

THE EVOLUTION OF MORALITY.

BEING

A HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
MORAL CULTURE.

BY

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CHAPTER I.

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF ALTRUISM.

WE have now reached a point at which it is desirable to consider shortly the results already attained. The first and most important is that the formation of the idea of moral obligation is dependent on the recognition of new relations rather than on a development of principle. Its foundation as well as its final expression is "right." A certain line of conduct is proper, not because it is dictated by duty, but because it is right, although being so, it is obligatory. The idea of propriety is formed at a very early stage of progress, and it remains the same through all subsequent stages, although it receives very different applications. At first, it has relation only to self, and concerns only the property rights acquired through the action of the instinct of self-preservation. After a while it comes to be recognised by the savage that others possess the same rights as he claims for himself, not all others, but those who belong to the family or clan to which he belongs. It is at a later date that those rights are allowed to the members of the common tribe or nation. Only in the latest stage does the application of the idea of propriety in relation to moral conduct become absolute, in consequence of the recognition of the universal brotherhood of humankind.

A second important result arrived at is that the conduct which constitutes practical morality, or in other words, the recognition of the rights of others, has not a

subjective origin. In the absence of retribution, or the fear of it, such a recognition could not take place. Retribution, however, to be effective, must be supernatural rather than natural, or at least be ascribed to an invisible agent, and it depends originally on the belief in the power and will of the dead to interfere with the living. The idea of right forms an important element in this belief, as it is based on the notion that the dead have certain rights, the neglect of which they will somehow punish. This is the simplest phase of the belief in supernatural retribution. The next phase is where certain rights of the living are supposed to be under the guardianship of the denizens of the spirit-world, who deal with those who invade them as though their own rights were infringed. Only the members of the same family or clan, or afterwards of a common tribe or nation, were thus protected, the guardian spirits having no concern with actions directed against those who were outside of the circle of their influence. At a still later date, and only when the conception has been formed of a Supreme Being, who is the God of all peoples, is the belief entertained that all men are equally under supernatural protection, and that interference with their rights will call down divine vengeance.

The idea of right derived from the action of the instinct of self-preservation is a primitive one, and, as it forms the essential element of moral obligation, the real aim of the inquiry into the origin and nature of morality must be to trace the moral area from time to time embraced by that idea. At first the area is very circumscribed. The conduct of the savage who abstains from appropriating the property of others only because he fears the vengeance of the man he would injure if he dare, has no element of morality. Such an element could not primitively enter into the relations between two

individuals, and it would come into existence only when the individual was recognised as standing in a certain relationship towards a group of others. The savage cannot form the idea of a man, as such, having any rights. Such an idea embodies a generalisation too great for his mind to grasp, or rather it is too subjective for him to conceive. It is necessary that the savage should have not only a sufficient but an obvious motive for a particular line of conduct towards his fellows. Hence we must look for the first budding of the moral sense to the recognition of the ties of blood-relationship. The formation of the family was the earliest step in the moral education of mankind; as it would be towards his brethren that the savage would perceive that he had certain duties to perform, consequent on their possession of rights co-extensive with his own. In this we see the importance of the idea of clanship, which is so strong in the mind of primitive man, and which, from its being originally based on the maternal relationship we may suppose to have existed from the very infancy of the human race. The conduct of the members of a common family or clan among themselves is not, however, governed by a true sense of morality. It does not recognise any inherent evil in the acts which are considered as breaches of the obligations of clanship. It is not thought wrong to steal, but only to appropriate the property of those who stand in a certain relationship to the offender, and so through the whole catalogue of moral offences. The area may, indeed, be widened, either by the admission of certain individuals, as in the primitive system of "brotherhood," or by the action of political causes. While descent is traced through the mother, probably tribal morality never acquires equal obligation with clan morality, but nevertheless when the members of several clans are combined in a common tribe, they

must recognise mutual moral obligations, which will ultimately become co-extensive with those of the clans. The test of absolute morality, however, is universality, and hence it cannot be said of savage or semi-cultured peoples that they have any true moral principle. They do indeed recognise the evil of certain actions, such as theft and adultery, which interfere with the rights of others, although those actions are condemned because they interfere with such rights, and not because they are wrong in themselves. All the lower races of mankind have attained to that recognition, and, as they all possess the essential element of morality, a history of moral development must be chiefly an account of the manner in which the area embraced within the range of right conduct has become enlarged. Hence, it is impossible to found a classification of primitive peoples on moral phenomena, or even solely on the ideas and customs associated with progress in moral culture, although these are of great value in connection with other grounds of classification.

Before proceeding to consider the special phases of moral development, it is desirable to examine shortly the general culture of the primitive races of mankind. If a broad survey were made, it would probably be found that each stage in the general mental development of mankind is represented by one of its great racial divisions, and if this be the case, a knowledge of the special mental characteristics displayed by each of those divisions may furnish valuable evidence in support of the views expressed in the preceding pages as to the progress of moral culture. It has become a familiar idea that mankind, as a whole, may be likened to an individual man, having, like him, an infancy, a childhood, youth, and manhood. In the early ages of the world mankind was in its infancy, and from that stage it

has progressed, by gradual steps, until now it may be said to have attained, in peoples of the European stock at least, to a vigorous manhood. That such a development must have taken place is evident from the consideration that, when we speak of mankind at large, we can only refer to the aggregate of individuals of which it is composed, the sum of whose progressive improvement from generation to generation constitutes what is known as civilization. It is evident that if the above analogy be true, it must be of great importance; since to ascertain the various phases of development through which mankind as a whole has passed, it would be necessary, in such a case, to do little more than distinguish carefully the several stages in the individual man's mental progress. What then are the mental changes which the individual undergoes? The child, for some time after birth, is simply instinctive in its actions, all of which are directed towards the satisfaction of its own physical wants. With the accumulation of experience, there is the substitution of imitative action for that of instinct; the former, however, although it is necessarily accompanied by a certain amount of observation, having relation wholly to *self*, and operating merely to give a more certain result to the action of the instinct of self-preservation. The exercise of attention is accompanied by that of the *will*, which is the expression of the activity of the mind in relation to external objects. Intimately connected with this faculty is the *cruelty* so noticeable among children, so much so indeed, that it may be described as one of the most distinguishing traits of boyhood. Up to this point, the distinction which is generally made between the intellectual and the emotional faculties can hardly be said to have shown itself; as the actions of the child-life are referable chiefly to the instinctive principle in different external relations. If

either has priority, it must be said that the intellectual part of man's nature is the first to be developed, aroused by the observation of external objects. After the age of puberty, however, the *emotional* nature becomes more active; and we see the result in the passionate life which marks the youthful period of man's existence. Nevertheless, during this activity of the passions, the intellect is not dormant. Its powers are gradually unfolding, and its activity is exhibited in that simple phase of the imaginative faculty which may be described as the *empirical*. This is the phase which the mind exhibits during early manhood. As the sphere of its activity is enlarged, however, imagination comes to be controlled by the reflective or regulative faculty; and when *reason* has established its influence, man may be said to have attained his full manhood.

From the above sketch, it appears that a man's mental development has five chief stages, which may be described as the selfish, the wilful, the emotional, the empirical, and the rational, and on examination it will be found that these various phases have their counterparts in the mental condition of the several great races of mankind. The two first of these phases have much in common. This is necessarily so, as neither of them displays much mental activity; the difference between them being one of strength of will, rather than of the inner qualities which reveal themselves through external action. Those peoples, therefore, who answer to the first and second stages of development should present much sameness of phenomena. And such is the case. Granting that the aborigines of Australia display considerable ingenuity and cunning, and no small degree of skill and activity in war and the chase, yet it cannot be doubted that as a race they have advanced the least in the path of intellectual progress. Their intelligence is

the result of the accumulated experiences of hundreds of generations, while, after all, their mental activity is of a very simple—almost instinctive—kind. Moreover, it is combined with an entire absence of moral principle, and a disposition which seeks its sole satisfaction in the gratification of the passions. The Australian aborigines, the ruling principle of whose lives is pure *selfishness*, governed by no idea of morality, are undoubtedly the lowest in the scale of humanity, as they are probably the oldest of the existing races of mankind. It was said above that the second phase of man's mental activity, the wilful, has much in common with that which precedes it. The selfish nature is predominant in both; but in the one case its action is almost purely instinctive; whilst in the other it is accompanied by a certain mental activity in relation to external nature, which gives intensity to the will, without affecting the end towards the attainment of which its operation is directed. A natural result of this strength of will, guided as it is by contracted thought, is the cruelty which is a distinguishing trait, as well of the childish mind as of the lower races of mankind. So characteristic is this trait, that it might almost be said that the human mind passes through a "cruel" phase. It is, however, simply the thoughtless activity of the wilful "self," and its continuance is usually co-extensive only with that of the thoughtlessness which gives to selfish action its abhorrent character. Of the wilful stage of human development the mental state of the North American Indian may be said to be the representative. Mr Catlin, while affirming that the American savage is "by nature decent and modest, unassuming and inoffensive," admits that one of the leading traits of his character is cruelty. This trait, which is exhibited more especially in the treatment of prisoners of war, and in connection with

certain religious or superstitious rites, is, however, incidental only to the more general characteristic of *strength of will*, which the American Indian so peculiarly exhibits. This is seen in his endurance under hardship and suffering, in the incidents connected with his mode of warfare, and even in his political independence, which is almost absolute. The third phase of man's mental development of which a representative has to be sought among the great families of mankind is the emotional or passionate, and there can be no difficulty in identifying the race which occupies that position. The *emotional* nature of the negro¹ is proverbial. He is a creature of passion, which leads him to abandon himself to sexual excesses, and an indulgence in intoxication. The negro is not naturally cruel, being, in fact, rather mild in disposition than the reverse, but he has a disregard for human life, and when his passions are aroused he is utterly careless about inflicting pain. The influences of race and of education in great measure control the operation of the passions among civilised peoples; but *subjectively*, the youthful phase of the civilised mind is exactly similar to that which is observed among the negroes as a race. They agree, moreover, in another attribute. Captain Burton declares that "exaggeration is the characteristic of the mind of both the East and West African," and among civilised peoples the same must be said of the young. Deceit is an accomplishment as easily acquired by one as the other, although with the negro it is probably more often the result of mere caprice.

Analogy has been traced between the selfish, the wilful, and the emotional phases of the human mind,

¹ In this and some other particulars the Polynesian islanders and Papuas resemble the negro, while the Malays agree better with the American aborigines.

and the mental characteristics of the less cultured races of mankind. We might here stop, but it may be as well to complete the analogy by finding the counterpart of the *empirical* phase which distinguishes the mind of the civilised man. At this stage the mind has attained to considerable activity; but the regulative or rational faculty not being yet fully developed, its operations are empirical in the result, as being guided only by the simple teachings of experience. The great division of the human race which would seem the most perfectly to exhibit this mental phase is the Asiatic, or at least the Turanian. The Chinese, for example, are a people whose mind has become extremely active in relation to the simple phenomena of external nature, and they display great ingenuity in applying the knowledge thus gained to the satisfaction of the physical wants of life. The inability, however, of the Chinese mind to form an absolute science, shows that the mental development thus exhibited is still imperfect. That inability arises simply from the insufficient exercise of the regulative or reflective faculty; and it is true no less of the Aryan than of the Turanian. In fact, the Hindu intellect may be said to differ from that of the Chinese rather in the objects of its thought than in the faculties which show their activity. Empirical thought is that which governs the civilisations of both these peoples; although in the one case it has for its objects the simple experiences of life, whilst in the other it almost overlooks the mere facts of science, and becomes active about the first principles of nature itself.

It is the same with the developments of the altruistic sentiment which constitute, as we shall see, almost the only form of moral action among the Chinese. Governed by no principle of right conduct, such action has, with them, a purely empirical basis, and it is the

same also with other Asiatic peoples. Notwithstanding the influence of Mohammedanism and Buddhism among the predatory races of Central and Western Asia, these peoples can hardly be said to have yet reached the stage of culture at which morality can be said to have acquired a positive character. The influence of custom, the *Deb* of the Toorkmans, may ensure a certain propriety of conduct between the members of the same tribe; but outside of the tribe conduct is not affected by it, except so far as it tends to perpetuate practices which aim at the foundations of all morality. And yet the predatory peoples exhibit, as was shown in a preceding chapter, great hospitality, and are not wanting in acts of charity and benevolence. This is especially observable among the Bedouins, whose character may, indeed, be said to display an undue development of the altruistic sentiment. It may be doubted, however, whether any idea of duty is attached by them to the performance of charity, which is more likely to be dictated by custom than by the sense of moral obligation. The Chinese differ somewhat from most other Asiatic peoples. The altruistic sentiment is very influential with them; but although its development is of a primitive type, it presents a positive character which renders it deserving of special consideration. The examination of this earliest developed phase of altruism should be made before that of the more subjective moral phases which distinguished the civilized peoples of antiquity in Western Asia and Southern Europe. The passive virtues are the first in the progress of mankind to become recognised, but they are the last to receive a rational expression. The active virtues, although less fundamental, and therefore secondary in value, the soonest attain to a positive phase of development.

The Peruvians.

Before, however, treating of Chinese morality, some account should be given of a phase of altruism which would seem to have been developed on a still lower plane than that represented by any other people. Peru appears to have been, at an early date, in much the same political condition as Mexico at the time of the Spanish Conquest. Recent writers find three great epochs in the national history of Peru, the earliest being that of the *Pirhuas*, or pontiff kings, who having conquered the country, sought to establish their power by the aid of the priesthood. The second epoch was that of the *Amautas*, or priestly caste, whose power had grown with the monarchy which they served, preparing at the same time to take its place when it should become effete. This period was one of dissolution, during which all political ties were loosened, and society seemed ready to be resolved into its primitive elements. "L'ordre de choses," says an anonymous writer, quoted by M. Wiener,¹ "que ce régime représentait, s'éteignit et s'affaissa sur lui-même, bien plus qu'il ne succomba sous l'effort de causes extérieures; mais rien ne peut donner la mesure exacte de la durée certainement considérable, de cette phase de dissolution politique et intellectuelle, qui précéda la restauration du pouvoir royal au profit de la race Qquichua." At this time, when the Peruvians had sunk into a state almost of barbarism,² and had lost even the memory of their early civilisation, the third epoch, that of the Incas, commenced. Manco-Capac was the traditional founder of the new order of things, and it is not surprising that

¹ "Essai sur l'Empire des Incas" (1874), p. 47 *seq.*

² Mexico witnessed much the same phenomenon on the destruction of the Toltecan Monarchy.

the people looked upon him as a divine benefactor, a child of the sun. Garcilasso says that the Peruvians were so simple that they ascribed this character to anyone who invented something new, and that they revered good chiefs as gods, "seeing that they were different from the great multitude of tyrants."¹

We are not concerned here with the origin of the Incas, but with their character and institutions; and great light is thrown on the latter subject if we accept the explanation given by Garcilasso of the meaning of the title given to the founder of the empire. He says that *ccapac* signifies rich, "not in estates nor in the gifts of fortune, as the Indians generally use the word, but rich in the gifts of the mind, in meekness, piety, clemency, liberty, justice, magnanimity, and the desire to do good to the poor."² How far this honourable title was earned by the Inca rulers we shall see by consideration of the institutions which they established. The most complete provision was made for government, and the application of the laws by the division of the people into decades, fifties, and larger bodies, each under its own official head, and the appointment of tribunals of justice of different grades, the judges of which had to report to the courts above them, the highest courts reporting in their turn through the governors of departments to the sovereign himself.³ The laws themselves were very severe, and, according to Garcilasso, death was the usual punishment inflicted. Their opinion was that all crimes were equally deserving of punishment, since they were equally breaches of the commands of the Inca. The laws were supposed to have been revealed by the Sun to his child, the Inca, and hence

¹ "Commentaries of the Yncas" (Hakluyt Society), pp. 54, 229.

² Do., p. 90.

³ Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," vol. i., p. 39 *seq.*

they were divine, and those who disobeyed them were looked upon as guilty of sacrilege. The sanctions of religion were thus added to the fear of temporal punishment in support of the laws, and Garcilasso says that criminals, "accused by their own consciences, came to declare, before the seat of justice, their hidden sins; for, besides believing that their souls might be condemned, they held it to be a shameful thing that evil should be brought upon the commonwealth by their faults, such as pestilence, deaths, bad harvests, or other special misfortunes."¹ As Prescott points out, the laws were necessarily few, as the Peruvians had no money, hardly any fixed property, and but little trade. They were directed chiefly against theft, murder, and adultery, burning of houses or bridges, removing of landmarks, diverting of water-courses, blasphemy against the Sun, or his offspring the Inca, and rebellion, all of which were punished with death. Rebellion was considered the worst of all crimes, and a city or province which thus offended, was laid waste, and its inhabitants exterminated.² This was a fitting punishment for those who had shown themselves unworthy of the protection of the divine ruler, and who despised the favours which he bestowed on his obedient subjects. The same fate awaited those of his enemies who obstinately refused to accept the terms of peace which were offered them. In other cases, however, the Incas were not severe towards their enemies. They endeavoured to obtain their submission by famine rather than by force; and they injured them as little as possible, on the principle that to spare those who were so soon to become their subjects would be to their own advantage. The chief changes made in the conquered provinces were the

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., pp. 145, 148.

² Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," vol. i., p. 41.

division of the land in the same manner as was adopted in other parts of the kingdom, and the establishment of the worship of the Sun in the place of the local gods, whose images were removed to Cuzco and placed as hostages in one of the temples. Every respect, says Prescott, "was shown to the ancient usages and laws of the land, as far as compatible with the fundamental institutions of the Incas," which were thus established with but little opposition in the conquered territories.¹

Various modes were adopted by the Incas for rendering the conquered peoples willing subjects, and they sought also to remove all incentives to a breach of the laws. The evils of idleness were recognised by the Peruvian legislators, and idleness as such was severely punished, while industry was publicly rewarded. In order to take away any excuse for idleness, officers were appointed whose duty it was, not only to report offences, but to ascertain of what the people had need, and "to assist them with his diligence and care on all occasions when they required help, reporting their necessities to the governor or other officer, whose duty it was to supply seeds when they were required for sowing, or cloth for making clothes; or to help to rebuild a house if it fell or was burnt down; or whatsoever other need they had, great or small."² Moreover, employment was found for all the people in cultivating the ground, working the mines, or in spinning and weaving the wool which was given out from the public magazines, a labour in which occupation was found for all the female part of the household, "from the child five years old to the aged matron not too infirm to hold a distaff."³ If idleness is a fruitful source of crime, still more is

¹ Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," vol. ii., p. 69 *seq.*

² Garcilasso, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 144.

³ Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," vol. i., p. 46 *seq.*

poverty. This also was recognised by the Incas, who punished theft less severely than in other cases if it had been perpetrated to obtain the necessaries of life. But the Peruvian would seem to have had no excuse for being poor. If he were a soldier on active duty, or if he were old, sick, or an orphan, his neighbours were required to cultivate his land, and the same service was performed for a widow. So also a man with a young and numerous family could demand the assistance of his neighbours in tilling his land.¹ Should a man become reduced to want by sickness or misfortune, he obtained relief from the granaries established to supply the necessities of the people in seasons of scarcity. Wealth and poverty were alike forbidden to the Peruvian. "The law," says Prescott, "was constantly directed to enforce a steady industry and a sober management of his affairs. No mendicant was tolerated in Peru. When a man was reduced by poverty or misfortune (it would hardly be by fault), the arm of the law was stretched out to minister relief; not the stinted relief of private charity, nor that which is doled out drop by drop, as it were, from the frozen reservoirs of 'the parish,' but in generous measure, bringing no humiliation to the object of it, and placing him on a level with the rest of his countrymen."² The simple Peruvians may have thought their existence far from unenviable. Although, as Garcilasso remarks, they were in reality slaves, yet their lives were very happy and not the lives of slaves. In unnecessary things, they were as poor as could be, but "all had as much as they would have required if they had been rich," and therefore no one could be called poor.³

Pleasing as some of the results of the working of

¹ Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," vol. i., p. 46.

² Do., vol., pp. 53, 56.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., pp. 19, 26.

these institutions may have been, there is no doubt that in other respects it exerted a very baleful influence. The Licentiate Ondegardo observed, in relation to the provisions which rendered the poor and helpless independent of those to whom, as being members of the same family, they would naturally have looked for assistance and relief, that there is no surer way of hardening the heart than by thus disengaging it from the sympathies of humanity.¹ The whole system of Inca government must have had the same deadening influence over the higher sympathies. "The extraordinary regulations respecting marriage under the Incas," says Mr Prescott, "are eminently characteristic of the genius of the government, which, far from limiting itself to matters of public concern, penetrated into the most private recesses of domestic life, allowing no man, however humble, to act for himself, even in those personal matters in which none but himself, or his family at most, might be supposed to be interested. No Peruvian was too low for the fostering vigilance of government. None was so high that he was not made to feel his dependence upon it in every act of his life. His very existence as an individual was absorbed in that of the community. His hopes and his fears, his joys and his sorrows, the tenderest sympathies of his nature, which would most naturally shrink from observation, were all to be regulated by law. He was not allowed even to be happy in his own way. The government of the Incas was the mildest, but the most searching of despotisms."² It is evident that there was no room under such a system of government for the growth of the higher virtues, and it would seem almost as though the founder of that system had determined to prevent the necessity for them, by concentrating all benevolent action in himself

¹ Cited by Prescott, vol. i., p. 26, *nota*. ² Do., vol. i., p. 106.

and in his successors, the divine rulers of the State. One of the titles given to the sovereign was *Hacchacayac*, which means "lover and benefactor of the poor;" and the young heir to the throne was, during the novitiate which all the Inca youths had to pass through, clothed in rags, in order that when he became a king, remembering he had been one of them, he might not despise the poor, but merit that title.¹

The policy of the Incas has been well summed up by a late French writer, who affirms that the material aggrandisement of the State was the constant manifestation of their power, and domestic tranquillity—"order" *at all price and by all means*, its sole end.² In both of these respects success attended their efforts. Not only did the Incas establish a powerful empire, but their subjects appear to have led a contented and happy existence. But what was the moral result of their paternal despotism? Lejesama, the last survivor of the early Spanish Conquerors, declared, in the preamble to the testament which he made shortly before his death to relieve his conscience, that the whole of the people under the Incas were sober and industrious, that robbery and theft were unknown, that so far from the people being licentious, there was not a prostitute in the country,³ and that "everything was conducted with the greatest order and entire submission to authority."⁴ This picture is undoubtedly too highly coloured, and Prescott very

¹ Garcilasso, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 174. The eldest sons of the Mexican nobles were treated in much the same fashion. See Clavigero, "History of Mexico," (Eng. Trans.), vol. i., p. 286.

² M. Weiner "Essai sur l' Empire des Incas," p. 50.

³ This must be incorrect. Garcilasso states that the Incas allowed public women, in order to avoid greater evils, but they were compelled to live outside the towns. They were called *Pampayruna*, which means "field or public person," and were treated with great contempt. *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 321-2.

⁴ Cited by Mr Prescott, "Conquest of Peru," vol. ii., p. 156 n.

properly remarks that "where there is no free agency, there can be no morality; where there is no temptation, there can be little claim to virtue. Where the routine is rigorously prescribed by law, the law, and not the man, must have the credit of the conduct. If that government is the best which is felt the least, which encroaches on the national liberty of the subject only so far as is essential to civil subordination, then of all governments devised by man, the Peruvian has the least real claim to our admiration."¹ Goodness, however, is, after all, a relative term, and it is possible that the paternal despotism of the Incas may have been better fitted for their subjects than any other. Judged of by results, and the character of the people, we can hardly doubt that such was the case. If the Inca rule did not create virtue, it gave happiness, and it at least discouraged those actions which are contrary to virtue, although probably only because they are also inconsistent with the general happiness which was the aim of that rule.

The ideas which a people entertain with reference to the future life, often throw much light on their moral status. The Incas appear to have believed in a material resurrection, and hence not only were the bodies of the dead preserved with great care, but even "the nail-parings and the hairs that were shorn off or torn out with a comb."² The teaching of the Amautas, or philosophers, as to the soul and its destiny, was that there is a state of existence after this life, in which the condition of the soul would depend on its conduct here. "They did not understand," says Garcilasso, "that the future life was spiritual, but believed it to be corporeal like this one. They held that the rest of the upper world consisted in a quiet life, free from the toil and care in which this life

¹ "Conquest of Peru," ii., p. 157.

² Garcilasso, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 127.

is passed ; and that the life of the lowest world, which we call hell, was full of all manner of infirmities and sorrows, care and toil, and that there will be suffering without cessation, nor any comfort whatever in that place.”¹ It is not improbable that these ideas are due to some extent to Christian teaching after the Conquest. At all events, they were consistent with a very material view of the future life, since they supposed its occupations would be much the same as in the present world, which led them to bury with the dead man not only his clothes, utensils, and treasure, but also his favourite wives and servants. This, however, would seem to have applied more especially to the Incas, for, as Prescott observes, “one might suppose that the educated Peruvians imagined the common people had no souls, so little is said of their opinions as to the condition of these latter in a future life, while they are diffuse on the prospects of the higher orders, which they fondly believed were to keep pace with their condition here.”² This was agreeable to the spirit of the whole system of Inca government. The “people” are the workers of the hive, and so long as they are happy while they continue to work, or at least while they remain in this life, what matters it whether hereafter they live or die ! So also it was of little consequence *how* they lived so long as they did not infringe the social regulations laid down for their guidance. Obedience was for them, and not morality.

The Peruvian institutions were essentially paternal. All the people were members of a common family which was under the providential care of its Inca head. The phase of altruism which was exhibited among them was of a very primitive type. It was that of the father who supplies all the wants of his children, requiring their

¹ Garcilasso, *op. cit.*, i., p. 127.

² “Conquest of Peru,” vol. i., p. 83.

absolute obedience in return, rather than that of the brotherhood, all the members of which, if not voluntarily, yet by the rules of their alliance, minister to the need of their fellows. Agreeably to that view, the passive virtues of the Peruvians were as strictly negative as their active virtue. However admirable may have been the rules which governed their moral conduct, they represented the moral principles of the Inca and not of his subjects. In their actions they had to consider not what was right, but what was in accordance with the rulers' will.

The culture of the native races of Mexico had little in common with that of Peru at the time of the Spanish Conquest, but some further reference¹ to it will not be out of place here, if only by way of contrast. It is not improbable, indeed, that the ancient cultivations of North and South America may be traceable to the same source, the special features presented by either being due to local causes. The national character of the later Mexicans was undoubtedly moulded by the savage rites of their religion, but it was only because the Aztecs, who from the beginning exhibited a sanguinary tendency, by a happy concurrence of circumstances established a supremacy over allied peoples of a milder disposition, that the Mexicans came to be considered a cruel and bloodthirsty race. There is nothing to show that the Aztecs differed racially from the Toltecs and Chichimecs, who preceded them in Mexico, and whose character² appears to have been much more agreeable to that of the peoples of Peru. The Peruvians could be stern and relentless enough when occasion required, and notwithstanding the denial of Garcilasso, they were not absolute

¹ See *supra*, vol. i., p. 463, *seq.*

² See Ixtlilxochitl's "Histoire des Chichimèques," translated by M. Ternaux-Compans.

strangers to the practice of human sacrifice.¹ There are not wanting points of resemblance between the mythologies and traditions of Mexico and Peru.² The Supreme Deity recognised in the latter country was *Pachacamac*, "He who gives life to the universe," while the head of the Mexican Pantheon was *Ipalnemoani*, whose name signifies "He by whom we live."³ With the Mexicans, however, the Supreme Being gave place to the God of War, who was the national deity of the dominant tribe, and so also with the Peruvians his worship was almost abandoned for that of the Sun,⁴ who was the national deity of the ruling Incas or Ingas.

The institutions of the two peoples were undoubtedly very dissimilar. They agreed in the fact that the tribal authority had in either case become perfectly established in substitution for that of the clan. But while the Peruvian chiefly affected the active virtues and reproduced the altruism of the clan, or rather of the father of the family considered as embodying it, the Mexican represented the clan authority more especially in relation to the passive duties of its members. Neither of them were, indeed, exclusively confined to their particular moral province, and the active virtues were certainly not unknown to the Mexicans. Clavigero, in describing the character of this people, says that family ties were strong. Wives were much attached to their husbands, and parents to their children; while "the respect paid by children to their parents, and by the

¹ Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," vol. i., p. 98, note.

² See *passim* M. de Charencey's learned treatise on the Asiatic origin of American civilisation, entitled "Le Myth de Votan," where most of the authorities on that subject will be found referred to. See also M. Gustave d'Eichthal's "Etude sur les origines bouddhiques de la civilisation américaine."

³ Clavigero "History of Mexico," vol. i., p. 242.

⁴ Both the Toltecs and Chichimecs appear to have worshipped the Sun. See Ixtlilxochitl, *op. cit.*, vol. i., pp. 26, 45.

young to the old . . . seem to be feelings that are born with them." Moreover, after stating that they were patient of injury and hardship, and most grateful for any kindness shown to them, the historian declares that the principal features of their character were generosity and perfect disinterestedness. They gave away, without reluctance, what had cost them great labour to acquire. Clavigero adds that the charge of extreme indolence made against the Mexicans may be explained as due partly to their disregard for selfish interests, and partly to their dislike of their Spanish masters, which gave them an aversion to the tasks imposed on them.¹ The phlegmatic temperament which the Mexicans possessed, in common with most of the other American peoples, may have had something to do with that indolence, and temperament had no doubt considerable influence over their conduct towards each other. But some effect, at least, must be ascribed to other more positive influences. Probably the establishment of hospitals for the sick and for disabled soldiers was due, partially at least, to the influence of religious teaching, which would seem also to have enforced the practice of charity to the poor.²

The benevolent sentiments enforced by the Mexican priests were, however, accompanied by others which are somewhat antagonistic, to say the least. While he was taught to feed the hungry, the disciple was directed to provide a slave for sacrifice, and the demand for human sacrifices was so great that wars were undertaken to supply a sufficient number of victims.³ Such offerings, and the cannibalism which accompanied them, had undoubtedly a great and deteriorating influence over the character of the Mexicans. Prescott remarks that familiarity with

¹ *op. cit.*, vol i., p. 80, *seq.*

² *supra*, vol. i., p. 463.

³ Clavigero, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 278, *seq.*

their religious rites "stealed the heart against human sympathy, and begat a thirst for carnage, like that excited in the Romans by the exhibitions of the circus. The perpetual recurrence of ceremonies, in which the people took part, associated religion with their most intimate concerns, and spread a gloom of superstition over the domestic hearth, until the character of the nation wore a grave and even melancholy aspect, which belongs to their descendants at the present day."¹ The sternness, if not the cruelty, exhibited in the religious rites of the Mexicans were observable also in their dealings with criminals. Their penal code may have shown "a profound respect for the great principles of morality," but, adds Prescott, it was stamped with "the severity, the ferocity, indeed, of a rude people hardened by familiarity with scenes of blood." The usual penalties were death or slavery. Murder, whether of a freeman or a slave, was punished with death, as was adultery, and also theft of the more heinous kinds. The removal of land marks placed in the fields by public authority, the defrauding by false measures, and even the prodigal squandering of a patrimony, were treated as capital offences. Intemperance was punished by death, or with loss of rank and confiscation of property, according to whether the offender was young or more advanced in years. Traitors and rebels were, of course, treated as capital offenders; and such was the fate also of judges who accepted a bribe or gave an unjust sentence.²

The severity of the punishments, awarded by their penal code to certain offences, would seem to show that the Mexicans were governed by what they considered was essential to the interests of the State, rather than by the perception and recognition of the principles of morality

¹ Prescott, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 75.

² Clavigero, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 355, *seq.*

as Prescott supposes. A reference to the exhortations addressed by parents to their children confirms this view. In a father's advice to his sons, the great aim appears to be to enforce such conduct as should lead the gods to give them "riches, honour, and prosperity, even as they give them to those who are strong in battle."¹ Sahagun has preserved also an address by an Aztec mother to her daughter, in which the evil of adultery is dwelt on. She says, "see that you disgrace not yourself, that you stain not your honour, nor pollute the lustre and fame of your ancestors." Notwithstanding the elevated tone of this advice, it is noticeable that the condemnation of the act of adultery is placed on the ground of duty to the husband, and not of any special heinousness in the act itself. The punishment which it is said God will inflict on the offender is *for daring to injure her husband*. In an earlier passage, the mother warns her daughter against unchastity before marriage, but there is nothing to show that she had any idea of immorality in connection with the offence.² Nevertheless, those addresses, no less than the prayers to the Deity, contain much valuable moral instruction.

Moral discipline occupied also an important place in the education which both sexes received at the hands of the priests. An abhorrence of vice, a modesty of behaviour, respect to superiors, and love of fatigue were, says Clavigero, strongly inculcated.³ Veracity was one of the things most highly esteemed, while reverence for parents was so sedulously cultivated, that

¹ Bancroft, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 247.

² Clavigero states that no punishment was provided for unchastity before marriage, although its evil was dwelt upon by parents in their admonitions to their children, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 357. The Otomis appear to have allowed more license than the Mexicans, *do.*, vol. i., p. 321.

³ *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 329.

children, when grown up and married, hardly durst speak before them. Those youths who completed their education in the temple seminaries remained there until the time of their marriage had arrived, when they were dismissed by the superior, who exhorted them to a perseverance in virtue, and the discharge of all the duties of the married state.¹ Whatever influence virtuous action may be supposed to have had over the worldly lot of those who practised it, such conduct does not appear to have had any great effect on their condition after death. Of the three separate states of existence in the spirit world, which the religion of the Mexicans provided, the highest was reserved for the souls of those who fell in battle, or died in captivity, and of the women who died in child-birth. The second was devoted to the souls of children, and of those drowned, or struck by lightning, or who died by dropsy, humours, or other such diseases, or from wounds. The former "passed at once into the presence of the Sun, whom they accompanied with songs and choral dances, in his bright progress through the heavens; and after some years, their spirits went to animate the clouds and singing birds of beautiful plumage, and to revel amidst the rich blossoms and odours of the gardens of Paradise." Those relegated to the intermediate state passed into a cool and delightful place, where they enjoyed the most delicious repasts, with other sensuous pleasures. The third place was that to which were consigned the souls of the rest of the dead, who were supposed to reside in utter darkness, although they would seem not to have been subjected to positive punishment.²

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 337.

² Prescott, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 56. Clavigero, *do.*, vol. i., p. 242.

Chinese and Japanese.

The government of Peru was essentially paternal, the Inca being the Father, whose will was law, and whose providential care supplied all the wants of his children. The same spirit runs throughout the political institutions of both China and Japan. No doubt, the notion of dependence is less pronounced, this being due to the fact that the natives of those countries have attained socially to a certain degree of manhood. Actions are no longer punished because they are contrary to the will of the ruler, but are so because they "transgress the hallowed laws of the Empire,"¹ and individuals have a freedom of action which the Peruvians were quite strangers to. The American and Asiatic peoples agreed, however, in their idea as to what should be the aim of good government. An Emperor of China—Kang-hi—who was nearly contemporary with Louis XIV. of France, thus speaks in his will:—"I the Emperor, who honour Heaven, and who am charged with its decrees, say: From all time it has been the duty of those who govern the universe to revere Heaven and to follow the ways of our ancestors. The true way to do this is to treat kindly those who come from far, and to promote, according to their worth, those who are near; to give the people peace and plenty; to aim at the good of the world as at our own; to make our heart one with the heart of the world; to preserve the State from dangers before they come, and to meet all disturbances with wisdom. . . . During so long a reign I have had no other end than to bring peace into the empire, to make my people happy, each in his condition. For this I have toiled, and it has

¹ Thunberg's "Travels in Europe, Africa, and Asia" (Eng. trans.), vol. ii, p. 65.

worn out the strength of my mind and body.”¹ This is language which might have been used by an Inca of Peru, whose parental condition is reproduced in that of the rulers of China and Japan. Mr Dickson affirms that the State in Japan is founded on the idea of the family exactly as in China, whose sage, Mencius, says, “the root of the empire is the State—the root of the State is in the family—the root of the family is in the person of its head.”² Indeed, the sentiments, and sometimes the very words of the laws of Iyeyas, are taken from the writings of the Chinese sages Confucius and Mencius. The code is founded upon the five duties of universal obligation enunciated by the former in the *Chung Yung*, that of a sovereign and minor, of a father and son, of husband and wife, of elder and younger brothers, and between friends, and upon “the principle that the administration of government lies in getting proper men, and that such are to be obtained by means of the ruler’s own character.”³ Iyeyas wrote that he, like the Mikado, loved his people as a mother does her children, and he added, “this benevolence of mind is called Jin. This Jin may be said to consist of five parts—these are humility, integrity, courtesy, wisdom, and truth.”⁴ Elsewhere he says to his subjects, “respect the gods, keep the heart pure, and be diligent in business during the whole life,” adding, “the aged, whether widowers or widows, and orphans, and persons without relatives, every one should assist with kindness and liberality for justice to these four, is the root of good government.”⁵

These sentiments are doubtless derived from the

¹ Quoted by Dr Bridges in “International Policy” (1860), p. 387.

² This saying, which occurs in “Le Low,” is thus translated by Dr Legge:—“The root of the kingdom is in the State; the root of the State is in the clan; the root of the clan is in the person.”—The Works of Mencius (1875), p. 237.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 269.

⁴ *Do.*, p. 268.

⁵ *Do.*, p. 242.

teaching of the Chinese sages, and it is, therefore, somewhat surprising to learn that the Chinese "seem to be almost void of philanthropy."¹ This statement probably expresses the general truth, but it is by no means absolutely true. A late traveller undoubtedly affirms that "the charitable institutions of China are far from numerous, and but ill-organised as a rule."² Moreover, the Abbé Huc declared that "the Chinese, so ready and skilful at organising every kind of society that has any commercial or industrial object in view, or even for resisting thieves or the enticements of the gaming-table, have never yet formed any benevolent society for the solace of the sick and the unfortunate, with the single exception of a society to provide coffins gratis for the dead who have no relatives to undertake the funeral." And this he ascribes to a superstitious and self-interested motive.³ The Chinese have a special genius for the formation of trade societies and mutual benefit associations.⁴ The former consist of combinations not merely for fixing the price of articles by preventing undue competition, but also for keeping up the rate of wages. These trade societies make a near approach, in some respects, to the old English guilds. Doolittle says:—"Usually about the third or fourth Chinese month, the shopkeepers, journeymen, and master workmen who have entered into unions regulating their business, meet together in some temple to feast, behold theatrical shows,

¹ Meadows, "The Chinese and their Rebellions," p. 207.

² Thomson's "Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China" (1875), p. 271.

³ "The Chinese Empire" (1855), vol ii. p. 325.

⁴ At the end of the last century a formidable communistic society was formed, under the title of the Thien ti Hoih, or the "Brotherhood of the Heaven and the Earth," the object of which professed to be to abolish oppression and misery from the earth, but which became associated with opium smuggling. For an account of that society, see Röttger's "Geschichte," published at Berlin in 1852.

amend their rules as deemed best, and consult about their affairs in common. Offerings are made, and incense and candles burnt, on such occasions, before the divinity worshipped there, as an important part of the programme of proceedings, in the hope that his or her aid will be secured in this manner to enable them to conduct their business wisely and profitably."¹ The associations for mutual benefit among the Chinese appear to be chiefly clubs for the lending of money without interest, on the principle of the English building societies, in which the shares advanced to members are drawn by lot.²

It would be a mistake to suppose that the practice of private benevolence is unknown to the Chinese. Beggars are very numerous, at all events in the large cities, and their necessities must be relieved, or they could not exist. The alms bestowed upon them would seem, however, to be exacted more often than freely given. In the large towns the beggars of each districts are controlled by a head man,³ and shopkeepers and others enter into an arrangement with the head man that they shall not be importuned for money by the beggars during a stipulated time. Those who neglect to make such an arrangement are liable to be continually annoyed for contributions, and very effectual measures are taken to compel payment of them. Sometimes the beggars go round in companies to the shops or stores making a deafening noise with gongs or sticks, and, says Mr Doolittle, "a single lusty beggar with his lungs and staff, or gong, will make such a noise as to interrupt business entirely by drowning conversation, so that the shopkeeper, in a kind of self-defence, tosses him the 'cash' he demands,

¹ "Social Life of the Chinese," p. 462.

² Do., p. 458 *seq.*

³ Huc says that the King of the Beggars at Peking is a real power, "The Chinese Empire," vol ii., p. 327.

when he goes away to vex and annoy another shop-keeper in a similar manner." ¹ The beggars, moreover, unless they are restrained by the head man, owing to special arrangement having been made with him, interfere with the funerals of wealthy persons or the yearly sacrifices to the dead, in order to obtain money or food. ² It is evident that the giving of alms under such circumstances can hardly be described as an act of charity. Fear, rather than sympathy, is the governing motive, and such is the case also with the offerings made to the distressed and destitute spirits, often those of lepers and beggars, in the lower regions. These spirits are supposed to view with longing the offerings made on sacrificing to the dead, and also to have great influence over the fortunes of mankind, impairing health or causing derangement of business, and consequently it is necessary to propitiate them and to bribe them to let the sacrifices proceed. ³

The Chinese are, nevertheless, generally very considerate for the deserving poor. Thus in winter, the rich sometimes buy and distribute among the most destitute quantities of wadded second-hand clothing, a praiseworthy practice which is occasionally imitated by the officers of the gaols, who thus seek to protect the most needy of their prisoners from the deadly effects of numbness or cold. Moreover, at Fuhchau, when provisions are unusually scarce or extremely dear, the gentry and rich men sometimes open the granaries provided for this purpose, and sell rice to the poor at a very reduced price. It is true that rice is bought when cheap and stored up until it becomes dear, but the action is one of pure benevolence. This is shown by the further custom, mentioned by Mr. Doolittle, of money being subscribed for the purchase of rice for distribu-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 527 *seq.* ² *Do.*, p. 529. ³ *Do.*, p. 156.

tion among those widows and orphans who are not able to maintain themselves, and who have no friends willing to help them. Moreover, if we may judge by the numerous public charities at Fuhchau, the Chinese are by no means so backward in the organization of benevolent associations as some writers assert. Foremost among their charitable institutions are the foundling asylums, called into existence probably by the custom of exposing infant children. Societies have been formed also for the relief of indigent and virtuous widows. The members of one of these societies, which is connected with the municipal temple of the city, "are usually rich men or gentry, who agree to furnish money monthly to aid a definite number of respectable widows, who must comply with the regulations of the society, each member specifying the number of persons he pledges himself to aid, whether one or more." Burial in a decent and proper manner is considered of great importance amongst the Chinese, as among all Eastern peoples, and to aid a very poor person in thus disposing of the body of his parent, is considered in some sense a meritorious act. At Fuhchau there is a society whose object is "to aid the exceedingly poor people to bury their dead, or to provide funds for the purchase of coffins to contain the bodies of respectable strangers who die" there.¹

We have seen that associations for charitable purposes, or rather which required benevolent action by its members, were formerly not unknown to the Japanese. The Otokodaté won the respect of all men for their good deeds, which would seem to have been dispensed indifferently to all in distress.² The conduct of these

¹ For the above account of the Fuhchau charities, see Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 473 *seq.*

² *supra*, vol. i., p. 455.

brotherhoods, as well as such examples as that furnished by the life of the swordsmith of Osoka, mentioned by Mr Mitford, show that the benevolent actions of the Japanese, and no doubt the same may be said also of the Chinese, are sometimes due to really noble principles. The Japanese swordsmith, thinking that he was bound to atone for the evils caused by the trade to which he had been brought up, almost impoverished himself in relieving the wants of others. "No neighbours appealed to him in vain for help in tending the sick or burying the dead. No beggar or lazar was ever turned from his door without receiving some mark of his bounty, whether in money or in kind. Nor was his scrupulous honesty less remarkable than his charity."¹

It is possible that Christianity may have had something to do with the displays of charitable feeling by the Japanese, it having at one time had numerous professors among this people.² The development of the altruistic sentiment in both China and Japan is, however, no doubt chiefly due to the influence of Buddhism operating in either case on the minds of persons among whom the idea of the family was fully recognised. To that influence may, perhaps, also be ascribed the performance of certain thoughtful actions which would hardly find a place in Christian practice. Such as the placing of tea in vessels by the wayside in hot weather for the passers-by; the hanging of a lantern in the streets at night; and the repairing of bridges and roads.³ The charitable conduct which, according to Buddhistic teaching, ought to be exhibited towards man is not restricted to him. Among all peoples who accept the doctrine of transmigration of

¹ "Tales of Old Japan," vol. i., p. 72.

² For an account of the cruelties inflicted by the Japanese in exterminating Christianity, see Caron's Narrative in Pinkerton's "Voyages and Travels," vol. vii.

³ Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

souls, the taking of animal life is more or less objected to. Partly owing to the belief in transmigration, and partly through the influence of the idea of the impurity of matter with which it is connected, Chinese of all classes look upon the eating of flesh as "sensual and sinful, or quite incompatible with the highest degree of sincerity and purity."¹ The use of beef is especially denounced by many people, and a law which, however, is never now enforced, forbids the slaughter of the buffalo except for certain sacrifices. One of the "Twelve Sentences of Good Woods," contained in one of the books, "admonishing the age," which are distributed as an act of merit, is "you should not eat the flesh of the dog, nor beef."² In pursuance of this feeling, vows to refrain from destroying animal life, as well as vows to support certain animals as long as they live, are regarded as evidence of "a good and virtuous heart, and as meriting good fortune from the gods."³ Some persons who have thus vowed animals to live, place them in a monastery, and either supply food for them, or pay a monthly sum for the purpose of providing it. How far the prevalence of such actions as those just mentioned is accompanied by any more kindly treatment of animals in general, than is usual among peoples who show less repugnance to taking animal life, may be questioned. It is doubtful also whether the *duty* of performing benevolent actions of any kind has really been yet developed in the popular Chinese mind. Punishments and rewards for good and evil conduct are supposed to accrue in the present life; and as these come from a superhuman source, benevolent actions may have a purely selfish origin, as being inspired by the idea that they are pleasing to the beings who affect man for good or ill, rather than by any feeling of the propriety of such actions in themselves. In many

¹ Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 480.

² Do., p. 469.

³ Do., p. 480.

individual cases, perhaps pure benevolence is the motive for virtuous action; but from the prevalence of the practice of vowing—vows being analogous to oaths, in that they call the gods to witness that certain actions shall be performed—we may infer that it is not usually so. The absence of any strong opinion as to the existence of a state of future retribution is, in itself, a sufficient reason why the obligatory nature of benevolent action is not entertained by the Chinese mind; seeing that such a notion appears to be essential to the development of the highest phase of moral belief, although not to its continuance when once gained, either by an individual or a generation. It has been pointed out, at a preceding page, that the idea of duty is first aroused only in response to the belief that certain actions are displeasing to a spiritual being, who will in some manner or other punish any person who performs them. This belief is undoubtedly entertained by the Chinese, but its retribution is associated only with the non-observance of the passive duties of morality, and not with the non-exercise of the active virtues. Even as to the former, there is no guarantee that retribution will ever be inflicted. Moreover, the punishments feared are of such a character that it is hardly more than a question of expediency whether the actions deprecated shall be performed or not. Certain spirits, such as those of beggars and lepers, are held by the Chinese in much dread.¹ Sudden or repeated sickness is usually ascribed to certain malignant gods or spirits, or to a god or goddess unknown, who has become offended through some act or word of the person afflicted. Insulting the images of the gods is thought by the

¹ As to the spirits of beggars and lepers, see *supra*, p. 30. The spirits of children are much feared by the natives of some parts of China, as they cannot be propitiated by offerings. Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 343.

common people to be punished by colic, or some painful disease. At other times, sudden illness or derangement of business is ascribed to "the grudge or enmity of the spirit of some person, now deceased, but who was offended, either in the present or in a former state of being, by the rich man, or the man whose business languishes, or by his ancestors, for whose follies or whose vices he is held responsible, and for whom he is made to suffer."¹

The Chinese generally believe that the performer of a good or benevolent deed, or his posterity, will certainly enjoy the merit of it; and so also the evil doer will be requited, either personally or in his descendants, although the reward or punishment is only in the present life. Thus the Confucianists say that "if one is virtuous, and is faithful in the discharge of the relative and the constant duties of life, the appropriate reward is sure to be experienced in his family, or by his posterity in this world. . . . In like manner, the proper punishment for sin is believed by this class of men to take place in this life. A bad reputation, poverty and its usual attendant hardships, sickness, short life, to be without male posterity, without official employment, without literary fame and rank, &c., are not unfrequently regarded as punishments for unfilial or sinful deeds."² The Taouists have a book called *Kan-ying-peen*, or "Book on Retribution," which has great moral influence. The punishments denounced by it, however, have relation only to the present life. They are, says Mr Edkins, "losses, diseases, early death, and every sort of misfortune belonging to this world. The rewards of virtue are temporal blessings, and, in certain cases, immortality and transference to the abodes of the genii. But while the retribution of actions is Taouist, the actions themselves

¹ Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 104, *seq.*

² Do., p. 594.

are characterised as right and wrong entirely by the Confucian standard.”¹

Among the Chinese, in general, nearly all calamities appear to be looked upon as proofs of sin, and yet their idea of moral guilt is evidently very imperfect. It can hardly be otherwise, when such an act as the taking of a second wife during the lifetime of the first, is regarded, under certain circumstances, as a virtue. This is when a son is required to continue the sacrifices at the ancestral tomb.² From the Chinese point of view, the attainment of that object is a very worthy aim, but the practice of polygamy, although not in itself immoral, is hardly entitled on that ground to be classed among virtuous actions. The Chinese have other curious notions, the prevalence of which Mr Edkins refers to the influence of Buddhism, and which show how defective is their idea of moral duty. Thus “to destroy animal life in any instance; to partake of animal food; the desecration of the written characters, printed or manuscript, when found on paper, porcelain, or carved wood, are considered to be sinful in a high degree. They are looked upon as great crimes, and it is thought that they will surely provoke severe punishment from the unseen fate that controls human actions.” It is truly said that such opinions diminish very much from the moral weight that attaches to the word “sin,” in Chinese *tsuy*.³

It is sometimes supposed, nevertheless, that the higher moral sentiments are so fully developed among the Chinese, as to fit them for an example to even Christian peoples. Dr Bridges declares that, in the person of her great sage Confucius, China “offers perhaps the most perfect type of morality, that is to say, of perfect manhood, that has ever yet commanded the

¹ “Religious Condition of the Chinese,” p. 171.

² Do., p. 163.

³ Do., p. 179.

general veneration of mankind. History tells of none in whom such vigorous energies and such high powers of thought have been throughout a long life so completely under the dominion of social sympathies, so completely devoted to the service of others."¹ This may be very true, without, however, having the consequences which it is desired to deduce from the fact stated. Supposing even that Confucius was the greatest of all moral teachers, yet it does not follow that the Chinese are the most moral of peoples. It can be proved, indeed, that the type of morality which they exhibit is by no means of the highest kind; nor is it more difficult to establish that the teaching of Confucius is far from attaining the perfection which is sometimes ascribed to it, while the influence it exerts over Chinese life is extremely superficial.

It is not difficult to account for the great reverence paid to Confucius, especially by the Emperor and the State officers,² without ascribing it to any superlative excellence of his moral teaching. Dr Morrison affirms truly that the favour with which the sage has always been viewed by the governments of China is due to his political system being founded on the parental relationship. He teaches that the Emperor is the father of the nation, which is typified by the family, and hence his rule is absolute as that of the parent over the child.³ As said by another writer, the teaching of Confucius was that the obligation of man "consisted in doing good to his family, his friends, and his country. He exalted filial virtue above all other moral and social virtues.

¹ "International Policy," p. 423.

² See Legge's "Chinese Classics," Proleg., pp. 90, *seq.*

³ Cited by Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 101. Davis refers to the remarkable parallel which is kept up between "the relations in which every person stands to his own parents and to the Emperor," *op. cit.*, vol. I., p. 249 *seq.*

The principle of obedience to superiors extends through all his writings, and forms the grand basis of society and of government as he would have them."¹ Thus in the *Ta Hëø*, or "Great Learning," it is affirmed that the government of the State depends on the regulation of the family."² The meaning of this is shown by the words ascribed to Confucius himself:—"The ancients who wished to illustrate virtue throughout the empire, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things."³ Elsewhere Confucius says: "From the Emperor down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of *everything besides*."⁴ It must not be thought, however, that "rectifying the heart" has the same meaning in the mouth of the Chinese sage as it would have with us. The commentator explains that by making the thoughts sincere, is meant "the allowing of no self-deception."⁵ What is intended by the latter phrase appears from the further explanation of the saying, "the regulation of one's family depends on the cultivation of his person." On this point the Commentator says: "Men are partial when they feel affection and love; partial, when they despise and dislike; partial when they stand in awe and reverence; partial, when

¹ "The Chinese and their Rebellions," by T. Taylor Meadows, p. 197.

² Commentary, Ch. ix. Legge's "Chinese Classics," vol. i.

³ Text of Confucius, sec. 4 (*idem*). ⁴ Do., sec. 6.

⁵ Com., Ch. vi., sec. 1.

they feel sorrow and compassion; partial, when they are arrogant and rude. Thus it is that there are few men in the world who love, and at the same time know the bad qualities of *the object of their love*, or who hate, and yet know the excellences of *the object of their hatred*.”¹ Hence, self-deception is partiality, and perfect rectitude of heart is possible, only when the perfect knowledge of things has been attained which precludes all partiality. It is evident that the perfect rectitude here supposed can be attained by very few persons, and when attained it would be attended by the deadening of all true emotion. There is much analogy in this respect between the teaching of Confucius and that of Gautama (Buddha), with whom the abnegation of all desire and emotion constituted the condition of Nirvana. The practical result, however, of their teaching, was different, since their aims were different. Notwithstanding Gautama's precepts of benevolence, his teaching really centred in self, whereas that of Confucius, although it began with self, was chiefly concerned with the relations between the individual and those around him. It would have been impossible for Gautama to have written, “Profound was King Wăn. With how bright and increasing a feeling of reverence did he regard his resting-places! As a sovereign he rested in benevolence. As a minister he rested in reverence. As a son he rested in filial piety. As a father he rested in kindness. In communication with his subjects, he rested in good faith.”²

Sir J. F. Davis very well asserts that the doctrines of Confucius “constitute rather a system of philosophy in the department of morals and politics, than any particular religious persuasion.”³ Such being the case, it is necessary, if we would understand Chinese morality, to have

¹ Com., Ch. viii. § 1. ²The Great Learning. Com., Ch. vi., sec. 1.

³ China (1857), vol. ii., p. 2.

some idea of that system, and the following is a summary of it as described by Mr Meadows:—¹

Yang and *Yin*, the positive and negative essences, sprang from the ultimate principle, having produced the five elements of the material world. A “transcendental union and coagulation” of all these take place, and the positive essence becomes the masculine power, and the negative element becomes the feminine power, in nature. By the mutual influence of these two elements, all things in the visible world are developed, man being formed of their finer portion. At this stage the mind becomes existent as distinct from the matter—mind and matter having thus a common origin in the ultimate principle of all things. Man’s nature is at first perfectly good, and its active qualities are classified under the five heads, *Jin*, *E*, *Le*, *Che*, and *Sin*, or the five virtues, Benevolence—charity in its widest sense—Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom, and Sincerity. “Man’s form having been produced, and consciousness having ensued, his originally pure nature is influenced by the objective world, good and evil come thereby into separate existence, and all human affairs arise. . . . When man is able to follow the dictates of his pure nature, and thus to act in accordance with that principle in its operation, harmony is the consequence and his actions are good. When he allows himself to be unduly influenced by the outer world, and in consequence to act differently from, or contrary to, it in its operation, a jarring discord ensues, and his actions are evil.”² In the former case, man’s action being perfect, he is holy, and his teaching absolutely true. Fuh was the first Holy Man, and Confucius the last, while Mencius,

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 342 *seq.*

² This is practically the same doctrine as that of the Descent of Souls. See *Infra*.

although he was the first to positively declare that man's nature is fundamentally good, was only a Sage, or one who attains "a full apperception of the working of the Ultimate Principle in men and things, . . . and a complete obedience by dint of study and effort."

It may be wondered how it is that the Chinese, with so refined a system of philosophy, and with the precepts of the sages who have developed it, should yet give, as we shall see, so little evidence of a true sense of morality. The key to this curious phenomenon is probably to be found in the remark made by Mr Meadows, that "the Chinese have not set up that division of man's mental nature into intellectual and moral qualities, which plays so prominent a part in all discussions of occidental philosophy." In fact, a quality termed wisdom is placed by them with "benevolence" and "sincerity."¹ The word *Taou*, the original meaning of which appears to be way or path, signifies also course, method, the way of the universe, or the law of nature, absolute truth, true principles, science, virtue, reason, true doctrines, to speak. We can understand, therefore, how "perfect conformity, in all things, with the fixed course of nature must be perfect goodness or virtue," and how *Tih*, virtue, may be defined as "the complete possession of *Taou*, or absolute truth, by man."² Virtue being thus synonymous with true or reasonable, and vice with false or unreasonable,³ right or wrong conduct becomes a question of intellect rather than of morals. This view is not necessarily improper, as it cannot be denied that absolute truth and absolute morality are fundamentally the same.⁴ But the practical recognition of the fact is not possible until not only

¹ Do. p. 346.

² Do. p. 354.

³ See do., p. 68.

⁴ *Comp.* Mr Herbert Spencer's statement that conformity to the laws of life is the substance of absolute morality. ("Essays," 2d series, p. 269.)

the mental faculties, but also the moral nature, has attained to a certain degree of development. It is on the latter point that the Chinese fail, and their moral incapacity explains why, notwithstanding the perfection of their philosophical system, they come so far short of its requirements in the practical conduct of life. It must not be thought that the morality of Confucius even was perfect. Mr Legge points out that the Chinese sage is open to the charge of insincerity, and that he broke his oath on the ground that it had been forced from him.¹ The same writer remarks:—"How far short Confucius came of the standard of Christian benevolence, may be seen from his remarks when asked what was to be thought of the principle that injustice should be recompensed with kindness. He replied, 'With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness.' The same deliverance is given in one of the books of the Le Ke, where he adds that 'he who recompenses injury with kindness is a man who is careful of his person.' Ch'ing Hwen, the commentator of the second century, says that such a course would be incorrect in point of propriety. This 'propriety' was a great stumbling-block in the way of Confucius. His morality was the result of the balancing of his intellect, fettered by the decisions of men of old, and not the gushings of a loving heart, responsive to the promptings of Heaven, and in sympathy with erring and feeble humanity." A commentator on the saying of Confucius adds that only trivial matters could be dealt with in the way directed by the philosopher, and this we can well suppose would be his own opinion, since he expressly affirmed the duty of blood revenge.² It has often been stated that Con-

¹ *op. cit.* Proleg., p. 100-1.

² Legge, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112. This, no doubt, was the origin of

fucius taught the very doctrine expressed in the words ascribed to Jesus,—“Do unto others what you would that others should do unto you.” It was not so, however, in reality. The command of the Chinese teacher is,—“What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others.” The propositions are totally distinct. As Mr Legge points out, the latter wants the positive form of the Christian command, and its perfect observance is quite consistent with a total neglect of the duties of benevolence which are evidenced by the former, and which constitute the chief glory of Christian morality.

Seeing that the annotations made on the sacred books by Choo-tsze, the latest writer of the second epoch of Chinese philosophical speculations, are learned by rote by every educated person in the empire, his teachings must have considerable influence over the national life.¹ Ricci, indeed, thought that very many of the Chinese held views so good that he felt no doubt they would be saved by the mercy of God in the next life!² This would certainly require a wonderful stretch of charity, but too much weight must not be attached to the utterance of sententious sayings as evidence of high moral culture. The moral training of the child is always declared to be the chief element in the national system of education, and this is supposed to lead to the formation of a highly virtuous character. But, as Mr Edkins affirms, their system has not made the Chinese a moral people. Although many of the social virtues are extensively practised among them, yet “they exhibit to the observer a lamentable want of moral strength. Commercial integrity, and speaking the truth, are far less common among them than in Christian countries. The the responsibility to relatives in cases of death, which is the source of great evils. See *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 30.

¹ Meadows, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

² Edkins' “Religious Condition of the Chinese,” p. 155.

standard of principle among them is kept low by the habits of the people. They do not appear to feel ashamed when the discovery is made that they have told an untruth."¹

Much the same testimony as to Chinese morality is borne by other writers.² Sir J. F. Davis, while giving the Chinese credit for various good qualities, such as mildness, docility, industry, peaceableness, subordination, and respect for the aged, points out that these qualities are accompanied by the vices of insincerity and falsehood,³ with mutual distrust and jealousy. Deceit is not considered disgraceful at any time,⁴ and towards Europeans it would appear to be thought just the opposite. "Many a Chinese at Canton," says Davis, "in his intercourse with a stranger, would seem occasionally to have an abstract love of falsehood and trickery, independent of anything that he can gain by it; and he will appear sometimes to volunteer a lie, when it would be just the same to him to tell the truth."⁵ There are many other indications that moral conduct is judged of among the Chinese by a standard much lower than the Christian one. Thus, fathers have practically the power of life and death over their children. If a child is killed by his parent designedly, the latter is subject only to the chastisement of the bamboo and a year's punishment, and if the child had struck his parent, to no punishment

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 162.

