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## **Essential and Comparative Theology**

### **Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity**



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## INTRODUCTION

THEOLOGY is the study and description of God. It may also be the expression of religious belief. The word *theology* comes from the Greek word *theos* (god) and *logos* (talk).

Theology explores a wide range of questions, such as: “Does God exist? What is the nature of God? What is God’s relation to the world? And how do human beings know or experience God?”

Some branches of Theology deal with the history of religion or the study of sacred writings. Other branches deal with the defense of religious doctrines against opposing views or the application of doctrine to daily life.

Approaches to theology vary from one religion to another. They also vary within on a religious tradition. Some Christian theologians base their understanding of God on the Bible or Church Councils. Others explain Their understanding of God in terms of philosophy, psychology, or science. In most cases, a theologian’s own religious experience plays an important part in his or her theological system.

# Essential Theology

## Chapter One--The God Idea

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WE have selected the foregoing types of religious ideas, not because they are exhaustive, or because they better illustrate our purpose than other forms of religious development, but because they answer the end, in view, as well as any other, and also, because these especially have been attended, of late, with not a little general interest and discussion.

The following facts, in view of the ground canvassed, will, we think, be readily conceded - first, that Brahminism and Buddhism, Greek and Roman mythology, the Israelitish and Ishmaelitish faiths, also the Aboriginal religions of America, together with the beliefs of other religions, indirectly alluded to, present, as their fundamental notion, an invisible and unapproachable deity; second, that they give evidence of a constant search after the Unseen, and that, often baffled, they introduce various existing or imaginary objects, as mediators; third, that a divine man is the grand ideal, towards which, the inquirers most fondly turn; and fourth, that connected with this ideal man, or otherwise, is the principle of sacrificial atonement.

With these facts before us, we pause in the delineation of the world's religions, and gathering data, here and there, group them around the points already established.

"Two things are necessary," says Theodore Parker, "to render religion possible; namely, a religious faculty in man, and God, out of man, as an object of that religious faculty."

"That the divine is recognized by man," says Lewis, "is proof that the divine exists."

"The casual instincts of the intellect," says James Martineau, "the solemn suspicion of

the conscience, the ideal passions of the imagination, the dependent self-renunciation of the affections, are all, we believe, so many lines of attraction to the same Infinite Object.”

“Through the Absolute,” says Herbert Spencer, cannot, in any manner or degree, be known, in the strict sense of knowing, yet, we find that its positive existence is a necessary datum of consciousness; that so long as consciousness continues, we cannot, for an instant, rid it of this datum; and that, thus the belief which this datum; constitutes, has a higher warrant than any other whatever.”

Not unlike the foregoing in Spinoza’s “finite thinking,” suggesting an “infinite thinking,” Fichte’s “particular ego,” suggesting a “universal ego,” and Emerson’s “myself,” suggesting “another self.”

That which follows, from these undeniable postulates, is certainly true -- that the moment we predicate a religious nature or consciousness of man, that moment God is recognized as an established fact.

Jacobi correctly taught, that belief in God, is a primal instinct of the soul. “Not to know God, and be a brute,” he forcibly remarks, “are one and the same thing.”

Cicero and Philo, likewise, make the test of manhood to rest upon this recognition of the Infinite One.

No man can be really an atheist, though many are antitheists. “That God is,” exclaimed Cato, “all nature cries aloud.” We are aware, however, that the claim has been recently started, though not by any weighty authorities, that the Lepchas of Northern India, the natives of Australia, some of the tribes of Central Africa, the Caffres, the South American Indians, and some few others, have no religion, and no idea of a Creator, or a God.

But, these special pleaders, are often, their own betrayers. A little further investigation will introduce the chief, of some of these tribes, as the representative God of the people, while in other cases, the deity is the medicine-man.

And more than this, in these very instances, we see merely, a corruption of a purer faith, a lapsing from an earlier theism into what we may term, a degrading mediatorialism. Of a similar character was the deification of the Roman Emperors, the Sultans of Turkey, and the Pharaohs of Egypt. In other instances, we have not sufficient data to enable us to pass anything like a final judgment, in opposition to so much rebutting evidence. The weight of testimony is all in the opposite direction. Ancient philosophy, in its various forms, and especially in its purer and higher flights, sought ever to throw itself into the arms of the unknown God.

Modern philosophy and science, appear in many features, atheistic, but really are not. The God-idea is so overwhelming that it pervades the positivist school, including all its phases, from Comte to Renan. As soon as the mind of man, cultivated or not, rejects the popular idea of God, whatever that may be, it proceeds, at once, to manufacture another. The "Grand Etre" of Comte, the "Unknowable" of Spencer, are but Names that mean God. Where Darwin and Huxley, professed atheists - they are far from it - still the suggestions involved in "Development" and "Life Stuff," are inevitable. Voltaire would have no Jehovah, but he worshipped the god, Truth. Singular, as it may appear, it was the same Voltaire who said, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent one."

France dethroned the Almighty, but rid herself of a deity she could not, and Reason was deified. Night, was one of the rationalistic or speculative gods of Egypt, and "Nichts," was a god of Hegel.

"The materialists," as some French writer says, "sees God, as reflected in elemental nature, the pantheist, as reflected in the organic and animate creation, the theist, as reflected in man." But, see Him all must, in some way or other, or, at least, indisputable evidence of Him.

We appeal to a more general class of facts. Dr. Livingstone says, that all the newly-discovered tribes in the interior of Africa “have clear ideas of the Supreme God.” “There is,” he says, “no necessity for telling the most degraded of these people of the existence of God, or of a future state, for these facts are universally admitted.”

The Bakwaens scouted the idea of ever having been without clear conceptions on these subjects. The people of Tarouba speak of a deity, who is the “Owner of Heaven.” Roman Catholic Jesuits, from the earliest dates, have found deeply-rooted religious ideas in their first visits to the darkest corners of the earth, and the most desolate islands of the sea. The early belief of the Scandinavians, the Germans, and the Gallic tribes rest upon the basis of a Supreme Being, the One and Invisible, as firmly as those of later civilizations. Nor, has the God-idea always been vague and indefinite. The Fatherhood of the deity, constantly and almost everywhere, appears as a leading idea in Paganism. In the Rig Veda, we find this petition: “May the Father of Men be favorable to us!” Hesiod addresses Jupiter as “Father of Gods and Men.” Minucius Felix well observes, that “even they who make Jove Supreme, mistake indeed in the Name, but agree in the thing, the *one* notion of an Almighty God.”

Thus, Homer addresses Zeus, as the “most great and glorious Father.” “What would life be to me,” exclaims Marcus Aurelius, “in a world without a God and Providence?” Horace speaks of a “Father and Guardian of the human race.” “he, the glorious Parent,” says Seneca, “tries the good man and prepares him for himself.” “They (men) are the children,” says the Talmud, “of their Father who is in Heaven.”

Not only the idea of Fatherhood, but God’s willingness to reveal His will through Priests and Chosen Ones, has been well-neigh, universally believed. The Egyptians taught that the sacred books of Hermes were God-given. Thus, also, the Babylonians and Assyrians regarded the Eight Books, the Egyptians the Forty-two, and the Persians held in equal veneration the Zendavesta. Confucius and the Chinese appealed to the Five Kings, Buddhists to the Tripitaka, and the Scandinavians to the Voluspa, as the

voice of God.

That God, is such as to hear prayer, has been so generally believed that, it may be classed among the universal religious ideas. The view finds unquestioned confirmation in Chinese, Brahmin, Buddhist, and Grecian literature and theology. The noble prayer of Shun, the supplications in Rig Veda, and the devotions of Buddhists, are coming to be familiar to all. Pericles and Demosthenes, often commenced and concluded their speeches, with prayer. Homer was ever weaving prayers into his epics. He significantly called them Jove's daughters, feeble and deformed, lame and slant-eyed themselves, but, as mediators between Heaven and earth, he believed they constituted irresistible agencies. Socrates was wont to rebuke those men of his time, who never looked to God for assistance, but who relied, instead, upon human weakness. "He who prayeth to God," said Plato, "and trusteth in his good favor, shall do well."

That the Great Spirit of the early American tribes was regarded as a Prayer-hearer, is not questioned. Beautifully and forcibly did this find illustration, while Mayhew was preaching, for the first time, to the Nantucket Indians. "This God of whom you tell us," exclaimed an Indian mother, with full heart and tearful eye, "is the God I called upon to save my child."

But, we need not longer dwell upon specific cases, since illustrations of our position are so universal.

It would thus seem upon review, that every human soul is more or less "afire with God." Men have not been able to escape "the broodings of the Over-soul." The "One," "Almighty," "Incomprehensible," "Hidden God," "Ammon," of one portion of Egypt, of another portion Cneph, the "God unbegotten," Ormisda, the Supreme deity of the ancient Parsees, Baal of Chaldea, Remphan of Canaan, Homerca of the Babylonians, Syrians, and Phoenicians, the "One God" of the early Chinese Monarchs, who have given as clear recognition of the authority and personality of God, as can be found outside the Hebrew Scriptures, the "Invisible" represented by Odin among the

Northmen, the “Great Spirit” of the North American Indians, the “Sun God” of the ancient Peruvians, the “Greater than many is the One” of the Druids, the “Source of Light” among the Persians, the “Invisible Time,” the “Existence without Bounds,” the “Eternal Night,” the “Brahm of India,” the “All” of Platonism, the “Allah” of the Mussulmans, and the “Jehovah” of the Jews, in fact, the deities of every form of polytheism, pan-theism, or theism, show that God has stamped His indelible signature upon all human hearts, which no elevation or degradation can, by any possibility efface; that more or less perfect, have been human conceptions respecting Him; and that mankind will never rest from their labors and search, until God manifests Himself, in some such form, as can by them, be apprehended.

## Chapter Two--The Mediator

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“EVERY nation,” says Mackay, “that has advanced beyond the most elementary conceptions, has felt the necessity of an attempt to fill the chasm, real or imaginary, separating man from God,” Hence, the mediator-idea, is scarcely less general, than the God-idea.

Without this principle of mediation, all things are felt to be enveloped in inexplicable mystery and difficulty. How can the Supreme Being reveal Himself and Create a Universe, are questions that have given rise to riddles innumerable, and strangely bewildering. Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Cousin, and all modern “mediatorial” schemers, have diligently sought solutions.

Platonism, Gnosticism, Hindooism, modern German, and American Pantheism, are but repeated efforts, to give *form* to the formless. All image-worship, was likewise, well begun. Were there nothing better, all men, from necessity, would today, become image-worshippers.

On a very ancient Egyptian Temple, at Sais, we find the following significant and impressive inscription: “I am whatever Is, Was, and Will Be. No mortal has ever raised the veil that conceals Me.” Yet, the Egyptians have been far from satisfied with such confession of religious faith. They have, from almost the earliest historic times, felt that something sacred lay beneath every visible object; every object was a divine manifestation, and therefore, sacred. It was not inconsistent with their belief, reverently, to worship the bull, cat, and alligator. It certainly is not inconsistent that these objects awaken the worshipful attitude of the soul.

“A black cat, stealing by us in twilight,” says Hegel, “brings over our minds, an impression as of something preternatural. “Let us pray,” seems to be inscribed upon every  
existence.

Search for mediations and mediators, often dissatisfied and disappointed, as already stated, best explains the lapse of so many nations from monotheism into polytheism, and we may add pantheism, also. All fire-worship, whether in the Old or New World, rests substantially, upon the same basis, and signifies the same thought. Men looked about in nature for the purest, brightest, and most incorruptible thing to symbolize deity; they found it, or thought they did, in fire, and adored it.

The Bogles and Kelpies of Scotland, the Trolls of Denmark, the Nixes of early Germany, the charms of Fetich worship, the *Life* of the Egyptians, the *Light* of the Persians, the *Beauty* of the Greeks, the ancestor worship of China and New Zealand, the intercessor worship of the Roman Catholic, the worship of the graves of saints among the Mohammedans, the adoration paid to the Rain-makers of Central Africa, and to the Medicine-man among the North American Indians, are efforts, more or less perfect and significant, to satisfy the longing hearts of mankind, and find something to span the mysterious and perplexing gulf that is felt to intervene, dividing the finite from the infinite. This is the principle, also which lies beneath all materialism, be it that of Chu-Hi of China, Haeckel of Germany, or Huxley of England. It is that, which gives life and interest to every form of ancient or modern naturalism. Nay, more; there has been no system of philosophy, among men, which does not expect a bridegroom and a bridal ceremony.

The ultimate aim, in every case, is to find the something that forms the union between the divine and human, thought and matter. The difference is, that some of the systems are furnished with lamps only; others, in addition, have wicks and oil. This mediator-idea, is the basis of "man's old eternal want," always old and always new. It explains why the philosophers flocked after Paul, in Athens, and all classes after John the Baptist, in the wilderness of Judea. Western polytheism sought to exalt men into gods, and Eastern pantheism sought to identify God with His works. The end is the same; the methods differ.

The shepherds of Arcadia, regarding Pan, as the representative god, listened to brook, breeze, and tree, to hear him pipe his reed.

All these ancient methods of mediation between God and man, though so various in form, may be reduced to two -- action and contemplation. The end sought, is a perfect life, or a perfect ideal. If one form of mediation is not embraced, men will, of necessity, resort to another. Belief in something, to mediate between humanity and the Universal Heart, there must be.

Consider one of the highest and purest types, the "word," the symbol employed by Plato, Philo, and St. John, for illustration. It is deeply suggestive. A word stands for the invisible idea, which it represents. The classical Logos, is a thoroughly generic term, and may include the idea of Universal Being. It signifies reason, as well as speech. "Vach," the active form of Brahma, signifies "speech." "Honover," by whom Ormuzd creates, signifies, in the Persian religion, "word." The Chinese teach, that the world was Created, not by the Infinite God, but by the "Primordial Reason," or "Word."

The selection of this term seems, upon a moment's reflection, remarkably fitting. A thought is conceived in the mind, it struggles to utter itself, a word drops from the lips; the thought is embodied and expressed. What profound philosophy in the announcement that men, by the words they speak, are to be judged? Words are the embodiment and expression of the inner self. Such, was properly thought, to be the divine manifestation. The Invisible and Infinite embodies Himself, speaks, and His speech stands before us, manifesting what is, the great Thought of all thoughts. God speaks; worlds and all such grand things, are His language. But, humanity, as a whole, desires something more tangible and less abstract.

"Men cannot worship," says Mackay, "a mere abstraction; they require some outward form in which to clothe their conceptions and enlist their sympathies."

The entire history of the religious world, has been a continued prayer, for a Living and

Personal Mediator. "I need a God," said a learned Pagan, "who can speak to me and lead me."

What he needed, all need. The unquenchable and limitless desires of the soul, every point upwards, to a Supreme Restorer, whose strength is divine, but whose sympathies and form, are human. Otherwise, the spanless chasm can be gazed into, but crossed, it is thought, never.

This accounts for the "irresistible tendency, in the race, to personify the Supreme Being." This idea of a God-man, by no means, originated with the Church Fathers, or in Church Councils. The birth of a God-man, has been the expectation, of all history. The Jewish patriarchs, as we have seen, looked for Him, the prophets announced Him, the sibyls pointed to Him, and the poets of every nation, have sung His praises.

Behind all the searching's and longings of humanity, are seen the distinct outlines of the face of a man, -- a man in the likeness and majesty of God. The Jewish mystics, reasonably inferred from Genesis, and defended the position, that God and man, must bear the same image, when expressed. Such a commentary and interpretation, fit likewise, all human souls.

"Some," says Irenaeus, "call the Universal Father, *Anthropos*, man."

"God," says Marcion, "is not without form, for He is the prototype of all beauty; to say He is formless, is to nullify Him." Comparative theology, upon this point, offers from every quarter, its support. The *human*-headed and winged animals, excavated from the ruins of Nineveh, uniting in symbol, the intellect of man, the strength of the lion, and the rapidity of a majestic bird, were worshipped as representations of the Infinite.

Chosroes, who is said, by the Persians, to be a "Saviour," "among gods, a perfect and eternal man," and among men, "a conspicuous God," together with Mithras and Zoroaster, are the God-men of this ancient faith.

Tohe, was the first God-man, among the Chinese, Confucius, the second. But, these together with Goschosaun, the divine man of the ancient Parsees; Osiris and Phtha, the “apparent” or “manifest God” of the Egyptians; Oannes of the Chaldeans; Melicerta of the Phoenicians; Apollo, and in fact, the whole family of Titans, among the Greeks; Metraton of the Cabalists; Hobal, the divine man of the ancient Arabs; Khan, the “son of God,” in Tartary; the mighty giant of “daring and valor,” believed in by Celtic, Teutonic, Scythian, Etruscan, and Lydian mythologists, whose “beneficent footsteps” can benefit mortals, and whose “great arms” can be used against the powers of darkness; also Vishnu, Buddha, Manitou, Incas, and Quetzalcoult, -- betray how deep are the yearnings of mankind, and how quick their instincts, to interpret the slightest indications, that might appear, in favor of what seems, fundamental and universal -- a Mediator.

The most cursory glance, even, will show that the world has ever been standing on tiptoe, as if the Unseen God was about to clothe Himself, in human form, and stand next moment, visibly before the eyes of mortals. The Simeons and Annas were not confined to Palestine. Every night, since man left the Garden of Eden, has he been looking up to the throbbing Heavens for the Star in the East.

The Messiah-seeking Magi, had faith as strong, or stronger, than that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The entire ancient dispensation, including Jewish and Pagan, is a kind of John the Baptist. Men have always felt, that the Kingdom of Heaven, is at hand. Every great soul, since Adam has said, “I am not he, but there cometh One after me, mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.” The common people, of all nations, have ever been in readiness to flock after delivers and Messiahs, false or true. Provided a man had done something, or made good, some claim, he has had followers, and plenty of them.

Gamaliel tells us of Theudas and Judas of Galilee, who drew after them, “much

people.” Simon, too, had many followers, who, for a time, mistook him for Messiah.

A hermit of India established himself on a mountain in Thibet. He was believed to be the returning Buddha. Hundreds of millions of people espoused a faith, thus established. In 1829, Marayan Powar became noted, when eight years of age, as a serpent-charmer. Soon, he was believed to be divine, a “living God.” In ten months, ten-thousand pilgrims, came to him. At length, he was bitten by one of his serpents, then died, and his glory departed.

