. At this the ardent Hiouen Thsang himself presides, is protected against personal enemies by the determination of the king to see fair play, and makes many converts to his own belief. The Brahmans, however, do not seem to have entered the lists, to any great extent, in these controversies. Their religion, we should infer from Hiouen Thsang, had but little hold on the people;

and Buddhism was still in the full confidence of a fixed supremacy, which its principles forbade it to use in a spirit of persecution. This real mastery of the Hindu mind it had maintained, according to these excellent Chinese apostles, for the whole ten or twelve centuries since the ascension of Buddha into *nirvâna*. And, during all this period, we have, in fact, no record of hostile relations with Brahmanism. Yet within a very short period of Hiouen Thsang's mission, certainly not more than two or three centuries, Buddhism, as a distinctive faith, appears to have been expelled from India, and its followers dispersed into such other lands as had proved accessible to their principles.[1] How far this was owing to a revival of Brahmanism in the ninth century by its great leader, Śankara Âchârya, and how far to differences between Buddhism and other sects like the Jainas, into whom its free spirit had passed, is not easy to determine. But it is a singular phenomenon, in view of our Chinese account of the firm position of the faith but a few centuries before, and of the peaceful hold it had maintained from the beginning.

Doubtful inferences.

This remarkable record of an almost undisputed ascendency has led to the inference that Buddhism was in fact the older religion of the two; and that the strict Brahmanical church is but of recent growth, originating mainly in the movement of Śankara Âchârya.[2] There are evidences that caste at least did not stand organized on strict Brahmanical principles during many centuries subsequent to Buddha. Thus Arrian's account of the classes does not at all correspond with these principles. Fahian describes

[1] Lassen, IV. 708.

[2] Sykes, *R A. Journal*, vol. vi. Wilson, *Introd. to Vishnu Purâna.*

the four classes[1] in Ceylon as gathering to hear the law of Buddha three times a month. He found countries whose kings were Śudras. The oldest inscriptions in India are Buddhist, and the oldest coins too are marked with Buddhist symbols. Prinsep satisfied himself that the earliest monarchs of India are not associated with Brahmanical creeds or dynasties. Finally, to justify the inference that Brahmanism was of late origin, the Laws of Manu have been, though on insufficient evidence, brought down to a recent date, or, perhaps more correctly, referred to a small tract of country inhabited by an isolated body of priests.

Results.

Although this reasoning would seem to carry us too far, it must at least be allowed that Buddhistic liberty is traceable far back in Hindu history, beyond the era of Buddha; though not distinctly visible as a *special* religious movement till after Brahmanical ideas and even institutions had been developed out of the study of the Vedas in the hands of a priesthood. As for the four castes of the orthodox system, we have seen that it is doubtful if they *ever* had positive and permanent reality as a social organization, in the strict form in which they stand in the ancient codes; and that from the beginning they were subject to continual interference and modification from impulses of freedom and humanity.

Buddha and Brahman.

It is to be observed also that the word "Buddha" must be as old as "Brahman." Both are primeval, and grew up together, I am inclined to believe, as expressions respectively for the *rational*, or human side of religion, and for the *supernal*, or divine. The one stands for knowledge, the other for prayer. Both these tendencies of course entered into the

[1] Beal (*Translation*, p. 155) supposes that classes of *believers* are here meant.

substance of the faith which preceded Gotama; and, at whatever special epochs the one or the other may have ripened into a definite system, the elements of the two great religions of India are united by mutual interaction at every step in the history of the national mind.

IV.

THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

world. At the appointed time and place, he dies in a holy grove, surrounded by his chosen apostles, exhorting them "to remember that all things are passing away, and to prepare themselves quickly for what is imperishable." They in turn promise that they will preach his word fearlessly, enduring to the end.[1] After the burning of his body, the strife of eight kings for his relics is appeased only by Ânanda's admonition to remember the spirit of the master, and by their distribution among the whole.

Analogies of Buddhist and Christian legend.

The legend of Gotama follows the great common track of Oriental inspiration, familiar in its general features to all students of Comparative Religion; though in his case profusely heaped with the flowers of a tropical fancy. Its resemblance to the New Testament mythology, limited of course by contrasts of style and detail growing out of the difference of race, is yet sufficient to show decisively that the elements available for the mythopœic faculty in different religions are substantially the same. We have the story[2] of the Buddha's celestial choice to enter the world for its salvation; of his strict fulfilment of all the fore-ordained conditions necessary to meet the ideal of Buddhahood, as to nationality, family, times and places of birth, and ministry; of his mother's virginity, and the descent of the divine child into her bosom, approaching her in the form of a white elephant bearing a lily, thus taking up into this nativity consecration the life of the beasts and the flowers, — and of his birth amidst joyful adoration by all divine powers and the transfiguration of nature to welcome redeeming soul; of the saint who discerns upon him the manifold marks of incarnation, and rejoices and

[1] *Lotus*, p 165.

[2] See Burnouf, St. Hilaire, and Hardy.

weeps by turns as he describes the long-looked-for glory he has been privileged, so far, to behold; of the perfections of his childhood; of his six years' fasting in the wilderness; of his conflicts with the spirit of evil, Mâra, who comes to test his pretensions, and dissuade him from his purpose by bribes and terrors, and even by armed hosts, whose weapons, as they rain upon the firm heart and will, are turned to flowers; of his miraculous gifts, used always for beneficent ends; of his controversies with the Brahmans, who sought in all ways to overreach, or silence, and even in some cases to destroy him; of his predictions and exhortations, relative to his own death and its consequences for mankind; of the wonders that attended the burning of his body, on earth and through all the worlds.

The seclusion of the Buddhist monasteries gave opportunity for the growth of a luxuriant mythology about his person, greatly enlarged and enriched by the wide geographical expansion of the faith, and the division of the believers into a multitude of sects. Similar influences have produced analogous results on the person of "the Christ" in the Western world, but with a difference that should be carefully noted. The growth of legend about the earthly life of Jesus has been checked by the historic sense peculiar to Western civilization, and by the circulation of a written record. The mythopœic current, thus diverted from the ground of his actual life, has poured itself, in an almost Oriental flood, in the generation of an ideal, all-pervading "Christ," or rather a forever-changing ideal of perfection; bound somehow to get itself reconciled, however, with the record of Jesus as its norm and source, and to remain so, constructing all spiritual

for the dress of a woodsman, and gives himself up to meditation. He studies at the feet of renowned Brahmans, but soon exhausts the wisdom of their Brâhmanas and Upanishads; yet consents to try the ascetic path, and pursues its disciplines for six years, attended by five Brahman disciples. But, after confounding all teachers and overcoming all temptations, he is no nearer content: the way is not found. Not so is human misery to be met, not so to be followed to its root. To waste the body does not enlighten the mind. He abandons fasting and penance, to the horror of his Brahman followers, who flee from his blooming countenance, as if it proved him possessed by an evil spirit. Refreshed by food, he reclines on a carpet of grass-blades under one of those mystical fig-trees, or *pippalas*, whose heart-shaped leaves, attached to slender stalks, and shivering in the lightest breeze, seem to have been suggestive to the Hindu of the fluctuation of all outward things; resolved never to rise again till the way of emancipation shall have become plain; and there, motionless for a day and a night, a silent, waiting mind, he receives at daybreak the illumination which makes him the "Awakened One." He is now not only "Sâkyamuni," the Hermit-prince, but a "Buddha" of salvation.

Yet he is overwhelmed at the thought of the greatness of the task before him. To teach thoughtless and ignorant multitudes that ignorance and thoughtlessness were the root of all evil; to lead their minds through the long chain-work of causes and effects, beginning with "*ignorance*," and ending in the woes of existence, — by appreciation of which they could free themselves into the path of *nirvâna*, seems impossible; and he despairs. But all nature and soul hasten to

animate and urge forward the redeeming power for which they long. The very gods, Brahmâ and Indra, all that men have trusted in, confess their own defect, and entreat him to take courage and reveal the mighty secret of release.

His early preaching in Magadha is a failure. The Sutras tell of sixty days of doubts, temptations, exaltations, discouragements; of the celebrated doctors to whom he appealed in vain; of the outcry of heresy, and even insanity, that arose against him; of the necessity to leave his own country, where he had no honor, and "turn the wheel of the law" at the holy city of Vârânaśi (Benarès).

From this moment all is victory: all things are prepared for him. Kings greet him with honor, and provide structures for the propagation of the faith; and the people rejoice in the waters of life at last dispensed freely.

The world is renewed by this gospel revealed in the stillness of meditation, this solution of the problem of human misery by freedom, thoughtfulness, and love. We see the man who has dethroned the gods, for forty years journeying through northern India, preaching and reforming, clearing men's minds and opening their hearts and doing wonderful works; converting kings, saints, and scholars, and drawing the multitudes by the charm of his personal appearance and intercourse, his eloquence and his matchless virtues.

In his eightieth year he remembers that it is the time appointed for him to enter into *nirvâna;* predicts to his disciples that in three months he shall be taken from them; consoles their sorrow; admonishes them to fresh zeal, and bids them gather up his precepts when he is gone, and proclaim them to the whole

Writing.

Of the use of writing for religious purposes in the earliest ages of Buddhism, we have no evidence. The traditions of the first three councils do not mention it, and the monumental edicts of Aśoka, which belong to the third century B.C., are the oldest inscriptions as yet found in India. "The *Tripitaka*, or Three Baskets" (the Buddhist Gospels) — comprising *Sutras* (discourses), *Vinaya* (discipline), and *Abhidharma* (metaphysics) — current in the Pâli language in Ceylon, contains much of the oral tradition of the oldest times; but it cannot be referred as a whole to a period previous to the time of Aśoka. Of more marked originality is the Nepâlese collection, written in Sanskrit, and in corresponding though not identical divisions. Much of this also shows signs of elaboration, only possible in an advanced stage of monastic life.[1] The Pâli history of Ceylon refers the Tripitaka to the close of the "period of inspiration" (106–74, B.C.). The Dhammapada bears stronger marks of originality, and its sentences are evidently collected from primitive sources. They answer to the *logia*, which Matthew is reported in early Christian traditions to have preserved, and which, so far as they are discoverable in the gospel now bearing his name, must form our earliest data for the life of Jesus.

That other enlightened persons received the venerated name of "Buddha" in earlier times, and in regions north of India, is very probable. The theory of Buddhism affirms an "apostolic succession," descending from remotest ages; and Gotama himself is quoted in proof of it. The name *Tathâgata* con-

[1] Burnouf, p. 125; Wassiljew, *Le Bouddhisme*, p 19; Pillon, in *L'Année Philosophique* for 1868, p. 378–382; Müller, *Chips*, I. 196; *Sanks. Lit.*, p. 520; Feer in *Journal Asiatique* for 1867 and 1870.

stantly given him signifies "he who has pursued the path of his predecessors." Fahian reports three earlier Buddhas, describes a tower in Oude, where the relics of one of them were preserved, and even quotes heretics who rejected Gotama in the name of these earlier saints. He was supposed to have chosen the special scene of his labors in accordance with a proverb that "a Buddha must always be turning the wheel of the law at Benarés."[1]

Whatever becomes of the claims of Buddhism to an ancient "apostolic succession," there can be no doubt that the distinctive revolution in Hindu thought, we are now describing, was embodied in a real reformer; and that his moral traits, if not his words and actions, have been, on the whole, truly handed down by his earliest disciples, whose testimonies on this point substantially agree.[2]

Personal traditions.

They report him a prince of the royal race of the Śâkyas, and the great solar race of the Gotamas; — a truly "Messianic" origin. He is born at Kapilavastu, a city of Magadha, the centre of heroic and sacred legend. His true name is said to have been *Siddhârta*, "the victorious;" but this is more probably a later title of honor, like Buddha, given him by disciples. At the age of thirty, oppressed by the sense of human misery from disease, old age, and death, and the transiency of all things, and absorbed by the longing to deliver mankind from these evils and the successive future births which involved their return, he abdicates all his royal rights, escapes with difficulty from his father's court, exchanges his robes

[1] Accessible authorities are, for northern Buddhism; Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, Burnouf's *Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, and Foucaux's *Lalitavistâra*; and for southern, Turnour's *Mahâvanśa*.

[2] Lassen, II. 65–75; St. Hilaire, ch. 1; Duncker, II. 180.

THE HOUR AND THE MAN.

THE name "Buddha" is derived from the root *budh*, to know, and means "enlightened," "wakened out of dreams into certainty." Its wide currency, both in history and mythology,[1] indicates great energy of spiritual reaction amidst the inertia of Oriental faith. It was the name for *mind* in all Hindu philosophy, and the title of honor given to the sage. In the Brahmanical as well as the Buddhistic writings, this is a common term for sainthood.[2] "The Buddha," like "the Christ," is thus not a personal name, but an official title; yet conveying a less exclusive sense than the latter word has received from Christendom, being applied to innumerable ideal personages, a series reaching through incalculable time.

Name and date.

This latitude in the use of the name is one cause of the differences among Buddhists themselves, as to the epoch of the special Buddha to whom the Hindu religious reformation is referred. The Thibetans have as many as fourteen accounts of the time of his death, ranging between 2422 B.C. and 546 B.C. The Chinese and Japanese insist on the tenth century, and the Singhalese on the sixth. This last date (543 B.C.) substantiated by an agreement among the southern

[1] Pococke, *India in Greece.* [2] Weber, *Vorles.*, pp. 27, 161.

Buddhists, has been generally accepted by European scholars as approximately correct.[1] Yet Müller and Lassen have shown that dogmatic requirements, reputed prophecies, and other errors, have had much to do with fixing the recognized dates, after all.

Written records

His Sutras (sentences or discourses) were collected after his death by the earliest synod of his followers.[2] But these have been to an extent recast by somewhat later hands, and Müller believes that the story of Buddhism down to its *political* triumph, in the third century B.C., was supplied out of the heads of its disciples in that epoch, rather than from authentic records.[3] Yet, in common with other scholars, he regards the substance of the oldest Sutras as good material for history, accepting the main features of their report of Gotama, notwithstanding Professor Wilson's skepticism even as to his existence.[4] St. Hilaire, following the Lalitavistâra, one of the earliest works of the canon,[5] for the period of his youth, and combining various Sutras with the reports of the "Chinese Pilgrims" for that of his ministry, has endeavored to separate truth from fiction and to present a life of the reformer free from mythological additions, — just as Baur, Renan, Schenkel, and others, have sought to eliminate similar tributes of the religious imagination from the records of the life of Jesus. It is manifest, however, that there are even greater difficulties in the way of this effort than in that of extracting pure history from the Christian gospels.

[1] *Lassen*, II. 57-60; St. Hilaire; Burnouf; Weber, *Vorles.*, p. 251. Müller says 477 B.C. See *Sansk. Lit*, pp. 260-301.

[2] Koeppen, II 10; Lassen, II. 8. [3] *Sansk. Lit*, p. 260.

[4] *Sansk. Lit*, 79, 82; *Chips*, I. 217, 219.

[5] Dating beyond all question earlier than the Christian era (St. Hil., *Introd.*, xiv.; Müller, *Chips*, I. 205), and translated out of Sanskrit into Chinese in the first century of our era.

oldest Sutras seek to ennoble the name of Brahman. The Dhammapada, describing the true Buddhist saint says, "Him call I the true Brahmana." Our amiable Chinese pilgrims bear no malice towards believers in the older faith. Fahian praises a great Brahmanical teacher. Hiouen Thsang describes the Brahmans as "men of spotless life, who make purity the basis of their doctrine;" and has other good words for them whenever he speaks of them as a whole.[1] The Sutras represent Gotama as seeking to purify the lives of many, whose doctrine he does not assail. The Buddhists seem indeed to have used this ancient word to convey the sense of pure religion; objecting to the pretence of a technical Brahmanic priesthood to appropriate it. It has on their lips a certain ancestral sanctity, in view of which such ecclesiastical pretensions were childish: so that one cannot well avoid the belief that we are here dealing with one of those simplest and most natural terms for the inward life, which, like our own words, *God* and *Nature*, overpass special creeds, and associate the speaker with the whole religious experience of his people. Even while deposing Brahmâ himself as special deity, the Buddhist would seem to have held fast to the old significance of this root-word of religion. "Buddhism," says Max Müller, "was originally but a modification of Brahmanism, and grew slowly up to the position of a rival and opposing system."[2] The statement may easily be strengthened by the analogies of history. Christianity was, in its origin, a form of Judaism. The continuity of religious life is steadily maintained through all transitions.

[1] *Mém. des Voy. de Hiouen Thsang*, I. 76, 80.
[2] *Sansk Lit.*, p. 262.

There is no "supernatural" violation of this sacred sanity of growth.

But there was other soil than that of distinctive Brahmanism to quicken the new tree. We have seen that rationalistic reactions had already, before the time of Buddha, combined with the introspective tendencies of Hindu thought, as in Kapila. Buddhism inherited largely from the Sânkhya, and was, in the main, a democratic use of its speculative belief.[1] The rise of new divinities in the faith of the people, such as the worship of Krishna Vishnu,[2] and the reaction of aboriginal beliefs on the language, social habits, and religious sentiment of the Aryan conquerors, — must have weakened the hold of Brahmâ, as an *exclusive* conception of deity. The practical faith of the people has at all times exerted an influence on contemporaneous forms of philosophy; and even Hindu abstractions were not free from this social accountability.

And in Aryan character.

The most impressive fact in Indian Buddhism is a complete dethronement of the old deities in the name of (*buddhi*) human intelligence. The legend shows these elder gods kneeling around the mother of Gotama, at his birth, in homage to a Human Life that brought with it a profounder insight than their own. This secularist courage of the Buddhist lay in his ethnic descent. To hold special conceptions and names of deity in abeyance to the energies of *mind* was but a phase of that self-reliance which determines all forms of activity in Aryan races. Not only has there been in them all a *heroic* element that dared to lift itself to the level of recognized divinities; not only do all their epics delight to exalt the

[1] Weber, *Ind. Stud.*, I. 434. [2] Lassen, II. 464.

Buddhism may have found foothold in some strong civil or political reaction against the authority of a priestly caste. Of this we have no account. But we know that the civil power sustained the movement, and that princes bore as important a part in propagating it as they did in the growth of the Christian Church eight hundred years, and in that of Protestantism two thousand years, afterwards. We know of Kandragupta,[1] the great Hindu chief, who expelled the Greeks from India in the third century B.C., and conquered an empire which included the whole of Aryavarta, the Holy Land of Hindu tradition, and the birthplace of Gotama himself, and founded the famous dynasty of the Mauryas with which the latter was connected by subsequent legend as Śâkyamuni; that he was of low caste, probably a Śudra, and that his accession must have given great impulse to the preaching of social equality in the name of religion. And we find in his grandson, Aśoka, the Constantine of the Buddhist church. All accounts agree in reporting some of Gotama's earliest converts to have been men of the highest rank and distinction. Kings were his champions and almoners. Hiouen Thsang saw the ruins of a hall of conference at Śravasti, which had been built for him by the king of Kosala, and tells of other structures in the midst of beautiful gardens erected for his public preaching by men of great wealth and benevolence in different parts of northern India. The secular element could indeed hardly have been attracted by the speculative principles of Buddhism, which do but follow the Brahmanical track into depths where the common mind could not easily find food. But these

Foothold of Buddhism in the age.

[1] Lassen, II. 196.

fine-spun metaphysics were largely of later growth: they did not constitute its motive force. The practical democratic tone of its new preaching, on the other hand, must have been welcomed, both by the *masses* who saw mutual love and service substituted for priestly mediation as the path to beatitude, and by the *secular powers*, which would greet a religion so antagonistic to the rival caste. But we must not underestimate the capacity of the people to become interested even in *speculative* reforms. Müller does not hesitate to say that "in India less than in any other country would people submit to a monopoly of truth; and the same millions who were patiently bearing the yoke of a political despotism threw off the fetters of an intellectual tyranny." We have already seen that the political despotism itself was not so complete as has commonly been thought.

Roots of Buddhism in the past.

