

ART. VII.—COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

1. *The Primate's Visitation Charge*. The *Times*, September 8 and 11, 1880.
2. *The Hibbert Lectures* for 1878 and 1879. Williams and Norgate.
3. *American Addresses*. By THOMAS H. HUXLEY. Macmillan.
4. *Hume*. By Professor HUXLEY. "English Men of Letters." Macmillan and Co.

THE study of Christian Evidence has formed the main subject of the Charge which has just been delivered by the Archbishop of Canterbury. His Grace desires to recommend this study to the clergy of England as a special need of the times. He would have them note that "an acquaintance with the nature of this evidence and some of its principal features is very necessary in these days, when sophistical arguments, adverse to all revelation, are perpetually forced on our attention:—

It is well that from time to time, with a view to be ready to defend ourselves and those whom we can influence, as well as to give us confidence against arrogant and unscrupulous attacks, we should, as it were, take stock of the contents of our well-stored armoury. And this also I would have you note that the reverent and wisely-directed study of such evidence has an elevating and purifying effect. It has two departments, one philosophical, the other historical. I think the man who approaches such subjects in a right spirit will find that the philosophical part of the evidence leads him to dwell with humility and adoring awe on what he knows of God's nature and of his own. And this reverent contemplation of the nature of God and of man must elevate and purify the mind; while the second part of the evidence—the strictly historical—gives us more vivid conceptions of the reality of the recorded facts by which revelation is avouched, introduces us into greater familiarity with the persons and characters whose teaching we study, and, above all, enables us more thoroughly to appreciate that Divine historical picture of God manifest in the flesh—Christ living and dying for His people—around which all sound evidence for revelation revolves. I am one not of those who distrust the study of the evidences for revelation as if they suggested more doubts than they solve. Entered on with suitable preparation and reverently conducted, such study tends, I doubt not, to raise the whole character by bringing the intelligence as well as the devotional feelings, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, more directly into communication with the true God manifested in Jesus Christ."

It would be difficult to find words more wisely chosen and conceived in a better spirit than these. May they have larger influence in leading disputants on both sides to enter on the discussion of the greatest of all questions with a full sense of the

vast issues at stake ; with increased willingness to learn from one another whatever they may have to teach, and to make allowance for personal or professional bias. There could be no better examples of the way in which such inquiries ought to be conducted—no better illustrations of the principles so wisely laid down—than those parts of the Primate's Charge in which he deals with the subject of the alleged sufficiency of natural religion.

The following are his Grace's words:—"The first thing to ascertain is, what are the points on which we agree. Most earnest-minded men are in truth very much better than a cold logical statement of their abstract beliefs would represent them." It will be found, however, that in many instances these men have not taken the trouble to read the arguments which they undertake to answer, nor to look at the question from a Christian point of view. They are thus unable to judge of the Christian records with such knowledge and impartiality as any form of belief may fairly claim from its critics.

The books of the Old and New Testament are the only books in criticizing which men think that they are justified in disregarding any accepted canon of historical interpretation, and in regard to which it is not thought necessary to learn the purpose of the author, the modes of expression prevalent at the time, or the moral standard of the age. Every one is not equally competent to judge of all these things, and it is not too much to expect that those eminent men, whose large and frequently well-deserved influence is thrown into the scale against the Christian religion, would at least pay to the belief of their countrymen the compliment of examining what is said in its behalf, and showing that they comprehend and can appreciate the reasons why it commends itself to men who are not inferior to themselves in any intellectual or moral gifts. One cannot read Mill's essay on "Nature" without feeling that so obvious a misrepresentation of the Christian belief could never have been written by any one who had seen Bishop Butler's famous sermons on the same subject.

Some knowledge of both sides is necessary to every one who ventures to pronounce judgment in any controversy. Else, how can we know whether we have decided rightly? The principles which we have adopted on sufficient evidence, and of the truth of which we have no doubt whatever, may not after all be at variance with truths of a different kind, which seem to us at first sight irreconcilable with them. Many objections are brought against Christianity which it is not necessary to answer at all. It is sufficient to show that the statement on which the objection is based may be admitted without weakening in the least degree the cause against which it has been directed. Men have hastily and illogically supposed that their acceptance of some deduction of science compels them to reject revelation.