Nor, is this faith in a coming God-man, a thing of the past. The more Orthodox Hindoos, are today, anxiously awaiting the tenth and last visitation and incarnation of Vishnu. How impressively, is this set forth, in Bhagavat Dasam Askand, “When will the Helper come? When will the Deliverer appear?” The Buddhist is looking and longing for the advent of Maiter Buddha.

China had been looking west, for a coming One, long before the days of Confucius. Said this great philosopher, giving expression to the prevailing thought of his times, “In the West, must the true Saint be looked for and found?” Dreams and predictions, at length, deepened into convictions. The Emperor, Ming-ti, sent to India, obtained Priests of Buddha, and in five centuries, there were three-thousand temples, dedicated to the new faith. The modern Chinese, are far from being satisfied. They are expecting Tientse, a divine man, who is to inaugurate complete restoration. “We expect this divine man, and he is to come after three-thousand years. The people long for his coming, as the dry grass longs for the clouds and rainbow.” Such is the Chinese confession of faith. The same is true in the West, as well as in the East.

The people of the Nicaraguan Lake region, are anxiously looking, for the second coming of Montezuma. The Parsee awaits the coming of Sociosh.

Modern skeptical thought is included in the same category, and has, by no means, outgrown this principle. The Eternal Repose must, in some way, become an active and

visible force. Negative gods are not endured. Day is preferred to night, unless when men wish sleep. A God-man in history, or in the future, in a person, or in humanity, as Explainer or Revealer, demands recognition. All must touch Him, at hem or heart.

To elude the idea of a God-man mediator, and yet, retain the principle, has led not a few, to discover the divine manifestation in woman. Comte looks, in this direction, pronouncing woman, the presiding genius and goddess. Parker, who rejects the God-man, attempts to furnish a mediator in an imaginary God-woman. "May the Infinite Mother," he prays, "spread wide her arms, to fold us to the universal heart." The Catholics, in worshipping "Divine Mary," and the Shakers, in adoring "Mother Ann," from whom, spring all divine emanations, merely embody Comte's and Parker's ideal mediator.

But, all these faiths, in Pagan or civilized lands, have been better for the believers, than no faiths. These waiting, and expecting, and half-apprehending attitudes have saved the world's heart from despair. They have been, as one of God's educators and prophets, and great agencies in the development of humanity. They have been a kind of God's Son, on earth. It is scarcely too much to say, that the thoughts of the coming Christ, though bearing different names, have presided over and ruled the thoughts and destinies of ages. More than this, Faith was imputed to the Jews, for righteousness; why not likewise, so far as properly exercised, at least, in some instances, to these Gentiles?

It is the Spirit, not the letter without the Spirit, that maketh alive. And most certainly, faith in a divine One, has, as a matter of fact, saved individuals, nations, and the whole world, from utter despair.

The Karens of Burmah, were for ages, prevented from falling into the idolatrous practices of their Burman masters, by an ancient tradition, that white men coming from the West would bring them religion and deliverance. Their hearts were ready for a Gospel; the Christian religion was preached to them, and they eagerly embraced it.

Their case is far from being exceptional. It was this expectation, which gave such dignity and culture, to the old Hebrew race, otherwise despicable. It was the thought of the coming Messiah, which fed so freely, their sacred fires of truth and poetry. It was this, which introduced those sentiments and longings, aspirations, and expectations, which make their literature nourishing food, for all time. And the modern Jew, just in proportion to his faith, has been morally correct.

This Desire of all nations, by presenting an ideal, if in no other way, has developed all that is most interesting and most human, greatest and grandest, in the race of man. How much, indirectly, this principle has accomplished, none can tell. All feel, that Carlyle in his Hero-worship, has touched reverently upon the bounds of stupendous religious truths. "Hero-worship," he says, "heartfelt, burning, boundless, for a noblest, God-like form of Man, is it not the germ of Christianity, itself?" Mr. Emerson lives, so far as he lives, by faith. If his "perpetual undertone of sorrowful and unappeasable doubt," be the product, not of an incurable skepticism, which merely sports with themes of grandest import, but of an inquiring and agonizing doubt, then who can say that his stainless life and earnest faith will not "be accounted?"

Must all modern Jews, including the devout, for an error of education or judgment, be condemned? There are Jews, other than they, of Israel. We say it respectfully, Emerson is a Brahmin and a Jew. He seems to have been born two-thousand years ago in both, India and Palestine. "There is no man," he says, "there hath never been. The intellect still asks, that a man may be born. The flame of life flickers feebly, in human breasts. We demand of men, a richness and universality, we do not find. Great men do not content us. It is their solitude, not their force, that makes them conspicuous. There is somewhat indigent and tedious about them. They are poorly tied to one thought. If they are prophets, they are egotists; if polite and various, they are shallow. How tardily men arrive at any result? . . . Thus, a man lasts, but a very little while, for his monomania [that he has the secret of the universe], lasts but a very little while. It is so, with every book and person; and yet, -- and yet -- we do not take up a new book, or meet a new man, without a pulse-beat of expectation. And, this invincible hope of a

more adequate interpreter, is the sure prediction of his advent." O, bold searcher, whom you seek, Him would we declare unto you.

Along with its doubters, the world has always also had, and always will have, its "invisible Church," its divine commonwealth of souls and saints, united in the common idea of a Coming One. Who they are, we may not be able to distinguish.

When one of our early missionaries preached Christ, for the first time to a Western tribe of Indians, and had described what are the experiences of a Christian faith, he was confronted by an aged slave, who had never heard of Christ, or any Divine Supernatural Being, save the Great Spirit, with the confession, "The Saving One is mine, and these have been my experiences for many years."

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," and "there shall be One fold and One Shepherd," is fact and prophecy. Sooner or later, the "consolation of Israel" and the consolation of the Brahmin and Buddhist, the Persian and Egyptian, the Goth and Aboriginal Indian, must be one and the same. In the meantime, however rigidly Christians may cling to the correct and Scriptural form of truth, they can afford to be liberal in their estimates of the hearts of unquestionably good men. God knows many things that we do not.

It is for the present, a triumph, grand enough for the Christian truth, that the perfect ideal and divine man before Plato, and since Plato, has held the world as by fascination. Men may reject Jesus, but they will continue to seek the Christ. This true soul, this Prometheus, this ruler of nations, sinless and infinite, a God and a man, is an established fact. What multitudes have risen up and gone out to meet Him! Did men truly believe that a God-man had really walked the earth, all save earth - or wrath-bound souls, would ask nothing more. What He said would be believed and sufficient. All things else may fade, but the intense and vivid idea of God and man, somehow, and in some form, made One, will be among the last ideas to be abandoned by the race.

These universal thoughts are no accidents, but the natural forecast of searching hearts. They are not man's, but humanity's inventions. They show a feeling after and the catching of glimpses of exalting and stupendous truths. They are attempts, at making a cradle for the Infant of Days. They are the shadows of Heavenly things, the notable harbingers and adumbrations of eternal and immutable thoughts. They constitute a partial explanation of the Cypher of God's Universe. These dreams and representations, though more or less deformed, do answer promptly, to our human touch. They seem to respond with the pulse of a life like our own. Have not these beating and throbbing souls of men been trying to give birth to a reality, and not a dream? If men have dreamed, thus grandly, will not God, when the morning dawns, say to humanity, Thy dreams is truth, and shall be realized?

## Chapter Three--Incarnation

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FOLLOWING this universal belief in a Mediator, appears an effort in religious thought, to answer the question, How can one be, at the same time, human and divine? For such it has been felt, must be the True Mediator.

The reasoning among all nations and in all ages, seems to have been nearly the same, and a like-conclusion appears to have been reached: if a being can be God-begotten and woman-born, he can answer the conditions required, and be, at the same time, human and divine. These thoughts, in the development of theological opinions, ripened into conviction, and the dogma of incarnation, as found in the world's religions, took this form, as the most natural, and as being certainly, the least difficult solution of the most singular and perplexing of religious problems.

The idea of Immaculate Conception, has not, therefore, been arbitrarily assumed, but was based upon an absolute, as well as, dogmatic necessity -- that of attempting to account for the sinless origin of a sinless person. This, was also, the most natural way, and rationally and philosophically, the only way, of forming what all men desire -- a typical union between God and man, and a real union between the finite and infinite. It is also the only way known, in which can be obtained, a glance at ideal humanity. It renders possible, the still greater difficulty -- the union of a divine and human consciousness in the same person. It should not, therefore, excite surprise that the divine men, of all nations, have been represented as born of virgin mothers. Though involving an apparent contradiction, is it not the most plausible conclusion, that a God-man, must be God and woman-born?

“Of mother's love and maiden purity.  
Of high and low, celestial with terrene.”

It is in view of considerations, like the above, that we are very far from being disposed

to enter into controversy with modern radicals when they assert, that every religion has had its Christs, and that, history is full of incarnations. This is unquestionably true. It is the very fact, we too, would establish. Were it otherwise, the correctness of the principle of incarnation, might justly, be questioned. Poor hope of success has any man, or body of men, who rise up at this late day, to overthrow, without presenting a substitute, alike in kind, the opinions which have ruled the world for six-thousand years! Majorities are right, as well as wrong. Majorities are usually, in their deeper convictions, but the reflection of divine will and thought. When, then, this wonderful Epiphany ever presents itself, as the engrossing theme of piety and inspiration; when, as Mr. Weiss rightly remarks, "human struggle, has ever been, a divine struggle towards an incarnation;" when idolatrous art, in its various and best forms, is but an attempt to incarnate deity and give birth, upon canvas or in marble, to a God-man; when the idea, though often caricatured among Pagans, discolored by sensuality, invested with superstitions, and deformed through passion, has nevertheless remained, ready, and in waiting, like all great truths, for a perfect realization; when through this gateway of incarnation, left-half ajar in the thoughts of men, has been found so easy access into that Temple, in which, the true God, "is manifested in the flesh, brought nigh, to be handled with the hands and seen with the eyes," that not only the heathen, but all civilized nations, have been prying at it, or passing through it; when the philosophy or the pantheism of Hegel, -- if it be pantheism, -- allows, that God may incarnate Himself in man, nay, that He does it, in all men; when not only this great man's system, but likewise, all the higher types of modern philosophy, have compromised with this religious dogma, their boasted independence, speaking with great freedom of "abstract religions" and of "generic incarnations;" when we discover that the clearest types of incarnation, have always taken the place of the less perfect, as Brahma, in the East, gives place to Vishnu, and in the West, Huitzilopotchli to Quetzalcoalt; and when it is found, that some of these religious fictions have been so pure and natural, that were they to find fulfilment in a reality, they would, in most respects, correspond to it; nay, when we consider all these facts, is there left any room to doubt what have been the thoughts of man, upon this subject, ever since they felt the need of redemption and of a Redeemer? Is it an object of wonder, that Eve, and every woman of the race for four-

thousand years, did hope to be the chosen Mary, and bear a Divine Son? Will not God forgive the desire, and sometime, perhaps, do more -- relieve the disappointment, and place upon the bosom of some human mother, a Son of God?

## Chapter Four--Sacrifice

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THE thoughts of men, as seen in the religious systems already enumerated, do not rest satisfied with the birth and life of a Mediator, but ask and attempt to answer the question, by what means can the God-man unite the entire race with the Infinite One? This is less perplexing than some other religious inquiries; none, however, are more solemn. The solemnity arises, from the attending conviction, that the means employed must be extreme -- blood and death.

This idea of sacrifice, is so much a part of human nature, that ancient and modern speculative thought has made no effort to outgrow it.

“The pantheistic notion of Creation,” says Mackay, “is essentially, that of sacrifice. God, when descending to the limits of time and space, becomes incorporated in the world, identifies Himself with perishable nature, thus, by a sort of self-sacrifice, originating universal life.” The same, essentially, is true of all notions of Creation.

It is also a suggestive and beautiful conception of the old Persian, that the mission of the “express image of the eternal,” Ahura Mazda, was to release, “by a final sacrifice, the soul of nature from her perishable frame, that she might commence a brighter and purer existence.”

Indeed, the principle is so clear, that it may be seen in all human relations. Man, by the simple virtue of being above material nature, comes in contact with no form of matter, which does not cost him a sacrifice. He bears about his physical body, at great Spiritual loss and hindrance. Such, precisely, is the basis of the law of atonement.

Atonement, in the abstract, is the reconciliation between higher and lower, grosser and better natures. An atonement must lie at the foundation of every act in a universe, where all are not equals, in power and goodness. Recognizing this truth, it is not

strange, that the common sense of the race, has always appealed to sacrifice, as a solution of its difficulties.

Again, sacrifice and atonement seek to span, not only the natural distance between God and man, but also, the wider gulf of moral distances and disparities. While it is true, on natural grounds, that “the religious mind is ever striving to unite itself with God,” yet, it is pre-eminently, this conscious moral distance between God and man, which has occasioned those appalling cries of anguish, and that distressing hunger, whose contemplation makes the heart sick. The wailings of humanity are full of conviction that some great calamity has befallen the race, and separated it a long distance from the divine. There are dirges everywhere of houseless and homeless wayfarers.

The knowledge, has always existed, that men ought to do right, that they have done wrong, and that they must be judged. In these thoughts, has been anguish enough for one world. All modern glosses thrown over sin, representing it as an appearance of evil, merely have never touched the root difficulty, or in the least degree, eradicated the universal conviction and self-condemnation. Men always have felt and always will feel, that sin is something besides natural perspiration, and that it is so appalling, that nothing trifling will meet the requirements. All thinking men, who can justly lay claim to a philosophical mind, agree with Plato, that upon natural grounds, “it is impossible for the impure to approach the Holy and Perfect.”

More than this: that the race has been, “implicated in some aboriginal calamity,” which has formed, in part, this impassable gulf, strangely, and yet strongly, attaches itself to human thought. The fact is, that the race finds itself involved in these perplexities, and dares not, without interventions, look to God. Belief in any deity, and propitiatory sacrifices, are concomitants. That Pagan nations have been as ready to erect altars and offer sacrifices, as to perform the most congenial service, requires something besides surface and chance explanations. To the savage, the winds and nights are thronged with giant Spirits, and he ordains his Priests, and asks them to interfere. Priests are not religion-makers; they themselves, are people-made. The

principle is the same, which governs the more enlightened, who see in good men, or in a God-man, the One who can “restore and preserve the equipoise, which universal consciousness affirms to have been disturbed or lost.”

Sacrifice, is also an expression of the right of the Infinite Ruler, to inflict punishment. Human nature loves the confessional, and will make to the proper authority, its acknowledgment. It is this desire to confess and to appease the divine displeasure for sins committed, which undoubtedly, has led to the more frightful forms of sacrifice. Man took the most beautiful flowers of the earth and the richest fruits of the field, and offered them; but, these were felt to be, not enough.

“Sacrificial atonement, especially atonement by blood,” says Mackay, “has ever been the great religious idea.” It is one of the forms of religious cults, and is, in fact, co-extensive with religion, itself. It should not, therefore, surprise us to find expiatory rites recorded in the oldest Books of the Hebrew Scriptures, or to meet with them, at the earliest dates, to which, heathen records conduct us. Among barbarous nations, from India to Britain, sacrificial atonement prevailed.

Sacrificial emblems appear also, throughout Egyptian history and religion. The Priests branded the bull to be slaughtered, with a seal bearing this significant representation: a man kneeling, with his hands bound behind him, and a drawn sword held at his throat. There was an ancient custom, in Phrygia, of the same import. When a man desired to be purified, the Priests placed him in a pit, covered with a platform, in which holes, were perforated. Upon this, was placed an animal to be slain, the blood of which, flowing down upon the man, sprinkled and cleansed him.

In China, there are fifteen-hundred-and-sixty Temples, dedicated to Confucius, upon whose altars are yearly offered, sixty-thousand animals.

The sacred fires and bloody sacrifices of ancient Damascus are confirmatory.

For the purpose of proving their devotion to the Great Spirit and securing his favor, some of the tribes of the North American Indians, underwent the most excruciating tortures and agonies, mutilating themselves until completely besmeared with blood, as did the Priests of Baal, in Elijah's time. All these things, anyone who is acquainted with human nature, would expect.

Nor will it surprise any philosopher that humanity has also been fearfully lavish of its own blood. Dr. Magee, after extensive canvassing states, that human sacrifices have been offered by every people, excepting the Jews. We doubt if the exception be true of the Jews, even. Clearer exceptions are the Chinese and Peruvians, though the fact, is also here, questioned. The Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Mauritians, and all adherents of the gross naturalism of Asia Minor, built their altars, and upon them, sacrificed their kindred.

Spreading over the vast territory from the northern confines of the Roman Empire to the North Sea, and from the Atlantic to Asia, were peoples who entertained the same essential religious ideas. Rude black stones of immense size, are found today, scattered over all these portions of Europe. Alas! They, too, are monuments of the perplexing and mysterious thoughts which dwelt in the minds of these people. In the dark oak forests, their altars of blood received men, women, and children, as the fearful and frightful expression of a deep conviction, that it is guilt which separates God from man, and that, somehow, in blood, must the restoration be effected. The ancient Persians, the ancient Arabians, the people of Tartary, and of New Zealand, performed similar rites of human sacrifice.

Unnumbered victims have perished upon the temple-mounds, whose ruins are spread over the Central and Western portions of America. Recall again those frightful scenes in Mexico.

Ashanta, in Western Africa, numbering three-million inhabitants, together with Dahomey, of nearly the same number, also practice the dreadful rites of human

sacrifice. Three-thousand victims, in the former country, have been offered at the death, not of a king, but of a king's mother. What a river of blood has ever been flowing through the temples of heathen idolatry!

We pause. The heart grows faint and sick in its thought of the distress and agonies of the one offered, and equally of the one making the offering.

The sufferings have not all been on the part of the slain. The moans of the victims have been more than doubled by those of the troubled souls unsheathing the knife and kindling the fire. Sacrificial offerings speak something besides bloodthirstiness. These religious devotees were not, in the majority of instances, Caligulas and Neros, more than are we. Rites of sacrifice were originally instituted, not from caprice, but from the profoundest sense of religious conviction - the conviction, that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission. They spring from "divine instigations acting through human instincts and voices."

Moloch and Juggernaut were not the products of cruelty of heart, but of irresistible instinct. The Hindoo mother throws her first-born into the sullen stream, not without keenest anguish; around that child are entwined all the fondness of a mother's devotion and love.