² Comp. Finlayson's account in his "Mission to Siam and Hué," p. 64 *seq.*

³ Huc declares that "it is very difficult to believe them, even when they do speak the truth," *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 277.

⁴ Trickery is so general, says Huc, that no one is offended at it. *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 150.

⁵ *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 300. A recent writer, Mr J. Thompson, states that the Chinese exhibit a universal lack of confidence in their trade dealings with each other, and in another place he says:—"Before the Chinese can hope to take a position among the civilised powers of the world, they must acquire something of simple honesty, and unlearn much of the science of deception by which they study to enrich themselves." *op. cit.*, pp. 248, 468.

at all. The striking or cursing of a parent, on the other hand, is punished by death,¹ as among the Hebrews. Moreover, parents can sell their children to be slaves, and wives—only with their own consent,² however—can be sold by their husbands to be the wives of other men, although not for slaves. The real character of these transactions is shown by the fact that, the same terms are used to denote the sale and the purchase of children and wives as are applied to the sale and purchase of any description of property.³ The killing of female infants is very common in China among all classes of society. This has sometimes been doubted, but the facts detailed by Doolittle make it certain that infanticide is very prevalent.⁴ Even ordinary cases of murder are never inquired into, unless a formal complaint is made, and when charges of this character are laid, it is sometimes for the purpose of extorting money from rich men, who, although innocent, find it cheaper to bribe their accusers at once than to wait until a mock prosecution has been commenced.⁵ Sir J. F. Davis says, indeed, that crimes of violence are infrequent among the Chinese, and this he ascribes to the discipline to which they are subject from earliest childhood and the habit of controlling their passions. He adds:—"Robbery is seldom accompanied by murder. Under real or supposed injury, however, they are sometimes found to be very revengeful, and on such occasions not at all scrupulous as to how they accomplish their purpose. Women will sometimes hang or drown themselves, merely to bring those with whom

¹ Davis, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 291.

² This consent is not required in the case of "little wives"—*i.e.*, concubines. Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 227.

³ Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 496 *seq.*

⁴ *Do.*, p. 493 *seq.*; and see Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 347 *seq.* Mr J. Thompson states that 25 per cent. of the female children born at Amoy are destroyed. *op. cit.*, p. 293.

⁵ Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

they have quarrelled into trouble.”¹ Moreover, the absence of passion is accompanied by a cruelty which is intensified by its quiet cold-bloodedness, and which even finds real gratification in the sufferings of others.² The influence of this spirit is shown in the severity which marks the portions of the Chinese criminal code relating to the crime of treason. These, according to Sir J. F. Davis, exhibit a remorseless and unrelenting cruelty and injustice, and such is the case also with the provisions which treat of offences against parents.³ The same principle is seen in the treatment of slaves, every offence being “aggravated or diminished in its penalty, according as it is committed by a slave towards a freeman or *vice versa*.”⁴ And yet—strange moral contrast—the Chinese act on the principle that it is better to let the guilty escape than to punish the innocent.⁵

Among other causes of moral weakness operative in China, Mr Edkins places the practice of polygamy.⁶ By this is doubtless meant concubinage, as a man is not allowed to marry more than one wife (*tsy*) properly so called. He may, however, have as many *tsiè*, or handmaids bought with money, as he thinks fit, and their children are admitted to legal rights, according to the principle that the securing of male offspring is of the utmost importance.⁷ If, however, a man has sons by his

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 304. Suicide for the purpose of bringing misfortunes on others appears to be somewhat common. See Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 282.

² See Meadow's "Desultory Notes on the Government and Peoples of China;" (1847), p. 207 *seq.*; also Huc's "Chinese Empire," vol. ii., pp. 246, 270.

³ *op. cit.*, vol. i., pp. 250, 281.

⁴ *Do.*, p. 288.

⁵ *Do.*, p. 445.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 163. M. Huc says that polygamy is not a legal institution, and that formerly even concubines were allowed only to mandarins and to men of forty years of age who had no children. *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 226.

⁷ Adoption is resorted to for the purpose of providing an heir to

wife, it is not considered respectable to take a handmaid at all, and even if he has not a son, every additional *tsiè* he takes sinks him lower in the estimation of his friends. The concubines are taken from the lowest ranks, and enter the family as domestic slaves, but the wife is of equal rank with her husband, and has well-defined rights. Widows are allowed a certain degree of influence over their sons, and sons are obliged to pay homage to their mothers, showing that in some circumstances women are highly respected.¹ The Emperor himself is not exempted from performing the ceremonies of the *kotow* before his mother. Daughters, however, are never taken into account, and the position of woman is in reality one of great inferiority and hardship. Confucius taught that the man is the representative of heaven, and the woman is to obey his instructions. "When young, she must obey her father and elder brother; when married, she must obey her husband; when her husband is dead, she must obey her son. She may not think of marrying a second time. . . . Beyond the threshold of her apartments she should not be known for evil or for good."² Divorce is almost at the pleasure of the husband, as is seen by the seven grounds on which it is allowed. Barrenness is the first, and the others are adultery, disobedience to the husband's parents, talkativeness, thieving, ill-temper, and inveterate infirmities. But the consequences of any of these may be avoided if the wife has mourned for her husband's parents, if the family has acquired wealth since the marriage, or if the wife is without parents to

perform the required rites before the ancestral tablets.—Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 226.

¹ This is chiefly when a girl will not marry, that she may devote herself to her parents, or a widow out of respect for the memory of her deceased husband. To the memory of such women monuments are sometimes erected.—Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 21.

² Legge, *op. cit.*, Proleg., p. 105.

receive her back.¹ Adultery is the only act, except the commission of a capital offence, for which a woman can be imprisoned.² But this is probably owing to the small account in which she is held. Huc says, in relation to the position of woman in China, "as in all Pagan societies, the woman is always the slave or victim of the man, the law seldom troubles itself about her, but if ever it does mention her, it is but to remind her of the inferiority of her condition, and that she is only in this world to obey and to suffer."³ The popular sayings show sufficiently the estimation in which woman is held. Here are a few examples :—"To cultivate virtue is the science of men, to renounce science is the virtue of women ;" "You must listen to your wife, and not believe her ;" "The happiest mother of daughters is she who has only sons ;" "The minds of women are of quicksilver and their hearts of wax ;" "The most timid girl has courage enough to talk scandal."⁴ It would be a matter of surprise if a woman should be otherwise than here depicted, considering the treatment she receives from her very birth. In ancient times, when a girl was born, the child was left for three days on a heap of rags, and instead of the rejoicings which took place on the birth of a male child, not the slightest interest was shown in the occurrence. This ancient indifference is still exhibited towards female children, and when she grows up, the young girl is "treated by everybody, and especially by her brothers, as a menial, from whom they have a right to demand the lowest and most painful services." The only education she receives is in the use of the needle, and no one concerns himself about her until she is to be married. In the choice of a husband she has no concern. She is, in fact, purchased, and no wonder,

¹ Davis, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 322 *seq.*

² Do., p. 288.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 228.

⁴ Do., ii., p. 398.

therefore, that marriage brings little improvement in a woman's lot. "In her new family," says Huc, "she is expected to obey everyone without exception. According to the expression of an old Chinese writer, 'the newly-married wife should be but a shadow and an echo in the house.' She has no right to take her meals with her husband; nay, not even with his male children; her duty is to serve them at table, to stand by in silence, help them to drink, and fill and light their pipes. She must eat alone, after they have done, and in a corner; her food is scanty and coarse, and she would not dare to touch even what is left by her own sons." Her husband "may strike her with impunity, starve her, sell her, or, what is worse, let her out for a longer or shorter period, as is a common practice in the province of Tche-kiang." Huc declares that the judicial annals are full of the most tragical events arising from the perpetual humiliation and wretchedness to which the women of China are reduced, and that the number of them who commit suicide is very considerable. When this occurs the husband generally exhibits much emotion, but only because he will have to be at the expense of purchasing another wife!¹

Much of what has been said above of the Chinese is applicable also to the Japanese. Since the rule of Iyeyas, the harshness of the punishments inflicted on criminals has been mitigated, but even now they are very severe. Tearing to pieces and boiling² are no longer used as a means of putting to death, but incendiaries, forgers of seals or signatures, poisoners, and coiners are to be burnt alive or speared on a cross.³ A servant who kills or attempts to kill his master is

¹ Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 248 *seq.*, and see vol ii., p. 233.

² See Caron's narrative in Pinkerton's "Voyages and Travels," vol vii., p. 625 *seq.*

³ Dickson's "Japan" (1869), p. 267.

directed by the laws of Iyeyas to be treated as an enemy of the Emperor, and his relations are to be extirpated. The custom of blood-revenge appears to be still practised, but the person intending to put any one to death in pursuance of it, must give notice to the police within how many days or months his intention can be carried out, otherwise he is to be considered an enemy.¹ The position of woman in Japan is much the same as in China. A man cannot marry more than one wife, but concubinage is allowed. Caron describes the Japanese women as being amiable, humble, and obedient, as well as modest, and faithful to their husbands. They were never permitted to interfere with business concerns, it being said that they were created to serve man, "to accommodate him in his pleasures, to bear children, and to bring them up."² Formerly a woman who committed adultery was put to death, but now she is sold by her husband to the Yosiwara, or public stews. A man may even thus dispose of his wife, even if innocent, with her consent.³ The existence of a system of organised prostitution⁴ is one of the most curious features of Japanese society, and it bears witness of the great laxity which is exhibited in sexual matters.

The inmates of the Yosiwara appear to be recruited chiefly from the children of distressed persons, or orphans, who are sold when quite young by their relatives to escape the expense of supporting them. The causes assigned by Mr Mitford for the voluntary adoption by others of that mode of life are much the same as those

¹ Dickson, p. 256.

² Caron, *loc. cit.*, p. 619 *seq.*

³ Dickson, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

⁴ For much curious information on this subject, see the works of Mr Mitford and Mr Dickson, already quoted, and also Thunberg's *Travels* (vol. iii.), and the fine work of M. Aimé Humbert, entitled "Le Japon Illustré."

which operate in European countries.¹ It is remarkable, as showing Japanese ideas of sexual morality, that prostitution for the purpose of supporting a parent is esteemed an act of filial piety and deserving of all praise.² Notwithstanding what has been above said, it must not be thought that licentiousness is absolutely excused by the Japanese. Iyeyas affirms that "the man is not upright who is much given to woman," and the number of concubines a man may have is strictly regulated. Mr Dickson says, moreover, that it is a mistake to think that the marriage tie is lightly regarded in Japan, or that most wives have, as asserted by some writers, been courtesans in early life. The falsity of the former notion is proved by the fact that all marriages are believed to be arranged, or at least brought about, by the *kami*, or spirits who superintend Japanese affairs; and as to the latter, Mr Mitford affirms that marriages with women of bad character are much rarer in Japan than in England.³ That Japanese and European ideas relative to sexual matters greatly differ, however, is evident from the observations of Sir Rutherford Alcock with reference to Japanese plays. He says, "the curtain drops a great deal too late, if a Japanese audience were susceptible of being outraged by anything gross or obscene." He adds, "It is difficult to conceive how anything of purity or sanctity can enter into the lives, of those classes at least, where not only the sexes of all ages frequent the same public baths promiscuously, but young girls and respectable matrons find their recreation in witnessing such plays." And yet the same writer, while wondering whether the Japanese have any standard of morality, says that some such must exist,

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol i., p. 69. ² *Do.*, vol i., pp. 57, 67.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol i., p. 61.

“for a gentle, womanly, and modest expression and bearing generally marks the women, and the well-conditioned among the men have a certain refinement and delicacy in their manners; while there is much habitual courtesy even among the lower classes, with a consideration for the feelings and susceptibilities of others, and an unwillingness to give offence, which cannot well be sustained amidst universal grossness, and a coarse unbridled license.”¹

The estimate formed by Mr Doolittle of the moral character of the Chinese is that they do not regard sin “as a very unworthy and exceedingly wicked thing. . . . Sin or crime, or fault or error, is a very indefinite and comparatively an unimportant and trivial thing in the Chinese mind.”² This is not to be wondered at, when we consider that the moral code of Confucius lays little stress on ought but duties toward princes and parents. It is, of course, a great moral gain if a man becomes a good son, a loyal subject, and a faithful husband, and the Chinese are undoubtedly right in principle, when they seek a basis for morality in human nature, rather than in an indefinite idea of duty towards a supernatural being. It is, therefore, in favour of Chinese morality, rather than the reverse, that, as Mr Edkins says, “The notion of duty in the Confucian system being the moral bond that connects man with man, instead of that which connects man with God, it comes to resemble the feeling of honour.

¹ “The Capital of the Tycoon,” (1863), vol. ii. p. 116-17; see also Aimé Humbert, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 224.

² Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 594. Another writer says:—“The Chinese is so completely absorbed in temporal interests, in the things that fall under his senses, that his whole life is only materialism put in action. Lucre is the sole object on which his eyes are constantly fixed.” Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 161. This traveller describes the Chinese as being, what Napoleon used to call the English, a nation of shopkeepers, and as having all the accompanying characteristics fully developed (vol. ii., p. 149).

The good man is called *kuin-tsze*, the honourable man ; while the bad man is termed *seou jin*, the little man. Mean and dishonourable acts are said to be done by the latter, while all acts that imply self-respect and a sense of honour are attributed to the former.”¹ If the moral conduct of the Chinese were always governed by this principle, it would suffer little by comparison with that of peoples in a more advanced state of civilisation. The reference of actions to the standard supplied by self-respect, although in practice they fall short of it, shows that the Chinese are not far from a true idea of the nature of virtue. They speak, indeed, of the “ native purity and goodness of the heart,” and teach that “ it entirely depends on themselves whether their conduct and character throughout life shall be good and honourable, or bad and mean.”² Much the same testimony is borne by various writers as to the Japanese. Caron declared that they bore the character of being extremely honourable, and that only those who were lost to every sense of character would do anything to hurt another. He adds that they were most faithful to the trusts reposed in them, and that they would defend to the utmost any one placing himself under their protection.³ According to Thunberg, honesty prevailed throughout the whole country, and justice was universally held sacred.⁴ One of the principal defects in the Japanese character noted by this traveller was pride, which he ascribed to their belief that they were descended from the gods.⁵ What Thunberg terms pride, should rather be called a feeling of self-respect. It is the same feeling as that which has in a previous chapter been shown to be dis-

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 178.

² Meadows, “ The Chinese and their Rebellions,” p. 391.

³ *loc. cit.*, p. 636.

⁴ *op. cit.*, vol. iii., p. 259.

⁵ *op. cit.*, vol. iii., p. 260.

tinctive of the existing predatory races of Asia, as it was of the early European peoples.¹ Considered from this point of view, the Chinese and Japanese might have been classed with the peoples of Central Asia; but unlike these, they have ceased to be "predatory," and have indeed long formed settled and highly organised communities.

We have probably here the real explanation of the peculiar phenomena presented by the moral culture of the Chinese and Japanese. The formation of the sense of personal dignity was intimately connected with the recognition of man's true position as the head of the family, and it is evident that the instincts which express themselves in the family life, and the virtues springing from them, have, with those peoples, been inordinately cultivated at the expense of the passive virtues—those which are more immediately concerned with self—or rather before the idea of moral obligation associated with them was actually formulated. The teaching of the earliest ages was evidently as much political as moral, and it sought to support the authority of the State by reference to the constitution of the family. To the filial relation may be traced nearly all the developments of Chinese morality, and it is because the sympathetic side of their nature has been too exclusively cultivated, that such morality is so little elevated.

The defective nature of Chinese morality may, probably, have some connection with their intellectual culture. Before the idea of duty could be definitely formed, the process of moral development was checked by an extraordinary display of intellectual activity, resulting in the teachings of Chinese philosophy, according to which all action is to be tried by a rational rather than a moral standard. If the principles of true reason had

¹ *supra*, vol. i., p. 402, *seq.*

been embodied in that philosophy, the influence which it thus exercised would have had the happiest results ; but unfortunately it was not so. It is true that the influence of philosophy led to the establishment of certain political principles, such as that "the nation must be governed by moral agency in preference to physical force," and "the services of the wisest and ablest men in the nation are indispensable to its good government."¹ If it had not been for the recognition of these principles in political government, morality would most probably have been a mere name among the Chinese. As it is, the extraordinary system of competitive examination which has subsisted in China for thousands of years,² has had the result of so completely developing the intellectual faculties at the expense of the moral nature, that it may be declared of the Chinese that, while their moral conduct is on the whole guided by what they accept as the principles of reason,³ they are almost devoid of what we understand by "conscience."

It was said above that the phenomena presented by Chinese morality can be explained only on the assumption that the family instincts, and the virtues springing from them, have been inordinately developed at the expense of the passive virtues which form the true basis of morals. This conclusion is confirmed by the peculiar hold which ancestor-worship has acquired over the Chinese mind, that superstition being a consequence of the reverent feeling with which the head of the family is regarded during life.⁴ The same feeling is entertained

¹ Meadows, "The Chinese and their Rebellions," p. 401, *seq.*

² This writer says upwards of 4000 years. See *do.*, p. 402.

³ Mr Meadows refers to the Chinese readiness to yield to the force of reason, in proof of their high civilisation. (*Desultory Notes on China*, p. 203).

⁴ Huc states that the Chinese go to inform their ancestors of whatever good or evil befalls them, *op. cit.*, vol ii., p. 222.

towards the Emperor, not merely as the head of the State, but as the Father of his people.¹ We have here the moving principle of Chinese morality. As the Greeks may almost be said to have subjected all actions to the test of a kind of æsthetic sense, and the Romans to that of patriotism, while virtue was with the Egyptians almost synonymous with justice, and among the Hebrews with religious faith, so the Chinese make reverence to be the foundation, if not the sum, of all virtue. In this, indeed, they exhibit great likeness to the Hebrews, with whom also reverence formed the basis of morality, although in their case it was directed towards God rather than towards man. The difference is not so great, however, as at first sight appears; since in the Hebrew theocracy Jehovah occupied the same position as the visible head of the State among the Chinese.² The reverence for parents was also strongly developed among the Hebrews. But a distinction is to be found here between the two peoples, seeing that woman never attained among the Hebrews to the position which, under certain conditions,³ she occupies with the Chinese. The Japanese monarch, Iyeyas, likened the love he entertained for his subjects to that of a mother for her children; while the Chinese are required

¹ According to Huc, the Emperor is styled "Father and Mother of the Empire," and he has a right to "the respect, the veneration, the worship even, of his children," *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 86.

² The Emperor is looked upon as the Son and Representative of Heaven, whose Will is Supreme. Huc, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 85.

³ Widowhood and Virginity, see *supra*, p. 47. Virtuous widows, who have "obeyed, with filial devotion, the parents of their husbands," are entitled to have an honorary tablet or portal erected to their memory. The virtuous girl who *commits suicide* on the death of her betrothed husband, may have a tablet erected to her memory in a temple, and it then becomes the official duty of certain Mandarins to offer oblations in her honour twice a year. Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 78, *seq.* Comp. with Jephthah's daughter bewailing her virginity.

to pay especial homage to their mothers. The Emperor himself is not exempt from this duty, and it may be said that in the reverence which he pays to his mother, in the ceremonies of the *kotow*, is embodied the highest expression, according to Chinese idea, of the whole moral duty of man. M. Huc declares that impiety, which is treated as one of the great crimes, is "nothing but the failure in family duty."¹

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 273.

CHAPTER II.

POSITIVE PHASES OF MORALS.

IN summing up the moral characteristics of the predatory races of Asia and Europe, it was stated that they possessed the "manliness" which was so strongly pronounced in the ancient Romans, but that it was reserved for the Romans and Greeks among the peoples of Europe to develop for themselves a positive phase of morals. We have now to treat of the systematic morality thus developed; and, in connection therewith, it will be necessary to consider particularly the ideas entertained by certain other peoples who have exercised great influence over the progress of moral culture throughout the world; or who have, at least, accepted and vitalised ideas, originated by, perhaps, kindred races, which have had such an influence. It has been remarked that "the passive virtues are the first in the history of mankind to become recognised, but they are the last to receive a rational expression." The truth of this is shown by the fact that peoples, such as the Peruvians and Chinese, who are in the empirical stage of human progress, exhibit in their social life the activity of the altruistic sentiment, while it is not until the rational stage is reached that the passive virtues attain to a systematic expression. This is the point we have gained; and what we have now to do is to trace the development of the moral idea under the guidance of the reflective or regulative faculty. Henceforth, the intellectual and the moral progress of

mankind are intimately associated, each exercising a reciprocal influence over the other.

THE HEBREWS.

At a certain stage of culture, it would seem to be recognised by all peoples that the proper course for developing the virtues, the value of which has come to be recognised, is to place the moral law under the sanction of the Gods. The Egyptians constituted their great God, Osiris, the Judge of the Dead, and, as the Hebrews were so long in contact with the Egyptians, it would have been doubly surprising if the leader of the Hebrew Exodus, whether Moses or Oshea (the Saviour), had not claimed the divine sanction for his enactments. So far from such a mistake being made, the Decalogue—the second table of which contains the regulations of social life—was introduced with the words, “I am Jehovah thy Elohim, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,” and the commands profess expressly to emanate from the Deity. Judging from this fact, many persons imagine, or at least, from the superstitious reverence they have for the Decalogue, appear to do so, that, until the time of the Hebrew law-giver, the most ordinary rules of morality were unknown.¹ The mere fact of Egypt being the starting point of the Exodus, ought to be sufficient to disabuse the mind of this idea, without reference to the contents of the code itself. But the moral laws given in the Decalogue are of so

¹ Surely Ewald could not be of this opinion, and yet he speaks of the Ten Commandments as “a first attempt to bring the new truths and the essential principles of the community into legal language for practical use in ordinary life,” and again, “as an attempt to reduce to precepts of the shortest form all the most important new truths.” “History of Israel to the Death of Moses” (Eng. Trans.), pp. 581, 582.

primitive a character, that it is absurd to suppose, except on the assumption that the Hebrews were, at that period, in a condition of pure savagery, that God would personally appear to give his immediate sanction to them. The commands, *Honour thy father and thy mother; Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; Thou shalt not covet*, were simply reiterations of laws to which the Hebrews had been subject during their whole sojourn in Egypt, and which must, in fact, have been familiar to them before their ancestors left their traditional Chaldean home.

There is not even any peculiarity in the penalties inflicted for crime, which would lead us to look for a divine hand in the origin of the Mosaic law, any more than in that of the laws of Greece or Rome, which were equally supposed to declare the will of the Gods. The right of blood-revenge was admitted,¹ notwithstanding the establishment of cities of refuge for those who killed another by misadventure. But, although the wilful homicide of a Hebrew was punished with death, the beating to death of a slave is to be "punished" only if the slave die under the master's hand;² a circumstance in which the Hebrew law compares very unfavourably with the Egyptian regulation.³ The barbarous *lex talionis* is fully enforced, and the regulations as to compensation for injuries sustained by the "pushing" of oxen⁴ remind us more of the ingenuity of a Kafir chief than of a divine lawgiver. The killing of the thief caught in the act is an ordinary regulation of primitive societies, and the making of restitution⁵ shows that the immorality of the act was not considered, but only the loss which it occasioned. Death was, as we should expect, inflicted for adultery,⁶ but the

¹ Deut., c. xix., v. 6.

² Ex., c. xxi., v. 12, *seq.*, 20-21.

³ See *infra*.

⁴ Ex., c. xxi., v. 28, *seq.*

⁵ Ex., c. xxii., v. 1, *seq.*, 7 *seq.*

⁶ Leviticus, c. xx., v. 10.

lying with a woman who was not the property of another, either as wife or betrothed,¹ has the same want of immorality as among the peoples of antiquity in general.

In some particulars, indeed, the law said to have been given on Mount Sinai would seem to exhibit an advance on some other ancient codes. Thus in the regulations as to marriages, sexual intercourse between half-brothers and sisters is forbidden, although this was customary among the Egyptians, as among the Hebrew patriarchs themselves, and was not illegal with the Greeks, though not commonly practised.² The Romans, like the Hebrews, formed an exception to what was probably the ordinary rule among ancient peoples as to marriages between half-brothers and sisters. In the protection accorded to the fatherless and the widow,³ the Mosaic law is an improvement on the custom of the Homeric Greeks, but, as Mr Grote points out, the later Athenian law was "peculiarly watchful and provident with respect both to the persons and the property of orphan minors."⁴ The law against "usury" is evidence, when we consider the evils which the abuse of its practice has caused,⁵ of some advance; but the sale of a debtor's person, permitted by the Mosaic law,⁶ although practised by the Romans, was not allowed among the Egyptians, who limited the evils resulting from getting into debt, by requiring the body of the borrower's father or nearest relative to be given in pledge.⁷ Hebrew servants could, however, only be purchased for a term of

¹ See Exodus, c. xxii., v. 16-17; Leviticus, c. xviii., v. 19, comp. c. xix., v. 20, 29, xxi., 7, 9.

² Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities." Art. *Matrimonium*.

³ Ex., c. xxii., v. 22, *seq.*

⁴ "History of Greece," vol. i., p. 482.

⁵ The enquiry how far the relations between subjected peoples and their invaders, and the condition of particular classes, have been affected by the practice of usury, in the modern sense of this term, would form a curious chapter in the history of commerce.

⁶ Lev., c. xxv., v. 39.

⁷ Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," vol. ii., p. 50-51.

six years, and their treatment was very lenient; moreover, regulations were made for their easy redemption.¹ An enlightened spirit is shown in the direction that strangers should not be oppressed,² reference being then made to the law of love which requires the return of good for evil. The same spirit is shown in the command to aid one's enemy when his ox goes astray, or his ass falls under his burden;³ in the direction to leave the gleanings of the harvest for the poor;⁴ and in the requirement "thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;"⁵ the spirit of these precepts being probably derived from Egyptian teaching, if they were not a later addition to the moral code.

It must not be thought, however, that the practice of the Hebrews was altogether in accordance with the wise provisions of the lawgiver. The frequent reference to incest and unnatural crimes⁶ which, in the East and among uncultured peoples, are usually viewed with comparative indifference, proves that the Hebrews were by no means free from them. Moreover, the laws directed against lying and false judgments are such as to reveal a chief point of weakness in the national character.⁷ How lightly the giving of false testimony was estimated, is shown by a comparison of the punishments inflicted for perjury among the Hebrews⁸ and by the Egyptians.⁹ The general character of the Hebrews, in fact, compares, on the whole, very unfavourably with those of their African oppressors. We shall have occasion to refer hereafter to the influence over the former people of the religious

¹ See Ex., c. xxi., v. 2, *seq.*; Lev., c. xxv., v. 39, *seq.*

² Ex., c. xxiii., v. 9; Lev., c. xix., v. 33-34.

³ Ex., c. xxiii., v. 4-5. ⁴ Lev., c. xix., v. 10. ⁵ Do., v. 18.

⁶ Ex., c. xxii., v. 19; Lev., c. xviii., v. 6, *seq.*, xx., v. 11, *seq.*

⁷ See Ex., c. xxiii., v. 1, *seq.*, 6-7; Lev., c. xix., v. 15.

⁸ Lev., c. vi., v. 1, *seq.* ⁹ See *infra*.

idea, but the moral effect of that influence was by no means great. The early history of the Hebrews after the Exodus is a record of deeds of violence, cruelty, and injustice, which justify us in placing them morally on a level with the Afghans, and which, if perpetrated by any other people, would have been thought to evidence degradation rather than elevation of character. If the Hebrews were judged of by the light of modern ideas, they would have to be termed a nation of robbers who, under what we should now consider the flimsy pretext that it had been promised to them as the children of their ancestor, invaded a peaceful land inhabited by a people who had done them no injury, and whom they ruthlessly destroyed with fire and sword. They were, no doubt, justified in their own minds by the supposed gift to their father Abraham, and by the fact that those who had taken possession of the promised land were "idolaters," but they are excused only at the expense of their morality, which cannot have been of a very high type. The violence subsequently exhibited was a fitting sequel to that which had attended their settlement in the country. Ewald ascribes the social condition of the Hebrews, under the Judges, to a certain relapse into savagery, consequent on the long continuance of a condition of warfare; but he adds that "in general, there was maintained a primitive simplicity and soundness of heart, full of dignity and elevation; sustained by the consciousness of a higher strength in Jahveh, giver of victory to Israel, and terrible to Israel's foes. Something better than the Arab's love of isolation and wildness, or than the Phenician greed of gain, must have been deep in Israel's heart."¹ Nevertheless, the "insubordination and boundless profligacy" which lurked in the social disorder and mental confusion of

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 122.

the times soon came to the surface, and showed itself at Gibeah in the abusing to death of the Levite's concubine, due to the tribe of Benjamin having "inclined somewhat to Canaanite manners and licentiousness."¹ A proneness to licentiousness was, however, not restricted to the Benjamites, and the horror aroused by the incident of Gibeah was due to the attendant circumstances rather than the act itself. The savageness of the punishment inflicted on Benjamin—the almost entire extirpation of the tribe, including women and children, and animals as well as men—² would seem to imply that there was some other and deeper cause of quarrel than the death of the Levite's concubine. To repair somewhat the injury done to Benjamin, the other tribes slew all the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, who had abstained from the preceding quarrel, except four hundred young virgins, who were given to the surviving Benjamites for wives. Those still unprovided for were to lie in wait for the daughters of Shiloh, and act as the Romans are said to have done, when they took to themselves wives of the daughters of the Sabines. The book of Joshua not unfitly ends with the statement:—"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

The period of the early kings was the brightest in Hebrew history, although regal rule in Judea was no less defective than is usually the case in Eastern countries. What was the moral condition of the Hebrew people at a later date may be gathered from the keen denunciations of the prophets. Amos accuses the Israelites of oppressing the poor, crushing the needy, and drunkenness³ (c. iv. v., 1), to which is added in

¹ Ewald, vol. ii., p. 123.

² Judges, c. xx., v. 48.

³ These are the sins chiefly complained of by the Psalmist.

another place, the taking of bribes in the administration of justice (iv. 12), and dealing with false balances (viii. 5). Hosea sums up the sins of Israel in saying, "by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood" (iv. 2, also vii. 1 *seq.*). Isaiah likens Judah to Sodom and Gomorrah (i. 10, iii. 9). In another place he says "he that despiseth the gain of oppressors, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high" (xxxiii. 15, 16). In the fifty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, violence, lying, and perversion of judgment are enumerated as the sins of the people. The evil doings dwelt on by Jeremiah are substantially the same as those mentioned by the other prophets.¹ Stress is laid on adultery, but the chief burden of complaint is the oppression of the poor. "Execute ye," says Jehovah, "judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place" (xxii. 3). This also is the principal ground of rebuke by Ezekiel (xviii. 5, *seq.*, &c.) and the minor prophets, who inveigh strongly against the oppression of the poor by the rich and the powerful. We shall probably not be far wrong in supposing that the things which, according to the Book of Proverbs, are hated by Jehovah were those which were most prevalent among the Hebrews. They are "a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (vi. 16, 19). So, also, personified Wisdom

¹ See v. 25, *et. seq.*; ix. 2, *et. seq.*; xvii. 21, *et. seq.*, &c.

declares, "The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil, pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate" (viii. 13).

The peculiar position assigned to the Hebrews as the great moral teachers of antiquity, and the importance usually ascribed to the position of woman as a test of social if not moral progress, renders it advisable to ascertain from the Old Testament and other sources the ideas held by the Hebrews on that subject, considering first the question of marriage. That polygamy was practised by them is not denied, although a late writer affirms that monogamy was the rule and polygamy the exception.¹ Whether this was so or not is of little moment, as under the social conditions presented in the East, where it is not uncommon for women to keep apart from their husbands after the birth of a child until it is weaned, a period sometimes of three years,² polygamy is almost a necessity. M. Weill seeks to excuse the Hebrews for allowing polygamy, by saying that at least they prohibited marriages with two persons having certain ties of relationship, such as mother and daughter or two sisters. The latter, however, was only during the lifetime of the first wife.³ Moreover, although in Leviticus marriage with a half-sister is forbidden,⁴ yet it was practised among the patriarchs, Abraham himself having married his half-sister Sarah. Further, the law was either forgotten or disregarded in the time of David, as when Amnon wished his sister Tamar to lie with him, she urged him not to "work such folly in Israel," but to speak unto the king, "for he will not withhold me from thee."⁵ While a man was permitted to marry the sister of his wife after her death, he was,

¹ "La Femme Juive," par. Em. Weill (1874), p. 70.

² Dr Livingstone refers to the prevalence of this habit in Africa—"Last Journals" (1874), vol. i. p. 51.

³ Lev. xviii. 19.

⁴ Do., v. 9.

⁵ 2 Samuel xiii. 13, 20

under certain circumstances, commanded to marry the widow of his brother. In the Book of Deuteronomy¹ it is written, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother to her. And it shall be, that the first born which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." We have here the reason for the law of the Levirat, as the obligation of a man to marry his deceased brother's wife is sometimes called. This law was evidently recognised by the Hebrew patriarchs, as appears by the case of Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah.² The custom bears so close a resemblance to an ordinary phase of polyandry, that it is not at all improbable the early Hebrews, like some of the Aryan peoples, were not strangers to the latter custom. The law of the Levirat, which was afterwards extended so as to impose the duty on all the relations of the deceased and not merely his brethren, may, however, have originated in the belief, so widely spread among Eastern peoples, that the soul of the dead can best find repose when the funeral obsequies are performed by a son.

The law of the Levirat was made in the interest of the man, although the women, as appears from the cases of Tamar and Ruth, were glad to avail themselves of it. We may now enquire as to the legal position of woman among the Hebrews. During minority,³ that is, until puberty, a girl was absolutely at the disposal of her father, who could either sell her or marry her to whom he pleased, being a Hebrew. M. Weill points out, how-

¹ Ch. xxv. 5, *seq.*

² Gen. xxxviii. 8, *seq.*

³ Usually twelve years of age.

ever, that four conditions were attached to the sale by a father of his daughter. The purchaser must either espouse the girl or give her in marriage to his son ; at the end of six years, or at puberty if this occurs earlier, the girl obtained her liberty and could dispose of herself as she thought fit, without the hindrance of either father, husband, or master ; the purchaser could not re-sell her to any other person ; and, lastly, if the master did not marry her or give her in marriage to his son, he was bound to aid the girl in obtaining freedom, by reclaiming from her father the price he had paid for her services. M. Weill seems to think that the chance of marriage was almost a justification of the temporary sale by a father of his daughter, but even if married she became only a concubine, a position which, although conferring full conjugal rights, was one of inferiority. He very properly, however, supposes that the custom was pre-Mosaic, and we cannot doubt that it was a relic of an earlier social phase, when children were absolutely in the power of the head of the family.

To the marriage of a girl who attained her legal age her consent was absolutely necessary, and such being the case it is not surprising that Hebrew marriages were often the result of mutual attachment. Moreover, a wife, had, according to the Mischna, various rights reserved to her at the time of marriage, showing that her position was one not altogether of dependence. Those rights were inscribed in what was called the *Ketubah*, or *written*, and were nine in number. They are thus stated by M. Weill :—

1. A promise by the husband to honour his wife, to maintain her, and generally to help her in all her needs according to his power and means ; moreover, if she became captive to pay her ransom.

2. The conferring by the husband on his wife of a dower of a specified value.

3. A promise to fulfil the duties of a husband.

4. An estimate of the dowry and effects of the wife.

5. The conferring by the husband on his wife of a supplementary dower.

6. A mortgage over all the property of the husband, present and future, for the property of the wife, her dowry, her personal effects, her dower and supplementary dower, a security which was valid both before and after the husband's death.

7. A promise to leave to the male children, the exclusive succession to the dower of their mother, without prejudice to the rights they may have, with the children of another mother, to the paternal succession.

8. A stipulation that after the death of the husband, if he leaves daughters, their maintenance shall be provided for out of the paternal succession, so long as they remain unmarried or minors.

9. Power for the widow to continue to reside in the marital dwelling, with the right of maintenance, until she shall demand her dower.

Of the above provisions, all but the 4th, 5th, and 6th are looked upon as absolute rights, and enforceable although omitted from the Ketubah.¹ We may consider, therefore, that among the early Hebrews woman was held in high estimation, as she appears to have been among all Semitic peoples. Moreover she was entitled to dower on her marriage, which, however, was probably only the price which the husband had formerly to pay for his wife,² with certain rights of succession to her children, and of maintenance after her husband's death for herself and her daughters. But the respect of

¹ Weill, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

² Dower is, however, mentioned in Exodus xxii. 16.

a husband for his wife, which the Mishna and Talmud enforced as "a holy and imperious duty, on which depended not only the honour, but also the peace and prosperity of the family,"¹ did not prevent the woman being treated as occupying a subordinate if not inferior position. The daughter was subject to the absolute authority of her father, and the wife to that of her husband. Neither of them was capable of inheriting, except under certain special circumstances, and a woman was incapable of giving testimony in a court of justice, a disability which M. Weill supposes to have arisen from her want of independence. This explanation does not, however, account for the legal incapacity of a widow. Finally woman was not reckoned among the members of the religious assembly, and she had no part in the performance of any fixed religious observance. It was considered her place to attend to the interests of her home and family, the performance of her duties towards these being "for her a veritable priesthood, which carries in itself the generous principle of all sacrifices and of all devotion."² The inferiority of the rights enjoyed by woman was shown especially in the matter of divorce. A man could repudiate his wife for the most trivial reason, although the too free use of the power was no doubt condemned by the more cultivated Hebrews. In the case of a wife the right of divorce was much more limited. She could demand a dissolution of marriage in the following cases: if her husband was affected with some contagious disease, such as leprosy; if he adopted certain occupations of a too repulsive character; if he deceived his wife; if he habitually ill-treated her; if he refused to contribute towards her maintenance: finally, if after ten years of marriage, his wife could establish his impotence, particularly if she

¹ Weill, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

² Do., p. 117, *seq.*

asked for a divorce on the ground that she desired a son to support her in her old age. It is probable that in early times the Hebrew wife had no power of obtaining a legal divorce, as even at the date of the Mischna the tribunal could do no more than compel her husband to give her the letter of separation, which he on his part could use against her at any time. As M. Weill states, "it is always the husband, considered as the chief of the community, who is reputed to put away his wife, even when this is done on her own demand and against the will of her husband."¹ Adultery would seem to have been a good ground for divorce on the part of either the husband or the wife, but there is nothing to show that unchastity, on the male side at least, was regarded as having any actual moral delinquency. The incapacity, whether political or social, of the Hebrew woman was perhaps more theoretical than real. M. Weill very truly affirms:—"According to circumstances she could be poetess, prophetess, judge, and warrior, without her sex being the least obstacle to her legitimate influence; nor was she thought unworthy of taking part in the most important public affairs. But the respect which she at all times inspired perhaps manifested itself still better, in the bosom of the family of which she was not only one of the constituent elements, but of which she is proclaimed by the Bible as the firmest support."² It should not be forgotten, however, that the blessings arising from the possession of a good wife have been painted in glowing colours by Eastern writers among other peoples besides the Hebrews, writers who complain that such a wife is as rare as the jewel to which they liken her. She was probably, however, not so difficult to find among the Hebrews, and the position accorded by them to woman constituted one of the best

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 76, *seq.*

² *Op. cit.*, p. 123.

features of their moral character, which otherwise, notwithstanding a certain elevation of tone, was on the whole very defective.

This was quite consistent among the Hebrews with strong religious feeling, as is evidenced by the prayer of Solomon on the dedication of the temple¹ and the Psalms of David. Many of the latter breathe the spirit of pure devotion, and show the existence of keen searching of heart. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that not a few of those ascribed to David have no very lofty aim. They dwell continually on his escapes from the dangers which had beset him, or allude to triumphs over his enemies, with expressions of desire for their complete destruction.² Such notions were consonant with those prevalent in the days of the Psalmist, but they do not convey a favourable idea of the spirituality of Hebrew religion. That David was, moreover, a man of exceptionally holy life, is evident from the fact that the prophet who rebuked Jeroboam referred to David, as having kept the commandments of Jehovah, and followed him with all his heart, and done that only which was right in Jehovah's eyes.³ The same thing is said also in connection with Abijam's wicked reign, with the qualification, however, that David "turned not aside from anything that Jehovah commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."⁴ This statement shows more strongly than aught else could do the peculiar state of morality among the Hebrews in those days. Various incidents are related in the life of David which, according to our ideas, do not shed any lustre on his name, and which in fact we must, to say the least, consider shameful.

¹ 1 Kings viii. 22, *seq.*

² Stanley, "Lectures on the Jewish Church," vol. ii., p. 153.

³ 2 Kings xiv. 8.

⁴ 1 Kings xv. 5.

Besides the slaying of Uriah and the taking of Bathsheba, may be mentioned the slaughter of the two hundred Philistines, whose foreskins David presented to Saul as his daughter's dowry, or rather in return for her hand.¹ Again, David's conduct when dancing before the ark, while on its way to Zion, was considered disgraceful even by his wife Michal.² David was essentially a *religious* man, and hence the deep emotion which he displayed when he was brought to a sense of sin. The moral requirements ascribed to him are, moreover, of a comparatively high order,³ but that they at all represented the general ideas of Hebrew society in his day is extremely doubtful. David was an example of the highest type of moral excellence, but even he had too little strength of character to resist the influences of passion, and this explanation is no justification of his conduct towards Joab and Shimei, whom, even on his death-bed, he dedicated, pursuant to what must have been a long cherished scheme of revenge, to a violent death.⁴

If the moral conduct of David will not bear examination, that of the Hebrews generally will not do so, and judging from the testimony of their own religious teachers, it must be declared that the character of the Hebrews, as compared with other ancient Eastern peoples, was not of a very advanced type. How are we to account for this phenomenon, so curious when it is remembered that the claim of the Hebrews to be God's chosen people is admitted by Christian teachers? The explanation is to be sought in the fact that the Hebrew constitution was

¹ 1 Sam. xviii. 27.

² 2 Sam. vi. 20; also 1 Chron. xv. 29. It was not the fact of dancing, but the *mode* of dancing, which Michal reproached David with.

³ On this point, see Stanley, *op. cit.*, ii. 88; also p. 110, *seq.*

⁴ 1 Kings ii. 5, *seq.*, and compare 2 Sam. xix. 23.

a theocracy founded on laws supposed to have been personally given by Jehovah, and placed under his immediate sanction. That which impressed the mind of the Hebrew was the direct communication between Jehovah and his people, which he firmly believed to take place. Whatever was commanded in the name of Jehovah, therefore, received an authority which it could never otherwise obtain. Dean Milman¹ supposes that the superstitious veneration for the law which was exhibited by the Jews was only gradually acquired. We know, however, with what veneration the Romans regarded their primitive statutes, and it is highly probable that the same feeling was extremely strong among the Hebrews from the commencement of their history as a separate nation. The influence which that feeling had over the Jewish mind is well shown by the writer just referred to. He says: "The consecration of the second temple, and the re-establishment of the State, was accompanied by the ready and solemn recognition of the law. By degrees, attachment to the law sank deeper and deeper into the national character; and it was not merely at once their Bible and their statute-book, it entered into the most minute detail of common life. But no written law can provide for all possible contingencies; whether general and comprehensive, or minute and multifarious, it equally requires the expositor to adapt it to the immediate case which may occur, either before the public tribunal, or that of the private conscience. Hence the law became a deep and intricate study. Certain men rose to acknowledged eminence for their ingenuity in explaining, their readiness in applying, their facility in quoting, and their clearness in offering solutions of the difficult passages of the written statutes. Learning in the law became the

¹ "History of the Jews" (4th Edition), vol. i., p. 133, *note*.

great distinction to which all alike paid deferential homage. Public and private affairs depended on the sanction of this self-formed spiritual aristocracy. . . . Every duty of life, of social intercourse between man and man, to omit its weightier authority as the national code of criminal and civil jurisprudence, was regulated by an appeal to the book of the law." ¹

There is no doubt that the sense of duty thus created would in many minds be very powerful and productive of much social good. It would be accompanied, however, by extreme narrow-mindedness and by absurd moral prejudices. There would, moreover, be great danger that the broad duties of morality would be sacrificed to the petty requirements of ceremonial law. It was because the law was supposed to be the actual word of Jehovah that it had from the very first so great an influence over the Hebrew mind. All its commands were binding, because they rested on the will of Jehovah. Apart from this they had no authority. The same principle required, however, that the laws which more immediately concerned the duties owing to Jehovah himself should be viewed as of greater importance than those which relate only to man. From the earliest period of the Jewish State, the most prominent part of the legislation had reference to religious ceremonial observances, and so long as these were duly attended to, the necessity of conforming to the simple moral requirements of social law would come gradually to be more and more lost sight of. There would, in fact, be a tendency to revert to the condition of semi-barbarous life, where the religious sense is developed at the expense of all that we know as morality. That this was the case among the Hebrews under the later kings is evident from the denunciations of the prophets, who

¹ "History of the Jews" vol. ii., p. 409.

deplored the moral degradation of the people much more than their want of religious zeal. Thus we read: "The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, Stand in the gate of the house of Jehovah, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the Elohim of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever."¹ No doubt, after the return from the captivity, there was in many respects a change for the better; but it is evident from the state of things in Jerusalem, during its last siege by the Romans, that the moral condition of the Jews had again reached a very low point,² although religious fanaticism was then as strong as at any other period.

Probably among no people pretending to any great degree of culture, was what Mr Bain calls the *sentimental* side of morality, so strongly and persistently developed. Jesus bitterly complained of the Scribes and Pharisees that they put their tradition in the place of the law, applying to them the saying, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do

¹ Jeremiah, vii. 1, *seq.*

² See Milman, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., pp. 170, *seq.*, 289, *seq.*

they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”¹ Elsewhere he accuses them of laying on men’s shoulders heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and he denounces them as hypocrites: “For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.”² While thus pandering to a depraved religious sense, the Jews neglected the moral duties required for the “public security,” the result being the destruction of the Hebrews as a people. The cause is obvious. When the laws of morality are founded simply on the will of God, so soon as the sense of religion is weakened, or becomes limited in its object to “sentimental” observances, the sanctions of morality disappear, and with them nearly all traces of moral principle. Thus it was with the Hebrews, among whom morality was always subordinate to religion, and in whom, therefore, religious emotions and sentiments were cultivated at the expense of the moral conscience.³

When discussing the form of government which was established under Moses, Ewald ascribes the recognition of the Spiritual God as the sole ruler of the people, even in secular matters, to the power of the higher religion which rose upon the soil of older communities.⁴ Not merely the existence of such a religion, but the teaching of it “with a perfectly living fulness,” Ewald thinks is implied in the giving of the Ten Commandments, if these are considered in their intrinsic character and significance.⁵ This is a somewhat feeble basis for such

¹ St Matthew, xv, 3, *seq.*

² Do., xxiii, 4, *seq.*, 23 *seq.*

³ This is not inconsistent with the view entertained by the author of “Literature and Dogma.” Righteousness—that is, religion—is pre-eminently revealed in the Bible, but Israel fell for want of righteousness, or of that “morality touched by emotion” in which religion of the highest type may be said to consist.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 568.

⁵ Do., p. 582.

a superstructure, and yet it probably expresses nearly the truth. There is no essential connection between morality and religious feeling, and therefore the weakness of moral principle exhibited by the Hebrews was no bar to the existence of such a religion as Ewald refers to. Its fundamental idea is *deliverance*, and its fundamental thought is that only the pure spiritual God is the true Redeemer of all those who in their spirit do not dwell far from his, and who desire to be no more estranged from him.¹ The theocracy in which the religion of Moses embodied itself required that every individual should "acknowledge himself the servant and champion of Jahveh," the entire nation resolving "to seek its entire life and happiness only in sedulously avoiding all human violence and caprice, and always following the better truth alone when once perceived."² Tried by this test, however, it would seem that the idea of spiritual deliverance was far from being firmly grasped by the Hebrew mind during the earlier stages of the national development. The Israelite was essentially material in his aspirations, and as long life and an abundance of all that makes life desirable were the objects most eagerly sought after, so the deliverance present to the Hebrew mind was that from a condition of misery in Egyptian bondage. The facts of early Hebrew history are, indeed, such as that we can only suppose the idea of a spiritual deliverance to have been formed at a later period of the national life, and to have been read into its past records, or else that it was confined originally to a few persons—men spiritually privileged—and was only gradually awakened in the popular mind. Probably the latter is the view really entertained by Ewald, who says, "We cannot hold too firmly that the mighty and revolutionising thought with which Jahveism entered the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 533, *seq.*

² *Do.*, p. 571.

world, at first appeared in it, not fully and completely realised, but merely foreshadowed and expected." He adds: "And if this holds true of Jahveism during its whole course, it must be especially true of its early commencement, before it had developed itself, and thus began to discern more clearly the goal which it was approaching, and to strive more strenuously for its attainment."¹ The truth would seem to be that while the Hebrews of the Exodus were, as a rule, less concerned about deliverance from spiritual than from material bondage, their leaders had a higher aim. Probably acquainted with the teachings reserved for those who were initiated into the sacred mysteries, they may have thought to found a nation who should be gradually fitted for the reception of those profound ideas. To them the deliverance from Egypt would be typical of a spiritual deliverance out of a more than Egyptian darkness, but it would have no such significance to their followers. That the institutions of the Hebrew Theocracy were copied from those of the mysteries is more than probable, and if this were so, Jahveism was merely a development of the mystic faith so widely spread among the nations of antiquity which was founded on the notion of the *second birth*. This had a distinctly moral bearing, and probably all the Hebrews would be entitled to its benefits as members of the chosen race. To only a small number, however, would there be much practical moral result. There may have been a temporary display of religious feeling, but it would be as erroneous to estimate the character of the ancient Hebrews by the high standard which the leaders may have sought to establish, as to judge of that of the general body of Hindu Aryas from the Vedas.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 537.

THE ROMANS.

Comparatively little is known of the early days of the peoples from whose intermixture sprang the great Roman nation. It is true that Niebuhr affirms that "the strictness of their morals, and their cheerful contentedness, were the peculiar glory of the Sabellian mountaineers, but especially of the Sabines and the four northern cantons; and they preserved it long after the virtues of ancient times had disappeared at Rome from the hearts and demeanour of men."¹ The virtue of the ancients was, however, usually of so dubious a nature when tried by the modern standard, that in the absence of exact proof to the contrary we may well believe the morality of the Latins and their neighbours to have originally had much in common. A later writer, indeed, says that although the acquirement of wives by purchase, blood-revenge, and other primitive customs, had wholly disappeared when Italian civilisation first comes into view, yet that these must have been at its foundation. He adds that, "in this respect, Italian history from the first exhibits a comparatively modern character." Traces of the custom of blood-revenge are met with, but the legends which refer to it show that it was suppressed in Rome at an early period by the assertion of the authority of the State.² This was an important step towards the development of a higher moral condition. The mode by which this can alone be brought about is well shown by the actual phenomena of Roman history. Thus Dr Mommsen shows that in ancient Latin practice judicial procedure "took the form of a public or a private process according as the king interposed of his own motion,

¹ "History of Rome" (translated by Hare and Thirlwall), 4th ed., vol. i., p. 105.

² Mommsen's "History of Rome" (translated by Dr Dickson), vol. i., p. 165-6.

or only when appealed to by the injured party. The former course was taken only in cases which involved a breach of the public peace. First of all, therefore, it was applicable in the case of public treason, or communion with the public enemy (*preditio*), and in that of violent rebellion against the magistracy. But the public peace was also broken by the foul murderer (*parricida*), the sodomite, the violator of a maiden's or matron's chastity, the incendiary, the false witness; by those, moreover, who with evil spells conjured away the harvest, or who without due title cut the corn by night in the field entrusted to the protection of the gods and of the people; all of these were therefore dealt with as though they had been guilty of high treason." Every one convicted of thus breaking the public peace, was condemned to lose his life in the mode which seemed to be the most meet for his offence. The false witness was hurled from the Tarpeian rock, the harvest-thief was hanged, the incendiary was burnt.¹

But the moral influence which the intervention of the State exercised would no doubt arise, not so much from the awe inspired by legal authority, as from the fact that the laws themselves were supposed to be the expression of the will of the gods. This was so, as we shall see, among the Greeks; and we learn from Niebuhr that the ritual books of the Romans resembled the Mosaical, in prescribing the laws of the State as the law of the gods, and the anxiety so constantly exhibited not to abolish them, while giving them a totally fresh interpretation, arose from their original sanctity.² Hence also originated the devotion to the infernal gods which accompanied the outlawry proclaimed against those guilty of certain crimes.³ Mommsen asserts that every *capital*

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 166-7.

² *Do.*, vol. i., p. 140.

³ *Do.*, vol. i., p. 326.

sentence, at least, was primitively considered as the curse of the divinity offended by the crime. "At the very core of the Latin religion," says the historian, "there lay that profound moral impulse which leads men to bring earthly guilt and earthly punishment into relation with the world of the gods, and to view the former as a crime against the gods, and the latter as its expiation. The execution of the criminal condemned to death was as much an expiatory sacrifice offered to the divinity as was the killing of an enemy in just war; the thief who by night stole the fruits of the field, paid the penalty to Ceres on the gallows, just as the enemy paid it to mother earth and the good spirits on the field of battle. The profound and fearful idea of substitution also meets us here: when the gods of the community were angry, and nobody could be laid hold of as definitely guilty, they might be appeased by one who voluntarily gave himself up (*devovere se*)." ¹ The development of popular morality among the Romans was thus largely influenced by the belief in divine interference with the affairs of mankind, and it illustrates what was said at a preceding page ² as to the effect over the progress of moral culture of a supernatural sanction for the punishment of improper actions.

But apart from the intimate association just referred to, morality derived a less direct gain from the sanctions of religion. The German historian points out that the moral restrictions gradually developed by the priests, and by the *pontifices* in particular, supplied the place of police regulations when these were still almost wanting, and that, moreover, moral obligations, the breach of which could not be adequately punished by the state, even if taken notice of, were enforced by fear of the divine displeasure ³ The action of the Censors would

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 195.

² *Supra*, vol. i., p. 346; and see p. 388.

³ Mommsen, vol. i., p. 196.

have moral influence analogous to, although not so powerful as, that of the priests. How far the existence of such officers is evidence of a deterioration of manners is doubtful. Their chief object was said to be to maintain the old Roman character and habits. But their office, as conservators of morality, was acquired indirectly, and grew naturally out of the right with which they were invested of excluding unworthy persons from the list of citizens.¹ The offences with which the Censors were concerned were punishable only by their edict, and we may judge, therefore, what actions were in the early days of Rome not deemed to be such as the law would take cognizance of. The following are mentioned by Niebuhr as being within the jurisdiction of those officers. Excessive harshness or indulgence in a parent toward his children, the vexatious treatment of an innocent wife, the neglect of parents, selfishness between brothers or sisters, drinking-bouts, the seduction or abandonment of the young, the omission of sacred rites, the honours due to the dead, and exposing a child, unless deformed.² Most of these offences have relation to the family institution, which held at Rome a position curiously analogous to that which it still retains among the Chinese. The father, as the head of the family, was invested with full power over all its members, and this was carried so far that, originally, he might sell or put to death his wife (when she formed part of the *familia*), his child, or his slave, without any interference by the state. The son's children were also in the power of their grandfather, so long as their father was living.³ This, no doubt, confirmed the reverence for those in authority, which was always a

¹ Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities." Art. *Censor*.

² *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 400.

³ Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities." Art. *Patria Potestas, Servus*. Dionysius says that Romulus empowered the father to whip, imprison, or sell his son, or to put him to death, ii., 26-27.

great virtue in Roman eyes, but it tended to induce a false idea as to the value of human life, and, added to the sternness which formed so distinctive a trait of the Roman character, it resulted in the cruelty for which this was afterwards no less noted. Nevertheless, homicide was, probably, always considered highly criminal,¹ and the state saw the necessity, for its own preservation, of dealing with the offender directly, instead of leaving him, as is customary in more primitive societies, to be punished by the injured family. Infanticide, however, would seem to have been far from uncommon in the early days of Rome. It could not well be interfered with, consistently with parental rights, and it was even authorised in the case of deformed children, and also, according to Dionysius, of female children other than the firstborn.² The exposure of undeformed children was alone treated by the censors as criminal.³

The general moral condition of the early Romans may be judged of by the suggestive fact that, in the treaty between them and the Carthaginians, made subsequent to 509 B.C., it was assumed that plunder was one of the three objects the Roman fleet would have in view, "unless they were under special obligation to abstain in reference to foreigners."⁴ Piracy therefore, when directed against strangers, was not considered blamable, and such also would seem to have been the case with other actions when directed against those who were not under the protection of the national gods.⁵ It was different, however, as between fellow-citizens. Thus, theft was anciently

¹ The application of the term *parricida* might be held to show, however, that only the killing of parents was originally considered "murder."

² Dion. Hal. ii., 15.

³ As to Roman infanticide, see "Ueber den Stand der Bevölkerung, &c., im Alterthum," by C. G. Zumpt (1841), p. 67, *seq.*

⁴ Grote, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 481, *note.*

⁵ See Newman's "Regal Rome," p. 37.

very severely punished by Roman law. As declared by the Twelve Tables, a thief might be killed if he was caught in the act at night, or even in the daytime, if he defended himself with any weapon (*telum*). In other cases, he was whipped, and became *addictus* (outlawed), if a freeman, and was thrown down a precipice, if a slave.¹ The injured person might also demand compensation, and if the thief could not pay the sum required, when approved of by the judge, he was assigned to the former as a slave.² In this, however, he was treated no worse than the insolvent debtor, whom the severity of the Roman law delivered absolutely into the power of his creditor.³

Like other acts which interfered with a man's property, adultery was originally punishable with death. If the adulterer was caught in the act, he might be slain by the aggrieved husband, who was allowed, however, to take a pecuniary compensation. Adultery by the wife, which she was liable to atone for with her life, was also a reason for divorce, other grounds being, as stated by Plutarch, the poisoning by a wife of her husband's children, and the counterfeiting of the keys entrusted to her.⁴ The last named act doubtless refers more particularly to the key of the wine cellar; and, judging from the well-known law which forbade women to drink wine, we may believe that they, no less than the Grecian ladies, were somewhat given to that indulgence. The ease with which divorce could be effected, and the peculiarity of the marriage arrangements, were not conducive to sexual morality among the Romans. The mode of effecting divorce depended, in some measure, on the character of the matrimonial alliance sought to be dissolved. Marriage might

¹ Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities." Art. *Furtum*.

² Mommsen, *op. cit.*, vol i., p. 168.

³ Do., pp. 177-8.

⁴ Plutarch, Rom. 22. The man who put away his wife was required to make atonement to the gods of the earth.

be either *cum conventione*, in which case the wife became part of the *familia* of her husband, standing towards him in the relation of a daughter; or, it might be, *sine conventione*, when the wife became *uxor* merely, and retained her original familia, although her children belonged to her husband.¹ It has been thought that marriage at Rome was originally restricted to the patricians, having for its object the preservation of the hereditary aristocracy. It is more probable, however, that the Sabine aristocracy of Rome brought with them their solemn marriage rites, which differed wholly from the more primitive marital custom of the aboriginal plebeians, the nature of which was recognised from the name, *coemption*, given to it. One mode by which the plebeians entered into the married relation was that termed *usucapion*, which merely required cohabitation for an entire year, this having the result of placing the wife in *manu viri*. The regulation of Romulus that a "woman married to her husband by holy nuptials shall partake of all his goods and sacrifices,"² would seem to imply that marriage, without such rites, was a primitive Roman custom. A wife was, at an early period, allowed to "break the usus of the year," by absenting herself for three nights. The reason for this curious regulation is doubtless to be sought in the peculiar position which the wife occupied in relation to her husband. In the form of marriage *cum conventione*, she became part of his familia, and was, in fact, merely transferred from the power of her parent to that of her husband.³ It is not surprising that women should endeavour to escape from such a position, which was one of virtual slavery. Even an adult son, notwithstanding the rights which he en-

¹ Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities." Art. *Matrimonium*.

² Dion., ii., p. 25.

³ See Merivale's "History of the Romans under the Empire" (1856), vol. iv., p. 37.

joyed abroad among his fellow-citizens, was at home absolutely subject to his father's will; a mere thing, says Gibbon, "confounded by the laws with the moveables, the cattle, and the slaves, whom the capricious master might alienate or destroy without being responsible to any earthly tribunal."¹ Such was the case also with the other members of the family, over whom the head of the household exercised the power of life and death. Not only adultery, but even drunkenness, was considered a sufficient ground for putting a wife to death;² and so clearly, adds the historian, "was woman defined, not as a *person*, but as a *thing*, that, if the original title were deficient, she might be claimed, like other moveables, by the use and possession of an entire year."³

We have here evidence, no doubt, of the inferior position assigned by the early Romans to woman, but the fact that the other members of the family were under similar disabilities to those which the wife was liable to, shows that woman was not subject to special degradation. If this had been the case, she would not have been allowed to "break the usus of the year." The absolute authority given to the head of the family was evidence only of the importance ascribed to the function which he performed in the State, as *proletarius*, children producer, a designation which was at one time held in high honour among the Romans.⁴ The family was, indeed, a State "in little," and so long as children were supplied as citizens for the state itself, the conditions under which they were produced were of minor importance. The recognition of marriage by cohabitation must not be thought, however, to prove the prior existence of a condition of "communal marriage." At best it shows

¹ "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" (Ed. by Dr Wm. Smith), vol. v., p. 291.