One of the foremost and most successful explorers in the field of science, whose expositions of his favourite subject are always listened to with admiration and appreciative sympathy on both sides of the Atlantic, has lately alluded to the Christian belief in a Creator of the world in the following words:—"Cautious men will admit that such a change in the order of Nature may have been possible, just as every candid thinker will admit that there may be a world in which two and two do not make four, and in which two straight lines do enclose a space."¹

The candour of this avowal is more conspicuous than its caution. The highest of all kinds of evidence is mathematical demonstration. None but those with whom no sensible man could argue, would deny it, or ask it to be repeated. We cannot imagine any world, or any period of time, in which two and two do not make four, or in which two straight lines do enclose a space. To compare with such an impossible supposition a belief which the great majority of Englishmen shared with Newton, Brewster, and Faraday, is a strange introduction to the discussion of an important scientific question. "*Suspended judgment*" is the verdict of other distinguished men of science in their argument against the popular creed of Christendom. Agnosticism is the furthest limit of the antagonism of others. But Professor Huxley has gone as far beyond Agnosticism on the one side as Agnosticism has gone beyond fanatical superstition on the other. He assumes not only that the theory of Evolution is capable of demonstration, but also that his theory is irreconcilable with belief in a Creator and Governor of the world. But Mr. Darwin, who ought to know something of Evolution, has adopted as [his own the definition of Bishop Butler—that the only right meaning of the word "natural" is *stated, fixed, settled*; and that what is natural as much requires and "pre-supposes an intelligent mind to render it so, that is, to effect it continually or at stated times, as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once." We must distinguish, therefore, between the Evolutionism of Mr. Darwin and the ultra-Evolutionism of some of his followers. It can scarcely be maintained that a belief which Mr. Darwin has declared not to be incompatible with the Evolution which he taught, is to be compared with a denial of the rules of arithmetic and the axioms of Euclid.

It is to be hoped that no exponent of Christian evidence will speak so disparagingly of "scientific" opinions from which he dissents, or will ever proclaim an irreconcilable and interminable

¹ "Lectures on Evolution, delivered in New York," by Professor Huxley. Macmillan. (P. 3.)

hostility between scientific discovery and religious belief. The interests of truth will not be promoted by the assumption of a scientific or of an ecclesiastical infallibility. In another of Professor Huxley's writings¹ he applies the ultra-Evolutionist theory to the origin of religion. In the history of religion there is a body of natural facts to be investigated scientifically. Hume saw this requirement, and tried to meet it in an essay called "The Natural History of Religion." Hume possessed no special knowledge of this subject. In his day there were no materials for writing such a history. He knew nothing of the religious books, the religious beliefs, and the religious observances of the non-Christian races of the world. He argues from what he thinks savage races would have done. He tries to place himself in the position of a savage—an attempt as satisfactory as if he had shut his eyes or gone into a dark chamber, and then proceeded to write a treatise on the sensations of the blind and their notions of distance. Commenting on Hume's conclusions, Professor Huxley says:—"He anticipated the results of modern investigation in declaring Fetishism and Polytheism to be the form in which savage and ignorant men naturally clothe their ideas of the unknown influences which govern their destiny."

Now, modern investigation has dealt with this subject, and the results have been given to the world in the two first volumes of the Hibbert Lectures, by Professor Max Müller and M. Renouf, the former treating of the origin and growth of religion in India and in some other parts of the world, the latter in Egypt.