May not these altars of Paganism, this flow of human blood, these appalling sacrifices be unconscious prophecies? And though they have not satisfied the world, may they not have relieved it from despair? Solemn and significant it is to see a sinful man go forth with a lamb for sacrifice. Appalling is it to see hands in sacrifice besmeared with human blood. But, is there not a beautiful thought entwined in the wreath of smoke ascending Heavenward, bearing the savor of the choicest of the flock, expressing the hospitality of man towards God? In it we see "worshipful homage." No wonder that God was pleased with Abel's offering, and that Abel felt God's approval. May not all this have been the involuntary and constitutional tendency of the race towards Calvary - God's way of preparing the heart for Christ? If so, will He not make

some provision?

But we may go a step farther. Why is it not consistent that, in its struggling, the human soul, has sometimes looked, to the death of its divine man for relief? “the notion of a suffering deity was wide-spread,” says Mackay, “extending from India westward, including Scythians, Asians, and Arabians.” It was also held, by Hebrews and Pagans, that Chiefs and Princes, by undergoing a voluntary death, might in some way, benefit the race. They were regarded as “sublime acts of sacrificial self-devotion, for the public good.”

At certain times, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the mediators among the Persians, offered sacrifices to the Infinite and Invisible, whereupon, all things were said to be fulfilled. In fine, the well-nigh universal conviction is, that a mediator, real or ideal, must at sometime, be sacrificed. The good man and the cross, how can they, in this world, ever be separated? Herein, is felt to be ground for hope. A deeper faith, in a divine atonement, would perhaps have sheathed long ago and everywhere the sacrificial knife. But until this faith dawns, shall the world be left absolutely faithless? Incontestable, is the assertion that from the Fall to the Advent, there was universal expectation of some mighty victim of some Calvary. But, there was lack of data, and of faith, sufficient to save from alarm. Viewed in this light, there is a beautiful law underlying the vicarious atonement, which in practical life, all admire, though in the divine government, some condemn.

Fabius, when sentenced by the dictator, was pardoned because the Roman people implored it, for their sakes. Who objects? May it not be true, that the Great Law-giver has good and sufficient reasons for exercising the pardoning prerogative upon the ground of sacrifice?

Does it not half-dawn upon us, in serious moments, that, from an unexplained fitness or necessity, this may be, or perhaps, must be, God’s method? It seems hard, but are there not compensations? May not forgiveness, based upon sacrifice, be better for all

concerned, than universal and indiscriminate pardon? What possible objection can there be, when the sacrifice involves the world's God-man? Or who can tell if these human thoughts of a mediator, atonement, and sacrifice are not waifs thrown upon the Spiritual shores of humanity, by the unspent and majestic tides, which swell and flow forever in the divine consciousness?

## Chapter Five--Authority of Essential Theology

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We have now pointed out those conclusions of Comparative Religion, which have special bearing upon our general subject; these, with other points of agreement, are properly termed Essential Theology. There is embodied, in this term, nothing more or less than the claim, that the God-idea, together with the idea of Mediator, Incarnation, and Sacrifice, belongs to the true theology of humanity, whatever that theology may be, or wherever discovered. We do not see how any wise man can assert that this essential theology is not essentially true. Can one man's personal authority be sufficient to overthrow or have much weight against universal authority?

While entering somewhat into the details of this topic, it is interesting to note, respecting it, the attitude of the disciples and early Church Fathers; and all the more interesting, because they seem to have been far more liberal in their admissions, than many in modern times. We cannot quite overlook the narrowness, which led the King of

Prussia to expel Christian Wolff from Halle, on penalty of death if he returned, for eulogizing the ethical teachings of Confucius.

Believers during the late conflicts, between truth and error, have too often, been not a little troubled when skeptics have boldly asserted, that ideas of a Mediator, Incarnation, and Sacrifice are old as the race, and that Christian dogmas, based upon these and kindred subjects, have no better or different foundation than those of all other Paganisms, and that Christian nations and symbols are, at best, but second-hand. The method of many, in meeting such like assertions, has been to deny the correctness of all heathen conceptions. In this, there have been sad mistakes; much more is lost, by this course than gained.

The disciples, nowhere represent, that Jesus claimed, that all He said was new. He often referred to, and restored, the Law of Moses. The grand purpose of His mission, was anything save an effort, to demonstrate that He could be startling and original. He was to fulfill, rather than, to originate. He was not above noticing the shadow of the daisy at His feet. Much more, did He respect and appeal to the religious sentiment, in man. The marvel with His teachings is, that He gave principles so comprehensive, that they embrace everything ever spoken or dreamed of. He expressed, with supreme authority, the thoughts of humanity. Son of man, indeed!

In these respects, His Gospel remains, to this day, novel, unexplained, and on natural grounds, inexplicable; but, in all this, there is no disrespect, shown human thought and opinion.

St. Paul admitted, that the chief advantage the Jew had over the Gentile was not in the natural law of conscience, but in the possession of the written oracles of God. John and Paul, both employed, thoughts and expressions which were common in Pagan literature. Paul quotes from a Cretan philosopher, and an Attic comedian, and doubtless from certain lyrical melodies, besides. That the pre-Christian era of the world, was open to divine communing's, Jesus and His disciples, would thus seem to confirm

by gathering up, in some instances, those threads of truth that had been running through the web of the world's thought and history, and weaving them into a texture, not yet displaced.

The apologists also, especially the Greek, - the Latin Fathers, as a rule, were far less liberal, - frequently referred to the conscious of intelligent heathen, as fully competent, to decide moral and religious questions. They often quoted from them in confirmation, of Gospel truth; and their opponents, more than once, felt the force of this "arrow feathered from their own wing."

"Every man," says Justin Martyr, "by the germ of the divine Word which is in him, sees a part of the truth, which is harmonious with himself. Clement said, that Plato "touched the very gates of truth."

"All need His aid; His power sustains us all;  
For we, His offspring are, and He in love  
Points out, to man, His labor from above,  
Where signs, unerring, show where best the soil  
By well-timed culture, shall repay our toil."

Tertullian, speaking of Seneca, says, "He utters the testimony of a mind naturally Christian." Addressing the Pagan soul, he says, "Thou art not, that I know, Christian by nature; thou canst not be born Christian; thou must become such. Nevertheless, Christians invoke Thy Testimony." He then significantly asks, "who taught the souls of common people these truths?"

In condemnation of those who did not live up to the light they have, he argues thus: "Each soul, of its own accord, proclaims aloud these truths, which Christians are not permitted even to whisper. Thus, every soul may be called both, a culprit and a witness; a culprit as to error, a witness as to truth."

“And in the day of judgment, it shall stand before the bar of God, having nothing to say to the charge, “Thou didst preach God, and didst not seek Him; thou didst detest demons, and yet, didst worship them: thou didst appeal to the judgment of God, whilst thou didst not believe in His being; thou didst anticipate punishment in a world below, but didst take no heed against it; thou didst savor of the Name of Christ, and yet didst persecute Christians.”

Minucius Felix, impressed with the harmony between many of the teachings of ancient philosophers and the Gospel, affirmed that “either the Christians now are philosophers, or the philosophers of old, were thus far Christians.”

Origen attributed the rapid spread of the Gospel, in part, to the “harmony of its doctrines” with the “sentiments of natural conscience.” Cyprian based the condemnation of the Gentiles upon the fact, that they “will not confess what they cannot, but know.”

“How can you, who pretend to admire the precepts of your philosophers and teachers,” asked Arnobius of the Pagans, “blame our Jesus for uttering the same things?”

Thus, in various ways, the Church Fathers and apologists have cheerfully admitted that the children’s meat had, in some instances, been given to “dogs.” Their minds were unprejudiced and generous enough to admit that, “an unconscious Christianity,” had pervaded the sentiments of many, who objected to their faith. Though dark and obscure spots tarnished the Pagan character, still aspirations to a higher life, were not altogether, denied them. Much there was, which is tinsel and tinkling in heathen speculations; still a nobler music was heard, distinctly vibrating, on the ear of the early Church. Certainly, we of the twenty-first century cannot afford, in the Spirit of generosity, to be outdone by those of the first.

Religious truths, lofty and often Christian-like, falling from the lips of devout heathen,

ought to teach us, that there is in the world, a Gospel, hoary with antiquity. “These divine dogmas,” says Sir William Jones, “run like silver threadings through the systems of the most ancient nations.”

The doctrine of miracles, the end of the world, the resurrection and final judgment, were not entirely new when Christianity dawned upon the nations.

The natural corruption of the race is spoken of by Thucydides, Polybius, Horace, and Tacitus, in terms nearly, if not quite, as explicit as those employed by Paul. ‘There is no one of us without faults,’ says Seneca. “He who calls himself innocent, does so with reference to a witness, and not to his own conscience.”

It is also true that Thales, Zeno, Pythagoras, Plato, Anaximenes, Empedocles, Indian Seers, and Persian Magi, taught the immortality of the soul, no less clearly and forcibly, than the Jewish patriarchs and prophets. How long this opinion had held possession of the race, it is difficult to say; it was old in the days of Plato. He says, in Timaeus, “We ought always to believe those Ancient and Sacred Words, which declare the soul to be immortal.”

The place of retribution, as represented in Homer’s time, - a representation, old when he was born, - is where “mortals live again, or rather live on, and live forever, retaining the same character and habits, as in this life.” In some of the most Ancient Sacred Books, of the Egyptians, are accounts of a future life and final judgment, in which the deceased is represented, as urging in his own behalf, these considerations: “I have made to the gods the offerings that were their due. *I have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, unclothes to the naked.*”

This doctrine seems, indeed, to pervade Pagan life and thought. It shows itself, in certain current maledictory expressions, among the ancient Greeks. “May the earth lie heavy upon him!” “May his ashes be tormented in the shades below!” “Bruise my form,” exclaimed Anaxarchus, to his tormentors; “me ye cannot bruise.”

The theory of transmigration of souls, is likewise, confirmatory. The Shoel of the Hebrews, the Amenthes of the Egyptians, Hades of the Greeks, Patala of the Hindoos, and Dowzauk of the Persians, point directly to immortality for their basis.

The food placed by the graves of the American Indians, the bow and arrow, tomahawk, and hunting-knife, deer-skin and moccasins, buried with the brave, are to be used in *Hawahneu*, the other hunting-ground. The Milky Way was to the Winnebagoes the "Road of the Dead."

The Gauls lent money, in this world, upon bills payable, in the next. "Bury me on my shield," said Leonidas. "I will enter, even Hades, as a Lacedaemonian."

A Fejee, taking a weapon from the grave of a friend, remarked to a missionary, "The ghost of this club, has gone with him." It was an early custom among the Arabs to tie the finest camel of the owner by his grave, that supplies might be borne into the other land. Nor are the Chinese unmindful of their dead; annually they burn various garments and utensils for the use of those who have "gone before."

It suggests pleasant thoughts, that custom of Greenlanders. When a child dies, they bury a dog with him, as a guide. Over Gothard, to Paradise, with such a companion, he will safely go.

We may add also that the day of judgment, as represented by the Cataclysm of the Aztec, the Yugs of the Hindoo, the Great Resurrection of the Persian, the "final conflagration" of the Stoic, and the Ragnarokur of the Scandinavian, seems to be the expression of one of the root-truths in the heart of humanity.

Does there not appear to be good evidence in all this for the supposition, that there has been constant intercourse between God and the listeners of all ages and countries? Perhaps, the Gospel has, by some, been preached everywhere since the days of Abel.

In many instances, it is doubtless true, that Pagan notions were not clearly defined, and often, they had no seeming practical effect. They were sometimes, only the dimmest visions of the night; an awakening, it is possible, from an earlier, though not an absolutely primeval condition, into a partial view and witness of the truth.

When the souls of men, thus rise up and prove their possession of vast resources, then the unconscious Kingdom of Truth, begins to dawn upon them. The masses say “yes,” then pause; they next become idolaters, then idlers. But not so with all. Some, there are among the heathen who have “shown themselves to be nobler, loftier, Holier, freer from vanity, freer from meanness, freer from special pleadings, freer from falsehood, more Spiritual, more reasonable, on some points, even more enlightened,” than some among ourselves. These great and true souls longed after God, and groped among ancient opinions, existing philosophies, and their own souls, to find Him, as confined flowers, instinctively seek the sun.

Thomas Aquinas and John Fletcher were not extravagant, in saying that, many of these Pagans had an “implicit faith.” They had truth enough and light enough, at all events, to be conscious of a better way; enough “to overcome the allurements of the visible and the terrors of the invisible world:” and were martyrs for the truth they could not *fully* comprehend.

Men should never scoff, at these noble seekers, after God and His truth; intelligent men will not. They had their mission, and perhaps, fulfilled it better than some of those, upon whom, the ends of the earth have come.

We might also inquire whether there be evidence, that the Holy Ghost, has been idle among all people, save the Jews and nominal Christians. What nation, or individual, has been exempted from the command, “Seek ye My face?” Why insist that Christianity is, in every respect, odd and unique? Why not admit, that the lofty Spiritualism, which characterizes some portions of the Brahminical Books, the Moral Devotion of the

Zendavesta, the Law of the Soul's Progress of Buddhism, and the Precepts of the Five Volumes of China, together with every right movement among men, are products of the Holy Spirit?

The Pagan Bibles may be, in a sense, God's Word, at least so far as they are not the source, but the product of belief - the expression of faith and conviction.

Dr. Adam Clarke does not hesitate to affirm that Virgil's famous "Ultima cumaei venit jam carminis aetas" was written "apparently under the inspiration of God."

"There was a religion," Lessing truthfully remarks, "ere there was a Bible." "All history is an inarticulate Bible." All human souls are parts of God's work. He is no less the God of Adam than of Abraham. Adam was before Abraham. All men have faculties which depend upon no human laws of mind or matter. The race has never been without its invisible teachers, or without God. Souls are receptive and reflective - clay, as well as gods. Would it not be strange, if they had never reflected beams of Divine Truth, or received impressions from agencies, ever present and active? God has, doubtless, well-arranged evidence, that He has spoken to all; it is upon this ground, that none are exempt from His Law, and that all are without excuse.

Hooker gives expression to a truthful and generous sentiment, respecting Pagans, in saying that, "their revelation was of a nature which was confirmed, strengthened, and extended, but not superseded, by the Written Law of God." May we not suppose, that the Infinite Spirit has inspired in all true hearts "groanings which cannot be uttered," and that, the groping hand has touched, at least, the "hem of His garment?"

The supposed antithesis between natural and revealed religion, ought not for a moment, to be admitted. The difference is not essential, but purely one of words and degree. "For the invisible things of Him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." God tries no experiments. Truths in one of His Kingdoms never cancel those of another. Truth seen once, is seen

everywhere, and is always seen, as truth. Yes, it ill becomes a Christian, to view with suspicion, the noble utterances of those virtuous and pure minds of Paganism. We should receive them, rather with gratitude, as testimonies to Divine Truth, the gushing out, not of "naturalism," but of the "Christianity of Nature." Modern Christianity, like early Christianity, should not attempt to destroy these ideas, but try to fulfill, purify, and exalt them, and fear not to build from these, ruins, as the Christians of Rome built their places of worship from the marble of heathen Temples, which had been leveled by barbarian vandalism.

And on the other hand, the unbeliever who tries to impeach the Scriptures, because heathen have approached them, is far from being wise, and is no philosopher. Had they not been approached by all pure minds since Adam, then we might justly impeach and set them aside. The soul's testimony to the truth of religion, is its overwhelming argument and immovable support. No great religious truth is the work of priestcraft or priesthood, but is, perhaps, God-given, find it where we may. It is held, for a time, in "earthen vessels," but is none the less Sacred.

This consideration has all the more weight when modern investigations in the department of Comparative Religions bring the assurance that, two-thousand years before Christ, every principle of Essential Religion, was held with striking uniformity, throughout the civilized world.

He is an awful infidel, therefore, who would overthrow the truth in any religion on earth; seek rather to reconcile the truth, wherever found, to modern progress and thought. The natural logic, the fundamental common sense or common understanding, and the immutable conscience of the race, even when found among the rudest of mankind, demand respect from all schools and all classes.

The Church should rejoice, not sigh, that unconscious prophecies and even dreams of beauty, which eye hath not seen, or ear heard, have visited the hearts of human beings generations and generations ago. It should not hush these glorious utterances

of Paganism, for hath not God spoken to all men, “at sundry times and in divers manners?”

But there is another application to be made of this thought; and to this point, the attention of those who oppose Christian faith, is especially invited. The matter, may be stated, in form of an inquiry. Did it ever occur to the sceptic, when contending for the universality of religious ideas, what a weapon he thereby places, in the hand of the Christian? Is he aware that when he has urged upon public attention, the correctness of some Pagan notions, that questions will be asked respecting other notions? If Pagans have been correct in some things, why draw the line so sharply, when ideas of a Mediator and Incarnation present themselves? Who knows, but these ideas may be as correct, as those relating to law and morals? Plato, ruled the human mind from his own era, to that of Bacon. Jerome, carried his works under his hermit’s mantle, and Augustine, under his bishop’s robe. High was the compliment paid him, by Coleridge, “A plank from the wreck of Paradise, cast upon the shores of idolatrous Greece.” He was, beyond dispute, one of the most clear and righteous reasoners, the world has seen. Yet, he believed with almost prophetic conviction, that there must be, or ought to be, a God-man and Mediator; if right in other respects, may he not also have been right, in these religious opinions?

This thought will bear a more general application. There is no sceptic living, who is not willing to admit, that it will be a long time before the race can outgrow some of the sentiments in Cicero’s *Nature of the Gods*, and also, the preface to his treatise on *Laws*.

Aeschylus deals with established truths, when showing that the blood of a murdered man, never congeals, and that the God who lives and “ages not,” will bring offenders to justice and reward the good. The grand principles of moral obligation, are, in some instances, nearly, if not quite as clearly, represented by Pagans as by Christians.

The so-called “bloody Druids,” who were, at once, the ministers of religion, the teachers of science, and the legislators and judges of the people, embodied their

religion in the three precepts, "Worship the gods, do not evil, and act with courage." The Greek tragedians, too, were ever speaking of "unwritten laws."

Aristotle, means the same thing when he says that, "justice is before society."

"It is," says Cicero, "Right, Reason; not one thing at Athens, another at Rome, but uniform, and coeval with the Divine Mind."