The old religious institutions had doubtless lost much of their power.[1] Brahmanism was no longer the profound faith it had been; or rather it was passing into the freer spirit of the Upanishad, an ever open "sitting" for new revelations. It had already gone through many phases, and its pantheistic spirit left it open in many directions to great freedom of speculation. Its Brâhmanas and Upanishads abound in Buddhistic terms and doctrines.[2] It is certain that the reformers held its spiritual essence in respect. There is good evidence that, as late as the time of Aśoka, Buddha was still associated with it, and regarded as in some sort its pupil. He was a sitter at the feet of Brahmans, and his earliest followers were of that class. Famous Brahman teachers are associated with him in both these ways.[3] The

[1] Lassen, II 462. [2] Weber, *Vorles.*, p. 249. [3] Ibid.

moved from the age of the Hindu reformer, the less of that universal element in Buddhism that makes it a religion will be found traceable to his *exclusive* influence, and the more to profound tendencies and necessities in the life of his epoch and his race, — is but to apply a universal law. The further we penetrate towards the apparent sources of any great religious movement, the more strongly the disposition to ascribe it, *as a whole*, to the personal power of the so-called "Founder," will be reproved. And this not because the initial impulses of great reformations were not really felt in the depths of elect souls, nor because personal force is of less moment than we are wont to suppose; but because the tendency of a religious veneration which lasts for ages is to overlook or depreciate the *manifold* personal forces of which a great religious transition is made up, in the *exclusive* interest of *one*. All universal results must come from universal elements, and such elements could only have been expressed in the infinite variety of characters and aims that made up the spirit of an age. History brings round this needed lesson in the democracy of the soul, at last. It will not suffer the honor due to human nature to be for ever absorbed or monopolized by a few. The progress of inquiry dissipates these illusions of distance; but it is only to substitute better knowledge of the providential laws.

Origin of Christianity.

This is illustrated in the study of the origin of Christianity. What have been loosely called mere "preparations for the coming of the Lord"[1] are found to have been grand creative instincts

[1] Even Müller occasionally expresses such partialism, which seems out of accord with his large culture and spiritual as well as philosophical insight. See *Sansk Lit.*, p. 32; *Chips*, I. p. 373.

in the depths of Hebrew, Greek, and Roman civilization, moving millions more or less definitely in one and the same direction, and shaping an ideal, ready to crown the head which should be conspicuous enough to attract its attention, yet obscure enough to baffle criticism, — these spiritual tendencies of the age secretly moving the teacher and his apostles, and developing his religious genius for its work. Not only are the moral and spiritual truths he was believed to have imported into the time, and even into human nature, found to have been fermenting in the society into which he was born, but that all-controlling function in opening the new moral era which has been ascribed to his personal *life* fails of historical evidence. His nobility and sweetness are seen to have followed the natural laws of human influence.[1] All the more evident becomes the divine impulse that was moving that whole wonderful age.[2]

Individual and universal claims.

Thus inevitably are exacted all dues that have been withheld from the common nature, whereof all religions and their founders are outgrowths. Yet heroism and sainthood are none the less spontaneous; nor has genius the less of individuality and original power. And this inevitable absorption of the personal centres of religious tradition into the humanity of their times, at the touch of historical inquiry, can no longer surprise us when we remember that every exclusive claim has defrauded personality itself, by setting aside that ideal value which belongs to it in *each and every* efficient human life.

[1] See, for further illustration of these points, the author's work on *The Worship of Jesus* (Boston, 1868).

[2] See Denis, *Théories et Idées Morales de l'Antiquité*; and Leckv's *European Morals*.

symbolism to conform to this record, in order that the historical Jesus may be retained as indwelling life of his Church. To this personal ideal, thus constructed, which is put, like that of Buddha, in the place of deity, the Christian imagination ascribes all past, all actual, and all hoped-for good. The defect of the Buddhist mythology is thus of a very different character from that of the Christian; the one consisting in the absence of restraint by the laws of historical experience, and the other in arrest and custody of the spiritual sense by artificial historic limits. The value of both is in claiming, up to a certain point, spiritual and moral significance for the natural world.

And here the Buddhist ideal maintains, through all the wild, rank license of its fancy, a severe ethical purity, more surprising under such circumstances, than that which has been secured to the Christian by the far greater sobriety of Semitic and European imagination.

The analogy *in method* between the two mythologies holds, as far back as the records of either allow us to go. The pre-existing type of the Buddha life lay in the consciousness of the early Buddhist Church, just as the Messianic idea lay in that Hebrew consciousness to which we owe so much of the earliest biography of Jesus. "The Buddha must perform certain acts, visit certain places at certain times, work certain prescribed miracles;"[1] and it was but the natural tribute of faith to make his biography accord with these conditions. In all mythological construction, the soul has made good its own prophetic desire, more or less freely, by the creative word, "This was done that it might be fulfilled." First, a few general

[1] See Koeppen, I. 95; St. Hilaire, ch. II.; Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, ch. xxii.

typical features or moulds were supplied by the living hope of the age; then these, having found some personal centre round which they could gather, were wrought out by later demands in the desired variety and prodigality of product.[1]

To what extent the Founder of a faith himself has contributed to the *development* of the pre-existent ideal through sharing its hope, and believing himself appointed to fulfil it, is in all cases difficult to determine. The remote life of Gotama of course affords no exception to the rule.

The hour and the man

The eighty apostles he is believed to have sent forth to preach his gospel of "mercy to all" are probably but a mythical expression of the fact that the age awaited it. The voice of a common aspiration must have been heard in his appeal, as in all gospels that have survived in the faith of generations. Buddha represented, as did Jesus afterwards, a great demand of his time; partly by his actual personality, and still more as the centre of that idealizing process by which the demands of a religious crisis know how to create their own satisfaction out of a few ill-defined and therefore plastic materials. Before describing this demand in the instance of Buddhism, there is a word to be said about the significance of this relation between the Hour and the Man.

Significance of a great religious demand.

All the historical religions, even Mohammedanism and Christianity, run back to comparatively unhistorical ages and obscure personal relations. To say that the more this veil is re-

[1] Thus the legend associates with Buddha's life all the holy places of northern India. "He is born at Kapilavastu; reaches perfection at Magadha; turns the wheel of the Law at Vârânâsi (Benarès); and is freed from pain at Kaci."

interest of human strife by bringing in the immortals to share the perils and bear the fortunes of the day: this challenge to the Pantheon in the clash of Aryan arms was natural for bold and ardent races; the gods of the hero are ever provisional. But there was a like instinct of self-affirmation in the religious element also. It divinized the authority of truth, *as Thought;* and this, for the more *introversive* qualities of Aryan mind, would mean truth as contemplation, or devotion. And so the unsteadily seated Vedic and Brahmanical deities were amenable to a force more potent than the Kshattriya's sword. It was the very force by which they had earned their thrones. That concentration of mind on the eternal by reaction from the transient, which, as represented in them, constituted their deity, continued to hold them responsible to itself. It was an idea, a universal fact for ever seeking fresh expression and more perfect embodiment. In other words, devotion made them: an intenser devotion could unmake, could supplant them.

Dethronement of the older gods.

It is not meant by this statement that the ascetic mental disciplines themselves, which constituted the "devotion" of the Hindu saint, were themselves regarded as the highest object of worship. These subjective processes of the individual were doubtless, as profound aspirations always are, lost to the consciousness by absorption in the universal idea which they pursued. Thought *in itself*, as spiritual contemplation, was true deity, was creative essence; and the more there was of this, the more of real being and sovereignty, which all special forms of existence must obey.

The *rishi* who shall surpass one of these deities in devotion, who shall reach a completer sacrifice of im-

perfect desires and aims, shall dispossess him of the divinity claimed for him; and this of course is purely by virtue of the divine itself, as always greater than any of its manifestations. Thus all special forms of deity were subject to the instinct of *progress*, in this pantheistic worship of contemplation, this faith in the endless productivity of devotion. The old myth of the *pitris*, or fathers, curiously illustrates what is here meant. This class of divine human beings were believed to be the sons of the gods; but placed *above* them by Brahmâ, as having proved holier than they. Thenceforward they were acknowledged as fathers by their own parents. Being more divine, they were essentially older. Does not the long procession of religions, the line of special names and forms by which man has sought to express his changing thought of deity, present the same law on a majestic scale? Ever the child takes the father's place. The newest authority stands for the root of being and of history: its very birth and parentage are held to have been its own work. Man affirms, in every fresh enlargement of his religious ideal, somewhat ancestral and primeval; because it is in *its* adequacy that the problem of existence is solved for him, and the essence of creative power revealed. So the older God gives way to the new light from Man. And deity may be said to judge its own past, as the *Idea of the Holy* advances in human consciousness.

The law of liberty.

This is the process of spiritual freedom. In different stages of development, its forms are different, its intelligence less or greater. But the soul's mastership of its homestead is constantly asserted in one or another way; whether it be (to apply a distinction that has been well drawn) through

the illusive aim of primitive speculation to coerce the supernatural powers which an imaginative faith created, or through that "command of nature by obeying her laws which is the practical issue of modern science."[1]

Every step in religious progress is a reaffirmation of the authority of the ideal element in man, as representative of deity, to judge and reshape its conceptions of the divine. And, however partial these conceptions may be, it is through their changes that we are lifted *beyond them*, and know that the Infinite itself is objectively real.

Its inspiration of the human faculties, as the Idea of the Divine, advances in all Aryan civilizations with special freedom, boldly substituting fresh forms and names of deity for older ones, from time to time found inadequate. The speciality of the *Hindu* process is that the idea thus exercising eminent domain in worship is *contemplative*. From contemplation and its energies there was in Indian faith no appeal. Mythology and ritual were constantly destroyed and reconstructed by its breath. Ever dissatisfied with its own forms, it pressed on to abstraction more thorough and more intense; as we see not only in the difference between Brahmanical and Buddhistic speculation, but in the constant liability of the deities to be supplanted by a more perfect sainthood. Yet it must be recognized that the abstraction was thoroughly competent to creation not only of positive belief, but of moral aspiration and endeavor. These new masters of faith and heaven are held with singular strictness to the validity of moral authority. Devotees enter deity by prayer, discipline, and service; and saints alarm the

[1] *Westminster Review* on "Magic and Astrology" (January, 1864).

gods by their virtues, as well as their penances, into sending seductions and dissuasives, such as nymphs, called the weapons of Indra, to bend them from their victorious march. Their imprecations sway the course of nature and human life.[1] In the Râmâyana, the poet does not hesitate to make the older gods contemptible through their immoralities; while Vishnu only, the later deity who had supplanted them, is exalted as the perfect moral ideal, and thereby commended to worship. The antagonism involved in this possibility of supplanting the old divinity by new human energies, and the arduousness of the test, has its representative victim in the mythologic king Trisanku, whose ambitious virtue, offending the gods, caused him to be flung back from heaven, whither he had ascended, towards the earth; but, being caught on his way by the powerful Viśvâmitra, he remained suspended in space, forming a constellation in the southern sky.

Buddhism the ultimate of Hindu contemplation.

Such being the recognized authority of the contemplative and moral ideals, to supplant their own past forms with higher ones, it was natural that a definite negative should come at last, to sweep away every claim of everlastingness in the existent objects of Hindu faith; to disparage the old divinities more than the boldest war-chiefs had done, and to give law even to Brahmâ, through a force of abstraction profounder than that which his name had signified or his perfection involved. It was natural that contemplation itself, pressing freely to its utmost limit, should find its own *nirvâna*, and be, as it were, set free of its distinctive self, into universality, both speculative and moral; so that out of the depths

[1] See the whole plot of *Śakuntalâ*, which is founded on an event of this sort. Also

of philosophical pantheism, out of utmost isolation and abstraction, should arise this wonderful Buddhism, this "awakening," this "illumination" of idea and purpose, with the grand sweep of its affirmation: "All that lives and breathes shall become Buddha;" with its faith that whenever a Buddha passes into *nirvâna*, his *karma* is poured through the worlds as a fulness of living moral energies;[1] its summons to every one to master evil and make his own destiny; and its tender and earnest impulse to save all men, its world-wide gospel to the poor.

Can we wonder that a gospel whose essence lay in the experience that thought can reach its final purpose, and existence its solution, only in *service* of mankind, should have been heard so gladly by the teeming populations of the East? Sublime demonstration that the soul, even in its dreams, finds a path to universality, both in sympathy and faith.

Most naturally too, as we have seen, arose this radical *self-affirmation of the human*, through all negation towards special objects of faith. As Brahmanical piety was absorbed in the idea of God, so there seems to have always existed by the side of it, in India, some form of protest and reaction in the name of man. Its earnestness and courage are seen in such proverbs as these from the Dhammapada: — Self-affirmation of the human.

"Neither God nor Gandharva, nor Mâra (the spirit of evil), with Brahmâ combined, can make that man's victory a defeat, who has constantly ruled himself."

"Even the gods envy the thoughtful, calm, awakened ones."

"Better than lordship over all worlds is to take the first step in virtue."

[1] Bastian, *Die Weltauffassung der Buddhisten* (Berlin, 1870), p. 23.

The Buddha is in origin purely human; yet contemplation exalts him above all gods. His human energy masters all special forms of being and power in all worlds. His personal will *chooses* to postpone his hard-earned *nirvâna*, that he may share it with all mankind; that he may teach the whole world the way to its blessedness. This is like the divine love ascribed to Jesus in Christian creeds. But between the two religions that correspond to these two ideals there is this difference. In Buddhism the moral grandeur redounds purely and unmistakably to the honor of human nature, since it has always been maintained that Gotama was essentially human.[1] Christianity, on the other hand, has *not* rested the virtue of Jesus on the natural capacity of man; however it may imply, in holding him to be the manifestation of deity, that a human form may, for once, be transfigured by special divine influx.

Earlier germs of this.

This coming of the human to positive self-assertion in Buddhism was, as I have said, in part a protest against disparaging man in the name of God. But we must not carry this explanation of it too far. We should, for instance, be quite wrong in regarding it as the extreme reaction from an absolute denial of the Human in Brahmanism to an absolute denial of the Divine. This would be to overstate both sides as forms of negation. We have already seen that Buddhism was not atheistic; and it is equally true that its claim for man was not an absolute revolution in Hindu philosophy. It was indeed adequate to give fresh direction to the thought and life of the people. It was

[1] See Hardy, *Manual*, p. 363. "To remove the doubts of all beings, to show that what he does is not by the power of *irdhi*, or miraculous gift, he receives Buddhaship as a man, born from the womb."

a new expansive force, a stimulus to zeal and sacrifice. The soul always seeks a true balance of its activities; and so contemplative devotion enforced a demand for enthusiasm and the inspiration of work. Hence the Buddhist's appeal to the masses, his fearless rejection of the old divinities that slumbered in the bosom of caste. But there was in that older contemplative piety *itself*, it must be remembered, the germ of a profound recognition of the Human. Spiritual Pantheism, in its substantial meaning, exalts and reveres soul, *as* soul. Its logic can never quite escape a democratic, universal form. Its God in India was not this Brahman nor that rishi, but "All in all." Therefore, as we have seen, its development naturally brought rationalistic and free mystical tendencies, caste-disintegration, and, in a word, Buddhism itself, in definite, constructive form, as the concurrence of all these, notwithstanding every thing that ecclesiasticism could do to prevent them.

We must note that it was only as *special divinities* that the elder gods were liable to be supplanted by the spiritual disciplines of special saints. It was only as *a* god that Brahma was dethroned by the Buddhist test of transiency, not as God. It is not to be inferred therefore that the attitude of censorship we have described involved ignorance or rejection of an eternal essence beyond the power of human criticism to change, or of human achievement to supplant. Only the pursuit of such transcendent moral reality could have enforced the criticism of specific objects of worship, and the effort to achieve their subjection by a higher truth and virtue than their own.

Limits of this claim of the human.

It is true that the gods, thus declared to be merely temporary, were also held to be actual beings and powers in the universe: so that in the treatment of all

such definite forms of deity as provisional there lay the danger of dissolving *objective* truth in the self-assertion of the critical faculty; and of claiming not only that man makes and unmakes his special conception of God, but that God, as God, is nothing else than a human *conception*. But these perils of negation were held in check by a profound veneration in the Oriental mind for the independence of the eternal, absolute, and infinite. It was but as forms of personal will that the gods were held to be thus provisional, and subject to the demand for more perfect fulfilment of the religious ideal.

Imperfect sense of deity.

The Buddhist has not therefore committed the weakness of holding Brahmâ or Vishnu to be true and perfect Deity, while at the same time subjecting him to human criticism and even mastership. Yet, when Buddha himself came to be the centre of religious faith and mythologic creation, he was regarded as subject to human influence and even control, with little respect for the self-adequacy of the divine. So Vishnu is described by Kàlidâsa as "greater than the self-existent," when choosing a mortal shape, to save mankind.[1] To this imperfect sense of the meaning of deity all religions are subject, in concentrating worship on a definite personal will. In the same way, the Christ practically supplants the Father in the faith and service of Christians; and God becomes only an "impalpable effluence," from the person of his own Son! It hardly becomes Christendom to rebuke Buddhism for putting a man in place of God. Luther said that God had "tied himself to man by bonds of prayer;" Montalembert, that "prayer equals, sometimes surpasses, the power of God, triumphing

[1] *Śakuntalâ*, Act. VII.

over His will, His wrath, and even over His justice." "God," says Ruskin, "is a Being who can be reasoned with, moved by entreaties, angered by our rebellion, alienated by our coldness, pleased by our love, and glorified by our labor." All this is certainly to worship the conditional and finite. It would subject the moral order of the universe to the infirmities of human desire. It is also, on the other hand, however unconscious and perverted, a kind of claim justly entered by the human to determine the paths of freedom and progress. Both these forces manifestly involve criticism and even supersedure of what *has been* held the adequate object of worship. But they are perverted, if not suppressed, in so far as the claim amounts to a pretension of moving and changing deity itself; in so far as it is assumed that one who can be thus criticised, changed, convinced, improved, and even supplanted, has in very fact exhausted the idea of infinite, absolute Being. Such, however, is the perverted form under which the claim of the human to shape its religious ideal appears, not in the distinguished instances only that have just been given, but in the general tenor of Christian praying and preaching.

And the sincerity and devoutness, which is found to be compatible therewith in the Christian world, should prepare us to believe that a similar failing in later Buddhism is not without its aspirations to freedom and its sentiment of reverence and faith.

V.

AFTER-LIFE IN INDIA.

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HARDLY any thing in the history of religion is more impressive than the energy with which Buddhism was propagated for centuries after the time of Śâkyamuni, and its success in revolutionizing the religious life of the great and little states into which northern India was divided. All the oldest inscriptions on Hindu monuments are not only written in dialects of popular language, but are shown to be Buddhist by their spirit also, as well as by the emblems which in many cases are associated with them: the chaitya, or relic temple, the tree, the wheel, the cross, the seated Buddha. And the same conclusion holds of the old coins of India, so far as they have been brought to light. Fahian speaks of Buddhism as "the law of India;" and the immense treasures of sacred literature with which Hiouen Thsang returned to China prove that the resources of the faith were in his time almost unlimited. Yet the practical missionary zeal which it demanded of its converts could not be contented with the passive spirit of Hindu civilization. That restless ardor to deliver all mankind drove them to expend most of their force on distant regions. Gradually, too, after many centuries of depression, there came a revival of Brahman-

Extension of Buddhism.

ism, of which we have no very clear explanation. Doubtless the hold it had at the earlier period in the inertia of established system was not wholly lost through the palmy days of Buddhist ascendency. Doubtless it learned to quote the radical metaphysics and thorough rationalism of its rival with disparaging effect before a people naturally reverent towards tradition, profoundly mystical, and open to recognize somewhat authoritative in an ancient title to the Vedas, those fountains of national faith. But the disappearance of Buddhism from the soil of India is a consequence not so much of this revival of Brahmanism — which has, after all, never been very effectual — as of its own absorption into numerous sects, which have transferred much of its spirit into new forms of popular faith. It is not easy to say how much of the disintegration of caste described in an earlier part of this work as going on in later times, and which is manifest in nearly all important sects of recent formation, is due to the direct influence of distinctive Buddhism. Though it has failed to *eradicate* the idea of caste-subordination from the Hindu mind, so that even in Ceylon, where its effect on manners and life has been very great, the lowest, or Chandala caste, still remains;[1] yet the separation of that idea from *religious* faith and institution has been a marked result of the forces which it set in motion.

Influence on sacrifices.

Buddhism was still more effectual in its reaction against the sacrifices of animals, which had succeeded those simple Vedic rites, so seldom stained with blood. Even the cakes, butter, and soma-juice of those early days were abjured by these thorough Puritans, who allowed no rite but the offer-

[1] Tennent's *Ceylon*.

ing of flowers to their perfected Buddhas. And even the great Brahmanical revival has not restored the animal sacrifices thus interrupted, except in rare instances, and, as some affirm, in a single province. The Hindus have, as a people, returned to the old Vedic ways, and bring their offerings from the dairy and the field.[1]

The inspiration of Buddhism was, moreover, in its practical energy, its faith in liberty and in active work; and with these the climate of India was less congenial than that of regions to the north and west. Its apostles were attracted by the rude and unsettled condition of the tribes of middle Asia, as strongly as they were repelled from Hindustan by fixed ideas and systems. Yet the influences of climate, tradition, and organization combined, failed for twelve centuries to dislodge Buddhism from the country of its birth. The special causes of its disappearance from India, in or about the ninth century, are still unknown. This epoch is the dark age of Hindu history. Its scanty traditions hint of merciless religious persecutions; but of these, if they really occurred, all definite record has been effaced.[2] Of crusades against Buddhism by teachers like Śankara and Kumârila Bhatta, and of quarrels with the kindred school of the Jainas, we have little more than vague rumors. These Dark Ages were times of intestine strife among the principalities of India. They were followed by the all-commingling flood of Mohammedan invasion; and, when the old sects and schools reappeared, it was under new names, and as results of a ferment and fusion not now to be traced. Buddhism has but been exiled in name: the substance remained, and told decisively on the theology, literature, and life of the Hindu race.