² Dion., ii., p. 25.

³ Gibbon, *op. cit.*, vol. v., p. 295.

⁴ Mommsen, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 517.

merely that for some reason or other the relation of husband and wife had come to be formed in a peculiar mode, the origin of which may perhaps be gathered from certain legends connected with the early history of Rome. Notwithstanding its cosmical associations, the legendary incidents of the bringing up of Romulus may, like the myth of Cyrus,¹ have gathered round a person who actually existed, although his real name has been lost. We probably have the key to the myth of Romulus in the story of the rape of the Sabine women, which was the act of a band of adventurers who found themselves without wives and hence unable to form a permanent settlement. The founders of Rome were doubtless either outlaws or foreigners, and in the absence of women from their midst, the legend of the suckling of Romus or Remus by the wolf in lieu of a human mother, might well originate. The mode in which the early Romans acquired their wives is thus evidence, not of a prior condition of "communal marriage," but of a state of absolute non-marriage; and although the "rape of the Sabines" is an instance of "marriage by capture," it was purely exceptional, and was due to the peculiar circumstances under which the founders of Rome were placed.² Marriage, as a means for perpetuating the race, was regarded as a sacred institution among the Romans, so much so that only the offspring of a marriage of the highest form, that by *confarreatio*, could perform the highest religious functions. This refinement may have been due to the Sabine element in the Roman state, but the general feeling may be gathered from the statement of Merivale that the marriage "of a Roman with a Roman was a far higher and holier matter, in the view

¹ "The Mythology of the Aryan Nations," by George W. Cox (1870), vol. ii., p. 82.

² An analogous case in the history of the Hebrews is referred to, *supra*, p. 64.

of their priests and legislators, than the union of a Roman with a foreigner, of aliens with aliens, or of slaves with slaves.”¹ The people were, indeed, forbidden to form legitimate connections with foreign women, who, however, at Rome, as in Greece, acquired an influence which was all the greater for being illegitimate. Nothing shows better the notions entertained by the Romans on the question of marriage than their conduct in relation to the women who were classed as *pellices*. Prostitution seems never to have been recognised at Rome as a legal institution, but at the same time no idea of immorality or social impropriety was attached to a connection with a foreign pellex, so long as she was a free woman. Such alliances were almost inevitable under the conditions of the married life of the Roman citizen, which in this respect closely resembled that of the Athenian. “Gravely impressing upon his wife and daughters,” says Merivale, “that to sing, dance, to cultivate the knowledge of languages, to exercise the taste and understanding, was the business of the hired courtesan, it was to the courtesan that he repaired himself for the solace of his own lighter hours.”² This fact, together with the facility with which the marriage tie could be dissolved, would lead us to suppose that the morality of the Romans in sexual matters was not of a very high order. This opinion is confirmed by certain features of the Lupercalia and the Floralia, which dated from a high antiquity. In these popular festivals a prominent part was taken by the public prostitutes,³ notwithstanding they were declared to be “infamous,” the pretext for this, however, being, says Merivale, “rather the supposed baseness of exhibiting one’s person for money, than the iniquity of the performances themselves.”⁴

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 33.

² *Do.*, iv., pp. 34, 36, n.

³ See Dufour’s “*Histoire de la Prostitution*,” vol. i., p. 286 *seq.*

⁴ *Op. cit.*, vol. iv., 538.

On the whole, perhaps, it may be allowed that during the earlier days of the republic, Roman virtue had a positive character such as Greek morality could hardly lay claim to. Mommsen refers to Cato the elder as a living embodiment of the "somewhat coarse-grained energy and honesty" of Rome,¹ and no doubt his character as depicted by Plutarch is, on the whole, a noble one. The opposition, however, which the measures he enforced as censor called forth, shows that Cato was not a true type of the age in which he lived, while he himself was by no means perfect. Notwithstanding his love for children and his care in leading them in the paths of virtue, yet he viewed woman as a "necessary evil," and a wife as existing only for the sake of her offspring. He was very frugal in his mode of living, and yet he was always trying how he could best increase his wealth. Plutarch justly observes that "it was by no means necessary for a man who, like Cato, could make a delicious meal on turnips, and loved to boil them himself, while his wife baked the bread, to talk so much about a farthing, and to write by what means a man might soonest grow rich." Some of the means by which Cato effected this object appear not to have been of the most reputable nature. Besides lending money to his slaves to purchase boys for sale by auction after receiving instruction at his expense, he used to gratify the love of his own slaves for women by "allowing them to have the company of his female slaves on paying a certain price, but under a strict prohibition of approaching any other women." Plutarch, moreover, accuses him of turning off or selling his slaves when grown old, after having used them as beasts of burden, an ingratitude which the Athenians were not guilty of even to their horses. He was not free from severity to his servants, of whom he

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 429 *seq.*

was always suspicious, and to keep them from plotting together he contrived means to raise quarrels among them. He would seem also to have been wanting in the modesty which has distinguished so many great men, but was "perpetually boasting and giving himself the preference to others." Finally, although he used to say that he preferred the character of a good husband to that of a great senator, yet he showed the imperfection of his moral code by the assertion that "the man truly wonderful and godlike, and fit to be registered in the lists of glory, was he by whose accounts it should at last appear that he had more than doubled what he had received from his ancestors."¹

One of the most crying evils of Roman society is referred to in these passages from the life of Cato. The whole social economy came to be based on a system of domestic slavery, the objects of which were almost on a level with beasts of burden. Their number, as in the case of the Spartan Helots, was a source of anxiety to the rulers of the State, and the condition to which they were reduced was such that the frequent occurrence of servile outbreaks is a matter of no surprise. Mommsen suggests that, as compared with the sufferings of the Roman slaves, "the sum of all negro suffering is but a drop."² The moral evils created by this state of things, with the increase of wealth and luxury, prepared the way for the depravation of manners which was to attend the progress of Hellenism. The historian thus sketches the result of this foreign influence: "The ties of family life became relaxed with fearful rapidity. The evil of grisettes and boy favourites spread like a pestilence, and as matters stood, it was not possible to take any material steps in the way of legislation against it. The high

¹ Plutarch's "Lives," Langhorne's translation.

² *op. cit.*, vol. iii., p. 84.

tax which Cato as Censor (570) laid on this most abominable species of slaves, kept for luxury, would not be of much moment, and besides fell practically into disuse a year or two afterwards along with the property-tax generally. Celibacy—as to which grave complaints were made as early as 520—and divorces naturally increased in proportion. Horrible crimes were perpetrated in the bosom of families of the highest rank.” Another consequence, which under other circumstances would not necessarily have been objectionable, was the gradual emancipation of women from the control to which they had been subjected. “The family jurisdiction over women, which was connected with that marital and tutorial power, became practically more and more antiquated. Even in public matters women already began to have a will of their own, and occasionally, as Cato thought, ‘to rule the rulers of the world;’ their influence might be traced in the comitia, and already statues were erected in the provinces to Roman ladies.”¹ As evidence of the general looseness of moral ties, and as a token of what was to follow, this was of great significance.

The moral degradation of the Romans became so complete that it is impossible not to believe that their character, or rather the principles which governed their moral conduct, had some serious defect which prepared the way for so complete a change. The old Roman virtue had evidently lost its vitality, although external appearances would, under the restraining influence of national habit and institutions, continue for some time the same. At a certain point, however, that influence would cease to be effectual. The barriers of habit would be swept away, and morality itself almost disappear. And thus it was at the end of the old republic. Morality

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. iii., p. 455.

and family life, says Mommsen, had then come to be treated as antiquated things among all ranks of society. "To be poor was not merely the sorest disgrace and the worst crime, but the only disgrace and the only crime; for money the statesman sold the State, and the burgess sold his freedom; the post of the officer and the vote of the jurymen were to be had for money; for money the lady of quality surrendered her person as well as the common courtesan; falsifying of documents and perjuries had become so common, that in a popular poem of this age an oath is called 'the plaster for debts.' Men had forgotten what honesty was; a person who refused a bribe was regarded not as an upright man, but as a personal foe. The criminal statistics of all times and countries will hardly furnish a parallel to the dreadful picture of crimes—so varied, so horrible, and so unnatural—which the trial of Aulus Cluentius unrolls before us in the bosom of one of the most respectable families of an Italian country town."¹

The depravation of Roman manners is usually ascribed to the influence of Hellenism, but such an explanation is wholly inadequate. Hellenic example and teaching may have been the immediate agents, but not the ultimate cause. To explain that social decay, we must discover the key to the moral development exhibited by the Romans, and this is to be found in the wonderful influence which the idea of the "State" possessed over the popular mind. At the earliest period of their history the independent authority of the clans had already disappeared, and the rights of individuals were dependent almost entirely on the will of the state. "Freedom," says Mommsen, "was simply another expression for the right of citizenship in its widest sense; all property was based on express or tacit transference

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 545.

by the community to the individual; a contract was valid only so far as the community by its representatives allowed it, a testament only so far as the community affirmed it.”¹ The perfect subordination of the individual to the State, as well as certain other characters which the Romans exhibited, entitle them to be called the Spartans of Italy. Under other circumstances Rome might never have done more than Sparta did, but in the absence of the stern sense of patriotism to which all personal interests were sacrificed, she could not have attained to Italian supremacy or to the empire of the world. Until Italy almost ceased to be Italian by the draining off to foreign countries of her native inhabitants, and the influx of provincials, the old Roman virtue, the source of which Mr Newman has so well shown, displayed its influence, although with gradually weakened force. “Even in her most infantine state,” says the author of *Regal Rome*, “Sabine Rome showed the germs of those peculiarities which at length made her so great; high aristocratical feeling, and an intense power of submitting to discipline; profound veneration for authority, and a rigid observance of order and precedent, devotion to the national religion, yet subjection of all religious officers to the State; honour to agriculture above all trades, and to arms above all accomplishments. In such a stage of half-developed morality, not to be war-like, is not to be virtuous; and not to be devoted to established religion, is not to have any deep-seated moral principle at all.”²

By reference to these principles alone, we shall be able to understand Latin morality. Devotion to religion included devotion to the state, of which the king, in the days of the monarchy, was the religious as well as the

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 176.

² P. 80.

political head.¹ Roman virtue, therefore, must not be judged of from the modern standpoint. It certainly had a moral element, but as the particular phase was determined almost wholly by the relation of the individual to the state, its development showed results very different from what is usually associated with the idea of virtue. At the period when Roman morality was the purest, the interests of the state formed its only real test, and it is evident that this is consistent with many actions which the moral code of modern society could never sanction. The existence of the state in a vigorous condition of growth was the concern of all its citizens, and anything which interfered with that object was vigorously opposed and condemned.² But where in itself conduct was harmless, so far as its influence on the welfare of the state was concerned, it was treated as innocent. On the other hand, actions which were condemned when they affected the relations between the members of the state were considered praiseworthy when directed towards a foreign enemy, and for its aggrandisement. This was doubtless the source of the perfidy which Rome displayed in her dealings with foreigners,³ and the explanation of her political conduct. With the Roman, it may almost be said that patriotism took the place of morality, and when it is affirmed that the downfall of the Empire was caused by the decay of the old Roman virtues, it may be taken as meaning that the sense of patriotism had become deadened, if not lost, and with it disappeared the civic virtues which constituted the real greatness of the Roman character. A curious analogy may be drawn between the Hebrews and the Romans in this relation. Both alike

¹ This was so also at Sparta. (See Troplong, *loc. cit.*, p. 603.)

² We have an instance of this in the persistent but unsuccessful efforts of the state to enforce marriage. (Merivale, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 37 *seq.*)

³ Smith's "Ancient History," vol. ii., p. 301.

lived under a strong sense of duty, both viewing their law with a superstitious veneration as having had a divine origin, and, therefore, as claiming his implicit obedience. While, however, the one people fixed their attention on the divine sanction of the law, the other dwelt chiefly on the object for which that law was instituted. Hence, the Roman lived for the state, and with him the sense of patriotism was the governing principle of conduct; but the Hebrew regarded, not so much the state itself, as the Being whose will was supposed to be expressed in its laws, and the religious sense had to supply that principle. That only was right on either hand which the law allowed; but with the depravation of the religious sense in the one case, and the loss of patriotism¹ in the other, the motive to right action was gone, and morality itself almost disappeared.

When among the Romans the moral sense was thus paralysed, and the mere letter of the municipal law alone was left to restrain man from perfect freedom of action, we cannot be surprised at the appalling display of wickedness which the latter days of the Republic and those of the Empire exhibited. Even the influence of Christianity over the morals of the people was only temporary, and probably they were never at a lower ebb than when Constantine transplanted the seat of Empire from the Tiber to the Bosphorus. Unless, indeed, it was at a later date, during the reign of Julian, branded by his enemies as *The Apostate*, when, says Dr Milman, "Christianity was in a state of universal, fierce, and implacable discord, the chief cities of the Empire had run with bloodshed in religious quarrels. The sole object of the conflicting parties seemed to be to confine to

¹ This was shown especially in the gradual increase of celibacy, and the neglect to rear children. See Mommsen, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 547.

themselves the temporal and spiritual blessings of the faith; to exclude as many as they might from that eternal life, and to anathematise to the eternal death, which were revealed by the gospel, and placed, according to the general belief, under the special authority of the clergy. Society seemed to be split up into irreconcilable parties; to the animosities of Pagan and Christian were now added those of Christian and Christian."¹ This was utterly inconsistent with a high moral tone, and "no sooner had Christianity divorced morality as its inseparable companion through life, than it formed an unlawful connection with any dominant passion; and the strange and unnatural union of Christian faith with ambition, avarice, cruelty, fraud, and even licence, appeared in strong contrast with its primitive harmony of doctrine and inward disposition. Thus in a great degree, while the Roman world became Christian in outward worship and in faith, it remained heathen, or even at some periods worse than in the better times of heathenism, as to beneficence, gentleness, purity, social virtue, humanity, and peace."² That the Pagan Romans were not devoid of the active virtues was shown when treating of the altruistic sentiment.³ It could hardly be otherwise, considering the importance attached by the Romans to the "family," and the dependence of those virtues on the development of the family affections. But, notwithstanding their hospitality, a practice for which the early Romans were distinguished,⁴ private benevolence never attained to any great proportions among them. Their

¹ "History of Christianity," vol. iii., p. 54.

² Do., p. 528.

³ *Supra*, vol. i., p. 461.

⁴ As among the Greeks, hospitality was placed under the sanction of a god, Jupiter *hospitalis*, the character of a *hospes*, i.e., a person connected with a Roman by ties of hospitality, "was deemed even more sacred, and to have greater claims upon the host, than that of a person connected by blood or affinity." Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities," Art. *Hospitalium*.

morality, like that of the predatory races referred to in a former chapter, revealed itself rather in the passive virtues, which, however, at the brightest epoch of Roman history, would seem to have been concentrated on the glory and well-being of the State, as their chief if not only object.

THE GREEKS.

The study of history shows that primitively there was little, if anything, to distinguish the classic peoples of Southern Europe from the barbarous nations by whom they were surrounded. It was so, at least, with the Greeks, whose morality was not at any period of a very exalted type. The picture drawn by Mr Grote of Homeric Greece reminds us more of an aggregation of communities like the old robber clans of the Scottish border than of a cultivated nation. Thus the historian declares that, when we pass beyond the influence of private ties, "we find scarcely any other moralising forces in operation. The acts and adventures commemorated imply a community wherein neither the protection nor the restraints of law are practically felt, and wherein ferocity, rapine, and aggressive propensities generally, seem restrained by no internal counterbalancing scruples. Homicide, especially, is of frequent occurrence—sometimes by open violence, sometimes by fraud; expatriation for homicide is among the most constantly recurring acts of the Homeric poems; and savage brutalities are often ascribed even to admired heroes with apparent indifference."¹ Again, "the celebrity of Autolykus, maternal grandfather of Odysseus, in the career of wholesale robbery and perjury, and the wealth which it enabled him to acquire, are described with the same unaffected admiration as the wisdom of Nestôr or the strength of

¹ History of Greece, vol. i., p. 480.

Ajax. Achilles, Menelaus, Odysseus, pillage in person whenever they can find an opportunity, employing both force and stratagem to surmount resistance. The vocation of a pirate is recognised as honourable. . . . Abductions of cattle, and expeditions for unprovoked ravage as well as for retaliation, between neighbouring tribes, appear ordinary phenomena, and the established inviolability of heralds seems the only evidence of any settled feeling of obligation between one community and another. As a general rule, he who cannot protect himself finds no protection from society; his own kinsmen and immediate companions are the only parties to whom he can look with confidence for support."¹ Even the orphan is despoiled of his inheritance, and vainly appeals to the friends of his dead father for protection,² and conduct such as this incident exhibits quite justifies Goguet's opinion that the hospitality which (as we shall see hereafter) was extended by the Greeks to strangers, was exercised, not so much from generosity and greatness of soul as from the necessity arising from common interest.

Nor were the Homeric Greeks much further advanced in *sexual* morality. It is true that women were not so secluded as in the historic age, and therefore the position of the wife was so far superior to what it was at the later date. Mr Gladstone remarks that, the general tone of the intercourse between husband and wife during the Homeric age is "thoroughly natural: full of warmth, dignity, reciprocal deference, and substantial, if not conventional, delicacy. . . . The fulness of moral and intelligent being is alike complete, and alike acknowledged, on the one side and on the other. Nor is this description confined to the scenes properly Hellenic. Of rude manners to a woman there is not a real instance in the poems. And to this circumstance we may add its true

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 480.

² *Do.*, p. 482.

correlative, that the women of Homer are truly and profoundly feminine. As to the intensity of conjugal love, it has never passed the climax which it reaches in Odysseus and Penelope."¹ And yet notwithstanding this, and although polygamy appears not to have been practised, the sexual morality of the Homeric period is, as Mr Gladstone truly asserts, that of the childhood of the race, and not of its manhood.² Co-habitation, in anticipation of marriage, was not considered improper, and concubinage was practised by the Greek chieftains, before Troy at least,³ and at home also, if the lot of the female captive was to share in exile the conqueror's bed.⁴ It is more important to notice, as showing the prevalent ideas on the subject of illicit sexual connections, that the rights of bastards to a share in the paternal estate was admitted, although they took a smaller proportion than the legitimate children.⁵ On the other hand, although the unchastity of a daughter was, when discovered, punished with great severity by the father, yet the "furtive pregnancy of young women (which is often laid to the account of a god) is a frequently recurring incident in the legendary stories;⁶ showing a laxity of morals on the female side such as the condition of society generally would lead us to expect. Mr Gladstone admits that the indignation of the Greeks is against Paris the *effeminate coward* much more than Paris the *ravisher*, and he adds that the shame of the abduction lay in the fact that Paris was the guest of Menelaus.⁷ This very case throws other light on the relation between husband and wife. Prolonged absence of the latter, although she becomes the wife of another

¹ "Juventus Mundi" (1869), p. 411.

² Do., pp. 405, 407.

³ Grote, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 476.

⁷ *op. cit.*, p. 381.

² Do., p. 401.

⁴ Do., p. 409.

⁶ Do., p. 476.

man, is no bar to her resuming her original domestic position ;¹ showing, not the indissolubility of marriage, as Mr Gladstone supposes, but the continuance of a property right, the invasion of which, even in the Homeric age, is compounded for by payment of a fine.² The social condition of the Greeks during the Homeric age is well summed up by Mr Grote when he says that, in Greek legendary history, "there is no sense of obligation then existing between man and man as such—and very little between each man and the entire community of which he is a member; such sentiments are neither operative in the real world, nor present to the imaginations of the poets. Personal feelings, either towards the gods, the king, or some near and known individual, fill the whole of a man's bosom: out of them arise all the motives to benevolence, and all the internal restraints upon violence, antipathy, or rapacity: and special communion, as well as special solemnities, are essential to their existence. The ceremony of an oath, so imposing, so paramount, and so indispensable in those days, illustrates strikingly this principle."³

A recent writer, so far from accepting the view supported by the authorities just quoted, affirms that the society and morals of the Iliad and Odyssey were not those of a primitive era, and that the primitive features they retained were "combined with vices which betray the decadence of culture, and with virtues rather springing from mature reflection and long experience than from the spontaneous impulse of a generous instinct."⁴ Mr Mahaffy, after analysing "honour," to express which the Greeks had no equivalent term, into *courage*, *truth*, *compassion*, and *loyalty*, affirms that the courage of the Homeric chiefs was of a second-rate order; that the

¹ Gladstone, p. 407.

² Do., p. 411.

³ *op. cit.*, i. p. 472.

⁴ Mahaffy's "Social Life in Greece" (1874), p. 18.

Homeric society was full of guile and falsehood; that children, helpless women, and worn-out men received scanty justice and little consideration; and that loyalty to superior authority, or to the obligations taken by oath or promise, was a rare quality.¹ The explanation given of this state of things is that Homer describes an exclusive *caste* society, in which "consideration is due to the members of the caste, and even to its dependants," but beyond its limits, "even the most deserving are of no account, save as objects of plunder."² There is much truth in this notion, but then it does not support Mr Mahaffy's view of the non-primitive condition of Homeric society. The early Greeks were evidently in much the same state, allowing for difference of temperaments, as the Germans of Tacitus, or still better, the Scandinavians of the *Burnt-Njal Saga*. Manly, independent, hospitable to strangers, respectful to women, and fair dealing to those belonging to their own clan or special circle; but to outsiders, unless bound by the ties of "brotherhood," just the reverse. The Homeric Greeks were essentially a "predatory" race, and they possessed the virtues as well as the vices of such a condition.

Judging from the complaints made by Hesiod, the moral condition of Grecian society had rather deteriorated than improved down to his own age. The poet affirmed that even the ties of family and the duties of hospitality were no longer observed, while justice and honour were unknown. He lamented that he had to mingle with the race of iron, among whom "neither will sire be like-minded to sons, nor sons at all to parent, nor guest to host, nor comrade to comrade, nor will brother be dear even as it was afore-

¹ Mahaffy's "Social Life in Greece," p. 20 *seq.* ² Do., p. 42.

time to brother.¹ But quickly will they dishonour parents growing old, and will blame them, I ween, addressing them with harsh words, being impious, and unaware of the vengeance of the gods; nor to aged parents would these pay back the price of their nurture, using the right of might: and one will sack the city of another: nor will there be any favour to the trusty, nor the just, nor the good, but rather they will honour a man that doeth evil and is overbearing; and justice and shame will not be in their hands, and the bad will injure the better man, speaking in perverse speeches, and will swear a false oath."² Hesiod, indeed, fell on evil days, when wickedness was rife, and justice had fled from the land; when the age of gold had given place to that of iron. Instead of this showing a moral deterioration, as compared with the Homeric age, Mr Mahaffy however supposes that the two poets in reality describe the same period, and that "Hesiod has told us what the poor men thought and felt, while the Homeric poet pictured how kings and ladies ought, in his opinion, to have lived and loved."³

The historian of Greece mentions several particulars, showing great improvement in the moral condition of the people during the three centuries preceding the Persian war. The dead bodies of slain enemies were no longer mutilated, as had been formerly the custom.⁴ In cases of murder, the right of private revenge, instead of being compounded for by a propitiatory payment, was discountenanced, and finally allowed only in a few special cases, "while the murderer came to be considered, first as having sinned against the gods, next as

¹ The hospitality and brotherhood here referred to, probably held as important a place in the social life of the Homeric Greeks, as they do among other primitive peoples.

² *op. cit.*, p. 182 *seq.*, Banks' translation (Bohn), p. 84. ³

³ *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁴ Grote, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 482.

having deeply injured the society, and thus at once as requiring absolution and deserving punishment. The idea of a propitiatory payment to the relatives of the deceased has ceased altogether to be admitted; it is the protection of society which dictates, and the force of society which inflicts, a measure of punishment calculated to deter for the future.”¹ The mode in which this change was brought about thus appears to have been exactly that which has already been supposed to be necessary to clothe with the sense of duty, the abstaining from actions which had previously been treated as indifferent, or as simply not right. Among the citizens of historical Athens, the “great impersonal authority called ‘the laws’ may have stood out separately, both as guide and sanction, distinct from all religious duty or private sympathies.”² But the laws expressed only what had before been recognised as the will of the gods, under whose protection it was necessary that morality should be placed, if it was to acquire the authority which the sense of duty could alone confer.

Such it was in earlier ages, when the relation between a man and his father, his kinsman, or his guest, was supposed to be under the sanction of Zeus,³ before whom the engagement is entered into. In the “*Odyssey*,” as pointed out by a recent French writer, the gods are described as the guarantees of justice, the protectors of the feeble and of the unfortunate. It is there declared that guests, and the poor who beg, are sent by Jupiter, and that the unfortunates who ask for succour are respected even by the gods. It is not enough, says M. Havet, that the poor have for protectors the gods and the avenging Erinnys. Sometimes the immortals, under

¹ Grote, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 485-6.

² Do., p. 474.

³ *Supra*, vol. i. p. 452. Plato makes Zeus the guardian of the stranger suppliant. See “*Laws*,” Bk. v., Jowett’s trans., vol. iv. p. 249.

the form of miserable wanderers, traverse the cities in order to prove the goodness or the wickedness of mankind, and "the miserable one whom they repulse perhaps conceals a god."¹ No doubt the condition of the poor was, in early ages, usually very miserable.² Otherwise charity to the poor and the unfortunate would not have been placed under the sanction of the gods. When once actions are thus regarded, a sense of obligation towards the gods comes to be created, leading to the performance of duties which otherwise would never have been recognised, but which, when once established as part of the social code, finally receive their sanction from custom embodied in the laws. That the sanction was originally religious, appears from the fact, that, even unintentional homicide was, at Athens, considered as a pollution of the city; while trials for murder were held in the open air, "in order that the judges might not be under the same roof with one suspected of impurity, nor the prosecutor with his adversary." Even suicide, although not treated as a crime, was deemed to be an offence against religion;³ and it is the more likely to have been so with actions which were actually criminal. Such, indeed, would seem to have been the case, under certain circumstances, with the offence against chastity; since, not only was a husband prohibited, under pain of losing his civil rights, from cohabiting with his wife, if an act of adultery by her was proved, but "the adulteress was excluded even from those temples which foreign women and slaves were allowed to enter; and if she was seen there, any one might treat her as he pleased, provided he did not kill her or mutilate her."⁴ There appear to have been at Athens officers

¹ "Le Christianisme et ses origines" (1872), tom. i. p. 17.

² On this point see Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, pp. 87, 107.

³ Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities," art. *Phonos*.

⁴ Do., art. *Adulterium*.

called *exegetes*, or interpreters, who, like the Roman censors, dealt with actions which were not provided for by the ordinary laws; and who would seem to have been religious rather than civil officers.¹ Perhaps the law which these *exegetes* enforced was that unwritten law referred to by Plato, as condemning incest, and of which Lysias said, "no one made them, and no one is able to repeal or withstand them."²

Although, among the later Greeks, theft was, like murder, generally punished with severity, and adultery was stigmatised as a most heinous offence, yet the moral ideas entertained by them were never of a very high standard. This is the conclusion arrived at by a recent writer, who has examined with care and minuteness the social condition of the ancient Greeks. Mr Mahaffy refers to the ingrained selfishness, which was the prevailing element in the Greek character, and to the dishonesty which was one of its most marked features, "congenital in the nation and indelible."³ In political conduct those principles were equally active. Craftiness and revenge were applauded, "and it was openly recommended to fawn upon your enemy, and deceive him until he was in your power, and then wreak vengeance upon him."⁴ The Greeks of the lyric age had not quite lost the primitive hospitality of their race, but they were almost devoid of compassion to the poor. Poverty, especially the poverty of exile, was, says Mr Mahaffy, reckoned the worst of evils, "so much so, that the promises or the friendship of an exile were held of no value when he returned. He would do anything to obtain that result, and felt justified in any deceit to obtain it."⁵ Another feature of the Greek character, which was strongly marked, was the horror and hatred

¹ Havet, vol. i. p. 70.

² Do., p. 64.

³ *op. cit.*, p. 112 *seq.*

⁴ Do., p. 90.

⁵ Do., p. 107.

of old age. There were local and individual exceptions, but as a rule the aged were treated with irreverence and neglect. At Athens, actions by children to deprive their parents of the control of property were "legal and commonly occurring."¹ These characteristics were not confined to the Greeks of the lyric age. They appear to have been equally marked at the most refined period of their history. Mr Mahaffy points out that the Greeks of the time of Pericles, notwithstanding their politeness and literary and artistic refinement, were coarse and rude in their manners. They were, moreover, guilty of great cruelty to their enemies, especially in their civil wars, putting hundreds of prisoners to death apparently without the least compunction. This shows an extreme disregard for human life, which was consistent with the use of human sacrifices, and the practice, in judicial proceedings, of torture, especially of female slaves and freemen. The facts of their history show us, says Mr Mahaffy, that "with all their intellect, and all their subtlety, the Greeks were wanting in heart. Their humanity was spasmodic, not constant. Their kindness was limited to their friends and family, and included no chivalry to foes or to helpless slaves." The contempt for old age which marked an earlier epoch, was no less strongly developed among the Periclean Greeks. The fact of the Greek lawgivers so explicitly enjoining upon children the duty of supporting their aged parents shows that there must have been a neglect of such duty, and therefore a deficiency in family affection. Old age was looked upon as one of the greatest of miseries, and so keenly were its disadvantages felt, that in Ceos the old people, "when they came to the age of sixty or upwards, and felt themselves growing useless, drank hemlock, and left the world in which they were becoming a

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 110.

mere incumbrance.”¹ The loss of political greatness was attended at Athens with increased social refinement. This displayed itself in the prevalence of a humane spirit, which extended even to the treatment of criminals condemned to capital punishment, who were not only put to death in the most easy and painless manner, but, after condemnation, were allowed to enjoy the society of their friends. Prisoners of war were no longer massacred in cold blood, although women and children were still sold for slaves, and we are justified in saying that the Platonic age, as compared with that of Pericles, exhibited “a greater gentleness and softness, a toning down of the hard features, a nearer approach to the greater humanity of Christian teaching.”²

The writer to whom we are indebted for the above summary of the Greek character accepts the social position of woman as the great test of moral improvement. There is little to distinguish in that position between the lyric age and that of the great epic poet. In both married women had equal freedom of social intercourse. The careful, virtuous wife is equally prized, and the love of the mother for her child is as pure and intense among the later Greeks as during the Homeric age, as evidenced by the lament of Danae over her infant Perseus, in which “the purest maternal love and the noblest resignation find their most perfect expression.”³ A change, not for the better in all respects, appears to have taken place at a later period. Mr Mahaffy points out certain improvements in the position of married women, especially when residing in the country away from the restraints of town life, and he thinks that we find evidence in the Greek writers of that epoch of a disposition to recognise the importance of woman and to acknowledge her claims. She had not yet, however, come to be considered as occupying the

¹ Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, p. 214 *seq.* ² Do., p. 253. ³ Do., p. 99 *seq.*

same social position as man. The ancient practice of selling into slavery and concubinage the women found in captured cities was still retained, and not only were the consequences of such a fate accepted with stoicism by its victims, but if fate restored them to their friends, they were treated as though they had suffered no moral stain.¹

Generally speaking, women were, indeed, viewed as inferior beings, and so far as wives were not valued simply as mothers of children, they were usually treated as household drudges rather than as companions. Before marriage, girls would seem to have been kept in a state of strict seclusion, which amounted almost to imprisonment, and this restriction was long retained in the middle and higher classes, even after marriage.² The custom, which illustrates the remark of Thucydides, "that woman is best who is least spoken of among men, whether for good or for evil," was probably in some measure the result of Asiatic influence,³ but it may also have been required by the character of the Greek women. A writer who takes a medium view of the estimation in which women were held in historic Greece, says:—"At this time, and in the very focus of civilization, the women were regarded as a lower order of beings, neglected by nature in comparison with man, both in point of intellect and heart, incapable of taking part in public life, naturally prone to evil, and fitted only for propagating the species and gratifying the sensual appe-

¹ Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, p. 264 *et seq.*, and see p. 194.

² Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities," art. *Matrimonium*.

³ May not the change from the freedom enjoyed by women in the Homeric age be illustrated by Burckhardt's remark, with reference to the Bedouins, that "the more a tribe is connected with the inhabitants of towns, the stricter they are with respect to the seclusion of women." "Notes on the Bedouins," p. 200. As to the influence of Asiatic manners in Greece, see Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

tites of the men.”¹ This view is amply supported by the authorities quoted by Professor Becker, and we cannot wonder if the Greek women answered to his description, seeing that (except at Sparta) they appear never to have been educated, and to have been entirely “excluded from intercourse, not only with strangers, but also with their nearest relations,” while they saw but little even of their fathers or husbands.² Greeks were required to marry by their obligations to the gods, and by the duty to provide citizens for the State and children to perform the ancestral rites. Wives were valued, therefore, for the purposes of procreating offspring, and for their use in superintending the arrangements of the household,³ but beyond this they were but little esteemed. Socrates is made by Xenophon to describe the duties of a wife, and portray the pleasures which will accrue from attention to them. “But the greatest pleasure of all,” says Ischomachus, “will be this, that if you are plainly superior to me, you will become my mistress, and will not have to fear that with advancing years your influence in the house will wane, but will rather be assured that, in old age, the better companion you are to me and the better guardian of the house to our children, the more honoured will you be at home. For you will come to be truly admired and esteemed among men, not for good looks, but for good deeds in practical life.”⁴ This is not the highest condition woman can attain to, but the ideal is, at all events, somewhat higher than that of Katharina after she had been brought by Petruchio to admit that wives owe to their husbands “but love, fair looks, and true obedience.”

Mr Mahaffy thinks the contempt with which woman

¹ Becker's “Charicles” (Eng. trans.), p. 463.

² Do., p. 465.

³ Do., p. 473 *seq.*

⁴ For an analysis of Xenophon's tract, see Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, p. 258 *seq.*

was viewed among the higher classes at Athens may be traced in great measure to political causes. "Old age and weaker sex," he says, "were pushed aside to make way for the politician—the man of action—the man who carried arms, and exercised civic rights."¹ This may have had some influence, but the chief cause was probably to be found with the women themselves. The Greeks were excessively fond of social intercourse, and they had reduced conversation to an art. If they could have gratified their tastes in this direction at home we should have heard less of their preferring the society of other ladies to that of their own wives. The ignorance displayed by the females of his household must have bred a feeling of contempt in the mind of the intellectual Greek—although he was alone to blame for it—and that such was a chief cause of this feeling is shown by the fact that the society of educated women was much sought after. That there were such women we know from the case of Aspasia, whose name is so intimately associated with that of Pericles. Aspasia was one of the *hetairai*, a class answering to the "mistresses" of modern society, but occupying a much more important position, because supplying in the Grecian cities a real social want. The word *iraipac* signifies a "companion,"² and it explains the source of the influence which that class of women enjoyed. Aspasia can hardly have been otherwise than a woman of refinement and education, or she would not have been visited by Socrates and Xenophon for intellectual culture. Her house was even frequented by the wives and daughters of Athenians, with whom she discussed the duties of married life.³ This fact is not surprising when it is considered that according to the Athenian law no citizen could form a legal marriage engagement with a foreign woman. Aspasia was a native of

¹ Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

² Do., p. 267.

³ Do., p. 199 *seq.*

Miletus, and it is not improbable that the *hetairia* generally were at first foreign women of superior intellectual attainments, who, by the fortune of war or other means,¹ found themselves in Greece, and not being permitted to marry, became the "companions" of those who sought their society. Afterwards, no doubt, the class included many native born women who, of a mental calibre above their station, preferred being a "mistress," with the freedom of such a status, to the more honourable condition of wife with its social disadvantages. At no time does it appear that association with the *hetairai* was considered disgraceful. At Athens the young men spent a great part of their time, previous to marriage, in their company, and the intercourse was not thought disreputable even after marriage.² The cause of the influence which women of that class exercised is not far to seek. The *hetairai* not only sought by all means to preserve and enhance their physical charms, but they studied to please through all the senses. They perfected themselves in music and dancing, and they even "paid considerable attention to the cultivation of their minds. It seems to have been due especially to their superiority in intellectual cultivation over the female citizens, that men preferred their society and conversation to those of citizens and wives."³ The consequence was that these "good friends," as they were called, eclipsed the honest women; they had clients and flatterers, they exercised a permanent influence over public events by influencing the men who were engaged in them, and, as Dufour well says, they acted as the queens of Attic civilisation.⁴

¹ The system of concubinage may have added to the class. On that subject, see Dufour's "Histoire de la Prostitution," tom. i. p. 205, *seq.*

² Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities," art. *Hetaera*. ³ *Idem.*

⁴ Dufour, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 208. Mr Grote remarks, that "among the Heteræ in Greece were included all the most engaging and

At Sparta, the *hetairai* occupied an inferior position to that which was accorded to them at Athens, and other non-Doric cities. They cannot, however, have been numerous there, seeing how lightly female chastity was regarded by Lycurgus. The Spartan lawgiver was fully imbued with the idea, which was not uncommon in the ancient world, that the chief value of woman is to produce citizens.¹ But this was so important an office, that women could not fail to be highly esteemed among a race with whom the idea of the State was all-absorbing. The liberty granted to the Spartan women gave them much influence, and they were, indeed, said by the other Greeks to have brought their husbands under the yoke. But although the institutions of Lycurgus, for a time at least, produced citizens, they were founded on moral ideas which were certain to bear much evil fruit. M. Trolong, who has so well described Spartan character, after pointing out that the love of self and of fame was sacrificed to a fanatical regard for the State, and that every action of life was regulated in accordance with the idea that the private life should be absolutely merged into the public life, says:—"Par la raison que l'État est intéressé à la vigueur et à la beauté de la race, Lycurgue soumettait à ses lois modératrices les rapports des époux dans les premiers temps du mariage. Un mari avancé en âge avait la faculté légale de se donner auprès de sa femme, plus jeune que lui, un remplaçant distingué par sa force et sa beauté. Lorsqu'une femme était féconde, ou pouvait l'emprunter à son mari pour donner à la

accomplished women; for in Grecian matrimony, it was considered becoming and advantageous that the bride should be young and vigorous, and that as a wife she should neither see nor know anything beyond the administration of her own feminine apartments and household." "Plato and the other Companions of Socrates," vol. iii. p. 544.

i Dufour, vol. i. 108.

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patrie des enfants d'une autre souche. Une mère donnait-elle naissance à un fils contrefait, on mettait à mort cette malheureuse créature, qui ne promettait pas à l'État un soldat vigoureux."¹ What would have been the ultimate result of these regulations is perhaps questionable, but being combined with the dislike to large families, generated by the operation of the laws which prevented the alienation and accumulation of property, the Spartan population decreased instead of increasing. The want of men to which Aristotle ascribed the ruin of Sparta, was no doubt caused in great measure by the constant wars in which she was engaged, but it may doubtless be largely traced to the operation of the very institutions to which she at first owed her strength. Probably, also, something was due to infanticide, to which Polybius ascribed chiefly the "penury of men," which rendered the cities of Greece deserted, and its fields uncultivated.²

It is now time to draw some general conclusions as to the ideas which governed the moral conduct of the ancient Greeks. Mr Ruskin finds the dominant idea which moulded the Grecian character embodied in the worship of Athena, the owl-eyed (*Glaukopis*) Queen of the Air, who gives moral health, and inspires habitual wisdom of heart. She is the source of the four cardinal virtues, combined in the Greek mind into the two main ones of *justice*, or noble passion, and *fortitude*, or noble patience, which were represented in "two mighty songs,—one of the Menis, mens, passion or zeal of Athena, breathed into a mortal, whose name is 'Ache of Heart,' and whose short life is only the incarnate brooding and burst of storm; and the other is of the foresight and fortitude of

"Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques" (1852), vol. viii. pp. 611-612.

² Lib. xxxvii. ch. 4.

Athena, maintained by her in the heart of a mortal whose name is given to him from a longer grief, Odysseus, the full of sorrow, the much enduring, and the long suffering."¹ That the Iliad and the Odyssey were intended to teach some such deep moral lessons may well be believed from the wonderful influence they exercised over the Greek mind. This influence was centred in the worship of Athena, of whom, says Mr Ruskin, the idea formed by the common people "was as clear as a good Roman Catholic peasant's idea of the Madonna," while "the creed of the upper classes was more refined and spiritual, but quite as honest, and even more forcible in its effect on the life."² The effect was both physical and moral, seeing that the Athenian Goddess was inspired with wisdom, not only in human conduct, but also in human art, giving the instrument of faultless invention as well as of infallible decision.³ But the material aspect of her attributes is only secondary. Mr Ruskin remarks that the merit of Greek art is that it is not beautiful, but right;⁴ and hence it is Athena's supreme mission to make man act rightly, with due regard to physical beauty it may be, but, above all, in relation to moral propriety.⁵ "The first sign," says Mr Ruskin, "of Athena's presence with any people is that they become warriors, and that the chief thought of every man of them is to stand rightly in his rank, and not fail from his brother's side in battle. Wealth and pleasure, and even love, are all under Athena's orders, sacrificed to this duty of standing fast in the rank of war."⁶

The above statement as to the mission of Athena⁷ may be perfectly correct, but much depends on the appli-

¹ "The Queen of the Air" (1867), p. 17.

² Do., pp. 62-3.

³ Do., p. 161.

⁴ Do., p. 190.

⁵ Do., p. 117.

⁶ Do., p. 133.

⁷ Comp. Mr Hayman's estimate of the character of Athena, as approvingly quoted by Mr Mahaffy, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

cation of the term "moral propriety." The Goddess could be supposed to sanction only those actions which approved themselves to the general moral consciousness of her worshippers. Now, Mr Grote points out that not only the philosophers, but the Athenian people and the Athenian public men, were familiar with the words *pleasure* and *good*, and had sentiments corresponding to both of them. Thus, "the pleasurable and powerful referred to present and temporary causes: the Good and Evil to prospective causes and permanent situations, involving security against indefinite future suffering, combined with love of national dignity and repugnance to degradation, as well as with a strong sense of common obligation to each other. To provide satisfaction for these common patriotic feelings—to sustain the dignity of the city, by effective and even imposing public establishments, against foreign enemies—to protect the individual rights of citizens by an equitable administration of justice—counted in the view of the Athenians as objects of *good* and *honourable*; while the efforts and sacrifices necessary for these permanent ends were, so far as they went, a renunciation of what they would call the pleasurable."¹

The moral test to be applied to actions is the object which they have in view, and although it is good to seek the welfare of the State, or of individuals, by all honourable means, yet this may be consistent with the absence of any strong feeling of what we understand by "moral propriety." Such we have seen to be the case with the Romans, with whom morality became almost co-extensive with patriotism, and so also was it with the Greeks as a people, whose "good" was that of the individual rather than that of the State. It may be doubted whether words such as *con-*

¹ "Plato and other Companions of Socrates," vol. ii. p. 148.

science, duty, charity, which have so profound a moral significance to us, were known to the Greeks of any era, in the sense now ascribed to them. Mr Grote affirms that the words which now express the moral quality of actions had not gained their ethical sense during the Homeric period. The epithets *good, just, &c.*, "signify the man of birth, wealth, influence, and daring, whose arm is strong to destroy or to protect whatever may be the turn of his moral sentiments; while the opposite epithet, *bad*, designates the poor, lowly, and weak, from whose dispositions, be they ever so virtuous, society has little either to hope or to fear."¹ It is true that Mr Gladstone, on the other hand, declares that *agathos*, or good, has, in several passages of the Iliad, a solely moral meaning, and that Homer recognised the "voice of conscience, and a sentiment ranging between reverence and fear," which sometimes "ascended to a point far higher than the mere avoidance of crime;" as when Achilles was restrained by the inward feeling, *sebas*. So also the idea of sin, "considered as an offence against the divine order," was not unknown to Homer, it being implied in the term *ἀτασθαλίη*, "which is applied to deep deliberate wickedness; to sinning against light." But granting, as we must, that the moral conscience was, to a certain extent, developed in the Greek mind, its teachings cannot have been of a very satisfactory character; seeing that in Homeric times "to have killed a man was considered a misfortune, or, at most, an error in point of prudence," and that fugitives from the vengeance of the relatives of the person slain "were everywhere received without displeasure or surprise." When to these statements is added the declaration that "the weakest point of the Homeric system

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 459.

of ethics is its tenderness (to say the least) for fraud, under certain conditions," we have a picture which does not place the moral culture of the early Greeks in a very favourable light. The force of Mr Gladstone's remarks are much weakened, moreover, by the fact which he mentions that, with Homer, the upright and good men are "the persons addicted to sacrifice and religious observances." It is evident that this is far from being a sufficient test of moral propriety, consistent as such a practice of religion is with the performance of actions of great wickedness.¹ Such a combination of religious devotion and defective morality is what we have seen to exist among all peoples of a low condition of culture, and it is quite consistent with the degree of civilisation exhibited by the Homeric Greeks.

It is true that the self-restraint and patience exemplified in the poems of Homer give an air of nobility to the conduct of some of his heroes. Mr Gladstone affirms that "there lies at the root of the Homeric model of the good or the great man, in a practical form, that which Aristotle has expressed scientifically as a condition of moral virtue; a spirit of moderation, a love of *το μέσον*, or the mean." There should be moderation in sorrow, moderation in wrath, moderation in pleasure. Hence absolute implacability is, with Homer, one of the most unequivocally vicious qualities.² No doubt moderation is an essential condition of virtue, but it is not a virtue in itself. Moreover, self-restraint, although a noble quality, whether in a man of culture or a savage, is yet too ordinary a quality with the former to be

¹ See "Juventus Mundi," p. 381 *seq.* The fact mentioned in the text prevents there being any real contradiction between Mr Grote's and Mr Gladstone's statements as to the characteristics of the Homeric good man.

² *op. cit.* p. 389 *seq.*

credited with much of the moral element. Hence its importance in the Homeric poems shows how defective must have been Grecian morality at that epoch. The same is true, although to a less extent, of *patience*, which is, however, only a form of self-restraint. It does not appear, indeed, that any sense of moral obligation was attached to these qualities. It was good for a man to exercise patience and self-restraint, but if he did not thus act, although it might be a sign of mental weakness, it was no proof of actual wickedness. Even if it were otherwise, those qualities could hardly have reference to anything but the purely passive virtues, the practice of which is the earliest result of the conception of the idea of duty. It is otherwise with the sense of *justice*. This, as we understand the term, is a really active virtue, and it is the only one which Mr Gladstone refers to as being strongly enforced in the Homeric poems. But even here there is little evidence of the recognition of moral obligation. Justice has a negative as well as a positive side, and the teaching of Confucius, "Do *not* unto others that which you would that they should not do unto you," is applicable to the Homeric age, rather than the affirmative precept of Christianity.

Of course, with the progress of general culture, and the combined, although not always harmonious action of religion and philosophy, the moral sense would be gradually developed,¹ and a standard of propriety established. But this standard was very different from that which had resulted from the influences under which the

¹ We have an illustration of this in the Greek *Nemesis*—the *Adrastea* of Asia Minor and the *Athyr* of Egypt—who seems to have combined the qualities of a goddess of war, of love, and of the dead. As a moral agent she was at first an impersonation of righteous wrath and of retribution, who brings down excessive good fortune, and checks the presumption generally attending it. At the hands of the tragedians, she became the avenger of crime, and the punisher of every godless expression.

national character of other ancient peoples was moulded. Dr Mommsen has drawn a parallel between the Greeks and Romans which fitly illustrates that assertion, while showing the source from which their difference of character sprang. The learned historian says: "The family and the State, religion and art, received, both in Greece and Italy, a development so peculiar and so thoroughly national, that the common pedestal on which both peoples stood has been so overgrown as to be almost concealed from our view. That Hellenic character, which sacrificed the whole to the part, the nation to the single state, and the single state to the citizen; the beau-ideal of whose life was the beautiful and good, only too often degenerating into indulgence in luxurious ease; whose political development consisted in intensifying the original independence of the several districts and tribes, and finally, in the complete destruction of the central authority; whose religion first changed its gods into men and then denied their existence; which gave free play to the limbs in the games of the naked gymnasts, and full scope to thought in all its grandeur and in all its terror: and that Roman character which enjoined the son to reverence the father, the citizen to reverence the ruler, and all to reverence the gods; which required nothing and honoured nothing but the useful act, and compelled every citizen to fill up every moment of his short life with ceaseless work; which enjoined even the boy modestly to veil his body; which regarded as bad citizens all who wished to be other than their compatriots were; which made the State all in all, and its extension the only aspiration not liable to censure; who can trace these sharp contrasts to an original unity which embraced them both, prepared the way for their development, and at last gave them being."¹

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 24.

Morality, with the Athenian at least, had reference to the individual, rather than to the State as with the Romans, and hence it possessed a vitality which in the latter case was wholly wanting. But even with the Greek the conditions under which the moral sense was developed were such that the term *conscience*, as now understood, was hardly applicable to it. That admiration for the beautiful with reference alike to men, women, and animals, which, as Mr Gladstone points out,¹ is exhibited in the Homeric poems, was so carefully cultivated by the later Greeks as to give rise to what may be described as an æsthetic sense, the intuitions of which appear almost to have taken the place in the popular mind of a moral conscience,² as they certainly affected the moral speculations even of the Greek philosophers. Under its influence was developed the strange social phase by which the Greeks were probably distinguished from all other peoples of antiquity. No one can study the "Dialogues of Plato"³ without being struck with the fact that "boy-love" was a recognised phenomenon of Greek social life, and with the important position it occupied as a moral agent. Mr Grote, after referring to the absence of passion from the matrimonial connections of the Greeks, says: "The beauty of women yielded satisfaction to the senses, but little beyond. It was the masculine beauty of youth that fired the Hellenic imagination with glowing and impassioned sentiment. The finest youths, and those too of the best families and education, were seen habitually uncovered in the Palæstra and at the public festival matches; engaged in active contention and graceful exercise, under the direc-

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 398.

² This agrees with Mr Mahaffy's remark, that the Greeks were "always carried away by a love of beauty, more than by a respect for truth." *op. cit.*, p. 147.

³ See especially *Lysis*, *The Symposium*, and *Phædrus*.

tion of professional trainers. The sight of the living form, in such perpetual movement and variety, awakened a powerful, emotional sympathy, blended with æsthetic sentiment, which in the more susceptible natures was exalted into intense and passionate devotion. The terms in which this feeling is described, both by Plato and Xenophon, are among the strongest which the language affords, and are predicated even of Socrates himself. Far from being ashamed of the feeling, they consider it admirable and beneficial, though very liable to abuse, which they systematically denounce and forbid. In their view it was an idealising passion, which tended to raise a man above the vulgar and selfish pursuits of life, and even above the fear of death. The devoted attachments which it inspired were dreaded by the despots, who forbade the assemblage of youths for exercise in the Palæstræ."¹

This curious moral phase, which is almost unintelligible to us,² was connected with what a recent French writer terms a veritable "culte du corps," and strange as the idea may seem, it had undoubtedly a certain influence over the spread, if not the teaching of Christianity. Mr Mahaffy very truly remarks that "the deeper and fuller awakening to love in *one* sense among Greek hearts was closely connected with the rise of the Asiatic custom of attachments among men. The degradation, as we should say, in the object of their love (from natural to unnatural) was the cause of the ennoblement of that feeling itself."³ The mere passion was elevated into a sentiment which was not to be condemned, because it usually had a physical basis, and sometimes became de-

¹ "Plato and other Companions of Socrates," vol. ii. p. 207 *seq.*

² In its baser form it is by no means uncommon in the Mohammedan East at the present day.

³ *op. cit.*, p. 119.

graded into an unnatural appetite. This result betokened a defect in the character of the individual, but not in the sentiment itself, which, being independent of sexual influences, was more akin to friendship than to love. We can thus understand how "a great part of the heroism of Greece, a great part of their few unselfish friendships, a great part of their highest education," was based upon the romantic attachments under consideration. The sacred band of Thebes, says Mr Mahaffy, "was cemented by these relations, and the greatest and purest of all the Greeks in history—Epaminondas—was known to have been attached in this way to the boy Asopichus, without fear and without reproach."¹ The explanation of such sentimental attachments must be sought in the exigencies of Greek society and the conditions of Greek culture. The æsthetic education which the people underwent affected something more than their canons of taste. A refined phase of emotion was induced which was compelled to find a new channel for its expression. Few Greek women could have any idea of pure sympathy. Their ideas were too sexual; hence the man whose mind possessed the possibility of a pure attachment must turn elsewhere for an object worthy of it. Christian history furnishes us with illustrations of such a condition of things. The love of Jesus for Lazarus and for the "beloved disciple" differs little from the attachment between Epaminondas and Asopichus. The feeling of "brotherhood," that of which the feeble beginnings among uncultured peoples have been traced in a preceding chapter, was at the foundation of both, and it constituted the real point of contact between Greek thought and Christianity. There may have been, and no doubt was, as we shall see hereafter, a close resemblance between the doctrines of Christianity and

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 307 *seq.*

the ideas enforced in the mysteries, but these were not native to Greece, nor were they so influential there as in the East, from which they were probably derived by the founders of Christianity. It was the idea of the brotherhood of human kind which was gradually formed in the Greek mind that gave vitality to its philosophy. The Athenian writers were accustomed to proclaim the humanity of their laws, which do not permit even a slave to be outraged.¹ Isocrates, in the spirit of the Hebrew prophets, taught that the best sacrifice to the gods, and the truest worship, is to present to them a just and upright heart, while his first recommendation to those whom he addressed was to love mankind.² The idea of humanity is not so pronounced in the teaching of Plato, whose object was to introduce the exoteric religious doctrines of the East in an æsthetic garb which would fit them for reception by the Greek mind. It was reserved for Aristotle to proclaim the supremacy of that idea in declaring that social order is founded on love rather than on justice, and that eternal justice is love. M. Havet, referring to these sayings of Aristotle, affirms that "the sentiment of human brotherhood and the law of the love of mankind have issued from this grand philosophy, and not from a sacred text."³ That sentiment was further developed by the Stoics, who would admit to the privileges of citizenship in their ideal republic all who practised virtue, were they Greeks, barbarians, or slaves.⁴ The Epicureans, even more than their rivals, prepared the way for Christianity. They taught that friendship was one of the greatest blessings of life, and they formed among themselves a kind of fraternity, of which Epicurus was the chief, as the head of a large family. Slaves even

¹ Havet, "Le Christianisme et ses origines," vol. i. p. 186.

² Do., i. p. 199.

³ Do., i. p. 281.

Do., i. p. 321.

were admitted to this society, Epicurus saying that "the slave is a friend of a lower condition."¹ The idea of humanity which was thus formed in the Greek mind was developed naturally out of the manliness which we have seen to have been also at the foundation of the morality of all the latest born races of mankind. While to the Roman, "citizenship" was that which governed the whole conduct of life; to the Greek the idea of the State was subordinate to that of the individual. The whole tendency of Greek culture was to develop the idea of perfect "manhood," and when that idea was fully developed, the recognition of the brotherhood of mankind could not be long delayed. Viewed in this light, Greek morality might be thought to be a phase of altruism. It was not so, however, in reality. The practice of the active virtues was not unknown,² but Greek conduct had not yet ceased to be egoistic, in the sense that its aim was the improvement of the individual, and not the benefit of the race. This opinion is consistent with the statement of Aristotle, that "the beautiful is the end of virtue,"³ which sums up the famous doctrine of the "mean"—a doctrine which, says Sir Alexander Grant, expressed the law of beauty, in so far as virtue is harmony, grace, and beauty in action. The modern commentator adds:—"That beauty constituted virtue, was an eminently Greek idea. If we run through Aristotle's list of the virtues, we find them all embodying this idea. The law of the *Μεσότης*, as exhibited in bravery, temperance, liberty, and magnanimity, constitutes a noble,

¹ Havet, "Le Christianisme et ses origines," vol. i. p. 353. M. Havet's valuable work sufficiently indicates the influence of Greek philosophy over Christian teaching. It permanently affected the development of morality so slightly, except indirectly through Christianity, that it is needless to consider more at large the morals of Greek philosophy.

² See *supra*, vol. i. p. 461.

³ "Ethics," Bk. iii., ch. vii.

free, and brilliant type of manhood. Extend it also, as Aristotle does, to certain qualifications of temper, speech, and manners, and you have before you the portrait of a graceful Greek gentleman."¹

THE EGYPTIANS.

That the Egyptians were more advanced than either the Romans or the early Greeks in their moral ideas must be conceded. With the Romans, the good of the organic whole embodied as the State, rather than that of the individual, constituted the test of right action; while with the Greeks, the æsthetic sense fixed the standard of propriety, he who came nearest to attaining its requirements being regarded as the favourite of Gods and men. The Egyptians, although endowed with the feeling of manliness, which is so essential to the development of a high-toned morality, possessed neither the "taste" of the one, nor the stern sense of patriotism which characterised the other of those European peoples. Living under natural conditions which enabled the daily wants of life to be supplied with but little labour, and ruled with paternal authority by men (probably of a foreign race) who knew how to use the energies of the people for the material prosperity of the country, they would seem to have developed a phase of morality of a higher and more intellectual character than that exhibited by either the Greeks or the Romans. This was shown by the motives which actuated their conduct in relation to particular crimes, rather than by their mode of dealing with the offenders. Thus homicide, whether the victim was a freeman or a slave, was punished with death, "from a conviction that men ought to be restrained from the commission of sin; not on account of any distinction

¹ "Ethics of Aristotle" (1857), vol. i. p. 210.

of station in life, but from the light in which they viewed the crime."¹ The same punishment was inflicted on even the involuntary witness of an attempt to murder, unless he could show that he endeavoured to prevent it, or that he was unable to do so. Parricide was thought to be one of the most odious of crimes, and the culprit was lacerated with sharpened reeds, and, after being thrown on thorns, was burnt to death.² The killing of a child, although highly reprobated, was not treated so severely, perhaps owing to its having formerly been within the father's right. The punishment inflicted was intended to result in remorse and repentance, and for this end the corpse of the deceased was directed to be fastened to the neck of the parent, who was obliged thus to pass three days and nights under surveillance.³ The penalty incurred for theft, as for breach of trust and petty fraud, was bastinadoing; but robbery of a serious nature and burglary were sometimes punished with death.⁴ Many of the Egyptians were very expert thieves, and Sir Gardner Wilkinson mentions a curious custom which was introduced for the purpose of lessening as much as possible the losses which their operations occasioned. He says, "those who followed the profession of thief gave in their names to the chief of the robbers, and agreed that he should be informed of everything that they might thenceforward steal, the moment it was in their possession. In consequence of this, the owner of the lost goods always applied by letter to the chief for their recovery," and the things stolen were restored on payment of one fourth of their value.⁵ Wilkinson adds that there is even at the present day a Sheikh of the robbers at Cairo and Constantinople;⁶ and there appears to be in

¹ Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," vol. ii. p. 35.

² Do., p. 38.

³ Do., p. 38.

⁴ Do., p. 46.

⁵ Do., p. 47.

⁶ See also Lane's "Modern Egyptians," vol. i. p. 151.

China a system which has practically much the same effect as that employed in ancient Egypt.¹

Our knowledge of the state of sexual morality among the Egyptians is somewhat limited. The adulteress was punished by the loss of her nose—² her paramour receiving a thousand blows of the bastinado.³ Judging by the conduct of eastern women generally, and the character they now bear in Egypt, it is probable that the sense of chastity was not very highly developed. It is true that among the Egyptians woman was treated with more consideration than in some other countries,⁴ and she was even required to be present with her husband or relations at some of the religious festivals.⁵ The mother, however, was looked upon as "little more than a nurse" in regard to her children, who were considered as being indebted to the father for their existence. Hence all a man's offspring, whether by his wife or any other woman, equally enjoyed the rights of inheritance.⁶ From this it appears that, so far as the man was concerned, there was little restraint on sexual indulgence, and from the fact that such rights were accorded to illegitimate children,⁷ we may judge that unmarried women had a certain licence. The position of woman in general among the Egyptians was, if we may believe Diodorus, far superior to that allowed her by either the Greeks or the Romans. That writer declares that the wife had even control over the husband. This statement can hardly, however, be received as correct; and Sir Gardner Wilkinson states that "although we have sufficient to convince us of the superior treatment of women among the Egyptians, as well

¹ See Doolittle's "Chinese," p. 256.

² This is the punishment among several African peoples at the present day.

³ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 39.

⁴ Do., p. 58.

⁵ Do., p. 61.

⁶ Do., p. 64.

