

# THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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No. 2.—April, 1880.

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## I.

### THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

SMITH'S Dictionary of the Bible, in the article on the First and Second Books of Kings, by Lord Arthur C. Hervey, publishes a good many statements like the following :

“It must, however, be admitted that the chronological details expressly given in the books of Kings form a remarkable contrast with their striking historical accuracy.”

“When, therefore, we find that the very first date introduced is erroneous, and that numerous other dates are also certainly wrong, because contradictory, it seems a not unfair conclusion that such dates are the work of an interpolator trying to bring the history within his own chronological system ; a conclusion somewhat confirmed by the alterations and omissions of these dates in the LXX. As regards these chronological difficulties, it must be observed they are of two essentially different kinds. One kind is merely the want of the data necessary for chronological exactness. Such is the absence, apparently, of any uniform rule for dealing with the fragments of years at the beginning and end of the reigns.” “And this class of difficulties may probably have belonged to these books in their original state, in which exact scientific chronology was not aimed at. But the other kind of difficulty is of a totally different character, and embraces dates which are *very exact* in their mode of expression, but are erroneous and contradictory. Some of these are pointed out below, and it is such which it seems reasonable to ascribe to the interpolation of later professed chronologists.”

“Now, when to all this we add that the pages of Josephus are full in like manner of a multitude of inconsistent chronological schemes, which prevent his being of any use, in spite of Hales' praises, in clearing up chronological difficulties, the proper inference seems to be that no authoritative, correct, systematic chronology was originally contained in the books of Kings, and that the attempts to supply such afterwards led to the introduction of many erroneous dates, and probably to the corruption of some true ones which were originally there. Certainly the present text contains what are either conflicting calculations of antagonistic chronologists, or errors of careless copyists, which no learning or ingenuity has ever been able to reduce to the consistency of truth.”

Abundant similar statements, in regard to either the chronology of the Israelite and Judaite kings as a whole, or to particular dates in this chronology, may be found in other ar-

## VII.

### THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

ARE the claims of the religion of Christ absolutely exclusive of those of all other religions? Have we or have we not the right to speak of it as the universal religion? Granting that Christianity is the best religion for us, grant even that it is really the best in itself, alone and incomparably superior to all the other religions of men, is it true that in the present state of the nations of the world, it is practically the best for all peoples, and has any exclusive claim upon the faith and allegiance of all mankind? This is one of the questions of the day. And it is to be observed that neither of the assumptions made is such as in itself to compel an affirmative answer to the question. It is, without doubt, quite conceivable that of two or more religious systems, one should be essentially superior to the rest, and yet not be the best, all things considered, for a particular people or age. We shall easily be able to see this, if we take, for example, any two non-Christian religions, as, *e. g.*, Islam and Buddhism. And the same thing may be true as regards two religions admitted to be supernatural revelations. As Christians, we believe what is implied in the statement of the apostle Paul, that Christ was revealed in "the fulness of time;" that for a former dispensation, Judaism, although a form of religion inferior to Christianity, was better for the time than present. Paul states in a single sentence, both the fact and the reason of it, as follows: "When we were children, we were in bondage under the elements of the world." Judaism had a mission; the fulness of time had not come for the revelation of the Christ of God, and Judaism, though not better than Christianity for our time, was better for that time. This we shall all admit, as regards Judaism and Christianity. May we not extend the application of the principle, and suppose that in like

manner, although the religion of Christ may be both best for us and best in itself, yet other religions, as, *e. g.*, Islam, Buddhism, Taouism, although far inferior in themselves, and unsatisfying to *our* minds, may still be best adapted to the people who receive them?

Many are ready with a prompt affirmative to this question. It is plausibly urged that the very fact that a particular religion has secured acceptance with any people, is *prima facie* evidence that it has met their conscious wants and satisfied them; if not, why did they receive it? That it does not satisfy us does not prove, it is said, that it cannot satisfy them, but only that with that other people the religious consciousness is less developed, or developed differently from what it is with us.

This view of the case very naturally commends itself to all, whether atheists, agnostics, or deists, who agree that there is no such thing as a supernatural revelation, and that, of consequence, all religions alike are of merely human origin and authority. Thus Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his "First Principles," pp. 115, 117, 119, argues that all religions, although all alike false, may yet be useful and even necessary in their place. He says: "We shall be under the necessity of contemplating the ultimate existence as *some* mode of being;" "and," he adds, "we shall not err in doing this so long as we treat every notion we thus frame as merely a symbol, utterly without resemblance to that for which it stands." This forming erroneous notions about God, only in due time to reject them, he thinks may yet be very useful as an intellectual discipline. Moreover, although no religion gives us anything like the truth about God, yet, he argues, "a real adaptation exists between an established belief and the natures of those who defend it." In fact, the false belief or system of belief may be a real necessity, meeting a real need. He says: "As certainly as a barbarous race needs a harsh terrestrial rule . . . so certainly does such a race need a belief in a celestial rule that is similarly harsh." Indeed he thinks that "even now, for the great mass of men, unable through lack of culture to trace out with due clearness those good and bad consequences which conduct brings round through the established order of the unknowable, it is needful that there

should be vividly depicted future torments and future joys." Whatever may be our opinion as to the truth of his statement that a savage race of men really need to think of God as "savage" and "diabolical," we must at least admit, that in the views set forth as to the relative claims of various religions, Mr. Spencer is at least for this once not inconsistent with himself.