In the realm of practical morals, these Pagan philosophers likewise entertained, in many instances, correct and lofty theories. Aristotle's text-book on morals has much, even in our day, that commends itself. The common brotherhood of man, is strongly emphasized by Epictetus, Quintilian, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and the Stoics, generally. Says Zeno, "Greeks and barbarians drink from the same cup of brotherly love." "All men, everywhere," says Diodorus, "belong to one family." "No man is a stranger to me," says Menander, "provided he be a good man; for we have all one and the same nature." Terence is no less emphatic. "I am a man," he says; "nothing human can I count foreign to me." "Will you enslave those," exclaims Epictetus, "who are your brothers by nature, and children of God?" And in Vishnu Sarma, we read, "Is this one of us, or is he a stranger? Is the classification of the ungenerous; but to those by whom liberality is practiced, the whole world, is but as one family."

When the Jesuit missionaries, Huc and Gabet told one of the Lamas, that they were from distant France, he replied, "what matter where you are from? All men are brothers. Men of prayer belong to all countries. They are strangers nowhere. Such, is the doctrine, taught by our Holy Books."

The king of Siam, upon being told that a certain image in his court was St. Peter, immediately said to his little boy, "Do obeisance to it, my son; it is one of the Holy men."

As we read such lofty utterances, do we not half feel, that Pagans are correct, and in some sort our kinsfolk?

Approaches to the Golden Rule are also found scattered through Pagan writings. “what you do not wish done to yourself,” says Confucius, “do not do to others.” Said Thales, “That which thou blamest in another, do not thyself to thy neighbor.” Pythagoras repeats and enjoins the same sentiment. “Thou wilt deserve to be honored,” said Socrates, “if thou doest not thyself what thou blamest in others,” “Do to no man what thou thyself hatest,” is the sentiment of Tobit; and Hillel said, “Do not to another what thou wouldst not he should do to thee; this is the sum of the law.” In fact, every known language has forms for transmitting golden rules of Christian faith. And generosity, courage, and self-sacrifice have always, and among all nations, commanded the intuitive or spontaneous and involuntary respect of human nature.

We may venture a step further. The ten sins condemned by Buddha are, killing animals, theft, adultery, falsehood, discord, contemptuous language, idle talk, covetousness, envy, malice. *Homute*, *Hookhti*, and *Vurusti*, “purity of speech,” “purity of action,” and “purity of thought,” furnish the foundation, upon which, the entire system of the Zendavesta is established.

Some of the maxims of Zoroaster, are touchingly beautiful, and of high Spirituality withal - “Reply to thine enemy with gentleness;” “To refuse hospitality, and not succor the poor, are sins;” “Fornication and immodest looks are sins;” “To think evil is a sin.”

Sophocles, while presenting us with the moral ideal of touching devotion and purity, shows a conscience, which is thoroughly alive to the “unwritten laws” of God. In *Antigone* we read, in justification of doing good to an enemy, “I was not born to hate, but to love.”

Now, the correctness of these sentiments is questioned by no one. But they were a part of a great system of human thought, which has commended itself, to the best portion of the human race in all ages. Whatever be our individual views, the profoundest respect, for prevailing opinions is demanded, especially when that opinion

is acknowledged to have been correct in so many of its conclusions, and when it seems to be, not merely domesticated to the habits of thought, but to be essentially indigenous, to man's Spiritual existence. On the side of these truths, are to be found, God's majorities. As already claimed, opposing minorities will, in these matters, never become ruling majorities. When so many agree, the thing agreed upon, can never be a mere brain-birth. However perverse, may have been popular life, these truths have remained. They have not been the exclusive property of the few; not simply the suppositions of Plato, but the convictions of the masses. Those who gave expression to these sentiments were not all thinkers, but all held fast to the opinions. "Some men think, but all men have opinions." "Do you not see," says Seneca, "how the benches echo, whenever things are said, which we recognize to be true?"

But, it was this same great system of human thought, supported by such multitudes and teaching such nobler truths, which also held with equal tenacity, to the religious doctrines of Mediator, Incarnation, and Sacrifice. This Essential Theology of humanity, is as well established, as its essential morality: they both occupy the same position. The appeal of one, is no less earnest and imperative, than that of the other. Humanity, is no better moralist, than theologian. Upon what grounds, then, of reasoning or equity, is the voice in the one case, applauded, and in the other, disregarded? We may reject both; but can we accept one and reject the other?

## Chapter Six--Origin and Significance of Essential Theology

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“MYTHOLOGY,” says a writer of note, “records not *facts*, but opinions.” But, whence the opinions? Bossuet thinks, they are “distortions of Hebrew literature.” Gladstone says, they are “myths growing out of original descriptions of nature.” Creuzer holds, that they are “the echo of nature in our consciousness.” Max Muller decides, that they are attempts “to express abstract ideas by means of the extension of concrete terms.” Some look upon them, as the “debris of ancient systems,” often, however, covered, and concealed, under parasitic vegetation. Others regard them, as “broodings” of the hermits of the Ganges, and the Priests, under the shadows of the pyramids or elsewhere. Not a few in the last class, look upon the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, as transcribing’s from other records, and the system of religion, they present, as a compilation from religious and philosophical systems, more ancient than themselves. This position, which has been so long in favor with the opposition, demands a moment’s notice. Is it not a singular example of unfairness, when skeptics allow all forms of religious belief to flow into Jerusalem, even when Jewish laws forbade the introduction of new gods, under severe threatening’s, and when, at the same time, they do not allow the religious ideas of the Jews, to flow out into Pagan lands? The Jews offered their religion to the world; would it not be singular, if some in the world, did not accept it?

The Jews were scattered through Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome. They were inhabitants of Arabia, and also of Egypt. Under the Ptolemies, there were a million Jews in Egypt. They performed the rites of their religion in Alexandria, had synagogues in Asia Minor, Persia, and India; and their Scriptures, are among the oldest writings, extant. If, upon the ground of tradition or revelation, we were called upon, to account for the monotheistic and mediatorial notions, which are detected in all ancient religions, or to explain the definite Messianic hopes of all nations, is it not quite as reasonable to say, they came from Judaism, as from Paganism? Justin Martyr bravely meets his opponents thus: “It is not, therefore, that we hold the same opinions, as others, but that all others speak, in imitation of us.” “Our laws,” says Philo, “attract all to themselves –

barbarians, strangers, Greeks, the dwellers on continents, and in islands, in the East, in the West, and in Europe.”

It is not our purpose, in these citations, to thus account, for the origin of Essential Theology. We are no more inclined, to give it a Jewish origin than are objectors; but we wish to show that, to deny originality to Judaism, and claim it for Paganism, is simply assertive and fallacious. This position, however, leaves ground for more or less, traditional influence. If there be a religious atmosphere, which pervades all lands, as there certainly seems to be, then it must be breathed by all, and be more or less, affected by all, who breathe it.

It is, indeed, exceedingly difficult to trace religious ideas through tradition, up to any one original source.

Aristotle does not claim, that the Grecian doctrine of the gods, is entirely original with the Greeks. “Since it is probable,” he says, “that philosophy and the arts have been several times, so far as that is possible, found and lost, such doctrines (religious), may have been preserved to our times, as the remains of ancient wisdom.” Buddha, in protesting against caste, quotes an ancient “law of universal equality and grace.” Confucius does not claim, that he originated his rules of morality, but confesses, that he obtained them, from a remote antiquity. He speaks of himself, as a “transmitter,” not a “maker.” “I only hand on,” he says; “I cannot create new things. I believe in the ancients; therefore I love them.”

In general, the truths of Essential Religion, and of Essential Morality, seem to be co-extensive with humanity, and as old as thought. Adventurers, like Abraham and Buddha, have appeared in all ages, teaching and preaching them. As these truths come to us, they are therefore, common property, “floating ideas,” “elder truths” in Adam’s heart, and in all men’s hearts; handed on from hand to hand, through migrations, explorations, and otherwise; unifying us, with all past Saints and Sages, and with God; most likely they are, the voice of God resounding, through the ages.

If these statements be correct, it will appear, that the position opposed to the one to which exception has just been taken, is likewise not valid; i.e., that all religious ideas among the Pagans are borrowed from the Jews. Undoubtedly, all Paganism has been, to some extent, influenced, though in the main, unconsciously, by that wonderful, direct, and authoritative revelation to the “chosen people.” It is not too much to say, that light from it, did rise and spread itself for centuries, upon the mountains, “before its glory reached the plain.” But, certainly, these independent Pagans did not recognize it, as Jewish light, and did not intentionally borrow. And more than this, it cannot be denied, that some truths, not clearly revealed in the Old Testament, though luminous in the New, are quite forcibly stated, prior to the Christian era, in Pagan writings. Whence are these? The truest, among the Pagans, were Seneca, Epictetus, and Aurelius; yet, they entertained the prevalent Pagan notions, and looked upon the Christians, as the most “degraded and the most detestable” sect of what had long been held, as the most degraded and detestable of all religions – the Jewish. Tacitus speaks of Christianity as a “degrade superstition.” Pliny speaks of Christians as “pestilent fellows,” and Juvenal also uttered, his bitter satires against them.

We think it a great mistake, therefore, to say that Seneca obtained his morals and religious thoughts, by means of correspondence with St. Paul; that Aristotle gleaned his ethical system from a Jew, whom he met in Asia; that Philo met certain apostles in Rome, and built his system upon thoughts borrowed from them; that Plato was a student of Moses; that Pythagoras built upon Hebrew traditions, collected in his travels; that Thales composed his philosophy from “fragments of Jewish truth;” and that Zoroaster was a disciple of the prophet, Jeremiah. Such claims, are not well sustained. They show a degree of unfairness, that never helps the cause of truth. We are left, in the face of them, to look elsewhere for a solution of our inquiries.

We, therefore, renew the question, Whence these essential religious ideas, and what their import?

The first supposition is, that they are received, through tradition. As they present themselves to modern times, it is doubtless true, that they have brought along with them, much traditional matter. All systems of philosophy and religion are more or less accumulative. "Patient mankind," Parker well remarks, "never loses a useful truth." "Thought, once awakened, does not again slumber." It was a happy conceit, but contains a deeper truth than was intended, when Dr. South said, that "Aristotle was the rubbish of an Adam."

But, this position, is far from satisfactory, and various are its objections. Religious conviction, is something distinct from accretion; it is not a thing that stands by outward force or traditional prestige, so much as by its own native strength. Independent of Hebrew revelation or any number of traditions, the search after truth would, undoubtedly, have been prosecuted, all the same. Questions from youth to age, from first to last, while human nature remains, can never cease. Conclusions would still be reached and opinions formed, were all tradition lost. All great truths are eternal; it is merely, their fashion of dress that changes. All these unspent rays, from whatever source they come, have been kept, and will be perpetuated, independent of words, or ink, paper, or tables of marble or bronze. Did not the Ten Commandments exist before they were engraved? Did they not remain, in all their force, and all the same, after the lawgiver broke into fragments, the stone slabs which recorded them?

But, we can follow this same thought in another direction. It is not a short sight which fails to see, that beyond tradition must be threads, at least, from which tradition itself is woven? Ideas precede tradition. Ideas are back of everything. Perhaps, they are back of God, or are God; we cannot tell; because, when we reach Him on scientific ground, we are out of breath. Emphatically, then, accumulated traditions must have some sort of origin. We are, therefore, driven back of tradition for an answer to our question, because, plainly, tradition is no originator, and did not and could not, originate the religious ideas of man.

Another supposition is, that religious opinions are the product of original and special

revelations from the Divine, given to the different nations, in those ages, when God talked, as might be said, face to face with man; or, employing an intermediate and natural agency, an early age, produced religious ideas spontaneously, as the "Life Stuff" of Huxley, after the world was prepared for it, appeared, producing life in all its forms.

Whatever religious ideas, have of late appeared are, upon this supposition, fragments only of these primeval revelations or products. The Cartesian School, while not insisting upon special primitive revelations, such as are claimed for the Hebrew Scriptures, would state the matter thus: I am in possession of sublime and most wonderful ideas of God; whence come they? As the finite cannot originate the infinite, and as I am not destitute of these qualities, they cannot proceed from myself. If they came from tradition, where did the one who first stated them, find them? Nay, these ideas of God, are a tableau or image upon the soul, the original stamp and impression of the workman's name, set indelibly, upon the work.

But, in either case mentioned, -- that is, by special divine revelations or by special divine impressions, -- we are equally forced to trace universal ideas, respecting an Infinite Being, a Mediator, an Incarnation, and a Sacrifice, together with all others discussed, back to God, as their source. But, if these essential truths of theology originally came from Him, are they not the complete and infallible expression of eternal and necessary truth? For God deals only with such. The world is God's objective thought. Revelation, be it on the printed page, or in the soul of man, is His expressed thought. For God to think a falsehood, would be for Him to tell a lie. If, therefore, God be not a phantom, and if the central thought of the race relates to mediation, and its hungering and thirsting be in the direction of a God-man, Revealer, and Redeemer, then God, so far as we can see and reason, would lose His title, to virtue and truth, did He not likewise, make the central thought of history, an Incarnation, including the other relations and conditions already discussed.

The continuous search for these things is the famishing and *exorted* cry of God's children for bread -- a cry that nothing trivial can satisfy. "Be ye clothed and be ye fed,"

amounts to nothing. No culture or experience can satisfy. Plato longed as intensely, nay, more so than the slave that served him.

Here, then, is an unusual and gnawing hunger, which, according to the supposition, God has implanted and excited. Did He only mean by it, starvation? Will He give nothing, but scorpions for eggs, and stone for bread? If the desires of humanity could produce anything, would they not have produced a God-man? If these desires are a prayer, will not God answer prayer and give a God-man? The reply and conclusion are obvious and inevitable. God will not – we speak it with reverence, He cannot – mock the long-cherished aspirations of the soul, or tantalize its Holy ideals. God will not and cannot play false with the human race. He has not kindled these fires in the human soul, fires burning at night, and which go not out by day, for nought. If He has told men, directly or indirectly, specially or in general, that there has been, for instance, or is to be, a God-man, then, though man may be often mistaken in his selection and application, yet, there must be, sooner or later, such a God-man, as shall harmonize with God's ideal and declaration. God has thought these things, or man had not. For Him to think – as we have seen – is for Him to speak. He never breaks His Word or thought. It does, therefore seem, that God is bound, in view of these principles, to give humanity, at the best possible moment in the history of the human race, a God-man, Mediator, and Atoner, by precisely the same high moral obligations, as bind Him to be good and true. Many an eastern sky has the sun tinted and painted, but never without afterwards showing His face above the horizon. A faith, which God inspires, is a prophecy which awaits, as sure fulfilment as sunrise, unless God and humanity are dreams. Even, if that be true, humanity must dream once more; the God-man must be a dream, and be as real as God and existing man.

Another supposition is, that our religious ideas came from human speculations. This theory need not long detain us; it is neither deep, nor philosophical. Herbert Spencer, has clearly shown, that the hypothesis of an “artificial origin,” for religious belief, is utterly untenable, and that we cannot ignore the grand fact, that while criticism and science may have modified theological dogma and formula, they have “not, and cannot,

destroy the fundamental conceptions underlying these dogmas.”

It is clear, that there can be no human speculation, without certain data, to start from. Speculations which, to any extent, and for any length of time, have prevailed, must have been built upon data, originally correct. Correct original data must have come from God, or the moral instincts. If from God, He would seem, as above shown, to be held responsible for their fulfilment. If they came from our moral instincts, then, as our instincts are Created by Him, we reach the same conclusion, respecting God’s relations to us, by merely taking, through the instincts, an additional step.

But, change the course of thought for a moment, and so far as the argument is concerned, let God be omitted from the question and from responsibility. Introduce, instead, the principle of the “soul’s faith.”

The entire Pagan world was full of faith in the data of Essential Theology. Faith is substance and evidence, and is always above sense. The atheist and socialist can never destroy these human convictions, or hinder the accompanying aspirations.

“Faith,” says Fichte, “is the ground of all conviction, God is infinite, therefore beyond the reach of our sense, which can only embrace the finite, but not beyond our faith.” “God,” he continues, -- and he might add, all deep religious truths, -- “must be believed in, not inferred.” May not these self-reporting convictions, these strange “preludings,” be at the same time, notions and facts? What, in fine, can sooner be relied upon, than the sublime disclosures and whisperings of a religious soul, respecting religious truth?

Divested of their halo, fundamental religious ideas, come from whence they may, seem to be invested with a dignity and importance, which admit of no trifling, and furnish presumptive evidence, which is unanswerable. To reject notions, eagerly embraced by mankind, and fondly cherished, is foolhardy. Such ideas, may have an import, more vast and wonderful, than has yet been conceived. The great soul of humanity cannot be mocked by its own aspirations, yearnings, and groping’s. Humanity, has within itself,

the prophecy of eternal truths, and the human mind, in its mere normal conditions, does evolve these truths, because they are true and must be fulfilled. What if, at times, there has been a false halo round a disk of glory? -- "a halo," as Newman remarks, "so congenial to human nature, that the absence of it might be even wielded, as an objection." Does not a halo prove the disk? Halos, any number of them, never make war upon the sun and moon, which produce them. Diseases, as medical men tell us, are but "perverted life processes;" thus, false religions are only perversions of what is true. "All errors are partial truths," is a philosophical aphorism. They are not the shortest distance between the two points, but efforts to find it. Nay, errors and perversions do not damage the proposition, that the essential truths of religion have in them, something that does far transcend the language of ordinary approximation. Why hesitate to say, that permanent manifestations of human thought, are as reliable, as permanent manifestations in nature?

But, we must narrow the range, while seeking reply to the question before us. In doing so, let it be borne in mind, that we raise no disputes with philosophers. It answers our purpose equally well, to side with Malebranche, Schelling, Coleridge, and Cousin, who pronounce these first truths of religion, to be strictly and purely *intuitive*; or, with the early philosophers, the scholastics of the middle ages, and theologians of modern times, who say they are *discerned by the light of nature*; or with Descartes; and his school, who assume, that they are *connate* with the soul; or with Dr. Reid and the Scottish School, who interpret them upon the ground of *common sense*; or with Dugald Stewart, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, who account for them upon the ground of *experience and "associations that cannot be overcome and separated."*

Call them what we may, "elements a priori," or "positive cognitions," products of the "prudens quaestio" or "fore-thoughtful query," or inspirations of the Holy Ghost, or by any other name, -- one thing is certain, they exist, and ultimately, they must be traced back, directly or indirectly, even in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, either to special original revelations, or to certain fundamental and original elements of knowledge or belief. The subsequent accumulation, by association or tradition, does not in the least,

explain the first terms in the series.