Its hold on India

[1] See Wheeler, I. 159.

[2] Lassen, IV. 708.

Shown in the Bhagavadgitâ.

The Bhagavadgitâ is an evidence of this influence, for the period previous to the expulsion. It is Brahmanism making such concessions to Buddhism as were necessary to save its own life; recognizing the duty of eclectic liberality, and yielding a surprising amount of moral consideration and respect to the lower castes. The Yoga system of Patanjali, probably one of the outgrowths of Buddhism, or at least a successor in the same line, had in one sense equalized men, by exalting ascetic life as such above the distinctive functions assigned by the older faith to the several castes. The Bhagavadgitâ, while it disparaged these exclusive claims of ascetic discipline, yet obeyed the democratic impulse of Buddhism in another way; emphasizing the duty of action and the demands of society on the individual. It reduced the whole mythological world to unity; and, with Buddhistic thoroughness, absorbed the whole universe of gods and men into the abyss of apparent annihilation. "As torrents rush into the ocean, so the heroes of the human race enter the flaming mouths, the fire of death."[1] Brahmâ could never have appeared under so terrible a form, — that eremite God of eternal rest. The thought of evanescence must have been deepened by some powerful educational force. The universal energy of death is even declared in plain words to be greater than Brahmâ himself.[2] And we have here, without doubt, the gigantic shadow cast upon Brahmanism by the Buddhist *Nirvâna*, as well as by the terrors of the popular theology, which were not to be wholly escaped. But when that abysmal deity changes his form, and appears at once as Krishna, incarnation of Vishnu, the preserving Spirit, bidding

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch. xi. [2] Ibid.

Arjuna look on him "free from fear, with happy heart," — it is impossible not to recognize in this noblest *avatâra*, counselling to manly human service,[1] to absolute disinterestedness, to liberation from the Vedas, to the worship of eternal truth,[2] an effort of Brahmanism to combine with its aspirations toward an immortal life the practical love and freedom enforced by the Buddhist gospel.

"Without action you cannot reach freedom from action: whoso restrains the senses and acts unselfishly, without interest in the fruits, yet who acts, seeking the good of mankind, attains peace. His path leads to *nirvâna* in the Supreme Spirit"[3]

This is certainly as near Buddhism as Brahmanism could be expected to arrive. Krishna says further:—

"It is the mind liberated from the Vedas that reaches true contemplation. Seek refuge in thy mind."[4]

"Even Vaisyas and Śudras take the highest path, if they turn to me. How much more, then, Brahmans and Kshattriyas!"[5]

It is Arjuna, the Kshattriya king, who is promised the highest unity with deity, and admitted to visions hidden from all other men.[6] Such concessions to the lower castes, however imperfect, indicate democratic influences which the hereditary priesthood had been unable to resist.

All this is none the less true because the caste system is still maintained in the Bhagavadgitâ, the whole theory of action qualified thereby, and the duty of the warrior to his caste asserted, and emphatically urged. Nor is it the less true because the poem indicates none of that aversion to bloodshed which was characteristic of Buddhism. The other points that

[1] *Bhag. G.*, ch iii. xii.
[2] Ibid., ch. ii.
[3] Ibid, ch iii. ii.
[4] Ibid., ch ii.
[5] Ibid., ch. ix.
[6] Ibid., ch. xi.

have been noted amply suffice to show a profound influence proceeding from this religion, in the philosophy and ethics of an age five centuries after its birth.

In the Râmâyana

Some have supposed that the Râmâyana originated in a Brahmanical reaction against Buddhism.[1] On this theory, Râma's war with the Râkshasas, and his triumphant invasion of Ceylon, aided by supernatural apes and bears, was a poetic version of the expulsion of the Buddhists out of southern India, by a religious crusade, assisted by aboriginal tribes of the Dekkan. The old gods of the Rig Veda, and those of the native races, as well as the traditional heroes of the warrior caste, were all brought in to effect the restoration of the older faith; all these popular religious associations being wrought up with dramatic effect in the beautiful tale of Râma's recovery of his lost Sitâ from the ravisher Râvana, which forms the second half of the epic. The proofs of such a connection, however, do not seem at all satisfactory. The harpy-like, blood-thirsty Râkshasas, especially, could hardly have been suggested by Buddhism. Yet the Râmâyana bears striking marks of the influence of this faith on the Brahmanical system. The concessions to popular mythology in which it abounds, though written in the interest of the priesthood; the recognition of older and later incarnations; the democratic spirit shown by the people's taking an active interest in affairs of state, giving advice to the king, urging their desires on his ministers, and even jeering and reproaching him; the introduction of Śudras into public ceremonies, and the pouring of water on the heads of princes at their inauguration,

[1] Wheeler's *History of India*, II., *Introd.*, p. lxxvii.

by all the castes, — show that Brahmanism had been reduced to recognizing equalities that had no place in its system; a change that must be due to Buddhism.

After this, too, we hear more about *gods of the people*.[1] They were in many respects such as might be expected from the many causes of demoralization in India during modern times; yet their *number* and their *prominence* alike indicate that the exclusiveness of Brahmanism had to give way to the demand of the popular mind for freedom. The people transformed the old deities of the Veda; and even the later ones, Brahmâ, Vishnu, Śiva, were merged in Krishna and Râma. The priesthood were obliged to elaborate the popular deities in combination with their Brahmâ into a form of trinity; and even to subordinate Brahmâ to Vishnu and Śiva. In the common mind they remained separate, and each had his sect of worshippers. Vishnu, a Vedic god, who had come to represent the bounty and serenity of nature, grew into the beneficent divinity of the Ganges population,[2] embodying in his *avatâras* the noble faith that God descends to save the world, whenever evil wins the upper hand. The worship of Vishnu-Jagannâth, "protest of the equality of men before God," — making all castes eat together, celebrating traditions of the most humane and democratic spirit, — whose very breadth has opened it to excesses by a few minor sects, which all classes condemn, — is now shown to be largely the result of Buddhism, and associated with its earliest struggles.[3]

In the popular theology.

[1] Lassen, IV. 594.

[2] Duncker, II. 232.

[3] Mr. Hunter, from whose interesting work on *Orissa* these statements are drawn, speaks in the highest terms of the behavior of the pilgrims of Jagannâth, and of the influence of his worship on the customs of the people. The lines of research, so ably opened by Mr. Hunter, promise real light on the darkest periods in the history of Buddhism in India.

The modern sects.

It is in coming down to these later times that we realize how immense a variety of tendencies is covered by the common name Hinduism, and how large and free has been the growth of this tropical religious nature. Wilson's enumeration of the principal sects alone runs up to nearly sixty.

Their free criticism.

Scarcely one of the dogmas of older schools has escaped denial. Freedom of thought and speculation has been as perfect as ever in the world.

There are *Vaishnava* sects, as well as others, that deny the absolute unity of deity, and repudiate *moksha*, or absorption into the One, carrying the Sankhyan principle of individuality to its furthest extreme;[1] others that reject asceticism, passing over to the opposite pole, and in some instances, we must add, into sensuality under religious sanctions;[2] others that hold themselves bound, in view of the dogma of incarnation, to reverence the *guru*, or spiritual guide, as not only one with God, but greater even than Krishna himself;[3] others that consider ascetics as persons who are suffering the penalties of sins committed in former lives, and deny the possibility of *avatâras*, since God can neither be subject to transmigration nor to union.[4]

There are sectaries who say jokingly, when they hear the Vedas recited, "These are sick people, in a painful fit, or hired journeymen in an uproar;" and when they see the sacred thread on the neck of a Brahman, "A cow will not be without a rope."[5] There are others who "recognize the being of God in mankind, know no being more perfect than man-

[1] Mâdhwas.
[2] Chaitanyas, Kartâbhajas.
[3] Vallabhâchâryas and Sâktas.
[4] School of Piranah (*Dabistân*, II. viii).
[5] Chârvâks (*Dabistân*, II. ix.).

kind, and think that it contains nothing of a bad nature."[1]

Nor is the disintegration of traditions less manifest in the sphere of sentiment than in that of dogma. In mythology.

One issue of the old democratic movement of Buddhism is to be traced in the chaos of the later mythology, which awaits some centralizing and spiritualizing power.

This very luxuriance proves the richness of the native soil. We may therefore be sure that the reconciling principle, after all this disintegration, will spring from Hindu, not foreign, associations. The total failure of distinctively Christian propagandism was to be expected. How should this rich and free symbolism be supplanted by exclusiveness in type and form? Morality, science, freedom, humanity, will speak to the Hindus in those universal aspects which belong to the age; but it must be through their own native experience. The foothold must be found in their natural associations and descent. Native spiritual resources.

This free spirit is illustrated by the *Sikhs*, or disciples, at first a religious sect, then roused by persecution into a nation of soldiers, fighting for liberty of conscience, and establishing a free state in the Panjâb, which they held for centuries, until it passed under English rule. No race in India has shown a braver or more independent spirit, in thought or in conduct, than the Sikhs. They date their history from Nanak, a native Hindu teacher of the fifteenth century, a grain factor by trade, who threw aside Vedas and Koran, denounced caste, *sati*, The Sikhs

[1] Manushya Bhâkta (Ibid., xii.).

and all other degrading customs and institutions, and preached pure Theism, broad humanity, and a code of morals nowhere surpassed. Renouncing the ascetic garb, he spent his life in domestic relations, and after a long ministry, in the cause of right and noble living, of large tolerance, and devout aspiration, died, like Buddha, surrounded by devoted disciples, the founder of a new religion. Rebuked for sleeping with his feet towards a temple, this teacher asked: "Whither shall I turn my feet, if I would point them where God's house is not?" Like Buddha, he is believed to have had previous lives on earth. The following story from the Dabistân[1] is thoroughly Buddhistic: —

"When Nanak died, he saw two roads, the one to heaven, the other to hell. He chose the latter, and descending thither brought all the inhabitants out. But God said, 'These sinners cannot enter heaven: you must return into the world, and liberate them. Therefore Nanak came into this world, and his followers are those former inhabitants of hell: the *guru* (teacher) comes and goes, until that multitude shall have found their salvation."

The Sikh Bible, *Âdi Granth*, compiled by Arjuna, a subsequent *guru*, in the next century, and written in a now obsolete tongue,[2] contains contributions from the teachings of twenty-five persons, of all orders and pursuits; among them a leather-dresser, a cloth-printer, a barber, a butcher, and a musician; also a woman. It teaches the unity of God, the moral laws, and liberty of thought and worship; forbids all vices, and commands the practical virtues and universal love.[3]

This Bible speaks of God as "one, sole, self-exist-

[1] *Dab.*, II. p 269.
[2] Trumpp, in *Journal of Royal As. Soc.* for 1871, p. 198.
[3] *Asiatic Researches*, I. 292.

ent, the meaning and the cause of all, who has seen numberless creeds and names come and go."

Nanak says: —

"The true name is the Creator, the Being without fear, without enmity, the everlasting (timeless) One, the Self-existing."

"From his beneficence comes clothing; from his merciful glance, the gate of salvation. If He be praised, heard, and revered in the heart, He will take away pain and bring comfort."

"His worshippers rejoice always: to hear him is the end of sin and pain."

"He is not found in names, readings, austerities. If I knew Him, I would speak it; but the story cannot be told. What his power, what his thought? I cannot come up to it."

"What pleases Thee, that is a good work. If the heart is defiled by sin, it is washed in the dye of God's name. They who have done a deed, themselves have set it down. They sow themselves and reap themselves."

"What word may be spoken by the mouth, which having heard He may bestow love?"

"Early reflect on the greatness of the true Name."

"Remember the truth that is from the beginning of the world, — the truth that is and will be for ever: not by meditation can truth be reached, nor by silence, though I keep up continual devotion. The wall of falsehoods is broken by walking in the commandments of God."

"They say there are four races; yet all are of the seed of Brahmâ. The four races shall be one, and all shall call on the Teacher. Think not of thy caste, but abase thyself, and be saved."

"Fight with no weapon but the word of God; use no means but a pure faith."

"Devotion is not in ragged garments, nor staff, nor ashes, nor shaven head, nor sounding horns."

"He is pure who does no evil, is intent on good, and ever giveth to the poor."

"Be true, and thou shalt be free: to be true belongs to thee; thy success, to the Creator."[1]

[1] Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs;* Ludlow's *British India*, vol. i.; Trumpp, *ut supra.*

Other Sikh *gurus* have left these sayings: —

"My mind dwells on One, who gave the body and soul."

"Many Brahmans have wearied themselves with studying the Veds, but found not the value of an oil-seed."

"With slayers of their daughters, whoever has intercourse, him I hold accursed."

"Not they are *satt* who perish in the flames, but they, O Nanak! who die of broken hearts."

"Fall at God's feet: in senseless stone God is not."

"God heard the cry of virtue, and Nanak was sent into the world: the four castes became one, the high and the low equal."

"The Sikh should set his heart on charity and purity."

"He who takes the goods of sister or daughter, who oppresses the poor, is punished. He who gives not to the needy shall not see God."

"He is of the faithful who protects the poor, combats evil, remembers God; who is wholly unfettered, who ever wages battle, who slays the Turk, and extends the faith."[1]

The last sentence is from Govinda, a warlike *guru*, "who wore two swords in his girdle, the one to avenge his father, the other to destroy the miracles of Mohammed."[2] The peaceful Nanak brought, after all, "not peace, but a sword;" and Govinda, the tenth teacher, must change the name *Sikhs* (disciples) to *Singhs* (lions), and organize his people to defend the faith. Nanak has also, like Buddha and Jesus, been transformed in the faith of his later followers from the simply philanthropic reformer into the chief of divine emanations, and the way ordained for the redemption of the world.

But Govinda was theologically free and thoroughly in earnest.

"Since he fell at God's feet, no one has appeared great in his eyes: Râm and Ruheen, Purâns and Koran, have many votaries; but neither does he regard."

[1] Cunningham; Ludlow; *ut supra*. [2] *Dabistân*, II. 273.

"Smritis, Shastras, and Veds differ in many things: not one does he heed."

"O God! under thy power all has been done: nought is of myself."

Not less sincere and fervent is the faith of the modern Sikhs, whose religious services have been described as pervaded by a peculiar enthusiastic joy, and their prayers by a spirit of self-examination, moral discipline, and universal love.[1]

The strict monotheism of the Sikhs has a strongly Mohammedan tone; but their freedom of speculation and protest, as regards Hindu tradition, points plainly to that element in the national character of which Kapila and Gotama were earlier exponents. The Hindu sects of the last six centuries are marked by a democratic spirit, which may rightly be called the after-life of Buddhism in a people who had rejected its form and its name. Has this harvest sprung from the ashes of a martyred Church? Is this the meaning of that prescience of "a further shore" beyond the ocean of death?

Seed in Buddhist ashes.

All the important forms of Vishnu-worship[2] continue the impulse of these early reformers, who came to be themselves regarded as his incarnations. *Râmânanda*, in the fifteenth century, followed their example in renouncing caste. His disciples form the largest sect in Gangetic India.[3] The numerous followers of *Kabir* reject polytheism and the service of images, and ridicule the honors paid to pandits and Vedas. The *Jainas*, whose special relations with Buddhism have not been clearly made out, certainly combined

[1] Wilkins, *As. Res.*, I. 289.

[2] Lassen, IV 608–616; Stevenson, *Journ. R. A. S.*, vii. pp. 64–73; Wilson's *Essays on Religion of the Hindus*, vol. i.

[3] Wilson, p. 67.

with Sânkhya categories and formulas many Buddhistic elements; such as deliverance of the soul through pure knowledge alone, rejection of the Vedas, suppression of the Brahmanical gods, and substitution of a series of *jinas* or sages [*jina* is itself a title of Buddha], in their place.[1] Admission to their body was independent of caste.[2] Their moral code is contained in five great duties, — truth, chastity, abstinence from destroying life, honesty, mastery of desires; in four *dharmas*, or forms of good work, — liberality, gentleness, penance, and piety; and in three forms of restraint, — government of the mind, of the tongue, and of the person.[3] All these are wholly Buddhistic, and make the admitted hostility of the Jainas to technical Buddhism the more remarkable. It is perhaps simply the sign that no ecclesiastical bonds could confine these elements of moral and spiritual universality. The revival of Brahmanism itself, which seems to have represented a general movement towards more positive theism than the Buddhist affirmed, caught his democratic impulse; and Śankara, the great Vedantist leader, is said to have broken up the four original castes in Malabar into seventy-two, which was a great step towards destroying the principle itself.

Liberties of the later sects.

Lassen sums up the more favorable features of later Hindu sects under three heads. They lay greater stress on piety and morality than on outward forms of worship, and make protest against ritualism. They undermine the system of caste by admitting persons of all classes to religious communion. Their founders and teachers make use of the popular dialects, in writing and in speech.[4]

[1] Lassen, IV. 735–787.
[2] Wilson, p. 335.
[3] Wilson, pp 317, 335.
[4] Lassen, IV. 643.

These later schools resume the many elements which have preceded them; freely intermingling pantheistic, rationalistic, and skeptical forms of Hinduism with the monotheism of the old Mohammedans and the devout mysticism of the Sufis.

Great numbers of *maths*, or monasteries of the Vaishnava sects, are scattered over India, gov- The Vaishnavas erned and supported very much in the same way as similar Catholic institutions in the Middle Ages. But they are open to all travellers or mendicants; and, for the members, ingress and egress are perfectly free at all times, "any thing like restraint upon personal liberty seeming never to have entered into the conception of any of the religious legislators of the Hindus." "Their tenants are most commonly of a quiet, inoffensive character; and the *mahants*, or superiors, especially, are men of talents and respectability." [1]

The *Śaivas*, or Sivaite sects, for the most part represent more exclusive interests, being a fruit The Śaivas. of Śankara's great Brahmanical revival in the eighth century.[2] With few exceptions, their writings are not in the popular tongue; and they avoid proselyting among the masses. In such works as the Tamil "Gnân-Pothâm"[3] all the mystical philosophy of Brahmâ-worship is transferred to Śiva, yet not without Buddhist elements to which the change of deity is, after all, not improbably due. The least exclusive sect of Śaivas is that which worships Śiva under the emblem of the *linga*, a very old cult, and, in general, by no means the immoral one it has been represented.

But the Vaishnava sects have always been democratic. They have made their ideas free to The Vaishnavas. the people by rejecting a specially sacred and

[1] Wilson, p. 50–53. [2] Lassen, IV. 618. [3] See *Amer. Or. Journ.*, vol. iv.

learned tongue, and opening the function of teacher to all persons. A large part of the literature of the Mahrattas, who have proved the manly qualities of a Hindu race, is written in vernacular Prâkrit, and almost all this portion is due to the Vaishnavas. One of these democratic poets wrote a commentary on the Bhagavadgitâ. Another was famous for his satires on caste and ceremonial forms; while a third was himself from the lowest of the outcasts, and a fourth was a slave girl. The influence of the ethical and religious teachings of these Mahratta poets on the middle and lower strata of society in central India is said to have been very important.[1]

The Bauddha-Vaishnavas believe that all castes should eat together on religious occasions. "At the temple door all the castes become one." They have a legend of Vishnu, that he brought saints from heaven, who had been low-caste laborers, and placed them at a banquet beside the Brahmans, himself sitting at the head, and even eating the particles of rice that they let fall. Another story is of a householder who made a feast in honor of his ancestors, and gave part of their portion to a poor *pariah* at his gate: whereat the Brahmans present departed from the feast in contempt; but the ancestors themselves came down to take their places, and the table was filled. — Idolatrous rites are very sternly reproved by these sects.

"There are priests who command you to cut down a living plant to crown a lifeless stone. They call every thing deity, yet cut down trees for oblation. They have girdles for their loins with jingling bells, but they are dumb in divine knowledge. Ceremonies, austerities, and holy places are trifles compared with the praise of God."

[1] Stevenson, on *Maratha Literature* in *Journ. of the Bomb. Branch of R. A. S.*, vol i.

One of the Vaishnava sages is represented as not only forgiving men who had robbed and maimed him, but as pleading with Vishnu to release them from the penalty, and give them a place in heaven.[1]

The chief disciples of Râmânanda were twelve in number, and for the most part men of the lower and most laborious castes: among them were a weaver, a currier, a barber, and a basket-maker. The most famous of all was Kabir, perhaps the most radical reformer in Hindu history; though it is possible his name, which is an appellative of respect, may be mythical, and simply representative of a great movement of democratic reaction.[2] Kabir.