It is, however, a matter of more wonder when we find men who are neither atheists, agnostics, nor deists, but who profess to believe that the religion of Christ is a supernatural revelation from God, hasten, in the exceeding breadth of their charity, to express similar opinions. In the winter and spring of 1874, a series of four lectures on "Mohammed and Mohammedanism" was delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, by a Mr. Bosworth Smith. The course was shortly published in a book with the above title, which met with such a degree of acceptance, that in about a year a second edition was required. This work affords an excellent illustration of the line of thinking to which we refer. Mr. Smith is far enough from Mr. Spencer in his philosophical position. In a word, he is careful in the most emphatic terms to declare his faith in the Christian religion as a true revelation from God to man. Comparing the religion of Mohammed with that of Christ, he says: "The religion that he taught is below the purest form of our own, as the central figure of the Mohammedan religion is below the central figure of the Christian—a difference vast and incommensurable."\* The character of Mohammed he admits to have been "weak and erring;" and, in contrast with this, goes on to say, that the challenge of Christ, "'Which of you convinceth me of sin?'" has never yet been fairly met, and that at this moment the character of Jesus of Nazareth stands alone in its spotless purity and unapproachable majesty." Nor is this all; for he continues: "Is there one thoughtful person among us who has ever studied the character of Christ, and has not, in spite of ever-recurring difficulties and doubts, once and again burst into the centurion's exclamation, "Truly, this was the Son of God"? Finally, he admits that "the methods of drawing near to God are not the same in the two religions;" that, in

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\* "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," p. 344.

fact, the Mohammedan "can hardly be said to approach God" at all; but he "gains the knowledge of God by listening to the lofty message of God's prophet." "The Christian, on the other hand, "believes that he approaches God by a process which, however difficult it may be to define, yet has had a real meaning to Christ's servants, and has embodied itself in countless types of Christian character—that mysterious something which St. Paul calls a union with Christ."\* For all this, Mr. Smith denies that Christianity has any exclusive claim to the allegiance of men. On this point, he states his views as follows: "No religion is exclusively good, none exclusively bad; any religion which has a real and continuous hold on a large body of mankind must satisfy a real spiritual need and be so far good. . . . What we have to do is to feel after God in each and all, assured that He is there, even if, haply, in our ignorance we can find no trace of Him."† And so he thus speaks of Islam: "Sublime, eternal, unchangeable as its god, Islam appears to its votaries a religion worthy at once of the worshipper and of the being they worship. And is it for us to say that it is not?"‡ And again he expresses the conviction that "the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day agree in yielding to Mohammed the title of a prophet—a very prophet of God."§ Hence we are told that "there are two factors to be considered in testing the value of religion in any given case—the creed itself, and the people who receive it."|| That is, although Christianity is incomparably superior to every other religion, yet before we can decide whether it be on the whole the best religion for a given people, we must first know the people. Thus he tells us that "under the peculiar circumstances, historical, geographical, and ethnological," which we find in Africa, not Christianity, but Islam, "is the religion most likely to get hold on a vast scale of the native mind, and so in some measure to elevate the native character."¶ In like manner he regards Islam, and not Christianity, as the religion which is likely to prove the permanent faith of India. "Buddhism and Brahmanism may be driven out of India, but Mohammedanism never, except by the Mohammedan's method of the sword."\*\* Indeed, in another place, this apostle of a universal

\* "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," pp. 293-295.

† *Ib.*, p. 63.

‡ *Ib.*, p. 306.

§ *Ib.*, p. 344.

|| *Ib.*, p. 296.

¶ *Ib.*, p. 56.

\*\* *Ib.*, p. 59.

charity expresses the opinion that Mohammedanism is "perhaps the nearest approach to Christianity which the unprogressive portion of humanity can ever attain in masses;" and, he adds, suggestively, "how large a part of the whole human race are unprogressive!—progress is the exception and not the rule with mankind."\* What all this means is summed up in the preface to the first edition, where he tells us that he "believes that there is a unity above and beyond that unity of Christendom which, properly understood, all earnest Christians so much desire; a unity which rests upon the belief that the children of one Father may worship Him under different names; . . . that they may all have one hope, even if they have not one faith."† Thus, though by different roads, the agnostic and the broad churchman reach the same practical conclusion. With Mr. Spencer and his school, Christianity is the best of many religions, all more or less false; with Mr. Smith, it is the best among many religions, all more or less true. Both agree, that in any case the religion of Christ has no claims exclusive of those of other religions; and that the question as to what religion may be best adapted to a particular people, is one which can only be answered when we know the people themselves. But that a religion prevails among a given people is of itself *prima facie* evidence that it really meets and satisfies their needs.

We have set forth these views with somewhat of fulness and detail, and not, we venture to think, without some reason. We suspect that they are much more common than many would imagine, and, in a form half-defined, influence the thinking of not a few who pass with themselves and others for orthodox Christians. Whatever may be any one's opinion as to their essential correctness or otherwise, there can be no doubt as to the importance of the question raised. This is true whether we regard them in their bearing upon our doctrinal belief or upon our practical duty. In the first place, if we take even the scantiest fragments of the New Testament, which a certain type of modern criticism would leave us, it is plain that the writers of our gospels and first preachers of the religion of Christ had no such views as we have set forth. Ac-

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\* "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," p. 295.

† *Ib.*, p. xxv.

According to their account, the charge which they received from Jesus Christ ran thus: "Go teach all nations!" "Be my witnesses unto the ends of the earth!" They were, moreover, to demand instant faith in the message under the penalty denounced by the authority of Christ, of the condemning wrath of God in the day of judgment. If, however, Mr. Bosworth Smith is right in the views which he advocates, then one of two things is true: either Christ taught this Broad Church Gospel, in which case all His first disciples misunderstood Him; or they did not misunderstand Him, in which case Christ Himself was mistaken. In the former case we cannot trust Christ because we are not sure enough of the record to know what He really taught; for who knows how much else may have been misunderstood? If we accept the record, then we know that Christ made a mistake in giving His disciples the great commission. Thus, in the second place, it will follow, on the above supposition, that the charter and commission, on the strength of which the Church has done, and is still doing, her great missionary work, and which has ever been, and still is, the inspiration of her most heroic deeds, is utterly invalid, and her work, however benevolent in intention, has behind it no divine warrant. We dare not any longer preach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned," for we do not know whether this be true or not. This modern interpreter of the Gospel of Christ gives the missionary a very different charge; he says that no serious-minded person could wish the Mohammedans to give up their unflinching belief in the divine mission of their prophet; and tells Christian missionaries that "if they are ever to win over Mohammedans to Christianity, they must alter their tactics; . . . must not discredit the great Arabian prophet, nor throw doubts upon his mission, but pay him that homage which is his due,"\* which, whether it be true or not, again we insist, is in obvious contrast with that which the Church, for the past eighteen hundred years, has understood to be her message to the nations.