Cutting off, then, their excrescences, and passing back to their origin, and leaving out the thought of divine agency, we reach the strict philosophic and naturalistic position, that all primary religious ideas are based upon original intuitions; in other words, upon the soul's faith. We have before us, then, the question of pure intuitions. But, it is a universal tendency of the race, to associate internal monitions with some corresponding external reality. Reality is always, a coincidence of desire and thought. Apply these principles, for a moment, to the general subject before us. We have already found every religion, every system of philosophy, every school, ancient and modern, in quest of an *At-one-ment*. We have seen, that the idea of Mediator, did not originate with Christianity, but that all eyes, since Adam, have been looking towards such a God-Man, or a Man-God, as could accomplish a certain reconciliation demanded, if not by the Deity, then by Humanity. We have seen, that upon the common consciousness of the great mass of men, has dawned the idea of sacrificial atonement, through a divine manifestation.

We have every reason to believe, judging from Comparative Theology and Comparative Christology, if there should be blotted from the page of history today, all mention of religious thought, and if all religious tradition, were completely suppressed, that tomorrow the formula of God and the God-man, more or less perfect, and essentially the same as they are today, would reappear. All the sentiments, hints, and expressions of thought and feeling, bearing upon these points, which have been industriously compiled by Grotius, Wetstein, and others from the writings of heathen, prior to the coming of Christ, show, that if Jesus were not thought to be the true Christ, the world would begin and continue to look, until the coming of another. Abolish Christ and His religion today, and the oracles of Delphi, or others, would be consulted tomorrow. A divine Messiah and authoritative Revealer are found to be, an established necessity, in human nature. *Humanity will have a Christ.*

Allowing, then, the majority to interpret the minority, which in religious matters and

matters of common sense and common understanding, other things equal, we are compelled to do, we reach an inevitable conclusion. Either these religious ideas must have a substantial realization, -- that is, there must be something to correspond to these heaving and swelling tides of the human soul, -- or else, human nature is throughout, a stupendous and disastrous falsehood, all existences are phantasms, and to the four winds, should be flung every form of modern philosophy.

We accept, however, no such issue, "Souls see what eyes seek in vain." Renan, too, qualifiedly expresses, a grand truth, in closing his St. Paul. "O Humanity! Thou art just, at times, and certain of Thy judgments are good." We acknowledge the correctness of no religious speculations, from whatever source they come, and however profound they may be, which do not in the main, harmonize with the common sense of the vast majority of the race: this is not bigotry, but philosophy. That Pagan cradle-making, we cannot look upon, as a meaningless enterprise; it was meant well, and in good faith. Their views, sometimes rested upon a pillow of clouds; but, their infant-idea was growing. Behind their prattle, were motion and a beating heart. The fish is a prophecy of man in geological science. God, has often reflected His predetermination, in humanity. His "premeditation, prior to Creation," is the wonderful truth, verified by all departments of natural history. The Old Testament foreshadows the New. Pagan faith, is thus, also a prelude to a higher; it is not accidental, nor factitious, but is as lightning-gleams in midnight darkness, and signals of something, yet to come.

This "half-seeing" human nature, in quest of truth is, simply, the mind of man partaking of the mind of God. "God is the quarry of all; how old it is! How long it has supplied the world with spotless marble!" "O God," exclaimed Kepler, "I think thy thoughts after Thee." "Classification," says Agassiz, "is but an interpretation of the thoughts of the Creator."

The basis of modern philosophy is, "that the rational methods of the divine and human intellect, must be the same." We are not remote from God. The pulses of His heart are felt, in every throb-beat of human thought and being.

Religious intuitions, are not merely, a grand and sublime mystery, but are thoughts “before which, all others in the mind ought to bow down, in awe and reverence, -- thoughts which may be the very shadow cast upon the human soul of that mysterious, incomprehensible, unseen One, of whose Being and Presence, it dimly informs us.”

This search for God, and for One, to stand between God and man, which is co-existent with religious feeling and being, is the knocking at every gate and passage-way, and the trying of every door, leading to the halls of truth. It is the soul of man, prying into every crevice, where a ray of light appears. It is a peering into every dark nook and corner, which is thought to hold invaluable treasures. It is a shout to the Keeper, to deliver up the treasure, or let the seeker in.

The brawny arms of those ancient hunters were stretched out for help to do what they felt their unaided powers could not do. Their mud-clogged feet were seeking, if they could find a well-made path, to the invisible. They were looking for One. Has He come? – or look, we for another?

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# Comparative Theology

## Chapter One—The Brahmin

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The original religion of the land of the seven rivers, which stretches from the Indus to the Hesidrus, came from Bactria (modern Bokhara). Among the mountaineer and nomadic tribes, which inhabited this ancient kingdom of Asia, there existed, long before their conquest by Cyrus, a system of religion which, with subsequent modifications, has been embraced by a larger number of mankind than any other. Its antiquity is so great, and facts respecting it so meager, that it cannot be fathomed with anything like precision. Its truths appear to have been handed down by oral tradition, to have been enthroned, to some extent, in the songs and hymns of the people, exemplified, doubtless, in the rustic and religious life of the people, and to have furnished more or less, of that material, which has entered into the religions of all the Aryan nations - the Hindoos, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Celts, Slaves, and Teutons.

The more recent investigations in the sciences of comparative religions and philology decide that the worship of this people was originally simple, though sacrificial; the religious type was a pure monotheism, resembling closely the worship of Israel in Palestine. Data of a character beyond question, show that the later and modified religion consisted in the worship of the divine in nature. The oldest divinity, Deva, the "all-embracing heavens," corresponds precisely with *Canopus* of the Greeks.

The other gods were personified powers of nature. Agni, the god of fire, played a most important part. He was the mediator, the one who presented all prayers offered by mortals to Deva, and burned their sacrifices.

During these early stages of the Hindoo religion, which extended, according to Dr. Haug, from 2000 to 1200 B.C., there appear to have been no priestly orders. It was the

Hindoo patriarchal age in which the head of the family was Priest, or, without such a head, every man was his own Priest. To see God, and not mere man, the infinite, and not the finite, was the foundation of the old Hindoo effort and faith. Subsequently the nations of India adopted a more orderly and social constitution, abandoned their nomadic and warlike life, collected their ancient sacred writings, chiefly songs and hymns, into an authorized canon, and guarded them with jealousy almost equal to that of the Jewish Rabbins; they also instituted the priestly class, whose office was to represent the condition and wants of the people before the deity. The chief function of the Priesthood was prayer - *brahma*; hence *Brahmins*, i.e., praying.

After this date, the Hindoos possessed greater formal piety, but were more grossly immoral. The old Veda divinities were, in time, subordinated entirely to Brahma, and even the earlier phases of Indian theology resolved themselves into the doctrine of the abstract unity - a kind of impersonal *all*.

The modern Hindoo, in moments of religious excitement, declares that he believes in three hundred-and-thirty-million gods. Here, would seem to be the extreme of polytheism. Yet, to whatever natural object he looks, and to whatever form of intelligence he offers his devotions, he is, at every step, and in every effort seeking after the negative One - the eternal Check. The Brahmin, however, so far as he is not an ignorant and brutish idolater, asks different creatures and supplicates different objects with the sole purpose that they may inform him where he can find the Unseen; it is his way of erecting an altar to the Unknown God. His life, in fine, is a continued effort to approach, through some intervening something elevated into a god, to the presence of Brahm, who is the One Infinite Illumination, the Absolute and Self-Existent, the Mentor, and the All, who lies upon "eternity and the stars." It is, we think, usually conceded, at the present time, that not only was the original Bactrian, but the derived Vedic and the subsequent Brahmin idea, were also strictly monotheistic. "There can be no doubt," says Max Muller, "that the fundamental doctrine of the Vedas, is monotheism." Though all things may be involved in the Brahmin's general conception of deity, yet his monotheism clearly appears in the formation of his Creed - "Spirit alone is this All."

“To know that God is, and that all is God, this is the substance of the Vedas,” say the Vedas. “It is found, in the Vedas, that none but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped, nothing excepting Him should be adored by a wise man.” The Vedas often repeat the text, “There is in truth but One deity, the Supreme Spirit;” and often repeat the injunction, “Adore God alone, know God alone, give up all other discourse.” Its confession of faith, as far as it goes, could safely be incorporated into our own, “there is One living and True God, everlasting, without parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things. He is One and beyond description, whose glory is so great there can be no image of Him.” It would seem then, that the multitude of invented deities, in India, is only an effort at mediation, and a search after mediators.

The more definite steps in this religious development are confirmatory.

Brahm, the One Supreme, was thought, by Brahmins, to be too much like a “consuming fire,” too awful and too Holy to be approached by mortals directly; there was sought, in consequence, and intervening one. Indeed, they built no temples and offered no prayers directly to Brahm. In one of the early Vedas, Brahm is introduced as seeking an image of himself, and finding it in Brahma. The relations then become Brahm, the source of light, and Brahma, the light which flows from the source of light - the “Light of Light,” as with the Church Fathers; a “child springing from his father,” as among the ancient Greeks. And as the child, Zeus supplanted his father, in Grecian mythology, so Brahm, gave place to Brahma, who was either made identical with Brahm, or became, for a time, the sole object of Hindoo worship.

But, even this reflection of the Great and Ineffable through Brahma, was also at length, thought by the Hindoo to be too awful for most men to endure, though not for all; hence, the *caste* of India.

This resulted in a divine *call*. It was extended, at first, to some favored few: those,

who were thus called, were made Priests of Brahma, who thenceforth found his one adequate image in man - the Priest. Hindoo image worship is only another form of manifestation and mediation. "We do not believe these statues to be Brahma, or Brahm," said a Brahmin to M. Barnier, "but only their images and representatives, and we only give them honor on account of the beings they represent."

The Hindoo mythology contains two other characters which are of interest to us - Krishna Govinda, "the beautiful hero," who is the messenger of peace, and who, under human form, never ceases to be a "God-Being," - and Vishnu, who likewise combines two characters, "mortal and immortal," "being and *non-being*," "motion and rest." This Vishnu descended to the earth for the purpose of redeeming man. He is now the preserving power. He is the harbinger. He is a God, assuming human flesh, through an incarnation. He is to come again and judge the earth. As might be expected, Vishnu worship came, in time, to take the place of the original Brahma worship. Thus, the work of supplanting goes on. Brahma supplants Brahm, Vishnu Brahma, and the different incarnations of Vishnu supplant one another in the continued search after One who can satisfy.

The Hindoo also discovered symbols of terror in the world, groanings in nature, fire, earthquakes, and deaths. He reasoned that they must have a cause, but the cause could not be in Brahma or Vishnu; therefore Siva, the Destroyer, was introduced into their Creed.

Again, restoration and resurrection are in the world; life springs from death, and pure atmospheres have their birth in tempests. "All the rivers run into the sea, yet, the sea is not full; unto the place whence the rivers come, thither they return again." "every thunder-storm, each tornado, is a cry for quiescence." From strife comes symmetry. All these phenomena necessitate, and in the Hindoo Creed originate, the God, Rajah.

From this point, there is but a step to the principle of sacrifice. Brahminism was, from the outset, a blood-sacrificial religion. The Vedic hymns and prayers, as far as brought

to our notice by the translators, appear, for the most part, to have been composed for sacrificial occasions. Very likely the Hills of Bactria, not long after the deluge, were smoking with the choicest lambs and kine of the flock; and so, the custom was handed on; a custom heroic and religious.

This idea of sacrifice lies, as a matter of fact, at the foundation of individual life, in India. We read in the sacred books that “he who lives in the fire of the sacrifice is the great mediator between God and man.” The individual must be completely lost in the divine essence, and become *identical* with it. The Hindoo Institutes point out two paths leading to the state of perfection - religious sacrifice and religious contemplation. Brahma sacrificed himself by descending to the earth. The Sanscrit word for “sacrifice” means “union with God.” Brahma also sacrificed his own son, or emanation, for human good. Indeed, this refined pantheism of India pushed the idea of sacrifice, involving, at once, the highest and lowest orders, to its utmost verge. It produced, both the haughtiest individual asceticism and the conviction of Absolute Being, to which, all individual existence, in theory, and, if need be, in fact, must be sacrificed. To enforce this idea, there are occasions when their temples are made to run with blood, their enclosed grounds are clotted with blood, their garments bespotted with blood, and the whole air filled with blood.

It may be safely said, that the entire philosophy underlying the development of Brahminism, its Spirit of caste, and its different divine manifestations, is an elaborate, scholarly, and preserving effort to explain the various phenomena of nature, and is also a restless search after a living and incarnate intelligence to communicate *with* man, and to disclose to him, the otherwise, unknowable. Its success has been truly grand.

There is no mistaking the underlying principles upon which it rests, and which easily account for its success. We do not say that it borrowed from Egypt or Palestine; but it borrowed from - humanity, perhaps.

Its deep reverence for the divine, for illustration, is fundamental. The profanity of

other nations, sounds strangely enough, to the Hindoo ear. Of the many dialects of India, not one of them contains language, by which, the commandment, "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain," can be broken. Nor is the Divine Call of India peculiar to that country; it pervades all history. The priesthood of every nation, an Abraham and John the Baptist wherever found, and Jesus of Nazareth, show the universal demand for one set apart and consecrated for the especial services of the Unseen.

The twice-born of the Brahmins is likewise essential, and is not in form unlike the second birth of the Christian faith. Again, the creating Brahma, who is inseparable from the Absolute Thought, and who corresponds with the Egyptian Intelligence, and the Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs, is the Brahmin's anticipation of the Word-Reason in the Gospel of John.

The doctrine of a Divine Incarnation associated with a sacrifice, which is felt by the Hindoo, to be the agency for alleviating and removing the evils of the world, is likewise prophetic of the apostle Paul's statement, that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" and these different Creeds bear upon their clasped hands, a truth not arbitrarily assumed, but which is common to human nature. And any system of religion or philosophy which does not recognize, in one form or another, these root-principles, cannot touch human hearts, and must, sooner or later, perish from sheer lack of human support and human sympathy. Have not these subtle dreamers of India dreamed something besides dreams?

"The primal truth Glimmers through many a superstitious form That fills the soul,  
with unavailing truth."

## Chapter Two—The Buddhist

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BUDDHISM is one of the sublimest religious phenomena that has visited this world. It is not a primitive religion, but was originally a feature of Brahminism; it is safe to remark, that the primitive types of all known religions, have only been approximately ascertained. Buddha was early worshipped by the Brahmins, as one of the incarnations or manifestations of Vishnu. He was looked upon, however, as a propagator of heresies, and the originator of all forms of skepticism. This designation, Buddha, was very likely given to the reformer, Sakya-muni, at first, by way of reproach, who, by a most remarkable life, raised it above obloquy, making it as distinctive and honorable, as Brahm, or any other descriptive term could have been.

The modern phases of Buddhism originated in Northern India, from five-hundred to a thousand-years B.C., and were sincere and manly efforts to restore certain early types of Brahminism, and free the people from a galling yoke of hierarchy and dogma. It was a dissent of human nature and philanthropy against the obnoxious Hindoo system of religious caste.

A few leading steps in the controversy between Brahminism and Buddhism are the following: Brahm, of Brahminism, is a passive intelligence, with which it was contended, that the sacerdotal orders only, may through Brahma, ultimately become purely identical.

The corruptions of the priesthood, as with the Roman clergy before the Reformation, after a while, brought a stigma upon this dogma. The more intelligent, among the people, felt that they were as good, and if as good, then as worthy of divine honors, as their Priests. This led them to demand for a God, a being less abstract and more active; one who can enter into fellowship, not with one class, the Priests merely, but with all classes alike.

These bold Protestants of their time and country, like Luther and the Reformers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, called upon their countrymen, not to trust the sacerdotal classes, not to worship them, or Brahm through them, but to become their own Priests, and worship, “not on this mountain” or that, but everywhere and directly the Universal Intelligence. These reformatory movements led to controversy, and were doubtless, inaugurated under severe persecution. The bloody Spanish Inquisition may have been anticipated.

As has always been the case with similar reforms, it was a time, too, of religious break-up, attended with many and diverse “departures.” The infidel philosophies, of India, probably took their rise in this period. Humanitarian, rationalistic, naturalistic, and materialistic parties appeared, contesting the pre-eminence of their several claims to universal respect. India must have had its Hobbes, its Voltaire, and possibly, its Frederick the Great. It is with not a little interest, we find the modern “Development” theory, started at this time, or near it, in the formula, “The rising of the world is a natural cause.”

But, too many interests supported Brahminism to allow it to be overthrown by infidelities worse than itself, or supplanted by a revolution better than itself, but which was not without its grand defects. The seed of skepticism remained, however, producing more or less fruit ever after.

Buddhism soon yielded, and her noble sages became pilgrims, and fled to other countries. The leading Spirit in this reformatory movement was Siddharta, of the family of the Sakya. He has borne the names of Sakya-muni, Sramana, Gautama, and Buddha.

He told the people that purity, abstinence, patience, brotherly love, and repentance were better than sacrifice. He, like Jesus, became the poor man’s preacher and friend, employed the language of the common people, and chose his followers out of all classes, even from among the poorest women.

The subsequent success of Buddhism, is well nigh, incredible. It spread with amazing rapidity, and has held its ascendancy with unparalleled vigor. It is today, the faith of Tibet, Siam, of the Burmese Empire, Cochin China, Japan, Ceylon, and is the popular, though not the state religion, of China. The later Yoga system of Brahmin asceticism was formed by the introduction of Buddhistic elements, and to Buddhism, is almost entirely indebted, for its success.

Buddhism, is therefore, in numbers, the most extensively prevailing religion that has ever existed in this world. It has not less than three-hundred million disciples. It holds under its sway, one-third of the globe, and perhaps, it might be worse held.