The conjectures of Hume, which subsequent scholars have accepted, and which have been expanded into the four stages through which it was supposed that all the religions must necessarily pass—Fetishism, Polytheism, Monotheism, and Positivism—have been tested by actual examination of the religions of the most ancient nations of the world—the religions of India and of Egypt. If the universe and everything which it contains are to be developed from protoplasm, through an ascending series of animals up to man, religion also (which for good or for evil has held so large a space in the history of mankind from the earliest times) must be traced by slowly descending stages from the higher religions of civilized men down to the ruder forms which this theory believes it to have assumed at the first dawn of the rational life of mankind. Thus, as Monotheism (destined, as we are told, to pass into Positivism) is the highest form of the religion of the civilized races, so Fetishism and Polytheism must have been the forms in which the religious instinct of the earliest races clothed themselves at the beginning. Such is the theory and such the purpose for which it

¹ Essay on Hume.

was contrived. But neither in the pages of Hume nor of his accomplished commentator has it any foundation of fact on which to rest. In no sense can it be called a chapter of history, natural or political or religious. The sacred books of India have been translated and compared, the hieroglyphics of Egypt have been deciphered, the records of Buddhism and Confucianism have appeared in English dress, and the greatest of Oriental scholars have devoted their lives to the task of illustrating and explaining the newly-discovered treasures. In the department of religious history we have the opportunity of bringing the ultra-Evolutionist theory to the test of actual fact. We shall see whether it ought to be compared with axioms of geometry.

The Hibbert trustees have resolved to invite eminent men, "united in a common desire for a really capable and honest treatment of unsettled problems in theology, to work together, in the belief that the disinterested pursuit of truth would be no less fruitful in religious than in social and physical ideas." This proposal seems to be tolerant and impartial, and in the case of the first two lectures, at least, it will be found to have contributed valuable results. At the same time it was evidently conceived in a spirit unfriendly to revelation. It is unfair to those who believe in the inspiration of the Bible, since it assumes that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have had no higher origin than the Vedas or the Koran. However, we do not object to compare our religion with the other religions of the world. If the comparison be fairly carried out, it can only result in showing the incomparable excellence of that which is divine. No work of God can suffer from being compared with the works of man, least of all if we compare the glorious Gospel of the grace of God with the devices of man's imagination.

But the excellences of the Gospel are peculiar to the Gospel; they are characteristic of the Gospel; they had no counterpart anywhere else. This scheme is like comparing man with one of the lower animals or with lifeless matter. We are obliged to go down to the lowest residuum, to throw aside all that is noblest, truest, and best in human nature, before we can institute the comparison at all. So all the highest civilized races have much in common with the lowest savage; but it is only in that part of their humanity which both share with the brutes, or which comes nearest to the brutes. You must lop off everything distinctive before you begin your task.

But this method of comparison by degradation is unfair to Christianity for other reasons besides. It forbids us to appeal to the history of religion in the world, and to the influence of the Christian religion in promoting the welfare and happiness

of mankind. The Christian Scriptures are distinguished in various respects from the sacred writings of other creeds, but in no respect more than in their object and their method. From the earliest period of Old Testament history down to the last chapter of the New Testament, their mutual relation is intimate and indissoluble. The writers of the Bible proposed to themselves the most difficult of all problems—to write beforehand the religious history of the world, and to write it in such a way that the most ineffaceable of all conceivable distinctions—namely, the distinction between the past and the future—should be forgotten, forgotten so completely that the future should be present to the writers of the earliest books, while the latest books should be regarded as the fulfilment and completion of all that had gone before. The book of Revelation brings us back to Genesis, and takes its illustrations and types from the primitive record. The curse is taken away, and all the tears which it had caused to flow. The Lamb is the light of the new city, the light of the ceremonial law, the light to reveal the purposes of God in His dealing with the chosen people, the light to illumine the dark places of prophecy, the light which shone clearest in the darkest hour of human misery, increased in brilliancy and power as time went on, lit up the highest peaks, gilded the far horizon, and at length suffused the clouds from one end of heaven to the other, from the home of the sages of the East to the seven-hilled city in the West, when the Desire of all nations came in the glory of the Divine Manhood.

The history contained in the Old and New Testament, as well as the history of Christendom since the canon of Scripture was completed, have no parallel, can have no parallel, elsewhere.