⁷ This was the case also among the early Greeks.

as from ancient authors as from the sculptures that remain, it may fairly be doubted if those indulgences were carried to the extent mentioned by the historian, or that command extended beyond the management of the house and the regulation of domestic affairs.”¹

It may be questioned whether, morally, the modern Egyptians compare favourably with the ancient inhabitants of the country. The character of the former has been so greatly affected by the introduction of foreign race elements and the influence of new ideas, derived chiefly from the Koran, that we must expect to find many points of divergence. In fact, the modern Egyptian appears to resemble more closely, both physically and morally, the Arab, to whom he is nearly related. Mr Lane observes that the former are equally remarkable for generosity and cupidity. Commercial dishonesty is one of their most notorious faults, and they do not scruple to aid their cheating by lying, and making use of an oath to support the falsehood. If a decided oath is deliberately violated, it is expiated, in accordance with the directions given by the Koran with reference to an inconsiderate oath, “by feeding or clothing ten poor men, liberating a captive Mooslim, or fasting three days”—the last mode being usually preferred.² Both perjury and bribery in the courts of justice would seem to have been recently, if they are not now, extremely prevalent.³ One of the most general vices of the Egyptian character is envy. This, with a want of gratitude, which they also exhibit,⁴ Mr Lane thinks is common to the whole Arab race; but some of his friends confessed that they thought envy to be “almost wholly concentrated in the minds of their nation.”⁵ The Egyptians are extremely obstinate, and difficult to govern, although very obsequious in their

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 58.

² *Do.*, pp. 136, 156.

⁴ *Do.*, p. 378.

³ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 397 *seq.*

⁵ *Do.*, p. 398.

words and manner. They appear to be noted for their licentiousness, and, according to Mr Lane, they still justify, in that respect, the title, "abode of the wicked," which the Koran applied to ancient Egypt. The women are said to be kept with the greatest difficulty from criminal intrigues,¹ although the punishment for adultery is death, when it can be established by four witnesses, or if it be detected by an officer of justice.² Probably polygamy has something to do with that conduct, which, in the men, is aided also by the facility with which a wife may be divorced. Not only may a man have four wives and as many concubines as he likes, but if he has only one wife, he may divorce her, and take another whenever he chooses. He has only to say to her "thou art divorced," and she must return to her friends. This may be done twice to the same woman, and her husband afterwards take her back without any ceremony; but after a third time, he cannot receive her again, until she has been married and divorced by another man.³

Notwithstanding their proneness to licentiousness, the modern Egyptians are eminently religious, although with a tendency to become hypocritical. Pursuant to the requirements of their religion—according to which the most important duties are prayer, alms-giving, fasting, and pilgrimage—⁴ the Egyptians are, moreover, extremely benevolent and charitable to the poor. Mr Lane says, however, that, by their own profession, "they are as much excited to the giving of alms by the expectation of enjoying corresponding rewards in heaven, as by pity for the distresses of their fellow creatures, or a disinterested wish to do the will of God."⁵ This opinion is confirmed by the fact that the Egyptians usually give their alms during

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 386 *seq.*, 219.

² *Do.*, vol. i. pp. 117, 225.

³ *Do.*, p. 370.

⁴ *Do.*, vol. i. pp. 120, 142.

⁵ *Do.*, vol. i. p. 76.

the month of Mohhar'ram, at the festival then held.¹ Hospitality is a virtue which appears to be universally practised. Persons of the middle and lower classes sometimes sup before the door of their houses, and "invite every passenger of respectable appearance to eat with them."² The Egyptians would seem to be equally distinguished for their temperance and moderation as to diet. They have a peculiar respect for bread as the "staff of life," and will not, if possible, allow any of it to be wasted.³ The reverence shown by the Egyptians for their parents, and for the aged, is a very praiseworthy feature in their character, as is also the love of country, which leads them greatly to dread leaving their native land. It may be doubted, however, whether this is always owing to a feeling of pure patriotism, and it may be greatly due to a dislike of change, resulting from the indolence which pervades all classes.

We are fortunately able to ascertain with precision the exact ideas as to moral propriety enforced among the ancient Egyptians, since they were fully set out in the confession of sins, supposed to be made by the soul after death, which has been preserved in the Book of the Dead. Porphyry relates that when, during the solemn funereal ceremony, the vessel containing the bowels of the deceased was held up and exhibited to the "all searching" Helios Ra, one of the assistants offered, in the name of the dead man the following prayer:—

"O King Helios, and all ye life-giving gods!
 Take me to yourselves; suffer me to be companion of the eternal
 gods;
 For I have honoured the gods my whole life through, to whom my
 parents devoted me.
 To the persons of my parents have I always shown respect.
 Of other men none have I put to death;
 None have I defrauded of what was intrusted to me;

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 163.

² *Do.*, vol. i. p. 376.

³ *Do.*, p. 377.

Nor have I been guilty of any other impious act.
 But if I have sinned in life by eating or drinking what was not permitted,
 I have not so sinned for myself, but owing to these."

According to Bunsen, the last line is probably the translation of an Egyptian apophthegm of four monosyllabic words meaning "Righteousness to his spirit! His evil deeds to the stomach!"¹

The confession of sins is contained in the 125th chapter of the Book of the Dead,² and, omitting ritual allusions and names, it is as follows:—

"Oh ye Lords of Truth! Oh thou Great God, Lord of Truth! I have come to thee, my Lord. I have brought myself to see thy blessings. I have known thee. I have known thy name. I have known the names of the forty-two of the gods who are with thee in the Hall of Two Truths, living by catching the wicked, fed off their blood, the day of reckoning words, before the Good Being, the Justified, Placer of Spirits, Lord of Truth, is thy name. Oh ye Lords of Truth! let me know ye. I have brought ye truth. Rub ye away my faults. I have not done privily evil against mankind. I have not afflicted persons or men. I have not told falsehoods in the tribunal of Truth. I have had no acquaintance with evil. I have not done any wicked thing. I have not made the labouring man do more than his task daily. I have not let my name approach to the boat. My name approaches to the mast when . . . I have not been idle. I have not failed. I have not ceased. I have not been weak. I have not done what is hateful to the gods. I have not calumniated the slave to his master. I have not sacrificed. I have not made to weep. I have not murdered. I have not given orders to smite a person privily. I have not done fraud to men. I have not changed the measures of the country. I have not injured the images of the gods. I have not taken scraps of the bandages of the dead. I have not committed adultery. I have not spat against the priest of the God of my country. I have not thrown down. I have not falsified measures. I have not thrown out the weight of the balance (?) I have not cheated in the weight of the balance. I have not withheld milk from mouths of sucklings. I have not hunted wild animals in their pasturages. I have not netted sacred birds. I have not caught the fish which typify them. I have not stopped running water. I have not separated the water from its current. I have not put out a light at his (proper) hour. I have not robbed the gods of their offered haunches. I have not turned

¹ "Egypt," vol. iv. p. 643.

² See do., pp. 644-5, and vol. v. pp. 252-6.

away the cattle of the gods. I have not stopped a god from his manifestation. I am pure! I am pure! I am pure! I am pure! I am pure!

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|--|--|
| 1. I have not been idle. | 27. I have not been inattentive to the words of truth. |
| 2. I have not waylaid. | 28. I have not blasphemed. |
| 3. I have not boasted. | 29. I have not put forth my arm. |
| 4. I have not stolen. | 30. I have not made delays or dawdled. |
| 5. I have not smitten men privily. | 31. I have not hastened my heart. |
| 6. I have not counterfeited rings. | 32. I have not clipped the skins of the sacred beasts. |
| 7. I have not played the hypocrite. | 33. I have not multiplied words in speaking. |
| 8. I have not stolen the things of the gods. | 34. I have not lied or done any wicked sin. |
| 9. I have not told falsehoods. | 35. I have not reviled the face of the king or of my father. |
| 10. I have not spared food. | 36. I have not defiled the river. |
| 11. I have not caused to weep. | 37. I have not made length of (loud) words. |
| 12. I have not rejected. | 38. I have not blasphemed a god. |
| 13. I have not been idle. | 39. I have not injured the gods, or calumniated the slave to his master. |
| 14. I have not eaten the heart. | 40. I have not made his things, I have not made his account, I have not ordered. |
| 15. I have not plundered. | 41. I have not augmented his ... I have not taken the clothes of the dead. |
| 16. I have not killed sacred beasts. | 42. I have not despised a god in my heart, or to his face, or in things. |
| 17. I have not made conspiracies. | |
| 18. I have not robbed the streams. | |
| 19. I have not been deaf. | |
| 20. I have not let my mouth wander. | |
| 21. I have not robbed. | |
| 22. I have not corrupted women or men. | |
| 23. I have not polluted myself. | |
| 24. I have not caused fear. | |
| 25. I have not plundered. | |
| 26. I have not turned my mouth. | |

Champollion well describes this as the "negative confession of sins," a character which was common to the moral codes of nearly all ancient peoples. Moreover it refers almost wholly to passive virtues, as might be supposed from its negative character, although it is undoubtedly very comprehensive in its scope. Besides condemning, by implication, any kind of injury to gods or men, and the commission of evil in general, it mentions expressly perjury, murder, (open and secret), defrauding, particularly by false measures, adultery, theft, lying,

calumny and oppression, a list of offences more complete than that contained in the second table of the Hebrew Decalogue.

The laws of ancient Egypt were, however, more remarkable for the object which their administration had in view than for the wideness of their scope. They are declared to have had for their aim the preservation of life and the redemption of the offender.¹ Yet perjury was, as among the early Romans, punished with death, and deservedly so according to the opinion entertained by the Egyptians as to its heinous nature. To speak falsely was in itself esteemed shameful, but to support a falsehood by an oath was a double crime, a violation of faith and a contempt of the gods whose witness was invoked.² The wickedness ascribed to breach of faith was particularly characteristic of the Egyptians. They valued highly the three cardinal virtues—prudence, fortitude, and temperance, but the fourth, *justice*, was in their opinion far above the rest. The former were beneficial to the individual more immediately concerned rather than to others, whereas truth or justice influenced men's conduct towards their neighbours, and operated rather for the benefit of society at large.³ The great cardinal virtue was personified as *Thmei*, from whom was derived the Greek *Themis*, the mother of *Diké*, or justice, and whose name was borne by those who were admitted to the regions of the blessed after the final judgment.⁴ The Egyptians thus placed justice and truth under the sanction of the gods, as they did also the other cardinal virtues and various moral attributes, such as goodness, mercy, love, hope, and charity.⁵ In doing this their teachers adopted the course which was the most likely

¹ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 40.

² Do., vol. v. p. 28; ii. p. 31.

³ Do., vol. ii. p. 173.

⁴ Do., p. 32.

⁵ Do., vol. v. p. 30.

to ensure that such principles should guide their conduct in life. This was aided, moreover, by the ordeal which every person had to go through after death before he was admitted to the rites of burial. Forty-two assessors, representing the crimes freedom from which betokened the virtuous man, were appointed to try the deceased, if any person brought any accusation against him. If it was found that he had led an evil life, his body was deprived of burial, and his soul was condemned to the much-dreaded degradation of inhabiting the body of an unclean animal.¹ But non-burial, although it was a great disgrace in the eyes of the Egyptians, was not that which they the most dreaded. The soul had to appear before the bar of the Judge of the Dead. This was considered a fearful ordeal. "The all-scrutinising eye of the Deity was known to penetrate into the innermost recesses of the heart; and they believed that whatever conscience told them they had done amiss was recorded against them in the book of *Thoth*, out of which they would be judged according to their works. The sculptured walls of every sepulchre reminded them of this solemn ceremony; the rewards held out to the virtuous were reputed to exceed all that man could imagine or desire; and the punishments of the wicked were rendered doubly odious by the notion of a transmigration of the soul into the most hateful and disgusting animals."²

The great importance attached by the Egyptians to justice, shows that after all theirs was not merely a negative morality. The command to do right is a positive one, and there is little doubt that it had a practical effect over social life, its observance tending to maintain that harmony and good-will which were most essential for the welfare of society, and which existed among the

¹ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. v. p. 426 *seq.*

² *Do.*, p. 439.

Egyptians probably to a greater degree than among any other of the peoples of antiquity. There is no evidence, however, that the more extended view of man's relation to his fellows embodied in the idea of benevolence was ever actually realised by them. The moral requirement of a life of truth and justice, such as that which was enforced by the Egyptian priests, by no means implied the duty of actively ministering to the necessity of others. The Egyptians, as shown by their deifying the attributes of mercy, love, and charity,¹ certainly advanced further in that direction than either the Greeks or the Romans, but with all these peoples alike the passive virtues must be said to have formed the only essential part of morality. Probably the key to the origin and nature of the special phase of morality which distinguished the Egyptians, is to be found in the words which occur in the *Confession of Sins*: "I am pure, I am pure, I am pure." The true significance of this phrase will be seen when we come to treat of the ancient Mysteries, to which they no doubt had reference. The extraordinary influence which the Mysteries had over the life and manners of the Egyptian people is well known. The deity who was thought to preside at them was also the Judge of the Dead,² and the conduct which entitled the initiated to the privileges of the "second birth," enabled the dead to pass safely through the ordeal of the final judgment. The penalty attending failure to do this was the birth of the soul in the body of an unclean animal, a fate which was keenly dreaded. It was to escape from the "circle of existence" that the Egyptians sought to satisfy in their lives the requirements of the Book of the Dead. Hence the

¹ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 173.

² For an account of the "trial of the dead," see Sir Gardner Wilkinson's "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians," vol. ii. p. 426 *seq.* The mysteries of Eleusis are supposed to have been derived from those of Osiris, the Egyptian Judge of the Dead.

test of moral propriety was with them very different from that which governed the other phases of morals treated of in the preceding pages. With the Hebrews the test of right conduct was agreeableness to the will of Jehovah, with the Romans the welfare of the state, and with the Greeks the perfection of the individual. The Egyptians also tested moral conduct by reference to the individual, but "salvation," and not perfection, was the end which their religious teaching had in view. He only who was pure could hope to enter into the peace of Osiris, and the attainment of spiritual purity was the aim of that teaching, which thus reveals its Eastern origin and its connection with the profound doctrine of "divine emanation." This we have now to treat of, and it is not necessary, therefore, to examine more minutely into the moral ideas embalmed in the religious system of the ancient Egyptians.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTRINE OF EMANATIONS.

HITHERTO we have seen that the idea of morality in relation to human action has been founded on the recognition of duty towards some object or objects external to oneself. The performance of such actions as theft, adultery, and murder, is at first refrained from owing to the recognition of the duty not to interfere with the rights which we have learnt that others possess as well as ourselves. So, also, the virtuous action which springs from the principle of benevolence, although founded on sympathy, comes to be recognised as due to the misery and afflictions which threaten to prevent the enjoyment of the property (using this term in its widest sense), with which those rights are associated. It is at this point that a new motive of action is introduced as the result of the gradual development of human culture. Hitherto the flow of benevolence may be said to have been confined within the national barriers, outside of which, except in individual cases, no moral obligation is recognised, and no further moral growth can take place until those barriers are broken down and benevolence thus rendered universal in its objectivity. There was but one mode of effecting this result: the establishment of the principle that the foundation of the moral nature of all actions is duty towards self. The recognition of this principle, which the Greeks well-nigh evolved for themselves,¹ must necessarily be most fruitful in its con-

¹ See *supra*, p. 124, as to the "humanness" of the Greeks.

sequences, and in tracing the development of its several phases, we shall have to consider the moral ideas associated with the religious faiths which, during later ages, play so important a part in the progress of human culture. Up to a certain point morals form quite a subsidiary part of religion. From time to time as man's nature became developed, and new views as to the moral character of particular actions were formed by the most thoughtful minds, the sanction of the Gods was evoked in order to enforce their recognition on the masses. But non-acceptance of those views was not deemed evidence of moral depravity. At most it was thought only that actions not in accordance with the new ideas were displeasing to the unseen inhabitants of the spirit-world, and, *as being thus displeasing*, and not on account of any evil inherent in them, that they would be punished whether in the present or in the future life. At first, religion has no direct concern with the moral conduct; it has to do almost entirely with the duty of man to the Gods, who, among the peoples we have as yet been concerned with, were usually too immoral themselves to be thought to pay much attention to immorality in their worshippers. With them religion has in fact to do with morality, only so far as the former furnishes sanctions for ideas which are generated in the course of human progress, and which are equally enforced whether false or true. Afterwards, however, the conditions become gradually altered. Instead of religion consisting in observance of the requirements of certain superhuman beings, its chief use is to supply the motives for that life of moral purity which is supposed by the nobler faiths to be necessary to ensure a condition of happiness for the soul after death. The sanctions supplied by the old religions may yet remain in force, but the performance of actions will no longer be accepted as obligatory merely

because they are supposed to be agreeable to the Gods. The neglect of moral duties may be attended with much dreaded consequences, but only because the soul is rendered by that conduct unfit for any other condition than one of misery or degradation. Even where the pains of hell are threatened, they are not so much the penalty for disobedience to divine command as a punishment for vicious conduct. And so also the pleasures of paradise are promised to those who lead a life of virtue and holiness, not as the reward of obedience but as a fit recompense for the preservation of spiritual purity. The assistance of the Gods may be sought in the conflict with the powers of darkness, and they may be addressed in hymns of thanksgiving, and even their wrath for shortcomings may be deprecated. But all these things have relation to the moral well-being of man, showing that, instead of religion being the satisfaction of the rights of the inhabitants of the spirit-world, its chief importance has come to consist in its being an aid to the performance of moral duties which man owes to himself. Not that religion ceases to exist when its objectivity is thus changed. So far from this, it receives a deeper significance, and it will be found that, at this stage, religion and morality are really identical, or, at least, that they are merely opposite sides of the same truth.

Before tracing this further moral development, it is necessary to consider certain curious notions, anciently very prevalent, which are closely connected with the the subject under discussion, and without reference to which it is, indeed, impossible to understand the later phases of moral culture. At a preceding page¹ the ancient Mysteries were referred to as developments of the system of "brotherhood," but that they were something more than fraternal associations, is evident from

¹ Vol. i., p. 460.

the title—"twice-born," or "born-again," which was conferred on those who were admitted to membership. Their further object may easily be ascertained; but, before treating of them in this relation, it is necessary to consider certain ideas to which that title originally had reference. There has already been occasion to refer, in connection with the "rights of the dead," to the belief in the continued existence of the soul after death.¹ Such belief was co-extensive with the fear of invisible beings, which were indeed originally none other than the souls of dead human beings. Although the savage thus shows his possession of some notion of a future state, he thinks little about the origin of the principle of life within him. He may, and usually does, form an idea, however imperfect, as to the nature of the soul, but whence it is first derived he seldom thinks of inquiring. And yet peoples very low in culture often hold very definite opinions as to the origin of the spirits of individuals. Mr Tylor has collected many examples of the belief that infants are the re-incarnated souls of ancestors, or, at least, of other deceased persons.² Various other instances might be added. Thus, the Dahomans think that a child is sent by some ancestor.³ Lahontan relates that he saw a number of Essanape women running very fast, and on inquiry, he was told that they were going to receive the soul of an "old fellow" who was dying. He adds that the Essanapes believe in the transmigration of souls into other bodies, the souls of each kind of animal being limited, however, to the bodies of that kind.⁴ A curious phase of the belief in the re-incarnation of the souls of

¹ *Supra*, vol. i., p. 311.

² "Primitive Culture," vol. ii., p. 3.

³ Burton's "A Mission to Gelele," vol. i., p. 159. The Greenlanders believe that souls of children are reborn and the *Angekoks* profess to be able to exchange a sickly soul for the sound one of an animal or infant. See Crantz, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 200.

⁴ "Travels in Canada." *Pinkerton's "Voyages and Travels,"* vol. xiii., p. 314.

the dead, is the idea, prevalent among peoples of the primitive dark stock, that white men are black fellows who have been born into the world again. It is seen also in the notion, so important in relation to the doctrine of transmigration, that the human soul can pass into the body of an animal.¹ There is nothing surprising in this notion, when it is considered that the savage does not recognise any difference between the nature of an animal and that of a man, whatever peculiarity of mental action may be exhibited by them. The importance of the idea of the animal incarnation of human souls in relation to the origin of animal-worship, is evident. Thus, the superstition connected with the serpent (the most curious phase of that cult), would seem to have originated in the belief that the serpent is the embodiment of a deceased ancestor.²

Now, although the re-incarnation of the human soul is essential to the doctrine of transmigration, yet the introduction of another element was necessary before that doctrine could be definitely formed. What this element was may be judged of by reference to certain notions entertained by the Chinese. Among this people, according to Mr Doolittle, the transmigration of souls is firmly believed in by all classes,³ their opinion being that, at the end of five generations, the spirits of the dead may be born again into the world, or, according to their deserts, become birds, beasts, or reptiles.⁴ This opinion has a practical influence over the Chinese mind since, after the descendants of an individual have reached the fifth generation, the ancestral tablet which represents him is no longer worshipped. In the Chinese belief we see the influence of the idea

¹ See Tylor, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 6.

² On this subject reference may be made to a paper by the present writer in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* for 1873.

³ *op. cit.*, p. 595.

⁴ *Do.*, p. 143.

that man is subject to certain moral obligations, and its application in the formation of an estimate of his condition in another life. To the old notion that certain, if not all, animals are the re-embodiments of human souls, is added the belief that such incarnation is consequent on the performance, in the earlier human life, of actions which are morally wrong, or, at least, which are disapproved of by some superhuman being, who has power to condemn the soul to existence under an animal form.

It does not appear whether the Chinese consider this state to be final, or whether transmigration of the soul is to continue until a certain moral result is attained. A more fully developed form of the doctrine was held by the ancient Egyptians, who taught that the soul, for the sake of purification, "was condemned to a state of purgatory by passing through the bodies of various animals.¹ The most wicked were confined in those of the most odious description, as the pig and others, which for this reason they believed to be fit emblems of the Evil Being; and 'those,' as Plato makes Socrates say, 'who were guilty of injustice, tyranny, and rapine, entered into the tribes of wolves, hawks, and kites.'"² The Egyptians also believed that intermediary agents and demons visited the earth in the bodies of certain animals, apparently such as were sacred to the Gods, and therefore different from those into which the souls of the wicked passed during their transmigration.³ According to the Egyptians, the number and duration of the changes through which the soul has to pass, and the animal bodies it has to inhabit, depend on the degree of purification rendered necessary by moral imperfections.⁴ The disgrace attendant on being refused the performance of

¹ Bunsen sees in the doctrine of transmigration the only explanation of Egyptian animal worship. "Egypt," vol. iv., p. 639.

² Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. v., p. 112.

³ *Do.*, vol. v., p. 113

⁴ *Do.*, vol. iv., p. 316.

funeral rites appears to have been connected among the Egyptians with the doctrine of transmigration ; as this was supposed to be the lot of those whose crimes had led to their non-burial. Although, however, the duration of transmigration was dependent on the extent of crime, yet, says Sir Gardner Wilkinson, "when the devotion of friends, aided by liberal donations in the service of religion, and the influential prayers of the priest, had sufficiently softened the otherwise inexorable nature of the Gods, the period of this state of purgatory was doubtless shortened."¹ The doctrine of transmigration received its supplement in the teaching of the Egyptians that the soul, after its series of changes, returns to the same human body as that to which it had formerly been united. When this happened, the soul completed what was called "the cycle of necessity." The period named by Herodotus as that during which, according to Egyptian teaching, the soul was undergoing transmigration after departure from its human body, is three thousand years.² This doctrine, with others relating to metempsychosis, was adopted from the Egyptians by Pythagoras, and it is explained by Plato, who says :—"Ten thousand years must elapse before the soul can return to the place from whence she came, for she cannot grow her wings in less ; only the soul of a philosopher, guiltless and true, or the soul of a lover, who is not without philosophy, may acquire wings in the third recurring period of a thousand years ; and if they choose this life three times in succession, then they have their wings given them, and go away at the end of three thousand years. But the others receive judgment when they have completed their first life, and after the judgment they go, some of them to the houses of correction, which are under the

¹ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. v., p. 428.

² Do., vol. v., p. 440 *seq.* Euterpe II., c. 123.

earth, and are punished ; others to some place in heaven, whither they are lightly borne by justice, and there they live in a manner worthy of the life which they led here when in the form of men. And at the end of the first thousand years the good souls and also the evil souls both come to cast lots and choose their second life, and they may take any that they like. And then the soul of the man may pass into the life of a beast, or from the beast again into the man."¹ The "cycle of necessity" would seem to have extended over a thousand years, at the end of which period it again commenced. This, no doubt, was intended by Pindar when he said, "They who steadfastly, during three migrations, keep their soul free from contamination, accomplish their way on the path of Jupiter to Saturn, where the gentle breezes of the ocean blow around the island of the blessed."²

According to Plato's teaching, the soul was never in the first generation implanted in the form of a beast. It became a man occupying a position agreeing with its intellectual condition. Thus the soul which had seen the most of truth would become a philosopher, an artist, a musician, or a lover ; that which has seen truth in the second degree would enter into the form of a righteous king, warrior, or commander ; the third would be a statesman, an economist, or a merchant ; the fourth, one who loves gymnastic exercises, or a physician ; the fifth, a prophet, or one connected with the mysteries ; the sixth will be best adapted to a poetic life ; the seventh to a mechanical or agricultural life ; to the eighth the life of a sophist or demagogue ; to the ninth that of a tyrant.³ It is evident that this gradation shows only Plato's own estimate of the several positions or occupations specified. The Greek philosopher elsewhere de-

¹ "Phædrus," Jowett, vol. i., p. 583.

² "Olymp," Od. II.

³ Do., p. 582.

scribes the lower condition into which the soul afterwards sinks in a passage which throws a curious light on the ideas entertained by the ancients as to the relation between man and the animal kingdom. Thus he says : —“ Of the men who came into the world, those who are cowards, or have led unjust lives, may be fairly supposed to change into the nature of women in the second generation. . . . Thus were created women and the female sex in general. But the race of birds was created out of innocent, light-minded men, who, although their thoughts were directed towards heaven, imagined in their simplicity that the clearest demonstration of the things above was to be obtained by sight ; these were transformed into birds, and they grew feathers instead of hair. The race of wild pedestrian animals, again, came from those who had no philosophy in all their thoughts, and never considered at all about the nature of the heavens, because they had ceased to use the courses of the head, and followed the guidance of those parts of the soul which surround the breast. . . . And the most foolish of them, who trailed their bodies entirely upon the ground, and have no longer any need of feet, he made without feet to crawl upon the earth. The fourth class were the inhabitants of the water : these were made out of the most entirely ignorant and senseless beings, whom the transformers did not think any longer worthy of pure respiration, because they possessed a soul which was made impure by all sorts of transgression ; instead of allowing them to respire the subtle and pure element of air, they thrust them into the water, and gave them a deep and muddy medium of respiration ; and hence arose the race of fishes and oysters, and other aquatic animals, which have received the most remote habitations as a punishment of their extreme ignorance.”¹

¹ “*Timæus*,” Jowett, vol. ii., p. 585.

The story of Pythagoras and his transmigrations is well known. According to Heraclides Ponticus, as preserved by Diogenes Laertius (*De clarorum philosophorum vitis, &c.*), he was first Aethalides, a reputed son of Mercury, who on his petition granted him the power of remembering after his death all that happened to him during life. Some time after he appeared as Euphorbus, and was wounded by Menelaus in the Trojan war. Then he appeared as Hermotimus, and at the death of Hermotimus as Pyrrhus, a fisherman of Delos, and finally as Pythagoras. The apology of Appolonius, on his trial before Domitian, says of the Samian sage, whom it supposes to have received his doctrines from the Brahmans of India through the gymnosophists of Egypt, "He came into the world in the age when Troja was besieged on account of Helen; he was the most beautiful of the sons of Panthus, and the most richly dressed; he died so young that Homer lamented his untimely fate. After migrating in accordance with the law of Adrastea, which requires the migration of the soul through different bodies, he reassumed the human form, and was born of Mnesarchus the Samian, changed from a barbarian into a sage, and from a Trojan into an Ionian, and rendered so immortal, that he never forgot he was Euphorbus."¹ That the immortality of the soul was connected in the Greek mind with the doctrine of metempsychosis is evident from this statement. So, also, Ovid, when speaking of Euphorbus and Pythagoras, makes the latter declare that "souls are not subject to death, and after leaving their former habitation, they for ever inhabit new dwellings, and live on."²

Considering the origin usually assigned to the Hindu Aryas, it may seem strange that, as Prof. Max Müller

¹ "Philostrati de Tyanensi Appolonio" Lib. viii., 7.

² "Metamorph." Lib. XV., Fab. iii.

asserts,¹ there is no trace in the Vedas of the doctrine of transmigration. It by no means follows, however, that the authors of the Vedas had no belief in that doctrine. Various Aryan tribes rejected the Vedic religion,² from which we may suppose that it was not Hindu so much as Brahmanic; and the silence of the Vedas on the subject of transmigration proves nothing more than that the composers of the sacred hymns believed themselves not to be subject to its operation. Mr Spence Hardy makes the ingenious observation, that "there appears to be an intimate connection between the institution of caste, and the doctrine of transmigration of souls." In confirmation of this notion he adds—"Almost in every place where the former has existed, we can trace the presence of the latter. Indeed, the custom of caste is so contrary to right reason, that its establishment seems to be impossible without calling in the aid of some supernatural power to assist in its confirmation."³ That there is a connection between that custom and the doctrine of transmigration is supported by a fact noted by Sir Gardner Wilkinson in connection with this doctrine as held by the Egyptians. In later ages the Egyptian priests taught that the souls of good men, instead of passing through a series of transformations, are, after judgment, at once admitted to the presence of Osiris, whose mysterious name they then assumed. At an earlier period, however, this name was only given to kings and priests,⁴ the assumption being that the members of the sacred caste to which they belonged, were originally alone thought to be perfectly pure, and therefore not subject to transmigration. Taking the name

¹ "Chips," vol. i., p. 45; see also J. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire in "Journal des Savants," 1854, pp. 113, 212.

² Muir's "Sanskrit Texts," part ii., pp. 368, 377, 383, &c.

³ "Manual of Buddhism," p. 77.

⁴ Rawlinson's "Herodotus," vol. ii., p. 198—*Note*.

of Osiris was equivalent to the completion of metempsychosis. May it not be, however, that those whose souls were supposed not to be liable to this continued migration, were, for that very reason, looked upon as superior to other men—in fact, that they formed a distinct caste, with exclusive material privileges equivalent to the spiritual ones which they had secured? If this was so, the institution of caste was probably founded on the doctrine of metempsychosis, its several grades being merely those in which the people generally were classed together, according to the idea entertained by the sacred caste themselves of their relative spiritual condition.¹ According to this view, the silence of the Vedas on the subject of transmigration of souls is accounted for by the fact that those by whom and for whose use they were composed, constituted a sacred caste, consisting of men, who, from their spiritual condition, were supposed not to be subject to its operation. This notion is confirmed by the position which the Brahmans claim for themselves. Thus, the Rev. M. A. Sherring says that “the Brahman has the idea constantly before his inner self, that he is himself a god, and deserves divine honours, which . . . is acknowledged by all Hindus, some of whom, as he pursues his way, will stop him, and then offer to him the adoration due only to the Almighty, which he receives complacently as his right.”² Professor Max

¹ Dean Milman, after referring to the doctrine of the antagonism of spirit and matter as the elementary principle of the higher Brahminism, and also of the moral Buddhism of India and the remote East, remarks that “the theory of the division of castes supposes that a larger portion of the pure mind of the Deity is infused into the sacerdotal and superior orders; they are nearer to the Deity, and with more immediate hope of being absorbed into the divine essence; while the lower classes are more inextricably immersed in the grosser matter of the world, their feeble portion of the essential spirit of the divinity contracted and lost in the predominant mass of corruption and malignity.”—“History of Christianity,” vol. ii., p. 85.

² “The Sacred City of the Hindus,” p. 14; on this point see also “The Religion of the Hindus,” by the Rev. W. Ward, third edition, vol. i., p. 245.

Müller shows that the Brahmans claimed even the name of gods as early as the Brahmaná period.¹ The ground for this claim appears to be knowledge of the Vedas. By study of the sacred books the Brahman becomes a human god, a condition which is expressed by his title "twice born," as it is evidenced by his assumption of the sacrificial thread and the girdle.² Nor is the importance, in relation to the subject of caste, of the sacred character denoted by that title, lessened by the fact that all the Aryan castes, as distinguished from the lowest Sudra caste, are said to be "twice born."³ Prof. Max Müller remarks that we can see clearly in the Vedic hymns, in the Brahmanas, and in the legendary stories contained in the epic poems, how the three upper castes grew up. "The three occupations of the Aryas in India were, fighting, cultivating the soil, and worshipping the gods. Those who fought the battles of the people would naturally acquire influence and rank, and their leaders appear in the Veda as Rajahs or kings. Those who do not share in the fighting would occupy a more humble position; they were called Vis, Vaisiyas, or householders. . . . But a third occupation, that of worshipping the gods, was evidently considered by the whole nation to be as important, and as truly essential to the well-being of the country, as fighting against enemies or cultivating the soil." Those to whom this

¹ "Chips," vol. ii., p. 337.

² Until investiture with the girdle and the thread, the Brahman is on a level with the Sudra. "The Laws of Menu," translated by Sir W. Jones, ch. ii., v. 172.

³ According to the laws of Menu, the right to "ligation of the zone," and the investiture with the sacrificial thread, belong to the three higher classes (ch. i., v. 42-44), who thus acquire the second birth (ch. ii., v. 169). In this process, the prayer Gáyátrí, is said to be the mother, and the A'chárya, or sage-teacher, the father. A priest may attain beatitude by the repetition of the Gáyátrí without any other religious act (ch. ii., v. 87).

duty was committed were the priests or Brahmans.¹ As time went on these distinctions became more and more marked, and when the Brahmans finally established their supremacy, the division into the four castes, which subsisted until the subversion of Brahmanism by Buddhism was firmly established. But originally all the Aryas formed but one caste, as is evident from the various passages in the Puranas referred to by Prof. Max Müller.² Agreeably with this view, all the Aryas, as well Kshatriyas and Vaisyas as Brahmans were admitted to the sacrifices.

The reconciliation of this fact with the peculiar sacredness now claimed by the Brahmans, is to be found in the assumption by the latter of a superiority over the other Aryas as a consequence of their priestly character. Probably the Aryas, when they invaded India, considered themselves, *as a body*, a sacred class, and this may, indeed, be denoted by their name, which seems to have reference to their claim to be "children of the sun."³ The title of "twice-born," given to the three superior castes, confirms this view, as does the fact, otherwise so inexplicable, that some of the Kshatriyas became Brahmans or possessed an intimate knowledge of the Vedas.⁴

¹ "The Laws of Menu," ch. ii., p. 329.

² Do., ii., p. 336. The question whether the Vedas refer to caste divisions is thoroughly discussed by Dr. Muir—"Original Sanskrit Texts," vol. i., ch. 1,—in connection with the Purusha Sūkta hymn of the Rig-Veda, where the mythical origin of the four castes from the body of the creator is mentioned, and decided in the negative.

³ The Incas of Peru, who were called "children of the sun," appear to have formed a sacred caste; see Garcillasso's "Royal Commentaries," Hakluyt Socy., vol. i., p. 161.

⁴ Max Müller, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 341. Dr. Muir shows that, according to the ancient traditions on which the legendary history of the Hindu Aryas was based, all the castes, speaking generally, were descended from one and the same stock—"Original Sanskrit Texts," vol. i., ch. 2. Dr. Haug, however, finds in the Zendavesta mention of three classes, answering to the three highest castes of India, and he concludes that the primitive people had divided into three classes long before the separation of the Indians from the Iranians—Muir, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 293.

This presents no difficulty when it is known that the three superior castes originally formed but one, all the members of which not merely bore the title of "twice born," but were really supposed, like the present Brahmanic wearers of the sacred thread, to be so. We appear to have in this a sufficient explanation of the silence of the Vedas on the subject of caste, which, indeed, could hardly be said to exist, in relation to the Aryas at least, while all men alike occupied the same high position. When, however, social distinctions were established, the very ideas which at first prevented the existence of caste, would tend to firmly establish it. The laws of Menu have a curious passage to the effect that "a twice born man, who, not having studied the Veda, applies diligent attention to a different and worldly study, soon falls, even when living, to the condition of a Sudra, and his descendants after him."¹ This is what would be expected from the influence ascribed to the understanding of the Veda, and it is easy to see that as the Aryas become settled and divided into classes, the study of the sacred books might gradually be restricted to the Brahmans as the priestly class. In this case they would claim to be alone truly "twice born," and as such alone certainly free from the condition of metempsychosis. The loss of the sacred character, consequent on neglect of the study of the Veda, would, on the other hand, make the members of the other castes again liable to the transmigration from which their second birth had before protected them. It may be said, therefore, that as social distinctions became established, the system of caste was instituted, and this, again, rendered those distinctions gradually the more and more fixed as the sacred character of the Brahmans, on which caste was really founded, was generally recognised.

¹ Ch. ii. v. 169.

Unless caste was connected with the idea of transmigration, it is difficult to understand how the latter came to have that prominent position which it holds in the poetry, philosophy, and religion of the Hindus. Professor Max Müller, when comparing the opinions of Kapila and Buddha, states that "there are certain notions which Buddha shares in common, not only with Kapila, but with every Hindu philosopher. The idea of transmigration, the belief in the continuing effects of our good and bad actions, extending from our former to our present and from our present to our future lives, the sense that life is a dream or a burden, the admission of the uselessness of religious observance after the attainment of the highest knowledge, all these belong, so to say, to the national philosophy of India."¹ M. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire has made a comparison between the metempsychosis of Pythagoras and the doctrine of transmigration according to the Sâmkhya philosophy of Kapila. He concludes that the Greeks were indebted to the Hindus rather than to the Egyptians for their ideas on that subject. It is especially in Plato that the analogies between the Greek and the Indian philosophies are seen to be so numerous and exact as not to be merely accidental. For Plato as for Kapila, the only salvation of man is philosophy. Men devoted to brutal passions migrate into the bodies of brutes with which they have some affinity. But, as compared with Hindu teaching, the metempsychosis of the Greek writers is only fragmentary, the latter agreeing so far with the Egyptians, who do not appear to have extended the migration of the soul to plants and inorganic bodies as was done by Kapila.² "It is in the Sâmkhya," says M. Saint-Hilaire,

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 227.

² "Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences Morales," Tom. viii., pp. 508, 515.

“that we find the theory of transmigration in all its clearness, and, we may add, in all its folly. Owing to the details into which Kapila enters, we know precisely what the Oriental mind understands by the strange dogma. The Sâṅkhya excepted, no considerable work of antiquity makes it known to us. A distant echo has reached us of it through the uncertain doctrines of Pythagoras, and the not less obscure traditions afterwards transmitted from the East. Henceforth, by going directly to the fountainhead—the Sâṅkhya—we are not any further embarrassed; nothing remains obscure, and all uncertainties are dissipated.”¹ According to the theory there taught, transmigration extends not only to man but to animals and plants, and even to shapeless minerals,² and the French writer supposes it to have originated in the perception of the transformations which nature incessantly undergoes. These lead man to believe that he will himself be transformed, “as he does not yet perceive that he is a being apart, and, as he finds that there are different degrees of superiority and inferiority in different beings, he concludes that he will ascend or descend the scale of being, according to the goodness or badness of his actions.”³

How far this was the explanation given by the philosophic mind of the ideas embodied in the doctrine of transmigration, is at least doubtful. The *Brâhmé* or *Vedânta-Sutra* gives an account of the process of transmigration which seems to throw some light on the ideas associated with it. Thus the soul is said to pass from one state to another “invested with a subtle frame consisting of elementary particles, the seed or rudiment of a grosser body. Departing from that which it occupied, it ascends to the moon; where clothed with an aqueous

¹ “Mémoires de l’Académie des Sciences Morales,” Tom viii., p. 465.

² Do., p. 467.

³ Do., p. 469.

form, it experiences the recompense of its works; and whence it returns to occupy a new body with resulting influence of its former deeds. But evil doers suffer their misdeeds in the seven appointed regions of retribution." When the soul leaves the moon, it "passes successively and rapidly through ether, air, vapour, mist, and cloud, into rain; and thus finds its way into a vegetating plant, and thence, through the medium of nourishment, into an animal embryo."¹ The actual *origin* of the doctrine of transmigration must, however, be traced to the lower phase of thought and belief current among uncultured peoples represented in the preceding pages. In the declarations of the laws of Menu on the subject of transmigration, we have the use of the simple popular belief for the enforcement of certain moral and religious ideas. Thus it is said:—²

"By indulging the sensual appetites, and by neglecting the performance of duties, the basest of men, ignorant of sacred expiations, assume the basest of forms."—(*Sloka* 52).

"The slayer of a Brahman must enter, according to the circumstances of his crime, the body of a dog, a boar, an ass, a camel, a bull, a goat, a sheep, a stag, a bird, a Chandāla, or a Puccasa."—(55).

"He who steals the gold of a *priest*, shall pass a thousand times into the bodies of spiders, of snakes and chameleons, of crocodiles, and other aquatic monsters, or of mischievous blood-sucking demons."—(57).

"If a man steal grain in the husk, he shall be born a rat; if a yellow mixed metal, a gander; if water, a *plava* or diver; if honey, a great stinging gnat; if milk, a crow; if expressed juice, a dog; if clarified butter, an ichneumon-weasel."—(61).

"If exquisite perfumes, a musk rat; if pot-herbs, a peacock; if dressed grain in any of its various forms, a porcupine; if raw grains, a hedgehog."—(65).

"That man who designedly takes away the property of another, or eats any holy cakes not first presented, shall inevitably sink to the condition of a brute."—(68).

"Women who commit similar thefts, incur a similar taint, and

¹ "Miscellaneous Essays," by H. J. Colebrooke (1839), vol. i., p. 358.

² "The Laws of Menu," translated by Sir W. Jones, ch. xii.

shall be paired with those male beasts in the form of their females."—(69).

"With whatever disposition of mind a man shall perform in this life any act, religious or moral, in a future body endued with the same quality shall he receive his retribution."—(81).

The doctrine of transmigration so explicitly taught in the laws of Menu is not a mere intellectual figment even to the modern Hindu. Thus Mr Ward says that the faith of the Hindus in that doctrine often appears in their conversation, especially when either prosperous or adverse circumstances have arisen in a family. If a person die an untimely death, it is attributed to crimes committed in a former existence of state; while the prosperity of persons, especially if they have suddenly risen from poverty to affluence, frequently gives rise to remarks on the merits of such individuals in a former birth.¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that the doctrine of transmigration is taught by the Puranas, which contain the more modern theological ideas of the Hindus. Thus, the Agni Purana, with the characteristic extravagance of oriental thought, says that "a person who loses human birth, passes through eight million births among the inferior creatures before he can again obtain human birth: of which he remains two million one hundred thousand births among the immoveable parts of creation, as stones, trees, &c.; nine hundred thousands among the watery tribes; one million among insects, worms, &c.; one million among the birds; and three millions among the beasts. In the ascending scale, if his works be suitable, he continues four hundred thousand births among the lower castes of men; during one hundred births among Brahmans; and after this he may obtain absorption in Brahma."²

The general opinion entertained by the Buddhists

¹ "The Religion of the Hindoos" (3d Ed.), vol. ii., pp. 163 *seq.*

² Do., p. 160.

with reference to transmigration of souls—although, as we shall see, it is affected by the doctrine of *karma*—differs little from that of the Hindus, and Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire does not scruple to affirm that it was derived from Brahmanism.¹ This depends on the wider question of the origin of Buddhism, but there is no doubt that it embraces the doctrine of transmigration in its fullest extent. Gautama himself is said to have passed through all existences of earth, air, and sea, as well as through all the conditions of life. According to the Jatakas, he had been born no less than five hundred and fifty times before he became the Buddha. Among other forms, he was an ascetic 83 times; a monarch 58; the *déwa* of a tree 43; a religious teacher 26; a courtier 24; a *próhita* Brahman 24; a prince 24; a nobleman 23; a learned man 22; the *déwa* Sekra 20; an ape 18; a merchant 13; a man of wealth 12; a deer 10; a lion 10; the bird hansa 8; a snipe 6; an elephant 6; a fowl 5; a slave 5; a golden eagle 5; a horse 4; a bull 4; the Brahma Maha Brahma 4; a peacock 4; a serpent 4; a potter 3; an out-caste 3; twice each a fish, an elephant driver, a rat, a jackal, a crow, a woodpecker, a thief, and a pig; and once each a dog, a curer of snake-bites, a gambler, a mason, a smith, a devil-dancer, a scholar, a silversmith, a carpenter, a water-fowl, a frog, a hare, a cock, a kite, a jungle fowl, and a kindurá.² Gautama passed through all these conditions of life, and suffered in the course of them the most severe deprivations and afflictions, that he might “gain the power to free sentient beings from the misery to which they are exposed under every possible form of existence.”

The soul, according to Buddhist teaching, is not

¹ “Le Bouddha et sa Religion” (1860), p. 122.

² Hardy’s “Manual of Buddhism,” p. 100.

restricted, in the course of its migrations, to animal forms, or even to living bodies. Gautama himself is said by Chinese Buddhists to have been a tree and a plant, and the legend of Samgha-Rakchita mentions the existence of souls in lifeless bodies, and gives a curious explanation of the causes which lead to such a result. As quoted by Burnouf, the legend relates that Bhagavat, in answer to the enquiry as to what actions had caused certain metamorphoses, said :—" Les êtres que tu as vus, O Samgha rakchita, sous la forme d'un mur ont été des auditeurs de Kâçyapa, le Buddha parfaitement accompli. Ils ont sali de leur morve et de leur salive le mur de la salle de l'assemblée. Le résultat de cette action est qu'ils ont revêtu la forme d'un mur. Ceux que tu as vus sous la forme de colonnes, ont été ainsi changés par la même raison. Les êtres que tu as vus O Samgha rakchita sous la forme d'un arbre ont été des auditeurs de Kâçyapa, le Buddha parfaitement accompli ; ils ont joué des fleurs et des fruits de l'assemblée dans un intérêt tout personnel. Le résultat de cette action est qu'ils ont revêtu la forme d'un arbre. Ceux que tu as vus sous la forme de feuilles de fleurs, de fruits, ont été ainsi changés pour la même raison. Celui que tu as vu, O Samgha rakchita, ayant la forme d'une corde a été un des auditeurs de Kâçyapa, le Buddha parfaitement accompli ; il s'est servi de la corde de l'assemblée dans un intérêt tout personnel. Le résultat de cette action est qu'il a revêtu la forme d'une corde. Il en est de celui qui as vu sous la forme d'un balai comme du précédent." In like manner, a novice who had refused a drink to religious strangers was changed into a cup, and one who broke a chaldron in which medicines were being prepared for some pilgrims, was changed into a caldron."¹

If we may receive the testimony of Josephus, the doctrine

¹ " L'Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien," p. 328.

of transmigration was not unknown to the later Jews, although in a modified form, since the Jewish historian states that the Pharisees taught that the souls of the wicked were subject to eternal punishment, but that those of *good* men inhabited other human bodies.¹ Whether the Hebrews originally held the doctrine of transmigration, which they must have heard of from the Egyptians, is a difficult question. As in the case of the Vedic Aryas, the Hebrews may have been believers in the doctrine, although, owing to other notions entertained by them, it was not particularly mentioned in their sacred writings. It is far from improbable, indeed, that the Hebrews, like the Hindus, viewed themselves as being "regenerate," and, therefore, not liable to the migratory fate after death so much dreaded by Oriental peoples. This notion is supported by the assumption of the Hebrews that they were a chosen people,² and under the actual and personal guidance of Jehovah. But if so, the belief had not the consequences with which it was attended in India and Egypt, where the system of caste grew out of the application of the ideas connected with metempsychosis. This may have arisen partly from the different social condition of those peoples, but it was doubtless chiefly due to the peculiar constitution of the Hebrew state. In Egypt and India the members of the royal and priestly castes, as in some sense actual embodiments of Deity, were considered especially sacred. The regal and priestly offices were also highly magnified among the Hebrews, but the influence of the old theocratic notions prevented their occupants from being considered as divine.

¹ "Wars of the Jews," Bk. II., ch. viii., § 14; "Antiq.," Bk. XVIII., ch. i., § 8. See Delitzsch, "System of Biblical Psychology" (Eng. trans.), p. 545 *seq.*

² On this point, see *The Bampton Lectures for 1870*, by Dr J. W. Irons, p. 511 *seq.*

The Jewish Kabbalists appear to have embraced fully the doctrine of transmigration of souls,—the *Gilgul Neshamoth*.¹ A modern writer says, that according to the Kabbala, the souls, like all other earthly existences, “must re-enter the absolute substance whence they have emerged. But, to accomplish this end, they must develop all the perfections, the germ of which is planted in them, and if they have not fulfilled this condition during one life, they must commence another, a third, and so forth, until they have acquired the condition which fits them for their re-union with God. On the ground of this doctrine, which was shared in by Rabbis of the highest renown, it was held, for instance, that the soul of Adam migrated into David, and will come into the Messiah; that the soul of Japhet is the same as that of Simeon, and the soul of Terah migrated into Job. Generally, it was supposed by writers of this school, the souls of men are re-born in men, and those of women in women. . . . If the soul of a man, however, is re-born in a woman, such a migration is held by some to be a punishment for the committal of great sins, as when a man refuses to give alms, or to communicate to others his wisdom. And it is by way of punishment, too, that the soul of a Jew is re-born in a heathen, or in an animal, a clean or unclean beast, a bird, a fish, or even in an inanimate object. Of all these transmigrations, biblical instances are adduced, according to this mode of interpretation, in the writings of Rabbi Manasse ben Israel, Rabbi Naphtali, Rabbi Meyer ben Gabbai, Rabbi Ruben, in the ‘*Jalkut Khadash*,’ and other works of a similar character.”²

That the Chaldeans, to whom so much of the wisdom

¹ Mr. Tylor has collected facts relating to this point, and showing the continuance of the belief to a still later date—“*Primitive Culture*,” vol. ii., pp. 12-14. It is not without adherents at the present day.

² Chambers’ “*Encyclopædia*,” Art. “*Transmigration*.”

of the ancients must be traced,¹ entertained the doctrine of metempsychosis cannot be doubted. Like most Eastern peoples, they held the religious mysteries in great esteem, if, as Lajard supposes,² they did not actually invent them, and the central dogma of the mysteries was the transmigration of souls. It is true that Lajard, while quoting the opinion of Eubulus to this effect,³ materially qualifies the statement. Referring to the use by the initiated of costumes representing the animals which they were supposed to have vanquished in combat, he says that this contributed not a little to maintain the opinion formed by the vulgar relative to metempsychosis,⁴ although this belief was not held in the mysteries. For the union of some portion of the body of certain animals with a portion of a human body, was to express, symbolically, "not the passage of the man into the body of such or such an animal, more or less unclean, but the intimate union of the soul with a certain principle of matter."⁵ This is, no doubt, true, but nevertheless the vulgar notion is more likely to have preceded than followed that which was taught in the mysteries. It was, indeed, merely a development of the belief, almost universal among uncultured peoples, that the human soul can actually pass, under certain circumstances, even during life,⁶ into an animal body. The authors of the mysteries did not invent this idea, but finding it in existence, and accepting it as well-founded, they used it for religious

¹ Matter traces the 'science' of the Gnostics through Philo, directly or indirectly, to Zoroaster, who was merely the reformer of still earlier doctrines which were entertained by the Babylonians and kindred peoples—"Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme" (1828), vol. i., pp. 72, 87.

² "Recherches sur le culte de Mithra," par Felix Lajard (1867), pp. 12, *seq.*, 93, *seq.*

³ Do., p. 108.

⁴ Do., pp. 233, 197.

⁵ Do., p. 97.

⁶ See "The Book of Were-Wolves," by S. Baring Gould, p. 163, *seq.*

ends. That this was really so, may be readily conceived from what has already been stated in relation to transmigration as an agent for moral discipline.

An examination of the moral ideas taught in the mysteries must be reserved until we come to treat of the religious system ascribed to Zoroaster, but certain points connected with them may properly be mentioned here. Reference was made at a previous page to a supposed connection between the ancient mysteries and the secret associations of the aborigines of the American continent, and we may now see what are the grounds for such a supposition. Commander R. C. Mayne, when speaking of the inland tribes of British Columbia, says that, before a "young man is admitted to be a man and a warrior, he has to get his medicine, which he does, or is supposed to do, by roaming about the woods, fasting and praying to the great spirit to help him to medicine, much in the same way, though to a less extent, as the medicine men prepare themselves for the higher mysteries."¹ The so-called "medicine" should rather be named "mystery," the skin of the animal which is supposed to have been sent to the sleeping youth, forming the "mystery bag." The mode by which this is obtained, as mentioned by Commander Mayne, is exactly the same as that described by Catlin as practised among the Mandans,² and it differs little from the process by which, among all uncultured peoples, the sorcery-man or juggler attains to the condition necessary to enable him to exercise his supposed supernatural power. Bunsen refers to it in a passage which is deserving of quotation owing to its breadth of generalisation. He says—"Wherever we find Turanians, we find the yearning to transport oneself out of ordinary life into

¹ "Four years in British Columbia and Vancouver's Island," p. 302.

² *Supra*, vol. i., p. 435.

a state of enthusiasm which, in its highest grade, rises to ecstasy, and carries the votary quite out of his senses, to be their view of the relation of man to God, their mode of access to a more exalted consciousness. We may, perhaps, designate this in the most general way by an Indian word belonging to Buddhism,—Shamanism. The modes of superinducing this ecstatic condition are very various, but they always involve some physical excitement of the mind, and inspired clairvoyance is their ultimate aim. We now know, upon documentary evidence, . . . that this is the object of the practice common among the Indian (Mongolian) tribes of North America, of refusing nourishment till nearly dead of hunger. And this is the end constantly sought for by the use of intoxicating drinks, the noisy beating of drums and tambours, and all kinds of deafening and overpowering music, which are the invariable accompaniments of all Turanic modes of excitement, as also of the giddy revolving dance customary with them.”¹ Bunsen adds that the Turanian—and this is true of all other peoples of the same or of a lower degree of culture—“continually sees in the world of nature, and in the moral world too, not substances and phenomena, but powers and spirits. Of these he stands in awe. . . . Everything around is, to him, full of spirits lurking in ambush for him, but whom he is certain of being able to exorcise, when the spirit is mighty in himself. Hence he strives to work himself into a condition of excitement, because, in his ordinary state of sober existence, he does not feel himself a match for the influence of the surrounding spirits, and is in danger of falling a victim to the spell of the evil eye.”² We have in this the explanation

¹ “God in History,” vol. i., p. 237; Schoolcraft,—“Indian Tribes of the United States;” see also Sarytschew’s “Siberia” (Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1807, vol. vi.), p. 65.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 238.

of the extraordinary care with which the native American protects his mystery-bag. This he has obtained under the influence of a mysterious inspiration, and so long as he retains it he has power over those spirits which he supposes to be embodied in the animals whose skins have been used in the formation of the bag ; this, therefore, being equivalent to the rattle of the juggler or the ring of the magician.

But these ideas are all reproduced in the sacred mysteries of more cultured peoples. The proposed initiate had to pass through various trials¹ before he was admitted to the first grade of the mysteries and enrolled among its members. To prepare him for these trials he was fed on particular kinds of food, among them being figs and honey. The initiate was then made to submit to certain ordeals, such as passing through fire and water, enduring cold and hunger, thirst and fatigue. The Empress Eudocia (Macrembolista) in her "Violarium," as quoted by Lajard, says, in relation to the Mithraic mysteries, that "no person can be admitted to the initiations unless he has previously passed through all the trials, and shown himself, at the same time, to be just and pious, and insensible to pain. The degrees of trial are eighty in number. [From Nicetas, this would appear to mean that they lasted eighty days]. Sometimes they are abated, and sometimes they progressively rise. At first the torments are lighter, then they become more violent, and it is only after having suffered all the trials that the initiate is admitted. These are some of the trials: Firstly, they oblige him to sustain hunger during fifty days, more or less, according to circumstances. Afterwards, if he bears patiently this trial, they make him cross water by swimming for several days ; then he must throw himself into fire ; then

¹ Lajard, *op. cit.*, p. 112, *seq.* ; see further, *infra* chap. "Mithraism."

plunge into snow during twenty days; after which, they (roughly) rub him for two days, and he remains in solitude without food. Finally, they make him suffer other torments of the same kind, until he has passed through the eighty trials as we have said. If it is proved that the patient has supported them with firmness, they admit him from that time to the most perfect initiation."

Those who successfully passed through these various ordeals were in a position to be admitted to be mysteries; they had attained to that mental condition which, like the ecstasy or inspiration of the mystery-doctor, fitted them to cope with the powers of darkness, the instruments of evil. These were in some sense symbolised by the animals used to designate the several grades of the mysteries. The powers against which the initiand had to fight were, however, analogous to those which the Christian knows as "the world, the flesh, and the devil." In the mysteries all moral evil was ascribed to the influence of the material principle with which the soul is united. Says Lajard: "Le corps était considéré comme le t^ombeau de l'âme. Dompter les passions charnelles, les maîtriser, triompher de la matière, c'était donc pour l'âme, immortelle de la nature, triompher d'une mort passagère et renaître à la vie spirituelle, à l'immortalité."¹ All matter, however, was not considered evil. In the Persian system, Ormuzd created a world which, although obscure, was pure. It was only the world which Ahriman created which was impure and buried in darkness. It was the attraction of this impure matter which the initiand was taught to resist, and this could only be by overcoming the prince of the powers of the air, who acted on the soul through the affections of the material body. This is exactly the same idea, more fully developed, as that which is em-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 97.

bodied in the mystic rites of the Mongolian Shaman. The chief difference is that, in the teaching of the Oriental philosophy on which the mysteries were based, the invisible agents of the spirit world, so much dreaded by peoples of comparatively low culture, are represented by the Great Spirit of Evil who, like the Persian Ahri-man, rules over the world of darkness. Victory over him is equivalent, therefore, to the overcoming of all inferior demons, who, according to the ideas of un-cultured peoples, act independently and capriciously, but who, in the elaborated systems of the East, were subjected to the control of the Prince of Darkness. To secure that victory, however, it is necessary to resort to supernatural means; and, as in the simple ceremonies of the sorcery doctor, or Shaman, the soul is thought to be placed *en rapport* with the invisible agents of the spirit world, so, on initiation, the *myst* became placed in a certain special relation to the invisible being who was supposed to preside at the mysteries, and who was not only the Judge of the Dead, but the real Ruler of the Air.¹

The general analogy thus shown between the ideas embodied in the rites observed in the mysteries, and those which entered into the simple teaching of the American mystery-lodge, is confirmed by a special point of agreement. In the peculiar ceremonies practised by the Mandans, as described by Catlin, the bull-dance occupies a very prominent position. In the course of it a curious performance takes place, which has for its object the ensuring of a sufficient supply of buffalos to

¹ It is not supposed that the ceremonies of the Indian lodge had associated with them the idea of a spiritual change, such as "the new birth" of the mysteries; but the severe trials of the Mandans had evidently a mystic significance, as the victims offered to the Great Spirit, with great earnestness and humility, one of their little fingers, which was chopped off near the hand.—(Catlin, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 170.)

provide food for the ensuing season.¹ The strict observance of this ceremony, which from its character is evidently connected with the idea of fecundity, is thought to be necessary for this object. Now, there is nothing more remarkable than the universality of the association of that idea with the buffalo. During the festival with which the Chinese celebrate the return of spring, a paper image of the domestic buffalo, painted so as to represent the five elements of nature, is carried in procession, it being accompanied also by a live buffalo, which is afterwards killed and divided among the officials.² Among the Kaffirs of South Africa a festival is held at the beginning of the year, when the maize is in a fit state for food; and in the ceremonies which precede the commencement of harvest a bull is sacrificed under peculiar circumstances, its flesh being eaten only by the "boys."³ That animal, according to the account given by Drury,⁴ takes a prominent part also in the rites of circumcision as practised by the Madecasses, the significance of that practice making it highly probable that the idea of fecundity was associated with the bull used in the ceremony. Among more civilised peoples the same ideas were also thus represented. In the cosmogony of Zoroaster, the general principles of which were so widely diffused among the ancients, the primeval bull is the first created being, and from its body, when it was slain by Ahriman, proceeded "the material prototypes of all the beings which live in the water, on the earth, and in the air."⁵ Lajard points out that the *Zend gaya*, *gava*, or *guevé*, signifies both *life* or *soul* and *bull*, a fact which explains why this animal or the cow,

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., pp. 164, *seq.*

² Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 376.

³ Grout's "Zululand," p. 161.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 233. Compare with the Mandingo custom of offering prayers over a bull, described by Major Laing. See "Travels in Western Africa," p. 159.