There are those who look upon this great religious movement as of no account. To say that it is not worthy of a moment's attention is easy enough, but argues a void in the speaker. Ideas which have exercised sway, over such multitudes must, from the nature of the case, have foundation in fact and truth. Upon their surface, there may be unseemly "parasite growths," but underneath, there are vitality and reality. Newman, is not far from correct in saying, that "the majority is always true-hearted." "What every man says must be true," contains truth. It is a late day for Christianity to fall into a jealous fit, for fear that she has something to lose from paying respect to the thoughts of so many men. There is truth in Buddhism, "an inward perennial truth," or there is truth nowhere. These fore-thoughts of Buddhists may be as good and the same as our after-thoughts. Sakya-muni peered, for a time, into the very heart and depths of divine things. His religious system is the "enormous shadow" of what he saw. His apprehensions may have anticipated and foreshadowed the similar apprehensions of all believers, in all ages. He looked and saw for others. "What he says, all men were not far from saying - were longing to say. The Thoughts of all start up, as from painful enchanted sleep, round his Thought, answering to it, Yes, even so! Joyfully to men as the dawning of day from night, is it not, indeed, the awakening for them from no being into being, from death into life?" from a night of nightmare into the tranquil smile of spring morning? The "perplexing jungle of Paganism," springs from a grand tap-root,

nourished by the soul's life and thought. Its root is embedded in human nature; its leaves can but exhale, something of truth. All admit that Christianity is the highest form of religious truth and thought. Buddhism approaches and makes obeisance: why scoff at it? Christians can afford to be something near as charitable as the Buddhist of Ceylon, who surprised a missionary by saying, "I respect Christianity, because I regard it as a help to Buddhism."

Recall some of its great lessons to the race. It taught, that not merely the Priest, but the vilest person of the vilest race, even if a woman, may become One with Buddha. The word *Buddha*, means pure intelligence - the Brahm of Hindooism. Buddha and Brahm are of cognate, if not of the same signification.

No thoughts known to the world could be, therefore, more inspiring to Brahmin or Buddhist, than identity with this divine intelligence of Brahm and Buddha. The cry, in fact, to all nations was, "Ho, every one that thirsteth," "without money," "without price," and "without Priest." thirsty humanity lifted its drooping eyes and exclaimed, "I would, and I *will*." Buddhism, also maintains, the highest administration for intelligence. The low estimate placed upon human life, by the Brahmin, the Buddhist could not brook.

Intelligence, wherever found, to him, is sacred. A drop of human blood must not be split. The laws of Gautama, rigidly forbid the killing of any animal, from the minutest insect even, up to man. Brutes are felt, by the Buddhist, to have intelligence. They even must not be offered in sacrifice. Their half-human faculties and affections are thought to be other forms of Buddha. Buddhism was, therefore, consistent and emphatic in saying to the world, "I will defend your life, for it is grand and sacred." "You need spill no more blood." "Hereafter crown your altars, instead with fruit and flowers." Affrighted humanity fleeing from the sacrificial knife, and crushed under the footfall of tyrants and Priests, heard the message, and said,, "I will - defend me."

Buddhism also advocated, not only the sacredness, but the infinite capacity, nay, the infinite actuality, of the human intellect. "The one infallible diagnostic of Buddhism, is a

belief in the infinite capacity of the human intellect.” Emerson, speaking of “the infinite enlargement of the heart, with a power of growth to a new infinite on every side,” and of the soul of man as, “an immensity, not possessed, and that cannot be possessed,” but reiterates sentiments, with which, Buddhism abounds.

It also taught that the Pure Intelligence, the Illimitable One, may be embodied, in an infant. It affirmed that men are not brutes, but the True High Priests of the universe, nay, even gods. It anticipated in the same Spirit the claim of Empedocles, “I am God,” indorsed by our New England philosopher. “The seer and the spectacle, the subject and object, are One.” It anticipated the Spirit of Revelation, but with different import. “I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are the children of the Most High.” It told the mother that her child need not, and must not, be plunged into the Ganges, but be reared; for in the image of God had it been Created, and “of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” No wonder that these declarations were hailed, as messages from Heaven, and that whole tribes and whole nations exclaimed, “We too, are Buddhists.” And who is not, in these respects, a Buddhist?

But again, to the Buddhist, belief in God, is the most constant and the most awful of all thoughts; and his relation to Him started strange and deep questions. Explanations were demanded; thence, other religious positions were taken. The Buddhist saw, for instance, that men are degraded; hence Buddha is represented as descending to earth, in order to raise men into a higher and purer life. The transcendental school holds, that this Buddha was not a real personage, but the imaginary or Spiritual character of a perfectly spotless being, God’s representative, an example and a Saviour.

Though Buddhism started out as a protest against the idea of any kind of intervention or formal mediation between God and man, and likewise, against the idea of sacrifice as an element of reconciliation, still, through a philosophical necessity, both these ideas gradually fastened themselves upon the system, though not in old and repulsive forms, yet in essential forms. Buddhism, in these, as also in certain other matters, has, like Roman Catholicism, been, beyond question, a flexible religion, and upon this, in a

measure, has depended its success.

Notice further developments: There is pure intelligence, and there is matter, said the Buddhist, but these positions inevitably lead to a third. There is a mediating influence or personage who occupies the intervening territory, and this is Sanga. The Buddhist's idea of the God-man appears also, in those ancient idols which represent God's illimitable greatness in colossal human forms. The solemn idea of sacrifice, strange and contradictory, as it may seem, also found an important place in the Buddhist faith. It is really the essential foundation of its view of human and divine relations. The Buddhist's deity, not the Priest, is to destroy man and perfect him, and perfect by destroying, and make perfect by absorption. The sacrificial idea, is thus retained, but the prerogative of it is left, not with the *caste*, but with God. The Sankhya Cajhila state, that "sacrifice is the best of all *temporal* means of elevation; but to arrive at the possession of the prerogatives of the wise, *wisdom* itself must be sought." The lofty idea here embodied is, that "temporal means," like the Jewish economy, must give place to something higher; yet, these temporal means must not be discarded. The purer Buddhist souls seemed to half-apprehend, that wonderful economy which embraces all others, and which does not abolish the idea of sacrifice, but sees that Divine Reason has somehow been offered, "once for all," and that there is no longer needed, a sacrifice of blood for sin. Indeed, the more we examine the Christian side of Buddhism, the more it seems to be crowded with points of light; though its dark side leaves its followers in deepest ignorance and superstition. Notice additional aspects.

The Buddhist believes, for instance, that it is the privilege of divine men to contemplate divinity in its purity. It is likewise the teaching of Christianity that good men may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.

This privilege, says the Buddhist, is obtained by sanctification. And thus, Jesus prays to the Father, to sanctify His disciples through divine truth.

Buddhism calls good men, Buddhas; Christianity calls them "sons of God." Buddhism

affirms and reaffirms, that there must be some One person, and he a human person, in whom “perfect wisdom” resides. He may be a child in form, but he must be a God in power. All other persons utter only a part of the divine mind, this One is Himself Perfect; “Utterance.” He is the Perfect Image. Thus, also Christianity points to One who is the Word, and in Whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

The Buddhist believes in the final loss of himself in some form of the Deity, perhaps the negative. The thought startles him, and almost induces non-belief. Nirvana, the absorbing One, is - Nothing. The Christian also holds to the well-nigh overwhelming thought of the union of Father, Son, and Spirit in One, which thought our Saviour extends, until it embraces all the pure in heart: “That they all may be One; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be One in us.”

We need not carry our investigations further. We have seen enough to convince us, that in Buddhism, there may be a “half-play,” but also “real earnest” - rubbish, but gold.

Yes, it may be asked, but has not too much been shown? Why the need of special revelations, if these seekers have come so near God’s facts? If Buddhism has done so much, why may it not do all? If so, near the truth, why may it not be the truth?

Suppose, philosophically, there could be no reply; there are facts. One is, that there is no joy in Buddhism, nothing but profound sorrow. With other lights about it, there is also felt to be for it, no further progress. Beyond the Mongol nations, it can never step. The system has truth, but is not *the Truth*; paths it has, but is not *the Way*; light it gives, but not *the Light*; and never so sterile have been its fields, as they are today. “It is now Atheism, fast emerging into utter Idolatry.” With these thoughts in mind, we may admit all that the admirers of the system claim for it. Nay, we are desirous of allowing that these devout thinkers deciphered, in a rude style, their inmost thoughts, which are also in most truths. They saw, simply, what all true and earnest men must always see. “There is a Delphi and a Pythoness in every human breast,” though not all are willing or know how, to listen. Externals change and pass away, but underneath the crust, there

are essentials, which remain forever. God loves truth wherever found, and will see to it that nothing harms it. No age in history has been a thoroughly dark age. God has always kept fires lighted upon some altars. "The whole Past, as I keep repeating," says Carlyle, "is the possession of the Present: the Past had always something *true*, and is a precious possession. In a different time, in a different place, it is always some other *side* of our common Human Nature, that has been developing itself. The actual True is the *sum* of all these; not any one of them, by itself, constitutes what of Human Nature, is hitherto, developed. Better to know them all, than misknow them." "To which of these three Religions do you specially adhere?" inquires Meister of his Teacher. "To all the Three," answers the other. "To all the Three; for they, by their union, first constitute the True Religion."

## Chapter Three

### THE GREEK AND ROMAN

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GRECIAN mythology presents a field so vast and attractive, of such lofty Spiritual development, and is so crowded with thoughts of the divine, that we hesitate before entering it, lest, while searching for the vital points demanded by our discussion, we be allured from the chief purpose, and linger here and there, until the ultimate design eludes us.

We shall not attempt, in this course, to follow the chronological order of development, because the chronological and logical orders, often seem at variance.

We also treat of the Grecian and Roman faiths, as though they were one. The earlier religion of the Sabines, who inhabited the hills of around Rome, is very little known. It

may have had an Indian origin, and may have slightly modified the subsequent Roman faith. But, Greek culture, so affected the Roman, that it seems dependent upon it. The same is true of its later mythology; it does not present itself, as essentially independent.

The only marked distinction is, that the aesthetic and moral character of the Grecian people was deified, while the deification in case of the Romans, had relation to their practical and political character. There was, in consequence, but little piety in Rome; religion was utilitarian. It was different for a time, at least, in Greece.

But setting aside these comparisons, we seek leading ideas. It is well known to all, that first and last, the God-idea pervaded to the fullest extent, the ancient Grecian faith. Pantheism nowhere appears. Grecian theism was, in vogue, long before the time of Homer, who, though the first theologian of Greece, invented nothing; he gathered up the thoughts of ancients and of his contemporaries and set them to music; he was the Grecian Ezra.

Tyler, shows clearly in his chapter on, "The Homeric Doctrine of the Gods," that correct attributes were theoretically ascribed to them; but their conduct, as represented, presents thereto strange incongruities. The false ideas are the invention of men, the correct ones are the intuitive and almost unconscious testimony of the reason and conscience of man, to the truth of God.

Aeschylus, the later "theological poet" of Greece, represents the supreme deity as "the universal father," "the universal cause," the "all-seer," and "all-doer," and "all-wise," and "holy," and "merciful," the "most high and perfect one, blessed Zeus."

The current expressions, "God grant," "if God will," "God bless thee." "God will make amends," "God does good, men ill," betray most clearly, a popular belief in God's unity. Tertullian, Cyprian, and Arnobius employ, with great force, against the Pagans, an argument based upon this thought.

The relations of Zeus, to the Invisible and Unknown, have not yet been well drawn. This Zeus-deity merely stands at the head of Grecian civilization, art, and poetry. The representations that he is universal and eternal, must be received with qualification, for he was always represented as *specific*, as well as *generic*. He brings the world into light, but his inviolable decrees *anticipated his own birth*, and he has father and mother; so that we may well ask, back of Zeus and back of Saturn, back of Coelus, or Uranus, and Terra, is - what?

Philosophy gives an indirect answer to the question. Pythagoras and Philolaus, tell us that "God" and "One" are the same. Zeno said, that no temples should be built to that deity, who is so far above all works of art and of artisans. Thales taught, that the formative principle of motion, somehow connected with water, is God. This reminds one of Mr. Carlyle's "Force," Darwin's "Development," and Huxley's "Protoplasm."

Apollonius taught, that no offering should be made to that God, who is called, the First. It was a dictum of Aristotle that "God, who is invisible to every mortal, is seen alone in His works." We perceive errors, undoubtedly, in these speculations, but they are errors that lie near or in the direction of truth. The *unit* of Pythagoras, the *infinite* of Anaximander, *water* of Thales, *air* of Anaximenes, the *symmetry* of Anaxagoras, the *good* of Euclid, the *one* and *all* of Plato, mean more than they express. "They stand for a great unutterable thought." They were stepping-stones in the majestic struggle of the human intellect towards the Invisible One, yet only stepping-stones. They were attempted solutions of the riddles and enigmas of divine manifestation, yet only attempts. We fail not to recognize, in these higher philosophical speculations of the daring minds of Greece, a vigorous but repeatedly baffled search, after God. And were this, as should be the case, the attitude of modern scientific speculation, it would no longer call forth, the antagonism of Christian faith.

But, these ideas of the philosophers, were too abstract, for the popular mind. We; therefore, discover a continual blending of the God-idea with the idea of a mediator. A tangible God was, from the nature of the case, resolutely demanded. Zeus answered

this description, for a season, and in the meantime, that which is beyond Zeus was, by the people, forgotten. The masses, in their search, lost heart when they reached Zeus, and would go no farther. From terror, wonder, or perplexity of the vastness of the All Soul, even the search for it was abandoned. It was, at this point, that Grecian idolatry began; and here, begins all idolatry. The moment, Zeus in Greece, and Jupiter in Rome, became the only generally recognized First and Father of all, that moment the earlier mythologies of Greece and Rome, except a few faint traces, were abandoned and lost; and lost, it will be observed, in consequence of an existing and absolute necessity of a mediator between the First God, whoever he is, and man. It is merely an unconscious repetition of what took place with both, Brahminism and Buddhism; nay, it is what occurs in every human soul, as well as in every religious system - an effort to clear away all rubbish, and find someone, or something, real and available, between God and man.

Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, as well as the masses of the people discovering no direct approach to God, were ever-looking for this *stand-between*. Hence, Porphyry and Phidias defended the popular image worship. Something for a mediator, there must be, they claimed; the what, was a matter of opinion. The popular Zeus-manifestation, could not long satisfy. He was too well known to the philosophers, and not well enough known to the masses. Socrates embodied a prevailing sentiment, when he said that the true religious philosophy for imperfect beings is "an infinite search after the divine." "What God is," he says, "I know not; what He is not, I know." He knew He was not Zeus.

"Believe in God and adore Him," said one of the Greek poets, "but investigate Him not; the inquiry is fruitless."

"O Jupiter!" said Euripides, "I know nothing of Thee but Thy Name."

How clearly these expressions embody Spencer's theory of the Unknowable. Forcibly do they confirm Hobbes's remark, "The Name of God is used, not to make us

conceive Him, for He is inconceivable; but that we may honor Him.” An echo, is all this, of the same sublime sentiment, which broke from the lips of Job - “Canst thou by searching find out God?”

In this confused condition of things, the leading minds of Greece vacillated between hope and despair; they went from the Peripatetics to the Stoics, and from the Stoics to the Platonics; but, all seemed alike shrouded in confusion, contradiction, and doubt. Plato significantly defined man, as the “hunter after truth.”

Diogenes lighted his lantern and walked the streets of Athens, in daylight, to find a - man; a faultless man; an ideal man; a leader to higher attainments. This effort of the Greek philosopher, calls to mind the similar challenge of the Hebrew prophet, “Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any, that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.”

The search, at times, seemed to end in despair. The elder Pliny was in so great darkness while attempting to understand the way in which the “immeasurable Creative Spirit” could be related to man, that he exclaimed, “What is God? If in truth, He be anything distinct from the world, it is beyond the compass of man’s understanding to know. It is a foolish delusion to imagine that the Infinite Spirit would concern Himself with the petty affairs of men. Man is full of desires. Man’s nature is a lie. The greatest good God has bestowed on man is the power of taking His own life.”

Philosophers were, at times, exasperated into avowing themselves atheists. Lucretius openly denied the existence of the gods, Euhemerus made sport of them, reduced them to a history of nature and to symbols of agriculture, and Plutarch, subtilized them. At other times, Nature was looked upon, as the tie between God and man. Plato, who was both, the most ultra of Spiritualists and the most ultra of materialists, found the chief divine manifestation in the outer universe. This was also a phase of ancient Persian worship.

There were two Gods in Plato's scheme, the Seen and the Unseen; upon the principle of the *Ego* and the *Alter Ego*. The universe was simply a Created God, "the only begotten universe." It was something "Whose body, Nature is, and God the soul."

Even the world, to Plato's mind, has a soul; therefore, it was, he thought, an animal. We can easily imagine him bowing to the stars, throbbing in the midnight heavens, and to the various forms of earthly beauty, as our New England philosopher gives his lusty morning salute to the whispering pine or the incoming ocean. But, Plato fondly and easily stepped from this materialism into Spiritualistic idealism. Nature, he felt, as we may presently see, was not the only tie between God and man.

Back of all this materialism and these troops of gods, we find in others, as well as in Plato, occasional glimpses of a really lofty Spiritualism. Such, most likely, was the original basis of all Grecian mythology. Mercury, the messenger of God, Perseus, born of a virgin, Hercules, who burned himself to death, Orpheus, Musaeus, Melampus, and Pompilius Numa of Rome, enter into a material, better, perhaps, an objective superstructure, which has a profound and everlasting Spiritual basis. As soon as the material form, or the personification, was presented, it caught the popular eye, and held it; and this was the heathen's necessity, but also his mistake. Much advantage, had the Jew; it rested chiefly, in His Scripture and authority.

It was so much easier for the Greek to speak of Phoebus Apollo, Pallas Athene, Aphrodite, Ares, Hephaestus, Hestia, Hermes, Artemis, than of the abstract powers of nature, which they were made to represent; and so very much easier than to dwell upon the Universal Abstract which lies, and is felt to lie, back of all, that they often fell into unbelief and listlessness. In their doubt and skepticism they came to worship the creature more than the Creator. Indolence is usually the nurse, if not the mother, of skepticism.

But the strongest incentive to the search, in case of the Greek, as with other nations, was the felt necessity of a mediator, who is able to remove human guilt. If he could not

do this, he was at once, dismissed. This matter of guilt always has been, and always will be, the fearfulest chasm between God and man. "No man is found," says Seneca, "who can acquit himself." "If you wish to be good," says Epictetus, "first believe that you are bad." "There is wanting," says Porphyry, "some universal method of delivering men's souls, which no sect of philosophy has ever yet found out."