The Bible is also distinctively historical. This element is totally wanting in the sacred books of India. "Need we wonder," asks M. Max Müller, "that the whole nation—I mean the old Hindus—simply despised history in the ordinary sense of the word?" The Hindu Scriptures *despised* history. Our Scriptures give the earliest examples of history; their history, moreover, was not the history of a family, of a clan, or of a single nation, but it set forth the grandest ideal of all history, and carried out this ideal through a long line of independent and unconnected historians, through a period of hundreds of years. A well-known historian writes: "History was born on the day when the children of Israel went out of Egypt." This event itself was not isolated in the inspired record, but is regarded as the fulfilment of an earlier promise made to the father of the Jewish race, and the people are commanded to hand down the memory of it to all generations of their descendants: "This day shall be the beginning of the year to you."

In this, the earliest of all histories, we find in wonderful harmony the three leading ideas of all history—unity, harmony, and progress. These ideas were present to all the writers of the Bible. They are applied on the largest scale through cycles of centuries and to the whole race of men. The writers of the Old Testament, who followed the great father of Jewish history, have added page after page to the first record, writing under different circumstances, for different purposes, in different characters and at different times, yet harmonizing their various utterances into one great drama of the ages; and in these successive utterances of the one spirit we find an ever-growing progress and fuller enlightenment, until the fulfilment of all. Surely the initiation and progress, the unity and harmony of all history, sacred and profane, which may be said to form *the central idea* of the Bible, which challenges inquirers of every age, which touches so many departments of human inquiry, and is the common centre of so many converging circles, is a point of view which is not to be forgotten, because it finds no counterpart in any books, or in all the other books with which the Bible can be compared.

But while we thus point to the defects of this whole method of inquiry, we shall find that the investigation has brought us some most valuable results.

M. Max Müller's lectures on the religions of India bring prominently forward the extent and the power of the religious sentiment of mankind. He quotes Herder's testimony: "Our earth owes the seeds of all higher culture to religious tradition, whether literary or oral." He also sums up the result of his own investigations with these words: "Whether we descend to the lowest roots of our own intellectual growth, or ascend to the loftiest heights of modern speculation, everywhere we find religion as a power that conquers, and conquers even those who think that they have conquered it" (p. 5).

We are reminded of the various and conflicting meanings which have been given to the word "religion." No word has ever been used in so many senses, and stood for so many, and so opposite, ideas. It may mean "religious dogma," "religious faith," and "religious acts." Kant teaches that religion is morality: "Religion looks on all moral duties as divine commands." Fichte, Kant's immediate successor, takes the opposite view; religion he supposes to mean "knowledge." It gives a man a clear insight into himself, and answers the highest questions; but it is not practical, and was never intended to influence life. For this morality is sufficient. Schleiermacher defines religion as "a consciousness of dependence." Hegel, on the other hand, teaches that religion is "freedom." Comte and Feuerbach make man himself both the subject and the object of religious worship.

The most valuable portion of M. Max Müller's essay is his

clear and complete refutation of the popular notion that the earliest forms of all religion have been *Fetishism and Polytheism*. Professor Huxley, as we have seen, lays it down as a truth no more to be questioned than the axioms of geometry, that the origin and growth of all things is to be found in Evolution. Elsewhere he announces it as an axiom, not to be proved, but to be taken for granted, that the history of religion itself is to be traced back to *Fetishism*. He does not profess to have investigated this subject for himself, nor that Hume had investigated it when he wrote what is called a "Natural History of Religion," but inasmuch as it seemed to follow from the application of the ultra-Evolutionist theory to religion, it needed no other proof. But, after all, it is difficult to write a *history of religion*, whether natural or supernatural, without some acquaintance with the facts. For the facts we refer our friends to the first volumes of the Hibbert Lectures, by M. Max Müller. No higher authority in this special department of knowledge is to be found in Europe. No man has so large an acquaintance with all the various forms of primitive religion. He lays before us his facts, his witnesses, and his conclusions. His principles, indeed, are not the principles of this Review; for, he writes, "the only revelation which we claim is history, or, as it is now called, 'historical Evolution.'" But this is very different from the *ultra-Evolutionism* which asks us to accept a history of religion, not because it can be proved by any appeal to facts, but because it is consistent with a theory whose principles are compared with the axioms of Euclid. The following is the judgment of M. Max Müller on the attempt to evolve all forms of religion from *Fetishism* :—