⁵ Lajard, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

which had similar ideas associated with it, was the emblem of so many deities in the mythologies of the ancients.¹ In the Mysteries the bull symbolised the material life; the destruction of the primitive bull of Zoroastrianism, signifying that the soul which unites itself with matter gives life to the body but receives death, and will recover life or liberty only by the death of the body.² According to the ancients, moreover, water or moisture is the seat or source of life; and hence the bull was also the symbol of the humid principle.³

It is deserving of notice that the bull and the cow were the animals in which Osiris and Isis, the great deities of the Egyptians, were thought to become incarnated.⁴ There is little doubt that the origin of this peculiar belief must be sought in the association of the idea of life with the buffalo. As was mentioned above, the name of Osiris was given to those who attained to spiritual re-birth; and it is not surprising, therefore, that among a people so addicted to animal-worship as the Egyptians, the buffalo was chosen as the living representative of the God of Life.⁵ Thus the bull—the figurative sign which follows the name of Apis—is accompanied by the *cruz ansata*, the emblem of life,⁶ while Isis was expressly called by Plutarch “the place of generation.”⁷ It is a remarkable circumstance that, although Osiris was a sun-god, yet Apis was said to be sacred to the moon. It would seem as though Osiris

¹ See “Recherches sur le culte de Venus,” p. 159, *seq.*; also Faber’s “Pagan Idolatry,” vol. i., p. 404, *seq.*

² Lajard, “Le Culte de Mithra,” p. 57.

³ Do., p. 185.

⁴ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., pp. 347, 356, 381, *seq.*

⁵ Something of the same kind is probably associated with the sacred buffalo of India. In the Laws of Menu the Brahmans are said to be a constant incarnation of Dherma, the God of Justice (ch. i., v. 98), who would seem to be the same as the Genius of Truth and Right, who, in the Krita age, stands firm on his four feet in the form of a bull (ch. i. 81; viii. 16).

⁶ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 350.

⁷ Do., p. 382.

himself had some connection with that planet. Plutarch, indeed, tells us that Osiris was the power of the moon; and, notwithstanding Wilkinson's observation that this idea is not confirmed by the monuments,¹ we can hardly doubt that there was some foundation for the statement. Plutarch says, further, that on account of the great resemblance the Egyptians "imagine between Osiris and the moon, his more bright and shining parts being shaded and obscured by those that are of a darker hue, they call the Apis the living image of Osiris."² The reason why the moon and Osiris were identified, if at all, would be the same as that which led to the association between the latter and Apis. All alike had connected with them the idea of life. Thus Plutarch states that the Egyptians "call the moon 'the mother of the world,' and hold it to be of both sexes—feminine, as it receives the influence of the sun; male, as it scatters and disperses through the air the principles of fecundity."³ According to the Zoroastrian cosmogony, when the primitive bull was slain, its seed was carried to the moon, there to be purified and fecundated by the light and heat of the sun. In this notion we have, says Lajard, the consecration of the origin of the ancient opinion which attributed to the moon a direct and continual influence over all the phenomena of generation, reproduction, and vegetation.⁴

From the above facts we shall expect to find that when the mysteries were elaborated, the sun and the moon occupied in them equally important positions. The divine patron of the mysteries—the deity who pre-

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. v., p. 6. As to the twenty-eight years of Osiris' reign being derived from the number of days taken by the moon to perform her course round the earth, see vol. iv., p. 13.

² *Do.*, vol. iv., p. 348.

³ *Do.*, vol. v., p. 6.

⁴ "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 49 n., 158. For a related notion among the Hindus, see *supra*.

sided at the sacred rites—was said to dwell between the sun and the moon, one of which, as we shall see, was the door for the descent of souls, and the other that for their ascent. But, although those planets were equally essential in the mysteries, the positions they occupied were not equally important. The sun, by its very office as the dispenser of warmth and light, the Great Illuminator of the world, was sure to collect around itself ideas of a more noble order than those which the ruler of the night could inspire. Hence, the sun-deity was *par excellence* the God of wisdom and the giver, not only of bodily health, but also of spiritual life and purity. In this capacity, with that of Judge of the Dead, it was that he presided at the mysteries, which showed forth the resurrection of the soul from death unto life. Hence, also, when the emancipation of woman by admission to the mysteries enabled her to ascend the throne, reducing her consort to the condition of “husband of the queen,” it was necessary, says Lajàrd, that the queen, “pour consacrer sa prépotence, pût se montrer publiquement revêtue des insignes du soleil. Le sacerdoce fut contraint de changer, théologiquement parlant, le sexe des deux astres: la reine devint l’incarnation ou l’image suivante du soleil solennellement déclaré féminin par les prêtres, le roi descendit à l’humble rang de représentant de la lune solennellement aussi déclarée mâle. Bien plus, mais par une conséquence naturelle de ces évènements politiques et religieux, la prépotence accordée jusqu’alors au sexe masculin dans la religion publique et dans le culte secret fut transférée au sexe féminin. Chez les Assyriens, les Phéniciens et les Arabes, une déesse sous le nom de Mylitta, d’Astarté, de Dercéto, d’el Ozza, &c., présida désormais aux mystères.”¹

It is evident that the moon occupied a lower position

¹ “Le Culte de Mithra,” p. 107.

in the mysteries than that assigned to the sun. The ideas, however, associated with these planets were the same so far as they related to generation; except only that, as the sun had reference more especially to the higher or spiritual life, the moon was concerned more particularly with life on the lower material plane. The mysteries were, in fact, founded on the ideas which were embodied in the phallic worship, a superstition which was not only one of the most widely spread, but also one of the most primitive and influential of the ancient world. This is evidenced by the use of the well-known phallic symbols on cylinders relating to all the earlier grades.¹ Lajard remarks as to the use of the *ctéïs* in the fifth grade, that ‘un tel emblème nous indique assez clairement qu’ à ce grade l’âme est encore retenue dans les liens de la matière,”² referring, as we shall see, to material generation. In some of the higher grades the scarabeus and the *crux ansata*,³ the symbols of spiritual life, take the place of grosser emblems, the form of which nevertheless they perpetuate. This change is characteristic of that which the initiand is supposed to undergo in the mysteries. At first subject to the influence of the animal passions, which originated in the association of the soul with the material body, the initiand, immediately on his admittance to the mysteries, began a ceaseless conflict with the influences of matter, the object of which was to escape from “the path of generation,” and to secure an immortal spiritual existence.⁴ Hence, while

¹ Lajard, “Le Culte de Mithra,” pp. 159, *seq.* 238, 371, &c.

² Do., p. 346.

³ Do., pp. 495, 545.

⁴ Dr Faber well shows, as against Bishop Warburton, that the ideas embodied in the phallic superstition formed an essential part of the ancient mysteries. Both writers are in error, however, as to the actual origin of the mysteries, although probably the latter would, with but slight alteration, have accepted the explanation given of their aim by the former:—that “they displayed the lapse of the soul from original purity into a state of darkness, confusion, and ignor-

the struggle was in its earlier stages, the symbols of carnal generation¹ were employed, but in the later grades those which symbolised a higher life were used. The latter were, however, emblems not merely of the spiritual life, but also of the re-birth, and the cross was to the initiated as much the sign of regeneration,² as it was at a later date to the followers of Christ.

The ideas which entered into the teaching of the mysteries can be thoroughly understood, only when the opinions entertained by the ancients as to the nature of the soul are known. This is a matter on which uncultured peoples seldom spend much thought. They do, however, form some idea as to the nature of the immaterial principle, although as seen from the data brought together by Mr Tylor,³ it is often very indefinite. To all it would seem to have a very shadowy existence; "The Tongan imagined the human soul to be the finer or more aeriform part of the body, which leaves it suddenly at the moment of death; something comparable to the perfume and essence of a flower as related to the more solid vegetable fibre. The Greenland seers described the soul as they habitually perceived it in their visions; it is pale and soft, they said, and he who tries to seize it feels nothing, for it has no flesh nor bone

ance. They affected to teach the initiated how they might emerge from this state, how they might recover what had been lost, how they might exchange darkness for illumination; how they might pass from the gloom of error into the splendid brightness of a regained paradise." (*Comp.* Faber's "Pagan Idolatry," vol. iii., p. 111; Warburton's "Divine Legation," vol. ii., p. 8, *seq.*)

¹ The secret rites of the mysteries were performed in the famous Mithraic grotto or cave, which, like the ark, symbolised the dark womb of material being into which the soul had to enter preparatory to its appearance in human form. Nicodemus asked, "can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus might well be surprised at the spiritual ignorance of the master in Israel.

² As to this symbol, see Lajard's "Observations sur la croix ansée," in "Memoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions," tom. xvii. (1844).

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 388, *seq.*

nor sinew. The Caribs did not think the soul so immaterial as to be invisible, but said it was subtle and thin like a purified body."¹ The soul is nearly always supposed to have the same form as the body from which it has been separated. The universal belief in ghosts or spirits, which seldom have any other than the human form, may be taken in proof of that opinion.

Indefinite as are the ideas of uncultured peoples as to the nature of the human soul, their notions relative to its first origin are still more vague. Individual souls may be thought to be new-born ancestors, but whence they were originally derived is seldom considered. It is true that many peoples have myths which seem intended to account for the presence of man, as well as animals, on the earth. These myths, however, seldom, if ever, distinguish between the different portions of man's being, the creation of the body appearing to imply or rather being also that of the soul. Often the Creator is none other than the first man himself,² whose origin thus remains to be explained. It is hardly to be expected, however, that peoples of a low degree of culture should form an opinion on so abstruse a question as that under consideration. But it would be surprising if so philosophic a race as the Chinese had not bestowed considerable thought on the subject. And yet Mr Doolittle, while describing their notion formed of the future life as being very realistic, states that "the Chinese classics, and the most popular books in the Chinese language on moral and religious subjects by heathen writers, are singularly deficient in regard to the nature, powers, and immortality of the human soul."³ Mr Meadows, indeed, asserts that orthodox Confucianism furnishes "no word by which man's immortal soul could be expressed."⁴ This

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 411.

² See Tylor, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 282.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 595.

⁴ "The Chinese and their Rebellious," p. 419.

statement may be true, but Chinese philosophy does certainly explain both the nature and the origin of the soul, and yet in such terms as to show that it is viewed simply as an evolutionary result of the operation of the ultimate principle which, although immaterial, produces first matter and then man.¹

The ideas of the Egyptians as to the nature of the human soul were probably much the same as those of other civilized peoples of antiquity. According to Pythagoras, "the Deity was the soul which animated all nature,—the *anima mundi*, or soul of the universe—not an external influence, but dwelling within it, as the soul of man within the human body; and from this universal soul all other gods, as well as the souls of men and other animals, and even of plants, directly proceeded."² Elsewhere, Sir Gardner Wilkinson says:—"Plutarch and Porphyry attach great importance to the doctrine of emanation, as the source of animal worship, and the statements of these two writers tend to show the principle which guided the Egyptians in their speculations respecting the connection between the Creator and his creatures. The doctrine of emanations from one great soul, to which all returned again, after having been sufficiently purified from the contaminations to which each soul was subject during its earthly career, formed a principal feature of their religion."³ This is no less true of the philosophy of Plato, who, we cannot doubt, was largely indebted to the Egyptian priests for his ideas. The right understanding of the nature of the human soul was to Plato a subject of the highest importance. He declared that "of all the things which a man has, next to the gods, his soul is the most divine and most truly his own." Hence it is to be treated

¹ "The Chinese and their Rebellions," p. 343.

² Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 318.

³ *Do.*, vol. v., p. 111.

with high honour, and its honour and glory are not to be sold for money; for "all the gold which is under or upon the earth is not to be given in exchange for virtue."¹ The soul is derived from God, and it is necessary, therefore, that man should endeavour to be like Him, and such as He is. The temperate man, says Plato, "is the friend of God, for he is like Him; and the intemperate man is unlike Him, and different from Him, and unjust."² The object of man's life he taught was to regain the purity of the state of innocence; when pure, and not yet enshrined in the prison-house of the body, the soul beheld "apparitions innocent and simple, and calm and happy as in a mystery."³ The doctrine of emanations formed the philosophical basis, as it furnished the moral principles, no less of the spiritualized religions of antiquity, than of the teaching of the Greek philosopher. Such a connection between the Divine soul of the universe and that of man was the only way of explaining the existence of the human soul, and, since little, if any, mental distinction could be traced between men and animals, many animals came to be considered incarnations of the souls of men. The dogma of emanation is thus closely allied with that of transmigration, or the cycle through which the soul has to pass before it can return to the source from which it started in the career of existence. The formulæ of the Egyptian "Book of the

¹ Laws (Jowett, Trans., vol. iv.), pp. 246, 7.

² Do., vol. iv., p. 237.

³ "Phædrus" (Jowett, vol. i., p. 584). It has been said that Aristotle accepted the theory of emanations, but this opinion appears to be incorrect. It is true that he derived the human *noûs*, or intelligent soul, from the divine Celestial Body, which encircles the Cosmos, but he declares that the *noûs* adds nothing to the soul but a potentiality of unlimited intellectual cognition. It is thus a function or attribute rather than a principle, and as such, "subject to the same limits of duration as the other functions of the soul," and although immortal in itself, yet having no power to confer immortality on the individual possessing it. See Grote's "Aristotle," vol. ii., p. 221, *seq.*

Dead" are framed on those ideas, and Bunsen, referring to this fact, says:—"According to the creed of the Egyptians, the soul of man was divine, and therefore immortal. It is subject to personal moral responsibility. The consequence of evil actions is banishment from the presence of God. Faith transfers venial sins to the account of the body, which is, in consequence, doomed to annihilation. Man, when justified, becomes conscious that he is a son of God, and destined to behold God at the termination of his wanderings."¹ But the identification of man with God, which results from the doctrine of emanations, may be supposed (although hardly consistently with the belief as to the impurity of matter) to have had some influence over the ideas entertained by the Egyptians relative to the bodily organism with which the soul is associated. The organism was, says Bunsen, regarded as holy, a doctrine which "we may now read in every page of their sacred books. Thence the popular notion in Egypt that, unless its old human envelope was preserved, the soul would be subject to disturbances and hindrances in performing its destined course."²

From whence the Egyptians obtained the notions as to the nature of the human soul which they are thought to have given to Plato, cannot be affirmed with certainty, but probably they were carried from Western Asia by those early adventurers who settled in the valley of the Nile, and founded among a native African population what we know as the Egyptian monarchy. It is to Western or Central Asia that we must refer the origin of ancient civilization. Although its beginnings are still hidden in the mists of antiquity, some of its early developments have been brought to light by the labours of recent explorers amid the ruins of Chaldæa. The Chal-

¹ Egypt, vol. iv., p. 648.

² Do., p. 641.

dæans of Assyria appear to have been a sacred and learned caste, and probably much of the knowledge they held was received by them from their *Akkad* ancestors who founded the ancient Babylonian empire. These again may perhaps be traced to the still earlier *Mad*—the Medes of Berosus—and the Chaldæans thus be connected with the mysterious Magi of West Central Asia, to whom the voice of antiquity ascribes the origin of so much of its sacred lore. No doubt, among other speculations, the Magi treated of the nature of the soul, and, like the Egyptians, ascribed to it a divine origin. The teaching of the Persian Vendidad—which must also have been that of the Chaldæan philosophy, if Lajard be correct in his opinion as to the origin of the doctrines of Zoroaster¹—was that from Zervana or “Time without Bounds,”—(whose thought contained the typical ideas or *férouërs* of all things) emanated the luminous heavens, with Ormuzd as its presiding deity; at first in company with Ahriman (Aryaman), but afterwards, apparently when the light became separated from darkness, alone. From Ormuzd, thus the embodiment of light, and thence of goodness and life, emanated Mithra, who rules over the world of light with its three regions of the firmament, the revolving heavens, and the earth, which appeared when the creative word was pronounced by Ormuzd—“cette parole créatrice qui, dès le commencement, existait dans Zarvâna, le Temps sans bornes ou l’Éternel,”² Then appeared the celestial bull which, being slain by Ahriman, gave birth to the human prototype, which also fell a victim to the wiles of the Evil spirit, or of his agents. From his seed, however, when planted in the earth, was produced Meschia, the androgynous parent of the whole human race.³ The material prototypes of man

¹ “Culte de Mithra,” p. 25, *seq.*, 65, *seq.*

² See Do., p. 36, *seq.*

³ Do., p. 49, *seq.*

and animals thus proceed from the celestial bull, but their *férouërs* emanate, with those of all other earthly things, from the divine intelligence which had contained the ideas of all things from eternity.¹ Finally when, as required by the religious system of Zoroaster, the dead are judged according to their lives in this world, "les *férouërs* des purs remontent au ciel, leur demeure primitive, et y resteront jusqu'au jour de la résurrection. Les *férouërs* des impurs sont précipités dans les ténèbres ou les enfers, pour y subir les torments, des supplices, qui, proportionnées aux péchés ou aux crimes de chaque coupable dureront jusqu'à la même époque."² According to Egyptian teaching, the soul was ten thousand years in passing through the complete "circle of necessity." This period was not known to the Zoroastrian cosmogony, but probably it was connected with the great cycle of twelve thousand years, at the end of which the Chaldæans believed that all created things would disappear. "Au moment où finira ce grand cycle," says Lajard, "les morts ressuscitent en corps et en âme. Les bons retourneront dans les demeures célestes ; les mauvais y seront admis après avoir été purifiés par le feu des métaux. Ahriman, Mithra-daroudj, les deus, les daroudjs et tous les autres génies infernaux, chanteront comme Ormuzd, Mithra, les amschaspands, les izeds et tous les autres génies célestes, les louanges de l'Éternel, ils rentreront dans la Loi. En même temps la dyade rentrera dans le monde ; l'univers, c'est-à-dire les *férouërs* émanés de Zarvâna et tout ce qui a été créé, s'absorbera dans le sein de ce dieu suprême et sempiternel."³

¹ This notion agrees so closely with what is said by Plato that we may well suppose him to have been indebted directly or indirectly to the Persian teacher.

² "Culte de Mithra, p. 52.

³ Do., p. 70. A consideration of the ideas entertained by Philo shows that, as Matter supposes, they were derived from a Persian source. Matter asserts further that Philo bequeathed his opinions to the

The ideas entertained by the Hindus with reference to the origin of nature were much the same as those of the Egyptians. The Rev. W. Ward remarks that "the whole system of Hindoo theology is founded upon the doctrine that the Divine Spirit, as the soul of the universe, becomes, in all animate beings, united to matter; that spirit is insulated or individualized by particular portions of matter, which it is continually quitting, and joining itself to new portions of matter; that the human soul is, in other words, God himself; that the knowledge of this, leading men to seek complete deliverance from the degrading and polluting influence of material objects, is the only means of being reunited to the divine nature."¹ The Supreme Being, however, is more than the Soul of the Universe. Revealing himself, first, as *Brahmá*, *Vichnou*, and *Siva*, the Hindu trinity or *Trimourti*, he afterwards manifests himself in the inferior gods, in man, in animated nature, and in the elements of the material world. The world of Brahm is, however, no more eternal than is that of Ormuzd. According to an ancient book, the sun causes a division of time for the gods as well as for men, and a year of man is a day

Gnostics. The summary of them as given by him shows that they belong to the same class of ideas as were anciently universally prevalent in the East. It is as follows:—"L'Être suprême est un foyer de lumières dont les rayons ou les émanations pénètrent l'univers; les lumières et les ténèbres, principes ennemis de tout temps, luttent continuellement ensemble pour s'arracher la domination du monde; le monde a été créé, non par l'Être suprême, mais par un agent secondaire, qui n'est autre chose que sa parole, et suivant des types qui ne sont autre chose que ses idées, et avec une intelligence, une *sophia*, qui n'est autre chose qu'un de ses attributs; le monde visible est l'image du monde invisible; la plus pure essence de l'âme humaine est l'image de Dieu; l'âme a préexisté au corps; le but de son existence terrestre n'est autre que celui de se dégager du corps, qui n'est que sa prison ou son sépulchre, et elle s'élèvera dans les régions supérieures dès qu'elle sera purifiée par cette existence."—"Histoire critique du Gnosticisme" (1828), tom. i., p. 61 *seq.*

¹ "The Religion of the Hindoos" (3d ed.), Introduction, p. 1.

and night of the gods. But the day of Brahmá is far longer. Four thousand years of the gods, with certain additions at the beginning and termination, are called the *Crita* (or *Satya*) age. An aggregate of four ages, amounting to twelve thousand divine years, is called an age of the gods; and a thousand of such divine ages make a day of Brahmá, his night having the same duration. An age of the gods is a *manwantra*, the period during which creation lasts, there being alternate creations and destructions of worlds through innumerable *manwantaras*.¹ There appears to be considerable difference of opinion as to the duration of the divine age, but none as to there being an end of all things followed by a re-creation. Mr Moor says: "It has been revealed to the Hindus that, from the beginning to the end of things, when the whole creation will be annihilated and absorbed in the Supreme Being, there will be five great *calpas*, or periods. We are now in the middle of the fourth *calpa*, fifty years of Brahma being elapsed; and of the remainder the first *calpa* is begun. These five *calpas* include five hundred years of Brahma, at the end of which nothing will remain but the self-existing. Every *calpa*, except the first, is preceded by a renovation of the world."²

Such an idea as that here embodied is not unknown even to Buddhistic teaching, although it has received a colouring such as might be expected from the religious tenets of the followers of Gautama. Thus, in the *Brahmgâta-Sûtra*, it is said that at the end of every *kalpa*, when earth and hell, and even the worlds of the gods, with the three lowest of the Brahma-worlds of Buddhism, are annihilated, one of the spirits in the higher Brahma-worlds descends to a lower sphere, and after him other

¹ "Asiatic Researches," vol. ii., p. 112.

² "The Hindu Pantheon," p. 101.

such spirits who look on the first one as their creator. In the course of time "one of these higher beings sank lower and lower, and was finally born as a man on earth. There, by penances and deep meditation, he attained a state of inner enlightenment which gives to man the faculty of remembering his former existences;" and in this state he proclaims to his fellow-men the existence of Brahman. Prof. Max Müller sees in this a denial, as opposed to the teaching of Brahmanism, of the existence of a personal creator.¹ No doubt it is so, but the difference between Brahmanism and Buddhism in this respect is little more than the difference between the "emanation" of the Egyptians and that of the Persians. The universal soul of the one is the infinite creator of the other, and unless Buddhism assumes the eternal pre-existence of man, its teaching on that point must be reducible to a doctrine of emanations.

It is true that Koeppen supposes that Buddhism, while accepting the fundamental dogmas of evil and metempsychosis, does not enter into the question of the first origin of the individual soul. If the Buddhist is asked why beings are subject to metempsychosis, he answers, says Koeppen, because they are impure and full of sin—"because they fell, after the origin of the present universe, in consequence of taking earthly nourishment, into lust, greed, hatred; in short, into passions and sensuality." This could only be, however, because "there was in them the predisposition, and this has its root in the guilt which the beings had incurred in former worlds. The fall into sin of the present world is the effect and the continuation of the fall into sin in a former world, and so forth *ad infinitum*."² Although the dogma of emanation appears to be excluded by this

¹ Lecture on Buddhistic Nihilism, Trübner's "Literary Record," Oct. 1869, p. 562.

² "Buddha," p. 289, *seq.*

view, yet, when we come to consider the doctrine of Nirvâna, we shall see that it is not so in reality. It is not impossible that Gautama thought man's salvation from the pains of material existence was of so much importance as to require all his energy, without speculating as to the first origin of the soul. The doctrine of metempsychosis is, however, founded on that of emanation, and if not actually implied in Gautama's teaching, it may well have been held concurrently with it. This notion is confirmed by the fact, that speculations as to the origin of man are not wanting to various Buddhist sects. Thus, according to the teaching of the Kalmuck Lamas, certain divinities called *Bourkhans*, of whom the founder of Buddhism was one, sometimes descend upon the earth to preach penitence. Human beings are thought to be able to rise to the dignity of Bourkhan, and hence we may suppose that those divinities were originally spirits who had once lived on earth as men. The first inhabitants of this world, however, are supposed to have been divine beings called *Tingheris*. These beings "primarily inhabited the seventh heaven, but at one time they lapsed into quarrel and into war one against the other. The good conquered, and the wicked *Apouris* were forced to quit heaven, and they installed themselves upon the summit of *Summer* [the great mountain which forms the centre of the world]. Nevertheless, the contest begun in heaven always continued, and the number of fugitive *Tingheris* increased so, that they occupied all the islands which surrounded the mountain *Summer*. At the commencement of their terrestrial life, the *Tingheris* preserved their divine qualities. Thus, for instance, they each lived 80,000 years; their faces were luminous, they possessed wings wherewith to fly, they went without food, &c. But one day there appeared upon the earth a certain fruit named

'shime,' which was as sweet and as white as sugar. As soon as men tasted it they lost all their qualities of perfection; the brilliancy of their faces disappeared, their wings fell off, they felt the need of nourishment, and the duration of their lives sank to 10,000 years only." Calamities now quickly came upon mankind, whose stature as well as life gradually became shorter and shorter as their iniquities increased.¹ Ultimately, however, as says the Lamaic Apocalypse, "men will again become virtuous, and their age will increase until they again reach 80,000 years. At this epoch will appear a holy Burchan Maidarin of wonderful stature and inexpressible beauty. Questioned by men as to the cause of his stature and beauty, he tells them that he had become perfect by virtue, by having conquered all his passions, and by having refrained from sin and bloodshed. All men will then be thoroughly converted, and become finally equally perfect," and doubtless be restored to their primal condition of holiness when they were *chubülgans*, or "born again,"² a term which reveals the fundamental connection of these Lamaic ideas with those of other Oriental religions.

We have in the Lamaic legend reference to a dogma which had an extraordinary influence over the minds of the peoples of antiquity, and which is closely connected with

¹ "Journal of the Anthropological Institute," vol. i., p. 409.

² Pallas' *Merkwürdigkeiten der Morduanen*, &c. (1773), vol. i., pp. 220, 216. This Buddhist legend of the fall of the Tingheris has a curious resemblance in many particulars to that on which is based the belief and practice of the peculiar Hindu sect, the Mahárajás of Western India. "History of the Sect of Mahárajás" (1865), p. 78. Philo refers to the fall of mankind as being due to sensualism. On this point Matter says: "Cette idée est devenue si populaire chez les Juifs, qu'elle s'est communiquée à tons leurs docteurs, et que, passant de là aux Pères, elle est devenue dominante chez les interprètes de la Genèse, même chez les interprètes philosophes qui voient dans les premières chapitres de la Genèse plutôt un *mythe* qu' une *histoire*." *Op. cit.*, p. 68.

the question of moral development. It is referred to also in the Buddhist belief that the highest Brahma-worlds, those which escape destruction at the end of every kalpa, are "open to men, and the beings ascend and descend in the circle of time, according to the truths they have recognised,"¹ these worlds being the homes of those who have by inner contemplation, become 'the Enlightened, the truly Free,' the Buddha. The dogma of the *descent and ascent of souls* which is thus taught, and which is associated with the Egyptian doctrine of emanation from the universal soul, was held also by the Persians, the Chaldæans, and other Eastern peoples.² Lajard says, indeed, that it was the fundamental doctrine of the ancient mysteries. The initiations, says this learned writer, "furent donc un véritable cours de psychologie, où l'enseignait aux mystes comment les âmes, après être descendues sur la terre, séduites par l'attrait surtout des deux principes humides, l'eau et le sang, s'unissent successivement aux divers principes constituants du corps, en subissent la funeste influence, et par là contractent des vices éprouvent des désirs immodérés, des passions que condamnent et leur origine divine et leur future destinée. Les mystes apprenaient, en même temps, par quelle voie, par quels efforts, l'âme peut parvenir à se dégager successivement des divers principes de la matière, à s'affranchir du honteux esclavage où ils la retiennent à recouvrer enfin la liberté et la vie."³

According to Eastern theology, the sky has two doors, by one of which descend the souls which are seduced by the attractions of matter, or which (in the language of an ancient philosophy supposed by Lajard to have been

¹ Max Müller, "Lecture," &c., *loc. cit.*, p. 562.

² Further information on the subject will be found in the chapter on "Mithraism."

³ "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 96.

derived by the Greeks from Western Asia), have *fallen into the paths of generation*. The other door is that by which the souls return to their original abode, after having on earth passed through the ordeals, the metamorphoses and the chastisements due as a punishment for their first fault, and necessary to restore them to their original purity.¹ Agreeably with the ideas associated with the sun and the moon, the latter body was supposed to be the door by which souls descended to earth, while the former was that for their ascent. Those doors were, moreover, called "the gates of the lion" and "the gate of Aquarius," when these were the solstitial signs, and the bull and the scorpion formed the equinoctial points. They were, however, replaced by the gates of Cancer and of Capricorn, when the equinoctial points, owing to the sun's retrogression, were in the signs of the ram and the balance.² The opinions entertained on the subject of the descent and ascent of souls is well expressed in the names which, according to Macrobius, were applied to the two doors of heaven. That of descent was called *the door of men*, while that of ascent was called *the door of the Gods*.³ It is by the former that the soul passes when, overcome by the attractions of matter, it assumes the material covering of the human body, and it is by the latter that the soul returns to its celestial birth-place, when it has again overcome those attractions and regained its original god-like nature.

The connection of the doctrine of metempsychosis with the mysteries is easily understood, when it is recognised that the latter are founded on the dogma of the descent and ascent of souls.⁴ It was supposed that the

¹ "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 133.

² Do., p. 572.

³ See Dupuis, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 648, *seq.*; also as to the descent and ascent of souls, *see* p. 531, *seq.*, p. 623, *seq.*

⁴ Is not this referred to in Gen. vi. 2, when it is said that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair."

soul was compelled to tread the path of generation into which it had fallen, until it had lost all trace of the impurity arising from its contact with matter, and in the meantime it was doomed to pass through various animal forms. Dupuis well says that this transmigration was a kind of purgatory of which the suffering, in expiating the soul's former faults, would render it finally worthy to return to the abode of eternal felicity.¹ When this point was reached the dread cycle of necessity was broken through and transmigration was at an end. The mysteries were framed to aid the soul to escape from the sphere of material existence, and it can, therefore, only have been designed to neutralize the effect of such a doctrine as that of metempsychosis, which depended on the idea that the impure soul was subject to be born again into the world of matter and to occupy there a condition such as would agree with its own moral state. We can well believe, therefore, that the mysteries were intended not merely to represent, but in a sense to take the place of metempsychosis, the initiate passing figuratively through the forms of certain animals, representative of particular phases of material impurity, with which he had to conflict, using his victory as an aid to higher achievements, and thus providing a means by which the soul could finally secure its *anabasis*, or ascend to the world of light and purity. This agrees perfectly with Dupuis' opinion that the aim of the mysteries was to accustom man to detach himself from matter, in order to destroy the action of the senses on the soul, so that he might not be exposed after death to the humiliation of transmigration with its painful accompaniments, and to secure for him an easy return to his primitive dwelling-place.²

The initiate was thought to have undergone in the

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 545, *seq.*

² *Op. cit.*, vol. iv. p. 558.

mysteries a spiritual rebirth, this having the effect of freeing him from liability to the material rebirth of metempsychosis, and hence we cannot doubt that all those peoples who held the doctrine of the new birth must have accepted that of transmigration. This has already been shown to have been the case with the Hindu Aryas, the higher castes among whom were called the "twice-born," and such, doubtless, it was with all peoples among whom "caste" was established, founded as this appears to have been on the doctrine of the new birth. It was so even with the early Buddhists. Gautama did not deny the propriety of caste, but only that spiritual rebirth was the exclusive privilege of the Brahmans, or at least attainable only at their hands and in the mode which they taught. Nor is there any reason to believe but that many of the early Christians were acquainted with the doctrine of transmigration,¹ although, like the Hindus and the later Buddhists, they taught the existence of a place of torment for the unregenerate. It may, however, as St Jerome relates, have been an esoteric doctrine with them, and taught only to a selected few in later ages. Equally with their predecessors, they insisted on the necessity of the new-birth, and though they had not the elaborate rites in which it was represented of the more ancient religions, yet the moral ideas which were connected with that doctrine differed little from those enforced in the mysteries. The Christians, however, were not without mysteries to which initiation was required. Origen himself admits this, when he says, "to speak of the Christian doctrine as a secret system is altogether absurd. But that there should be certain doctrines, not made known to the

¹ Dupuis says, "Origen, Synésius, and other Christian philosophers, with the Simonians, the Basilideans, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, and all the Gnostics, held the doctrine of metempsychosis," *op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 535, *seq.*

multitude, which are [revealed] after the esoteric ones [e.g., Jesus born of a virgin, his crucifixion, his resurrection, general judgment to come] have been taught, is not a peculiarity of Christianity alone, but also of philosophic systems."¹ In Chapter xii. of the same work, he denies that Celsus was, as he affirms, acquainted with all the opinions of Christians. He adds that even Christians are not acquainted with everything in the Jewish history and the gospels, and he refers particularly to the Persians, as having mysteries "conducted on rational principles by the learned among them, but understood in a symbolical sense by the more superficial of the multitude. And the same applies to the Syrians and the Indians." The exact nature of the Christian mysteries it is more difficult to ascertain. As we shall see in a future chapter, many of the ideas associated with the Christian religion closely resemble those used in the secret cult of Mazdaism. The prayer given by Dupuis² from Synésius, "O Father! grant that my soul, reunited to light, may be no more plunged into the corruption of the earth," breathes the exact spirit of the Persian cult. We may suppose, therefore, that the secret doctrines of Christianity were of much the same kind as those taught to the soldiers of Mithra. Dean Milman, indeed, asserts that "the rite of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper were the sole real mysteries; their nature and effects were the hidden knowledge which was revealed to the perfect alone."³ It may be well doubted, however, whether this does not embrace the whole field covered by the mysteries of the older religions. The secret doctrines of these were in themselves simple, although they were surrounded by numerous rites and

¹ "Against Celsus," Bk. I. Ch. vii.; Ante-nicene Library, vol. x.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 554.

³ "History of Christianity," vol. iii., p. 429.

observances to ensure that they should be revealed only to those who were worthy. And such was the case also with Christianity. Dean Milman says: "The church rivalled the old Heathen mysteries in expanding by slow degrees its higher privileges. Christianity was itself the great mystery, unfolded gradually and in general after a long and searching probation. It still preserved the power of opening at once its gates to the more distinguished proselytes, and of jealously and tardily unclosing them to more doubtful neophytes. . . . Its preparatory ceremonial of abstinence, personal purity, ablution, secrecy, closely resembled that of the Pagan mysteries (perhaps each may have contributed to the other); so the theologic dialect of Christianity spoke the same language."¹

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Bishop Warburton should accuse the Christian Fathers of having unjustly represented the ancient mysteries, and of having exhibited great credulity in listening to the tales of secret abominations which were told them. It was a fitting return when "the same secrecy in the Christian rites, and the language introduced by the Fathers in speaking of them, procured as easy credit to those calumnies of murder and incest charged upon them by the Pagans," who accused the Christians of the specific enormities which disgraced their own mysteries. The strange part of the story is, says Warburton, "that after this, they should so studiously and formally transfer the terms, phrases, rites, ceremonies, and discipline of these *odious mysteries* into our holy religion."² It is extremely improbable that there should be this studious use of the same ceremonial, language, and observances, and yet be a complete difference of doctrinal teaching. It is

¹ "History of Christianity," p. 419-20.

² "Divine Legation," vol. i., p. 230.

necessary to remember that Baptism and the Lord's supper, although administered in secret, were not in themselves mysteries. They were merely signs of certain spiritual changes which only the initiated could undergo, or symbols of certain doctrines which they alone could be taught. In this sense it may be said that baptism was "a complete lustration of the soul," and the partaking of the Lord's supper was a spiritual union with the divine being who had died, but who had risen again. The same remarks exactly might, however, be made as to the so-called pagan mysteries. These also had the initial baptism and the sacred feast, the ideas connected with which were the same as those taught in the Lord's supper. As will be shown more fully hereafter, the great object of the mysteries was to enforce the necessity of a spiritual re-birth, and to show how the soul could escape from the *deadly* influence of matter and attain to eternal life. Probably the Christians soon forgot the source whence they had derived their own ideas, and the bitter language which the Fathers used in relation to the pagan mysteries may have been due in great measure to ignorance of the doctrines taught in them. Seeing that certain symbols, which, to the modern mind have an obscene reference, were used in the public ceremonies connected with the mysteries, they supposed that the secret rites were of the most abominable nature. This conclusion may have been confirmed by abuses which certainly did creep into the celebration of the rights of Bacchus or Dionysus, but to condemn all the mysteries on this account was as irrational as it would be to condemn Christianity on account of the excesses of the Anabaptists of Munster. The ignorance of the Christian Fathers on that subject was the less excusable since it proves that they knew little as to the origin of the ideas which were embodied in their own religion, and which (as will be shown more

fully hereafter), differed from those expressed in the mysteries in little more than that the life and immortality taught secretly in the one was "brought to light," *i.e.*, publicly proclaimed, by the other. The mode by which the spiritual and eternal life was to be gained was practically the same in each case, and in both the secret cult of the mysteries and the public teaching of Christianity, the process was treated as a new birth. The Christian, like the initiate, was baptised into a new life, the observance of the conditions of which ensured a deliverance from a future existence of misery, whether it was one of metempsychosis or of eternal punishment in the hell which is common to Christianity and other religions.

It is now evident that, although the primitive doctrine of transmigration may have been but slightly associated with ideas of morality, it was yet capable of being used as an important moral instrument. Certain animals were originally thought to be tenanted by the souls of wicked men, and afterwards these souls were believed to be condemned to pass through a series of such existences until they were freed from moral impurity. Those who possessed a certain degree of moral excellence were, however, supposed to pass at once, after death, to a state of happiness, and ultimately means were devised by which that excellence might be acquired or increased during this life. This idea influenced the form taken by the mysteries, which, as finally developed, by securing spiritual re-birth for the initiated before death, enabled them to escape from the "cycle of necessity," within the limits of which the soul subjected to the fascinations of the material or carnal life was hopelessly confined.

The moral element in metempsychosis is dependent on the doctrine of emanations, but how this originated

is uncertain. It implies the belief in the existence of the universal soul from which all finite souls were supposed to have been derived. Whether, as might be thought, the starting-point in these speculations was the formation of the idea of the pre-existence of the human soul, may be questioned. More probably they had a purely physical basis, and originated in the philosophical speculations of the Scythic Magi as to the origin and constitution of the world, which led to the belief that heat was the active agent in nature, and that all life is derived from the principle of heat which pervades the universe. Hence, as Dupuis remarks, the soul was regarded as a small portion of the immortal fire.¹ It may have been long after the formation of this notion before it came to be regarded as having a moral element. It is possible, indeed, that this did not take place until the *luminous* principle had come to be recognised as an important feature in nature. The idea of purity appears to have been, from an early date, associated in the East with light, and with the white colour which represents it, and it is, therefore, much more fitted to furnish a moral analogy than heat, which is usually connected with the idea of generation. Speculation, relative to the origin of evil, may, indeed, have preceded the distinct recognition of light as a separate principle. Meditation on evil-doing, under the influence of feelings such as that expressed in the saying—"Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards," may have suggested the analogy between evil and darkness, and goodness and light. Misery is the attendant of birth, and this would be associated with the night, at least from the time when the moon became the symbol of generation. Birth itself came to be looked upon, not only as an evil, but as the source of all evil, and the matter with which the

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. iv., p. 556.

soul had to be united when incarnated, was considered to be impure like the darkness it symbolises. Hence birth was thought to be a sign of impurity in the soul, which laid it open to be attracted by matter, and thus to be drawn away from the infinite centre of light and heat from which it had emanated. It was taught, however, that the soul could escape from the influence of matter, and from the consequences of the actions performed under its influence, by undergoing the penalties of metempsychosis. The doctrine of the descent and ascent of souls on which metempsychosis was founded, was finally elaborated in the mysteries, which provided a means by which the soul could thus escape, and doing so, regain its original purity and estate without passing through the cycle of transmigration. Probably at this stage the dualistic theology had been fully developed, and the conflict which the initiated waged in the mysteries would be, not only against the attractions of matter, but also against the Prince of Darkness, by whom it was then said to have been created.

CHAPTER IV.

HINDUISM.

THE opinions referred to in the preceding chapter as having been at one time almost universally prevalent, have, during the last two thousand years, been gradually restricted to a continually decreasing area. When once Christianity ceased to be influenced by the old Gnostic ideas derived from the East, its teaching was seen to be inconsistent with the doctrine of transmigration of souls, no less than that of divine emanation. The same must be said of Mohammedanism, except so far as its founder may be classed among the mystics and its followers as Sufis. The author of the *Dabistan* gives, as an authentic tradition of the prophet, "There are moments in which I am with God in such a manner that neither angel, nor archangel, nor prophet, nor apostle, can attain to it."¹ The doctrines of the Sufis, who believe themselves capable of becoming God during the present life,² are evidently based on the dogma of emanations.³ Sufism includes also the doctrine of transmigration, the separation of the soul from one body, and its junction with another, being called *Maâd*, "resurrection."⁴ This nevertheless is, undoubtedly, a foreign addition to Mohammedanism, and to find the beliefs of the ancient world as they have lineally descended to our own time,

¹ English trans., vol. iii. p. 288.

² Do., vol. iii. p. 290.

³ For an account of the opinions of Sufis, see "The *Dabistan*," vol. iii. p. 220, *seq.*

⁴ Do., vol. iii. p. 277.

we must seek among those Eastern peoples who have not been affected by the teachings of Jesus or Mohammed, or, if at all, only very superficially. We have already had occasion to point out the important position occupied by "transmigration" in the doctrinal teaching of the Buddhists, and we shall have to return to the subject when treating of the moral system of their great apostle. That India was the birthplace of historical Buddhism, cannot now be questioned, and to that country some writers are inclined to trace the origin of the doctrine of transmigration itself. M. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire finds a close analogy between the philosophy of Plato and the Sâmkhya philosophy of Kapila, and he concludes that the dogma of metempsychosis was derived by Plato, through Pythagoras, from India, rather than from Egypt.¹ It is possible, indeed, that the Egyptians themselves may have been indebted for the dogma to the Hindus, over whom it exercises the most potent influence. Among the latter it has been developed into a complete system, which may be said to govern nearly every action of their whole lives.

An examination of the religious and moral phenomena observable among the Hindus must be of essential service for the understanding of the ideas entertained in relation to religion and morality by the ancients. For that people have undoubtedly preserved the chief features of a condition of society which thousands of years ago prevailed throughout the then civilised world. The religious ideas and customs which are usually supposed to represent a comparatively recent phase of Hindu thought, are such as were known to and practised among the ancient Chaldeans and Egyptians. The system of caste, which in India has an all-important influence over social life, was almost equally potent in the ancient world.

¹ "Memoires de l'Academie des Science Morales," tom. viii. p. 515.

In general character also, the Egyptians had much in common with the modern Hindus. A softness of temper, due probably to a want of physical energy rather than to moral excellence, was distinctive of the former as of the latter. In their general moral ideas, however, the Egyptians were apparently in advance of the Hindus, owing probably to the influence of the teaching inculcated in the sacred Mysteries, which appears to have taken a more purely moral tone in the West than in the East. In their slight regard for the passive virtues, the inhabitants of India more nearly approach the Chinese, and, like this people, the Hindus have been subjected to influences which can hardly have failed to modify considerably their moral ideas, whether their general character has been affected or not. Buddhism was essentially a moral agent, and although it has almost¹ completely disappeared from the soil of India (except so far as it is represented by Jainism), its teaching may doubtless be traced in various practices which represent the higher phases of Hindu morality, and which approach it on the altruistic side to that of the Chinese.

Bishop Heber, who took some pains to inform himself of the nature of Hinduism, came to the conclusion that, of all the idolatries which he had ever read or heard of, the religion of the Hindus was "the worst, both in the degrading notions it gives of the Deity, in the endless round of its burdensome ceremonies, which occupy the time and distract the thoughts, without either instructing or interesting its votaries; in the filthy acts of uncleanness and cruelty, not only permitted but enjoined, and inseparably interwoven with those ceremonies; in the system of castes, a system which tends, more than anything else the Devil has yet invented, to destroy the

¹ In Bengal, chiefly at Chittagong, there are now a considerable number of Buddhists.

feelings of general benevolence, and to make nine-tenths of mankind the hopeless slaves of the remainder ; and in the absence of any popular system of morals, or any single lesson which the people at large ever hear, to live virtuously and do good to each other." He added, " I do not say, indeed, that there are not some scattered lessons of this kind to be found in their ancient books ; but those books are neither accessible to the people at large, nor are these last permitted to read them ; and in general all the sins that a Sudra is taught to fear are killing a cow, offending a Brahmin, or neglecting one of the many frivolous rites by which their deities are supposed to be conciliated." ¹

From what has been said in a preceding chapter,² and from what will hereafter appear as to the moral conduct of the Hindus, we cannot doubt that Bishop Heber's denunciation is deserved. And yet probably no people are more attentive to the duties of their religion than the modern Hindus. The performance of religious rites is perhaps less strict among the people generally than was formerly the case, but the Rev. W. Ward,³ who reproduces the complaint of a Brahmin as to the irreligion of the present age, mentions facts which show that those rites were in his time still largely observed. He states that the daily offerings to the goddess Kali are astonishingly numerous, and that the amount expended in Calcutta alone over the annual festival of Dourga was half

¹ "Journey through the Upper Provinces of India," vol. iii. pp. 354, 355.

² Vol. i. ch.

³ Mr H. H. Wilson did not think very highly of Mr Ward's opinion. He says that Mr Ward "is neither an experienced nor an admirable witness ; his experience was limited to Bengal, in which the best specimens of the Hindu character are comparatively rare, and his station and circumstances brought him into contact chiefly with bad specimens even of Bengalis." "The History of British India," by James Mill, 4th ed., vol. i. p. 435, *note*.

a million pounds sterling.¹ Elsewhere he says that as a person passes along the streets and roads he is continually reminded of one or other of the ceremonies which are daily performed by those who conscientiously observe their religious duties.² Whether or not the performances of those ceremonies is prompted by pure devotion, or by the desire to obtain the blessings promised by the Shastras in return for them,³ they are evidence of a belief in the being of God. The same must be said of the pilgrimages to sacred places, and of the penances⁴ which form so prominent a feature of the Hindu religious system. Mr Ward says as to the former "excited by the miraculous accounts inserted in the Shastras, multitudes visit these places; others reside there for a time, and some spend the last stages of life at a holy place, to make sure of heaven after death. Rich men not unfrequently erect temples and cut pools at these places for the benefit of their souls."⁵ Benares is especially noted for the multitudes who visit it for the purpose of obtaining the benefit of a residence within its sacred enclosure, which is "compared to a loose female, who receives all, and destroys their desire of sin, by quenching their appetites."⁶ Mr Sherring declares that the Hindu is in his own way a religious man of very great earnestness. His religion enters into all the associations and concerns of his life. He can take no step without it. He carries his offerings publicly in the streets, on the way to the temple in the morning, and receives upon his forehead, from the officiating priest, the peculiar mark of

¹ "The History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindus," vol. i. pp. 109, 160.

² Do., Introduction, vol. i. p. 82.

³ Do., p. 78.

⁴ For a curious account of the religious vows of the Hindus see "Description of the People of India," by the Abbé Dubois, p. 413, *seq.*

⁵ *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 130.

⁶ Do., vol. i., Introduction, p. 74, *note.*

his god, as the symbol of the worship he has paid him, which he wears all the day long. As he walks about, you may hear him muttering the names and sounding the praises of his gods. In greeting a friend, he accosts him in the name of a deity. In a letter on business, or on any other matter, the first word he invariably writes is the name of a god. Should he propose an engagement of importance, he first enquires the pleasure of the idol, and a lucky day for observing it. At his birth, his horoscope is cast; when he is ill, the gods must be propitiated; when he is bereaved, the idol must be remembered; at his death, his funeral rites are performed in the name of one or more deities.”¹

The Abbé Dubois bears similar testimony to the influence of religious ideas over the Hindu mind. He says, “we hardly find any of their civil observances that are not combined with some religious mixture, either as the motive or the object. Everything, in short, is blended with superstition; whether it be the manner of salutation, the mode of dress, the shape and colour of the clothes, the placing of their trinkets and other ornaments, the manner of erecting their houses and other buildings, the side where the fireplace is to stand, or where the household utensils; and even the rules of civility and politeness which they are called on to observe.” He adds, “I have been closely viewing their customs and observances for more than fifteen years, and I have scarcely remarked any one, however simple or indifferent, or, I may add, indecent, that had not something religious either for its motive or end.”² Elsewhere the same writer observes that buildings for religious purposes are probably more numerous in India than

¹ “The Sacred City of the Hindus” (1868), p. 44. See also Mill’s “History of British India,” vol. i. p. 329.

² “Description of the People of India,” p. 16.

in any other country, and he states that it has become proverbial among the Hindus that if a man lives in a place where there is no temple some misfortune is sure sooner or later to happen to him.¹ A recent writer, himself a Hindu, says that "the Hindus walk and sit religiously, eat and drink religiously, work and sleep religiously, their social organism is interwoven with their religion."²

Such being the character of the Hindus it is hopeless to expect to understand their moral ideas without first knowing something of the teaching which has moulded their religious beliefs. That teaching is not to be found in the Vedas, nor have even the Puranas exercised so great an influence over the life and manners of the people as the ordinances ascribed to the mythical Menu, which, notwithstanding the minute moral directions they contain, are essentially religious in their aim. What then is the teaching of the great Hindu lawgiver? The Code of Menu, although some of its texts are now considered obsolete, and as intended only for the three first ages of the world,³ are supposed to have been derived from a divine source, and its last clause expressly declares that "every twice-born man, who, attentively reading this Mánava Sástra promulgated by Bhriga, shall become habitually virtuous, will attain the beatitude which he seeks."

It is important to notice, however, in the first place, that the future happiness attainable in the mode described by Bhriga,⁴ is promised only to the "twice-born."

¹ "Description of the People of India," p. 393.

² Lectures and Tracts, by Keshub Chunder Sen (1870), p. 20. For a remarkable account of the popular religion of the Hindus, see an article by Mr A. C. Lyall in the "Fortnightly Review" for 1872, p. 121, *seq.*

³ See General Note to the "Institutes of Hindu Law," or "The Ordinances of Menu," translated by Sir Wm. Jones (Works, vol. iii.).

⁴ Menu would appear to be merely a personification of the divine understanding. There is no ground for supposing him to have had any real existence. See "The Institutes," *loc. cit.*, p. 70.

It is true that even a Sudra may gain "exaltation in this world and in the next," by imitating the practice of good men (in the household sacraments), and that he may be able to impart "pure knowledge."¹ But elsewhere it is said that "servile attendance on Brahmans learned in the Veda, chiefly on such as keep house and are famed for virtue, is of itself the highest duty of a Sudra, and leads him to future beatitude; pure (in body and mind), humbly serving the three higher classes, mild in speech, never arrogant, ever seeking refuge in Brahmans, probably he may attain the most eminent class (in another transmigration)."² In another place it is said that "attendance on Brahmans is pronounced the best work of a Sudra; whatever else he may perform will comparatively avail him nothing."³ Nor is this inconsistent with the fact that the same moral duties are assigned to the Sudras as to the three other classes.⁴ For whatever his virtues, the Sudra cannot raise himself to an equality to those above him. The laws of Menu lay down expressly that "Brahma himself, having compared a Sudra, who performs the duties of the twice-born, with a twice-born man, who does the acts of a Sudra, said: 'Those two are neither equal nor unequal,' (that is, they are neither equal in rank, nor unequal in bad conduct)."⁵ Thus the best Sudra is merely on an equality with the worst Brahman, who through his misconduct sinks to a level with the Sudra.⁶ Practically therefore the moral

¹ "Institutes," ch. x., v. 127, 128; ch. ii., v. 238.

² Do., ch. ix., v. 334-5.

³ Do., ch. x., v. 123.

⁴ Do., ch. x., v. 63.

⁵ Do., ch. x., v. 73.

⁶ The Brahman, until investiture with the sacred thread, is declared by Bhriga to be on a level with a Sudra (ii. 172), that is, morally, not socially. The servitude of the Sudra was not a state of slavery, even when the laws of Menu were compiled (viii. 414). When not engaged in waiting on the "twice-born," he was to subsist by handicraft, chiefly by mechanical occupations, such as joinery and masonry, or the practical arts, such as painting and writing (x. 99,

rules laid down in the laws of Menu are for the guidance of the three higher classes or castes. The Sudra may hope through his good conduct to rise to the ranks of the twice-born in some future birth, but until then his duty consists in obedience to the commands of his superiors rather than in the practice of virtue.

In what consists then the virtue required of the members of the three higher classes? Each of the four ages which, according to Hindu philosophy, have succeeded each other since the birth of mankind, has been distinguished by its special virtue. During the *Krita* age it was devotion, in the *Treta* age it was divine knowledge, in the *Divapara*, the chief duty attended to was sacrifice, and in the *Kali* age, which is the present one, liberality alone.¹ The earliest is considered the purest, and the highest attainment of virtue in each of the subsequent ones must be that by which it is distinguished. And it is indeed affirmed that "all the bliss of deities and of men is declared by sages, who discern the sense of the Veda, to have in devotion its cause, in devotion its continuance, in devotion its fulness." The influence of this principle is great, seeing that not only are sinners in the highest degree absolved from guilt "by austere devotion well practised; but even souls which animate worms and insects, serpents, moths, beasts, birds, and vegetables, attain heaven by its power. It is said to equal the performance of all duties, and in fact it becomes the perfect fulfilment of duty, as it is divine knowledge in a Brahman; defence of the people in a Kshatriya; the business of trade and agriculture in a Vaisya; dutiful service, in a Sudra."² Elsewhere devotion and sacred

100); but he is to restrict himself to the acts of his class (x. 96, 97). As to the social condition of the Sudra, see Wilson, *loc. cit.*, vol. i. p. 194, *note*.

¹ "Institutes," ch. i., v. 86.

² *Do.*, ch. xi., v. 235, *seq.*

knowledge are classed together as of equal value as means for attaining final beatitude.¹

Divine knowledge was the distinctive virtue of the Treta age, and great importance is attached to it by the Laws of Menu. That knowledge is to be sought in the Veda, which teaches everything necessary for the prosperity of man. This is not the highest science, however. In answer to the question, whether there is no single act held more powerful than the rest in leading men to beatitude, Bhriga declared that the chief duty was to acquire a knowledge of one supreme God: "that is the most exalted of all sciences, because it ensures immortality."² This is intended when it is said that "he who completely knows the sense of the Veda Sastra, while he remains in any one of the four orders, approaches the divine nature, even though he sojourn in this low world."³ It must not be supposed, however, that the mere reading of the Veda is sufficient. A man may know the three Vedas, and yet if he governs not his passions and disobeys the ceremonial requirements, he is inferior to the man who, while completely governing his passions, knows only the *gáyátrí*.⁴ In another place Bhriga affirms that in the knowledge and adoration of one God are comprised all the rules of good conduct before enforced;⁵ divine knowledge, like devotion, being thus

¹ "Institutes," ch. xii., v. 104. For the requirements of the austere devotion of the third and fourth orders of Brahmans, see the "Institutes," ch. vi. In v. 81, it is said of the anchorite, "having gradually abandoned all earthly attachments, and indifferent to all pairs of opposite things (as honour and dishonour, and the like), he remains absorbed in the divine essence."

² See ch. xii., v. 85 *seq.*, as to the nature of the Veda.

³ Menu, ch. xiii., v. 102.

⁴ Do., ch. ii., v. 118. As to the *gáyátrí*, see *supra*, p. 150. This sacred verse is thus translated by Mr Colebrook: "Let us meditate on the adorable light of the Divine Ruler; may it guide our intellects!"

⁵ Menu, ch. xiii., v. 87.

the perfect fulfilment of duty. These rules are for the guidance of the Brahman, who alone is supposed to be worthy to explain the sacred text, although the other twice-born classes are directed to carefully read it. They are as follows:—"Studying and comprehending the Veda, practising pious austerities, acquiring divine knowledge (of law and philosophy), command over the organs of sense and action, avoiding all injury to sentient creatures, and showing reverence to a (natural and spiritual) father."¹ These six chief branches of duty are said to ensure final happiness, but elsewhere a tenfold system of duties is laid down for the guidance of Brahmans. The ten precepts are, "content, returning good for evil, resistance to sensual appetites, abstinence from illicit gain, purification, coercion of the organs, knowledge of the scripture, knowledge of the supreme spirit, veracity, and freedom from wrath."²

In the chapter entitled "On Economicks and Private Morals," full directions are given for the guidance of a Brahman through life, but they are chiefly useless ceremonial observances. The daily performance without sloth of his peculiar duty as prescribed by the Veda is "the highest path to supreme bliss."³ The tenfold system of duties may, however, be there traced, and it is expressly stated that "a wise man should constantly discharge all the moral duties, though he perform not constantly the ceremonies of religion, since he falls low, if, while he performs ceremonial acts only, he discharge not his moral duties."⁴ Moreover, acts of charity are expressly enjoined. The wealthy man is told that by sedulous performance of the sacred rites, and by consecrating gardens or pools with faith, he can procure an imperishable reward. It is added: "if he meet with fit

¹ "Institutes," ch. xii., v. 83.

² Do., ch. iv., v. 14.

³ Do., ch. vi., v. 92.

⁴ Do., ch. v., v. 204.

objects of benevolence, let him constantly bestow gifts on them, both at sacrifices and consecrations to the best of his power, and with a cheerful heart;” and certain rewards are specified as attainable by particular gifts.¹ The direction for the performance of acts of charity is probably intended for all the twice-born classes. In the same chapter it is said, “He who perseveres in good actions, in subduing his passions, in bestowing largesses, in gentleness of manners, who bears hardships patiently, who associates not with the malignant, who gives pain to no sentient being, obtains final beatitude.”² This would seem to refer especially to the Brahman, but elsewhere, after setting out the six prescribed acts of the first-born class, “reading the Vedas, and teaching others to read them, sacrificing and assisting others to sacrifice, giving (to the poor, if themselves have enough), and accepting (gifts from the virtuous, if themselves are poor),”—it is declared that the receiving of presents is an act of duty which belongs only to the Brahman, implying that the other twice-born classes are to make gifts to him.³ Acts of charity are thus enjoined for the benefit of the Brahman by all the twice-born, but the Brahman need give only to a member of his own class, thus securing for himself the blessings of the Kali age.

This privilege of the Brahman depends on the sacred character with which he is endowed, showing that his superiority over the other castes is no modern innovation. Bhriga declares that “the very birth of Brahmans is a constant incarnation of *Dherma*, god of justice, for the Brahman is born to promote justice, and to procure ultimate happiness. When a Brahman springs to light, he is born above the world, the chief of all creatures, assigned to guard the treasury of duties, religious and

¹ “Institutes,” ch. v., v. 226 seq.

² Do., ch. v., v. 246.

³ Do., ch. x., v. 75 seq.

civil. Whatever exists in the universe, is all in effect (though not in form), the wealth of the Brahman, since the Brahman is entitled to it all by his primogeniture and eminence of birth. The Brahman eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, and bestows but his own in alms. Through the benevolence of the Brahman, indeed, other mortals enjoy life."¹ In another place it is said that the Brahmans created the fire, the sea, and the moon; that by them worlds and gods perpetually subsist; and that, if angry, they could frame other worlds and give being to new gods and mortals.² No wonder that a Brahman was an object of veneration, even to deities.³ That authority is due to the possession of sacred knowledge, and the exercise of austere devotion, and the rules laid down for the guidance of the Brahman therefore may safely be accepted as embodying the highest morality known to the Hindus when those rules were first promulgated.

Several summaries of the chief moral duties prescribed for the Brahmans have been above quoted, and there is little to find fault with in them, except in the insufficient recognition of the altruistic sentiments. General exhortations to virtue are not uncommon. The reward of the man habitually virtuous, "whose offences have been expiated by devotion," is after death to be

¹ "Institutes," ch. i., v. 98 *seq.*

² Do., ch. ix., v. 314 *seq.*

³ Do., ch. xi., v. 85, see Mill's "History of British India," vol. i. p. 191, and the observations there by Mr H. H. Wilson, on the position occupied by the Brahmans. Mr Wilson says, that in the early stages of Hindu society, "they were an order of men who followed a course of religious study and practice during the first half of their lives, and spent the other in a condition of self-denial and mendicancy," but that now they have, collectively, lost all claim to the character of a priesthood. They form a nation following all kinds of secular avocations, and where they are met with in a religious capacity, it is not as Brahmans, merely, but as being ministers of temples, or the family Guru, or priests of the lower classes of the people.

instantly conveyed to the highest world "with a radiant form and a body of ethereal substance."¹ Moreover, spiritual purity is strongly insisted on, and, absurd as are some of the means laid down for attaining it, external observances are not the most efficacious. Thus, after saying that sacred learning, austere devotion, fire, holy aliment, earth, the mind, water, smearing with cow-dung, air, prescribed acts of religion, the sun, and time, are purifiers of embodied spirits; it is added, "but of all pure things, purity in acquiring wealth is pronounced the most excellent, since he who gains wealth with clean hands² is truly pure; not he who is purified merely with earth and water. By forgiveness of injuries, the learned are purified; by liberality, those who have neglected their duty; by pious meditation, those who have secret faults; by devout austerity, those who know the Veda."³ Without repentance, however, a sinner cannot be absolved from his guilt. "In proportion as the heart sincerely loathes his evil deed, so far shall his vital spirit be freed from the taint of it," and to escape future retribution, a man must be "constantly good in thoughts, words, and actions."⁴ This threefold purity is referred to in another passage, where it is said, "he whose firm understanding obtains a command over his words, a command over his thoughts, and a command over his whole body, may justly be called a *tridandi*, or triple commander (not a mere anchorite who bears three visible slaves). The man who exerts this triple self-command with respect to all animated creatures, wholly subduing both lust and wrath, shall by those means attain beatitude."⁵

¹ Menu, ch. iv., v. 243.