After this full statement of opposing views, we return to the

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\* "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," pp. 336, 342.

question with which we started: Do the claims of the religion of Christ exclude, or not, those of all other religions? In so far as the negative of this question is argued from atheistic, agnostic, or deistic premises, it is plain that the validity of the conclusion stands or falls with the validity of those premises. If either there be no God, or if He cannot be known, or if, for any reason, a supernatural revelation from God be impossible, then, of course, it is perfectly clear that Christianity can have no exclusive claim upon the faith of men. On any of these suppositions Christianity, in common with all the other religions of the world, is a purely human thing, and can have no more authority than is possible to any set of fallible human opinions. On this assumption, Mr. Spencer's conclusion is quite reasonable, that as one form of civil government may be best adapted to one time or people, and another to another, so also it may be in religion; and that the whole question as to what form of religious belief, if any, may be the best for a certain people, is purely one of expediency. From this point of view it is plain that any argument for the exclusive character of the claims of the religion of Christ, must be, first of all, an argument for theism as opposed to anti-theism, or for supernaturalism as opposed to naturalism. Till these questions are settled, it is clear that all other arguments are irrelevant. If, however, we assume here the validity of the argument for theism and against deistic naturalism; if, for example, as against Mr. Spencer, God, though not to be comprehended, may yet be really and truly known to exist and to be possessed of certain attributes; if, moreover, as against the deist, it be granted that it is inconceivable that a free, personal, and almighty Spirit, the creator of the world, should not have the power of revealing Himself in a manner supernatural to His intelligent creatures, then we at once confront the question whether there has ever been such a revelation of the will of God to man; and, granting that we have such revelation in the religion of Jesus Christ, the question whether it be the only revelation of divine authority to man, is now before us. In the present article we propose to deal with this question as to the exclusive claims of the religion of Christ, not as raised by unbelievers, but by professed believers in that religion as a divine and supernatural revela-

tion. In the comparison of religions, which may be necessary to our argument, we shall restrict ourselves to the three religions of Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Islam. There is abundant reason for this selection. They represent severally three distinct lines of anti-Christian opposition, namely, Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism; with the exception of Christianity and Judaism, they will be admitted to represent the highest existing types of religion; and finally, as a matter of fact, the three, between them, stand pre-eminent in the number of their votaries, which, according to the latest estimates, can hardly be less than 800,000,000 of the human race.

What precisely is the question before us? It is not on the present occasion, whether Christianity be a true revelation from God. This is admitted on both sides. It is not whether or not all religions have in them somewhat of essential moral truth. This again is freely granted. It is often persistently assumed that those who affirm the exclusive claims of Christianity ignore or deny the existence of spiritual truth in other religious systems; but the assumption is utterly false. The writer has had abundant opportunity to observe that, in India for example, both native and foreign missionaries continually avail themselves with gladness of the many testimonies to the truth of God which are scattered through the sacred books of the people. But it is to be further remarked that it seems to be constantly forgotten on the other side, that the mere presence of truth in an alleged revelation is not enough to prove that it is really such, except it can be shown that the knowledge of such truth in any case could only be obtained in a manner supernatural. God has revealed Himself in the physical universe. "The heavens declare His glory." He has revealed Himself in the moral nature of all men, so that Paul expressly says, that in this way they who have not the written law "are a law unto themselves." It is perfectly plain that the recognition and expression in any religion of truths revealed in nature to all mankind, cannot of itself warrant us in inferring that the religion in question is, in any proper use of the terms, a supernatural revelation from God. Nor should we forget that truth supernaturally revealed may easily be borrowed by one religion from another. But its presence in that religion, under such conditions, obviously gives us no reason to

speak of that religion as a divine revelation. Not only is this hypothesis quite possible, but it is the notorious fact that the Koran in particular is full of ideas which indeed could not have been derived from the revelation of God in nature, but which have been taken directly from the Christian revelation. Mr. Smith's whole argument to prove that Mohammedanism is entitled to be regarded as no less truly than Christianity a revelation from God, is marked by entire forgetfulness of these almost self-evident principles. He comprehends his whole argument to prove that Mohammedanism might almost be called "another form of Christianity," under the three following heads: its monotheism; its spirituality, as opposed to all sacerdotalism and idolatry; and, finally, its reverence for Christ. But when we apply the simple test above suggested, the argument at once collapses. For, as regards the monotheism and the spirituality of Islam, to say nothing of the influence of Jewish and Christian tribes scattered in those days throughout Arabia, Mohammed could certainly have learned all that, and doubtless did in the first instance, from the works of God without him and within him, as did the Hanifites and seekers after God such as Zaid and Waraka, who appeared in the moral darkness of Arabia in those days. As for his reverence for Christ, it requires surely no hypothesis of a supernatural revelation to explain that. His familiar intercourse with Christians is a quite sufficient explanation. To sum up this part of the argument, we may safely challenge any one out of all the treasures of Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Islam, to produce any moral sentiment or truth or religious idea which cannot be accounted for except on the hypothesis of a supernatural revelation within the sphere of that religion; a single fact or truth which might not have been learned either from the light of nature, or, as in the case of Mohammedanism, from either Christianity or Judaism. The contrast in this case with the Gospel is too evident to need more than a mention.