My position, then, is simply this. It seems to me that those who believe in a primordial *Fetishism* have taken that for granted which has to be proved. They have taken for granted that every human being was miraculously endowed with the concept of what forms the predicate of every fetish, call it power, spirit, or God. They have taken for granted that casual objects, such as stones, shells, the tail of a lion, a tangle of hair, or any such rubbish, possess in themselves a theogonic or God-producing character; while the fact that all people, when they have risen to the suspicion of something supersensuous, infinite, or divine, have perceived its presence afterwards in merely casual and insignificant objects, has been entirely overlooked. They have taken for granted that there exists at present, or that there existed at any time, a religion entirely made up of *Fetishism*, or that, on the other hand, there is any religion which has kept itself entirely free from *Fetishism*. My last and most serious objection, however, is, that those who believe in *Fetishism* as a primitive and universal form of religion, have often depended on evidence which no scholar nor historian would feel justified to accept.

Elsewhere (p. 96) he ascribes the philosophical theory which

would develop all religions from African *Fetichism* to ignorance and superstition. "This very theory has become a kind of scientific fetish, which it will be difficult to eradicate from the textbooks of history." To disbelieve such *scientific fetishes* is scarcely so unreasonable as to doubt the rules of arithmetic. The learned lecturer has also shown that the second step in the romance of ultra-Evolution has no foundation in actual history. *Polytheism* was not developed from *Fetichism*. The earliest form of Vedic religion he calls *Henotheism*. This he defines to be "a worship of single gods, which must be carefully distinguished both from Monotheism, or the worship of one God, involving a distinct denial of all other gods; and from Polytheism, the worship of many deities, which together form one divine polity under the control of one supreme God" (p. 289).

That which M. Max Müller has done for India M. Renouf has done for Egypt. His researches have led him to the same conclusion. The religion of Egypt was originally a pure Theism. The symbols of a religion are very often mistaken by strangers for its essential parts. This was the error of Herodotus. Hence it came to be believed that a low kind of *Fetichism* was the religion of Egypt. This was a corruption, not the primitive faith. M. Renouf shows also (in opposition to well-known writers on the supposed development of religion) that the worship of deceased ancestors was no part of the earliest religion of Egypt. His judgment is (p. 179), that in no case can it be proved that the propitiation of departed ancestors preceded the belief in a divinity of some other kind.

Such may be called the *negative* results of the two first volumes of this series of lectures. They have put to the test of actual observation the theories of *ultra-Evolutionism*. They have shown that the conjectured progress of the natural history of religion has taken for granted what should have been proved. The first religions have not begun with *Fetichism*, and passed on through the following stage of Polytheism. For this judgment we are thankful.

The *positive* results we may also accept without apprehension. They have shown that the notions of law and of sin have formed an essential part of the early religions of the world:—

This feeling has found expression in various ways among the early philosophers of Greece and Rome. What did Herakleitos mean when he said: "The sun or Helios will not overstep the bounds" (*τὰ μέτρα*), *i.e.*, the path measured out for him; and what if he said the Erinnyes (the helpers of right) would find him out, if he did? Nothing can show more clearly that he recognized a *law* pervading all the works of Nature, a *law* which even Helios, be he the sun or a solar deity, must obey. Cicero said that men were intended not only to con-

template the order of the heavenly bodies, but also to imitate it in the order and constancy of their lives; exactly what we shall see the poets of the Veda tried to express in their own simple language (p. 236).