² Does not this imply that the getting of wealth with unclean hands was the usual practice?

³ Menu, ch. v., v. 105 *seq.*

⁴ Do., ch. xi., v. 228 *seq.*

⁵ Menu, ch. xii., v. 10, 11; see also ch. ii., v. 161.

It can hardly be denied that many of the moral ideas entertained by the authors of the laws of Menu were, on the whole, of a high type. No doubt, acts of virtue are enjoined on the ground of their conducing to future happiness,¹ but the attainment of this state is dependent on something more than external conduct. "He whose discourse and heart are pure, and ever perfectly guarded, attains all the fruit arising from his complete course of studying the Veda."² In this teaching we see the influence of the doctrine of metempsychosis and of the theory of emanation from the Divine soul on which it is founded. From the actions of men, says Bhrgi, "proceed their various transmigrations in the highest, the mean, and the lowest degree," and of those actions the heart is the instigator.³ The rational soul has three qualities—a tendency to goodness, to passion, and to darkness—and according to the predominance of one or other of these dispositions of mind will be the nature of such actions. Thus the good quality is attended by study of Scripture, austere devotion, sacred knowledge, corporal purity, command over the organs, performance of duties, and meditation on the Divine Spirit. The quality of passion shows itself in interested motives for acts of religion or morality, perturbation of mind on slight occasions, commission of acts forbidden by law, and habitual indulgence in selfish gratifications. Finally, covetousness, indolence, avarice, detraction, atheism, omission of prescribed acts, a habit of soliciting favours, and inattention to necessary busi-

¹ In one place, however, it is said "not a single act here below appears ever to be done by a man free from self-love; whatever he performs is wrought from his desire of a reward. He, indeed, who should persist in discharging these duties without any view to their fruit, would attain hereafter the state of the immortals, and even in this life would enjoy all the virtuous qualifications that his fancy could suggest." Menu, ch. ii., v. 4, 5.

² Do., ch. ii. v. 160.

³ Do., ch. xii., v. 3, 4.

ness, are declared to belong to the dark quality. In another verse, it is said that the chief object of the last-named quality is pleasure, and of the passionate quality, worldly prosperity, while the chief object of the good quality is virtue.¹

We have already seen what the "virtue" required of a Brahman includes, but it may be advisable to see further what qualities are specifically commended or condemned. Justice occupies an important place. The Brahman is born to promote it, and he who violates it is considered by the gods as a slayer of the bull *Vrishā*, which represents the divine form of justice.² Reverence is strongly inculcated. Wealth, kindred, age, moral conduct, and divine knowledge, are said to entitle men to respect. Constant reverence for the aged will ensure life, knowledge, fame, and strength; while as to a father, mother, and spiritual preceptor, it is declared that "all duties are completely performed by that man by whom those three are completely honoured."³ Hospitality, at least to Brahmans, is an important virtue, and numerous rules are laid down for its observance.⁴ It is one phase of the charity which Brahmans are privileged to receive, and the bestowal of which is attended with great reward. "An oblation in the mouth (or hand) of a Brahman is far better than offerings to holy fire, it never drops, it never dries, it is never consumed."⁵ Kindness to animals is made a part of moral duty, and the prohibition to eat their flesh is based on the injury which they sustain in the loss of life.⁶ The actions forbidden are those—such as theft, assault, murder, and adultery—which are re-

¹ Menu, ch. xii., v. 30 *seq.* 38.

² Do., ch. i., v. 98; viii. 16.

³ Do., ch. ii., v. 121, 136, 234.

⁴ Do., ch. iii., v. 72, 99 *seq.*

⁵ Do., ch. vii., v. 84, and see 134 *seq.*

⁶ Do., ch. v., v. 43 *seq.* Cattle are directed to be slain at sacrifices, and they are said to have been created for that purpose. Do., ch. v., v. 39 *seq.*

ferred to in every criminal code. Perjury by a Brahman is to be punished by banishment, and by any of the other classes by fine and banishment. Future punishment, moreover, is threatened for those who give false testimony.¹ Gaming of every kind is strictly prohibited.² Sensuality is strongly condemned, as destroying all the benefits to be derived from liberality, sacrifices, or pious austerities.³ Affection between husband and wife is enforced, and the supreme law of marriage is declared to be: "Let mutual fidelity continue until death."⁴ Before marriage, however, chastity, on the part of man at least, would seem not to be absolutely required, as it is said: "In lawfully tasting meat, in drinking fermented liquor, in caressing women, there is no turpitude; for such enjoyments men are naturally prone; but a virtuous abstinence from them produces a signal compensation."⁵

The rules of conduct thus laid down would seem to leave little to amend in the moral teaching of Menu. It may be doubted, however, whether the compiler of the Institutes had any very clear notion as to the proper basis of moral conduct. That which is sanctified by long usage is right, and the usage must be ascertained either from the Veda or from the teaching of the Brahman.⁶ It is true that the moral laws laid down are, on the whole, of a high order, and in one place, at least, it is said that the knowledge of what is right should be a sufficient incentive to ensure obedience to them.⁷ But the value of this teaching is lessened when we consider that the performance of sinful actions could be expiated by penance, and that many of the actions which were treated as extremely sinful possess no real moral element.

¹ Menu, ch. viii., v. 81 *seq.*, 292 *seq.*

² Do., ch. ii., v. 97, 118.

³ Do., ch. v., v. 56.

⁴ Do., ch. v., v. 13.

⁵ Do., ch. ix., v. 221.

⁶ Do., ch. xix., v. 101.

⁷ Do., ch. ii., v. 8, 18, 20.

As to the former point, it is believed by the Hindus that the stupid, dumb, blind, deaf, and deformed, are persons who have committed bad actions in a preceding state of existence, which have not been expiated by penance.¹ The crimes in the highest degree are declared by the Institutes to be killing a Brahman, drinking forbidden liquor, stealing gold from a priest, adultery with the wife of a father (natural or spiritual), and associating with such as commit those offences.² The expiatory penances for these actions, *when openly committed*, are very severe,³ but it is far otherwise when the offences are secret ones. Thus it is said: "Sixteen suppressions of the breath (while the holiest of texts is repeated), with the three mighty words and the trilateral syllable, continued each day for a month, absolve even the slayer of a Brahman from his hidden faults. Even a drinker of spirituous liquors is absolved by repeating each day the text *apa* used by the sage Cautsa, or that beginning with *preti* used by Vasisht'ha, or that called *mahitra*, or that of which the first word is *suddha vatyah*. By repeating (each day for a month) the text *asya vamiya*, or the hymn *Sivusancalpa*, the stealer of gold from a priest becomes instantly pure. He who has violated the bed of his preceptor is cleared (from secret faults) by repeating (sixteen times a-day) the text *havishyantiya*, or that beginning with *na tamanhah*, or by revolving in his mind the sixteen holy verses called *Paurushæ*." It is added, that "the man who desires to expiate his hidden sins, great and small, must repeat (once a-day) for a year the text *ava*, or the text *yatcinchida* . . . Though he have committed many secret sins, he shall .

¹ Menu, ch. xi., v. 48 *seq.* These persons are among those debarred from sharing in an inheritance. See Halhed's "Gentoo Code," p. 73.

² The commentator excepts "incest" in a direct line, and some others. Menu, ch. xi., v. 55.

³ See do. 73 *seq.*

be purified by repeating for a month the text *Somandra*, or the three texts *aryamna*, while he bathes in a sacred stream.”¹ A twice-born man, or member of the three superior classes, “shall be released from all deadly sins if he fasts three days, with his members mortified, and twice a-day plunge into water, thrice repeating the text *aghamarshana*. As the sacrifice of a horse, the king of sacrifices, removes all sins, thus the text *aghamarshana* destroys all offences.” The mere repetition of certain mantras and brahmanas will cleanse from every possible taint, it being declared that “a priest, who should retain in his memory the whole Rig-veda, would be absolved from guilt even if he had slain the inhabitants of the three worlds, and had eaten meat from the foulest hands.”²

While crimes of the greatest magnitude are so easily atoned for, many actions, which in themselves are perfectly harmless, are treated as most serious moral offences. Thus drinking forbidden liquor is classed as an equal offence with killing a Brahman, while eating things prohibited or unfit to be tasted, is said to be a crime nearly equal to drinking spirits. Slaying a bull or cow, sacrificing what ought not to be sacrificed, marriage of a younger brother before the elder, working in mines of any sort, engaging in great mechanical works, cutting down green trees for firewood, are all classed, together with adultery, desertion of a parent or son,³ and stealing anything besides gold, as crimes in the third degree. Certain actions which are not considered actual crimes are nevertheless attended with penal consequences. Such is the case with “unnatural practices

¹ Menu, v. 248 *seq.*

² Do., v. 262, 263. It would seem that these sins were looked upon as equally heinous.

³ There is no mention of a daughter.

with a male," which, with giving pain to a Brahman, smelling at any spirituous liquor or anything extremely fetid and unfit to be smelt, and cheating, cause a loss of caste. Killing an ass, a horse, a camel, a deer, an elephant, a goat, a sheep, a fish, a snake, or a buffalo, is an offence which degrades a person to a mixed tribe. Accepting presents from despicable men, illegal traffic, attendance on a Sudra master, and speaking falsehood, are causes of exclusion from social repasts. Finally, killing an insect, a worm, or a bird, eating what has been carried in the same basket with spirituous liquor, stealing fruit, wood, or flowers, and great perturbation of mind on trifling occasions, are offences which cause defilement.¹

Notwithstanding much that is excellent in its requirements, the moral system of Menu is evidently very imperfect, and although it is based on a principle which may be traced in the morality of Mazdaism and Christianity, yet it is undoubtedly at an earlier stage of development. The drinking of intoxicating liquor is said to be equally criminal whether the spirit is distilled from the refuse of rice,² or the dregs of sugar, or the flowers of the *Madhúca*, and the wilful partaking of it requires, for expiation, the penance of either drinking more spirit in flame to severely burn the body, or of drinking, boiling hot, one of certain fluids, so as to cause death. The intoxicating liquor operates by sprinkling the divine spirit which is infused into the body, the effect being that the Brahman loses his priestly character, and sinks to the degree of a Sudra.³ The intoxicating spirit becomes impure, an idea which furnishes the key to the whole moral system of Menu. The law

¹ Menu, ch. xi., v. 55 *seq.*

² Called *mala*, which is also a name for sin. Do., ch. xi., v. 94.

³ Do., ch. xi., v. 91 *seq.*

of purification occupies there a very important position. Various things render a person impure; such as the death of a relative, the birth of a child, the touching of certain objects, and various other matters.¹ Even inanimate objects may become impure, and rules are laid down for their purification. The most usual mode in which defilement is caused, is by contact with something unclean, and twelve secretions or excretions of the human body are declared to possess that quality.² The defilement, where animate objects are concerned, is not merely of the body. Even after death, the touch of a Sudra obstructs the passage of the deceased Brahman to heaven.³ On the other hand, death is, in certain cases, considered as an act of purification; such is the case with the soldier slain in battle.⁴ It is evident, therefore, that the defilement had relation to the soul as well as the body. Moreover, the ideas connected with impurity could not be restricted to physical causes. The outward is the sign of the inward uncleanness, and the latter may have a physical cause only in a secondary sense. However caused, the impurity is the same, and although not equally heinous in all cases, it requires to be removed by analogous ceremonies. Hence it is that actions, which are in reality perfectly indifferent, have come to be equally criminal with those which clearly offend the moral sense.

We now see where the moral system, enforced in the laws of Menu, is defective. It is evident that, to the compiler of those laws, immorality and impurity were practically the same. To be in a condition of impurity is to be in a state of sin, and that which will remove the former will get rid of the latter. We see this from the following passage: "Sacred learning, austere

¹ Menu, ch. v., v. 58 *seq.*

³ Do. ch. v., v. 104.

² Do., ch. v., v. 111 *seq.*

⁴ Do., v. 98.

devotion, fire, holy aliment, earth, the mind, water, smearing with cow dung, air, prescribed acts of religion, the sun, and time, are purifiers of embodied spirits. But of all pure things, purity in acquiring wealth is pronounced the most excellent, since he who gains wealth with clean hands is truly pure; not he who is purified merely with earth and water. By forgiveness of injuries, the learned are purified; by liberality, those who have neglected their duty; by pious meditation, those who have secret faults; by devout austerity, those who best know the Veda. By water and earth is purified what ought to be made pure; a river, by its current; a woman, whose thoughts have been impure, by her monthly discharge; and the chief of twice-born men, by fixing his mind wholly on God. Bodies are cleansed by water; the mind is purified by truth; the vital spirit by theology and devotion; the understanding by clear knowledge."¹ There is much that is good in this passage, but it conveys the idea of a want of definiteness in the conception of what constitutes morality. As Mr Wilson remarks,² the great moral duties are not unfrequently commanded by Menu; but then it is in such a way that the legislator can hardly have had any very precise idea of what constitutes the grounds of obligation. It seems, indeed, as though, notwithstanding his recognition of those duties, they were to him ceremonial rather than moral. That ceremonial lapses were placed on the same footing as moral ones, is shown by various passages, such as the following: "Not a mortal exists more sinful than he who, without an oblation to the manes or gods, desires to enlarge his own flesh with the flesh of another creature."³ In a preceding verse, it is said, "the twice-

¹ Menu, ch. v., v. 105 *seq.*

² *loc. cit.*, vol. i. p. 399, *note.*

³ Menu, ch. v., v. 52.

born man, who has intentionally eaten a mushroom, the flesh of a tame hog, or a town cock, a leek, or an onion, or garlick, is degraded immediately ;” and it is added that the twice-born man must perform a harsh penance annually to purify him from the unknown taint of illicit food, “but he must do particular penance for such intentionally eaten.”¹ The fact would seem to be that, to the compiler of the laws of Menu, the test of sinfulness was impurity, instead of the reverse, as a true idea of morality would have led him to believe. Such a notion is in the true spirit of the primitive stage of thought, where everything is right but that which is forbidden by some competent authority, which can, on the other hand, impress with the stamp of immorality the most indifferent actions.

There is also the peculiarity about the laws of Menu that the criminality of the actions forbidden depends upon the persons concerned in them. From their character as “twice-born” the members of the three higher classes have certain moral privileges, so to speak, which the Sudras do not possess. Crimes when performed by the latter towards the former are always more sinful than under the reverse circumstances. Thus it is said, that “with whatever member a low-born man shall assault or hurt a superior, even that member of his must be slit ;”² while there is no provision as to assault by a superior on an inferior man, unless it be the general ones that a blow attended with much pain is to be punished by a fine as heavy as the presumed suffering, and that “in all cases of hurting a limb, wounding, or fetching blood, the assailant shall pay the full expense of a perfect cure.”³ Those who commit great violence are declared to be more grievous offenders than a de-

¹ Menu, ch. v., v. 19, 21.

² Do., ch. viii., v. 279.

³ Do., 286, 297.

famer, or, thief, or a striker with a staff;¹ but the *twice-born* are authorised to take arms when "their duty is obstructed by force," and on certain other occasions. Killing under those circumstances is no crime, or when in defence of the slayer's preceptor, or of "a Brahman deeply versed in the scripture."² There are no such provisions in favour of the Sudra. A man of the servile class who commits adultery with the wife of a twice-born man is to lose the part offending, and his whole substance, if the woman was unguarded; but if she was guarded (and a priestess), then he is to be put to death. On the other hand, the Brahman who commits adultery with a guarded woman of the military class or the mercantile class is to be fined a thousand panas, and the same fine is to be paid for the like offence with a guarded woman of the servile class by a soldier or a merchant; while adultery by a Brahman with an unguarded woman of the servile class is to be punished by a fine of five hundred panas.³ The soldier or merchant would seem, under the same circumstances, to be unpunishable. There is an apparent exception to the rule which requires the lower classes to be punished more severely than the higher for similar actions, in the provision that the fine of a Sudra for theft is to be eightfold, that of a Vaisya sixteenfold, that of a Kshatriya two-and-thirtyfold, but that of a Brahman at least four-and-sixtyfold.⁴ This can only apply, however, to thefts punished by fine, and although there is not the same distinction of classes made as to theft as in relation to other crimes, yet it is clear that there must have been such a distinction. For, not only is theft from priests made specially criminal,⁵ but the stealing of men and women of high birth, and also of precious gems, is declared to be deserving of

¹ Menu, ch. viii., v. 345.

² Do., 348 *seq.*

³ Do., 374 *seq.*

⁴ Do., 337, 338

⁵ Do., 314, 325.

death,¹ a punishment which is not to be inflicted on a Brahman, though convicted of all possible crimes, as the greatest of all crimes is the slaying of a Brahman.² This comparative³ freedom of the highest class from punishment is of great significance, and it is expressly enacted. Thus it is declared "for crimes by a priest (who had a good character before his offence), the middle fine⁴ shall be set on him; or (if his crime was premeditated) he shall be banished from the realm, taking with him his effects and his family; but men of the other classes who have committed those crimes (though without premeditation) shall be stripped of all their possessions; and if their offence was premeditated, shall be corporally or even capitally punished (according to circumstances)."⁵

The "transcendental system of law" embodied in the Institutes of Menu cannot be properly understood without reference to the dogmas of emanation and transmigration, of which, indeed, it is merely a practical expression. It is declared to have been disclosed by the all-wise Menu "from his benevolence to mankind," and it must be kept devoutly concealed from persons unfit to receive it. Its aim is to enable man to escape from the bondage of the material life, and hence the morality of any act is estimated by its influence in aiding in this result, and its immorality in preventing its attainment. Defective as this view undoubtedly is, it is nevertheless founded

¹ Menu, ch. viii., v. 323.

² Do., 380, 381. Mr Wilson, however, points out that this immunity from capital punishment has not always been adhered to. *loc. cit.*, vol. i. p. 262 *note*.

³ A similar rule applies to penances, the severity of which depends on the class of the person injured by the action to be expiated. (See Menu, ch. xi., v. 127 *seq.*)

⁴ 500 panas. Do., viii. 138.

⁵ Do., ch. ix., v. 241, 242. The priest who commits adultery is to have his head shaved, where the punishment of other classes would be loss of life. Do., viii. 379.

on a sublime truth. "Let every Brahman," says Bhriga, "with fixed attention consider all nature, both visible and invisible, as existing in the divine spirit; for when he contemplates the boundless universe existing in the divine spirit, he cannot give his heart to iniquity."¹ This declaration shows that whatever their actual practice, the religious teaching of the Hindus is in some respects on a level with that of the most advanced of the peoples of antiquity. It was, in fact, the same; for the doctrine of Emanations formed the foundation of the moral systems of all Oriental peoples. Opening with an account of the origin of the universe out of the substance of the self-existent One, the Laws of Menu close with the declaration that "the man who perceives in his own soul the supreme soul present in all creatures, acquires equanimity towards them all, and shall be absorbed at last in the highest essence, even that of the Almighty himself."

We have the practical application of that doctrine in the system of caste. If the soul of man is an emanation from the Divine Being, certain persons may be supposed to have a more intimate union with that Being than others. And so we find that, according to Brahmanic teaching, Brahma caused the four classes to proceed from different parts of his body—the *Brahman* from his mouth, the *Kshatriya* from his arm, the *Vaisya* from his thigh, and the *Sudra* from his foot.² Each class is more noble than those below it, and to each were assigned separate duties, which marked its place in the line of emanation. Thus to the Brahmins were assigned the duties of reading the Veda, of teaching it, of sacrificing, of assisting others to sacrifice, of giving alms (if they be rich), and (if indigent) of receiving alms. The duties of the Kshatriya are to defend the people, to give

¹ Menu, ch. viii., v. 118.

² Do., ch. i., v. 31.

alms, to sacrifice, to read the Veda, and to shun the allurements of sensual gratification. Those of the Vaisya are to keep herds of cattle, to bestow largesses, to sacrifice, to read the scripture, to carry on trade, to lend at interest, and to cultivate land. One principal duty was assigned to the Sudras—to serve the other classes, without depreciating their worth.¹ The duty of the lowest class is thus simple enough, and it is only where he interferes with the rights of the classes above him that it is thought necessary to define his criminality; but in that case his wickedness is considered as of the highest degree. On the other hand, the Brahman to whom is assigned the highest duties, occupies so superior a position that the crimes which he commits are treated lightly.

Another practical result of the doctrine of emanations is, that the moral complexion of actions, or rather their degree of immorality, depends on the position of the persons who perform them. This conclusion is not only consistent with what was before said as to purity being the test of morality fixed by the Laws of Menu, but it is connected with this idea; for the position of the Brahman is essentially one of the highest purity. The purest part of Brahma, the self-existent, is his mouth—that part from which the Brahmans sprang. These possess the Veda, and are alone permitted to teach it to others; and the Brahman who studies the Veda, “having performed sacred rites, is perpetually free from offence in thought, in word, and in deed; he confers purity on his living family, on his ancestors, and on his descendants, as far as the seventh person.”² The Brahman, whether learned or ignorant, is compared as a powerful divinity to the fire, which is a perfect divinity, whether consecrated or popular.³

¹ Menu, ch. i., v. 87 *seq.*

² Do., ch. i., 92, 93, 103 *seq.*

³ Do., ch. ix., v. 317. As to the sacred nature of the Brahmans, see *supra*, p. 149.

The superiority of the Brahman is accompanied by a privilege the nature of which supplies us with the key to the moral system of Menu. Thus, it is said that the attainment of a knowledge of God, and the repeating of the Veda, is "the advantageous privilege of those who have a double birth (from their natural mothers) and from the *gáyátrí* (their spiritual mother), especially of a Brahman; since the twice-born man, by performing this duty, but not otherwise, may soon acquire endless felicity."¹ The Brahman is placed in the most advantageous circumstances for escaping the corporeal existence which is the pain of transmigration, and that this is the ultimate aim of the teaching of Menu, is shown by the promises given even to the lowest class should they perform perfectly their duty. "Servile attendance on Brahmans learned in the Vead, chiefly on such as keep house, and are famed for virtue, is of itself the highest duty of a Sudra, and leads him to future beatitude. Pure (in body and mind), humbly serving the three higher classes, mild in speech, never arrogant, ever seeking refuge in Brahmans, probably he may attain the most eminent class (in another transmigration)."² According to their present moral condition will be their future lot; souls endued with goodness attain the state of deities: those filled with ambitious passions, that of men; and those immersed in darkness, the nature of beasts. This is called the triple order of transmigration, each order again having a threefold division.³ The Sudra being only "once-born" cannot attain without further re-birth to the highest state, that of the deities, which is the privilege of the Brahman who perfectly observes the system of duties declared in the laws of Menu.⁴

The teachings of "Hinduism," and the requirements

¹ Menu, ch. xii., v. 93.

³ Do., ch. xii., v. 40, 41.

² Do., ch. ix., x. 334-5.

⁴ Do., ch. xii., v. 116

of the inspired law-giver, having for their ultimate aim the salvation of the soul, that is, its escape from the "path of generation," the practice of morality is a matter of secondary consideration.¹ So far as a particular line of conduct may be useful for aiding in the attainment of that salvation it is desirable, but if the same end can be attained in another way, it is not necessary. Viewed in this light, morality becomes merely a matter of expediency, and it is not surprising therefore that the Hindus exhibit few traces of any fixed principle of moral conduct. Bishop Heber declared that he had "never met with a race of men whose standard of morality is so low, who feel so little apparent shame in being detected in a falsehood, or so little interest in the sufferings of a neighbour, not being of their own caste or family; whose ordinary and familiar conversation is so licentious; or, in the wilder and more lawless districts, who shed blood with so little repugnance."² This is consistent, however, with the fact that the Hindus are, according to their light, highly religious. In some sense, indeed, the want of morality depends on the strength of the religious spirit; for the gods of such a people as the Hindus will exhibit little concern with the conduct of man towards his fellows, so long as their own requirements are attended to; and the performance of religious rites will be considered much more efficacious for the attainment of salvation than a moral life. This opinion agrees with the remark made by Dubois, that "offences, imaginary or of small account, are menaced with endless punishment after death by the directors of the popular faith; whilst adulterers, perjurers, robbers, and other real offenders are absolved by

¹ As to this question, considered in relation to the altruistic virtues, see *supra*, vol. i. p. 473.

² *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 355.

the Brahmans of their actual crimes, for selfish objects, and assured of a recompense after death which should pertain exclusively to virtue.”¹ On the other hand, actions of the most trivial kind, and even blasphemy itself, may under favourable circumstances, become efficacious for securing salvation. A Brahman who pursued a dog four times round a temple of Siva, and then killed it at the gate with one blow of a cudgel, not only obtained the pardon of his sins, but admission to the paradise of Siva. The pronouncing, although not in a blasphemous way, of the divine name *Narayana* secured for a great sinner entrance to the paradise of Vishnu. Bathing in sacred rivers and pools is thought to have the power of cleansing from all sins and impurities, a benefit which may, however, be obtained at home by simply thinking of the sacred water while performing the ordinary purifying ablutions. Pilgrimages to celebrated temples, or to other places considered holy in the popular imagination, and the view of the summit of certain sacred mountains are equally efficacious. The repeating of the Mantras, or forms of prayer, the thinking upon Vishnu, and even the mere sight of a Guru, or spiritual teacher, have the same effect. The most extraordinary mode of purification is that known as the *Panchakaryam*, or the “five things” proceeding from the body of the cow, namely, milk, butter, curd, dung, and urine. Whoever drinks this mixture will obtain the “remission of all sins committed with a perfect knowledge.”² Finally, some places are of themselves so sacred that the mere fact of dying within their precincts is sufficient to ensure salvation, quite irrespective of the

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 426.

² Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 124 *seq.* The purification by cow's urine was known also to the ancient Persians, and is practised by the modern Parsees. See Tavernier, “Travels in Persia,” p. 167.

character of the person himself. Thus, even outcasts and infidels dying at Benares are supposed to be certain of happiness in another world.¹

Morality thus occupying so secondary a place in the mind of the Hindu, it is not surprising that he should often act as though he were entirely devoid of moral principle. Nor would such a conclusion be far wrong. In the life of the Hindu, custom would appear to be that by which everything is tried, and whatever this allows, however gross, is performed without hesitation.² The tendency to perpetuate trades and occupations in particular families, which is intimately connected with the modern phase of the caste system,³ aids in the formation of hereditary habits which give evidence of a very low condition of moral culture. Thus the princes of the *Calaris* exercised the profession of robbers as a birthright, and although this was well known, and indeed was openly admitted by them, the tribe was considered one of the most distinguished among the Sudras of Madura.⁴ Even murder was, until a comparatively recent period, and probably is still, practised as a regular, if not an hereditary calling. Strange to say, thuggi was supposed to be presided over by a divinity, the goddess Bhavani, who in return for her protection required that the murderous sacrifices offered to her should be accompanied by certain prescribed ceremonies.⁵

Facts such as these undoubtedly support the opinion that the Hindus have but slight knowledge of what we regard as morality, and it is confirmed by other pheno-

¹ Sherring's "Sacred City of the Hindus," p. 175.

² The influence of custom is referred to by Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 183 *seq.*

³ As to the modern "professional" caste, see Max Müller's "Chips," vol. ii. p. 325.

⁴ Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵ As to the Thuggs and robber tribes of India, see *supra*, p. 113 *seq.*, and authorities there cited.

mena. Reference has already been made to the wide extension, until recently, of the practice of infanticide.¹ This was sometimes accompanied by the exhibition of heartless cruelty, and as such must be referred to the influence of gross superstition. In the northern districts of Bengal, infants who refused the mother's breast and declined in health, were thought to be under the influence of an evil spirit, and were sometimes exposed for three days in a basket hung on a tree, and usually they were dead at the end of that period.² The practice of abortion was also at one time extremely prevalent; chiefly among widows, who were not allowed to marry, but it was not confined to them.³

It was not, however, with the destruction of infant life merely, that the Hindus were chargeable. Mr Ward declares that private murder was practised among them to a dreadful extent, and that cases of secret poisoning, especially in the houses of the rich, were numerous.⁴ Inconsistent as this charge is with the humane character often ascribed to the Hindus, it is undoubtedly confirmed by the testimony of Bishop Heber. This writer states that murders of a cowardly and premeditated kind were very frequent among the Bengalese. They were chiefly of women, killed through jealousy, and children murdered for the value of their ornaments.⁵ Bishop Heber refers to a horrible case of the burning alive of an old woman by her husband and children with the object of bringing a curse on a piece of land, the ownership of which was in dispute, and he adds, "the truth is, so very little value do these people set on their own lives, that we cannot wonder at their caring so little for the life of another; the cases of suicide which come before me, double those

¹ *Supra*, vol. i., p. 422.

² Ward, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 123.

³ Do., vol. iii. p. 291; Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁴ *op. cit.*, vol. iii., p. 291.

⁵ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 34.

of suttees ; men, and still more, women, throw themselves down wells, or drink poison, for apparently the slightest reasons, generally out of some quarrel, and in order that their blood may lie at their enemy's door.¹ Dubois also refers to this self-murder by women, which he ascribes chiefly to family discord, but he says that homicide and suicide are held in particular horror by all the Hindus, and are less frequent among them than with many other peoples.² This may be true of the natives of Southern India, of whom the Abbé more especially speaks, but, on the other hand, they are said to be very revengeful. When their passions are aroused by some real or fancied injury, they will brood over it, if necessary, for years, and when opportunity offers, will not hesitate to take the life of the offender, or, should the injury have been caused by a European, and he cannot be found, on some other member of his class.³

The Hindus would seem to have thought as little of appropriating the property of another as, down to a recent period, they did of taking his life. Bishop Heber affirmed that the besetting sins of Bengal were theft, forgery, and house-breaking, and those of Hindostan violent affrays, murders, and highway robberies.⁴ In the Doab, the people were still "of lawless and violent habits, containing many professional thieves, and many mercenary soldiers," who were ready at any time to become thieves.⁵ The inhabitants of Oude, the Robillas, and the Rajpoots, all meet with the same condemnation, as being given to robbery, either with or without violence.⁶ The natives of Southern India are probably less prone to such conduct than those of Hindostan, and it is of the

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 352.

³ *Do.*, p. 195 ; Bevan, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 146.

⁴ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 294.

⁶ *Do.*, vol. ii. pp. 64, 138, 494.

² *op. cit.*, p. 196.

⁵ *Do.*, vol. ii. p. 5.

former that Dubois speaks, when he says that the Brahman is too timid and cowardly to have resort to violence even by way of revenge.¹ The career of the Mahrattas or Pindharees shows, however, that the natives of the south are capable of any atrocities for the sake of plunder.² Nevertheless, those Mahrattas who do not follow the profession of arms, are said to be a remarkably moral, kind, humane, and hospitable race, their chief fault being a disregard for truth in their dealings with strangers.³

What the generality of Hindus want in the open appropriation of the property of others, they too often make up in the practice of deceit. They are extremely prone to lying and deception, and appear to think that it is hardly possible to transact business without recourse to falsehood. Ward says also that they are very litigious, and "in defence of a cause in a court of justice, will swear falsely in the most shocking manner, so that a judge never knows when he may safely believe evidences."⁴ Bishop Heber remarks that perjury is dreadfully common and very little thought of. In the Furreedpoor district the defence set up in nine cases out of ten was an *alibi*, "being the easiest of all others to obtain by the aid of false witness."⁵ Elsewhere he says that "a lie is not disgraceful, and if an offence, a very venial one."⁶ The same testimony is borne by Dubois as to the southern Hindus, among whose special characteristics suspicion and duplicity take the first rank, those qualities being "very prominent wherever their interest is in any degree committed;"⁷ and the same writer remarks that the Brahmans surpass

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 196.

² See Duff's "History of the Maharattas," vol. iii. p. 328 *seq.*

³ *Do.*, vol. ii. p. 127.

⁴ *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 289.

⁵ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 220.

⁶ *Do.*, vol. ii. p. 458.

⁷ *op. cit.*, p. 189.

all other castes in the art of lying.¹ The distrust which Dubois noted is also characteristic of the natives of Hindostan who, according to Heber, cannot trust each other even in the watching of the cornfields against depredation by birds.² Ward affirms that the treachery of the Hindus to each other is so great "that it is not uncommon for persons to live together, for the greatest length of time, without the least confidence in each other, and, where the greatest union apparently exists, it is dissolved by the slightest collision."³

We have here one of the most serious defects in the Hindu character. Parents are extremely attached to their children, and they are thus led to indulge them in everything, never correcting their faults.⁴ On the other hand children have no reverence for their parents. According to the testimony of Dubois, not only do they use abusive language to and even strike their mothers, but when grown up they cease to regard their father with respect. The latter is generally "reduced to an absolute submission to the will of his son, who becomes master of him and his house."⁵ It should be added, however, that among the southern Hindus, at least, when sons have thus acquired absolute authority in the household, they treat their parents and relations well, and do not suffer them to want in their old age. Real affection between brothers and sisters appears to be as rare as that between parents and children. What little there is almost entirely disappears on marriage, after which event brothers and sisters seldom meet, unless it be to quarrel.⁶ Greater harmony would seem to subsist

¹ Do., p. 177.

² *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 269.

³ *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 292.

⁴ The Hindus are always much more gentle with children than with women. See Heber, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 71.

⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 190; see also Ward, *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 288

⁶ Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

after marriage between brothers, than between brothers and sisters, the former continuing to reside together with their wives and children, under the parental roof, until the death of their parents, and it is not uncommon for large families thus to live together for years.¹

There has been considerable dispute as to the character of the Hindus, or at least of the women, in their sexual relations.

It would not be surprising if they were as licentious as they have been described by some writers, considering the examples continually before them. Dubois declares that the greater part of the institutions, both civil and religious, of the Hindus, "appear to be contrived for the purpose of nourishing and stimulating that passion to which nature of itself is so exceedingly prone. The stories of the dissolute life of their gods; the solemn festivals so often celebrated, from which decency and modesty are wholly excluded; the abominable allusions which many of their daily practices always recal; their public and private monuments, on which nothing is ever represented but the most wanton obscenities; their religious rites, in which prostitutes act the principal parts; all these causes, and others that might be named, necessarily introduce among the Hindus the utmost dissoluteness of manners."² The experience of other Eastern peoples is proof, however, that where habit has sanctified the usage, the most indecent scenes may be continually viewed without actually inducing licentious conduct. Such would seem to be the case with the Hindu women, who, on the testimony of Dubois himself,³ we must believe to be not so licentious

¹ Bevan, *op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 339.

² *op. cit.*, p. 191. As to religious prostitution, by the "slaves of the gods" and others, see *do.*, p. 401 *seq.*

³ *Do.*, p. 192 *seq.*

as Ward¹ and other writers have depicted them, although, owing to the peculiarity of Hindu institutions, they may not always be so chaste as they would be under more favourable circumstances. The testimony of the Institutes of Menu and of the Gentoo code is certainly not favourable to the morality of Hindu women. Probably something must be ascribed to the influence of climate and other circumstances, and from the statements of Mr Wilson it would appear that the women of Hindostan proper are less inclined to morality than those of Bengal and the South.²

The dissoluteness of manners, referred to by Dubois, is that of man rather than woman, and it appears to be great. The custom of the Hindus limits a man to one wife, except with men of high rank, or privileged classes,³ or where the first wife, after long cohabitation, does not bear children. Should a man live with several women, the children of one of them alone is legitimate, the others not being allowed to inherit any portion of their father's property.⁴ Nevertheless, it is very usual for a man, unknown to his wife if possible, to keep one or more concubines.⁵ Even the *Sannyāsis*, or Gurus, who profess to lead a life of celibacy, are publicly known to have concubines. No virtue, says Dubois, is less familiar to them than chastity, and they commit breaches of that virtue "which would disgrace the most profane."⁶ This is explained by the fact that a connection with unmarried women is not considered an offence by the Brahmans, unless the woman is of a superior caste, in which case the man is to be put to death.⁷

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. iii. pp. 82, 157.

² "History of British India," by James Mill, vol. i. p. 426. Dubois affirms, however, that girls are little capable of resisting the solicitations of a seducer, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³ The Institutes of Menu allow several wives to Brahmans.

⁴ Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 135 *seq.*

⁵ *Do.*, p. 191.

⁶ *Do.*, p. 133.

⁷ Halhed's "Gentoo Code," p. 276.

Considering the position occupied by a wife in her husband's household, it is not surprising that but little affection is displayed in the relations of married life. Having been purchased, the wife is considered by her husband, in some sense, as a slave. Ward affirms that females are reduced to a state of complete servitude; and so far from being companions to their husbands, a man never converses with his wife during the day, nor is she permitted to eat with him, or to sit in company even of near friends.¹ Bishop Heber also says, as to the sex generally, that all through India the roughest words, the poorest garments, the scantiest alms, the most degraded labour, and the hardest blows, are usually their lot.² It is possible that there is a certain amount of unintentional exaggeration in these statements, and that the inferior position of woman among the Hindus is not in reality so pronounced as an outsider would suppose. To understand this question aright, it is necessary to consider the ideas entertained by that people as to the relation between the sexes. Dubois remarks, "it is an established natural rule that women are designed for no other end than to be subservient to the wants and pleasures of the males."³ At another page, he says that the Hindus are brought up in the belief that there can be nothing uninterested or innocent in the intercourse between the sexes. Hence external propriety of behaviour is considered imperative, and a man who should talk in a familiar way, even with his wife, would be considered vulgar and ridiculous.⁴ In public, the husband treats his wife with apparent contempt and roughness. It is true that Dubois declares this manner to be merely ceremonial, and that in private it entirely

¹ *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 183.
op. cit., p. 134.

² *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 71.
⁴ *Do.*, p. 194.

vanishes ;¹ but elsewhere, he admits that the husband never pays his wife any attentions, even in familiar intercourse. Regarding her as a servant and not as a companion, he thinks she is not entitled to such attention ; and, in fact, wives are so accustomed to the austere manners of their husbands, that they despise them if they act otherwise.² It not unfrequently happens that wives leave their husbands and return to their father's house. This is ascribed by Dubois partly to the chastisement which the young wife receives at the hands of her husband, and partly to the harsh and domineering manner in which wives are treated by their mothers-in-law, who "embroider the husband and wife with false reports, lest they should live too lovingly, and lest the wife, by being too much caressed, should cease to be obedient."³

The Abbé, in fact, agrees with other writers, when he affirms that the object for which a Hindu marries "is not to gain a companion to aid him in enduring the evils of life, but a slave to bear children and be subservient to his rule."⁴

The harsh treatment which wives would thus seem often to meet with, is not inconsistent with the general respect shown towards women by the Hindus. To strangers, their persons are in fact sacred, and in addressing them, however poor may be their position in life, they are always saluted with the title "mother." They can frequent the most crowded places without fear of insult, and the least disrespect shown to them in public would be resented by their husbands and other male relatives at any cost.⁵ They are regarded simply in their

¹ See Appendix to Bevan's "Thirty Years in India," vol. i. p. 338 *seq.*

² *op. cit.*, p. 219.

³ *Do.*, pp. 145, 219.

⁴ *Do.*, p. 146.

⁵ Dubois' Appendix to Bevan, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 338.

character as women, probably in relation to the maternal function, and without reference to the circumstances or ideas which lower them in the estimation of the men with whom they come in contact. The husband cannot forget that his wife is his by right of purchase, and he contemns her not only because she is thought to be formed for the mere enjoyment of man or for his service, but also on account of her supposed mental inferiority. Whether for this reason, or because it is thought immodest for them to possess the same attainments as the temple and public prostitutes, girls seldom received the least education.¹

The position of the Hindu women is not, however, so uninfluential as might be thought from what has been said above. The political influence often exercised by widows of Hindu princes is well known. As to women in general, Dubois affirms that they cannot be considered in any other way but as perfect mistresses of the house. He says that their influence on the welfare of families is so well known, that the successes or misfortunes of the Hindu are almost entirely attributed to their good or bad management; when a person prospers in the world, it is said "he has the happiness to possess an intelligent wife; and when anyone runs to ruin, it is the custom to say that he has the misfortune to have a bad wife for his partner." In another place, the same writer affirms that the Hindu women are dutiful daughters, faithful wives, tender and intelligent housewives; and he adds that there is no kind of work or trade known in a civilised country in which they are not seen engaged, and occupying a conspicuous place. At home, the authority of married women is chiefly exercised in preserving peace and good order among the persons who compose their families—a duty which is discharged by

¹ Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

many with a prudence and discretion which have scarcely any parallel in Europe.¹

It is difficult to form, from the testimony of observers, a just estimate of the general character of the Hindus. Heber says of them : "The natural temper is decidedly good, gentle, and kind, they are sober, industrious, affectionate to their relations, generally speaking faithful to their masters, and in the case of the military oath, are of admirable obedience, courage, and fidelity, in life and death. But their morality does not extend beyond the reach of positive obligations, and where these do not exist, they are oppressive, cruel, treacherous, and everything that is bad."² Mr H. H. Wilson takes a more favourable view of the national character,³ and in support of his opinion refers to the testimony of several distinguished men, given in the course of the parliamentary investigation relative to the Hindus, made in the year 1813. The unprejudiced enquirer will doubtless come to the conclusion, expressed by the author of the "History of the Mahrattas," that "much injudicious praise has been lavished on the learning and virtue of the Hindus, and in exposing these panegyrics, their character has become the theme of still more injudicious censure. Both extremes are unjust." Mr Duff adds that observation shows that much of the corruption, meanness, and other debasing passions which they possess, has "originated in a corrupt, oppressive government, and the demoralising effects of an absurd superstition ; that they really possess many virtues, and great qualities ; and that much of what is amiable, in every relation of life, may be found among the natives of India."⁴

¹ See Appendix to Bevan's "Thirty Years in India," vol. i. p. 337 *seq.*

² *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 264.

³ *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 529 *seq.*

⁴ "History of The Maharattas," vol. i. p. 24.

The character of the Hindus, indeed, presents a curious mixture of good and bad elements. The performance by them of actions due to a natural mildness and gentleness of manner,¹ and of acts of charity springing from a principle of pure benevolence,² appears to be consistent with conduct of a totally different character when his rights are questioned. "Gentlest of all creatures," says Dubois, "timid under all other circumstances, here only the Hindu seems to change his nature. There is no danger that he fears to encounter in maintaining what he terms his right, and rather than yield it he is ready to make any sacrifice, and even to hazard his life."³

It is not, however, merely in the assertion of his right that the Hindu can lose his mild and gentle demeanour. When incited by interest or superstition he shows an indifference to the sufferings of others, and a readiness to inflict pain, which reveals a serious moral defect. Mr Ward says: "The Hindus, forbidden by their religion to destroy animal life for food, have received credit for being very humane, but we look in vain amongst them for that refined sensibility⁴ which makes men participate in the distresses of others; their cruelty towards the sick, the insane, and persons of an inferior *caste*, as well as to their cattle, and even towards the cow, a form of the goddess Bhagavati, is carried to the most abominable lengths."⁵ This judgment is confirmed by Dubois, who declares as to the Brahmans that the feeling of commiseration and pity for others never enters their hearts, and that they would not stir to help

¹ See Heber, *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 255.

² As to the charity of the Hindus, see *supra*, vol. i. p. 471 *seq.*

³ *op. cit.*, p. 10 *seq.*

⁴ Dubois ascribes the ingratitude with which the Hindus are sometimes charged, as well as their resignation and patience under suffering and misfortune, to a want of sensibility, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

⁵ *op. cit.*, vol. iii. pp. 290, 307. As to cruelty to oxen, see Heber, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 21; iii. p. 251.

a person of another caste to a drop of water even though to save his life.¹ Nor is such conduct confined to the Brahmans. Heber relates that travellers falling down sick in the streets of a village were not only left to perish, but were sometimes allowed to be pelted by the children with stones and mud. Bishop Heber observes that "many of the ancient and sanctified customs of the Hindus are marked with great cruelty." He refers to an instance of human sacrifice, in which this characteristic was especially noticeable.² Indifference to suffering would seem to be common among the Hindus, and it is shown in various other particulars.³ A writer quoted by Mr Ward refers to the extreme barbarity of Hindu punishments, which include the cutting off of legs, hands, noses, and ears, and the pulling out of eyes, and others of a similar character, all performed in the most brutal manner;⁴ while a later writer says that generally Hindu creditors are intensely cruel, and prefer the gratification of revenge even to that of avarice.⁵

The refusal to administer to the necessities of strangers above referred to is due, however, not so much to any actual moral defect as to the influence of caste prejudice.⁶ This is so strong that a man dying with thirst will not accept of a cooling draught of water from the hands or the cup of a person of a lower caste.⁷ Whatever may have been the origin of caste, and whatever advantages it may be attended with,⁸ its moral defect is deplorable. It has become a most powerful superstition, and its maintenance a religious obligation. The observ-

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 196.

² *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 262 *seq.*

³ This point is referred to in connection with religious pilgrimages, *supra*, vol. i. p. 473.

⁴ *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 307.

⁵ Heber, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 202.

⁶ On this point see Heber, *op. cit.*, vol. iii. p. 262.

⁷ *Do.*, vol. i. p. 145; Introduction, p. 70.

⁸ These are well stated by Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 13 *seq.*

ance of caste requirements is the most essential duty of life. The loss of caste is the greatest misfortune a man can sustain, and an outcaste is the most degraded of human beings. "A Hindu of caste," says Dubois, "may be dishonest and a cheat; but a Hindu without caste has always the reputation of a rogue," even though his offence may have been very slight or even unintentional.¹ It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that a Hindu will do anything, however cruel it may appear to us, which the customs of his caste require, or the neglect of which might lead to the expulsion from the society of his fellows with which the loss of caste is attended.

It may perhaps be suspected that the Brahmans, at least, exhibit in their lives the influence of the moral teachings contained in the sacred books of which they are the guardians. This is not so, however, in reality. Dubois says expressly that the greater part of what he relates as to the manners of the Hindus is applicable to all the castes alike, so that the Brahmans cannot be excluded from the description given in the preceding pages of their moral conduct. There is, in fact, little to distinguish the members of the sacred caste from the other Hindus. It may have been different, however, in former ages, when Brahmanic rules of life were more closely adhered to than at present. Dubois says that "the simple and innocent manners of those early Brahmans, their contempt of honours and wealth, their moral virtues, and above all their temperance, raised them into respect amongst kings and people."² The *Vanaprasthas*, or ascetics, practised hospitality, and taught that a Brahman, when going to his meals, ought to look into the street to see whether there was any wanderer who was in need of food; nor did they make any distinction between friend and enemy in that respect,³ although

¹ Dubois, p. 24 *seq.*

² Do., p. 43.

³ Do., p. 311.

they were bound to exercise hospitality only to members of their own caste.¹

Whether or not the Hindus of ancient times partook as a whole of the moral superiority ascribed to the early Brahmans is uncertain. Lassen refers to the two dramas of *Kālidāsa* and the *Mṛikkha-Kalika*, as giving very interesting descriptions of Hindu habits and manners in the first three centuries of the Christian era. He says that the former dramas describe in a masterly manner the refined manners which obtained at the courts of the Indian kings of that period. Their gentleness and respect for the law; the retired life of the penitents in the forests, and their entire devotion to holy things; the innocence of penitent girls; and finally their delicate sense for the beauties of nature. Lassen adds that from the third drama, which is the only one hitherto found in which the daily life of the Indians of that period in their families and in the great cities is described, we learn how splendid were the establishments of the rich, what were their amusements, and how the Indian dandies passed their time in the houses of famous hetairai. But at the same time we read of the great respect paid to poor but virtuous Brahmans, and of the self-sacrificing devotion of women.² The knowledge preserved to us of that period is, however, very scanty. Of the Hindus of an earlier date the Greek writers have supplied us with several particulars, but, as Lassen informs us, Megasthenes was the only one to give details of their daily life. From the fragments of his history which have come down to us it appears that the Hindus were then famed for their honesty and love of truth, their temperance, justice, and bravery.³ Alexandros

¹ Dubois, p. 151.

² "Indische Alterthumskunde," vol. ii. p. 1113.

³ Do., vol. ii. p. 723.

Polyhistor has a curious reference to the *Semnoi*, or Buddhist ascetics, who wore no clothing, devoted themselves to truth, and were careless about the future. They had no sexual intercourse, and were on account of their continence looked upon as saints. The female Buddhists, who were called *Semnai*, led a virgin life and they predicted future events.¹

The period during which Buddhism was at the height of its influence may probably be esteemed as the most moral era of Hindu history. How far the ethics of Buddhism, which will be fully considered in a subsequent chapter, were derived from another source is uncertain. That Gautama was indebted for the fundamental ideas of his moral system to the speculations of the Hindu philosophers is extremely probable, but it is impossible to understand the success which attended his teaching unless we believe that it introduced a new element of some kind. This element had doubtless a practical character, and it possibly had relation to the active virtues as distinguished from the moral passiveness which especially marked Brahmanic asceticism. The morality of the predecessors of Gautama, as established in the Vedas, is that of the Institutes of Menu. The great aim of life is to attain to a condition favourable to absorption into the divine essence, and for this a knowledge of God is necessary, accompanied by a perfect freedom from all desire.² The examples exhibited by the men who devoted themselves to meditation on divine things must have exercised some influence over the lives of their fellows. At the same time the secondary importance attached to the moral element would render

¹ "Indische Alterthumskunde," vol. iii. p. 355.

² Compare Rammohun Roy's "Translation of the Veds" (1832), pp. 31, 65, 79.

that influence comparatively weak over the moral conduct. We may well believe, however, that the mild temperament which enabled the early Hindu ascetics to control their passions and lead a life of celibacy, and the simplicity of character which led them to adopt the primitive habit of dwelling in the forests, were shared in some measure by their fellows.

In accordance with this notion, we find that the Vedic period was distinguished by a patriarchal simplicity which was completely lost in the later Brahmanic age. The Hindu Aryas had then no idols or temples and their religious rites consisted merely in invoking their deities with hymns "to attend and partake of the food which had been prepared for them." The gods were supposed to be attracted by the noise made in expressing the soma juice, which they were as impatient to enjoy "as bridegrooms long for their brides." Mr Wheeler says that "the relations between the Vedic Aryans and their deities appear to have been of a child-like and filial character, the evils which they suffered they ascribed to some offence of omission or commission which had been given to a deity, whilst the good which they received was in like manner ascribed to his kindness and favour." What they considered good may be inferred from the prayers which they offered to the gods. These prayers had relation simply to their temporal wants, and were for abundance of rain, plentiful harvests, and prolific cattle, for bodily vigour, long life, numerous offspring, and protection against all foes and robbers. There appears to have been very little spirituality in their aspirations, and their moral tone cannot have been very high when they were accustomed to implore the god not to turn aside to the dwelling of any other worshipper, but to come to them *only*, and drink the

libation which they had prepared, and *reserve for them all his favours and benefits.*¹

If Mr Wheeler's opinion be correct, that the Mahabharata and Ramayana contained ancient traditions of Kshatriya origin, we may hope to learn something of the manners and ideas of the warrior class of the early Aryas, as distinguished from the sacred or priestly class, to whom, no doubt, the hymns of the Rig-Veda must be referred. We learn from the Mahabharata that among the Kshatriyas two kinds of marriages were practised which the laws of Menu only allowed to them. One was simply a union without any ceremonial, and was called a Gandharva marriage, owing to its being a form of union which was said to prevail among the Gandharvas, the tribes of the Western Himalayas.² The other form of marriage was called Rakshasa, a name applied to the aboriginal races, and it was a forcible abduction of the women of a conquered enemy.³ The Kshatriyas, moreover, were polygamists, and they followed the custom of a man taking the wife of his deceased brother for the purpose of raising up sons to him,⁴ from which may have originated the practice of polyandry. From the legend of the Pandavas, however, it would seem that they were actually polyandrists, and that this custom was associated with the practice of the eldest brother choosing a wife for the family.⁵ When polygamy was practised, there is reason to believe that it was not unusual for a favourite wife to be put to death at her husband's tomb, or to be burnt on his funeral pile.⁶ The character of the Kshatriyas is shown in their passion for and use of gambling. In the Mahabharata the Kauravas invite the

¹ The account of the Vedic age given in the text is taken from the Introduction to Mr J. Talboys Wheeler's valuable work, "The History of India from the Earliest Ages."

² Wheeler, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³ Do., p. 56.

⁴ Do., pp. 52, 58.

⁵ See do., pp. 115 *seq.*; 128 *seq.*

⁶ Do., p. 70.

Pandavas to a match at dice-throwing, for the purpose of depriving them of their possessions, and although they attained this end by skill, the use of loaded dice is evidently referred to in the poem. Mr Wheeler says that "more than one Hindu legend has been preserved of Rajas playing together for days, until the wretched loser has been deprived of everything he possessed and reduced to the condition of an exile or a slave." In the case of the Pandavas the player, after having lost everything else, staked himself, then his brothers, and finally their wife, the beautiful Draupadi, an act which was possibly not unusual among the ancient Kshatriyas, who appear to have valued women chiefly on sensual grounds.¹ The conduct of this primitive people in war appears to have been as barbarous as during peace. Before fighting commenced the warriors used abusive language towards each other,² and when they engaged in single combat they fought with clubs, knives, and clenched fists, "and cut, and hacked, and hewed, and wrestled, and kicked until the conqueror threw down his adversary, and severed his head from his body," which he carried away in triumph. To gain this end treachery, deceit, and foul play, were freely employed, even at the suggestion of the divine hero of the piece, Krishna, who afterwards extenuates the deed.³ This conduct is on a par with the revengeful feelings by which the ancient Kshatriyas were actuated. We have a curious instance of this in the extraordinary revenge which Aswatthama took for the death of his friends, by surprising the camp of the Pandavas at night, slaying their followers by hundreds, among them their five sons, whose heads they cut off and carried to the dying leader of the Kauravas, making him believe that they were the heads of the Pandavas themselves. The chief rejoiced at having the heads of his

¹ Wheeler, pp. 175 *seq.*, 184. ² Do., p. 280. ³ Do., pp. 292, 344.

enemies in his grasp, even when he was at the point of death, and he crushed between his hands the skull which he thought to be that of his chief foe, Bhima. As a redeeming feature of this barbarous scene, it should be added that when Duryodhana discovered that not the Pandavas but their innocent sons had been slain, he upbraided Aswatthama for having performed so terrible a deed in killing those against whom he had no enmity ; although it was not the act which he abhorred so much as its consequences, in cutting short the race of which he was the head.¹ The Kaurava chieftain died, and his soul passed away to the mansions of Indra, where those who fought bravely were thought to enjoy happiness and glory.² This sketch of the manners of the ancient Kshatriyas may be fitly concluded by that given by Mr Wheeler of the probable character of the Rajas present at the great sacrifice celebrated by the Pandavas. He says that in all probability they were "a rude company of half naked warriors, who feasted boisterously beneath the shade of trees. Their conversation was very likely confined to their domestic relations, such as the state of their health, the condition of their families, the exploits of their sons, and the marriages of their daughters ; or to their domestic circumstances, such as herds of cattle, harvests of grain, and feats of arms against robbers and wild beasts. Their highest ideas were possibly simple conceptions of the gods who sent light, heat, and rain ; who gave long life, abundance of children, prolific cattle, and brimming harvests, and who occasionally manifested their wrath in lightning and thunder, in devastating tempests, and destroying floods. Such, in all probability, was the general character of the festive multitude who sat down upon the grass at the great feast to eat and

¹ Wheeler, p. 350 *seq.*

² Do., p. 355.

drink vigorously to the honour and glory of the new Raja." ¹

We can hardly expect to find among people such as those above described any very refined system of morals. There is in fact no evidence they had the slightest idea of what we understand as the obligations of morality. It is true that Mr Wheeler sees in the events which led to the second exile of the Pandavas, and also in the evils which befell Nala, the lover of Damayanti, related in the Mahabharata, the conception of an avenging nemesis.² But true nemesis possesses a moralelement,³ and is not merely vengeance called forth by envy of another's good fortune, as was the case in relation to both the Pandavas and Nala.⁴ If a knowledge of the obligations of morality are to be sought anywhere amongst the ancient Hindu Aryans, it must be with the people who may possibly be identified as the ancestors of the Brahmans. Mr Wheeler says of this people that they "evidently possessed strong religious instincts. They prayed in earnest language to primitive deities for such simple benefits as colonists in a new country might be expected to crave, namely, seasonable rains, abundant harvests, prolific cattle, and plenty of children. They were certainly a peaceful community, and appear to have been altogether indisposed for war, for they prayed not for victory but for protection. They do not seem to have sacrificed to any god of war, unless Indra may be regarded as such; but their offerings were exclusively made to what might be termed family or domestic deities, who were supposed to supply the daily wants of a simple but contemplative people."⁵ But neither in this description of the character of the peace-loving ancestors of the Brahmans, nor in the original conception of their

¹ Wheeler, p. 167.

² Do., pp. 175, 504.

³ See *supra*, p. 119 note.

⁴ Do., pp. 176, 485.

⁵ Do., p. 33.

deities as exhibited in their earliest hymns, is there any appearance of a moral element. No doubt the Vedic deities had finally come to be regarded as rewarding goodness and punishing wickedness. This is shown by the noble hymn to Varuna, translated as follows by Professor Max Müller :¹

- “ Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy !
 “ If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind, have mercy, almighty, have mercy !
 “ Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone to the wrong shore ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy !
 “ Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy !
 “ Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness, have mercy, almighty, have mercy ! ”

Noble as the language of this hymn undoubtedly is, it yet leaves uncertain what are the actions which give offence to the gods, and therefore even if it had belonged to the earliest Vedic age, it would not have thrown much light on the moral ideas of those who used it. A late French writer affirms that the ancestors of the Indian and Iranian races believed in an almighty, self-existent God, who was essentially good, and who disposed of the world and of man according to his goodness, and in the immortality of man. They also believed that evil is only an accident which can be overcome by the assistance of God, in applying oneself to good thoughts, good words, and good actions ; and that conscience imposes on us moral obligation.² That such ideas are to be found in the Avesta of the Iranians may be true, but this can hardly be said of the early Vedic hymns. M. Schoebel

¹ “ History of Sanskrit Literature,” p. 540.

² “ Recherches sur la Religion Première de la Race Indo-Iranienne,” par O. Schoebel (1872), p. 135.

admits that a first study of the texts would seem to show that moral good exhibits itself in the Veda only as a fruit of material good, and not as springing from a divine source. He adds, however, that the Vedic writers distinguish between earthly and heavenly blessings, the latter being referred to as the reward for good works. Heavenly blessings are not only such virtues as wisdom or intelligence, right action, and the good reputation which depends on it, but also faith and piety. Moreover, the Vedic writers express their aversion to evil thoughts and pray to be delivered from them, and that their speech may be without deceit. "The desire of sincerity and of truth," says M. Schoebel, "is so strong in them, that it causes them to break out in imprecations not only against evil, but also against those who commit it."¹ These sentiments undoubtedly reveal a knowledge of good as distinguished from evil, but they are far from proving that the early Aryas had any definite idea of moral obligation. Their bards seem to have had an abhorrence of lying and deceit, which they used to denote moral evil,² and possibly abstention from those practices and the observance of the sacrificial rites constituted the whole duty of man in their eyes. Simplicity of character and truthfulness may be ascribed to them, but certainly no elevated notions of morality, such as those must have had who give themselves to good thoughts, good words, and good actions. Among the Vedic writers the last named included the destruction of the enemies of the deity, and on the other hand they incessantly prayed the deity to destroy *their* enemies, without distinction, relations or strangers.³

M. Schoebel supposes that the early Hindu Aryas saw in Ahi, the serpent enemy of Indra, the emblem of

¹ See *op. cit.*, p. 112 *seq.*

² *Do.*, p. 115.

³ *Do.*, p. 116.

moral, as well as physical evil.¹ The epithets *ignorant*, *insane*, *full of pride*, *false magician*, *traitor*, and *enemy of man* do not seem, however, to have any moral element, and they are such as might well be applied to the opponent of the divine benefactor of man. M. Schoebel, moreover, refers to the presence in the Rig Veda of what appears to be an account of the Fall,² which, however, makes no mention of the serpent. The reference to the tree of sweet fruit³ certainly recalls the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the two winged friends may answer to the first human parents of Genesis. Supposing, however, that the Biblical and the Vedic narratives are traceable to a common source, it by no means follows that the latter narrative has the moral significance usually ascribed to the former. It can, in fact, be shown that the so-called Fall has a totally different explanation from the usual one, and that it relates to purity rather than to morality. To some extent no doubt purity and morality are convertible terms, but the former idea had originally so limited a sense that it was of little use as a criterion of morality. It is very possible, however, that we have there the key to the moral ideas of the early Aryas. M. Pictet refers to the fact that the Sanscrit *mala*, sin, signifies literally dirt, the adjective meaning filthy and then miserable. From thence came the word *malina*, filthy, black, then vile, bad, depraved, sullied with vices or crimes. So, also, the Sanscrit *punya* has the double sense of purity and moral and religious virtue, or, as an adjective, of pure and virtuous.⁴ Thus that which was originally present to the Aryan mind was not goodness and sinfulness, but purity and impurity, terms which have a very relative sense.