Nor, in the third place, is the question before us whether or not other religions than the Christian or the Jewish may not have been, or still be, in some sense schoolmasters to bring men to Christ. This is freely admitted. In such a case, of course, it will be true that they will have a certain adaptedness to the peoples among whom they prevail. But adaptedness to

the requirements of the divine government is by no means the same thing with adaptedness to the spiritual needs of sinful men. Thus we may freely admit that the non-Christian religions have an indispensable and necessary place and function in the plan of the divine government. But it does not follow that they were therefore from God, or that their place and function is to lead men into peace and reconciliation with God. "Behold, is it not of the Lord of Hosts that the nations shall labour as in the very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity?" But that does not prove that the "vanity" is from God.

But the question is precisely this: whether Christianity is or is not the only revelation from God of present authority, which has come, not in any way of mere nature whatsoever, but in a way above nature, as a direct communication from God to man; and whether, this being so, its claims upon the faith and allegiance of men are instant, universal, and exclusive of those of every other religion whatsoever.

The first and most obvious fact which bears upon the answer to this question is the simple fact that the Christian religion indisputably claims for itself just this position. The truth of this statement does not depend upon our views as to the nature or extent of inspiration of the New Testament, or of any part of it. Whatever any one may think about these matters, the fact remains that the New Testament is at least the highest extant historical authority as to what Christ and His apostles may have believed and taught. And it lies on the very face of this record that the religion of Christ, as therein set forth, claims an authority which is utterly exclusive of all like claims made from any other quarter whatsoever. It claims to be, not one of many more or less full and complete and divinely given religions, but, in its historical connection with Judaism, the one only religion supernaturally revealed from God to man. It claims to set forth, not *a* way of salvation, not the *best* way of salvation, but the *only* way of salvation. This is indeed involved in the very command to preach this Gospel to, not some, but "all nations." If that Gospel be not equally adapted to the needs of all nations, then Christ herein made a great mistake. In denouncing damnation against all who, hearing, should reject it, He was guilty of the greatest

injustice. But this is not merely inferred, but it is again and again broadly and categorically asserted. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." "He that believeth on the Son hath life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." Such, then, are the undisputed facts of the record. What is to be done with them? The religion of Christ, judged by the only documents which profess in any authoritative way to expound them; judged, moreover, we may add, by the whole history of its early propagation, makes a claim explicitly excluding all other religions from the same category with itself. Instead of teaching us to regard Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, and other leaders and founders of the ethnic religions, as Mr. Smith and his like would have us, as prophets of God, Christ and His apostles stigmatize all such as "false prophets," "antichrists," and "thieves and robbers," who "come not to save, but to kill and to destroy." What, again we ask, is to be done with these facts? If it be asserted that we have not in such sentiments a part of the original teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, we demand the evidence to prove the assertion. We ask for so much as a trace of the contrary doctrine in the New Testament or in the history of the early Church. Moreover, since, on this hypothesis, it is apparent that the New Testament is not a reliable source of information as to the content of the revelation which it is admitted Christ brought to men, we demand that a more reliable source be pointed out. If this cannot be done, then what has become of the revelation? But if we admit the historical accuracy of the New Testament, even in so far as it purports to be an account of the actual teaching of our Lord and His apostles, then, beyond all controversy, Christ and His apostles preached Christianity as exclusive of all other religions whatsoever. If that be true, then it settles the question, and books like this "Mohammed

and Mohammedanism" need to be re-written throughout in the light of that fact. Let us not misapprehend the issue. This claim is not a claim to the exclusive possession of all moral truth, but a claim to be the only supernatural revelation from God to man, and as such, to present the only possible way of salvation. If this claim be denied, it can only be either on the ground that Christ was mistaken, or that we have not in the New Testament a reliable account of what Christ really taught. In either case our ground of faith in Christ is but a shifting sand. To affirm in lofty terms upon the glory of Christ and the supreme perfection of His religion as a revelation from God to man, and in the same breath to assert that, though the best, it is not the only revelation, is only to evince one's ignorance as to what the religion of Christ really is.

But not only is the position we assail logically incompatible with the claims of the Gospel itself, and with any real faith in it as a revelation from God. But we may go still further. We affirm that the differences which exist between Christianity and the various ethnic religions, are such as to make it absolutely certain that they cannot all alike be revelations from a God of truth. We admit freely that there are certain moral truths which are recognized more or less distinctly in all alike. We admit that there may be real differences which are not incompatible with the hypothesis of a common divine origin. We admit that different religions may differ greatly in their fulness and completeness, or in the proportion which various truths occupy in the revelation; and yet, both be from God. Of this fact Judaism will occur to every one as a familiar illustration. But for all this, it remains true that to prove that all religions are, in any true sense of the words, from God, they must not teach contradictories. One may tell more, another less of God, but they must not affirm contradictories concerning Him. If one such contradiction be proven in the original form of any two religions, then no amount of moral truth that we may notwithstanding find in both, will warrant us in saying, that both religions as such are from the God of Truth. We affirm that this is precisely the case as between Christianity and all other religions, without a single exception.

The following illustrations will abundantly establish this assertion. First, as to the being of God, Christianity affirms that there is one God and Father of all, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things," and declares the belief of this to be absolutely fundamental and essential: "He that cometh to God, must believe that He is." This the Buddha ignored or denied. We are told that he "recognized no Supreme Deity;"\* that he regarded the question whether the world owed its existence to God or not, as "an inquiry that tended to no profit."† Brahmanism, going to the opposite extreme, affirms that all that is, is God :

" Nothing exists but Brahm ; when aught else  
Appears to be, 'tis, like the mirage, false."

Here, then, to go no further, Christianity, Buddhism, and Brahmanism, stand in blank contradiction, each to the others, and that as regards the most fundamental of all questions. Whichever one be true, the other two are *ipso facto* false. Are all three revelations from God? The case does not improve if we inquire further. As to the attributes of God, Buddhism, of course, is silent; Brahmanism says :

' Imperishable, without form, unbound  
By qualities, without distinctive works,  
Without a name, know that indeed as Brahma." ‡

How is it with Islam? Mr. Smith will be no prejudiced judge. What does he say? "Mohammed's notion of God had never been that of a great moral being who designs that the creatures He has created should, from love and gratitude to Him, become one with Him, or even assimilated to Him." § Can the teachings of all three of these be reconciled with each other or with Christianity?