The Dabistân relates the following stories of Kabir: —

"Hearing some learned Brahmans, who had been praising the miraculous power of the Ganges water to wash away all sins, call for some of this water for themselves, he ran to the river, and brought back his own wooden cup filled with this sacred element, which he offered to the Brahman. But being of a caste from whose hands a Brahman cannot take either food or drink, his gift was refused, upon which he observed: 'You have just now declared that this water purifies body and soul, and makes all foulness of evil disappear; but if it cannot render pure this wooden vase, it certainly does not deserve your praises.'"

"Seeing once a gardener's wife collecting flowers for the image of a deity, he said to her: 'In the leaves of the flower lives the soul of vegetation, and the idol to whom thou offerest flowers is without feeling and dead: the vegetable is superior to the mineral. If the idol possessed a soul, it would chastise the cutter, who, when dividing its substance, placed his foot on the idol's breast. Go, and venerate a wise and perfect man, who is a manifestation of Vishnu.'"[3]

The following sentences[4] from Kabir and his

[1] These illustrations are from Stevenson, and taken from the *Bhakta Vijaya*.

[2] Wilson, pp. 55, 68.

[3] *Dabistân*, ch. II viii.

[4] Taken from Wilson's selections in *Essays*, &c., *ut supra*, pp. 79–90

immediate followers will convey an idea of his teaching: —

"My word is from the beginning; it has been deposited in life; there is provided a basket for the flowers."

"He who knows what life is will seize the essence of his own: such as it is now, he will not possess it again. The travellers are hurrying on, expecting to purchase where there will be neither trade nor market."

"Man wanders astray till he finds the gateway of the word. But he who has made himself acquainted with the word has done his work."

"Live according to your knowledge: fetch water for your own drinking, nor demand it from others."

"Life (the world) sells pearls; but with him who knows not their value, what can be done?"

"The goose (man) abandons the lake, and would lodge in a water-jar! Kabir has called aloud, 'Repair to your own place, nor destroy your habitation.'"

"The dwelling of Kabir is on a mountain peak, and a narrow path leads up to it: an ant cannot put his foot on it, but a pious man may drive up an ox."

"He who sows Râma never puts forth the buds of wrath. He values not the worthless, and he knows not pleasure nor pain."

"That a drop falls in the ocean, all can perceive; but that the drop and the ocean are one, few can comprehend. You and I are of one blood; one life animates us both; from one mother is the world born: what knowledge is this that makes us separate? Kabir has said, 'I have cried aloud from friendship to mankind: from not knowing the name of Râma, the world has been swallowed up in death.'"

"Of what avail is it to shave your head, prostrate your body on the ground, or immerse your body in the stream? Whilst you shed blood, you call yourself pure, and boast of virtues you never display. Of what benefit is cleaning your mouth, counting your beads, and bowing yourself in temples, when, whilst you mutter your prayers, or journey to Mecca, deceitfulness is in your heart? The Hindu fasts every eleventh day; the Mussulman during the Ramazan. Who formed the remaining months, that you should venerate but one? If the Creator dwell in tabernacles, whose residence is the universe? Who has beheld Râma seated amongst images, or found

him at the shrine to which the pilgrim has directed his steps? The city of Hari is to the east, that of Ali to the west; but explore *your own heart;* for there are both Rama and Karim."

"Who talks of the lies of the Veds and Tebs? Those who understand not their essence. Behold but *One in all things:* it is the second that leads you astray. Every one is of the same nature with yourself. He whose is the world, and whose are the children of Ali and Râm, — He is my teacher."

"Poison still remains in the soil, though ambrosia be sprinkled a hundred times: man quits not his evil habits."

"If you are a true dealer, open the market of veracity: keep clean your inward man, and repel oppression afar off."

"Many there are that talk, but few that take care to be found: let him pass on without regard, who practises not what he professes."

"Check the tongue, associate with the wise, investigate the teacher's words."

"Affection is the garment in which man dresses for the dance: consign yourself, hand and foot, to him whose body and soul are truth."

"Let truth be your rate of interest, and fix it in your heart."

"A real diamond should be purchased: the mock gem is waste of capital."

"Pride of intellect is manifold: now a thief, now a liar, now a murderer; men, sages, gods, have run after it in vain. Its mansion has a hundred gates."

"When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the well."

"Yet the master is helpless when the scholar is inapt. It is blowing through a bamboo to teach wisdom to the dull."

"The tree bears not fruit for itself, nor for itself does the stream collect its waters: for the good of others only does the sage assume a bodily shape."

"I have wept for mankind, but no one has wept with me: he will join in my tears, who comprehends the word."

"Kabir cries aloud to his fellows: 'Ascend the sandal ridge; whether there be a road prepared or not, what matters it to me?'"

"All have exclaimed, 'Master, master,' but to me this doubt arises: how can they sit down with the master whom they do not know?"

It is noteworthy that while the disciple of this sect is bound to devote himself to his spiritual *guru* or

teacher, with implicit obedience, he is warned not to do so till he has thoroughly investigated his character and doctrine: to act blindly and slavishly is the highest wrong.

Dâdu.

Another sect of Râma worshippers is that of Dâdu, the cotton-cleaner, also a disciple of Kabir. Here are a few of his sentences:[1]—

"He is my God, who maketh all things perfect. Meditate on Him in whose hands are life and death. He provideth for all. He is my friend."

"In all your thoughts, words, and actions, let there be faith in God. O foolish one! God is not far from you. You are ignorant; but he knoweth every thing, and is careful in bestowing."

"Care can avail nothing: it devoureth life; for those things shall happen which God shall direct."

"He who causes all living things to be giveth milk to their mouths, while yet in the womb."

"Oh, forget not, my brother, that God's power is always with you: there is a formidable pass within you, and crowds of evil passions flock to it; therefore comprehend God."

"He who hath but one grain of the love of God shall be released from all his sinful doubts and actions. Who need cook or grind? Wherever you cast your eyes, ye may see provisions."

"I take for my spiritual food the water and the leaf of Râm: for the world I care not, but God's love is unfathomable."

"Whatever is God's will shall surely happen: therefore do not destroy yourselves by anxiety, but listen."

"Fix your heart on God, and be humble as though you were dead."

"Have no desires, but accept what circumstances may bring you: whatever God pleaseth to direct can never be wrong. Go not about, tearing from the tree which is invisible."

"Dâdu saith, 'Do unto me, O God! as thou thinkest best: I am obedient unto thee. My disciples, behold no other God, go nowhere but to Him.'"

"Condemn nothing the Creator hath made. We are not creators. He can make what He will: we can make nothing."

[1] Wilson, *ut supra*, pp. 106–113. From Siddons's translation in the *Journal of the Bengal Society*.

"Meditate on the mysterious affinity between God and the soul."

"Even as you see your countenance reflected in a mirror, or your shadow in still water, so behold Ràm in your minds, because He is with all."

"He that formed the mind made it as it were a temple for himself to dwell in. Receive that which is perfect into your hearts: abandon all things for the love of God."

"God ever fostereth his creatures; even as a mother serves her offspring, and keepeth it from harm."

"O God who art the truth! grant me contentment, love, devotion, faith. Thy servant Dàdu prayeth for true patience, and that he may be devoted to thee.

"Dàdu saith, 'My earnings are God. He is my food and my supporter. God is my clothing and my dwelling. He is my ruler, my body, and my soul.'"

"Listen to God's admonitions, and you will care not for hunger nor thirst, for heat nor cold. If ye subdue the imperfections of your flesh, you will think only of God. When you cease to call on Him, they will return to you."

"Dàdu loved Ràma without ceasing: he partook of his spiritual essence, and constantly examined the mirror within him; he overcame all evil inclinations: wherefore the light of Ràma will shine upon him."

"Sit humbly at the foot of God, and rid yourselves of bodily impurity."

"Be fearless and guide yourselves towards the light of God: there neither sword nor poison have power to destroy, and sin cannot enter."

"Afford help also to the poor stranger."

"Meditate on Him by whom all things were made. Pundits and Qazis are fools: of what avail are the heaps of books they have compiled?"

"Wear not away your lives by studying the Vedas. Meditate on God, the beginning and the end."

"Do nothing, O man! till thou hast thoroughly sifted thy intentions: acquaint thyself thoroughly with the purity of thy wishes, that thou mayest be absorbed in God. Endeavor to gain Him: nor hesitate to restore your soul, when required, to that abode from whence it came."

The belief of the followers of *Bábá-lál* is a combina-

tion of the Vedânta and Sufi tenets. It illustrates in like manner that union of speculative mysticism with practical benevolence, of which Buddhism was the earliest expression. This teacher, when asked which is the best religion, replied: —

Bâbâ-lâl.

"The creed of the lover differs from other creeds. God is the faith and creed of those who love him. To do good is the best for the follower of every faith. And, as Hafiz says, — The object of all religions is alike: all men seek their beloved. What is the difference between prudent and wild? All the world is love's dwelling: why talk of a mosque or a church?"

The following sentences[1] illustrate his teaching: —

"With whom should the fakir cultivate intimacy? With the lord of loveliness. To whom be a stranger? To covetousness, anger, envy, falsehood, malice. Should he wear garments or go naked? Nudity is excusable only in the insane. The love of God does not depend on a cap or a coat. How conduct himself? He should perform what he promises, and not promise what he cannot perform."

"Should evil be done to evil-doers? He should do evil to none. Hafiz says, 'The repose of the two worlds depends on two rules, kindness to friends and gentleness to foes.'"

"Is it necessary for a fakir to withdraw from the world? What is the world? Forgetfulness of God, not clothes, nor wealth, nor wife, nor offspring."

"What is the fakir's passion? Knowledge of God. What his power? Impotence. What his wisdom? Devotion of the heart to the heart's-Lord. What is the fakir's dwelling? God's creatures. His kingdom? God."

"How do the supreme soul and the living [individual] soul differ? The supreme soul is beyond accident, but the living soul is afflicted by sense and passion. Happiness is attained only in reunion with the One, when the dispersed portions combine again with it, as the drops of water with the parent stream."

"The body only separates from God. Blessed be the moment when I shall lift the veil from off that face. The veil of the face of my beloved is the dust of my body."

[1] Wilson, I. 349, 350.

VI.

BUDDHIST CIVILIZATION.

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AS a distinctive religion, Buddhism has vanished from its native soil; surviving only in those qualities of thought and sentiment out of which it grew, and to which, in their Hindu forms, it gave fresh vigor. But, in the view of universal religion, this is its real triumph. Positive religions affirm their own substance to be sacrifice, — of the lower to the higher, of the special to the ideal. Nature takes them at their word. Their formulas, that seemed final, pass; their sacred names are no longer pronounced with awe; their proscriptive masterships are set aside; their body perishes, and they are changed. But their after-life is their best. The shell of symbol thrown aside, the immortal essence escapes, to work freely as a universal force, and in the whole movement of human life.

Expansion.

So with Buddhism in India. Its *karma* passed into a new soul. Its sainthood returned from the gates of *nirvâna*, to assume fresh forms; veiled by new names and relations, wherein the closer eye may discern its life-beyond-death. But its distinctive triumphs have been without the limits of India. It justified itself also by its *expansive* power. In the seventh century Hiouen Thsang found, even in the most flourishing Buddhist

states, many signs of its approaching decay, — powerful heresies, deserted monasteries, and fallen shrines. Two more centuries, and the faith of fifteen hundred years is cast out: the name of Gotama Buddha, in India, has had its day. The peaceful debates of its schools, that had divided every great Hindu state, the polemics of its moral and metaphysical sects, *the Great and Little Vehicles*, shall no more be heard. The first act of a darker drama has swept away the preachers of peace: the second is at hand; for the conquering Moslem approaches from the north. The persecution of the Buddhists is the natural precursor of a social disunity which lays this magnificent empire at the mercy of a horde of invaders.

Persecution only roused the zeal of those messengers of mercy and release. They flocked north, south, east, and west; bearing the relics of their saints, and the writings of their schools, and planting their seats of culture in the desert and the populous place. But they had not waited for persecution. For two centuries or more from the death of Gotama, there are no records of Buddhist expansion, nor signs of the use of written memorials by the new faith.[1] Yet at the end of that time it had become the state religion of northern India. At the close of the first Christian century it had gone far towards converting Ceylon, Kashmir, Kabulistân, and southern Tartary. Even in China, princes had adopted it, and translations of Buddhist writings overflowed this empire of rationalists.[2] The earliest missionaries had appeared in the third century B.C. Six centuries afterwards India was a holy land of Chinese pilgrimage. From Ceylon this living and welcome belief spread on to further

[1] Koeppen, I. 184. [2] Lassen, II. 1078.

India, Burmah, Siam, and the Eastern Archipelago. From northern India it reached away over the Thibetan steppes; from China to Korea and Japan.[1] Certain Chinese records of the fifth century, combined with a few slight analogies, mythological and other, have been held sufficient, with not a few scholars, to prove that it must have penetrated even to Mexico.[2] As it would be difficult to find a civilization more in contrast with Buddhism than the Mexican, such theories can only be regarded as signs of the impression made by the expansive energy of this religion on the European mind.[3] They are quite unimportant beside the marvellous record of history, that, after twenty-five centuries of life, Buddhism is, with all its gospel of sorrow, at present the most widely spread religion of the East; that its adherents outnumber those of Brahma three to one; and that they constitute at the lowest estimate a quarter of the human race.

How impressive is Father Huc's account of the wandering Lamas, a body of men whose vocation is not indeed that of preaching, but who carry with them their opinions and ceremonies, and are doubtless the practical propagators of the faith! "They visit all accessible countries. There is not a river they have not crossed, a mountain they have not ascended, a people among whom they have not lived, and of whom they do not know the manners and the language. One would say they are under the influence of some mysterious power which drives them on-

[1] Lassen, IV. 710; Müller, *Sc. of Lang.*, I. 147; *Journ. R. A. S.*, VI. 278.

[2] This theory, for which see Lassen (IV. 754) and Wuttke (I. 348), has been fully disposed of by J G Müller, *Gesch. d. Amer. Urreligionen* (Basel, 1867), pp. 9, 490.

[3] So Pococke (*India in Greece*, London, 1852) displayed great ingenuity in an attempt to trace every name in Greek mythology, geography, and history to a Buddhist origin, on linguistic grounds alone.

wards; and it seems as if God had caused to flow in their veins something of that motive force which moves worlds forwards in their course."[1] This mysterious instinct has possessed Buddhism from the beginning. It must spring in part from a sense of universality,—of duties, needs, sympathies, and hopes, felt as common to all mankind. It is the thirst for communion, a democratic religious faith that knows no bounds of country, creed, nor name. Even that vagabond life, that vague, restless roving which reminded this Christian missionary of "The Wandering Jew," is evidently a relic of the primitive ardor of Buddhism to emancipate the world. What motive power it must have had in the day of its definite and conscious aims!

Asoka.

The direct effects of Gotama's practical, peaceful, philanthropic gospel are to be studied in the edicts of king Aśoka, inscribed on monumental rocks and pillars in various parts of northern India.[2] These inscriptions record at once the legislation of this Buddhist ruler, and his convictions and motives. They announce themselves as his own words, cut in the stone at his command, and their authenticity is beyond question. The history of Aśoka, as derived from Singhalese records and from these monuments, is a wonderful one. About the middle of the third

[1] Huc's *Journey*, &c., I. 117.

[2] For the substance of these remarkable records, and the evidences of their antiquity and authorship, see Lassen, II. 214-270, Muir's *Sansk. Texts*, vol. II.; and Koeppen, I. 173-178. Consult also Sykes's *Notes*, &c., in *Journ. R. A. S.*, vol. vi. Professor Wilson reviewed Prinsep's translation of them, in *Journ R A. S.*, vol xii. In a later review (vol. xvi) he withdraws his doubts as to their Buddhistic origin. Buddhism is not mentioned by name, but the emblems are unmistakable The inscriptions are written in a "corrupt Sanskrit," closely resembling Pâli, the language in which the oldest works of Buddhism are written, and which was vernacular in northern India when it arose (Muir, II. 72. 104). The name they give the king is *Piyadasi* (the benevolent), a term applied to Aśoka, in Buddhist writings. Lassen, II 223.

century B.C. a prince succeeded to the crown of Pâtaliputra, whose passions earned him the title of "*the wrathful.*" He was a devoted follower of the Brahmans, but stained, according to tradition, with the blood of a brother, who stood in the way of his succession to the throne. In four years he had become a Buddhist disciple. His character changed with his faith. Instead of "the wrathful" he was called "the just." "Every good man," he said, "will I hold as my own child." He caused inns to be built, and wells opened, and trees planted along the public roads, to give shelter and refreshment for man and beast. He regulated the treatment of animals throughout his dominions according to Buddhist precepts, and forbade their slaughter for sacrificial purposes. It is probable that he abolished the death penalty, and certain that he gradually narrowed its use, until it became almost, if not quite, obsolete. His treatment of prisoners taken in war was of the most humane nature. He recognized freedom of thought and established universal toleration.

The inscriptions say: —

"The king, beloved of the gods, honors every form of religious faith; but considers no gift nor honor so much as the increase of the substance of religion; whereof this is the root, — to reverence one's own faith, and never to revile that of others. Whoever acts differently injures his own religion, while he wrongs another's. The texts of all forms of religion shall be followed, under my protection. Duty is in respect and service. Alms and pious demonstrations are of no worth compared with the loving-kindness of religion. The festival that bears great fruit is the festival of duty. The king's purpose is to increase the mercy, charity, truth, kindness, and piety of all mankind. There is no gift like the gift of virtue. Good is liberality; good it is to harm no living creature; good to abstain from slander; good is the care of one's parents, kindness to relatives, children, friends, slaves. — That these good things may

increase, the king and his descendants shall maintain the law Ministers of morals shall everywhere aid the charitable and good. I will always hear my people's voice. I distribute my wealth for the good of all mankind, for which I am ever laboring."[1]

To the Brahmans, whose disciplines he had renounced, he paid respect, and gave substantial favors to such of them as he thought sincere and liberal in their spirit. He built monasteries for the Buddhists; regulated their cultus; held their most important synod, to whose labors the oldest *sutras* are probably due; and spared no effort to make their preaching effectual. He is believed to have erected eighty-four thousand topes, or relic shrines; probably a mystical number. He sent friendly embassies to foreign lands, to propagate the faith. His civil regulations showed the highest regard for justice and humanity. He appointed a corps of officers to keep him informed, at all times, of every thing in the condition of his people that required his attention, fearing only lest any private pleasure should distract his mind from the care of their peace. He instituted another class of officers for the purpose of *preventing crime;* placing them at the outskirts of towns where crowds were wont to assemble, commissioned to dissuade people from wrong-doing without resorting to violence. Finally, he declared that he could not, with all these endeavors, satisfy his sense of responsibility, as a king, for his people's moral and social condition, nor his inmost desire for their good. "There is no higher duty than to work for the good of the whole world."

Such are the earliest products of Buddhism in personal life, which at this distance of time can be

[1] These extracts are from Wilson's revision of Prinsep's translation, and from Lassen's full account of Asoka.

clearly discerned. Aśoka has been called "the Buddhist Constantine" from his temporal services to this gospel of the East; but, as a ruler, he seems to resemble the great heathen emperor, Marcus Aurelius, far more than that most unscrupulous patron of Christianity. And even if the records of his life and government were less fully accredited than, as a whole, they really are, the conception of such a monarch, at that epoch and in that quarter of the world, would be a fact quite as interesting as the actual man.

Kunâla.

The story of his son, Kunâla (so called from the beauty of his eyes), who, after being deprived of these organs in consequence of the false testimony of an unprincipled and cruel woman, intercedes to save her from the consequences of her crimes, may or may not be historical, but has a like value as testimony to a moral ideal.

Dushtagâmini.