These expressions are similar to Plato's earnest longing for emancipation and redemption; they are the anticipation of that wail, which broke from the soul of the great apostle, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

As might be expected, both from the nature of the case and from universal experience, different forms of sacrifice, among the Greeks and Romans, were resorted to, for relief. The earlier sacrifices of the Greeks consisted of human victims. These, were subsequently abandoned, still, sacrifice, in some form, and with some kinds of victims, was practiced to the last, excepting where a religious polytheism had given place to a blank atheism. Excuses for sin, based upon the derelictions of the gods, who were often represented, as partakers in human crimes, afforded no permanent relief. The dissatisfaction and the restless search for something to relieve and restore, continued. We, thus arrive at the basis of Grecian and Roman, as of all other forms of polytheism; they spring from desires and efforts to find God, and a mediator between God and man; one who can unite God, and save from guilt. This is a tenant of universal and essential theology. The gods are multiplied among heathen nations, because they do not, in these respects, satisfy. Greek sculpture rose to perfection, but rose while feeling after, if happily, it could find and reproduce, a God Incarnate; no other thought could have kindled such enthusiasm.

Every new God is, in fact, the product of deep desires, and shows that the search had hitherto, been comparatively fruitless. The hand, in its reaching, had hit upon something, but not the thing. Plato represents Socrates, as advising men to investigate and learn from others respecting these great themes, and then risk themselves, as on a raft, until they can be carried more safely, or with less risk, on a surer conveyance, or

some divine Logos.

A thousand years later, when Paul visited Athens, her inhabitants were still in search, and in public form, recognized the existence of the Unknown. These many gods of Greece and Rome, of Persia and Egypt, as also those of the Hindoo faith, are so many disappointments. They are meant for mediators, radiations of the supreme unity; but each has, after a while, received the slight and negative of the people in the suggestive cry, "We look for another!" Monotheism, as we have seen, has always been embosomed in polytheism, notwithstanding its million gods; and pantheism always has been, as it is today, an effort of cultivated thought to mediate between the finite and infinite.

"When men are questioned concerning the nature of divinity," says Maximus of Tyre, "their answers are all different; yet, notwithstanding all this prodigious variety of opinions, you will find one and the same feeling throughout the earth; viz., that there is but One God, the Father of All." There is here recognized, a universal religious consciousness.

It is true that all forms of ancient polytheism have suffered terrible corruptions. There is truth in the statement, that development, in all cases, tends "to sacerdotalism, ritualism, polytheism, and idolatry." It is not, therefore, surprising that the original conceptions, which the ancients attempted to embody, have been, in most instances, so strangely distorted as to escape recognition; still, the religious institutions which produced polytheism are, doubtless, of higher order, than those which leave to the world nothing save a cold, scientific and distant monotheism. Polytheism may have been the best expression of a new order of things that an unaided monotheism could devise. It is mediatorial throughout; nay, polytheism, rising from monotheism, may have been its prophetic announcement, that there cometh One, the latchets of whose shoes it could not unloose.

Before closing this course of Grecian and Roman mythology, we advance another

step, and call attention to two quite distinctly marked developments of thought, which we take the liberty of denominating Grecian *Humanitarianism* and Grecian *Spiritualism*. It is interesting to notice in these and modern theories, how often and fully the moral and religious world repeats itself.

The thought, in either case, it will be noticed, points directly to a mediator, who, is somehow human and, somehow, divine. At times, so strong was the inclination in Greece and Rome, to convert ordinary men into mediators, that great care had to be exercised by the philosophers, lest unworthy and ungodly persons should be elected to the office by vote of a fickle populace. Plutarch throws out his challenge and warning thus: "If any man, elated by arrogance, has claimed the attributes of a God, his career has ever been but short, and he has been ignominiously driven out, from the temple he desecrates."

Pindar placed the greatest stress upon overcoming the tendency among men to "confound the merely human and divine." To him, as to us, the line between the two is "unsurpassable." Unintentionally, however, some of the leading philosophers had fostered these popular impulses.

Pythagoras, Plato, and Euripides, for instance, had repeatedly set forth, in various forms, the thought that "men are mortal gods, and gods are immortal men."

The Greek, in common with the Oriental systems, though in different forms of development, held the opinion, that there is "an essential divinity in the eminently good man, and a possible association, or connection, of the Godhead with humanity."

It was believed, by some philosophers, that all men have power over nature, and that this power results from some kind of connection with the divine. There are, doubtless, grains of truth in these representations. But when they were caught up by the common people, who could not well wield them, they were so sadly perverted, that it came to be, in men's imaginings, no strange thing for the gods in human forms to walk the earth.

The usual effort on the part of the Greek, was to humanize deity; yet he sometimes yielded to the Spirit of Orientalism, and deified humanity. That was the popular Grecian Creed, which set forth, as fundamental, that the gods were nothing but children of women. Pythagoras was thought to have been a son of God. Aesculapius, is also, thus represented. At times Apollo displaced Zeus, and became the central figure in Grecian mythology. The Greeks and Romans were continually elevating the most ordinary men into intermediate or subordinate divinities, and, for the want of something better, their intense search centered itself, at times, in Hero-worship. In Rome, this idea was carried so far as, to well-nigh, shock us. Jupiter was practically dethroned, in order that man might be deified. As atheistically, France deified a prostitute, as Roman Catholics predicate divine attributes of the Pope, as the modern Mohammedan defies the Sultan, and as modern humanitarians deify humanity, so Rome deified her Emperors, though changing daily. The bald-headed and squint-eyed Caligula, became a God.

In the startling language of Gibbon, the emperor of Rome, was at once, "a Priest, an Atheist, and a God."

Such is humanitarianism, when carried to its logical extreme. Yet underneath, as with other forms of polytheism, there is something besides shadows. Here, are symbol and prophecy. But these extreme views were not received by all, or by most, of the best minds of Greece. And no wonder, for deified Nature, deified Heroes, and deified Emperors, never can satisfy the inquiries and wants of human souls. Souls are not content with toys, or make-believes, however gilded. Paganism answered no substantial purpose in these phases of it, and was never accepted by Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Anaxagoras, Pericles, or any of the thoughtful minds of antiquity, other than as an expedient. It was endured simply for the want of something better. There may have been some difficulty, in drawing the line between this, which we have termed, Grecian Humanitarianism and Grecian Spiritualism, but not so great, as at first, appears. There is an incompleteness in the system, but clear indications that these great minds were vigorously struggling towards the light in their search for the truth. Plato speaks of One, ideal or real, as we please to call Him, who embodies all that is

true in modern civilization. Let us designate that conception as Spiritualism; better, theistic Spiritualism. Why stagger at terms? This Super-human One that great philosopher called, "Logos," "Reason," "Shadow of God," "Ideal Man," "Secondary God," "Name of God," "Looker on God," "Divine Image," "Eldest of Ideal Things," "Undivided Association of the Supreme," "God of God," "Light of Light."

How strikingly these terms recall the language of the apostle, "The effulgence of the Father's glory, and the express image of his nature." If one of these conceptions be Spiritualism, why not the other, though not equally clear? Both, Socrates and Plato looked for the divine manifestation in human form. They believed it possible for God to become man, and in such condition, visit the earth. These thoughts, to whatever source we trace them, made a deep impression upon the Grecian mind, and were subsequently reflected from the Roman. Civero and Virgil employed very definite terms, respecting a coming supernatural Man, who would be able to satisfy the baffled intelligence of mankind.

Faith took shape in Seneca's mind thus: "No good man is Holy without God." "The wise or ideal man is the equal with God." How the thoughts of these men of Spiritual insight hovered about, though not fully comprehending the divine Logos! They were often in a kind of bewilderment - lost; but, in comparison with many others, how "delightfully lost!" The symbols and prophecies of the past, were with these men, at length, to be realized. But, pause - to find in the Pagan world, a higher and its highest type, we must go back.

Socrates anticipated Christian Spiritualism, if we mistake not, more perfectly than any other, outside the Jewish prophets, until Jesus came. We fix attention, for a moment, upon the last scenes of his noble life. He had taken, in his hand, the poison which he was condemned to drink, as a legal penalty for being true to truth, and then remarked, "It is certainly both, lawful and right, to pray to the gods that my departure thither may be happy; which therefore I pray, and so may it be." "And as he said this," says Plato, "he drank it off readily and calmly.....Having walked about, and saying that his limbs were

growing heavy, he lay down upon his back, for the man so directed him. Afterwards Socrates touched himself and said, that when the poison reached his heart, he should then depart. Later, he uncovered himself, -- for he had been covered over, - and said, - and they were his last words, - "Crito, we owe a cock to Aesculapius; pay it, therefore, and do not neglect it." "It shall be done," said Crito; "but consider whether you have anything else to say." To this question, he gave no reply; but shortly after he gave a convulsive movement, and the man covered him, and his eyes were fixed; and Crito, perceiving it, closed his mouth and eyes. This, Echecrates, was the end of our friend, a man, as we may say, the best of all his time, that we have known, and, moreover, the most wise and just."

This, we hear it said, is the death of a Pagan. But is there here no faith, no Christian theism even? Who was this Aesculapius, to whom Socrates looked, in the last moments of his life? An ordinary physician? No! Yet, a physician of whom it was reported that he could heal by the power of his word, or his touch, all manner of diseases that were brought to him. This Aesculapius was a god, the God of Restoration. He was the god, who once used the blood flowing from his veins, for the benefit of human beings. He was sometimes represented as the Light of the World; the One who gives repose; whose statue is the image and figure of Jove, slightly modified. He was represented, at other times, as seated upon a throne, holding in one hand a sceptre, in the other, the head of a *strangled serpent*. O, whence came these ideas? To this God-man, Physician, and Restorer, to this One who, more clearly than any other Grecian god, prefigures the Christian's Physician, Friend, and Saviour, Socrates, the great and grand prophet of Greece, looked, and feeling that this One, the most fully embodied, what the race needed, and what his own soul longed for, spoke his name, and died. In this act, there was no delirium, but an expression of the great beating and hunting heart of humanity. Here, was Christianity - beclouded. If a Christian be one who devotedly seeks God, through a mediator, then we know not, if a Christian lived on earth prior to Christ, why Socrates, was not a Christian.

"Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis." But, was Socrates faultless? Nay! Was

Jacob?

## Chapter Four--The Israelite and Ishmaelite

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The Israelitish religion rests upon the same basis as Islamism. They both distinctly recognize subjection to an absolute will as the vital point in their faith.

Belief in monotheism and antagonism, to idolatry, constitute their natural strength. Whatever is original in the two systems belongs, however, to the Israelite. Its Jewish origin shows itself in all its better features. The name for its sacred writings, Koran, is borrowed for the Biblical term, *mikra*, reading. Scholten, though, as some think, in error respecting other statements, is quite right in saying that "what is true and good in Islamism, was borrowed from Israel and Christianity." "Islam," says Carlyle, "is definable, as a confused form of Christianity." It has been well termed, "a heresy of Christianity." "We think," says Deutsch, "that Islam is neither more nor less than Judaism, adapted to Arabia, plus the apostolate of Jesus and Mahomet."

The Israelitish faith was, doubtless, partly natural; and may it not also have been partly supernatural? partly inspired by nature; and may it not also have been, in part, and in a peculiar manner, God-inspired? The basis of it is not distinctively Hebrew, but is, beyond question, natural and common to all the other Semitic nations. Let not this admission disturb the Christian believer. For were God to form a supernatural religion, he would not reject existing materials, did they answer His purpose. He is an Economizer, and always practices rigidly upon the precept enjoined by His Son, "Gather up the fragments; let nothing be lost." Nothing slips undetected through His fingers. Truth is His wherever found, and He is not ashamed to use and own it.

Among all the Oriental nations, there was a religious Spirit that arose above the worship of nature. Bel among the Babylonians, Baal among the Ammonites and Moabites, Molech among the ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians, Melkarth at Tyre and Carthage, and Jehovah, more properly Javah, of Israel, in each case, indicates a

conception of the unity of God, distinct from, apart from, and above nature. The religious sympathy between these nations was so strong, that the Israelites, notwithstanding the most resolute opposition of their prophets, constantly inclined to the worship of Baal and Molech.

The science of comparative philology, when applied to these Semitic religions, shows that they all had their “root originally in one and the same soil.”

The pure conceptions, which were reached in some individual instances, are seen in the old Canaanitish chieftains, Melchizedek and Abimelech, who worshipped the same God as Abraham; indeed, long before the patriarch reached the Land of Promise, and while his father was engaged in idol-making, the beautiful hills of Palestine were adorned with altars and smoking with sacrifices to the same One Being, who is found in the original development of Brahminism.

Yet, no one can look upon the Israelitish religion, as a whole, not as frequently practiced by the people, but, as always, taught by the prophets, and recorded in the sacred books, without discovering, that apart from these natural or common elements, there is also a marked difference in subsequent developments between it and all other Semitic religious systems.

Such are the facts in the case. The only really difficult question is to account, upon naturalistic grounds, for this “disposition,” and this advanced step of the people of Israel. Did Abraham really receive a special call, and were the prophets under special instruction? If we can give an affirmative answer, our path is clear of difficulties, otherwise, it is well beset.

The Israelites, first and last, were not philosophers. No people were less prepared to make religious discoveries; none, by dint of will or intellect, were more illy prepared to reduce religious haze and nebula to order and system. They did not make their religion; it seems to have made them. With obstinate tendencies towards idolatry, they were

kept, not to a cold and scientific, but to a lofty and inspiring theism.

Two centuries before Christ, there was written, in Alexandria, the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon. It is as philosophical, as anything in Jewish literature; still it is hardly a philosophy. The Spirit that pervades it, is metaphysical dualism. It holds, to what may be termed a personal God and a divine emanation. But its divine emanation is an idea, not a person. It is that which “fills all things, permeates the souls of the Holy, and is diffused like a luminous ether throughout the universe.”

Some of the sentiments of this book are pure, lofty, and dignified. It anticipated many truths subsequently enunciated in the Gospels. A “hope full of immortality” (Wisd. iii. 4); “the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God” (Wisd. iii. 1); “to know thee [O God] is perfect righteousness; yea, to know Thy power is the root of immortality” (Wisd. iii. 9), are beautiful and inspiring when viewed in the light of Christianity. The treatise, however, is indebted to Persian and Grecian thought, and especially to the utterances of Old Testament prophets, for its philosophy and for its sublime truth.

Of a later date, is Philo, the contemporary of Jesus. His is the only name in Jewish history that is worthy of the title, philosopher; and he is not original. He is Platonized through and through. His reasoning upon the nature of deity shows, that he stood comparatively independent of the prophetic schools, but not of the schools of philosophy. “When we attempt to investigate the essence of the Absolute Being,” he says, “we fall into an abyss of perplexity; and the only benefit derived from such researches is the conviction of their absurdity.” His God is not, therefore, the God of Abraham, but is an abstract being, who has no personality. Philo does not, however, stop in this state of despair; but, like a true Jew of the divine school, he says, “Unable to see God Himself, we may at least hope to see His image - the most Holy Logos, in whom, is comprehended the Most Perfect of sensible things -- the Universe.” But, here again, Philo’s Logos is never lifted from the region of abstractions. He, was perhaps, the Father of a modern notion that, “each man is the true Messiah and Saviour of himself.” We repeat, Philo, in laying any claims to philosophy, stands in the Jewish

commonwealth, almost alone.

The prophets and Jewish teachers were not, by the slightest pretence on their part, philosophers, nor can we institute any such claim for them. They indulge in no speculations about God. He is represented as Creating and Ruling. He is the "I am," and the Jehovah, -- the coming One. He is such and such, and there the prophets stop. Of His generic nature and substance, they never speak. Whatever may have been the tendency of the common people towards idolatry, polytheism, images of God and image-worship, their sacred books and their inspired prophets countenance nothing of the kind, but severely condemn all such approaches. The Hebrew prophets attempted to explain God no more than a child attempts to explain his father. Yet, to this sublime doctrine of theism, the Hebrew nationality, under the personal influence of their prophets and the teachings of their sacred books, in the midst of polytheism and idolatry, has clung during a period dating two-thousand years before, and extending to two-thousand years since, their exile. Israel stands, in this respect, without a parallel.

From the God-idea of the Israelites, we turn, for a moment, to that of the Ishmaelite. The first historic notices of the ancient nomadic tribes of the Arabian peninsula, find them worshippers of the stars, the powers of nature, sacred stones, imaginary angels, and images. But there was, doubtless, among them, a prehistoric religious epoch. It discloses itself in the worship of Allahtaala, and points to a more distant monotheism. It can hardly be questioned, that the stars, the powers of nature, and the like, were merely looked upon, at first, as mediators between the Invisible and man. They were way marks in the journey to the Infinite. In their influence, they played the part of a talisman. But, thoughts of the Unknown One, at length, confused the minds of these early Arabs, and they paid their devotions and offered their sacrifices, not to the "All," but directly and exclusively, to invented, mediating, and deified things. From this state of idolatry, they were first, effectually aroused, by Mohammed. He was no ordinary man, but one of the greatest; he was religious, not ambitious. Those who knew him best named him, "Al Amin," the Faithful. His purpose was to revive the religion of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Like Zoroaster, Sakya-muni, and Martin Luther, Mohammed was a Protestant

reformer. And like them, he, too, was no sham or false man. "A false man form a religion!" exclaims Carlyle. "Why, a false man cannot build a brick house."

He was born at Mecca (571), of a reputable family, belonging to the Koreish tribe. After his first public announcements, he suffered the various reverses of all reformers. He, at length, overcame the prejudices of his friends, organized troops, conquered Mecca (630), and made the Kaaba, the sanctuary of the new religion.

Islam (submission to God), is the word which embodies the doctrine of Mohammed, whence also, his followers take the name, Moslems. Nothing is truer or sublimer than this underlying principle of their faith.

"If this be *Islam*," asks Goethe, "do we not all believe in Islam?" The first public act of the reformer, was to abolish idols and idol-worship. At the same time, he pointed the people to the one, Allah. His purpose was not merely, to destroy, but to build up. In these acts, he was no coward, but full of daring. "This wild man of the Desert, with his wild, sincere heart, earnest as death and life, with his great flashing natural eyesight, had seen into the kernel of the matter. Idolatry is nothing; these wooden idols of yours, 'ye rub them with oil and wax, and the flies stick onto them;' these are wood, I tell you! They can do nothing. 'Allah Abkar, God is great.'"