As to the nature and condition of man, the fact of sin and misery cannot be well denied; but Buddhism and Brahmanism agree in denying that man is a free agent, and therein deny that personal responsibility for sin on which the Christian Scriptures so strenuously insist. And Islam also, as is

\* "Indian Wisdom," Monier Williams, p. 57. † "Buddhism," Rhys Davids, p. 87.

‡ *Atma Bodha*, trans. in "Ind. Wisdom," p. 123.

§ "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," p. 199.

well known, though arguing from different premises, reaches the same practical conclusion. Are the doctrines of freedom and of necessity, of responsibility and non-responsibility, both revealed by God as truths? Finally, as in all these other fundamental matters, so in regard to the method of salvation, each of these three stands in irreconcilable contradiction both with each of the others and with Christianity. Buddhism proposes that man shall save himself by moral and ceremonial observances; Brahmanism, that he shall save himself by a transcendental intuition of the unconditioned Brahm and various ritual observances, supposed to be more or less helpful thereto. Islam declares repentance to be the ordinary, but not the necessary condition of salvation.\* Salvation by a substituted victim, it emphatically denies. As these are in contradiction to each other on the one question which of all others is of the most transcendent personal importance, so do they all alike directly contradict therein the most explicit testimony of the Gospel of Christ. Therein we are taught, that no man can save himself in any way; that "without the shedding of blood," and that the blood of the incarnate Son of God, "there is no remission of sin;" that before even this can avail to the individual he must be made over by the power of God—in a word, be "born again," and "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" that he may be saved. It declares, finally, no less explicitly, that this is not only *one* way of salvation, but the *only* way of salvation. There is not to be found a solitary exception or limitation to those solemn words: "He that believeth not shall be damned." "He that believeth on the Son hath life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." But this will suffice. How or on what principle, with the utmost stretch of charity and latitude of interpretation, these four religions, which thus contradict each other on matters the most fundamental to all religion, can all alike be called more or less full revelations from the God of righteousness and truth, we leave to others to show. Most,

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\* "By repentance, all sins may be pardoned, and it is God's prerogative if He please, without repentance to pardon all sins, except that of imputing plurality to Him; or again, if He please, to visit His wrath upon the very smallest of all transgressions."—*Masslavi Syed Ahmad Khan*, in Introduction to Commentary on the Hebrew text of the book of Genesis.

we believe, will grant our conclusion from such facts as these, that if Christianity be in very truth a revelation from God, then it is certain that neither Buddhism, Brahmanism, nor Islam can be such a revelation; and that if it have any claim at all to the faith and allegiance of mankind, that claim, in the very nature of the case, must be forever exclusive of all others.

But it is argued by those against whom we contend, that Christianity is not in point of fact adapted to all men. It is suited, say some, only to the higher races; to the Western, as distinguished from the Eastern races, say others. That while no doubt it would be good for other races to receive the Gospel, still, as a matter of fact, it appears to be beyond them, or in some of its essential ideas, foreign to their line of thinking. Under these circumstances, we are told, Buddhism, Islam, or some other form of faith must be accepted, as may best meet the case. As to the capacity of these other creeds to meet and fill man's sense of need, we are told, that while they do not meet *our* sense of need, they may yet satisfy races of a different type or an inferior moral development. To all this much might be said. And first, the truth of the Christian religion being admitted, it is to be observed, that all this stands flatly opposed to the teaching of Christ. If anything is clear alike from the New Testament, and from all history, it is this, that Christ professed to be a Saviour, not for *some* men, but for *all* men. He told His disciples to go, not to certain races, but "into all the world," and preach His Gospel "to every creature." If the Gospel be not adapted to all races, then Christ was mistaken, and the great commission is but the language of an erring enthusiasm, little to be trusted as a guidance for eternity.

But we affirm, in the second place, that it is a moral impossibility that even the three religions above considered, confessedly the highest and best of the non-Christian religions, should ever satisfy the needs of any race of men, however low in the scale of moral development, or sprung from whatever stock. Take Buddhism, for example. Not the attractive character of its founder, nor the high morality which he inculcated, can compensate for the stubborn fact that Buddhism, as delivered to the world by Sakya Muni, was a relig-

ion without a God. But a religion without a God, a religion which denies the existence of the soul, and holds forth annihilation as the final issue of all the struggles of life—surely it is too much to be asked to believe, that such a religion can be adapted to the needs of any creature which has a soul, or a single longing, however vague and transient, for a life after death. What better can be said of Brahmanism, which as a system offers the worshipper no personal God, and teaches him that all his fears and aspirations are born of illusion and end in eternal unconsciousness? Is it possible, can any one believe, that weak and sinful man, reaching out in the dimness for the strong arm of a personal God, can be satisfied when he finds that he has grasped, after all, but a shadow in a draem? Is it a moral possibility that any man who has ever felt a longing to be anything better than he is, can be satisfied when he is told, as the Brahman will tell him, that all he is and all he is to be, all his sins and crimes, and all their distressing sequences of pain and anguish, are for him eternally fixed by an eternal, necessary, inexorable, and most irreversible fate? Can any man soberly believe that under any conceivable conditions the dreary negations and illusions of atheism or pantheism should satisfy the heart better than the faith of a personal God and Father? And Islam—can even Islam satisfy the heart of a sinner, when it tells him in the words of the Koran, that “nothing shall be imputed to a man but his own labour”? Can it really be better for any sinful man to be told that, than to hear the gracious words, “The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all”?