The account given in the Mahâvanśa, of Dushtagâmini, who reigned in Ceylon in the second century B.C., is involved, as indeed is this whole sacred chronicle, in a mass of mythical legend; but it bears witness none the less positively to the practical excellence of Buddhism.[1] This monarch, also, is reported to have been a model of devotion to the interests of his people, moral, industrial, social, and æsthetic. He especially furthered agriculture, and opened roads through his dominions. Like Aśoka, he built hospitals, and endowed monasteries with the greatest zeal. Both these kings seem to have contributed to the improvement of Hindu architecture, by erecting religious edifices on a magnificent

[1] See Lassen, II. 421–430; *Mahâvanśa* (Turnour), ch. xxiv.–xxxiii.

scale. The description of Dushtagâmini's pious labors in erecting the stupendous dagop of Ruanvelli, to fulfil the prediction of his ancestors regarding his own reign, reminds us in many ways of the building of Solomon's Temple to Jehovah; but the mythical splendors that invest the Buddhist work are nowise paralleled by Hebrew tradition. The noble edict is recorded of this king, that no part of his great work should be accomplished by unpaid labor.[1] When, at the close of life, his good deeds to the poor and in furtherance of his faith, are enumerated in his presence, in order to overcome his natural shrinking from death, — he replies: "With these works I am not satisfied: the two alms-deeds which I did while I was in want, and which I performed without regarding my life, I prefer to the whole." Then, calling his brother, who is to be his successor, he charges him not only to complete the religious works thus begun, failing in no form of benevolence or of care for the faith, but to "do no harm to the people, and to rule the kingdom with justice;" and then lies silently down to die, facing the *dagop* he had made, while the *devatas* (celestial beings) invite him in the air, saying, "Our lord is glorious and possesses longer life: come then hither, come then hither." Beseeching them to suffer him, as long as he lives, to hear the teaching of the faith, he raises his hand. The movement is mistaken by the priests for a gesture of fear, and they say to one another: "There is no one that does not fear death." But the king, having expired, is borne away in a chariot, like a man awakened out of a deep sleep; and then, to show his glory to the people, he reappears in splendor, driving thrice around the sacred pile,

[1] *Mahâv.*, ch. xxx.

that they may see the heavenly glory he has attained.[1]

It is an unreliable version which ascribes to this king a harem of Solomonic proportions: there is not, in the whole story of his reign, the faintest sign of sensuality nor of any other personal vice.

A similar record is given of several other Buddhist rulers of Ceylon in the continuation of the Mahâvanśa. Some of these were scholars and writers, and all were patrons of literature and art.[2] Traditions of the same moral tone celebrate the virtues of the earliest Buddhist rulers of Thibet.[3] One of the Singhalese kings is described as having, among other marvellous powers, such as bringing on rain by his piety, a much better one; namely, that of converting rogues by good counsel. He thus puts a stop to the bad practices of great numbers of thieves, while satisfying his people, who insist on their punishment, by showing dead bodies, on which those penalties had been inflicted which the law would have visited on the living offenders.[4] Another king, of very barbarous tendencies, dissuaded from war by Buddhist priests, who teach him the superior virtue of peace and harmony, thereupon gives up the country he has won, and returns to his own.[5]

Ceylonese legends.

Leaving these old traditions, we turn to the present Buddhists of Thibet. All travellers testify to their simplicity, gentleness, and freedom from sensual excesses. Huc tells us their theory is that "all men are brothers."[6] "The regent of Lha-Ssa," he says, "did not appear surprised at any thing

Buddhism in Thibet

[1] *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxxii
[2] See abstract in Lassen, IV. 279–350.
[3] Koeppen, II. 65, 73.
[4] *Mahâv.*, ch. xxxvi.
[5] Ibid. (Upham), ch. lxx.
[6] *Travels through Thibet*, I. 43, 170, II. 40, 107.

in Christian teaching, but incessantly repeated, 'Your religion is like our own: the truths are the same, we only differ in the explanation.'" The good missionary indeed found it not easy to understand the pantheism into which this liberal and hospitable faith resolved itself. Yet nothing could be finer, even as manners only, than the cordiality and courage with which the Buddhist ruler entered into free inquiry as to the respective merits of his own and the foreign belief, promising to adopt the latter, if it should appear to be the better one.[1] The Thibetans exhibit none of that exclusiveness towards foreigners which the Chinese and other Asiatic nations have been driven into adopting. They seem to have even a careful interest in strangers, and lose no opportunity of kindly service. The missionaries, near to perishing of hunger and wet in the desert, for lack of fire and fuel, were accosted by a band of Tartars, leading a laden camel: "My lords Lamas, the sky has fallen to-day: doubtless you have not been able to light your fire; but men are all brothers and belong to one another, and the lay should serve the holy; so we are come to light your fire for you."[2]

When the animals of a caravan go astray, whoever is in the neighborhood must go seek them; and, if they cannot be found, give others in their place.[3] "We will search for your horses," said the Tartar chief to Huc, "and, if they are not found, you shall choose at pleasure from all our herds. We wish you to leave us in peace as you came." Contrast these civil tribes with their ancestors, the barbarian hordes of Tschingis-khan, following the wolf's head on their banners to incessant ravin, piling pyramids of human heads along their path, merciless alike to the weak and the

[1] *Travels through Thibet*, II. 203. [2] Ibid., I. 43. [3] Ibid., I. 64.

strong.[1] Security of life and property reigns among them to a degree undreamed of in Europe during the Middle Ages; and the change is almost entirely the work of Lamaism.[2] "The humane doctrine of Buddha has greatly softened, if it has not eradicated their old savage traits.[3] Thus women in Tartary are in a more independent position than is usual in the East. They come and go as they please, are active, cheerful, and of free bearing, notwithstanding the old marriage regulations which still oppress the sex.[4] Huc says that all but the highest classes are in a mild form of slavery; but it is hard to understand in what sense this is true, since their mode of life is precisely that of their masters, and, if they enter the tents of the latter, they are always offered the customary courtesies.

Thibetan literature and law.

It was through Buddhism that literature and law were introduced among the rude tribes of Thibet. The traditions tell us of a hundred translators and teachers of the sacred books invited from India in the ninth century, who at last completed this new gospel in a hundred folio volumes,[5] to be revised and retranslated five centuries later under the auspices of the great Buddhist monarch, Kublai Khan. Previous to this time, Buddhist scholars had constructed a new alphabet for the Mongolian tribes.[6]

The superstitious and savage Mongols who mastered these highlands in the thirteenth century were met and controlled by the devotion of a Buddhist monk, Thsong-kha-pa, who revived the best elements

[1] Wuttke, I. 244-248. [2] Koeppen, I. 482. [3] Ibid., from Neumann
[4] Huc, I 185 A similar position is accorded to women in Siam. *Journal of Indian Archipelago*, 1847.
[5] Lassen, IV 716. [6] Koeppen, II. 99-101.

of primitive Buddhism, then rapidly yielding to the superstitions of a degraded form of Śiva-worship. This earnest preacher of devout meditation and social order and harmony, setting bounds to the coarse fetichism of the nomads, directed the religious sentiment to ideas, and to the broader forms and disciplines that ideas demand. He was in fact the father of the real Catholic Church of Central Asia. The true Thibetan papacy of the "yellow hat" Lamas, as distinguished from the older and ruder "red hat" priests, goes back to Thsong-kha-pa. He came to be venerated as first incarnation of the phenomenal portion of the Buddha, which perpetually renews itself by transmigration, to preserve the unity of his Church, in an endless succession of Dalai Lamas, or "Oceans of Sanctity."[1]

Civilizing power of Buddhism.

It is not easy to overestimate the benefits of that incessant emphasis on benevolent, and even tender and compassionate sentiments, which everywhere accompanied the effort to unite these tribes in a universal church. Through all the grossness into which Buddhism has degenerated, we can trace the invincible leaven of practical humanity, everywhere neutralizing ignorance, inertia, and despair. An ample collection of testimonies to this effect may be read in Koeppen's masterly work, from which I select a few examples. Such are the reports given by Symes and others, of the manners of the Burmese, as in some respects wild and barbarous, but in others exhibiting the delicate sensibilities of a cultivated people,[2]—thoughtful for the sick, the weak, and the old, placable towards enemies and hospitable to

[1] Lassen, IV. 725; Koeppen, II. 70, 112.

[2] Malcom (*Travels in Burmah*) says: "During my whole residence in this country, I never saw an immodest act or gesture in man or woman."

strangers; — by Crawford, of the kindness of the Siamese and Burmese to the shipwrecked, now regarded as a religious duty towards those whom they were used to despoil; — by Pallegoix, of the custom with private persons in Siam of placing hospitals and night-lodgings along the roadsides and rivers, for the use of wayfarers, while large vessels are daily filled with water, by the peasant women, for their refreshment; — and by travellers generally, of the condemnation of crimes like theft and murder, by the Siamese as a people, notwithstanding the great number of rogues and vagabonds that infest the country.[1] "Vast numbers of the poor in Christian countries," says a competent witness,[2] "may well envy the corresponding class in Siam."

Its vestiges.

Wherever Buddhism has extended, even where it has fallen from the simplicity of its earliest inspirations into manifold mummeries and fanaticisms, there still remains this redeeming presence of the spirit of brotherhood. "Popular education has reached a considerable degree of advancement in all Buddhist countries. Every town, almost every secluded village, has its monastery occupied by monks, who, either with or without pay, give instruction to children, affording to all the means of acquiring elementary knowledge; so that it is really rare to find persons who can neither read nor write."[3] There are institutions everywhere for the sick, orphaned, and poor; wells in every desert; shady groves along every dusty road; everywhere missionaries of comfort and relief; everywhere tender mercies towards the lower

[1] Koeppen, I. 455-486. See also Nevins's *China*, pp 214-228.

[2] Alabaster, *Wheel of the Law*, p. lvi.

[3] Bastian, *Weltauff. d. Buddh.* (Berlin, 1870), p 37. St. Hilaire, p 400.

Recognition of universal religion.

Buddhism reached the conception that all religions have been apprehensions, with greater or less distinctness, of one eternal faith; so that it has felt a kindly yearning towards all of them, sought to find their common good elements, and to give each a place in the theory of its *dharma* or Law. It assigns one of its highest heavens to the virtuous of other religions. It knows no heathen hated of God, only a common humanity seeking for eternal life. "When Śâkyamuni came to earth," say the Lamaists, "he found that all peoples were not equally capable of receiving his whole law. He therefore gave to each what truths it was able to apprehend, and so spread his blessing over all. And of all these, not one that follows its own light, shall be lost."[1] The Mahâvanśa relates of Dushtagâmini, that, among the images of deities in act of homage to Buddha, which he made to adorn his great dagop, was that of the Buddhist Satan, ascending humbly, with his host of followers, to praise with the rest the power of goodness he had vainly striven to overturn.[2] The legend of the conversion of Kashmir makes the *Nagas* (water serpents) oppose the civilizing gospel and attempt to destroy its apostles. Not only are their stones and arrows turned to flowers as they fall, but their chiefs, instead of being annihilated, are *converted*, to rejoice in a land which from a desert has been transformed into a garden.[3]

Towards Christians Buddhism has always shown

[1] Bergmann, in Koeppen, I. 462; Bastian, *ut supra*, p. 26.

[2] *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxx. The reply of the priests to the scruples of this king at having destroyed thousands of lives in war, that "heretics" were "no better than wild beasts" (*Mahâv.* ch xxv), is at once condemned by the chronicler: a fact not mentioned by Hardy, who quotes the saying to discredit Buddhism. (*Eastern Monachism*, p 415.)

[3] *Journ Asiatique*, for 1865, pp. 490, 505. In Indian mythology, serpents stand for rude primitive powers, whether of man or nature; while the eagle, *garuda*, represents the divine forces that subdue them.

this broad hospitality. It was among the Mongolian tribes of Central Asia that they found readiest access; with Tschingis-Khan and his successors, who gloried in acknowledging one God, and the many ways in which men might serve Him. Marco Polo records the declaration of Kublai-Khan, that he "reverenced the four great Prophets, — Jesus, Mahomet, Moses, and Buddha."

Ruysbrock relates that Kublai-Khan, after witnessing a long discussion between disciples of different faiths, said to a Franciscan, holding up his hand: "How many fingers here?" Answer: "Five." "Yet 'tis the same hand, for all. So with your religions." A Buddhist priest in Ceylon, we are told by Tennent,[1] not long since wrote a book about Jesus, in which he expressed the belief that he had pre-existed, after the Buddhist way, as a God, and had dwelt in six heavens; then taken flesh, through his good-will to man, and taught the truth, as far as it was given him; in short, that he was, in some sense, a Buddha. The same writer records the remark of a Ceylonese chief to a missionary, upon entering his son at the mission-school: "I would add your religion to steady my own, holding Christianity to be a very safe outrigger to Buddhism." The edict of Aśoka, proclaiming universal toleration and affirming his preference of conduct that should bring any religion into good repute, to all alms-giving and all personal homage, has its modern counterpart in the entire religious freedom established by the late King of Siam in all his dominions; in his special regulations to secure Christian churches from interference, and his endeavors to acquaint himself with the languages and

[1] *Ceylon*, I. 530.

creatures; and this not confined to regulations in restraint of their wanton abuse and destruction, but carried even to that extravagance of care and protection which naturally belongs to an idealism without sense of practical limits. Buddhism has everywhere sought to abolish bloody sacrifices, and in most Asiatic countries with success; bringing, in place of these barbarities of religious service, mystical and fragrant incense, and the tender beauty of flowers. And with the same endeavor to refer sacrifice to its true conception, as a consecration by love, the believers, from the first, contributed alms to the priests; gifts for the support of the temples; milk, butter, cheese, and various kinds of drink, according to their occupations and means. But these gifts were never to be burned, nor poured out as libations, nor given with any idolatrous notion that they were eaten or drunk by the Buddhas, as the older Semites believed their blood offerings were by Baal and Jehovah. If animals are sometimes offered in Buddhist countries, it is never to the Buddha.[1] Deity indeed, to accord with the conception of *nirvâna*, must be as profoundly independent of outward tributes as, for the Semitic idea, it is dependent on them; and, if allowing slighter hold than this idea for personal relations with the worshipper, it at least did not force the imagination to divine the unknown and indefinite demands of a jealous master; a demoralization *by fear* in which the most degrading forms of sacrifice have originated. The instincts of love and devotion were left to find their own spontaneous expression.

"The worship of the Hindu deities in Ceylon," says Tennent, "is devoid of the obscenities and cruelty by which it is characterized on the continent of India;

[1] Koeppen, I. 561.

and it would almost appear as if these had been discontinued by the Brahmans in compliment to the superior purity of the worship with which their own had been fortuitously connected."[1] Slaves have been received even by Buddhist monasteries in this island, where caste has not wholly yielded to the civilizing influences of that humane faith; but Singhalese slavery, according to the same observer, "is domestic, not predial. It was so mild that, when, in 1845, Lord Stanley abolished it, no claim was made by masters for compensation."[2]

Wherever Buddhism has penetrated, it has abolished human sacrifice, which still prevails in portions of India never yet subjected to its influence. It has constantly discouraged capital punishment; and in many parts of Asia it has succeeded, at various times and for longer or shorter periods, in setting the death penalty aside.

"Buddhism has been violently persecuted at various times and in various countries. It appears never to have dreamed of revenge."[3] It has been faithful to its principle that truth is not to be imposed by violence; that opinion must be free. Its rejection of bloodshed has been absolute. Beside the history of its peaceful progress, the records of Islam and Christianity are black with tyranny and hate. If it has not prevented civil wars in a colossal empire like China, we must remember that its essential ideas have been a constant restraint on them, and probably contributed, as much as any thing, to that social order and national unity through nearly four thousand years, which has been in many respects the most marvellous fact in the political history of mankind.

Peaceful and tolerant spirit.

[1] Tennent's *Ceylon*, I. 536. [2] Ibid., ch. i. [3] St. Hilaire, p. 400.

science of the West, in furtherance of plans for purifying Buddhism from superstitions, and placing it on a basis of pure natural religion.[1] Sir John Bowring quotes a letter from this liberal prince, in which he says: "In inquiries into the nature of God, we cannot tell who is right and who is wrong; but I will pray my God to give you his blessing, and you must pray yours to bless me: thus blessings may fall on both of us."[2] But he told the missionaries plainly: "You must not expect any of us to become Christians. We shall not embrace what we think a foolish religion."[3] Becoming acquainted with European navigation, he at once decreed that the holy Mount Meru, with all its heavens and hells, must be given up, voyages round the world having disproved its existence.[4] So thoroughly is the Buddhist transmigration-system identified with this old religious geography, that this summary dealing with the one must, it would seem, be the death-knell of the other. The courageous honesty of the King of Siam is but a natural result of Buddhist faith in reason and in man.

The Siamese believe that the different confessions are but diverse forms of one true faith; and the practical consequence is the growth of the Free Buddhist churches, now for many years existing in Siam, which reject the miraculous in their ancestral religion, and adhere to its moral teachings only.[5] In China sayings like these are common proverbs: "Religions are many, reason is one: we are all brothers. The three religions have a common standpoint: they insist

[1] Pallegoix and Bowring. See Koeppen, I. 467.

[2] Bowring's *Narrative of the Mission to Siam*, I. 349. His very intelligent correspondence with Bowring (in English) is printed in the appendix to the same work.

[3] *The Modern Buddhist* (Alabaster), p. 73. [4] Bastian, *Weltauff.*, &c., p. 34.

[5] Koeppen, I. 468.

on the banishment of wrong desires." And this is not merely the commonplace of a formalism which M. Huc rather contemptuously calls "Chinese politeness" in religion, but the practical principle and policy of the empire; made, so far as foreign interference will permit, the basis of the relation between Church and State. The frank liberality of the regent of Thibet to the Catholic missionaries, and his readiness to discover that, on the whole, there was no serious difference of faith between him and them, is of the same quality, and truly Buddhist. Spence Hardy speaks of Brahmanical ceremonies as side by side with Buddhist in Ceylon, and of the ease with which native temples can be obtained, if desired, for Christian worship.

Persecution, in Buddhist countries, has in fact always been the result of wrongful interference from without. The Chinese have expelled European missionaries only when they began to plot for overthrowing the government. It was the *piracy* of the Portuguese that caused their expulsion from Japan, not their religious belief. Recent attempts of Catholic priests in Siam to destroy the native temples have been met by a forbearance unknown in the Christian world. The large-hearted king actually counselled his people to ignore the injuries done them by Christians who were the pensioners of his bounty.[1]

The controversial element.

This spirit is no less apparent in the sectarian discussions, which have abounded at every period of Buddhist history. They exhausted every form of Oriental metaphysics, every question of ecclesiastical discipline and practical duty. Yet they were conducted with a mutual toleration that has probably

[1] Bastian, *ut supra*, p. 26. The virtues and failings of this king are described in Mrs. Leonowens's work, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* (1870).

never been equalled in the history of religious controversy. "Though the vessels differ, the water is the same," say the Chinese sutras. "Though the flame be of various lamps, the illumination is one: so with the difference of the two *Vehicles*." Tennent says of Singhalese Buddhism, that "its toleration of heresy is intolerance of schism." But he admits that the quarrels of Christian sects have repelled the Singhalese from their teachings.[1] Hiouen Thsang found all the kingdoms of India agitated by the strife between the schools of the *Great and Little Vehicles*, the former advancing to the metaphysical basis of Buddhism, the latter confined to its moral, ecclesiastical, and mythic elements. Notwithstanding the extent of the difference, and the spread of this schism through the whole Buddhist church, these contending sects were living, upon the whole, at peace, without attempting to oppress or exclude each other; and Hiouen Thsang hardly mentions a single act of fanatical violence. On his return to China, though a devoted follower of the *Great Vehicle*, he translated the books of his opponents with entire impartiality.[2] Throughout the history of this Church of Humanity, a commandment which has been the prolific seed of Catholic and Protestant intolerance, the "*compelle intrare*," is wholly unknown.

Buddhist toleration not indifference.

In all forms of Buddhism, rationalistic, ethical, philosophical, the principle of religious freedom stands, a constant factor. It belongs to the essence of the faith.

According to most Christian writers, this is because the essence of Buddhism is "indifference in religion." The injustice of such a charge against the

[1] Tennent's *Ceylon*, II. 545. [2] St. Hilaire, p. 301–306.

most ardent missionaries in the ancient world is too evident to be discussed. Others find the explanation in the "negative" spirit of this religion. "How should they who believe the highest truth is in knowing nothing, persecute others for knowing less than themselves? Intolerance grows out of the necessities of an actual Church and an actual State. How should they persecute, to whom both Church and State are unreal?"[1] But the supposed "nihilism" of the Buddhists has already received our attention. Even were there more justice in the imputation than there is, the fact remains to be explained that they who are so intensely devoted to the propagation of nihilism should exhibit such liberality towards the intensest opponents thereof. If knowing nothing is the highest good, then the pretence of knowing any thing is the utmost mischief; and it is hard to say why he who finds motive for zeal in love of the one should not find motive for severity in hatred of the other. However unreal in essence Church and State may be for the Buddhist mind, it is to the extension of the Church and the conversion of the State that it has been devoted for more than a thousand years, and there must be something more positive and potent than mere insensibility to the worth of right knowledge, which has kept it broad and sweet, hospitable and tolerant to all opposing creeds. An attitude of negation is essentially an attitude of opposition; and the path of opposition is the path to *enmity* just in proportion to the degree in which the affirmative and receptive spirit is excluded from it. How, then, is the tolerance of Buddhism to be explained as a fruit of its *negative* qualities? How is it we have not here a set of morose and bitter misanthropes, skeptical of all good in their fellow-men?

[1] See Wuttke, II. 586.