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 119.

² *Do.*, p. 139 *seq.*; see *infra*.

³ For an analogous idea, see *supra*, p. 182.

⁴ "Les Origines Indo-Européennes," par Ad. Pictet (1863), vol. ii. p. 559.

Mr Sherring observes that the Hindu partakes of the supposed nature of his gods. "His soul's best affections are blighted, and his conscience is deeply perverted. Idolatry is a word denoting all that is wicked in imagination, and impure in practice. These remarks are especially true of rigid and high Hindus like the Ganga-putras, or sons of the Ganges, who may be regarded as representing in their own persons the complete results of their strange religion . . . The moral nature of such Hindus has become so distorted that to a large extent, they have forgotten the essential distinctions of things."¹ Whether this is the true explanation of the phenomena may be doubted. Instead of the moral nature of the Hindus being distorted, it would probably be nearer the truth to say that it is *stunted*. Religion—using the term in its widest sense—always precedes morality, and in the case of the Hindus the latter has never undergone that development which is necessary to enable it to become the moving principle of action. The Hindus present every appearance of being a people who have in their infancy been taught that the most important of all matters is to secure "salvation," that is, escape from rebirth, the conduct of a man in his social relations being of secondary importance. Hence religion itself is to them nothing but a means to that end. It has no real concern with morality, and practically its observances are spells which counteract the evil designs, or compel the good countenance, of the gods towards the worshipper.² It is true that the efficacy of offerings depends on the Brahmans or priests, who receive them and perform the sacrifice,³ but the worshipper none the less influences the gods through them. Anyone, how-

¹ *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 46.

² Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

³ For some account by Prof. Stenzler of the *prāyaścitta*, or offering of expiation, see the "Academy" (1874), p. 351.

ever, may command the gods who can pronounce the *mantras*, or certain prayers which have a magical power.¹ The effect of these is expressed in the sentence which the Brahmans are foud of repeating, "All the universe is under the power of the gods; the gods are subject to the power of the Mantras; the Mantras are under the power of the Brahmans; the Brahmans are therefore our gods."² The same power was possessed by those who followed a life of asceticism. The Rishis, or Penitents, acquired by their exercises an actual superiority over the gods, and they showed their influence by cursing the latter for their immorality.³ The absence of any public worship of Brahma at the present day is accounted for by his having been cursed by some ancient Penitents for such conduct.⁴ The gods are said to have endeavoured to prevent the Rishis from accomplishing their sacrifices by throwing lumps of flesh from the sky on to their offerings to render them worthless.⁵ At other times the heavenly courtesans were sent down to earth to distract the minds of the ascetics,⁶ a temptation not unknown to Christian anchorites. That the power to be obtained by leading such a life was not restricted to the Brahmans, is shown by the fact that their irreconcilable enemies, the giants, themselves resorted to a life of austerity, not as a mark of penitence but simply to be enabled to overcome the gods. In this they were often successful until they were finally defeated and destroyed by Durga, the wife of Siva.⁷ Religious austerities are useful, according to Brahmanic teaching, to

¹ Mischievous magicians are punished by removing the two front teeth from their upper jaws to prevent them from pronouncing plainly the words of the *mantras*. (Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 81).

² See Dubois, *op. cit.*, pp. 77 *seq.*, 346.

³ Do., p. 308 *seq.*

⁴ Do., p. 140.

⁵ Do., p. 319.

⁶ Ward, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 187.

⁷ Do., pp. 123 *seq.*, 183 *seq.* Dubois, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

subdue the passions, and raise the mind to a pure state. "This subjugation of the passions," says Ward, "applies to all virtues as well as to vicious desires. The person who is divested of all desire, even that of obtaining God, is described as having arrived at the summit of perfection. The love of parents, of children, &c., is an imperfection, according to the Hindu code; hence, says Krishna, wisdom is exemption from attachments and affection for children, wife, and home."¹

A learned German writer remarks that Indian morality possesses essentially a cosmic character, both in its foundation and object. There is no personal liberty, especially as regards the higher beings. Brahma alone acts in them. Of the three worlds, that of light, that of humanity (the upper world), and that of the ungodly (the lower world), one only is pure and good. The upper and the lower worlds are the seat of evil, which necessarily lies in nature, and is created with man without any fault of his own. Among men, the Brahmins, who answer to the world of light, are alone in full possession of mental and moral power. The Sudra is vicious by nature and incapable of doing a moral act.² Man loves his fellow only as a being of nature, and regards him in the same light as other natural objects. Whatever is due to man is due also to animals, and the Brahmin venerates a cow more than he respects a Sudra. The love of the Hindu to nature as a whole extinguishes his love to man, and he knows of no general moral duty, but only of those duties which are required by the regulations of caste.³ The same writer in comparing Brahmanism and Buddhism as philosophic systems says,

¹ *op. cit.*, Introd., p. 92. Compare this with the teaching of Confucius and his commentator, *supra*, pp. 38, 39.

² Wuttke's "Geschichte des Heidenthums" (1852), vol. ii. p. 459.

³ *Do.*, vol. ii. p. 461.

that in the former the idea proceeds from plurality to unity, from the periphery to the centre, which latter is the only truth. The Buddhist doctrine on the contrary remains in the periphery, which alone is true. The centre does not exist, the all is but plurality, an existence pervaded by non-existence. For the Brahman the only true existence is a point, for the Buddhist it is a bubble. The Brahmanic doctrine denies the world; the Buddhist doctrine denies God.¹ This is the philosophic statement of the difference between the two great religious systems which have originated and been developed among the people of India. In the next chapter we shall have to consider the moral aspects of Buddhism, and we shall probably find that whatever may have been the philosophic difference between that system and Brahmanism, the aim of both was the same, although the mode of attaining the desired end—escape from the circle of existence—was different. They have, moreover, one practical feature in common, which should not be lost sight of. Buddhism, notwithstanding its selfishness, is essentially altruistic, and the chief duty of the present, or Kali, age of Hinduism is that of liberality.² This virtue, however, in the Brahmanic sense, is merely a phase of hospitality;³ but at the hands of Gautama and his followers, it has received so important a development that it raises Buddhism almost to a level with Christianity.

¹ Wuttke, vol. ii. p. 524.

² *supra*, p. 202.

³ See *supra*, vol. i. p. 471, *seq.*

CHAPTER V.

BUDDHISM.

IN a former chapter, the ideas entertained by the ancients as to the nature and origin of the human soul were considered. Their bearing on the doctrine of metempsychosis was also explained, and it was shown that this doctrine was connected with the philosophic teachings as to the impurity of matter, and the degrading influence which contact with it had over the spiritual being. We have already, when treating of Hinduism, seen that under the influence of that idea "purity" comes to take the place of obedience as the aim of religious life, and we have now to consider other developments of the same phase of thought. It is important to notice, in the first place, that the reason assigned for metempsychosis necessarily led to that result. The soul is compelled to pass through a series of material transformations, not because it has disobeyed the command of the Gods, but because it is not in a condition fitted for its admission to a place of purity and holiness. It is subject to metempsychosis only so long as it is in a condition of moral impurity and until it is purged from the contamination of the material life. Practically, therefore, transmigration becomes a punishment for vicious conduct—that which causes impurity—and hence it may be viewed as a most important sanction of morality. It is not surprising, therefore, that the chief aim of those religious sectaries who receive the doctrine, should be to escape its penalties, this motive having originally far greater weight

than the correlative one of attaining to the condition of spiritual purity necessary to ensure escape from the "cycle of necessity." It is long, indeed, before the latter motive has much real influence over moral conduct. But even the desire to escape from the painful rebirth of metempsychosis is preceded by another phase of thought. When the idea was first formed that transmigration, if not actually required for the purpose of purifying the soul, was the result of its impurity, the dogma thus enounced would have to be placed under the sanction of the gods, who would direct the form of embodiment which the soul must from time to time assume, as well as declare what conduct would result in rebirth. In course of time, as that dogma became firmly established, the sanction of the deity would be gradually lost sight of, and the motive for right action would thenceforth be, not obedience to a divine command, but a desire to escape from the fate which awaits the soul impregnated with material desires. This can hardly be said in relation to the priestly class, however, since by their very nature they are supposed to be, not only in a condition of spiritual purity, but even in some sense actually divine. What has been before said of the Brahmins¹ agrees with the observation of Lajard, that anciently the priests were considered, not merely the direct ministers of the gods, but as their representatives, and manifestation on the earth, and even their actual incarnation.²

It is the worshipper, not the human God, who has to fear rebirth,³ and it is this fear which leads him to perform those things which are supposed to be efficacious to free the soul from metempsychosis. But the nature of the rites necessary for this purpose proves that the idea of

¹ *Supra*, p. 149.

² "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 79.

³ In the Hindu system, however, the Brahmin even may sink to the level of a Sudra. See *supra*, p. 201.

punishment inflicted by an angry deity is still influential. According to Brahmanic teaching the state of future bliss may be secured by oblations to the gods, and by gifts to the priests. The gifts thus presented to the "human gods" are efficacious only so far as they lead the recipients to perform the sacred sacrifices. This office is the peculiar privilege of the priests, and it holds a place of great importance in the Brahmanical system. Dr Haug says that it is "regarded as the means for obtaining power over this and the other world, over visible as well as invisible beings, animate as well as inanimate creatures. Who knows its proper application, and has it duly performed, is in fact looked upon as the real master of the world; for any desire he may entertain, if it be even the most ambitious, can be gratified, any object he has in view can be obtained by means of it. The *Yajna*, (sacrifice) taken as a whole, is conceived to be a kind of machinery, in which every piece must tally with the other, or a sort of large chain in which no link is allowed to be wanting, or a staircase, by which one may ascend to heaven, or as a personage, endowed with all the characteristics of a human body. It exists from eternity The creation of the world itself was even regarded as the fruit of a sacrifice performed by the Supreme Being. The *Yajna* exists as an invisible thing at all times, it is like the latent power of electricity in an electrifying machine, requiring only the operation of a suitable apparatus in order to be elicited. It is supposed to extend, when unrolled, from the *Ahavanîya*, or sacrificial fire, into which all oblations are thrown, to heaven, forming thus a bridge or ladder, by means of which the sacrificer can communicate with the world of gods and spirits, and even ascend, when alive, to their abodes." The *Yajna* is thus a most potent instrument, but its efficacy depends on the mode in which the sacrifice is

performed. Every part must tally, so that there shall be nothing in excess or deficient. If the *rupa*, or form, is vitiated the whole sacrifice is lost, and as the power and significance of the Hotri priests at a sacrifice consists in their being masters of the "sacred word," the effect of which depends mainly on the form in which it is uttered,¹ it is evident that to obtain the benefit of the *Yajna* the people must have recourse to the priests. This, however, is equivalent to being entirely dependent on them for escape from re-birth, since it is taught that for gaining heaven a Soma sacrifice is indispensable. The sacred Soma juice has, according to the opinions of ancient Hindu theologians, the power of uniting the sacrificer, even on earth, with the divine being Soma, making him thus one of his subjects, an associate of the gods, and an inhabitant of the celestial world.² The animal which is sacrificed is instead of the sacrificer himself, and when the former goes to the gods in the fire, so does the sacrificer in the shape of the animal. "Being thus received among the gods, the sacrificer is deemed worthy," says Haug, "to enjoy the divine beverage, the Soma, and participate in the heavenly king who is Soma. The drinking of the Soma makes him a new man; though a new celestial body had been prepared for him at the Pravargya ceremony, the enjoyment of the Soma beverage transforms him again; for the nectar of the gods flows for the first time in his veins, purifying and sanctifying him. This last birth to the complete enjoyment of all divine rights is symbolically indicated in the rites of the morning libation."³

¹ The Aitareya Brahmanam of the Rig Veda, by Dr Haug (1863), Introd. p. 73, seq.

² Do., p. 80.

³ Do. pp., 60, 62. As to the nature of the Soma plant, see p. 489, note, also F. Windischmann in the Transactions of the Bavarian Academy, vol. iv. (1845).

The rites of the Soma sacrifice might almost be classed with certain magical formulæ, which occupy a foremost place in the religious observances, as well of the followers of the Hindu Siva, as of the various Buddhist peoples. Schlagintweit remarks that "the confidence in the powerful influence of prayers and ceremonies is so common among all Buddhist tribes of High Asia, that every undertaking is begun by them with the recital of incantations and the performance of certain ceremonies by which to appease the wrath of the demons; they, moreover, believe that by virtue of the strict observance of the duties connected with such rites, they will in time acquire a miraculous magical energy, called Siddhi, and finally become liberated from metempsychosis. This view is not opposed to the principles of Buddhism, which declare that faculties superior to those with which nature has endowed men can be obtained by meditation, abstinence, the observation of moral duties, and true repentance of sin."¹ Elsewhere, the same writer, observes that the principal rites and formulæ of Tibetan mysticism are almost identical with the Tantrika ritual of the Hindus, although they also have an extraordinary analogy to the Shamanism of the Siberians.² It is true that Schlagintweit supposes that the Tantras were probably introduced into the Buddhist sacred literature from India, at so late as the tenth century of the Christian era. Burnouf, also, sees only "une pratique de diverses cérémonies et une adoration de diverses Divinités çivaïtes par des Bouddhistes, qui paraissent peu s'inquiéter de la discordance qui existe entre leur foi ancienne et leurs superstitions nouvelles. Cela est si vrai, que la philosophie la plus abstraite reste entière au milieu des formules magiques, des diagrammes et des gesticulations des Tantras. Ce sont donc des Bouddhistes

¹ "Buddhism in Tibet," p. 242.

² Do. p. 48.

qui tout en gardant leurs croyances et leur philosophie, consentent à pratiquer certain rites çivaites que leur promettent le bonheur en ce monde, et en reportent l'origine jusqu'à Cākyaṃuni, afin de les autoriser davantage."¹ The magic formulas, called Mantras or Dhāranīs, contained in the Mahāyāna Sūtras, reserve to Sakyamuni, his ancient superiority over the Sivaite divinities who supply them, and Burnouf considers, therefore, that all the forms of Siva which the Buddhist Tantras venerate, and the protection of whom is accepted by the Mahāyāna Sūtras, are true Hindu Deities anterior to Buddhism and adopted by it.²

The Hindu mind has made repeated and almost constant efforts to escape from the tyranny of priestcraft. The ceremonies of priestly sacrifice partake of the nature of magical rites, and the formulæ supplied by the Tantras may be looked upon as contrivances for obtaining the desired end without the aid of the privileged class.

Practically, however, the result is the same. The recognised magician takes the place of the priest, and the exchange is of doubtful value. It was different when philosophy declared its power to do what had hitherto been considered the sole prerogative of sacred or magical rites. Of the leading philosophic systems the Vedāntasara teaches that emancipation may be effected by the acquirement of the knowledge that Brahma is the soul of the world, or that God and matter are the same. There are four ways by which this knowledge may be perfected. 1st. By that reflection, in which the person decides upon what is changeable and what is

¹ "Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien," p. 549.

² Do. p. 551. Mr Hodgson, however, comes to a different conclusion. He gives reasons for believing that both Brahmanism and Buddhism are indebted for their Tantrika traits to the rude superstitions of a primitive population, traces of whom are found everywhere from Siberia to Ceylon. "Journal of the Roy. As., Soc.," vol. xviii., p. 397.

unchangeable in the world. 2d. By cultivating a distaste of all sensual pleasures, and even of the happiness enjoyed by the gods. 3d. By the following qualities, an unruffled mind, the subjugation of the passions, unrepenting generosity, contempt of the world, the rejection of whatever obstructs the acquisition of the knowledge of Brahma; and 4th. By unwavering faith in the shastras, added to the desire of absorption.¹ To aid in attaining to this condition, the ascetic formerly practised what is called the *Yoga* ceremony, the object of which was the subduing of the passions and the causing a disregard for the pleasures of sense. When in this manner and by constant meditation on God he has annihilated, as it were, the body and the world, he is then to fix in his mind that he and Brahma are one, and so to settle this point as never to lose sight of it, nor return to earthly attachments. From this state of mind arises complete pleasure; he becomes dead to food and to every other bodily want, and when the body is finally shaken off, the yogi is re-united to the supreme soul.² The philosophical system of Kapila, known as the Sâṅkhya, is, like the Vedânta, based on the notion of a return to earthly existence, and its aim was to substitute, as a means of liberating man from rebirth, the efficacy of science for that of religious practices. The Bouddhi, or intelligence, the first principle of nature, afterwards becomes the first principle of Bouddhism, which is *gnosis*, or science. By the operation of that intelligence the mind becomes supreme, knowing all things and dominating all being. Science is thus "the sole condition of felicity," and its operation is to free the soul from the fear of returning to either of the three worlds of which the universe was assumed by Kapila to consist—that of the gods, that of men, that

¹ Ward *op. cit.* Introd. p. 5.

² Do., p. 8.

of animals. A fourth world had thus to be introduced, the denizens of which, as being above the world of the gods, are superior to the deities, even Brahma himself, who, as the Vedas affirm, is subject to the law of rebirth.¹ Having thus shown the ultimate condition of the soul it was necessary that its nature and origin should be explained. This Kapila did not neglect, and he laid down the principles that, 1. The soul is eternal; it has not been created, and can consequently not perish. 2. The soul has been its own cause, and, like nature, which has also produced itself, is insensible; the soul which is endowed with sensibility is superior to nature, which it comprehends without being comprehended by it. 3. The soul, distinct from nature in which it should never be dissolved, is nevertheless distinct from the body to which it is united through its successive existences. To distinguish itself from the body and from nature is for the soul the essential condition for liberation and eternal beatitude. 4. The soul has no personality, although it possesses individuality. 5. The soul is absolutely inactive.²

The difference between these philosophic systems has been well expressed by Mrs Manning, who says: "The Sāṅkhya explains the origin and development of the universe, and teaches that 'true knowledge' emancipates man from the bonds of transitory existence. The Yoga further shows that true knowledge includes knowledge of Iswara, or God, and that this knowledge can only be attained by contemplation and exercises. And,

¹ "Memoire sur le Sāṅkhya" par J. Barthelemy Saint Hilaire, Academie des Sciences Morales, tom. viii., p. 477, *seq.* There is a curious similarity between the fourth world of Kapila, in the highest of which dwell the souls become truly free, and the Brahma worlds of Buddhism, in the highest of which are to be found the perfected Buddhas, who also had once been dwellers on earth. See *supra* p. 180.

² Do., p. 453.

lastly, the Vedânta agrees with the Yoga in asserting that true knowledge is the knowledge of Iswara, but lays especial stress on the doctrine that man's soul emanates from Brahma, or universal soul, and must learn to *know* that from which it came, and to which it is destined to return. All other knowledge the Vedânta considers futile, and only at a late period were ascetic practices recognised as secondary means in the acquisition of this knowledge."¹ This is shown to be true by the fact that, although one of the four chapters of Patanjali's Yóga-shástra contains numerous directions for bodily and mental exercises by which a knowledge of everything past or future is gained, the thoughts of others are divined, the power is acquired of flying in the air, floating in the water, and diving into the earth, and all worlds are contemplated at a glance, yet all these only prepare the soul for that condition which is essential to the accomplishment of the ultimate purpose. That which "constitutes efficacious devotion, whereby the deity, propitiated, confers on the votary the boon that is sought, precluding all impediments, and effecting the attainment of an inward sentiment that prepares the soul for liberation," is the repeated utterance of the mystical name OM, while meditating on its significance.²

The ultimate object sought by those several systems is thus the same as that with which the Brahmanical sacrifice is offered—the attainment of freedom from rebirth. Of themselves they would probably have but little affected the influence of the priestly performers of that sacrifice. They prepared the way, however, for a movement which led to the temporary overthrow of Brahmanism, and which was destined to affect more or

¹ "Ancient and Modern India," vol. i., p. 418.

² Miscellaneous Essays by H. T. Colebrooke (1839), vol. i., p. 250. As to the mystic *om*, see Dr Haug's "Aitareya Brahmanam," vol. ii., p. 372

less profoundly the institutions of a third of the human race. The great apostle to whom the spiritual liberation of the Hindus was due, appears to have been born at the city of Kapilavastu, about the end of the seventh century before the Christian era. His father, who was the king of the country, belonged to the great solar race of the Gôtamides and to the Kshatriya family of the Sâkyas, while his mother, surnamed Mâyâ, or illusion, on account of her extraordinary beauty, was the daughter of King Souprabouddha. The name bestowed on the young prince by his father was Siddhartha or Sarvarthasiddha, but afterwards he came to be known as Sâkyamouni or Sramana Gautama. From an early age Siddhartha was given to deep thought, and often, instead of joining in the games of his companions, he would retire apart to meditate. When he arrived at man's estate his father, wishful that he should marry, sought out a wife for him, and Siddhartha, after having vanquished all his competitors, married the beautiful and accomplished Gopa, the daughter of Dandapana, of the family of the Sâkyas. The marriage was a happy one, but the young prince still continually meditated on the problems of life and death, and on the means of attaining peace, spiritual freedom for himself, and deliverance for the world. Filled with such thoughts, it cannot be wondered at that the sight of the many evils which so often accompany old age, and of the disease and death which tread in human footsteps, should determine Gautama to devote his life to the working out of man's deliverance. How was this to be effected? The first step to it was for him to become a devotee, the refuge of those who, like himself, truly desired to attain to life, happiness, and immortality. Declaring his intention to his father and his wife, he left Kapilavastu, in spite of the guards set to watch his movements, and went in search of a teacher

who could show him the way of salvation. Disappointed at Vaisâli and at Radjagriha, the capital of Magadha (Behar), he took to a life of severe penance and privation, which he led for six years, in company with five fellow-students who had accompanied him when he quitted Rudraka, the Brahman whose fame had attracted him to Radjagriha. Finding after all that ascetism was not the way which leads to perfection, he gave up its practice, and quickly recovered his strength and beauty. His fellow-students, however, being disgusted with his frailty, abandoned him, and he was now left alone in his hermitage at Uruvilva. Here, after many ecstatic visions,¹ and especially after one which lasted without interruption for a week, Gautama thought he had arrived at the truth which he had hitherto been vainly seeking and with which he could save the world. He had finally found, says Barthelemy Saint Hilaire, "la voie forte du grand homme, la voie du sacrifice des sens, la voie infalible et sans abattement, la voie de la benediction et de la vertu, la voie sans tache, sans envie, sans ignorance, et sans passions, la voie qui montre le chemin de la delivrance . . . la voie qui mène à la possession de la science universelle, la voie qui adoucit la vieillesse et la mort, la voie calme et sans trouble, exemple des craintes du démon, qui conduit à la cité du Nirvana." At that moment Gautama thought he had become the perfected Buddha, the sage in all his purity, his grandeur and power, more than divine. The precise spot where Buddha thus revealed himself is called Bodhimanda, which means the Seat of Intelligence, and tradition has preserved all the details of the solemn act. The remainder of Gautama's life was spent in active benevolence and in disseminating his opinions, a work in which

¹ The process by which Nirvana is attained is called *Dhÿàna*, and is ecstasy or trance.

he was so successful that not only the kings of Magadha and Kosala, and, apparently, many of their subjects, became his converts, but on visiting Kapilavastu, all the family of the Sâkyas received his doctrines, his own wife and his aunt becoming the first female devotees in India. The death of Gautama was as peaceful as his life. Resting under a sal tree, in a forest near the city of Kusinâgara, his spirit quietly entered into the "rest" which he had devoted his life to find for poor sorrowing humanity.¹

To what are we to ascribe the extraordinary success which attended the teaching of Gautama? That it was not the effect of any peculiarity in the moral or religious doctrines he taught, is evident from the similarity which these unquestionably had to those of Hinduism itself. Probably it was in great measure due to his personal influence, to that sympathy which put him *en rapport* with all those who were not hardened against his teaching by religious prejudices. The account preserved of the interview which Gautama had with his five old companions, soon after he had attained to the state of Buddha, shows that he had such a sympathetic influence. When they saw him approach they determined to receive him with cold indifference, but as he came nearer this resolution gradually disappeared. They treated him with respect; and being struck with his appearance, they said, "The senses of Ayoushmat Gautama are completely purified; his skin is perfectly pure; his countenance is perfectly pure." They then inquired whether he had yet attained to the perception of true knowledge. The answer to this question declares the aim of Buddhistic teaching, and it is thus of great moment. Gautama said,

¹ The substance of this short account of the life of Gautama is taken from Barthelemy St. Hilaire's "Le Bouddha et sa Religion" (1860), chap. i.

“Do not give me the title of Ayoushmat. For a long time I have done you no good ; I procured you neither aid nor well-being. Yes, I have come to see clearly immortality and the way which leads to immortality. I am Buddha ; I know all, I see all, I have got rid of all defects ; I am master of all laws. Come, that I may teach you the Law ; listen, pay attention, I will instruct you in giving you advice, and your spirit being delivered by the loss of all defects, and by the manifest knowledge of yourselves, you shall accomplish your birth, you shall become brahmacharis, you shall do what is necessary, and you shall know no other existence after this : behold what you shall learn.”¹ Here we see no real difference of aim from that which was taught by the Brahmans whom Gautama had visited during his noviciate. However much he might doubt the practical value of the teaching of Arata or Roudraka, he did not seek to attain to something which was unknown to them. Indeed, after his separation from Roudraka, he spent six years in penances such as Brahmanic asceticism prescribed ; not because he was yet uncertain as to the right way, but that he might derive from them the benefit they were supposed to give.² So, when he attained to Buddhahood, he assumed the privileges of a Brahman, acting as a priest, although he was a Kshatriya. Gautama fully believed and acted on the belief, that he had attained to the condition which the sacred thread betokened—that of the new birth, the perfect spiritual freedom which he had so earnestly sought for the sake of his fellow-men. After some delay he began to preach the good tidings. Disregarding the privileges of the priestly caste, “he addressed himself to all classes ; nay, he addressed himself to the poor and the degraded rather than to the

¹ “Le Bouddha et la Religion,” p. 35.

² Do., p. 24.

rich and the high," since the former were the most in need of his ministrations.

Burnouf, in describing the source of the influence which the founder of Buddhism exerted over his fellow-countrymen, says : " L'espérance que Sâkyamuni apportait aux hommes, c'était la possibilité d'échapper à la loi de la transmigration, en entrant dans ce qu'il appelle le Nirvâna, c'est a-dire l'anéantissement. Le signe définitif de cet anéantissement était la mort ; mais un signe précurseur annonçait des cette vie l'homme prédestiné à cette suprême délivrance ; c'était la possession d'une science illimitée, qui lui donnait la vue nette du monde, tel qu'il est, c'est-a-dire la connaissance des lois physiques et morales ; et pour tout dire en un mot, c'était la pratique des six perfections transcendantes : celle de l'aumône, de la morale, de la science, de l'énergie, de la patience et de la charité. L'autorité sur laquelle le Religieux de la race de Sâkya appuyait son enseignement était toute personnelle ; elle se formait de deux éléments, l'un réel et l'autre idéal. Le premier était la régularité et la sainteté de sa conduite, dont la chasteté, la patience et la charité formaient les traits principaux. Le second était la prétention qu'il avait d'être Buddha, c'est-a-dire éclairé, et, comme tel, de posséder une science et une puissance sur humaines. Avec sa puissance, il opérait des miracles ; avec sa science, il se représentait, sous une forme claire et complète, le passé et l'avenir. Par là il pouvait raconter tout ce que chaque homme avait fait dans ses existences antérieures ; et il affirmait ainsi qu'un nombre infini d'êtres avait jadis atteint comme lui, par la pratique des mêmes vertus, à la dignité de Buddha, avant d'entrer dans l'anéantissement complet. Il se présentait enfin aux hommes comme leur sauveur, et il leur promettait que sa mort n'anéantirait pas sa doctrine ; mais que cette doctrine devait durer

après lui un grand nombre de siècles, et que quand son action salutaire aurait cessé, il viendrait au monde un nouveau Buddha, qu'il annonçait par son nom et qu'avant de descendre sur la terre, il avait, disent les légendes, sacré lui-même dans le ciel, en qualité de Buddha futur." ¹

This admirable summary brings clearly into view the important position occupied in Gautama's teaching by the doctrine of emancipation from the rebirth of metempsychosis. No doubt, as Mr Spence Hardy shows, there can be no such process as transmigration, as usually understood, consistently with the peculiar explanation given by southern Buddhism of the nature of "being," as made up of the five *khandas* ² controlled by the two properties, *upādāna* (drawing to existing objects) and *karma* (action). ³ This requires that the soul should cease to exist with the body, the good and bad acts performed during life resulting in the growth of a new life, the soul of which is therefore the necessary product of that which precedes it. But this is merely later Buddhistic speculation, and that the above doctrine is perfectly recognised in popular teaching is evident from the fact, mentioned elsewhere by Mr Hardy, that "in historical composition, in narrative, and in conversation, the common idea of transmigration is continually presented." ⁴ So, also, M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire declares that "l'idée de la transmigration s'étend pour le Bouddhisme aussi loin que possible ; elle embrasse tout, depuis le Bodhisattva, qui va devenir un Bouddha parfaitement accompli, et depuis l'homme jusqu'à la matière inerte et morte. L'être peut transmigrer sans aucune exception

¹ Burnouf, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

² These are (1) *Rūpan*, the organised body ; (2) *Wīdanā*, sensation ; (3) *Sannyā*, perception ; (4) *Sankhāro*, discrimination ; (5) *Winyāna*, consciousness.

³ "Manual of Buddhism," p. 390. ⁴ Do., p. 397.

dans toutes les formes quelles qu'elles soient ; et, suivant les actes qu'il aura commis, bons ou mauvais, il passera depuis les plus hautes jusqu'aux plus infimes. Les textes sont si nombreuse et si positifs, qu'il n'y a pas lieu au plus léger doute, quelque extravagante que cette idée puisse nous paraître."¹ It could not, however, be otherwise, considering the fundamental character of the dogma in Buddhism. So far from Gautama raising any protest against the doctrine of transmigration, his teaching could have had no place in its absence ; since it may be said with truth that the whole aim of Buddhism is to enable its votaries to escape from the dreaded rebirth of metempsychosis. This is the object of attaining the " perfect dominion over passion, evil desire, and natural sensation," which distinguishes Nirvâna.² So, the chief aim of the recital of mystical words and sentences practised by the Tibetan Buddhists is to obtain final emancipation from metempsychosis, and acquire a birth in Amitabha's celestial mansion,³ as it is, also, of the acquisition of the magical energy called Siddhi.⁴ The inconsequence of Buddhism rests, says Koeppen, upon its having rejected the doctrine of emanation, while it admitted the conclusions as to the nature of evil and the transmigration of souls as far as they had passed into vulgar belief. Hence the great object of Gautama was to show how it was possible to burst the cycle of metempsychosis and his teaching was called *the way*, that is, the way to attain eternal rest from the pain which attends existence.⁵

The teaching of Gautama on the subject of metempsychosis, had a most important bearing on the question of caste. The early Buddhistic writers continually recognise the existence of the four castes, and this shows that

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 123.

² *Do.*, p. 57.

³ *Buddha*, p. 215, *seq.*

⁴ Schlagintweit, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁵ *Do.*, p. 242. *Supra*, p. 256.

when Gautama taught that "there is no essential difference between the four tribes,"¹ he must have referred to some condition which those belonging to all might or might not alike attain to. This notion is confirmed by his declaration that "when the man of low caste attains Nirvana, his reward is the same as that of the man of high caste." There the existence of caste is supposed, the equality referring only to spiritual gifts, the possession of which in Buddhism, as in Brahmanism, is the criterion of fitness for honour.² Thus it was that, "at the commencement of Buddhism, persons of all castes were admitted into the priesthood; and when so admitted, the lowest Sûdra held equal rank and received equal honours with the Brahman or the Kshatriya." There is no abolition of caste in this. Indeed, it is difficult to see how there could be, seeing that "that which gives to caste its real importance, and by which it is exhibited in its most repulsive aspect," is retained by the Buddhists as by the Brahmans, "inasmuch as they teach that the present position of all men is the result of the merit or demerit of former births."³ Instead of Gautama rejecting caste, as Mr Hardy supposes, he abolished only its spiritual privileges, which he taught did not belong to the Brahmans only, but to all those and to those alone, whatever their caste, who proved themselves to be worthy. Acting on this principle, although Gautama addressed himself to all classes, or rather preferably to the poor and the degraded, he did not seek to abolish caste as a social institution. His only attacks were levelled, says Prof. Max. Müller, against the exclusive privileges claimed by the Brahmans, and against their

¹ Hardy, "Manual of Buddhism," p. 80.

² The Bonze or Buddhist priest is the only person that the King of Siam salutes when passing through the streets. See Bowring's "Siam" *passim*: So kings must cede the way to the Brahman—Max Müller, "Chips," vol. ii., p. 340.

³ Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

cruel treatment of the lowest castes.¹ But this was enough, and "at the bidding of Buddha the evil spirit of caste seems to have vanished. Thieves and robbers, beggars and cripples, slaves and prostitutes, bankrupts and sweepers, gathered around him. But kings also came to confess their sins and to perform public penance, and the most learned among the Brahmans confessed their ignorance before Buddha."²

The influence which the spread of Buddhism had on the position of the Brahmans was not due to any interference with caste as a social distinction. It was the natural result of the teaching of Gautama as to deliverance from rebirth, and in this we have the source of the undying hatred which the Brahmans as a class from the first entertained against the Buddhists. The Brahman had hitherto been secure in his possession of the benefits of the new birth, and also of the right of Sacrifice, which was the exclusive property of the "human-god." Now, however, those who had looked to him for deliverance from metempsychosis were placed on spiritual equality with himself. Thus taught Gautama:—"Between a Brahman and a man of another caste there is not the same difference as between gold and a stone, between light and darkness. The Brahman is born of a woman, so is the Kandâla. If the Brahman is dead, he is left as a thing impure, like the other castes. Where is the difference?" "My law is a law of grace for all." "My doctrine is like the sky. There is room for all without exception, men, women, boys, girls, poor and rich." So also, "As the four rivers which fall in the Ganges lose their names as soon as they mingle their waters with the holy river, so all who believe in Buddha cease to be Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and

¹ *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 343.

² *Do.*, p. 345.

Sudras.”¹ It is then, in the destruction of the spiritual privileges of the Brahmans, not merely of that supremacy which they possessed as “twice born,” but as the mediators between gods and men, that we must seek the source of the endless antagonism which subsisted between Brahmanism and Buddhism. The latter placed every man’s salvation within his own reach without the intervention of the “human gods” and their priestly exactions. We cannot wonder that where Buddhism flourished the Brahmanic sacrifices were abolished, while “buildings rose over the whole of India, sacred through the relics of Buddha which they contained, and surrounded by monasteries open to all ranks, to Brahmans, and Sudras, to men and women.” Nor is it surprising that, when on the decline of Buddhism, Brahmanism revived, and became in India the dominant faith once more, it dealt hardly with its rival, and determined “to exterminate for ever the heresy of Buddha on the soil of India.”²

And yet, although the great aim of Gautama’s teaching was to point out how deliverance from the dreaded rebirth might be attained, according to one phase at least of modern Buddhism it seems almost impossible for metempsychosis to be escaped. This teaches that ‘karma’ is the arbiter of every man’s destiny, which nothing will avail to change. “No sentient being,” says Mr Spence Hardy, “can tell in what state the karma he possesses will appoint his next birth; though he may be now, and continue to be until death, one of the most meritorious of men. In that karma there may be the crime of murder, committed many ages ago, but not yet expiated, and in the next existence its punishment may have to be endured. There will ultimately be a reward

¹ Chips, &c., vol. ii., p. 344.

² Do. p. 345.

for that which is good ; but it may be long delayed.”¹ It is impossible to believe that these refinements on the dogma of transmigration and its consequences originated with Gautama. His teaching could never, indeed, have had the influence it possessed if it had rendered the possibility of emancipation so uncertain as it has become in the hands of his Singhalese disciples. His life had been passed in finding out the way of Salvation, the means of deliverance from rebirth, and it cannot be supposed that he would teach that this was in the sole arbitrament of a mysterious principle, the action of which was wholly beyond control.

It is not to be wondered at, however, that in the hands of the subtle thinkers of India the dogmas of Gautama came to have a form so different from that in which they were left by him. It cannot be denied that they contain the elements of the peculiar doctrines which distinguish modern Buddhism. The fundamental dogma of Gautama's teaching is thus stated by Schlagintweit :—“ All existence is an evil ; for birth originates sorrow, pain, decay, and death. The present life is not the first one ; innumerable births have preceded it in previous ages. The reproduction of a new existence is the consequence of the desire for existing objects,² and of the works which have been aggregated in an unbroken succession from the commencement of existence. Proneness to the pleasures of life produces the new being ; the works of the former existences fix the conditions in which this new being is to be born. If these works have been good the being will come to existence in a state of happiness and distinction ; if, on the contrary, they have been bad, the being will be born into a state of

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 398.

² This is the idea which, as we have seen, was at the foundation of the dogma of the descent and ascent of souls.

misery and degradation. The absolute annihilation of the conditions and pains of existence—Nirvâna—is attained by the most perfect dominion over passion, evil desire, and natural sensation.”¹ The influence of the actions of a past state of being over the present existence is here clearly expressed, but there is no reference to an inevitable fate ruling a man’s future destiny, such as is supposed in the fully developed doctrine of *karma*. So far from this, although Gautama declared that there was no difference between a sinful Brahman and a sinful Sudra, yet he taught that both Brahman and Sudra alike were capable of attaining by similar means to Nirvâna. How this is to be effected is declared in the theory of *The Four Verities* or *The four excellent truths*—the Pain, the Production, the Cessation, and the Path, which Schlagintweit defines as meaning :

1. Pain cannot be separated from existence.
2. Existence is produced by passions and evil desires.
3. Existence is brought to an end by the cessation of evil desires.
4. Revelation of the path to this cessation.

Eight good paths are indicated in the early Sudras.

1. The right opinion ; 2. The right judgment ; 3. The right words ; 4. The right mode of acting ; 5. The right way of supporting life ; 6. The rightly directed intelligence ; 7. The right memory ; 8. The right meditation.

Schlagintweit doubts, however, whether the four truths were taught in this form by the founder of Buddhism, and he gives the following sentence, in which they are formulated, found on ancient Buddhist images, and now recited as a kind of confession of faith :—“Of all things proceeding from cause, the cause of their procession hath the Tathâgata explained. The great Sramana has likewise declared the cause of the extinction of all things.”

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

Tathāgata and Sramana are epithets of Sakyamuni, the latter apparently expressing "he who restrains his thoughts, the purely acting."¹

The most important part of this formula, and that which constitutes the distinguishing peculiarity of Gautama's teachings is the fourth verity. This shows the path to Nirvāna, the means of obtaining deliverance from the pains of transmigration, which will not cease until Nirvāna be obtained. This way, says Koeppen, "consists not in the worship of gods ; not in reading the Vedas ; nor in sacrifice, prayers and offerings, self-torments, but in a complete renunciation of all love for existence. This way is open to any one without distinction of rank, capacity, and education—this is the whole sum of the teachings of Buddha."²

According to Prof. Max Müller, all the precepts which have for their aim the attainment of *The Way* might be understood as part of a simple moral code, "closing with a kind of mystic meditation on the highest object of thought, and with a yearning after deliverance from all worldly ties."³ This agrees with what Burnouf says, that, without religious practice, Buddhism would be a simple moral philosophy.⁴ In fact, its sole aim is to teach how the pain attendant on continued existence can be escaped, and it proclaims that this can be effected by adherence to a certain line of moral conduct, accompanied, in the case of those who embrace a religious life, with austerities of a severe character. The observances required of the ordinary disciples of Buddha are not so severe. They are as follows—1. Not to kill ; 2. Not to steal ; 3. Not to commit adultery ; 4. Not to lie ; 5. Not to get intoxicated ; 6. To abstain from unseasonable meals ; 7. To abstain from witnessing dances,

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 16, *seq.*

² *Op. cit.*, vol i., p. 251.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 337.

theatrical performances, music, &c. ; 8. To abstain from expensive dresses and perfumery ; 9. Not to have a large bed ; 10. Not to receive silver or gold.¹ These precepts are not in themselves of a very high order, but they were accompanied by others of a more exalted character, which have been preserved in the sacred books. Thus, the six transcendental virtues of Buddhism are charity, purity, patience, courage, contemplation, and knowledge. The first of these, says Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, is not "la liberté ordinaire qui donne à autrui une partie des biens qu' on possède. C'est une charité illimitée qui s'adresse à toutes les créatures sans exception, et qui impose les sacrifices les plus douloureux et les plus extrêmes. . . . La charité doit éteindre dans le cœur de l'homme tout égoïsme, ou comme on dit en style bouddhique, elle conduit à la maturité parfaite de l'être égoïste."² Thus also, according to Prof. Max Müller, "every shade of vice, hypocrisy, anger, pride, suspicion, greediness, gossiping, cruelty to animals, is guarded against by special precepts. Among the virtues recommended, we find not only reverence of parents, care for children, submission to authority, gratitude, moderation in time of prosperity, submission in time of trial, equanimity at all times, but virtues unknown in any heathen system of morality, such as the duty of forgiving insults and not rewarding evil with evil. All virtues, we are told, spring from Maitrî, and this Maitrî can only be translated by charity and love"³—a feeling of benevolence towards all mankind, as that term is explained by Burnouf.

An enthusiastic writer, speaking of the *Dhamma Padam*, or the "Footsteps of Religion," a Pali work on

¹ J. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, *op. cit.*, p. 632. As to these precepts, see Hardy's "Manual of Buddhism," p. 460, *seq.*, and also "Eastern Monachism," by the same author, p. 342.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 222.

Buddhist ethics, goes so far as to say that "in it we have exemplified a code of morality, and a list of precepts, which for pureness, excellence, and wisdom, is only second to that of the Divine Lawgiver himself."¹ The following are some of the best of these moral precepts—

"Anger is not to be appeased by anger, but by gentleness.

"Mental control, and the subjection of the passions, is the path to happiness and eternity.

"Be not anxious to discover the faults of others, but jealously watch your own.

"Let man perform those actions of which futurity will never cause him to repent.

"As the solid rock stands unshaken by the storm, so the wise man is unmoved by contempt or applause.

"Nothing is sinful to the pure.

"All the religion of Buddha is contained in these three sentences:—Purify the mind; abstain from vice; practice virtue."

The high moral tone of the *Dhamma Padam* cannot be denied, but it should not be overlooked that the theoretical virtues of Buddhism would seem to be far superior to those which are required in practice. La Loubère gives the maxims of the priestly orders in Siam, and Sir John Bowring says of them that, "all energetic action, all virtuous exertion, would be paralyzed under such influences."² So far as these maxims possess any moral element at all, they are either of such a character as to be almost valueless or of the simplest description. Mr Hardy remarks, as to the *Sila* precepts, or ten ordinances binding on the priests, that they are all "either of too rigid a character to secure the possibility of observance; or are so loose in their requirements, as defined in other parts of the system, that they are deprived in a great measure of the claim they would otherwise have upon our regard . . . They are

¹ Knighton's "History of Ceylon" (1845), p. 77.

² "The Kingdom and People of Siam," vol. i., p. 323.

rather an ineffectual attempt to teach men the way of rectitude than a perfect law."¹

The chief interest which Buddhism possesses for the moral philosopher is the great extension it gives to the objectivity of benevolent action. Gautama, by inspiring his disciples with "the spirit of charity, kindness, and universal pity," did that which had not been accomplished by any preceding religious reformer—he made the recognition of the universal brotherhood of humanity possible. But he did more. Actions which, if enjoined by earlier religions, had been so because they were thought to be due to the rights of others, and as sanctioned by the gods, were now shown to be required by duty to self. A life of perfect morality necessitated attention to, not only the passive duties, but the active virtues of morality, and without such a life the condition of Nirvâna, so highly coveted, could not be attained. But, while acknowledging that in thus making duty towards self the foundation for right conduct, Buddhism effected a great advance in the development of the moral idea, it must not be thought that such a result was ever anticipated by Gautama. According to the Buddhist theory, says a recent writer, "truth is to be spoken, self to be sacrificed, benevolence to be exercised, not for the sake of the good thus done to others, but solely for the effect of this conduct on the soul of the actor, in preparing him for escape from existence. To teach man 'the means of arriving at the other shore,' was another expression for teaching virtue."² The aim sought by Gautama was, in fact, to deliver man from the rebirth of metempsychosis, and the duties and observances he enforced were valuable so far only as they were useful for that purpose. Not that Buddhism differs much in this re-

¹ "Eastern Monachism," p. 343.

² "Chambers' Encycl." *art.* "Buddhism," vol. ii., p. 407.

spect from other developed religious systems. As we have seen, the mysteries were instituted for exactly the same object as the teachings of Gautama had in view. The aim of Christianity itself, although its morality is certainly of a nobler type, was the deliverance of man from the consequences of sin, if not metempsychosis, yet future punishment such as has been supplied by modern Buddhism. The practical virtue of the latter system depends no doubt on its moral influence, and yet Gautama, judged of by the aim of his teaching, is rightly viewed as a Saviour or Redeemer, rather than as a mere moralist. Dr Muir, in drawing attention to the application of that title to Gautama,¹ says that "Kumârila Bhatta, a renowned Brahmanical opponent of the Buddhists, while charging Buddha with presumption and transgression of the rules of his caste, in assuming the functions of a religious teacher (with which, as belonging to the Kshatriya, and not to the Brahmanical class, he had no right to interfere) ascribes to him these words, 'Let all the evils (or sins) flowing from the corruption of the Kali age (the fourth or most degenerate age of the world) fall upon me, but let the world be redeemed!'" Nevertheless, as Dr Muir remarks, there is no reference here to vicarious atonement, but only an "enthusiastic utterance of highly-strung moral sympathy and charity," such as that which Saint Paul expressed when he said "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren."

It is almost inseparable from such a system as that founded by Gautama, that the moral duty which it enforced must sooner or later come to be interpreted in so narrow a spirit as to nearly preclude the benevolent conduct towards others which had so much value in the eyes of its founder. Prof. Max Müller does, indeed, say

¹ Trübner's "Literary Record," Feb. 28th, 1871, p. 95.

of Buddhism that "the morality which it teaches is not a morality of expediency and rewards. Virtue is not enjoined because it necessarily leads to happiness. No, virtue is to be practised, but happiness is to be shunned, and the only reward for virtue is that it subdues the passions, and thus prepares the human mind for that knowledge which is to end in complete annihilation."¹ This is true, in one sense, but it should be remembered that the reward of virtue, is valued only as a means of escaping what Gautama taught to be the most miserable fate. Although virtue was not practised directly for the sake of happiness, yet indirectly it was so; since it ensured deliverance from the misery of existence. Its object, Prof. Max Müller himself asserts, was "to guide each individual towards that path which would finally bring him to Nirvâna, to utter extinction or annihilation. The very definitive of virtue was that it helped man to cross over to the other shore, and that other shore was not death, but cessation of all being. Thus charity was considered a virtue; modesty, patience, courage, contemplation, and science, all were virtues, but they were practised only as a means of arriving at deliverance."² This passage cannot be accepted as giving a correct idea of the nature of Nirvâna, but it well reveals the weak point in the moral system of Buddha. Its sanctions are essentially selfish. Virtue has no value in itself, and virtuous action, as could only be expected of a system which treats contemplation and metaphysical knowledge as virtues, is not measured by the benefits it confers on others. Universal love and benevolence are enjoined, and they were practised by Gautama and his immediate disciples, but their ultimate object was the benefit of self; and it is not surprising, therefore, that when the traditional influence of Gautama's example grew weak,

¹ "Op cit." vol. I., p. 248.

² Do., p. 249.

the means were almost lost sight of in the end, and the necessity of charity took a secondary place in Buddhistic teaching.

To enforce that benevolent action is commendable, not because it is right in itself, or as pleasing to God, but because it will aid in preserving the agent from a much dreaded evil, is to ensure that it shall finally cease, unless some healthier motive for it is provided. And such seems to have been the result in those countries where Buddhism at present prevails. Sir John Bowring says—"The real and invincible objection to Buddhism is its selfishness, its disregard of others, its deficiency in all the promptings of sympathy and benevolence. Its highest virtue is fruitless contemplation; its noblest reward is to be found in eternal repose."¹ This is said in relation, more especially, to the Buddhism of Siam; but it appears to be the same in all other Buddhist countries.² How far the development of the selfish side of Buddhism had to do with its downfall in India may perhaps be questioned. Major Cunningham asserts that it was "a natural consequence of closing all roads to salvation, save the difficult path which led from one grade to another of the monastic orders. No layman could hope to be saved; and even the most zealous votary must have felt that the standard of excellence was too lofty to be reached. Absolute faith, perfect virtue, and supreme knowledge, were indispensable; and without these, no man could attain Buddhahood, and final freedom from transmigration. Continued celibacy, abstinence, and privations, were expected from all who had taken the vows; and a long course of prayer, penance, and devout abstraction, were requisite before

¹ "The Kingdom and People of Siam" (1857), vol. i. p. 297.

² Mr Spence Hardy insists strongly on this point. See "Eastern Monachism," p. 343 *seq.*

the votary could gain the rank of Arhata or Bodhisatwa. But as this was the *only* path to salvation, people of all ranks flocked to the monasteries," taking the vows of celibacy, abstinence, and poverty. The daily begging for subsistence of the early converts was no longer required, as the finest lands in the country had been alienated for the support of the monasteries. The inhabitants of these were envied by the people, and their wealth coveted by the rulers, and when finally this was seized, "the people looked on unmoved, and would not defend what they had long ceased to respect, and the colossal figure of Buddhism, which had once bestridden the whole continent of India, vanished suddenly like a rainbow at sunset."¹ The fall of the religion of Gautama seems to be ascribed here to defects probably inherent in the monastic system. It is evident, however, that it must be traced ultimately to the source previously indicated. Buddhism is strictly a "Path of Salvation," and so soon as freedom from metempsychosis was sought to be attained by other than moral means, it would lose its high moral tone, and with this, its hold on the popular mind.

Sir Emerson Tennent, when speaking of the moral influence of Buddhism, remarks that "both socially and in its effects upon individuals, the result of the system in Ceylon has been apathy almost approaching to infidelity. Even as regards the tenets of their creed, the mass of the population exhibit the profoundest ignorance, and manifest the most irreverent indifference. In their daily intercourse and acts, morality and virtue, so far from being apparent in practice, are barely discernible as the exception. Neither hopes nor apprehensions have proved a sufficient restraint on the habitual violation of all those precepts of charity and honesty, of

¹ "The Bhilsa Topes" (1854), p. 167.

purity and truth, which form the very essence of their doctrine; and in proportion as its tenets have been slighted by the people, its priesthood are disregarded, and its temples universally neglected and in ruin."¹ Elsewhere the same writer, after making the questionable statement that "a sense of abstract right and wrong is a moral element of human nature," adds that "in none are its dictates more perverted, more torpid, and more uninfluential than amongst the unenlightened Singhalese. Conscience in them can scarcely be said to be seared, for its impulses are but imperfectly awakened, and even when excited, they fail to echo to the appeals of truth, or but imperfectly respond to them. Shame and compunction are sensations comparatively unknown; the senses rather than the soul become the monitors of the man; the spiritual and the remote suggest no motive impulses; and virtue and vice are terms which acquire relation only through the interests and passions of the moment."² It must not be thought that Buddhism has had no real ameliorating influence over the social life of the peoples professing it. So far from this being the case, it has probably permanently raised the general moral tone of society, although from Sir Emerson Tennent's description it would seem to be incapable of being lowered, in Ceylon at least. Among particular results, it has effected great improvement in the condition of the female sex. Father Bigandet says, in relation to women in Burmah and Siam—and it appears to be true also of other countries—that "their social position is more elevated in every respect than that of the persons of their sex in the regions where Buddhism is not the predominating creed. They may be said to be man's companions, and

¹ "Christianity in Ceylon" (1850), p. 228.

² Do., p. 250, *seq.*

not their slaves."¹ The higher position accorded to woman originated, doubtless, in her being allowed to embrace the monastic life, or rather in the belief on which that permission was grounded, that she is capable of spiritual re-birth.² Nuns would seem to exist in all Buddhist countries. Such is the case in Tibet and Ceylon, as in China and Siam. Certain other social ameliorations appear to be due to the influence of Buddhistic teaching. Thus, Mr Edkins says, in relation to the Chinese, that "carefulness in avoiding the destruction of animal life is certainly, and the existence of many charitable institutions for the relief of the poor, the aged, and the diseased, is probably, to be ascribed to Buddhism. This religion has made the Chinese charitable, giving rise to almsgiving and many benevolent institutions. There is usually a tinge of Buddhist phraseology in the appeals made to the benevolent for the various charities and schemes for the public convenience so common in that country."³ Wuttke remarks that, owing to the idea that all animated nature participates in the misery of existence, the Buddhists have become the mildest people of heathenism. This is by no means a despicable result of Gautama's teaching, and such may also be said in relation to the patient suffering which is a chief feature of the Buddhist character. A curious commentary on this characteristic is cited by Wuttke from Lassen, who remarks—"When a pious man is insulted, he thinks: they are good people because they do not beat me; when they beat

¹ Cited by Sir J. Bowring, *op. cit.* vol. i., p. 309.

² Dr Eitel, who takes a different view as to the position of women in Buddhist countries from Father Bigandet, says that there is no hope of salvation for women unless through being reborn as men.—"Buddhism," (2d Ed., 1873), p. 63.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 171. As to Buddhist charity, see *Supra*, p. 29, *seq.*, and vol. i. p. 467 *seq.*

him with the fist, he thinks : they are good and gentle because they do not beat me with a stick ; when they beat him with a stick, he thinks : they are very good, because they do not kill me ; when they kill him, he thinks : they are very good, as they liberate me from this impure body with so little pain."¹

The undeniable decay of the active virtues among the followers of Gautama, consequent on their moral conduct being governed almost exclusively by reference to metempsychosis, has probably been assisted by the absence of any definite idea as to the existence of a God. It is usually denied, indeed, that the founder of Buddhism had any belief in such a Being. On this point Prof. Max Müller asserts that we have no ground for exonerating Gautama personally from the accusation of atheism.² This is doubtless true, if the term "atheism" is here used, as it appears to be, in the sense of a denial of a personal God or Creator. But it is very doubtful whether it can be said with equal truth that "Buddhism knew not the Divine, the Eternal, the Absolute." The religious ground for the belief in a personal God is the sanction which it supplies for the laws of morality, and it is clear that the recognition of an Absolute Being would not of itself furnish sufficient ground for supporting ideas of moral responsibility and a future life of torment such as those taught by Christianity. But the idea of future punishment was not absent from the mind of Gautama. The whole tenor and aim of his teaching, which was directed wholly towards freeing man from the most dreadful of all fates—rebirth into the material world—presupposes it, and no punishment for evil doing could be greater than the

¹ "Geschichte des Heidenthums," by A. Wuttke (1852), vol. ii., p. 576.

² "Lecture on Buddhistic Nihilism" (Trübner's "Literary Record," October 1869, p. 563).

transmigration from which he believed himself born to save mankind. Earth itself was thus the Buddhist's place of punishment, material existence being due to moral impurity or wickedness, the degree or nature of which governed the future phase of life.

It should not be forgotten, however, when accusing the Buddhists of atheism, that Gautama Buddha himself is in some sense supposed to be God.¹ The Buddhist finds reasons for treating Gautama as divine² equally weighty, to his mind, as those which Christians possess for thus venerating the founder of their faith. The Hindus, indeed, affirm that Gautama was an avatar of Vishnu, while the Buddhists seem to regard him as the latest incarnation of the Absolute, or at least as the Divine Emanation which embodies itself in human flesh at certain epochs in the world's history. Gautama himself referred in his discourses to the twenty-four Buddhas who immediately preceded him, and he related the circumstances of his own life at each of those periods.³ In his developed form he has thus great analogy to the Christian Logos, with whom he agrees also in many of his attributes. The gradual personification of the divine Buddha, as distinct from the human Gautama, may be traced in the philosophic systems. Thus in the *Mahāyāna*, or "Great Vehicle," beings who have arrived at the state of a perfect Buddhahood care no more for the world, not because they have ceased to exist, but because they cannot contribute to man's salvation after they have once left it. The Buddhas, moreover, "are no longer entirely deprived of every personality, and are believed

¹ See Max Müller's "Chips," vol. i., p. 234.

² It has, however, been said, and truly on the whole, that the Buddha is not God, but merely a human ideal, and "the great object of Buddhist worship is to keep this ideal vividly in the minds of the believers."

³ Hardy's "Manual of Buddhism," p. 98.

to have a body with certain qualities, and to possess various faculties." A still further advance is made in the contemplative Mahāyāna, by the supposition that a soul, *Alaya*, is the basis of everything. This personification was carried further by the endowment of nature with the character of an all-embracing deity. The final phase of development is that of Japanese Buddhism, which imagines a supreme Buddha, sitting throned in the diamond world, who has created all the Buddhas.¹

The recognition of a personal God by later Buddhism appears to be utterly inconsistent with the idea that Gautama positively denied the existence of the Absolute. Silence on the subject, however, is no real test of his belief, since his doctrinal teaching was practically complete without the affirmation of the existence of such a being. The doctrine of Nirvāna has a strong bearing on this question and if the explanation of that term usually given be correct, it is certainly difficult to understand how absolute being is possible. But is it correct? Prof. Max Müller asserts that Gautama "denies the existence not only of a Creator but of any Absolute Being. According to the metaphysical tenets, if not of Buddha himself, at least of his sect, there is no reality anywhere, neither in the past nor in the future. True wisdom consists in perceiving the nothingness of all things, and in a desire to become nothing, to be blown out, to enter into Nirvāna."² Elsewhere, however, Prof. Max Müller declares that Nirvāna is not "a total extinction of being, personality, and consciousness." He adds: "What Bishop Bigandet and others represent as the popular view of the Nirvāna, in contradistinction to that of the Buddhist divines, was, in my opinion, the conception of Buddha and his disciples. It represented

¹ Schlagintweit, *op. cit.*, p. 37 *seq.*

² "Chips," (2d edition), vol. i., p. 232.

the entrance of the soul into rest, a subduing of all wishes and desires, indifference to joy and pain, to good and evil, an absorption of the soul in itself, and a freedom from the circle of existences from birth to death, and from death to a new birth . . . Only in the hands of the philosophers, to whom Buddhism owes its metaphysics, the Nirvâna, through constant negations, carried to an indefinite degree, through the excluding and abstraction of all that is not Nirvâna, at last became an empty nothing, a philosophical myth."¹ It is true that other recent writers of equal weight take a contrary view of the nature of Nirvâna. Thus, Koeppen asserts that "Nirvâna is definitive deliverance, is death, followed by no regeneration; there is an end of all the misery of existence. Nirvâna is the beyond of the Sansâra. In the Sansâra is origin and decay, motion, variation, composition, and individuality; in the Nirvâna is rest and stillness, unity, simplicity and emptiness; in the former is birth, disease, age and death, sin and pain, virtue and vice; in this perfect deliverance from all conditions of existence, Nirvâna is the shore of safety, which beckons to those drowning in the stream of the Sansâra; Nirvâna is the safe harbour to which the beings on the ocean of sorrow steer; Nirvâna is the refuge which receives those who have escaped from the prison of existence and have burst the fetters of the cycle; Nirvâna is the medicine which heals all sufferings and all diseases; Nirvâna is the water which quenches the thirst of desire, and of hereditary sin, &c. It has no form, colour, space, nor time, is neither limited nor unlimited, neither present, nor past, nor future, neither originated nor not originated."² According to this view, Nirvâna may be described as simple negation, and consistently with this idea the word is derived by Koeppen from the

¹ Trübner's "Literary Record," *cit.*, p. 563.

² *op. cit.*, p. 304.

Sanskrit *Va*, blowing, and the negation *nir*, its meaning thus being "extinction or blowing out." Hence Nirvâna, continues the German writer, "is fundamentally the total extinction of the soul, simple annihilation, or according to the theory of metempsychosis, the final definitive extinction of the series or succession of souls. If life itself be the greatest of all evils, then annihilation must consequently be the highest good, and so Sakya-muni has conceived it, not essentially different, but only more decisively than the Brahman ascetics and philosophers. Nirvâna is the blissful nothing. Buddhism is the gospel of annihilation."¹ But the annihilation supposed by Nirvâna is certainly stated here too absolutely. Reference to Brâhman belief at least confirms this idea. Koepfen himself asks "is the orthodox Nirvâna, the Nirvanah of the Vêdanta philosophy—the extinction in Brâhma (Brâhmanirvânam) from our point of view more than annihilation of the Ego? For whether the soul becomes extinct in Brâhma, or vanishes in nothing, is in point of fact the same thing."² But surely this is a mistake. The latter is simple annihilation, not merely of the ego, as a definite separate existence, but of the very principles of being—a total extinction. The former, however, is not so. The extinction of the soul in Brahma is merely the loss of its separate personality without the destruction of the elements of being. These elements remain intact, although absorbed in the great ocean of life, and by emanation again from this source of being they may come again to assume the separate existence which they had while united with matter.