Again granting, as we safely may, that all peoples have not developed in them the sense of moral and spiritual need which we have, does it follow that the Gospel is not therefore so well adapted to them? Surely, in all reason we should rather argue that the lower in the scale of moral development a people may be, the more urgent and imperative the need of the stimulus of the great ideas of God, and personality, and eternity, and atoning love, to rouse into consciousness, if possible, the dormant sensibilities of the soul. That an ignorant man, with a malaria-breeding pool behind his house, is not conscious of any harm to himself as resulting from it, scarcely proves that for that man the most wholesome thing is a stench.

But it is asserted that the actual reception of any form of religion proves that it did meet their conscious needs, else it would not have been received. But we venture in reply the affirmation, that the history of the development of doctrine in every religion goes to prove the contrary. It is indeed admitted that each religion, as it has first presented itself for the acceptance of men, has contained and offered to men certain elements of truth, to the power of which it has owed much of its success. Such, notably, was the case with Buddhism. In its doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man, as opposed to the tyranny of caste, it met a great need of the time. Such was the case again with Islam, in its emphatic proclamation of the great truth of the essential unity of God as opposed to the everywhere prevailing idolatry. But this does not prove that these really *satisfied* the spiritual needs of those who first received them. A sinner looking for some sufficient hope for the future could not rest with a knowledge of either the brotherhood of man or the unity of God, however good these might be in their place. And so it has come to pass that while Christianity, after eighteen hundred years, in all its various forms, Eastern or Western, Greek, Roman, or Protestant, retains still all the great fundamental truths of the personality and unity of God, the Deity and atonement of Christ, and is essentially the same body of doctrine which was first delivered by our Lord and His apostles, of the non-Christian religions there is not one of which this can be said. There has been not merely logical development of doctrine as in the case of Christianity, but an addition of elements utterly foreign to the original system. But it is not the mere fact of such changes that concerns us so much as the character of those changes. As a matter of fact, it would appear that these have to a great extent consisted in efforts to supply those lacking elements of faith which are the distinguishing characteristics of the religion of Christ.

The personality of God, a divine incarnation for human salvation, the remission of sin by the shedding of blood, these are the special and most essential doctrines of the Christian system; and if in any religion any of these ideas have at first been wanting, there has been, in the case of each of the three great historic religions to which we have referred, an attempt

in some way to supply the lack. If such doctrines have had a logical place in the system, so much the better; if not, they have sooner or later been added, even in defiance of logical consistency, and sometimes in direct contradiction to the fundamental articles of the original creed. Taught by no one, led, as it were, by a kind of spiritual instinct, a faintly recognized sense of need, the disciples of each of these religions have sought to supply, often indeed in crude and superstitious fancies, those special and peculiar ideas which the Christian religion alone possesses as matters of blessed fact and abiding reality. And herein lies our argument: that all this goes to show, not that these religions have been felt to meet the conscious needs of those who first received them, but the exact reverse. Even those blind efforts which the adherents of various religions have made to adapt them more closely to their necessities, bear involuntary testimony to the adaptedness and necessity to all men of those great doctrines which in their full historical form are the distinguishing truths of the Gospel of Christ.

In illustration, first let us take the case of Buddhism. The original system as propounded by Sakya Muni was very simple. Fundamental are the so-called four noble truths, viz, that sorrow is inseparable from existence; that its cause is desire; that sorrow is therefore to be removed by the extinction of desire for all things, either good or evil, which is *nirvāna*; and that the path to this is eightfold, as follows—rightness in belief, thoughts, language, actions, mode of livelihood, application, memory, and meditation. And the final issue of all this is *parinibbāna*, annihilation. This, in merest outline, is original Buddhism. Sakya Muni did not himself profess to be anything more than a man. As he entirely ignored the existence of a God, he could not profess to have received his doctrine by any manner of divine revelation or supernatural illumination. He did not propose himself to save men, but only to teach them how to save themselves, and that, not from sin, but from sorrow, by walking in the eightfold path. Was it possible that this should satisfy the heart of man even in India? that men should accept and quietly rest in a religion absolutely without a God? History answers, No! Scarcely had this new religion been given to the world, when men

began to add to it ideas wholly alien, thereby to meet if possible the crying wants of the soul. Materialism, even when dressed up like Buddhism, in the garb of a religion, could not satisfy. First, men needed a personal God; then they needed, not so much a teacher, as a Saviour, and a Saviour, moreover, sinless and divine. And so men, working no doubt unconsciously, set themselves to incorporate these ideas into the religion of Sakya Muni. In Southern Asia this process is witnessed in the gradual growth of the legend of the Buddha. First, the Buddha, Sakya Muni, was declared to have been without sin, omniscient and almighty. Then men said that he had pre-existed for ages in the heavenly glory, and that for the salvation of men he came into this world, in the form of a god of light, and became incarnate in the womb of a virgin. And so the son of the king of Benares was at last practically made into an incarnate God and Redeemer. The Northern development of Buddhism was much more elaborate, but testifies to the sense of the same wants. Sakya Muni had taught that he was but one of a succession of religious teachers appearing in the history of the world from time to time, to point men to the path of righteousness. Others were to come after him, and to do in their turn a work like his. In particular, the faith and expectation of the Thibetan Buddhists fixed upon the so-called Maitreya Buddha, who, as they believe, is to appear and conquer sin and sorrow. This Maitreya Buddha, and all others yet to come, are supposed to be existent through ages in the heavenly world, as Bodhisatwas, exalted beings yet to be manifested on the earth. Of these Bodhisatwas, three, called *Vajrapáni*, *Manjusrí*, and *Avalokiteswara*, came at last to be regarded as three gods, severally representing the ideas of wisdom, power, and mercy. And even thus the blank atheism of Sakya Muni was left far behind. But if the heart of man could not rest in atheism, neither could it be content with tritheism. And so, in due time, some at least of the Thibetans, reached the conception of one supreme spiritual being whom they term the *Adibuddha*—"Primal Buddha." This Primal Buddha is affirmed to be infinite, self-existent, and omniscient. Not, indeed, immediately, but mediately, after the manner conceived by the ancient Gnostics, by a threefold succession of