St. Hilaire, who believes these millions to be pure nihilists, utterly "without one trace of the idea of a God," is very naturally unable to explain the fact that "so much ignorance should be accompanied by a virtue that seems to demand so much light and so rare a sense of justice." And he contents himself with recognizing the fact without attempting to solve it, except by stating it to have been in part "an imitation of the tolerant spirit of Brahmanism."[1]

Other theories.

Some, again, have ascribed this liberal tone of Buddhism to an inability to appreciate the "sinfulness of sin;" which might indeed be a sufficient reason for expecting men to *manifest* such easily besetting sins as uncharitableness, but hardly explains *the victory over it*, especially when, as here, this result is attended by a painful perception of moral penalties and a rigid moral discipline.

Others, more rationally, refer us to the peculiar circumstances under which Buddhism was compelled to struggle into life; to a resistance in ancestral institutions which it could not hope to overcome by any *outward* force at its command.

Freedom from religious monarchism.

More significant, however, is the truth that is now beginning to be recognized by students of Comparative Religion, that intolerance is an incident of distinctive *monotheism* or *monarchism*. The belief that the law of duty is the imposed will of a Being external to man and the world, having its authority in his right and power to send down his special edicts to a separate and subject race, and to secure recognition and obedience to his exclusive messengers, — this belief, standing as the substance of religious obligation, is the inevitable parent of per-

[1] *Le Bouddha*, p. 286.

secution. With whatever good elements it may be combined, the right of an imposed, external divine Will issues in human Inquisitions, and the *compelle intrare* of the Church. It is the energetic infusion of this monarchism in Judaism and Christianity, which has made intolerance their perpetual vice or their subtle tendency. On the other hand, and by reason of the total *absence* of this monarchical interest, whatever the perils that attend pantheism, or any other form of belief which tends to *identify* the substance of the human and the divine, this of attempting forcible entrance on the domain of reason and conscience, in the name of sovereign will, is not one of them. Now if Buddhism is not strictly pantheistic, if it does not in *terms* identify the substance of the human with the divine, it in fact assumes their unity to be essential, and not arbitrary nor imposed. It seeks the divine *through* the human, and makes the self-abnegation through which it is attained a strictly human volition. Nirvâna, whatever be its peculiar meaning, certainly expresses the free choice and fulfilled capacity of the Buddha. In other words, it is *Man "awakened"* to his real being. Buddhism, therefore, appeals to no monarchical will absolutely external to human nature. And, when it denies validity to every definite form of human thought and being, this is not that it may affirm the infinite to be altogether *apart from man;* but that it may find the infinite, somehow, *involved in his process* of emancipation from all dreams and illusions into the reality of his essential Buddhahood. And no exclusive messenger to human nature is here possible, since humanity is itself defined as having no *real* being apart from this process and result. For these reasons, if for no other, Buddhism can assert no

authority but such as is awarded it by the free consciousness of man: its doctrines must rest on their own intrinsic merits, and their appeal must be to reason, not to force. Its starting point is not in an external command, but in an inward free aspiration.

Origin in free protest and aspiration.

And this was indeed historically its origin. It was a spontaneous protest, metaphysical and practical, against the twofold tyranny of transmigration and caste. It was the reaction of the human against an idea of deity crystallized in texts, in institutions, in endless minute legislation for thought and life. It was an appeal from authority claiming to descend upon man to the force of aspiration *in* man.

And in brotherly love.

But it was not merely the assertion of a human right. It was the cry of human sympathy; the summons of compassion to the rescue of mankind from pain that seemed as wide and deep as life itself. Surely intolerance would be a strange fruit to come from such seed. Surely it would be unaccountable if they, who go out solely to heal suffering and to break bonds, should take with them the cruelest scourge of body and mind. We may easily believe that such instincts of brotherhood as impelled the Buddhist, — being wholly free from that sense of a commission to maintain the exclusive claims of a mediator and a monarchical dogma, which has so often darkened Christianity and Islam with its persecuting spirit — could not fail, however otherwise enfeebled, to reap the benefit of this indemnity in a broader and sweeter flow.

Result.

The tolerant attitude of Buddhism requires no other explanation, apart from the natural tendency of the Hindu mind as shown also in Brahmanism, than the essential quality and aim of the Budd-

hist movement itself. It is but a part of that humane impulse, which must be fully recognized as substantially its motive power, before either its metaphysical negations or its positive moral ardor can be fairly understood.

As inclusive of all other practical benefits from the propagation of Buddhism, we must add the fact, that it has been a vast force of association; an ideal centre of unity among the rude and isolated races of Asia. With all its pliancy to local peculiarities, and through all diversities of phase, it has given them a common starting-point of religious interest, in place, in time, and in personal homage; and, to no slight extent, a common dogma, a common tradition, and a common literature. It has thus done much in accomplishing that *preliminary* stage in religious growth for the Eastern world which Christianity has so well effected for the West. It has brought the tribes together by missions, explorations, and pilgrimages to distant and widely separated shrines. It has taught them orderly routines, patient disciplines, permanent friendly relations between classes, and, in such defective ways indeed as Oriental genius conditioned and an undeveloped perception of natural laws required, aided them to distinct social and political aims.[1] It is not true that its call to forsake the world as vanity, and to immure life in the convent or the cell, has made it a mere force of social disintegration. The conventual life was a step towards definite and constructive communion. A large proportion of the Buddhist priests lived in the towns

Unifying force.

[1] The crude and coarse material, which was to be leavened, explains that strange mixture of moral elevation with trivial and even repulsive details of special prescription, which characterizes such Buddhist works as the *Catechism of the Chinese Shamans*.

and cities, were not eremites but cenobites, avoiding the old isolation of the Brahmanical ascetics;[1] and whether as mendicants, or as private teachers, or as employed in other professional services, everywhere formed a real centre for the interests of the people. They are to this day the instructors of the children of the poor in all towns and villages in Buddhist countries.[2] Their preaching of the vanity of life was at least *preaching*, and gathered the multitudes as they had never been gathered before, to breathe the magnetic atmosphere of a common purpose, and feel the thrill of democratic appeal. The degree to which this sense of social equality, *this democratic element*, exists in China, in India, and even in Central Asia, is yet to be appreciated by the Western nations; and Buddhism has been, to an extent which is equally unrecognized, at once its expression and its education.

"Nipâl is covered with *vihâras* (monasteries); but these ample abodes have long resounded with the hum of industry and the pleasant voices of women and children. The convents are always open to new-comers, and for the departure of those who are tired of their vows. Women are regarded as equally worthy of admission with men."[3]

The Nepalese priests have abandoned ascetic practices, and have exclusive inheritance of the professions and trades. The chief maintenance of the *lamas* of Thibet is their own industry. They are artists, schoolmasters, artisans, and laborers in every kind.[4] The dependent condition involved in the mendicancy of the Buddhist priesthood exposes this class to popular contempt, which is to a great degree offset

[1] Koeppen, II. 262.
[2] Bastian, *Weltauff. d. Buddh.*, p. 37; St. Hilaire, p. 401.
[3] Hodgson, *Transact. of Royal As. Soc.*, II. 256
[4] Wilson, *Essays*, II. 374; Koeppen, II. 275; Huc, II. 90.

by the many ways in which they make themselves of general service. In most Buddhist countries, the *Festival of the Plough* is held annually with great honor, all classes, from the monarch down, paying reverence to this symbol of the dignity of labor. In Siam, on these occasions, a "king of the husbandmen" is chosen, who represents the highest authority, and is made the centre of various singular rites. During his brief sovereignty, he receives as his perquisite all fines paid for violating the law against doing work on this festal day.[1]

These bold pioneers, these active colonizers, these sturdy democrats, making the far expanses of a continent vocal even with their tidings of a silent world, and alive and prolific by a gospel which actually proclaimed them empty and dead, — what a rebuke they are to all narrow, negative formulas for interpreting the facts of religious history! That they preached absolute renunciation of life, enforced thereto by the absence of science and practical freedom, was really the sign that these two elements were indispensable to the dignity and desirability of life, and that man's ideal nature refused to honor even existence itself on the conditions it then and there presented. And was the instinctive protest wholly blind to this, its own inner meaning? Mark what these idealists did.

Significance of Buddhist preaching

They struck out a new doctrine and discipline, because the old was stiff and unsocial. They proselyted for it with an energy never equalled before or since, save by that of Catholic Rome. They preached tidings of salvation to the low-caste artisans and laborers; encouraged agriculture, and taught

Achievements.

[1] Crawford's *Mission to Siam.*

writing and humane manners to the rude rovers of the north.[1] They planted peaceful monasteries for study and contemplation, gathered colossal libraries, created immense bodies of literature, in India, in Nepâl, in Thibet, in Ceylon, in China; and they refreshed with tides of positive enterprise and emigration, in the interest of an ideal aim, all Eastern Asia from Korea to Siam. Architecture and sculpture in central and southern Asia are mainly of their creation. The indications of writing in India commence with their revolution in the interest of the masses.[2] Their recognition of the value of letters is illustrated in their mythical genesis of "the sacred syllable." "First the world was void. The first light was *aum;* thence the alphabet, the seeds of the universe."[3] They may even be said to have created *history* in India by the civil, social, and political agitations which they produced.

Their uninterrupted chronicle of Ceylon, covering nearly the whole period of Buddhist sway in that island, with its valuable chronological data, is, notwithstanding its mythical elements, one of the most important historical documents in Oriental literature. The Buddhist canon in China is seven hundred times as large as the New Testament. Hiouen Thsang's translation of a single set of Sutras is twenty-five times the amount of the Christian Bible. The canonical books of the Thibetans are of dimensions beside which those of other races and religions are insignificant.[4] They number thousands of works, gathered into hundreds of volumes; and the Bible of the southern Buddhists

[1] See St. Hilaire, 370; Koeppen, I. 186, 481; Wuttke, I. 248, II 559.

[2] Muller's *Sansk. Lit.*, p. 519. [3] Hodgson, *Trans. R. A. S.*, II. 232.

[4] A summary of the hundred volumes of the *Kah-gyur* is given by Csoma Körösi, in *Asiat Researches*, vol. xx.

is equally enormous.[1] Both treat of all forms of Oriental speculation, science, and art.[2] In the sixth century two thousand Buddhist works had been translated into Chinese.[3] The literary industry of these (theoretic) unbelievers in work was immeasurable.

It was the necessity of agricultural development, to meet the practical requirements of a religion which prohibited the taking of life, that stimulated manual toil, and covered Ceylon with reservoirs and consecrated lakes for the irrigation of the country. It was this that measured the praise of the Buddhist kings by the number of tanks and canals, sometimes amounting to thousands, which they had constructed for the "benefit of the country," or "out of compassion for living creatures," or to enrich the Church and maintain its priesthood. Here was a theoretic indolence, that taught kings to plant gardens and reclaim lands; to provide by systematic cultivation the means for gratuitously supplying food to travellers in their dominions; to organize the democratic village communities, with their simple and regular administration of justice; and even to labor in the rice fields with their own hands, "to make their gifts more meritorious!"[4] Here was a contempt for nature and all fleeting forms, that could surround cities with gardens, and bury lofty temples to their summits under votive heaps of flowers, and make every day's especial atmosphere of prayer and praise refresh the worshippers with a new and distinct aroma, from the wealth of their floral world![5] Here was a metaphysical nega-

[1] The Singhalese *Tripitaka* (Three Baskets) contains 350,000 verses. St. Hilaire, p. 380.

[2] Weber's *Vorlesungen*, p. 194; Koeppen, II. 278–280.

[3] Beal's *Buddhist Pilgrims*, p. xxxiii.

[4] *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxxiv. [5] Tennent.

tion of all light and joy, that could come out into recognition of these very things as elements of religious architecture and ritual, far transcending that accorded them by the Christian world; lifting its airy pagodas in the pleasantest sites, enclosed with cheerful galleries and luxuriant gardens and groves; enlivening its *vihâras*, and even the gloom of its rock excavations, with endless carving and painting of symbolic imagery drawn from nature, the animal world, and the arts of social life; performing its sacred rites to the sound of inspiring music, and celebrating periodical feasts of lamps, of images, of birthdays, and of the opening spring![1]

Historic parallels.

There is scarcely any movement in the history of religious enterprise that can be compared to this, except the labors of the Benedictine monks, whose rise made the sixth century of the Christian era memorable, just as the first preaching of Buddhism signalized the sixth century before it. That band of devoted missionaries, who carried Christianity into the wilds of northern Europe, raised woman to equality of ecclesiastical position with man, and opened asylums to outcasts and serfs; who transcribed and diffused copies of their own Scriptures with prodigious industry; who founded schools of music, painting, and architecture; who preserved art and science through the mediæval night, and organized agriculture on a gigantic scale, as acceptable service of God and ennobling work of man, — are the nearest western analogue to these oriental enthusiasts; and not without special resemblance in the proof they afford that man cannot help reluctng with vigor

[1] Koeppen, I. 560–585, II 300; Lassen, II 1170. Wilson, *Journ. R. A. S.* (Bombay Branch), vol. iv. On the growth of Buddhist art in Orissa, from mere holes in rocks to temples covered with beautiful imagery, see Hunter, vol. i.

against all his own theoretic postulates of the "vanity of life."

We should mention also the Moravian brethren, a more recent instance of practical zeal in the service of an ideal that apparently disparaged the present world; — penetrating the remotest regions of barbarism, and piercing Himalayan solitudes, to surmount those colossal heights, and stand side by side with Buddhism on the sacred plateaux of Central Asia.

VII.

ECCLESIASTICISM.

ECCLESIASTICISM.

THE practical energy and humanity of Buddhism in its early days, and these later vestiges of a civilizing power which even its degeneracy cannot hide, thoroughly refute the charge that its intellectual skepticism was spiritual despair. They are the cheering signs of a healthful effort of nature to counteract the inertia of the Eastern races; to overcome the physical conditions that held them apart; to compensate for the absence of scientific and social opportunity, and for the inveteracy of institutions; to relieve the monotony of contemplation, endlessly revolving fixed forms of thought, and cycles of destiny. It was from these invincible conditions of race, climate, experience, identified with life itself, that men sought refuge in negations, whose very thoroughness was a path of emancipation, and led out into the grandeur of compassion, sacrifice, love. Yet without science, without friction of races, without the stir of a more ardent life, these conditions *were* invincible. The social status could not supply material for forms of permanent culture which would justify life, *as life*, to man's ideal sense. So this negation penetrated even the humane instincts, and made them subservient to ascetic aims. The Buddhist priesthood be-

Degeneracy.

came, after an Oriental way, men of action, and constructive forces in the living world; but it was to persuade others to abandon action and renounce the world.[1] The salvation they preached was escape from life, not discovery of its inherent practical values, outward or inward. It was the same in a very large degree with Christianity; but the ethnic connections and opportunities of Christianity, unlike those of Buddhism, have been capable of counteracting the other-worldliness of its own prescribed ideal. The Buddhist priesthood, on the other hand, are still children of the jungle and the steppe, of the brooding Oriental fate. Their active enterprise, their organized efficiency, their democratic zeal, trail with the old languor of the Yogi life in its endless strain against an endless consciousness, moving through nature in a somnambulic way, like the anchoret pacing under his banyan shades. They fail of our Western magnetic sense of the outward capabilities of the actual world, so needful to the evolution of its spiritual uses.

Against these disadvantages, they have put a persistent adherence to their traditions of benevolence as the purpose of life. But even this has proved but an imperfect defence against the *inevitable degeneracy of a positive religion*, in its passage through definite cultus into the form of authoritative institution; while on the other hand they have lacked the energy in *secular* aims which Western races have known how to oppose to this process, and to make available for a continual reconstruction of the religious ideal. They are monks, mendicants, dreamers still, but without

[1] "Leaving all pleasures behind, calling nothing his own, going from his home to a homeless state, and no longer clinging to any thing, the wise will set himself free." — *Dhammap.*, vv. 87–89. Yet the *Prâtimoksha* forbids disparagement of life or commendation of death, however common suicide may have been in later Buddhism. See Beal, *Budd Pilgrims*, p. xlii.

the enthusiasm of the founders of their faith; still apostles of negation, but not now in the old way of earnest protest and quickening demand. Their metaphysics are not so much the *keen sense* that perception is of the unreal, as a traditional acquiescence in that conclusion and its results. For the swarming functionaries of a Church two thousand years old, and the hundreds of millions who perform its rites, the dogma of the nothingness of things visible, however conceived, has indeed come to its own self-contradiction both in faith and practice; though certainly not, thus far, in the interest of their proper reality.

Nature's irony.

The world, pronounced a phantom because it is so transient, has become a flood-tide of minute and busy ceremonial observances; it pours upon these preachers of the Void immeasurable details of mythologic and symbolic imagery; it buries them under a tropical rankness of legend, to be compared only with the colossal flora of the carboniferous epoch of the planet. What irony! A God in *nirvâna* blooming into a tropic summer of resplendent fable, flowering inexhaustibly in personal portraiture, miracle, metamorphosis! The human body renounced as worthless, vindicating itself in a stupendous veneration of statues and relics! The longing for absolute rest as the crown of virtue, issuing in unbounded devotion to miraculous energies, supposed to flow from saints who have departed for such a rest! Believers in the emptiness of all forms, and even actions, driven by an insatiable passion for multiplying prayers, to actual mechanical contrivances for working off the greatest number of them in the shortest time by movements of the lips, or strings of beads, or the many-colored prayer-cylinder (*kurdu*) stuffed with

formulas on paper slips, or with the books of the law, and turned by hand! These are nature's own revendications, enforcements of rights suppressed or disallowed, in such ways as remain possible; proving at least that the balance of spiritual forces cannot be destroyed. In the very extravagance of such self-contradictions and perversions there is a blind pressure of the instincts towards immeasurableness, which affirms man's innate relation to the infinite.

Veneration of relics and images.

Swarms of images standing above millions of prostrate men, or heaps of bones, ashes, jewels, vases, coins, devoutly laid up in *topes*, those bubble-shapes that deny the validity of what they hold, are but illustrations of the spectacle that every distinctive religion has presented in degenerating from its first inspiration. Neither Buddhism nor Catholicism, however, must be supposed to teach mere idolatry of dead objects. Pure fetichism belongs only to the lowest stages of the religious sentiment; and every historical faith carries with it traditional idealism enough to forbid recurrence to the mere dread of volitions inherent in the dead wood and stone. The worship rendered these images and relics looks through them to their consecration by some superior presence, some subtle guardianship, some association that holds them to what was once a personal relation. It differs far less than is wont to be supposed from sentiments familiar to all civilized people. The extreme demonstrativeness in these rituals, which seems to indicate no less than real adoration of the statues and relics themselves, is in fact habitual to the Oriental mind, and does not by any means imply that the merely symbolic meaning of the object is lost in sheer idolatry. "The intelligent Burman," says Malcom, "claims that

he regards images as papists do a crucifix: he places no trust in them, but uses them to remind him of Gotama, and in compliance with his commands."[1]

Its limitation in Buddhist art.

Buddhism, in fact, subjects this form of service to special restraints. Its devotion was centered in love and gratitude to a man. Its oldest temples are without visible objects, even of this form of piety.[2] But an old legend describes the Buddha as directing his picture, inscribed with the precepts of the law, to be sent by one king to another, as the best of gifts, and as a means of conversion, causing his shadow to be cast on a surface for the purpose.[3] The earliest images to which the tributes of this faith in human forces were naturally directed were in human form: far from such monstrous combinations as Hinduism has allowed its later sects, they were confined to the Buddha preaching, meditating, resting; to the figures of his saints, and to human representations of his church and his law. The Sutras abound in praises of his personal beauties; reckoning them by hundreds, defining and classifying them; covering his *ideal* image with every conceivable symbol of supernatural strength and grace and sweetness;[4] yet a wonderful soberness, suggestive of heartfelt respect for the human and the real, reigns throughout the world of actual Buddhist statuary. The earnestness of that profound sense of the limits of outward perception and possession, of that call to an unseen path of release and rest, which gave meaning to the teacher's life and word, would seem to have made these colossal forms,[5] lifted above the gath-

[1] *Notes on the Burman Empire*, ch vi.
[2] See *Journ. R. A. S.*, vol. viii. p. 42.
[3] Burnouf, p 340–344.
[4] Hardy, *Manual*, p. 367.
[5] Great numbers of these statues, in all Buddhist countries, are from twenty to forty feet high, and many are far larger: they will ordinarily measure from twelve to twenty. Koeppen, I. 509.

ered relics of the mortal part, its enduring home. Contrast this absence of pretension and display, this calm reliance on the bare truth of inward thought and purpose, these quiet gestures of teaching, these folded hands of meditation, with the boundless license of symbolic expression in the popular statues of Brahmâ, Vishnu, and Siva. The lifted finger commends to silence; the half-closed eyes recall to self-discipline and self-restraint; the sitting posture, a restfulness not of death nor sleep, but of life, affirms the still patience of law that abides in the depths of all existence; the benign aspect pervades them with human love.[1] This limitation has its *moral* value; holds religious feeling and fancy to a certain realistic interest. Art in Buddhist countries, especially in Japan, shows rare fidelity to nature, and surprising sense of all vital energies; and its tender patience in elaboration is referable in part, one cannot help thinking, to the influence of a religious sentiment which constantly insists on corresponding moral qualities and disciplines.[2]

Meaning of relic worship.