In these volumes we see manifold proofs of the goodness of God in revealing so much of Himself to mankind by the works of creation, by the law of conscience, by the instinct of reverence, by the craving for authority, by the feeling of dependence. We see how deep and how universal has been the foundation of religion. The argument from general consent has been strengthened by these books; has been shown to exclude many unworthy conceptions which were once believed to be universal, and to include many other religious ideas besides the existence of God. We have the best and latest commentary on the well-known line from the Odyssey:—

πάντες δὲ θεῶν χατέους' ἄνθρωποι.

As M. Max Müller translates the words, "All men gape for gods as young birds gape for their food from the parent bird." We owe them much. The dreams of theorists who have spun natural histories of religion out of the cobwebs of their own brains have been rudely brushed away, and shown to be at variance with the customs and beliefs of the primitive races of civilized as well as of savage men. This is no slight gain, when we remember the great names which have been paraded in support of the famous theory of the four stages in the history of religion. These theorists have been playing the foolish game of shutting their eyes in order to describe the sensations of the blind. Their sensations appeared very "natural" to themselves and to their hearers, *because they had not been born blind*. Not being able to discover in the record of the rocks or in the tales of travellers the missing link between man and the brute creation, they imagined the lowest kind of religion, and ascribed it to the savage races, and called it by the name which the Portuguese sailors gave to the worship of the negroes. The plausible theory has collapsed when confronted with the facts. So far from religion having passed through a series of changes for the better, the earliest stages have been the purest, and the history of religion has been almost universally a history of degradation, demoralization, and corruption. The religion of the Portuguese sailors was no less disfigured by *fetishes* than that of the negroes whom they pitied.

But when we come from the so-called natural, but really unnatural, because unhistorical, history of religions, what do we find? We find only one religion in the world which possesses the recuperative power of throwing off the degradations of Fetishism, Polytheism, and immorality, and recovering its primitive purity and grandeur without losing the spiritual

power and moral dignity of its earliest days. Other religions have possessed sacred books far more numerous than ours, which have been preserved and transmitted with equal fidelity; but the Christian religion alone possesses in its sacred books historical truth, moral perfection, irresistible authority, immaculate example, and undecaying recuperative power. In mediæval times the Christian religion had, through a large portion of Christendom, degenerated into a worship of *fetishes*, and in this way Strauss argued that, because there is less of "*crossing*" and of attending mass in our days, there is also less of religion. And certainly, if our religion had run the same downward course as all the other religions of the world, it also would never have recovered from the condition of degrading externalism. But it possesses an inner life which all the superincumbent mass of superstition could never completely stifle. So that here also, as well as in its satisfying the highest needs of man's moral nature, and in its distinctively historical character, our difficulty in comparing Christianity with other faiths arises from its unapproachable superiority and from the uniqueness of its claims. We thankfully accept the testimony which these treatises have furnished to the strength and universality of the sentiment to which religion appeals, as well as to the comparative purity of the earlier religions of India and of Egypt. In these facts we see nothing to oppose, but much to confirm many well-known passages of Scripture.

We ask our scientific *ultra-Evolution* friends to follow with us the course of that religion whose first beginning and earliest history is to be found in the Old and New Testaments. We ask them to trace with us the progress of revealed truth in the world, the preparation in earlier times, the dawning light of prophecy, until the full disclosure of Revelation, when Life and Immortality were brought to light in the Gospel of Christ. We remind them that the teaching of Christ contains not only the germ from which every distinctive tenet and practice of Christianity has emerged, but also the divinely appointed tests whereby His religion is for ever to be distinguished from the debasing tendencies of corrupt human nature. Though he gave to His disciples few formulæ, His principles have been shown to be capable of assuming an almost endless variety of adaptations, so as to satisfy everywhere and at all times the various cravings of the soul, "those gapings of the young bird for the food necessary to support its tiny life." Think, for instance, of the various and apparently conflicting definitions which have been given to the word *religion*—"the feeling of absolute dependence," "liberty," "the apprehension of the infinite." How comes it that the same thing has presented itself to various minds under aspects so different, and that each part