emanations, he created the worlds. In particular, all the earthly Buddhas are manifestations of his eternal essence. As the *Avalokiteswara*, the Lord of providential mercy, he is believed to be continually incarnated in the person of the Grand Llama on the throne of Lhasa in Thibet.\* Such, in the merest outline, has been the doctrinal development of Buddhism. Superstitious as it may seem to us, it is none the less profoundly instructive. It teaches that Buddhism, as delivered by its founder, did not meet and satisfy the needs of men. The soul cries out for a personal God and hearer of prayer; for an incarnate God and Redeemer. There was indeed no logical place for these conceptions in the religion of Sakya Muni. But, logical or not, the heart of man demanded and obtained a place for them in the popular religion. Thus the history of Buddhism is a confession of want, want of a personal God and incarnate Saviour; and if it be admitted that Buddhism has not yet found these, then it is plain that Buddhism is not, and cannot be, adapted to the needs of man.

Such has been the history of an atheistic religion. Let us now take the case of a pantheistic faith. When, about the year 600 or 700 of our era, Buddhism disappeared from the place of power in India, modern Brahmanism, a system of pure pantheism, took its place. Its fundamental principles are as follows: God, Brahm, is the only real and true existence. The human soul and the world are, therefore, truly God. Personality and free will are illusions; so also, by necessary consequence, are sin and righteousness. Salvation, therefore, consists simply in deliverance from the necessity of repeated births into this illusory world of personality, and reabsorption in the infinite deity. This salvation is to be reached by means of *jnàna*, knowledge, *i. e.*, the intuition of our identity with God. These propositions express the essential principles of modern Hindoo theology. Has this satisfied the people? As in the case of Buddhism, history answers, no! The people want a personal God; nor are they equal to any transcendental intuition. And so it was that Shivaism, or the doctrine that Shiva was the true personal God and Creator of the world, and that men were to raise themselves to God, not

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\* "Buddhism," Rhuys Davids; Chap. viii.

by knowledge, but by works of a painful asceticism, became a popular form of faith. But neither could Shivaism satisfy. For man craves a God who is accessible and merciful. And Shivaism is only terrible. Man, moreover, is not equal to the task of saving himself by works any more than by knowledge; and so the next development of Hindooism, still feeling its way after those truths which the Gospel alone reveals, was Vaishnavism, or the worship of Vishnu as the Supreme Lord and Creator of the world. The Vaishnavist holds that salvation is to be attained, not by knowledge or by works, but by *bhakti*, or devotion to Vishnu, and that to Vishnu as incarnate in Ram or Krishna, who are to-day the favorite gods of the Hindoos. And still the heart of the Hindoo is apparently not yet satisfied. For all these incarnations, it is admitted, were sinful like ourselves. Hence we are told that yet another incarnation of the Deity is still to come, the *nishkalanak* *avatâr*, or sinless incarnation, who in the end of time, being born of a virgin, is to appear riding on a white horse, with a two-edged sword in his hand, for the destruction of all wickedness and the establishment of righteousness in the earth. Thus the history of Hindooism, like that of Buddhism, shows that men cannot rest long in a religion which does not tell of a personal and incarnate God and Saviour. But the testimony to this truth is still more clear; for all through the course of modern Hindooism, men have from time to time arisen, like *Madhava*, *Kabir*, *Tulsi Dás*, and others, who gave expression, often with great power, to sentiments utterly foreign to the pantheism in the midst of which they lived. In a life of *Tiruvallava* the author of the Cural, a poem in the highest repute among the Tamul people of South India, we find language which has no force except the personality of God be assumed. Thus :

“ Though God cannot be seen, he knoweth all  
 Our many needs. He feedeth every day  
 The frog that on the forest rock doth crawl :  
 And from our birth till now hath found a way  
 To give us day by day our daily food.  
 If thus it pleaseth him to do us good  
 Will not the future bring us plenitude? ” \*

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\* “ Folk Songs of Southern India.” Gover, p. 208.

“ Such strife  
 With God is wrong. On earth all things that are,  
 Are those that ought to be. We may not bar  
 The course of things, else we God's world may mar.”\*

And in North India Tulsi Dás has said,

“ In darkness deep men practice their religion  
 With fast and alms, and sacrifice and repetitions vain.  
 If God himself rain not upon the earth,  
 For all man's sowing there will be no grain.”

And Kabir also had complained,

“ Lord, Lord, all men are saying,  
 But I have another concern ;  
 I'm not acquainted with the Lord ;  
 Oh, whither shall I turn ? ”

And again,

“ With what face can I approach Thee ? Shame cometh unto me !  
 I have sinned, and Thou hast seen it ! How canst Thou delight in me ? ”

Such illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely, but these will suffice. It should be plain enough that, according to history itself, it is not true that a pantheistic religion, any more than an atheistic creed, has been able to satisfy the heart of man. The whole history of Hindooism witnesses to a continual effort to adapt the prevailing creed to the unsatisfied needs of the soul. In attempting to do this, men have added, often at the expense of all logical consistency, those elements which Christianity alone supplies in fact ; or, when too clear-sighted for that, have taught such doctrines in the form of a protest against the hollow worthlessness of the popular system.

It has been thus with the history of Buddhism and Bramanism ; how has it been with Islam ? Mohammed, we shall all admit, offered the world a creed as much purer and nearer the truth, as theism is nearer the truth than atheism or pantheism. We may also freely admit, without any prejudice to our argument, that Islam has in some instances improved the state of society in idolatrous countries where it has become the religion of a people formerly idolatrous. But that is not the question. The question is whether Islam has *satisfied* the realized needs of peoples who have embraced it ? What light does the doc-

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\* *Ib.*, p. 210.

trinal history of Islam cast upon this matter? As is well known, the original creed proclaimed by Mohammed was very simple: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet." And there is much in the Koran as regards the being and the attributes of the one God to which no Christian can possibly take any exception. The most devout and orthodox Christian in the world can join with all his heart in the Fátíha, the first chapter of the Koran:

"Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds!  
The compassionate, the merciful,  
King on the day of Judgment!  
Thee only do we worship, to Thee only cry for help!  
Guide Thou us in the straight path,  
The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious,  
With whom Thou art not angry,  
And who go not astray."