Veneration of relics is here combined, as in Catholic Christianity, with prayers for the dead, intercession of saints, and other related forms of devotion to personal ties. It is, in reality, to be explained as the natural cling of private affections, unenlightened by science, to the senses; as their protest against being severed by death from the outward objects with which they have been associated. Escape from supernaturalism does not destroy this interest, but simply frees it from extravagance: it is changed from a superstition to a sentiment, and its

[1] The Buddhist sculptor is required to give the Teacher such a countenance as becomes the "Father of all creatures." Koeppen, p. 505. The elaborate symbolism of later figures indicates Sivaite influences. Schlagintweit shows that the figures of Buddha and his saints, in Thibet, are of high Aryan type.

[2] On the realism of Japanese art, see Jarves's *Art Thoughts*, ch. ix.

object from a miracle to a memento. This result is simply due to the fact that science renders the required justice to the senses *from the side of reason*, releasing the emotional nature from that anxious watch over their interests which it could not otherwise abandon. I do not wonder, therefore, at the dimensions attained by relic-worship, under the influence of a religion like Buddhism, which theoretically rejects the claims of the senses, at the same time giving a prominent place to the distinctively human and personal; in other words, to sensibilities and affections which inevitably adhere to these claims. It is the struggle of the sentiments to hold their own; their cling to associations threatened with destruction by the sense of the transiency and unreality of phenomena.

I do not think we need carry this thought so far as to suppose with Burnouf, that the intense attachment of the Buddhists to the relics of their saints grew out of the feeling that these dead bones were all that remained of the beings they had loved; thus making it an argument to prove that *nirvâna* was annihilation. Would not belief in such a *nirvâna* have *abolished* interest in these mere mementos of decay, in place of stimulating it? That, on the other hand, relics were piously gathered up, to the last fragment, and abundantly supplied by the imagination where they were wanting, would seem to demonstrate that those whom they represented were still cherished as individuals whose life was bound up with the hopes and desires of their followers. It would thus come in evidence *against* Burnouf's theory, rather than for it. It is also to be noted that the relics of *kings*, who certainly could not have been thought to have passed into *nirvâna*, were honored in the same way. The con-

servation of relics was not wholly unknown to Brahmanism; but it became from the first the special characteristic of Buddhism, measuring the intensity of its sense of change, decay, and death, as a sorrowful destiny, to be in every way, symbolically and spiritually, mastered and set aside.

So the dead body of the loved Buddha, who had passed into *nirvâna*, was idealized beyond measure: the fears and hopes of millions gave enormous proportions to the mythopoetic faculty in this direction, and scattered his members, like those of Egyptian Osiris, over the world.[1] Every organ, feature, atom of his body, alive or dead, is sacred. He throws up his beautiful locks and his royal garments into the air when abandoning the world; and they are caught devoutly as they ascend, by a Brahma, and borne away to a grand relic shrine in the Brahmâ heavens where all the angels can adore them.[2] He distributes every thing he can detach from his person to his disciples during his life. At his death, whatever has passed through the funeral fires is divided into eight portions, to satisfy as many contending nations; then follow the miraculous restorations and multiplications which assure his presence wherever his name is praised. His skull is in India; his shoulder-blade, in Ceylon; the apples of his eyes are in a cloister in Nagara; his hairs, nails, fingers, in various cities of the East; his very shadow is shown in several caves of Western China; and his foot-prints are visited by crowds of pilgrims on the highest peaks of Asia accessible to devotion. His water-jar is laid up to work miracles at the Singhalese capital; his wash-bowl, staff, and mantle are scattered in mani-

Its extent in Buddhism.

[1] St. Hilaire, 294.

[2] *Wheel of the Law*, p. 103.

fold shapes over vast empires. His left eye-tooth in early times converted an army. A Brahman king tried to destroy it; burnt, beat, buried, stamped it out under the feet of elephants; but in vain. It *would* reappear, on some lotus-leaf, no mere perishable eye-tooth, but an indestructible element of the ascended Buddha. Finally, wearied and overpowered, the imperial enemy gave in and built it a splendid temple, where it wrought indescribable miracles. Bloody wars were fought for that eye-tooth of the Buddha. In the fifth century, Fahian, the Chinese pilgrim, saw it carried about in pomp; long lines of elephants were taught to kneel when it passed by, and flowers were strewn by the people along the ways. At last it fell to the British, who tried to destroy it, but failed like the rest; and so it is still honored with magnificent ceremonies, in *Mahâ-Nuwara*, or the Great City, in Ceylon,[1] where it was displayed, in 1858, amidst prostrate crowds, to Burmese priests sent to compare it with a rival tooth preserved at Ava.[2]

All this has its analogies in Christian history. And though a mystery rested on the disposal of the actual body of Jesus, which protected it from this kind of mythology, till veneration for his person had changed it, in popular faith, into the very substance of deity, yet the worship of relics has approached as nearly as possible to the same point, in the wonder-working of his sepulchre, his manger, and his cross; even of his foot-prints on the Mount of Olives, in the houses of Jerusalem, and in various Catholic Churches of France.[3] At the close of the fourteenth century,

[1] See the account of the deposition of Gotama's relics in the great dagop of Ruanvelli, by Dushtagâmini, and of the accompanying miracles, in the thirty-first chapter of the *Mahâvansa*.

[2] St. Hilaire, p. 417.

[3] Maury, *Légendes Pieuses*, p. 214.

the Abbey of St. Denis presented a piece of the head of St. Hilary to the city of Poitiers: the chin had already been obtained. St. Andrew's head was worshipped for centuries at Patros. "Kings died for the purchase of it. It was carried in procession to Rome. The heads of Peter and Paul would have been borne forth to meet it, but the gold and iron which enshrined them were too heavy. At the Milvian Bridge, the Pope made an eloquent address to the Head, entreating its aid in overcoming the Turks. It was conveyed in splendor to St. Peter's, and deposited under the high altar."[1] No Vigilantius has arisen in the East to rebuke the "rag and dust worship" of Buddhist Jeromes; no Luther to thunder against the venders of sacred images that swarm in all Buddhist states. But even the freer and more practical understanding of the European races did not save them from an almost Oriental mania for this kind of traffic and this form of devotion; and in the ninth century the sale of relics had become the main part of the trade of Rome.

The topes.

It is probable that far more of conscious imposture has mingled with these operations of the Catholic Church than with those of Buddhism in the same direction. It is a desire for the preservation, rather than for the sale, of relics, that has covered southern Asia with *topes*, or *dagops*,[2] from Samarkand and Cabul to the extremities of China and further India. The oldest topes are in the form of a bubble, surmounted by an umbrella, symbolical of sovereignty. In later times several figures of the latter kind were placed one above another, in a series typical of the several stages of the religious life, or of the triple

[1] Milman's *Latin Christianity*, VIII. 221.

[2] Topes, or *stupas* (heaps) are *tumuli*: *dagobas* are relic-shrines. The one term is Pâli, the other Singhalese, but their meaning is substantially the same.

form under which the religious ideal was conceived, as person, as law, as church. In this way the Chinese pagoda grew up out of the Indian *dagop* or *stupa*, which contains its elements, but whose emblematic bubble is not adapted to the realistic taste of the Chinese. Between these styles is the pyramidal, which is less common. The *dagops* are in grottoes or in the open air, near the *vihâras*, or places of assembly and temporary sojourn; and these last also, although built for convenience in the form of a parallelogram or square, exhibit the bubble-shape in the most sacred portion, the apse. Under these singular monuments, significant at once of utter weakness and sovereign power, of the transient and the eternal, the relics were buried in cells, with the prayer that they might remain for ever closed; probably in the hope that they might be undisturbed till the coming of the next Buddha, thousands of years in the future.[1]

Significance of Buddhist mythology.

The mythology of Buddhism presents the same boundless yearning for the infinite and eternal amidst the fleeting of phenomenal forms. Mythology is always prophetic: it is the child's play of intuition and imagination, and dimly divines those essential relations of man and nature, which science afterwards reaches slowly and presents clearly in detail; so that, as we look backward, man seems to have been predicting them all through the ages. Even in this, the most extravagant imagery of religious faith that ever grew, such instinctive presentiment of the latest facts and the broadest laws is too plain to be mistaken. This revel of the imagination in pathless and endless wastes of number was astronomy and microscopy in ideal dream. "The

[1] On Buddhist relics, statuary, &c, see Bastian's *Siam*, pp. 119–163.

world," it said, "rests on a lotus-leaf, which carries also innumerable worlds beside it. So with every other leaf of the flower. Out of the atmospheric deep in which this lotus floats, arise so many similar flowers, that it requires unity followed by four millions of ciphers to designate their number. And every leaf of every one of these flowers bears as many worlds as the first. But this one atmosphere is but an atom to the whole. There are as many more as there are flowers in this, and each is as full of worlds." When science would refute the theological fictions of a beginning of time, and of a creation a few thousand years ago, it points to the ancient geological layers, counting these backwards till the definite sense of numbers is lost. The Buddhist imagination, not obliged, like science, to fill out its spaces with historical facts and conditions, goes further; it strikes away the notion of a beginning, at one sweep, and marks immeasurableness as inherent in time itself. It recalls, as if it were no earlier than yesterday, an event declared to have occurred ten quadrillion times a hundred quadrillions of kalpas ago, each kalpa being thirteen hundred and forty-four millions of years! So of the prolific power of *virtue* in every atom of its own substance. "Buddha caused a beam of light to go forth out of every one of the eighty thousand pores of his body, and on the top of each beam was a flower, in which sat a Buddha teaching his disciples." "Four things are immeasurable: space; the number of worlds therein; the number of sentient creatures; and the wisdom of the Holy One."

Its pure morality.

The miracles of Buddha are colossal, penetrate all worlds, supplant all physical laws and powers; yet they never violate the eternal laws of

morality, but in all possible forms affirm their authority and all-sufficiency. The freedom which love and wisdom claim in the universe, their power to make the little great, the distant near, the atom reveal infinity, shines through all this delirium of fable; a deeper sanity that binds it to the heart and conscience of more sober races, and to forms of imagination more ripe and calm with the experience of natural law.

It is all concentrated in Gotama Buddha; but its very fertility and plasticity save it from crystallizing definitely and exclusively, as a closed series of prodigies, around this earlier human divinity, as Protestant supernaturalism centered and confined the miracle in its Christ. The love and wisdom of Gotama are one and the same thing with love and wisdom in all *arhats* and *bodhisattvas;* in all the saints who walk in the great "Way of Release;" one and the same thing for all, in its power over the elements, and in the gift of transforming itself into all forms and forces for the good of man. It is through the *merit of all beings* in these higher stages of attainment that the "worlds are renewed;" as it is through the vice of all degraded beings that they are destroyed. The heavens and hells of Buddhism, with their tremendous imagery, go behind all Buddhas; for they rest on the essential nature of virtue and vice.

Its universality.

The miraculous legends of Gotama's birth and infancy indeed, like corresponding forms of the myth in relation to other Eastern saviours, isolate him in celestial splendor above all beings; yet only as celebrating, in this as in other religions, the divine right of holiness and love, and the loyalty of the visible universe to their redeeming power. Thus at his birth ten thousand worlds are moved. He takes seven steps, as a

sign that he would have the seven constituents of the highest knowledge; and Brahmâ holds over his head the white parasol of kingly power, to show that he would arrive at the perfection of all saintly fruits of emancipation.[1] The older gods — *magi*, bringing their tribute to the child who shall supplant them — lay the powers of a rejoicing universe at his feet. We have already noticed the similarity of these legends to those of the birth and infancy of Jesus. We have only to allow for the difference between the redundance of Oriental fancy and the sobriety of Hebrew and Greek, and the points of resemblance certainly appear remarkable: the royal genealogy of Gotama; the supernatural conception without sexual passion; the salutation of the mother by guardian *devas;* the worship of the new-born babe by all the powers and elements of nature. In this moment of rapture at the birth of nature's lord was concentrated by Buddhism all that Christian mythology scattered more slowly along the life of Jesus, and infinitely more to a similar purpose. The material body of the holy mother became transparent, and disclosed him, fair as a flower, leaning on his hands within it. At his birth prisoners were released, the fires of hell put out, the living creatures forgot their hates, and sea and land were strewn with flowers. To explain these messianic correspondences, we need only remember that the religious imagination in both cases had to deal with the same faith in the authority of holiness and love, the same wonderful and prophetic fact of their entrance into humanity, and the same ignorance of natural laws.

Whence its extent.

Oriental worship of miracle *has remained colossal* in comparison with Christian mythology, because it is a more profoundly real sentiment;

[1] *Wheel of the Law*, p. 103.

not weakened by that sense of divided allegiance to which the latter is subjected by the increasing perception of positive law. Its mythology does not intimate a divine interference with the universe by reason of evil, nor convey any implication against nature, either as of break in its order, or of supplement to its imperfection; but is co-extensive and even identical with nature. It is not evidence of dogma nor compulsion to belief, so much as spontaneous faith in the power of mind to change the appearances of things, the ideality of wonder and delight. "Miracles," says Gobineau, "being regarded in the East simply as ever-possible manifestation of power acquired by men over the changeable methods of nature, are not regarded as proving any thing in behalf of the religious belief of the performer."[1] So that nature may well be a free playground for the gigantic transformations of mythology.

Aśoka cuts a slip from the Buddha's holy Tree, surrounded by a thousand kings. With golden pencil he draws a vermilion stripe around a bough, and it separates from the tree by the virtue of prayer and the predestination of Buddha's law. Planted in a golden vessel, it instantly takes root, at which miracle all gods, men, and beasts, and the very earth itself, utter a shout of praise. Then proceeds the sacred bough, emitting many-colored rays, under convoy of persons of every caste, to Ceylon, on a ship, safely guided by the divine powers of a chief priestess, entrusted with this charge. Placed on the sacred earth prepared for it, the tree ascends into the sky, sending rays to the highest heavens of the gods, and there stands till sunset, converting ten thousand souls at a time.[2] Other relics ascend in the same way to shine

[1] *Relig. de l'Asie Centrale*, p. 298. [2] Turnour's *Mahâvansa*, ch. xviii.-xix.

like the sun for a while; after which the earth heaves itself up to receive them with tumultuous joy. When the great temple of Ruanwelli is to be dedicated, the relics of Buddha are adored amidst celestial flowers and perfumes by gods and men, with music that fills the sky; they ascend into the atmosphere and are transformed into the natural shape of the Buddha, whose multitudinous qualities form themselves around him in a nimbus of glory, the mere sight of which converts innumerable beings into saints.[1] Palaces in the heavens are described as seen by the eyes of saints, of dimensions and splendors that strangely contrast with that service of dead bones by which they are attained. Yet what associates such relics with the joys of paradise is hinted in the tale of Bhirani, a slave girl, who for her *benevolence to the poor* was born again in a heaven of delight, the queen of one of these divine mansions, described as forty-eight leagues in circumference.[2]

Shall we wonder more at such idealization of the relics of mortality, or at such absolute faith in the supremacy of love? In either way, this infantile imagination plays with nature as a child with the blocks which he builds into structures that grow colossal in his dream.

The fall into ecclesiasticism.

But the mythology of Buddhism, like its worship of images and relics, grew up under other influences besides its original motive. Like Brahmanism it fell from its stage of prophecy to its stage of priesthood, from inspiration to ritualism; and what was at first the spontaneous play of earnest instincts, however blind, crystallized into the polity of

[1] Turnour's *Mahâvanśa*, ch. xxxi. [2] Ibid., ch. xxvii.

a church. In tracing the process, we detect in its insidious steps the perils of ecclesiastical organization, and the necessity for constant reconstruction of religion from free inward centres of personal life.

Gotama, so far as is known, instituted no cultus. His main work must have been itinerant preaching of his practical ethics and his philosophy of life to whomsoever he found prepared to hear; and this novel function in India must have freely chosen such methods as occasions prompted or allowed. Special religious rites were a small matter to one who so strongly emphasized every moral duty. So far as they entered into his public ministry at all, they must have borrowed the prevailing terms and symbols of Brahmanism; and how much ritualism he was likely to have taken from these may be inferred from the sentence ascribed to him from earliest times: "Brahmâ dwells in the *homes* where children honor their parents."[1] The offerings of flowers and perfumes, the sound of music and the utterance of devout ejaculations, which have always been main features of the Buddhist service, are precisely such forms as might have grown up spontaneously in those earliest popular gatherings around the beloved teachers of a gospel like this. Yet with the increase of his disciples, and the growth of a definite purpose in their minds, Gotama may have established some kind of arrangement among them, which developed itself into later distinctions of a more positive character. We find his assembly consisting of *bhixus* (mendicants), called also *śramanas* (ascetics), all of whom, men or women, are received on equal terms.[2] Yet it is said that "some comprehended more

Steps of the process.

[1] Burnouf, p. 338.

[2] Ibid., p. 278. From *śraman* (diligent) is derived the Chinese "*shaman*" or priest.

of the doctrine, others less, though all were absorbed alike in the Buddha and his law."[1] Here was already ground for distinctions. His furthest step in that direction seems to have been classification of his followers according to age and worth.[2] We find *sthaviras*, or elders, distinguished by these qualifications, teaching in the earliest schools and presiding at the assemblies.[3] From the whole body of *śrâvakas*, or hearers, there soon comes to be set off an elect class, called *arhats;* but this was also a distinction founded on wisdom and its supposed power over nature, — the word itself signifying *merit*.[4] The earliest schism, however, resulting in the exodus of a body of *sthaviras* and the conversion of Kashmir to the faith, is believed to have originated in the rebellion of the younger disciples against the growing authority of these "elders."[5] Veneration for "the master" was another path towards ecclesiasticism. It was natural to gather up his relics, to divide them as a common legacy among as many as possible; to multiply them for the same purpose; to proselyte with images and pictures; to add the relics of early apostles of the faith to his; to locate them in shrines; and to develop out of all this a prescribed system of pilgrimages and a mass of mythical traditions. It was natural that converts should divide into monks and laity;[6] that they should gather into small fraternities, choose abbots or spiritual fathers, and classify men according to their progress in the faith, as "the unsanctified" and "the holy;"[7] that they should meet yearly in larger conclave, and

[1] Burnouf, p. 290. [2] Lassen, II 456; Weber, *Vorles.*, p. 265 [3] Koeppen, I. 383.
[4] Burnouf, p. 297. The *Mahâvanśa* (ch. iii.) speaks of the first council held immediately after Gotama's death, as an assembly of *arhats;* but its whole account is manifestly legendary.
[5] See *Journ. Asiatique*, for 1870, p. 465. [6] Bhixus and Upâsakas.
[7] Prithagdjanas and Aryas.

hold periodical "assemblies of liberation," to discuss questions of policy in the conduct of this great missionary movement, and to gather up contributions for the same; an aim that proved so successful as in after times to give the institution the title of "the Field of Alms." It was natural that monasteries and nunneries should multiply, and prove stiff defenders of orthodoxy; and legislative synods try to make ecclesiasticism complete. Three of these were held within two hundred and fifty years after Buddha's death, to define errors in discipline, custom, and faith, and affirm the true Buddhist Law. In the absence of written documents relative to the original faith, *heresies* could not be wanting. In less than two centuries, seventeen different sects had appeared.[1] There were schools of strict and schools of lax discipline; schools holding to the oldest Sutras only, and schools accepting also the later metaphysics;[2] schools of speculation, and schools resting on faith alone.[3] Quite as inevitable it was that there should come a Grand Council, somewhat of the Nicene Christian type, to settle finally what was orthodox, who were to be encouraged, and who to be held heretical, though not, as in Western dogmatic differences, to be suppressed by force. Buddhism was the Protestantism of India, and a multiplication of heresies followed its larger liberty; but not less distinctly did all profess to hold the original faith, and appeal to the name of the Buddha. These were natural tendencies to consolidation: doubtless they were strengthened by a common opposition on the part of all Buddhist sects to Brahmanism. Of the synods, to which all the traditions testify, the

[1] Turnour's *Mahâvansa*, xx.
[2] Sâutrântikas and Vâibhâshikas.
[3] Koeppen, I. 157, 158.

natural result must have been some kind of hierarchy. That it did not develop into a great Hindu Church is one of the most wonderful things in the history of this wonderful movement. Outside of India, wherever a state embraced Buddhism, a patriarch established himself at the court.[1] The argument of convenience and expedition in the machinery of missionary work must have combined with personal ambition, to produce elements of official despotism out of grades of authority, that had begun in the natural gravitation of respect to age, worth, eloquence, and devotion.[2] All this was of course contrary to the democratic spirit of the early faith, to its philosophy and its morality; and the history of Buddhism in India shows how powerfully those elements of freedom could work in counteraction of the ecclesiastical process.