has commended itself to some thinkers as if it were the whole? Obviously because the thought is too large, too many-sided, to be grasped by any definition, or to satisfy any of our conceptions. Religion is the reflection of the Almighty on the mirror of man's mind and heart and conscience. We look on it in various lights, and every successive ray seems so beautiful that we fancy it to be the best, to be the whole. Every other religion, as it came nearer to the true light, borrowed a part of this light. Separated from the central sun, they began to fade away, or they served rather to mislead than to direct. Each of them presented some features in common with *the truth*, or revealed some want which *the truth* supplied. They were fragments of the broken mirror reflecting, or perhaps refracting, at various angles some of the blended glories of the Gospel. The more we contemplate the immeasurable differences which separate our religion from all that have gone before it, the better we shall see what is the essence of Christianity, its unchangeable, imperishable, and incommunicable greatness.

The treatises which we have been considering may be said rather to clear the ground on which to build the structure of religion, than to show the plan of the structure or the wisdom of the Architect. This is the province of revelation, and with actual revelation they profess to have no concern. But men need to be reminded that Christianity is something more, something higher than a department of science. It has not been evolved out of pre-existing elements. It is the revelation of a series of facts, in no wise contrary to Nature, but above Nature, situated on a higher plane, moving in a different orbit, providing for the sickness of the soul (which was one of the earliest notions of religion itself), and based on the testimony of witnesses to the life, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of its Divine Founder. The highest glory of Christianity is its *truth*. Christianity is the only religion which addresses the *mind* of man, giving the highest of all objects for the contemplation of his reason, as well as the Person most worthy of his affections, and the almighty strength of the Holy Spirit to help his feeble will. In the comprehensiveness of its appeal to every part of man's complex nature Christianity stands alone. Nor can we consent, in the interest of humanity, no less than in the interest of religion, to ask the mind of man to give up the highest and greatest of all subjects of contemplation, whether the demand be made in the name of an infallible science or of an infallible religion. We cannot listen to those who would say—"We claim the exclusive right to all the *mind* of man. There is no corner of the wide domain of truth over which the writ of science does not run. Be satisfied with this compromise. We shall give up to religion control over the *emotions*, provided

you encroach not on *our* province, which is the investigation of *truth*. *Emotion* belongs to religion. *Morality* is self-interest in a form more or less refined. *Affection* has nothing to do with religion, for affection fixes itself on a person, and we do not believe in a personal God."

To these terms the Christian cannot consent. A religion which never has spoken, and never will speak to man, which never has acted and never will act in the affairs of men, is so little different from the religion of Epicurus that we cannot accept it, though it may praise the Sermon on the Mount and acknowledge the nobility of the character of the great Eponym of Christianity.

But the history of Christianity has taught us another lesson which we shall do well to remember when we compare it with the other religions of the world. Ours is not the only religion which has exercised vast influence on the development of the human mind and on the character of its adherents. We have a right to compare it with other faiths in its tendencies as well as in its results. Nineteen hundred years is a fair trial. We shall be better able to understand the claims of Christianity as a divine revelation if we contrast its fitness for all forms and conditions of life with the immobility, the stagnation, and decay of all other faiths. The Vedic and Egyptian and Buddhist religions began with noble ideas and a comparatively pure morality, but as they flowed down through the centuries, they have carried with them the impurities of the soil through which they passed, and are now fallen into the dry and barren sands. There was also a time when Christianity seemed to have lost its early force and its noble character. But she alone has always held within herself a recuperative energy, the power of self-recovery and self-purification. Her course has been guided by an unseen hand and watched by the All-seeing eye.

When the river which flows from beneath the throne of God emerged from the overhanging rocks and gloomy passages whose shadows darkened and concealed it for so many centuries, its early freshness and power returned, and it became again the chief civilizing, ennobling, purifying element in all the thoughts and works of men. "Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting the image of heaven."

WILLIAM ANDERSON.