As for himself, Mohammed claimed only to be a man sent from God to preach His truth. Anything approaching to divine honors for himself or for any prophet, he emphatically forbade. Said he, in the Koran, "It becometh not a man that God should give him the Scriptures, and the wisdom and the spirit of prophecy, and that then he should say to his followers, Be ye worshippers of me as well as of God."\*

He admitted himself to be a sinner. He says that God had found him erring and guided him,† and prayed to be forgiven him "his former and his latter sin."‡ Any power of working miracles he utterly disclaimed.

But as regards the doctrines distinctive of and essential to Christianity, the Incarnation and the Atonement of our Lord, he explicitly rejected and repudiated them. We read in the Koran, "God begetteth, and He is not begotten, and there is none like unto Him."|| He admitted no intercession as prevailing with God for a sinner. We read, "A soul shall have no patron or intercessor with God."§ And the doctrine of salvation by substitution is denied in the following words: "A burdened soul shall not bear the burden of another."¶

Such, in its most important features, was the religion first preached to the world by Mohammed—a religion of pure and lofty theism, but a religion without a Mediator, an Incarnation,

\* Sura iii. 73.

‡ Sura Ikhlás.

† Sura Tirha.

§ Sura Anaam.

‡ Sura Al Fath, Abraham.

¶ Sura Najur.

or divine sacrifice for sin. Did it meet the needs, as is alleged, of those to whom it was given? Here, again, history answers, no!

Even Mohammed himself, inconsistent though it was with the doctrine which he taught, found himself compelled to recognize the demand of the human conscience for the shedding of blood as the condition of the remission of sins, and accordingly enjoined an annual sacrifice, which is still observed throughout the Mohammedan world. But even this was not enough, and after the death of Mohammed, his followers proceeded in various places to add to his religion those elements which they felt to be wanting in the original system. A great body of tradition appeared to give sanction to the new doctrines. Men feel the need of an intercessor with God. It was said that Mohammed had been appointed of God to that office. In the great day of resurrection and judgment, all the sinful sons of men shall appear before God to hear their doom, and then Mohammed shall stand up in the presence of God and cry, "*Ummati!*" (it is my people), and God shall thereupon hear him and accept the persons of all true believers in Islam and save them, while all unbelievers shall be driven from his presence into the fire of hell. But it was in Persia especially, among the Shias, that doctrinal development went to an astonishing length in the same general direction. Not only to Mohammed himself, but to the Imams, or divinely ordained successors of the prophet, and spiritual heads of Islam, were by degrees ascribed the same attributes which in the New Testament are ascribed to Christ. The Imam, it was said, must be impeccable, omniscient, and be appointed of God Himself to his high office. Next some began to affirm the pre-existence of Mohammed and his immediate successors. God, we are told, took out of His bosom a single ray of His divine light, which He then united to the bodily form of Mohammed, and called upon the angels to recognize and submit to him as the elect of all God's creatures. This spark of the divine light was also communicated to the Caliph Ali, and so on. Others went further still. Ali, said they, never died. Indeed, he and his two sons, Hassan and Hassain, together with Mohammed and Fatima, were jointly sharers in the uncreated glory. And finally, whereas men felt that the blood of a goat, as ordained

by Mohammed, could not avail to take away sin, it has come to be maintained by many among the Shia sect, that Hassain, who perished upon the battle-field of Kerbela, in conflict with the rival Caliph, Muavia, died there in expiation for the sins of men. And so at last was added to the original creed of the Arabian prophet, an imitation of every doctrine distinctive of the Christian system.\* That all Muslims have by no means accepted these doctrines; that in particular, the Sunnis detest these heretic Shias, does not affect our argument. It remains true, that if men had felt satisfied with the original creed of Islam, we cannot well conceive that they would have ventured to make changes and additions such as these.

Thus, as regards Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Islam alike, has neither of them ever afforded a permanent resting-place for the soul. Along each of these so different roads have men groped, seeking after three things—a personal God, an Incarnate Saviour, and a sufficient atonement for sin. In Buddhism, men found neither; Pantheism in India attempted to show man an Incarnate God. Mohammed alone proclaimed a personal God, but nothing more. Sooner or later, however, each of these three religions sought to find some place in itself for this transcendent trinity of truths, and has thus testified that no creed without them could meet the needs of men in any land or age.

And thus we are brought to answer affirmatively the question with which we began. If Christianity be, in any true sense of the words, a revelation from God, it is involved in that very affirmation that other religions are excluded from the category. This exclusive claim is an integral and inseparable part of the revelation; its teachings on the most fundamental questions are in such irreconcilable contradiction with those of other religions, that it is logically impossible that they should also be from God. Finally, it is not more clear that the Gospel of Christ has really met and satisfied all the spiritual needs of man than it is that no other religion ever has or ever can. Charity in its place is very well; but when in the name of Christian charity we are asked to “trace God” and “see His workings” in re-

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\* See “Islam under the Arabs,” Osborn, Part II., Chap. I, for a full account of these developments.

ligions which deny His being or His personality, or to welcome as our "best ally" in our labors for the salvation of men, a religion which, like Islam, denies the Godhead and Atonement of our Lord,"\* it is time to remember that not only charity, but also righteousness and loyalty to the revealed truth of God, are Christian virtues. Just at the present time, if we mistake not, the Church needs less to learn a larger breadth of charity, than a sterner intolerance of error and falsehood.

S. H. KELLOGG.

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\* "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," pp. xvi., xxv.