Resistance to consolidation.

During the thousand years of Buddhist ascendency in India, that process was never developed. In the time of Hiouen Thsang, the early democracy of the faith was still vigorous. Thirteen centuries had elapsed since the first preaching of this word, and yet there was scarcely a sign of consolidation; there was no national church, no hierarchy, no ecclesiastical centre or headship.[3] The only unity was spiritual, the only authority was unseen. Every *vihâra* was a free centre of religion, like those free *political* units, the "village communities." And, with all this independent local life, the peninsula shone with flourishing Buddhist institutions of culture and humanity. Could ecclesiasticism have come and gone again? We can hardly believe it. We read the record with

[1] Rémusat, *Mélanges Posthumes.*
[2] Koeppen, I. 382.
[3] St. Hilaire, p 298

admiration, and ask ourselves if the history of any religion affords its parallel.

But in Thibet the process of organization was furthered by a traditional respect for patriarchal institutions.[1] It was therefore inevitable that a succession of infallible pontiffs should at last be set up in proof of the antiquity and dignity of the faith. Further combinations with the old beliefs in transmigration and incarnation issued in the Dalai-Lama of this eastern papacy, and his equal, if not superior, the Bogdo of southern Thibet: ever renewed and propagated by miraculous tokens and special inspirations of his college of priests, a hierarchy of no less than nine distinct orders.[2] The parallel with Christian history may be pursued further:— to the rivalries of different Buddhist popes; to their political intrigues for building up a vast temporal power; to the contentions of Red and Yellow Lamas; and to the ambition of every important convent to possess an authoritative Lama (*Chubilghan*) of its own.[3] We may add to this series of analogues with Western Catholicism the fall of the Lamaist Church under the dominion of a foreign power, namely, the Chinese Imperial Master who now "protects" Lha Ssa, that Oriental Rome; and the idle dream of its present pontiff that supernatural aid is at hand to subject civilization to his sway.[4]

The ecclesiasticism of Thibet.

Thus Buddhist organization in Thibet ends, like Brahmanical caste in India, in *disintegrative* forces. They are found, after all the phases of consolidation, all-powerful in this as in

The issues of ecclesiasticism.

[1] Bastian, *Reisen in China*, p. 619.

[2] Ibid., p. 572.

[3] *Journ. Asiat. Soc*, XVI. 254

[4] See the interesting account of Modern Lamaism in Koeppen, II. 105–242. Also Bastian, *Reisen in China*, pp 571–580, and Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Thibet*.

other distinctive communions, showing how vain is that assumption of finality which is always made by Institutional Religion.

The steps of degeneracy involved in this process were the same which every effort to organize a religious faith on a great scale and in permanent form has inevitably pursued. The first simple precepts of the teacher multiplied into a mass of ritualism and petty discipline, filling fifteen volumes of the enormous Thibetan canon, which amounts in all to three hundred and sixty books.[1] This scripture, outside Thibet, is no longer read to the nations in their own tongues.[2] The representatives of the non-resistant Śâkyamuni now inflict cruel punishments on their subjects.[3] The perfect democracy of the earlier time was slowly yet steadily modified, till slaves could not be admitted to the Church without consent of their masters; and the doors were fast closed to a diseased person, or one of uncertain origin, or one who had slain a priest, or made trouble in the priesthood.[4] Recruited in perpetuity, by the custom that one lama shall come out of every family which has more than one son, the priesthood at last directs the whole private life of the people, officiating on all domestic occasions, performing the part of physicians, astrologers, conjurers, intercessors for the dead. And the profligacy which is inherent in the unnatural relations of monasticism is not wanting, though prevented in great measure by the ease with which, under Buddhist rules,[5] a discontented monk or nun can return into the world. The simplicity of the early faith is moreover corrupted by intermixture with the popular polytheism, whose dei-

[1] Bastian, p. 575. [2] Koeppen, II. 288. [3] Ibid., p. 331.
[4] Hardy, *Eastern Monachism*, p. 210. [5] Koeppen, I. 584, 354.

ties have been referred to spheres below the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, yet receive a modified form of worship. Buddhism has, however, its rationalistic development also, as in China; where the hierarchical system has never been developed, and the theoretic elements it depended on, such as incarnation and transmigration, have never taken root. Although China as a political master is believed to dictate the succession to the Dalai Lamaship and to control the priesthood of Thibet, the actual relations of the people of the "Middle Kingdom" with this spiritual centre are in fact very remote. As a natural result, many of the oppressive rules and personal vices of the mendicant and monkish class just mentioned are, in China, to a considerable extent, escaped. The mendicancy of the Buddhist priesthood, of course a mark of dependence, will greatly tend to their downfall in the present age: they however, especially in Ceylon, compare favorably in morals with the clergy of other religions, notwithstanding the peculiar perils to which their celibacy and their mendicancy alike expose them.[1]

Buddhist and Christian analogies.

The old and constant record of distinctive religions is their passage from Inspiration to Ritualism and thence to Ecclesiastical Despotism. Yet the resemblance of Thibetan Buddhism to Roman Catholicism has often been supposed to prove a direct influence of the latter, on the former, of these religions. There is no more need of such an explanation than there is evidence of its truth. Such evidence is wholly wanting. The cross, the mitre, the rosary, censers, bells at the altar, tonsure, exorcism, celibacy, fasts, holy water, baptism, confession, benediction by laying on of hands, are thoroughly Oriental symbols, indigenous to the soil. So the custom of going on pilgrim-

[1] St. Hilaire. D. 402.

ages is much older than Christianity. In the third century India was and had long been the resort of Buddhist pilgrims from all northern Asia. The idea of prayer to saints, as well as that of compelling their aid, is familiar to Hindu faith from earliest times. Confession in the Buddhist Church is very well described as growing out of the maxim, "Live hiding your good works, and proclaiming your evil ones;" which is certainly in the true spirit of the sutras. Confession is spoken of as a custom in the oldest legends of Buddhism, and even represented as made before the whole assembly, at certain seasons, and under the direction of Buddha himself.

That mediæval Christianity originated these and other forms of Thibetan Lamaism, through the teaching of Nestorian monks, is asserted upon no other evidence than conjecture.[1] It is much less improbable that the facts are the other way, — that Christian symbolism is very largely of Oriental origin.[2] Buddhism is, as our whole account has shown, genuinely Indian.[3] It made its way into Western Asia some time previous to the Christian era. Its influence in moulding Gnostic, Manichæan, and Neo-Platonic teachers is unquestionable.[4]

We may observe also, in passing, that the resemblances between Gnostic systems on the one

[1] Tennent gives many legends from the *Mahâvansa* strikingly resembling those of the Old and New Testaments, which he ascribes to the influence of Malabar Jews and Nestorian Christians. But why may not this resemblance have grown out of that common movement of the religious sentiment in man, which must explain the analogies of Thibetan Buddhism with Romanism in dogma and ritual? On the other hand, Ferguson (*Rude Stone Monuments*, p 499) thinks that nine-tenths the changes introduced into Christianity in the Middle Ages were of Buddhist origin! It is very easy to go much too far in the direction of historic derivation

[2] Lassen; Prinsep; Koeppen; Thomson's *Introd to Bhag. Gitâ*.

[3] Burnouf; Colebrooke; St. Hilaire.

[4] Lassen, III. 354-405, 440 Baur's *Christliche Gnosis* (1835), pp. 54-60.

hand, and the Buddhist and Sânkhya on the other, are of a very profound character. Among these are their common opposition to the material and changing world; their successive potencies emanating in descending series; the idea of creation as originating in the fall of a beam from the world of light; the recognition of justice as ruling the processes of existence; the threefold division of qualities; the faith in liberation through knowledge; and the separation of the soul from 'nature' into its own self-subsistence. Then the very point of contact for the Oriental with the Greek mind was provided in the great trade-emporium of Alexandria, where Gnosticism arose contemporaneously with the recorded embassies of the Hindus, commercial and other, to the West.[1] It is matter of history also that Buddhism was well known in Babylon, just before the appearance of Mani and his dualistic faith;[2] and that the Neo-Platonists sought very earnestly and successfully to acquaint themselves with Oriental systems.[3]

Influence on Christian systems.

The whole process of reasoning from moral and spiritual resemblances in different religions, to a historical connection between them, is, however, to be handled with great caution. When used, as it so frequently is, in the interest of a special faith, it has been very apt to turn its sharpest edge against the user. But why should it be ignored, in *religious* history alone, that like causes must breed like effects? The similarity may well run into minute details even, since the great shaping moulds of human nature and religious relation are alike in all races.

Thus, in the East and in the West, ecclesiastical

[1] Strabo, Pliny, and others, quoted in Lassen, III. 57–73.
[2] Lassen, III. p. 407.
[3] Matter's *École d'Alexandrie*, II. 368.

organization naturally enough presents the same essential features and processes of degeneracy. Comparative religion shows us a similar picture in the history of Christianity to that which we have been studying.

Christianity and Buddhism.

Jesus apparently organized no religious machinery, no positive cultus. On the contrary, he preached and worked in a personal, prophetic way; announcing an approaching end of this world and the coming of a kingdom that was not of it; and calling on men to accept his claim as Messiah to judge between the just and the unjust, in that day. Of the institutional meaning of the approaching change, and of the special ways in which his own name would be exalted therein, his record gives no sign that he had the least presentiment. How could he or his immediate disciples anticipate its grand hierarchy, ecclesiastical councils, machinery of association for the coercion of private judgment? It lay *involved*, indeed, in his original claim of authority vested in one exclusive Lord and Master of salvation, just as Buddhistic ecclesiasticism, in *its* peculiar form, grew out of the concentration of Buddhism around one personal name. If there be but one church and One Head thereof, it naturally follows that there should always be a representative of this Head, visible as the church itself. On this there further follows an all-controlling mechanism to perpetuate the idea. But at first Christianity knew simply the congregation, choosing its own teachers, and managing its own concerns; under apostolic advice, it is true, and perhaps, to a certain extent, dictation. A few simple forms; some slight conditions of membership, deemed necessary in days of weakness and peril from false brethren; the Jew-Christians indeed insisting on circumcision,

yet unable to impose it on the Gentile world; friendly or admonitory letters passing from church to church, with contributions from the strong in aid of the weak; — this was all the machinery in its age of inspiration by the original motive. But contentions began early, over what Jesus was and what he willed. Churches multiplied. Bishops meddled with each other's flocks. Councils were necessary to settle the faith, and, after quarrelling their utmost, imposed their decisions on the people. Metropolitans managed or browbeat the country pastors, settling and unsettling ministers, lobbying and levying, *pre*scribing and *pro*scribing. Gradually the political prestige of the Metropolitan of Rome made him Head of the Church visible, representative of the One Invisible Head. Strong men like Victor and Gregory sat in the imaginary Peter's-seat, mastered the councils and the state, fulminated decrees and settled points of ritual, till the Roman Catholic Church, with its strange mixture of mummery and devotion, of pomp and humility, became for its season a sovereign in the religious world. All the passions and follies, as well as the nobilities of thought and conduct, by which it was brought to its throne, were steps in the evolution of the idea of ecclesiastical organization, which had gathered around the conception of a Christ. The second stage of Christianity, the age of Priesthood and Ritualism, was to have its day. It compelled the third, which was fresh Inspiration. Luther, preceded by the mediæval mystics, came; and there was recurrence to the free personal life, the root of religion. But the recognition of this root was still imperfect, and again came organization about the name and the church of Christ. Calvin soon turns the prayer and the protest to rigid dogma and

merciless discipline; and the Protestant sects build up new limbos, as like as may be, under the new conditions of civilization, to those they had spurned. Again therefore comes reaction to the inspiration of a new ideal; and the free personal religion that becomes the Free State is laying its foundations, not now in ecclesiastical construction around a historical name or person, but in the moral laws and natural forces, in unity of practical brotherhood, integrity of culture, and worship of the infinite in the whole movement of life and growth.

Why Buddhism is unprogressive.

Why has Buddhism lacked this vigor and stir of progress? Doubtless because, with all its reaction upon Hindu belief and institutions, it remained within the old Hindu circle, and made contemplation the chief end of man. Still the dreaming brain supplanted spiritual muscle and nerve. Still it so brooded over the idea, as to lose the form of *action*. "My religion," said Chinese Laotseu, in the true Buddhist spirit, "consists in thinking the inconceivable thought, in going the impassable way, in speaking the ineffable word, in doing the impossible thing." We may smile, but the old dreamer meant an ideal faith. As abstraction and meditation, all great thought works in this way. Yet in action it must conform to conditions; and in the mutual contact of these two is struck out the fire of progress.

The Hindu type in Buddhism.

How inveterate the cerebral element in the Hindu mind! Even in its protest against an isolated sainthood in the name of love and pity, it could forbid the perception of those social and physical laws which provide the affections their natural opportunity. Greek, Afghan, Mogul, British, Dutch, American, have thus far done little to counteract the

gravitation of the native Hindus to reverie. Abstract thinking has held dominion in their works and ways. As it came off triumphant within India from the Buddhist reaction towards practical work, so it has been communicated, in some measure, through the expansion of Buddhism itself, to other races of a less speculative cast.

The practical side of Buddhism prompted, of course, to the use of natural symbolism. But the symbols were chosen by the same absorbing sense of the transient and unreal in all positive forms. The *Lotus*, hovering on the heave of the sea, a delicate bloom just mantling for a moment a restless, all-engulfing deep: the *Wheel*, that symbol of a life that revolves for ever around itself, in perpetual change without progress, — these are the two select types of Buddhist thought and art. The wheel stands whirling before the door, to greet the stranger with its admonition. It whirls on the house-tops, a sign that even the routines of domestic life are a swift motion that escapes us while we seek to grasp and to hold it fast. It whirls on the hearth by the draft of the fire; and it whirls in the running stream by force of water; and men carry it whirling as they walk. It whirls as vicarious religious machinery, adopted into the formalism of meritorious works; and, as with symbolism in general, other superstitions have doubtless very much obscured its primary meaning. For even so does man relieve himself from the vanity of for ever contemplating a restless whirl of vicissitude, where nothing abides but change itself.

The symbolism of dreams.

Yet what is this symbol, after all, but admonition to seek the eternal, and to trust in the law that rounds all change with preserving renewal and return? Nor can we doubt that such deeper

The Buddhist wheel.

meanings have given rest and courage to thousands of meditative watchers of the Buddhist Wheel.

The Wheel was in fact not only the accepted emblem of transmigration and its returns to birth, but also, as associated with the *Disk* (which indicates the strength of the arm that sets it rolling, perhaps also the orb of the sun), an emblem of universal dominion. It was the sacred mark seen on the hands and feet of the infant Buddha, by which the sages were able to predict his divine destiny to "roll the wheel" of unlimited sway.[1] Râma also is called "the Wheel." Thus the symbol of the transiency of all things becomes itself representative of the one only life that can overcome it; that is, of the almighty and everlasting. The very "prayer cylinder" represents the universe; and on its turning axle, bringing many sides successively to view, the types of all living creatures impartially revolve.[2] "A hundred and eight sacred figures are the guard of honor around the holy wheel." "The wheel has ignorance and desire for its axis, predisposition for its spokes, decrepitude and death for its tire."[3] To be master of their revolutions was to be a lord of life.

There was also a favorite *architectural* symbol for this worship of the duty that is rounded with a dream. That dome-like shape, — now sunk like a cushion for slumber, as on the Buddhist pillars; now swelling, as on the *stupas*, into a definite sphere; now active, now at rest; mobile in assuming either attitude, and longing, apparently, for both, — what an emblem it is of this mystical faith, so strangely combining practical

[1] See Sykes on the *Political State of Ancient India*. *Journal R. A S.*, vol. vi.
[2] Bastian, *Reisen in China*, p. 565.
[3] *Wheel of the Law*, pp. 113, 241.

energy and contemplative calm! It is the *Bubble*, purest type of the transient and unreal; yet this mere evanescence, this very emptiness, this nothing, if it but breaks, — is in fact held from breaking, fixed in enduring forms of art and use.[1] Such the lesson that comes to us from *vihâra* and *dagop*, where the hearts of millions find impulse, and their longings and sorrows, rest.

The Brahmanic symbol, on the other hand, was the *Banyan*, whose vast shadow expands and deepens with the multiplication of stems that shoot downward to refasten themselves in the earth. Hindu thought perpetually recurs to the inward shadows of that self-renewing mystery of change, which grows with the multiplication of visible forms and finite desires. Hew down these banyans of the mind, it says, and reach the eternal life they veil. The Banyan.

Banyan and Bubble! Such the symbolism of a philosophy too deeply immersed in contemplation to find the full validity of the world and life. But we have seen that the forward look is not wanting; we have traced the disintegration of old social and religious systems, and the living germs of freedom in pantheistic belief; we have noted the force of Buddhist expansion, and its faith in a future that shall bring on earth the fulness of that peace and love which is the Buddhist heaven. The earnestness of this faith is illustrated by the abolition of slavery by the present king of Siam. The contact of the practical West with the introversive East must bring mutual impulse, and help to balance the human globe, as the continents the physical. The East and the West.

[1] It is even made emblematic, in the three hemispheres that constitute the *chaityas*, or relic-temples, of the triple form of deity, Buddha, the Law, and the Church.

Bubble and Banyan mean more than dream. Is not that spheric form the emblem of a world-wide unity of life and purpose? That dim pillared forest is from a single root; and, as it grows, do not its airy branches turn back incessantly to the soil it loves, as if to hold earth and heaven united by imperishable ties? So with the faith which these natural symbols subserved. — The reaction of Brahmanism to Buddhism demonstrated that there were germs of democratic energy in the nature of contemplation itself. The Buddhist *pippala*, or *Bo-tree*, symbolizes the power of human nature to burst every bond of apathy. "Its vitality is extraordinary; its roots will crack and rend buildings, and only preserve their memory by the huge fragments which they retain for centuries clasped in their embrace." So the abstract idea fled into interior deeps only to find the need of social communion, to learn that man cannot live by meditation only, and to rend and burst its own ancient structures with the invincible energy of noble purpose. That mystical instinct of the Unity of Life, which formed the constant matrix of Hindu thought, — unconscious of its own inevitable relations, unaware that science should one day fulfil its substantial meaning in endless practical correlations and uses, — ruled life with an exclusiveness that depressed energy and threatened morality. Yet even then its very sense of a common bondage and misery in all living beings became a sympathetic impulse that reached throughout existence; an ardor of love and pity, that knew no limit, and no repose.

Practical and contemplative races.

The wide extension of Buddhism, as compared with Brahmanical aristocracy and caste, indicates that in Eastern civilization itself these oppres-

Signs of promise.

sive elements are less natural to man than the instincts of fellowship and equality. Malcom tells us of a numerous and growing sect of reformers in Burmah, whose founder, Kolan, revised the Buddhist law, about seventy years ago, and taught the "worship of wisdom." "This sect discard the use of images, and have neither priests nor sacred books. Their teachers rise from time to time, always from among the laity, and gain many followers."[1] St. Hilaire describes a powerful reaction in Ceylon, from later superstitions to the simplicity of early Buddhism; a democratic revolution arising from the effort of the state, nearly a hundred years since, to confine the right of entrance to the priesthood within a single powerful caste. One of the lower castes, the Tchaliyas, had the spirit and intelligence to rebel against this innovation, and, being well provided with means, made an effective stand for puritan principles. About the end of the last century, these reformers imported from Burmah a body of priests, devoted, like themselves, to the simplicity of primitive Buddhism; and the movement received fresh impulse. Special changes insisted on by the reformers were these: — an open door into the ministry for all classes; freedom from state interference with religion; abandonment of astrology; reading of the books of the faith freely to all. This "sect of Amarapura," so called from the Burmese city whence it received its teachers, has been very successful in its efforts to purify Buddhism from polytheism and caste, and made numerous converts in different provinces of the kingdom. Other sects make other demands, and Ceylonese Buddhism seems to be alive with religious discussion and heretical zeal.[2] Another

[1] *Notes on Burmese Empire*, ch. vi. [2] St. Hilaire, p. 407.

impressive illustration has recently appeared in Siam. Large numbers of Buddhists in that country have thrown aside negative speculation and ecclesiastical authority, and the whole miraculous element in their traditions. They have not been content with this individual emancipation, but have proceeded to found free churches on the moral teachings of Buddha, and the practical brotherhood which they require.[1] Surely these brave steps, apparently due to native impulses, — and, if furthered by contact with Christianity, yet showing no sign of conversion to that special faith, — point directly towards the free communion of Universal Religion.

[1] Weber's *Indische Studien*, II. 320; Koeppen, I. 468. The efforts of the late king in this direction, and the writings of his minister, (*The Modern Buddhist*) have already been noticed.

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