But, Mohammed's philosophy is not so good as his heart. His Allah is enthroned on high, and in the strictest isolation from the world. Thus, by separating God, as the abstract Supreme Being from the world, Mohammedanism, as Scholten states, leaves no place for the doctrine of God's immanence. God's Spirit no longer dwells in man. The divine revelations, remain purely mechanical, with no natural, or, in the true sense, supernatural point of connection in man. Hence, there can be no enduring prophetism, which is the fundamental principle of Judaism and Christianity. From this separation between God and man, the Mohammedan doctrine of pre-destination, in distinction from the Christian, is abstract and fatalistic. Man has no free activity in which God's power and life are glorified, but is merely, a passive instrument of a higher power. To true

moral independence, therefore, the Moslem does not attain. His religion, as a whole, is legal and external, therefore, cold, intolerant, and exclusive; “and when Islamism, led by excited passion and a heated imagination, disregarded the sanctity of marriage, and held up, as a reward, before the faithful Moslem, a paradise characterized by sensual enjoyment, it missed, at once, the deep moral and Spiritual character of Christianity.”

Still, Mohammedanism, though a system of error, has done not a little, for the cause of truth. It has always held, to some tenets, which are common to both, Jewish and Christian believers. “It was wrong, and yet, not wholly wrong.” “Your salutation in Paradise,” it said, “shall be *Salem*” -- Peace. “Ye shall sit on seats facing one another. All grudges shall be taken away out of your hearts.” Such expressions would be, an adorning, to any religion. Prayer, hospitality, and benevolence, also occupy, a prominent place in the Islam faith. Belief in the future life, the Jewish-Parsee form of the resurrection, the final judgment, future rewards, and punishments are essential doctrines in the Mohammedan Creed. Belief in communications from the unseen Lord, to the pure and good, though contrary to the Spirit of their philosophy, is never called in question, by the followers of Mohammed. Indeed, they teach, that God, from the earliest times, revealed Himself to some privileged men, as to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus; and of those, thus favored, Mohammed is regarded, as the greatest and last of the prophets. In him, the revelations of God are thought to find their culmination and their end.

The Mohammedan soldier exclaimed, “God is One, and man is His minister to do His will on earth. Mahomet is his prophet.” He needed no additional incentive. He swept onward in his startling conquests. Those “dusky millions, have felt daily, a power in this watchword. Nightly, the watchmen of Cairo, when they cry, ‘Who goes?’ with the response will hear, ‘Allah abkar, Islam.’”

But, with Mohammed and the visible government of the caliph, the divine manifestation ends. No new prophet can arise. God is to remain unobserving, distant, cold. The Mohammedan, will henceforth, worship his faithful mare and the desert. The

new history with which Mohammed was to have the world begin, admits no additional step of religious progress. Their clarion shouts have already lost their startling effect upon the plains of Arabia. Here, in a system, that evokes no love, which impels submission, which is well characterized by the epithet, "a pantheism of force," end the triumphs of the Crescent. No further or closer connection with the divine, no atonement, no universal kingdom, inspire the people. As early history of conquests, based upon an intense belief in God, and in a divinely-inspired man, so intense, clear, and simple, as to leave scarce any room for heresy or schism, and a future history of defeats, are what remain. It is a "fatal legacy." It now acts "as, a gradual decay in every nation over which it dominates." Here is witnessed, the fact that a pure theism, without the power or possibility of manifestation, cannot live on earth. Such negation shocks human nature beyond endurance, saps the foundations of belief, and opens the door to practical atheism.

Long since Mohammedanism had found its grave, but for the imaginary connection between God and the Sultan. In this earthly sovereignty remains, for a while, a central, natural, and religious power. As a shadow of that which resembles the truth, it affords a temporary support. When this falls or is questioned, Islamism is no more.

We now pass to the personal God, and Messiah-idea of the Jewish faith, which draw a broad line between Judaism and Islamism. The faith of the Israelite was made, first and last, to centre itself in a personal deity, who is ever present with His children, and who interests Himself in all the affairs of mortals. The early prophets, without, for an instant, losing sight of a pure theism, have, at the same time, clear visions of a King, who shall be the "manifestation of God," His Perfect Image, the Son of Man, the Son of God, not the human Sultan, but the Divine Deliverer. Isaiah has given the world a vision, which, for clearness and sublimity, upon grounds of the coldest criticism, finds no equal among mortals. Amid scenes of terrible conflicts and utter darkness, he saw in the distance, a Light. He saw the joy of the people, heard their shouts, and depicted their deliverance. He saw the armor of war, laid aside, the image of Peace, succeeding, the Light expanding, becoming more and more intense, and the darkness, on every

hand, retiring. He gazed upon the wonderful scenes -- they were transformed, and there stood before Him, a little child, but one upon whose shoulders, the government of the world was placed. These prophetic visions produced impressions upon the Jewish heart, which for ages, were deeper than any other, and which have never been entirely obliterated.

It is a remarkable fact, that the Jews, though professedly strict monotheists, never attacked Christ or His disciples upon the ground of polytheism. They looked, in common, for a divine Messiah. "Make us gods, who shall go before us," the people demanded of Aaron. A deliverer, who should be a God, or a Son of God, was the strongest and deepest feeling in the heart of every Jewish patriot. The common people differed, it is true, in their opinions, as to the character of the Mediator. Some looked for a half-human and half-divine King. Others expected to see Him appear, in the form of a bloody conqueror. This was especially the case, after the Maccabean conquests. Nothing is more natural, perhaps, than for the nobility and courage of Judas Maccabeus, before whom, the vast armies of the Seleucidae disappeared, like morning mist, to furnish the Jew with an ideal Messiah. "This vision of the warrior archangel, was thenceforward, ever to float before their eyes." The masses were never quite able to understand how the empire of Messiah could be established by teaching, instead of fighting. Josephus thought he recognized the Divine One, in Vespasian.

But, there were others still, who looked for a Spiritual and Divine Reformer, a Saviour of the world. Such, when He appeared, were satisfied with Jesus of Nazareth.

These expectations, in various forms, were rife, not only among the School of the Prophets, but were talked of elsewhere. His name was heard more frequently than any other in the Schools of Hillel, Philo, and among the Essenes. The duty of every true Hebrew, was to consider it possible, for the Messiah to appear in Himself. These convictions, it may be noticed, were in part, the product of the prophetic writings, and in part, the prophecies of humanity. As in the case of the theism of Israel, so these Messianic longings and expectations had their natural and widespread basis, as well as

their supernatural and special development. God fosters what is common to human nature, instead of inventing what is foreign to it. He is no more a friend to one part of His work, than He is to another. If nature, which is God's child, and which He loves, were strong enough, He would allow her to produce, without interference, the Supernatural. "Natural," were it possible, would take the place of "Supernatural," "Selection," and "Development." God is jealous, not of nature, though of man. Yet, as things are constituted, the supernatural is the natural, carried beyond natural possibility; but, there is no change of directions.

The root-faith, in the subject before us, is belief in a mediating and Divine Prince. This is the product of a common understanding among men. No religion can be a universal religion, that does not recognize it, and God would not "gather up the fragments," did He not employ it, as a part foundation of His special providential and universal superstructure, whatever that may be.

The same statements, apply also, to the Israelitish idea of sacrificial atonement. There is a natural and universal basis, known and acted upon, long before special revelations in the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as a supernatural, ordained, and symbolic superstructure. Had he received no special directions, Abel would, nevertheless; have offered in sacrifice, "the firstlings of his flock."

The Jews represent their God, as ordering sacrifices. Why object? May it not have been a divine recognition of a human necessity? The sacrifice of human beings, even, was not, among the people of Israel, altogether unknown. But, excepting in great emergencies, it had not the divine approval. Shall the Jewish faith, on account of its sacrifices, be condemned, as entirely of human invention?

Take away the principle of sacrifice, from any people, or any religion, leaving no substitute, there would of necessity, be a void so awful, that conscience must be violated or permitted to fill it. Human nature has remained too long essentially the same, in this respect, to be revolutionized, by merely, natural expedients.

But, leaving speculation, return to the simple fact of the Israelitish faith in the Messiah. The belief was wide-spread. In common, the Jew and Samaritan looked for one greater than their father, Abraham. At His advent, the Jew expected to see his nation suddenly “exalted to new bloom and luster.” When Pompey entered the Holy of Holies, he was surprised to find no image. He did not understand that this sacred apartment of the Temple was in waiting for its True and Divine Lord and Master. With a half-glance, one cannot fail to discover, that the entire Jewish theocracy is made up from ideas of sacrifice, atonement, and a coming Messiah.

Scripture figures and types are, otherwise, meaningless. There is, upon any other supposition, no unity or force in Old Testament history, or prophecy. Introduce these elements, and there is one manifest object, from Adam to the origin of the Jewish commonwealth; from the prophets until “Behold the Lamb of God!” broke from the lips of John the Baptist. All incidental prophecies, histories, and biographies manifestly bear upon their surface, a Divine One. In Him, all sacrifices, rites, ceremonies, and types find their common centre and complete fulfilment. This explains those outbursts of feeling in the Jewish nation, which occasionally knew, no bounds. A wild “blaze of prophetic anticipation,” at times, swept over the people. It was the inspiring promise of His coming, which, in hours of adversity, brought every Jewish harp from the willows, and evoked their happiest songs of praise. The united anthems of the prophetic books, in force and beauty, will never be equaled. “I see Him, but not nigh. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river, unto the ends of the earth. Break forth into singing, and cry aloud. The Lord of Hosts is Thy Name. The Lord of the whole earth, shall He be called. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom, as the rose.”

The concluding Books of the Old Testament, are less inspiring, but have an intensity of meaning, rarely met, with elsewhere. These “short, convulsive sobs of a dying dispensation contain, in their broken and pathetic eloquence, many gleams of glorious hopes and splendid predictions, like the beautiful visions that cheer the death-bed of the sad and weary.”

The Jews of today, need not detain us. Their history is a sad one. Two-thousand years ago, they said, "the Messiah was then coming." They made extensive preparations to receive Him. Today, they say, He has not come. They have lost heart, and fall to worshipping Dollars. The essence of true worship with the Jew, is no longer, morality. The deep feeling of dependence on God and the spontaneity of religious life, are, among this people, rarely met with. Faith in the Most High, who, enthroned in Heaven, "puts purity into the closet, and allows the most intimate communion with the true worshipper," no longer characterizes this nation of hucksters. What next, they scarcely know. That He, *will come*, has been through history, a bond of union, but this today, yields to a bond of mutual and financial interest.

Alas, for the descendants of Abraham! Islam sees God, in the ruling Sultan, and worships a horse. Israel trembles upon the verge of atheism, and consecrates an altar, to Mammon

## Chapter Five--The Aboriginal American

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A review or comparison of religious thoughts would not answer its purpose did we leave from our account, as is often done, the original inhabitants of the American continent. Here, were peoples and nations, numbering in the aggregate, from ten to twenty-million souls, and speaking six-hundred different dialects. Here, was mankind presented under various phases, from brutal abasement up to, at least, a limited civilization. At the northern extremity of America, were the pygmy Esquimaux, a trifle above four-feet in height, and at the southern, the Patagonian giants of seven feet. Here, humanity has unquestionably existed, in such numbers, and of such character, as to demand attention, if we correctly settle what are some of the religious ideas, which are innate or common to the race.

The Indians, who occupied both sides of the Alleghany Mountains, upon the arrival of the English Colonists, possessed the same general characteristics. They loved their respective tribes, treated their wives cruelly, and their children with indifference. The grand element in the Indian character, is stoicism. The Indian is gloomy, stern, severe, and is a stranger to mirth and laughter. He desires, above all things, to be let and left alone. He has, however, deep religious convictions. His Supreme Being is the Great, sometimes called, the Good Spirit. There were tribes -- for instance, the Natchez, near the Mississippi -- who worshipped the sun, and erected temples, upon whose altars, as in the Jewish Temples, they kept a perpetual fire.

Others -- for illustration, the Araucanians of South America, who, in true courage, in manliness and energy of character, take precedence of all the original American nations, and who maintained their independence against the best troops and the best generals of Spain for two-hundred years, while they intensely believed in a Supreme Being, have neither temples, nor idols, nor religious rites. The Indians generally, if not universally, believed in a future state; their descriptions make it resemble, the heaven of

Mohammed.

The good and brave, according to their belief, enter beautiful and eternal hunting-grounds; the wicked fall into the hands of a relentless master. Their religious thought and Spirit threw coloring over every object of nature. There was a kind of theistic naturalism. The melodious names they gave to mountains, lakes, and rivers are suggestive. Their "Smile of the Great Spirit," "The First Good," and the "First Fair," enthrone truth, and hint to us, the past poetico-religious character, even of the unsettled and savage tribes of America. Of the settled and partially civilized nations, we call attention, especially to two.

The largest empire in the early history of America was the Peruvian. Her people were unwarlike, and devoted themselves to art and agriculture. The government was an absolute despotism, based upon a strict theocracy. This feature mitigated largely, the rigors of its constitutional despotism. The temporal sovereign of Peru was, like the Monarchs of Egypt and Japan, the Supreme Pontiff. He also assumed, like the Emperor of China and the Catholic Priest, the title "Father of the People." He was regarded, as the descendant and representative of the great deity, the Sun, who was supposed to inspire the Pontiff's Councils and speak through his orders and decrees. The race of the ruling Incas was held sacred, and their claim to celestial origin seems, by the people, to have been implicitly believed.

The founder of the line of the Incas is to the Peruvians what Buddha is to the Buddhists. Not far from eleven-hundred of our era, Manco Capac, with his wife, and Mama Ocello, his sister, appeared as strangers upon the banks of the Lake Titicaca. Doubtless by some fortune of the sea, they or their ancestors had drifted from the shores of China. They brought with them, the principles of a higher civilization and purer religion than those of the native Peruvians. They were taken to be "children of the sun;" were believed in; then worshipped.

How naturally and fondly humanity worships a deity in human form! The people of Lystra exclaimed, when they saw the deeds of Paul and Barnabas, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men!" and prepared their garlands and oxen for sacrifice.

Manco Capac, like Sakya-muni, Zoroaster, and Odin, was a religious reformer. Like Quetzalcoatl of the Mexicans, the Bochica of the Muyscas in New Grenada, and the Camarara of the Brazilians, so Manco Capac was looked upon by the Peruvians, as God-sent. May he not have been? Whose are the world's reformers, her teachers, prophets, and workers of miracles? May not the same providence which sent Paul and Barnabas to Lystra, have also sent Capac and Ocello, to the shores of Peru? Who governs the affairs of this world, God, man, or chance?

The Peruvians, like the Chinese, worshipped the sun, the moon, the evening star, the Spirit of thunder, and the rainbow. To these deities they had temples erected in Cusco, as the Chinese have in Peking. Their sacrifices consisted of those objects of their own industry which were most highly prized - fruit, grain, and animals.

The story of Manco Capac and Mama Ocello, and the beneficence of the ruling Incas, is to-day fresh in the memories of the Peruvians. The accounts have been handed down from father to son, with fondest admiration. Abraham is no better remembered among the Jews.

Three centuries of humiliation and misfortune have not blasted their hopes. They will not rest, nor will the Indians of the territory of Quito throw off their mourning dress of black, until their Incas, this race of the sons of God, return for their relief and restoration. Suffering humanity, thou shouldst have a universal Restorer!

Next to the Peruvian, ranked the early Mexican empire. Probably not far from 500 of the Christian era, the Toltecks first occupied the Mexican tablelands.

The ancient towns and cities visited by Stevenson, which have been, for ages,

partially covered by dense tropical growths of vegetation, and which point to an earlier civilization than that existing at the time of the Spanish conquests, were undoubtedly of Tolteck construction. Five or six centuries later, the Toltecks were subdued by the Aztecs, or Mexicans Proper, who upon the ruins of this earlier and higher civilization, erected their own.

When Cortez made his conquest, the eighth of the Montezuman line of Monarchs ruled a territory of one-hundred-and-thirty-thousand square miles, containing two-million subjects. The government was under an arbitrary aristocracy of Priests and Nobles.

Their Temples of worship were upon the same architectural plan as that of Belus at Babylon. They had a complicated system of theology. It was unique, in many particulars, but in others, strongly resembled that of the Persian fire-worshippers, and in still other respects, it reminds one of the faith of the Hindoos of the Ganges. They recognized One Supreme God, the "omniscient" and Invisible." Yet, like all other nations, they sought relief in mediations and incarnations. Hailzilopotchli and Tezcatlipoca were the chief deities, to whom, sacrifices were offered. These are approachable, because they are gods, born of women.

But, the people were not satisfied, and, like the Egyptians and Buddhists, the Greeks and Romans, the Goths and Vandals, they invented other divinities, still more human. They desired a Being, who could walk in their midst, heal and comfort them, and in the hem of whose garment there should be virtue. Quetzalcoalt came, and answered the conditions, and inaugurated the Golden Age of Mexico. He was probably a deified person, like Zoroaster, Buddha, and Odin. He was, according to their accounts, subsequently expelled from the empire, by a Superior God. But the Aztecs, year after year, looked and longed for his return. At first, they mistook Cortez, for this returning deity. How much this had to do with their conquest, it is not easy to estimate. The Aztec religion appears to have been cruel and savage, beyond measure. Women and children, as well as men, were mercilessly sacrificed. The highest estimates of victims (human) throughout the empire reach fifty thousand annually. At the dedication of one

of their great temples the procession of victims extended for the distance of two miles.

A certain ceremony in honor of Tezcatlipoca, who ranked next to the Supreme and Invisible One, is to us, painfully interesting and suggestive. This deity is represented, as a man, faultless in form and beauty, and endowed with perpetual youth.

A captive youth, remarkable for personal beauty, was selected to represent him, to whom divine honors were paid for a year. Then, amid imposing and solemn ceremonies, he was publicly executed - an atonement for the people.

The stories of these repeated tragedies are appalling. They show what fearful and bloody coverings are sometimes thrown over truths which are fundamental to the race. This young man, of faultless form, of perhaps thirty and three years, made the representation of deity, the God-man of the Empire, and led forth, as a sacrifice for the people, awakens in the heart of humanity, a thought which, when once awakened, never slumbers.

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