But there is no occasion to insist on this distinction between pure annihilation into nothing and the extinction into the Absolute Something named Brahma, as

¹ Trübner's "Literary Record," p. 306.

² Do., p. 307.

bearing on the nature of Nirvâna. Professor Max Müller says that "it is doubtful whether the term Nirvâna was coined by Buddha. It occurs in the literature of the Brahmans as a synonyme of *Moksha*, deliverance; *Nirvritti*, cessation; *Apavarga*, release; *Nihisreyas*, summum bonum. It is used in this sense in the Mahâbhârata, and it is explained in the Amara-Kosha as having the meaning of 'blowing out,' applied to a fire and to a sage.'" ¹ As applied to the fire, this "blowing-out" can only mean the extinguishing of the flame and not of that from which the flame arises, and it may have an analogous sense in relation to the soul. It is the "blowing out" of something associated with the soul, but not the annihilation of the very principle of being. The distinction is shown by reference to the work *Mokshu*, deliverance, which is used as synonymous with Nirvâna. "Sânkhya philosophy," says Prof. Max Müller, "in its original form, claims the name of *An-isvara*, 'lordless' or 'atheistic,' as its distinctive title. Its final object is not absorption in God, whether personal or impersonal, but *Moksha*, deliverance of the soul from all pain and illusion, and recovery by the soul of its true nature." ² Now, it should be noted that the "atheistic" philosophy of Kapila was not really without a God. Prof. Max Müller shows that all the important philosophical systems of the Brahmans admit the existence of an Absolute and Supreme Being, and that when Kapila denies the existence of *Isvara*, he refers only to the Lord of the Yogins, or mystic philosophers, and not to the Absolute cause of all that exists or seems to exist. The difference between Kapila and Buddha is said to be that the latter admits of no real cause of this unreal world, he denies the existence not only of a Creator, but of any Absolute

¹ "Chips," vol. i., p. 283.

² Do., p. 283.

Being.¹ But this is open to question. Elsewhere, Prof. Max Müller says that Buddha, "though perhaps not a Nihilist, was certainly an Atheist. He does not deny distinctly either the existence of gods, or that of God; but he ignores the former, and he is ignorant of the latter."² This atheism, however, is of a very indefinite character. It closely resembles that of Confucius, who preferred not to speak about that of which he knew nothing.³ The saying of Gautama, quoted by Prof. Max Müller from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, is exactly in this spirit. "Sadasad Vikâram na Sahate," *i.e.*, "the ideas of being and not being do not admit of discussion." Metaphysical discussion is thus declared to be vain and useless,⁴ but it leaves quite untouched the question whether being really exists, and it is quite consistent with the existence of the Absolute, and with the belief that Nirvâna is a positive state or condition.

But what is the sense which Gautama is supposed to have ascribed to Nirvâna? Mr Childers, who has made researches on this point with the aid of the Buddhist clergy of Ceylon—"a body of men one of the most enlightened, generous, and liberal-minded in the world"—has come to the conclusion that Nirvâna means extinction, or annihilation. It is of two sorts, *Kleçanirvâna* and *Skandhanirvâna*, "annihilation of human passion," and "annihilation of the elements of being." "The former is compatible with existence, the latter is not. . . . When the devout Buddhist reaches the final stage of sanctification, termed *arakuttvaphala* (fruition of *arhat*ship), he is said to have attained *Kleçanirvâna* or *Upadhîçeshanirvâna*. He is then still a living man,

¹ "Chips," vol. i., pp. 229 *seq.*

² Do., p. 288.

³ Legge's "Life and Preaching of Confucius," (3d Ed, 1872, p. 100.)

⁴ *op. cit.*, vol. i.; do., p. 286.

but purged from earthly passion, endowed with supernatural powers, and rejoicing in the ineffable consciousness that man's great enemy, Existence, is at length well nigh conquered. He dies, but not to be born again; the seed of existence has withered, the lamp of life has burnt out, he has attained 'the annihilation of the elements of being,' he has entered that 'Nirvâna in which no trace of the body remains,' he has ceased to exist."¹ Now, although Nirvâna, as thus explained, appears to mean absolute annihilation of being, it is not necessarily so. Schlagintweit points out that, in the earliest period of Buddhism, the name *Arhat* was given to "every one who had arrived at the comprehension of the four truths," and thus it was with Gautama himself, who was originally called only *Arhat*. Hence to allege of any one that he had seen Nirvâna, was the same as saying that he had become Arhat.² But Nirvâna can be attained during life, and as the "fruition of Arhatship" can be enjoyed while the material organism exists, it is evident that the presence or absence of the organism can have no influence over the spiritual result. Being purged from earthly passion, that is, freed from all the disturbing influences which the body usually exerts over the soul, while the physical life still continues, the happening of death is a mere accident which cannot affect the condition of the spiritual inmate of the material organism. The soul is said to have attained to Nirvâna when it is free from material influences, and so far as the actual result is concerned, it is a matter of indifference whether the body is alive or dead. The "fruition of Arhatship" is enjoyed equally in either case, and unless, therefore, it can be said that the soul is already extinct during the life of the body, the annihilation

¹ Trübner's "Literary Record," Oct. 25, 1870, p. 27.

² *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 28.

which is predicated of Nirvâna cannot have relation to the soul essence.¹

The only rational explanation of the Nirvâna of the founder of Buddhism himself, as distinguished from the philosophical speculations of his followers, is that the "annihilation" which is associated with it has relation to the body and not to that which animates it. With the body is connected all those wishes and desires, joys and sorrows, which it was the object of Gautama to get rid of, and the recurrence of which is inevitable so long as the soul is confined within "the circle of existences from birth to death, and from death to a new birth." Thus Schlagintweit says, "the absolute annihilation of the conditions and pains of existence—Nirvâna is attained by the most perfect dominion over passion, evil desire, and natural sensation."² That which Gautama wished to obtain for man was deliverance from "the cycle of necessity" with its attendant miseries; not the absolute extinction of being, but that of desire, until the cessation of which freedom from life was impossible. The idea differs little from the Christian one of putting off mortality, and thus in Gautama's teaching, Nirvâna is called "the quiet place, the immortal place, even simply that which is immortal; and the expression occurs that the wise dived into this immortal."³ But what is the immortal, "the eternal and imperishable" something, the existence of which Gautama himself recognised? It is said that at the moment when he became the Enlightened (Buddha) he spoke the words: "Without ceasing shall I run through a course of many births, looking for the maker of this tabernacle,—and painful is birth again and again.

¹ This is consistent with the use of the word *Upadhîçeshanirvâna*, the "Nirvâna in which the body remains," which implies that the only difference between the two Nirvânas is in the presence or absence of the body.

² *op. cit.*, p. 16.

³ Max Muller ("Trübner's Literary Record," *cit.*, p. 568).

But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen ; thou shalt not make up this tabernacle again. All thy rafters are broken, thy ridge-pole is sundered ; the mind, being sundered, has attained to the extinction of all desires." Prof. Max Müller, in commenting on these words, says : " Here, in the maker of the tabernacle, *i.e.*, the body, one might be tempted to see a Creator. But he who is acquainted with the general run of thought in Buddhism, soon finds that this architect of the house is only a poetical expression, and that whatever meaning may underlie it, it evidently signifies a force subordinated to the Buddha, the Enlightened."¹ There is here, undoubtedly, the idea of subordination, but its value depends on the meaning of the poetical expression, " maker of the tabernacle," and on the source of the power which breaks its " rafters " and sunders its " ridge pole." Now, although the " force " which acts in the making of the tabernacle may be subordinated to the Buddha, it does not follow that the spring of that force is so. The idea of creation, no doubt, is wanting in the reference to the formation of the body. It is simply the destiny of the soul under certain circumstances to clothe itself with the illusory material of this world. But this destiny, which is equivalent to the *Karma*,² is only a necessity, a law, and there must be something beyond the law, a something which gives it vitality. It is only in a figurative sense that *Karma* can be said to be the maker of the tabernacle. That there is an existence outside of the " force " is implied by the very words of Gautama. It is impossible for a force, a law, to become visible except in the sense of being recognised, and, therefore, when Gautama says " maker of the tabernacle thou hast been seen," he can mean only that that which

¹ Max Muller (Trübner's "Literary Record," p. 563).

² *Supra*, p. 270.

underlies all things becomes visible to the eye of the soul. This spiritual sight, by the ecstatic feeling it generates, causes the extinction of all desires, and thus, in a figurative sense, sunders the mind from the body. It is at this point that the soul enters Nirvâna, the body thenceforth becoming a mere earthly covering waiting only to be put off by death. But what is that which the soul has seen, bringing it *en rapport* with the invisible? It must be of the same nature as the soul itself, and it can only be the fountain of Enlightenment, the source of Buddhahood. That, therefore, which the Buddha subordinated to himself is destiny, the *karma* which necessitates the continued birth and rebirth of the human soul on earth, but this only through his having become *en rapport* with that which is higher than destiny, which is outside of all law, and which is the Absolute and Eternal Existence.

If this be a true explanation of Gautama's philosophy, his religious notions would appear to have been a form of pantheism. It may be, that Gautama taught that the only beings exempt from destruction at the end of every Kalpa are "the Buddha, the Enlightened and truly Free;" even the gods and the spirits "who in the circle of spirits have raised themselves to the world of gods," and the dwellers in the Brahma worlds, "purely spiritualized beings, without body, without weight, without desire, far above men and gods," being alike subject to the inevitable law of change. If so, however, it shows only that in these various spiritual beings Gautama found not the Absolute One. But above them are the dwellers in the higher Brahma world, the Enlightened, those who are alone not "affected or disturbed by the collapse of the Universe," and in these we have one phase of the Buddhistic idea of Deity.¹ According

¹ See Trübner's "Literary Record," (1869), p. 561.

to this view, each of the pure and formless spirits, the Buddhas, beings "without body, without weight, omnipresent and blessed within himself," may be esteemed God, as being purest expressions of His being. When, therefore, it is said that "according to the metaphysical doctrine of Buddhism, the soul cannot dissolve itself into a higher being, or be absorbed in the absolute substance, as was taught by the Brahmans and other mystics of ancient and modern times,"¹ it is not because Buddhism does not know the Divine, the Eternal, the Absolute. It is only because the soul itself *is* Divine and Eternal, the expression of the Absolute, which becomes man for a time by contact with matter, but which by penances and deep meditation is capable of again attaining to the Buddha state, of becoming again the Enlightened, the absolutely Free. The maker of the tabernacle the sight of which broke in upon Gautama's spiritual vision was the Divine Essence within himself. He truly then passed into Nirvâna, for in view of this wondrous revelation there was no more room for passion or desire, there is nought but an abiding sense of the Eternal.

In this way alone can the fact be explained that, in the very same canon in which the most extreme views of nihilism are put into the mouth of Gautama, he is still spoken of as living after having entered into Nirvâna, and even as showing himself to those who believe in him.² The Tibetans, who address prayers to the Bôdhisattvas and not to the Buddhas, do so, not because the latter have ceased to exist, but because when beings have "arrived at the estate of a most perfect Buddha it would be beyond their power to contribute to man's salvation, the Buddhas caring no longer for the world when they have once left it."³ This expresses the true

¹ Do., p. 563.

² Chips, vol. i., p. 234.

³ Schlagintweit, *op. cit.*, p. 37. The perfected Buddhas have much in common with the *Pitris*, or "great progenitors of the Hindus." — "The Ordinances of Menu," ch. iii. v. 192.

spirit of later Buddhistic teaching, and the indirect evidence it gives as to the nature of Nirvâna is none the less valuable because that spirit is on the whole intensely selfish.¹

Prof. Max Müller points out that in Brahmanic writings Nirvâna is used "as synonymous with Moksha, Nirvritti, and other words, all designating the highest stage of spiritual liberty and bliss, but not annihilation. Nirvâna may mean the extinction of many things—of selfishness, desire, and sin, without going so far as the extinction of subjective consciousness."² And this agrees well with what Gautama is himself reported to have said to the Brahmanic sage Rondraka, shewing that the latter understood what Nirvâna meant: "Friend, this path does not lead to indifference for earthly objects does not lead to freedom from passion, to the hindrance of the vicissitudes of existence, does not conduct to peace, to perfect intelligence, nor to the state of sramana, to Nirvâna."³ The original idea embodied in this phrase may probably be ascertained from the popular sense now assigned to it. Koeppen says that "whilst the blissful nothing was praised as the highest good, though with negative predicates, it became imperceptibly a condition

¹ This is quite consistent with the existence of individual Buddhists who show forth in their lives the benevolent spirit of the founder of their religion. It is pleasing to read the testimony borne by Mr Childers to the fine character of the Ceylonese priest Yâtrânullé Dhammârâma, who died a few years ago. Mr Childers writes: "those who have had the good fortune to know him personally will recollect the singular fascination he exercised upon all with whom he was brought into contact, a fascination due to his gentle spirit, his deep piety, his modesty, his charity, his self-abnegation, his earnest faith. So warmly was he beloved by the simple villagers among whom his lot was cast that a fellow-townsmen of his once said to me, 'there is not a native of Bentota who would not gladly give his life to save that of Yâtrânullé.'"—Trübner's "Literary Record," No. 78, Mar. 1872, p. 123.

² Trübner's "Literary Record," (1869), p. 563.

³ Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

of everlasting peace, freedom from pain, apathy, without which the oriental man cannot imagine perfect happiness. This popular definition of the Nirvâna became especially necessary when Buddhism reached ruder and stronger nations than the tired-out Indians, and for whom total extinction had no great attraction. Without this popular conception of the Nirvâna the Buddha religion would scarcely have conquered the greater portion of Asia."¹ There is really no evidence, however, that total extinction was more fitted to recommend itself to the Hindu mind than to that of any other people, and it is equally improbable that if Gautama had taught such a doctrine,² his teaching would have recommended itself to his hearers. Extinction of being was not what they desired, it was escape from metempsychosis, and this is what the founder of Buddhism provided for them.

It is not surprising that in the latest schools of Buddhistic thought Nirvâna means "return into the universal soul, rising into the abstract Monas, divinity, the primeval Buddha." This Koeppen ascribes to the influence of Brahmanism and Sivaism, and probably rightly so, but the fact that such influence has been so strongly exercised renders it extremely probable that there was a more fundamental agreement between Hinduism and Buddhism than might be supposed from the meaning which came to be attached to Nirvâna by the philosophers.³ Whatever might be the practical opposi-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

² Dr Eitel thinks that Gautama left the question of the nature of Nirvâna undecided in his own mind, but he states that on that subject the most ancient Sutras which we possess coincide with the popular literature of modern Buddhism. *Op. cit.*, p. 68.

³ Curiously enough the very comparison between the body and a tabernacle ascribed to Buddha (*Supra*, p. 290) is made in the Institutes of Menu and in a similar connection. In the 6th chap. Bhriga says, "The body is a mansion (for the soul), whose bones are rafters and beams; nerves and tendons, cords; muscles and blood, mortar; skin, outward covering. . . . Having gradually abandoned all earthly

tion between those systems, the doctrine of Emanations formed the essential base of each of them, although the aim which Gautama had in view did not require that he should expressly refer to it in his teachings. A modification of that doctrine is now, as we have seen,¹ recognised by Buddhistic teaching. Myriads of perfected Buddhas "descend in regular periods upon the earth to give motion to the wheel of the doctrine. Innumerable Buddhas have descended in the innumerable past ages and world successions. They are mostly born in Central India; their mother dies on the seventh day after their birth; they all conquer Mara (the devil) in the same way. They are beings who having reached the highest degree of wisdom are capable of redeeming others."² The idea here expressed is not that of actual emanation from the Universal Soul, but it could hardly have been formed except by derivation from such a doctrine, and it is possible that both this modification and the belief in the continued existence of the perfected Buddhas, instead of their absorption into the Divine Essence, may require that the immediate philosophical basis of Buddhism should, after all, be sought in the speculations of Kapila, whose name Prof. Wilson supposes to be retained in the mythical birth-place of Gautama—Kapilavastu.³

Such would, indeed, appear to be the opinion of M. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, who affirms that Buddha is in complete accord with Kapila, except in two points; the universality and openness of the teaching of the former, as compared with the partiality shown by the latter and the secrecy he enjoined on his disciples;

attachments, and indifferent to all pains of opposite things (*as honour and dishonour and the like*), he remains absorbed in the divine essence;" v. 76, 81.

¹ *Supra*, p. 180.

² Koeppen, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

³ Max Müller, "Chips," vol. i., p. 227.

and the annihilation of being introduced by Gautama to perfectly ensure the non-return to material existence.¹ According to this view, Buddhism was simply a reform or rather a development of the Sâṅkhya system, and the analogy between them becomes almost exact if, as we have seen reason to believe, Nirvâna, in the sense of annihilation, was not in reality a dogma of early Buddhism. The first point of difference mentioned by the French philosopher is practical, and does not affect theoretic teaching. It is much the same as that which is implied in the statement that "life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel," the meaning of which is simply that ideas which had previously been secretly taught to the few are now openly proclaimed to the many. The extraordinary effect of Gautama's preaching, however, would seem to show that there was some radical point of difference between it and that of Kapila. That which Kapila evidently wished to insist on is the absolute independence of the soul, its connection with nature and the body being accidental, and to be severed as the condition of freedom from rebirth. Moreover, the connection with the body gives *personality* as distinguished from *individuality*, the former being thus treated as a purely material consequence; and as action is the attribute of the body, the soul by itself must be absolutely inactive. It does not cease to exist, however, it only then returns to its original condition of purity and happiness. By the light of these principles there seems to be no difficulty in understanding the real nature of Gautama's teaching. This did not hold out absorption into the divine essence, as the reward of a holy life. The attainment of Nirvâna was the destruction of the personality which depended on the possession

¹ "Memoire sur le Sâṅkhya," (Academie des Sciences Morales, tome viii. pp. 496-7.)

of a material body, but the individuality would still remain. No soul would thus regain its original condition of inactivity, which is the "rest" which has so great an attraction for the weary in body and mind, especially for those who, in addition to the feeling of lassitude which affects the dweller in tropical countries, are subject to the tyranny of Eastern rule. But, although without personality and in a state of absolute rest, the soul still exists—to Kapila in the world above that of gods and men, to Gautama in the highest Buddha world, that which alone escapes destruction at the end of each Kalpa, and from which the perfected Buddhas descend from time to time "to give motion to the wheel of doctrine" on earth. The difference between the Sâmkhya philosophy and Buddhism would thus appear to be purely practical. Kapila's doctrine was esoteric, and although it repudiated the sacred books, and knew nothing of the distinctions of caste,¹ yet practically it was confined to a favoured few, and thus re-introduced the very principle which it destroyed. Gautama's teaching, on the other hand, was addressed to the multitude. His object was to save from rebirth mankind as a whole, not a favoured few. This in itself constituted an enormous practical difference between his system and that of Kapila, and it was necessarily accompanied by another point of difference of equal importance. If all men can be saved, and that in the same way, all men must be brethren and must be treated as such. This introduces the principle of charity, which appears to be unknown to the Sâmkhya system, and M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, well says: "To sacrifice virtue to science, as Kapila has done, was to mistake the nature of man. . . . It is to this deplorable principle that the doctrine of Kapila is reduced, and being so we condemn it without

¹ *loc cit.*, p. 493.

reserve.”¹ It is just in this point that Buddhism differs from the Sâṅkhya system. The dogma of Nirvâna has too fascinating an effect over the minds of the students of Buddhism, and it hides what is really distinctive in the system. This is its *moral* character, not so much in theory as in practice. Gautama thus introduced into Kapila’s teaching exactly the same reform which Jesus effected for the esoteric system, which he also proclaimed to mankind at large—the necessity of practical charity, although, as we shall see, the motive for its requirement was different in either case.

¹ *loc cit.*, p. 483.

CHAPTER VI.

MITHRAISM.

FAILURE as Buddhism must be declared to be, judged of from the Christian stand-point and by its present fruits, nevertheless, as a teacher of morals, Gautama was far in advance of any reformer that had preceded him. He reduced the exercise of benevolence to a system, and gave a sanction to the active virtues,—virtues which can hardly be said to have existed until Gautama saw that one of the chief aids to the purification of the soul and for rendering it fit for the peaceful existence of Nirvâna, was the abnegation of self for the sake of others. It is strange that a system into which at its inception benevolent action entered so largely, and which, if it did not govern by love, yet worked by it, should have become so intensely selfish as we have seen it now to be. This result was, however, almost inevitable, seeing that its aim was deliverance from the pains of material existence, without any definite notion of another state in which happiness will depend on a present life of purity and goodness. But, notwithstanding the failure of Buddhism, as a system of either religion or morals, it might well be said that the birth of Gautama Buddha was one of the most important events in the world's history. Not on account of the vast number of people who recognise him as a divine teacher—about thirty per cent. of the inhabitants of the globe being Buddhists¹—but owing to the indirect

¹ Max Müller, "Chips," 2d Ed., vol. i. p. 216 *note*. Nearly all the inhabitants of China are to some extent Buddhists, although they are also followers of Confucius and Lao-Tze. See Doolittle, *op. cit.*, p. 204 *note*.

influence his doctrines have had over the religious belief of other peoples. That at one time the disciples of Gautama penetrated far beyond the regions where Buddhism is now received cannot be doubted. Schlagintweit refers to the researches of Professor Holmboe of Stockholm, who, "when comparing the tumuli and long wall sextant in many parts of Norway, with the Topes in India and Afghanistan and the Chortens and Manis of Tibet, found so many surprising analogies, that he at length declared that, in his opinion, it is highly probable that the teachers of Buddhism advanced as far as Scandinavia, after having passed through the vast provinces of Russia."¹ Mr Fergusson, indeed, claims for Buddhism a Turanian origin,² and he sees in the tope only a lineal descendant of the tumulus, which was "the object of special veneration, not only in Northern and Western Asia, but in Etruria, and as far West as the British Isles."³ Buddhism was, therefore, according to Mr Fergusson, a Turanian religion, a "refinement" of a more primitive faith, and he adds that "it has long been suspected that there was some connection between the Magi of Central Asia and the priests of that religion, and that some of its forms at least were elaborated in the Valley of the Euphrates."⁴ Certain rock-cut buildings found in Armenia, and also in the Crimea, are said to resemble exactly in their ground-plan buildings of Buddhist formation. One of the oldest excavations, that at Tchekerman and in the Crimea, might have been taken for a Buddhist *vihara* or monastery, if it were not for the cross deeply cut in the screen which separates the choir from the nave. Under the fortress at Inkerman is an excavated church which differs from a Buddhist Chaitya only in the fact that the aisle

¹ "Buddhism in Tibet," p. 327.

² "History of Architecture," vol. ii. p. 455, *sq.* ³ *Do.*, p. 477.

⁴ *Do.*, vol. i. p. 144; but see Max Müller, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 237 *note.*

does not run round behind the altar, as is always the case in Buddhist churches.¹ The remains are undoubtedly Christian, but they show an earlier Buddhist influence, such as that which Mr Fergusson supposes to have been carried by "Woden" from the Caucasus to Scandinavia. M. Lajard refers to the presence of Sivaïte Missionaries in Bactria during the reign of Gustasp.² There is no reason, therefore, why the disciples of Gautama also should not have penetrated so far, and considering the connection between Buddhism and Sivaïsm, we might be tempted to believe that the missionaries referred to belonged to the former rather than to the latter faith; especially seeing that, as Professor Müller declares,³ the Brâhmans carefully excluded strangers from their religion. Dr Haug, indeed, states that Buddhism is known to have spread into Bactria at a very early time, and that Gautama is mentioned in the Fravardin Yasht of the Avesta.⁴

Therefore, although Buddhism, owing to its innate selfishness, was inevitably destined to lose its direct influence over the benevolent side of human nature, yet it may indirectly have aided in the full development of those active virtues which form the complement of man's passive morality. It may be that what we call "Buddhism" was the form under which certain ideas, handed down from much more ancient times, embodied themselves in India. If such were the case, those ideas may have found expression in the faiths of other peoples, without the intervention of Buddhistic teaching.

That Brâhmanism had much in common with the religious views which prevailed in Western Asia is now well established. Creuzer, indeed, thinks that Mithraism,

¹ Fergusson's "History of Architecture," vol. ii. pp. 347-8.

² "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 10.

³ "Chips," vol. i. p. 256.

⁴ "Essays on the Sacred language of the Parsees" (1862) p. 223.

or rather Mazdäism, preserved a primitive doctrine which was found in both Magism and Brähmanism, and which under different forms passed into Egypt and even into Greece. This may well be, seeing that the Hindu Aryans migrated from Central Asia. But, if so, an analogous fact must probably be predicated of a primitive element in Buddhism. This religious movement spread originally among the non-Aryan peoples, who appear to have been the representatives in India of the Turanian element of High Asia—that is, of the peoples among whom Buddhism is now the received religion. In this fact has been sought the origin of its connection with Sivaism,¹ which from its relation to the worship of Saturn, we may suppose to have been a very ancient cult,² and one which was known to the Hindu Aryans before their settlement in India. If Dr Faber is right, a primitive form of Buddhism prevailed at a very early date throughout the greater part of the old world, being identical with the *Scythic* or *Cuthic* heresy of Epiphanius.³ This may be true quite consistently with the assertion that Gautama “is the offspring of India in mind and soul.” It is going somewhat too far however to say that the antagonism in which Buddhism stands to the old system of Brahmanism, shows that it must necessarily have sprung up in India.⁴ It might have been developed in any country where the central idea of Brahmanism—spiritual rebirth—had established itself

¹ As to the local associations of Sivaism see Fergusson, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Hunter's “Annals of Rural Bengal,” p. 188 *seq.*

² On this point see Creuzer (Guigniaut) *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 216.

³ Faber's “Pagan Idolatry,” vol. ii. p. 233. Is there any connection between the name *Germanes*, given by the Greek writers to the Hindu Buddhists or *Sarmanians*, and that of the inhabitants of the Germania of Cæsar and Tacitus? The religion of the latter was probably a primitive form of “Buddhism,” even although the name of the God *Odin* has no relation to that given to the Hindu reformer.

⁴ Max Müller, “Chips,” vol. i. p. 224.

as a tyrannical formula. It was the popular protest against the exclusive privileges of a spiritual caste, and as such its founder might have preached in Chaldæa or Egypt, instead of in India.

Curiously enough, a great religious movement was progressing in Bactria about the same time as Buddhism was being developed in India. Whether or not the revival originated by Zarathustra or Zoroaster, was directly influenced by that of Gautama is an interesting, although probably an insoluble question. It may have been so, if the Hindu missionaries mentioned by M. Lajard as having been at the Court of Gustasp were Buddhists. The practical aim of both religions is, notwithstanding their doctrinal differences, undoubtedly the same, the deliverance of the soul from the dreaded "cycle of necessity" or continued rebirth. But this is consistent with their having sprung from a common source, which may have been Brahmanic, seeing that the Zoroastrian schism appears to have originated in India;¹ or, considering how wide-spread was the dogma of the descent and ascent of souls, it may have been taken by each from the source with which it was the most intimately connected. The origin of the Mithraic cult is a more difficult question than that of Buddhism. Of Zarathustra, its supposed founder, little is known. The date of his birth is fixed by Anquetil at about 589 B.C., a date which Lajard² finds to be confirmed by Masoudi, an Arabic writer of the tenth century. Tradition states that when he was ten years of age he secluded himself

¹ Max Müller "Chips," vol. i. p. 86.

² To prevent the necessity of making continual reference to authorities, it may be stated that the account of Mithraism given in this chapter is taken chiefly from the magnificent work of M. Felix Lajard, "Recherches sur Le Culte Public et les Mystères de Mithra," which was *couronné* by the French Academy in 1825, but published posthumously so late as 1867, in a greatly extended form although unfortunately incomplete.

in a cave in the mountains of Elburz, where he remained for twenty years. During this period he received the revelations contained in the Avesta, which signifies literally "the word." When thirty years of age, he is said to have made his appearance at the court of the Bactrian monarch Gustasp, to whom he proclaimed the doctrines of the sacred book, and then to have travelled throughout the East preaching the "living word." That there was, however, any religious teacher actually called Zarathustra is very improbable. Dr Haug asserts that Zarathustra signifies "spiritual senior or chief," and that it "must have conveyed in ancient times the same sense, as the word Destur now-a-days, meaning the spiritual guide and head of a whole district, or even province."¹ No doubt, the remembrance of some prominent religious reformer, whose real name has been forgotten, has been perpetuated as Zarathustra, but the general meaning of this word gives support to the opinion expressed by various writers that there was an earlier Persian prophet, the reformer, if not founder, of Magism, and whom Sir Henry Rawlinson would indentify with Nimrod.²

Perhaps by the supposition of the existence of an earlier and a later reformer may be explained the great difference between the date ascribed by scholars for the birth of Zarathustra. Dr Haug fixes this date at not later than 2300 B.C. He thinks that he may have lived before the age of Abraham.³ It may be that to this early period belongs the most ancient of the Mazdaic sacred writings. The Avesta seems to have consisted originally of twenty-one parts, called in Zend *Naskas*. Of these only one part (the 20th), which is

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 252.

² "Notes on the Early History of Babylonia" (1855), p. 14 *seq.*

³ See "Lecture," &c. (1865), p. 27.

almost complete, with fragments of others, have been preserved. The *Vendidad* is the name given by the Parsees of Guzerat to the portion of the 20th *Naska* which they possess, and to this is added the *Izeschené* or *Yasna*, a liturgical book, containing also fragments of other *Yasnas*. With this is combined a third book called the *Vispered*, which is a small collection of hymns or invocations called *Yashts*. These several books are evidently not all of equal antiquity, and the earliest date is now assigned to the *Gâthâs*, which form the second part of the *Yasna*, the *Yashts* being the most recent. Spiegel says that it is a significant fact that in the *Gâthâs*, which form the oldest part of the *Yasna*, "nothing is fixed on the doctrine regarding God." In the writings of the second period, that is in the *Vendidad*, we trace the advance to a theological, and, in its way, mild and scientific system.¹ The ideas contained in that book nevertheless form an essential part of the religion ascribed to Zarathustra, for the understanding of which some knowledge of its cosmogony is necessary.²

At the foundation of the world-system proclaimed by the *Vendidad* we find a Supreme Being infinite and eternal, invisible and incomprehensible, who is some-

¹ Spiegel's "Avesta" (English translation, by Bleeck). *Introd.*

² We cannot discuss here the place of origin to be assigned to Mithraism, but its ideas are so closely related to those anciently prevalent in Western Asia, that the Chaldæan origin assigned for it by Lajard is not improbable (*Le Culte de Mithra*, pp. 3 *seq.*, 93 *seq.*, 105 *seq.*, &c.). Perhaps, however, it should be referred rather to the mysterious Scythians from whom the Chaldæans themselves seem to have sprung, and of whose sacerdotal caste Lajard thinks the Brahmans, the Magis, and the Chaldæans were three branches (*op. cit.* p. 6). As to the Magian origin of Zervana, see Rawlinson's "Notes on Early Babylonian History," p. 40. It should be mentioned, however, that Dr Haug supposes Zervana to have been simply the historical Zarathustra, who was converted into a dogmatical and metaphysical being, and then placed at the beginning of creation.—"Lecture on an original speech of Zoroaster" (1865), p. 24.

times called "Time without bounds," *Zervâna* or *Zarvana akarana*, that is The Eternal, and sometimes "the Being absorbed in excellence." This Being contained in thought, from all eternity, the typical ideas—called by Zarathustra *ferouërs*—of the creature word, of the darkness, of light, and of the four elements, fire, air, water, and earth, and he is emphatically the Law. From *Zervâna*, thus existing as the law and containing the "ideas" of all things, emanates a fresh order of things. The light and the darkness become manifested, and with them the two beings called *Ormuzd* and *Ahriman*. These beings were equally endowed with the power of pronouncing the creative word, and Lajard supposes that, as originally they were also both good and beneficent, and as they represented at the same time light and darkness, they formed with *Zervâna* a supreme triad. Hardly, however, had *Ahriman* obtained being, when he refused to pay to *Zervâna* the homage which belonged to him, and thereupon he became separated from the Law. Henceforth, *Ahriman* becomes the principle of evil, and expressive only of darkness and death, while *Ormuzd* is the embodiment of good, of light, and life. The heavens, which represent the light, are synonymous with the divine intelligence, and when this was expressed in word by *Ormuzd*, the world itself was created. The world of light thus formed embraces three superimposed regions—the firmament or fixed heaven, the planetary zone or revolving heavens, and the earth. The first, says Lajard, "renferme principalement les étoiles fixes et le mont central. Dans le monde bon, cette montagne, qui répond à l'Olympe des Grecs, se nomme *le Bordj* ou *l'Albordj*, *le Gorotman*, *le Behescht Tireh*, dénominations qui concourent à exprimer les idées de montagne tres-élevée et de montagne de lumière. C'est, en effet, sur la haute cisme de l'Albordj

et au milieu d'une éclatante lumière qui réside le Dieu Ormuzd, assis sur une trône d'or, emblème de la fixité et de la puissance. Il est entouré de son fils Mithra et d'une cour céleste nombreuse. La réside surtout une seconde triade, qui, formée de Zarvâna, d'Ormuzd et de Mithra, représente la pensée, la parole et l'action, et régit les cieux et la terre. De là Ormuzd a prononcé et prononce incessamment *l'honover*, cette parole créatrice qui, dès le commencement, existait dans Zarvâna, le Temps sans bornes ou l'Eternel."

Beneath the firmament is situated the region which, from its containing the sun, the moon, and the five planets—Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn—the constellations, and the wandering stars, is called the movable heavens. It is here, placed between the sun and the moon, that Mithra, surrounded by his court, usually resides, but in continual movement, as directing the ever-active energy of nature. With his two *hamkars*, or assistants, the *izeds* Sarosch and Raschna-râst, he there forms a third triad. But Mithra reigns also over the earth, the third zone of the world created by Ormuzd, and which is itself divided into the three regions of *water*, *heat*, and *air*. This position has its counterpart in the moral world. Mithra is not only the preserver of harmony in the creation, but also "the model of perfectibility exhibited to humanity." He is even more than this. He is the mediator between Ormuzd and man. Moreover, says Lajard, "il préside aux initiations ou aux mystères institués pour le salut des âmes; il pèse les actions des âmes, assisté de Sarosch et de Raschna-râst, l'ized de la médiation; il leur ouvre la porte du ciel et les conduit au pied du trône d'Ormuzd, juge suprême, ou bien il les précipite dans les enfers, selon que leurs bonnes actions l'emportent ou non sur les mauvaises." Mithra, therefore,

is entitled King of the movable heaven, King of the living or of the earth, and King of the dead or of hell. The assistants of Ormuzd, the intermediate agents by whom the world is supposed to be governed, are the *Amschaspands*, or *amēsha-spēntā*, the "excellent immortals," seven in number, of whom Ormuzd himself, the being from whom they all emanate, is the first and chief.¹ Each of these immortals, again, is aided by three *hamkars*, or assessors. The agents of Mithra, also seven in number, are, as manifestations of himself, called *Izeds*, or *izata*, the "divine," and he occupies as to them the same position as Ormuzd does in relation to the *Amschaspands*.

Thus far the creations of light, which could not remain unchallenged by the powers of darkness. The antagonism between Ahriman and Ormuzd, once begun, never ends, and the former, therefore, must seek to counteract the work of the latter. Hence Ahriman creates a world of darkness, having its three superimposed regions, in analogy to the tri-form luminous world of Ormuzd. There, on the summit of a lofty mountain, dwells Ahriman, enveloped in darkness and surrounded by a numerous company of infernal agents, with his son *Mithra-daroudj* at their head. These wage continual warfare with Mithra and the celestial beings to whom Ormuzd has given existence. *Mithra-daroudj*, moreover, superintends the earth, dark and impure, which Ahriman created in opposition to the earthly creation of Ormuzd, placed under the care of Mithra. From him emanated, also, the dews—sometimes said to be seven, and sometimes nine, in number,—who answer to the *amschaspands* of Ormuzd, and three other classes of evil genii, called *daroudjs*, *darvands*, and *peris*, the

¹ Sometimes the sun and the moon are classed as *Amschaspands*, who are then nine in number.

first of whom appear to be analogous to the *izeds* who assist Mithra in his control of creation.

Having seen the formation of the opposing worlds of light and of darkness, we have now to trace the origin of life on the earth, as described by the Persian sacred books. As to this, we learn from the Avesta that the first created earthly being was the *celestial bull*. This creature was pure and holy, but attracting the envy and hatred of Ahriman, this Spirit of Evil caused its death. The soul of the bull, however, personified as the ized *Goschoroun*, escaped from its right shoulder, collected the seed which had fallen to the ground and carried it to the moon,¹ there to be "purified and fecundated by the warmth and light of the sun, in order to become the germ of all creatures." From this seed was produced, by the power of Ormuzd, two buffalos, one male and the other female, from which proceeded all other animals. From the body of the bull issued, at the same time, the material prototypes of all "the creatures which live in the water, on the earth, and in air," including man himself. This human prototype called *Gaya-mërëta*, or *Kaïomorts*, was not destined to fare better than the divine animal from which it sprung. Attacked by the *dews* of Ahriman, *Kaïomorts* fell a victim to their wiles, according to the legend preserved in the Avesta. From the *Boundehesch*, however, we learn that the seed of *Kaïomorts* was planted in the earth, producing a tree, the *reivas*, from which sprung an androgynous human being *Meschia*,² who, dividing asunder, became the man *Meschia* and the woman

¹ As to the influence of moon over generation, see *supra*, p. 169 ; also Deut. xxxiii. 14.

² These are, however, described by Windischman as being male twins, see "Zoroastrische Studien," Ed. by Fr. Spiegel, 1863, p. 217.

*Meschiana*¹ from whom have proceeded the whole human race. During this time, however, Ahriman was not idle. He also created a human being, the man-*Daroudj* or *Darvand*, the incarnation of evil, as the human creation of Ormuzd was the incarnation of purity. Moreover, Ahriman, changing himself into a serpent—whence he is called “the serpent with two feet,”—seduced Meschia and Meschiana to commit “for the first time, in thought, in word, and in deed, the carnal sin,” thus infecting all their descendants. Nor is this the whole of the mischief ascribed to Ahriman. He continually directs his agents in attacks on the beneficent creation of Ormuzd, and employs his wiles for the seduction of the souls of those who have not finally freed themselves from material influences. The conflict between Ormuzd and Ahriman is to last for twelve thousand years, and to terminate with the complete triumph of Ormuzd only when the created world itself comes to an end. Then will be seen “l’anéantissement de la matière ou des formes plastiques, le retour de *férouërs* ou des idées typiques dans la pensée supreme de laquelle ils étaient émanés, et, par conséquent, l’absorption de l’univers en un Dieu sans commencement ni fin.”

The true meaning of the seduction of the first human pair can be understood only by reference to the ideas symbolized in the preceding parts of this creative drama. Thus, Ormuzd and Ahriman are typical of “spiritual life” and “material darkness.” The primeval bull,

¹ Compare with this the Teutonic legend of the sacred ash-tree which gave birth to the primeval man Ask: (Cox’s “Aryan Mythology,” vol. ii. p. 19.) Brasseur de Bourbourg points out a curious resemblance between this Persian legend, and that relating to the tree of fire of Mexican Mythology. (*Quatres Létres sur le Mexique*, 1868, p. 46.)

Gaya, symbolizes the *principle of life*.¹ The destroying of the bull by Ahriman signifies that "the soul which unites itself to matter, the source of all passion, gives life to the body but receives death, and can recover life or liberty only by the death of the body." So, also, the birth of *Meschia*, the androgynous man, from the tree which sprang from the seed of the human prototype, is "the union of the soul or life with a portion of earth or dust." The death of the human pair who spring from him, is the spiritual result of their giving way to the carnal desires of the material life. This result affects all their descendants, and it can be escaped from only by regaining the spiritual purity from which *Meschia* and *Meschiana* fell. At the death of every man his thoughts, and words, and deeds, are judged by a celestial tribunal composed of Mithra and his assessors. The *férouërs* of the pure re-ascend to the heaven from which they originally came, to remain there until the day of the resurrection; and those of the impure are precipitated into darkness or hell, where they will endure torments proportioned to the sins or the crimes of each sinner until the same epoch.

Although little trace is to be found in what remains of the Zend-Avesta of the doctrine of metempsychosis, yet this doctrine could not have been unknown to the founder of the Persian Cult, since its ideas are based on the dogma, held by all the civilized peoples of antiquity, of the descent and ascent of souls. The developed religions of antiquity taught that transmigration was a punishment for a life of wickedness, and hence it was a means of purifying the soul, and fitting it for a return to the spiritual realm from which it had fallen, through the desire for association with matter.

¹ *Supra*, p. 167.

Gautama, as we have seen, recognised this belief, and he sought to deliver man from "the path of generation" by meditation and a passionless life of charity and self-denial. The Mazdaic faith was, however, in advance of Buddhism in one respect. Its standard of morality was not higher, but the motive to moral conduct was of a far nobler character. Buddhism teaches the necessity of leading a certain kind of life, or of doing certain acts, for the purpose of escaping the much dreaded new birth. The attainment of Nirvâna is certainly held out as an inducement to a life of holiness and charity, but this is practically of so negative a nature that its real value consists in its ensuring escape from material existence. The follower of Ormuzd, on the other hand, while probably not recognizing the value of a life of holiness, simply for its own sake, yet saw in it a means of regaining the spiritual purity which had been lost, and which would obtain for him a life of continued felicity in the paradise of Ormuzd in company with Mithra and his angels.

In the sense, therefore, that its teachings were placed under the sanction of the gods, who would inflict future punishment for present evil-doing, Mazdaism may be said to be more religious than Buddhism. Its practical tendency was, however, moral rather than religious, since its object was to fit man for residence in the world of spirits, although, of course, the recognition of the gods, and the performance of the duties owed to them, were essential to the condition of purity required for that purpose. The ideas contained in the Avesta as to the sinfulness of man, and as to the necessity of a sacrifice to atone for the primal fault committed by Meschia and Meschiana, introduce a religious element such as is quite unknown to Buddhism. That sacrifice is of the material desires, typified by the bull, and

Zarathustra taught that it could not be made without divine assistance. Hence the sacrifice is offered through a Mediator, this title being given to Mithra, in the office bearing his name, as the slayer of the sacrificial bull. But Mithra is not merely the mediator between man and Ormuzd, he is the pattern and guide for his followers. The Zend-Avesta continually enforces this doctrine. Spiritual death is the result of material affections, and the casting off of old habits and desires, and the adoption of fresh modes of life, having for their aim the attainment of the complete freedom from material influences which marks the spiritual new-birth, and can only be effected by seeking the aid of Mithra and following in his footsteps.

The principal doctrines of early Mazdaism have been deduced by Dr Haug¹ from the original speech of Zarathustra, which is preserved in the 45th Yasna. They are as follows :—

1. Everywhere in the world a duality is to be perceived ; such as the good and the evil, light and darkness, this life and that life, human wisdom and divine wisdom.

2. Only this life becomes a prey of death, but not that hereafter, over which the destructive spirit has no power.

3. In the universe there are from the beginning two spirits at work, the one making life, the other destroying it.

4. Both these spirits are accompanied by intellectual powers, representing the ideas of the Platonic system, on which the whole moral world rests. They cause the struggle between good and evil, and all the conflicts in the world, which end in the final victory of the good principle.

5. The principal duty of man in this life is to obey the word and commandments of God.

6. Disobedience is punished with the death of the sinner.

7. Ahura-Mazda created the idea of the good, but is not identical with it. This idea produced the good mind ; the Divine Spirit, working in man and nature and devotion, the obedient heart.

8. The Divine Spirit cannot be resisted.

9. Those who obey the word of God will be free from all defects, and immortal.

¹ "Lecture on an Original Speech of Zoroaster" (1865), p. 16.

10. God exercises his rule in the world through the works prompted by the Divine Spirit, who is working in man and nature.

11. Men should pray to God and worship Him. He hears the prayers of the good.

12. All men live solely through the bounty of God.

13. The soul of the pure will hereafter enjoy everlasting life; that of the wicked will have to undergo everlasting punishment.

14. All creatures are Ahura-Mazda's.

15. He is the reality of the good mind, word, and deed.

The moral ideas of Mazdaism may be said to be fully embodied in the dogma that three degrees of purity are required as the condition of salvation for the worshippers of Ormuzd—purity of thought, purity of word, and purity of action. This is founded on the supreme holiness ascribed to Ormuzd, who is "too pure to behold iniquity," and whose followers must, therefore, be absolutely free from sin before they can be admitted to his presence. The central idea of the Avesta, even of its oldest portion, the *Gāthās*, is the importance of purity. Several of the books commence with invocations to the "lords of purity." The address to Mithra¹ shows well the light in which that attribute was viewed.

33. Give us the favours we pray thee for, O Hero, in accordance with the given prayers: Kingdom, strength, victoriousness, fulness, and sanctification, good fame, and purity of soul, greatness, and knowledge of holiness, victory created by Ahura, the blow which springs from above, from the best purity, instruction in the holy word.

73. Mithra . . . who, ever, with uplifted hands, utters the words, speaking thus :

74. "Ahura-Mazda, Heavenly, Holiest, Creator of the corporeal world, Pure! If men would offer to me with named offerings, as they offer to the other Yazatas with named offerings, then would I come to the pure men at the set time and times, at the set time of my own shining heavenly life would I come."

In Vispered xii.² the Haōma is said to be uplifted and the offerings made known :—

¹ "Mihr-Yasht," Spiegel's Avesta (English Translation by Bleek).

² Spiegel, *op. cit.*

21. For the offering, prayer, satisfaction, and praise of the whole world of purity. Then we make them known : To the Fravashi of Zarathustra, the holy, pure, for offering, prayer, contenting, and praise ; to him who desires purity in both worlds, together with all the pure Fravashis of the departed pure, of the living pure, of the yet unborn pure, of the profitable who progress forwards.

25. For the advancement.

30. Of the good-working pure men, of the good-working pure women,

31. Of the open-working pure men, of the open-working pure women,

32. Of the pure men who perform good works, of the pure women who perform good works.

The threefold degree of purity is repeatedly referred to as the evidence of holiness. Thus it is said¹ that praise is uttered

“ In order, through the utterance of good thoughts, words and works,

To withstand evil thoughts, words, and works,

For an atonement for my false thoughts, words, and works.”

The Gâthâs are introduced by the formula, “ Good is the thought, good the speech, good the work, of the pure Zarathustra. May the Amēsha - spēntas accept the Gâthâs. Praise be to you pure songs.” It is true that this formula did not belong to the Gâthâs originally, but the ideas it embodies are explicitly expressed in them.² The first of those ancient hymns³ says :—

¹ Vispered xxiii. 7, 8, 9 (Spiegel).

² Mr E. B. Cowell (*Journal of Philology*, vol. iii., 1871, p. 215 seq.) refers to the use by the Buddhists of the threefold ethical division of thought, word, and deed. It does not appear, however, whether he agrees with Professor Koepfen (*Relig. des Buddha*, i. 445) in ascribing to it a Buddhist origin. He shows that the phrase, as a mental division, is found in the Vedas, but he supposes its use in the moral sense by the later Sanskrit writers to have been due to Buddhist influence. Mr Cowell mentions that the phrase is used also in the Institutes of Manu and the Mahâbhârata. The *trivihadwara*, or threefold door, of Buddhist ethics is : “ There are three entrances whence proceed that which is good and that which is evil—the body, the speech, and the mind ” (Hardy’s “ Manual,” p. 494). The ideas here expressed are the same as those embodied in the formula of the Zend Gâthâs, but the latter probably contained a much higher moral significance than the former. The ‘ quietness ’ in word, deed, and thought spoken of by the Dhammapadam is different from the ‘ purity ’ of the Avesta.

³ Yasna, 34 (Spiegel *loc. cit.*)

1. The immortality which I (have obtained), through deeds, words, and offerings,
And purity, give I to Thee, O Mazda, and the dominion of plenty,
Of these give we to Thee, Ahura first.
5. What is your kingdom, what is your desire for works? for to you, O Mazda, I belong.
With purity and good-mindedness will I support Your poor.

Again in the second Gâthâ¹ it is said :—

4. Of the good thoughts, words, and works, which here and elsewhere
5. Have been done, or will yet be done,
6. The praisers and propagators are we, that we may belong to the good.
7. That we believe, Ahura-Mazda, Pure, Fair,
8. That will we think, say, and do :
9. Which is best among the works of men for both worlds.

The invocation of Mazda-Ahura, through the *fire*,² says :—

“With all good thoughts, with all good words, with all good works, we draw nigh to thee.”

But the soul having “fallen into generation” through the influence of material desire, it was thought by the Mazdaians, as by the followers of other ancient faiths, to be almost powerless to regain its lost estate. To aid it in doing this, therefore, certain trials,³ the passage through which was thought to weaken or destroy the influence acquired by the material nature over the soul, were established. These were considered, also, as furnishing tests of fitness for initiation to the mysteries of the God in whose name those rights were performed. The fundamental dogma of the mysteries was, as we have seen, the descent and ascent of souls, and there, in the words of Lajard, the initiand was taught “*Comment les âmes après être descendus sur la terre, séduites par l'attrait surtout des deux principes humides, l'eau et le sang, s'unissent successivement aux divers principes con-*

¹ Yasna, 35.

² Yasna, 36.

³ See *supra*, p. 164.

stituants du corps, en subissent la funeste influence, et par là contractent des vices, éprouvent des désires immodérés, des passions que condamnent et leur origine divine et leur future destinée. Les mystes apprenaient, en même temps, par quelle voie, par quels efforts, l'âme peut parvenir à se dégager successivement des divers principes de la matière, à s'affranchir du honteux esclavage où ils la retiennent, à recouvrer enfin la liberté et la vie." The body was considered as the tomb of the soul. "Dompter les passions charnelles, les maîtriser, triompher de la matière, c'était donc pour l'âme, immortelle de sa nature, triompher d'une mort passagère et renaître à la vie spirituelle, à l'immortalité."

Ancient writers disagreed greatly as to the number of the stages required to be passed through before this end could be thought to be fully attained. Lajard appears, however, to have now established, by reference chiefly to monumental evidence, that the mysteries formed a cycle of twelve grades, which was divided into four smaller series of three grades each, answering not only to the four seasons of the year, but also to the four regions of the world. The trials through which the initiate had to pass were divided into two series, called in Greek *hypobase* and *anabase*, these being the names applied also to the descent and ascent of souls. The grades themselves, therefore, were also so divided, and the two series answered to the division of the sphere into the inferior and superior hemispheres. Thus, the trials by water, by fire, and by air, as "the three elements which concur in the phenomenon of generation, and consequently in the manifestation of the carnal passions," belonged to the *hypobase*, while the others were connected with the idea of the *anabase*. This opinion is the more probable seeing that, in the system of Zarathustra, the two divisions of the sphere were under the control

of Mithra, who as *King of the movable heaven*, presided between the Sun and the Moon, the two gates by which souls descend and ascend. Moreover, Mithra was the *King of the Living* as well as the *King of the Dead*, and, as in this capacity he weighed the actions of souls after death, consigning them to happiness or misery, according to their deserts, he was the best fitted to preside over the Mysteries by the rites of which the soul was prepared for the final judgment.

To understand the object of the first grade to which the initiate had to seek admission, it is necessary to remember that the followers of Mithra composed a body militant, at the head of which was Ormuzd, with the Amschaspands, and Mithra, with his Izeds and other agents. Mithra is called in the Avesta "the warrior very strong and valiant, always victorious and procuring victory." He is represented as "mounted on a vigorous courser, his arms extended, striking and destroying the authors and propagators of evil." The *first grade* into which the follower of Mithra was initiated, was fitly, therefore, that of the *Soldier*. After the neophyte had undergone his preparatory training, he appeared at the door of the sanctuary with his adopted father, who asked that admittance might be granted to him. The door having been opened, the neophyte was introduced to the officiating priest, who offered to him a crown which was suspended from the point of a sword. This he refused, saying "Mithra is my crown," and the initiate was thereupon invested with spiritual armour by the water of baptism, which in the Avesta is called the "victorious," and "the giver of victory." He was also clothed with the arms of warfare, the tunic called *Sardara* and the *Kosti*, or girdle of chastity, with which the young Parsee is still invested, and the models of which are supposed to have been furnished by Ormuzd himself. This having

been done, the initiate was declared to be a "Soldier of Mithra," and he received the seal of Mithra on his forehead, as a sign of his engagement "to consecrate his faculties, his powers, and his life, to the service of the god who presides at the Mysteries."

Judging from the cylinders relating to it which have come down to us, many more women than men were admitted to the soldier grade. Lajard suggests that this may be explained on the assumption that women seldom went beyond this grade. Another reason, however, may be assigned for what is apparently so strange, in the fact that most of these cylinders—which appear to have been used as evidence of initiation—relate to the mysteries of the Assyrian goddess *Mylitta*. The mysteries of this goddess closely resembled those of the Persian Mithra, and as *Mylitta* presided at marriages and births, as well as at the mysteries, she would no doubt have a much greater number of female followers than the Persian deity. It is important to know that women were allowed to be initiated, and Lajard supposes that we have in their admission to the soldier grade the origin of the fabulous accounts of the Amazons, female warriors whose right breast was said to have been amputated that they might the better use their warlike weapons. This notion arose apparently from the dress worn by the female initiants, which concealed one half of the bosom, the other half being left uncovered. The nature of the warfare which would have to be waged is exemplified by the symbols which are placed on the cylinders. Most of these, such as the *goat*, the *fish*, the *cteis*, and the *hôm-tree*, represent the principle of generation, and thence the material life, which, moreover, is typified by the bull, which was chained near the door of the sanctuary.

It was only on seeking admission to the *second* grade, that of *Bromius*, or the *Bull*, that the actual combats

of the initiant began. The reason why the bull was chosen to represent the second grade in the mysteries is sufficiently evident. When these were first instituted¹ that animal was the symbol of natural fecundity, and hence the emblem in the mysteries themselves of the material life. This symbol, however, was undoubtedly used with another signification. One of the most important requirements of natural fecundity is moisture, the recognition of which fact the ancients showed by ascribing the origin of animal life to the water. The bull, therefore, became also the symbol of the principle of humidity, and this very fitly, as in the East the buffalo is almost amphibious in its habits, frequenting the low and damp localities where marsh and water abound. Still more fitly, perhaps, was the fish chosen by the Chaldeans as the symbol of fecundity and moisture, and thus used in the mysteries with a moral significance. In this way, water itself became, from one point of view, a symbol of impurity. That which exists in the human body was supposed to be affected by the taint of the original sin, and more especially was this said of the soul, which was thought to reside in the blood, the fluid principle. But that which causes can also remove impurity. In the system of Zarathustra there are, therefore, three kinds of water. These are, says Lajard, 1st. "L'eau première, c'est-à-dire, l'eau du firmament, l'eau des sources appelées Ardôisour, l'eau pure et céleste de laquelle proviennent les deux autres; 2d., l'eau *hom*, appelée aussi *pérahom* et *zour*, c'est l'eau lustrale, l'eau consacrée, l'eau employée dans les rites, dans les purifications, dans le baptême; 3d., l'eau qui coule sur la terre, qui concourt à la génération et à la reproduction, qui donne la fertilité et qui lave et enlève

¹ When the Sun at the vernal equinox entered the Zodiacal sign, Taurus.

les impuretés." In the Avesta, water is represented under three forms, answering to its threefold nature—that of a vigorous *horse*, darting from the navel of the *Albordj*, the sacred mountain responding to the Mount Merou of the Hindus, from which issued the water of life in four streams, under that of a *girl*, the original, perhaps, of the water-nymphs of Aryan mythology, and under its ordinary form. The impurity of the natural humidity can now be removed by the celestial water, or the water of purification, the use of which was all-essential in the grade of the bull. It is over this animal, as the symbol of material impurity, that the *myste* has to triumph after being admitted to the soldier grade, and the combat which ensues is often represented on the monuments belonging to the grade of the bull.¹ In connection with this grade, it may be noticed that the priest who introduces the initiand is sometimes figured with two faces, one of which is turned to the right and the other to the left, making allusion, as Lajard suggests, to the two gates by which the soul descends from and ascends to heaven, and answering to the Janus of Roman mythology.

The *lion* gave its name to the *third* grade in the mysteries, this animal being chosen to symbolize the fierce and fiery element in nature, which was opposed to the humid principle, of which the bull was emblematic. The reason for this choice cannot be better expressed than in the words of Lajard who, when comparing these animals says:—"le lion, animal carnassier, élané dans sa taille, agile et souple non moins que vigoureux, doué d'un constitution sèche, ardente, ignée même, dedaignant

¹ Lajard sees in the *myste*, clothed with the skin and head of the bull, the origin of the Minotaur and of the Satyrs of Grecian and Roman mythology. The latter had the name *Bromius* applied to them, this being also the name given by the Greeks to Dionysos, from the practice of bellowing (*βρέμω*) associated with his mysterious rites.

l'eau, ne voulant se repaître que de la chair et du sang des quadrupèdes herbivores ou frugivores, mais ennemi aussi magnanime que courageux, il cessant de répandre la mort au moment où sa faim est assouvie; le lion, chaste dans ses amours, fidèle à une seule compagne, résume en lui-même les idées de l'antiquité sur la nature du feu, sur le rôle de cet agent dans les phénomènes de la generation et de la reproduction, sur le développement de l'intelligence dans les animaux carnassiers, sur la supériorité des facultés intellectuelles et des qualités morales de l'homme doué d'une constitution sèche ou ignée." ¹ Hence, not only is the lion a symbol of royalty, but it is sometimes associated with the words denoting a *King*. Thus, the Latin *leo* is derived from the same root as *rex* and *lex*; the Persian *schir* (lion) appears to be connected with the Zend and Sanskrit *khshéko*, *Khschakia* (King) which gave its name to the warrior caste of the Hindus; while *ar* is the Semitic term for "lion," and *ra* was not only the name of the Sun-god among both the Egyptians and the Babylonians, but it was the title given by the Egyptians to the King.

This association shows the importance of the grade of the lion, and Lajard thinks that admission to it was a necessary qualification for appointment to certain military or civil offices in Persia. The form which the initiate took when admitted to the grade, is seen in the Hercules of Greek and Roman mythology, who is usually represented clothed in the lion's skin. Among the sculptures of Persepolis which delineate the initiation of the Persian kings into various grades of the mysteries, is one which exhibits the combat with the lion. To indicate his power, this animal has a horn projecting from his forehead—the horn of the unicorn—the symbol of strength and usually of victory. The horse, owing to its solar charac-

¹ "Recherches sur le Culte de Venus," p. 223.

ter, appears to have been one of the animals which it was necessary to vanquish in this grade, and in the form of which the initiant became clothed. In this Lajard supposes that the stories of the *centaur* originated. Like the persons who were initiated into the grade of the lion, these fabulous creatures are said to have been remarkable for their scientific acquirements, for their studies in natural history, especially of the properties of plants, and for the practice of medicine and surgery.¹ The form taken by those who fully attained the grade of the lion was that of the sphinx, and Lajard figures² a cylinder on which the initiant is represented with the body of a lioness, showing that this grade was open to women as well as to men. Various cylinders represent the combats of women with the lion, thus confirming the statement of Porphyry that in the Mithraic mysteries the male initiants were called *lions*, and the female, *lionesses*.³

It has been stated that the region of the earth was supposed to be divided into three zones, those of *water*, *heat*, and *air*. When the initiant had obtained admission into the grade of the lion, he had already conquered the influences of the zone of moisture, and he was prepared to press on to the higher grades, those which had relation to the aërial principle of material nature. According to the notions of ancient philosophy, water was vivified by the wind, and the air thus occupied a position the importance of which is recognised in the fact of Zarathustra proclaiming it, equally with water, to be a proper object of adoration. The air was, however, considered both impure, in its terrestrial aspect, and pure, in

¹ See Smith's "Roman Antiquities." Art. *Chiron*.

² Atlas Pl. 54, C. No. 10.

³ Much uncertainty has existed as to whether the sphinx of antiquity was represented as male or female. These facts show that it sometimes took the one form and sometimes the other.

its celestial aspect, the winds having the greatest power at the equinoxes, the two epochs the most favourable for the descent and ascent of souls. In seeking, then, for objects to represent the aërial grades, the institutors of the mysteries would naturally look to those animals which are the most intimately connected with the air itself. The ancients, indeed, considered birds to be very superior to other animals in every respect. The power of flying, although in itself rendering the bird less material, according to their ideas, was only one of its peculiarities. It was looked upon as presenting marked differences in its habits and instincts. One of the most important functions which birds fulfil, within the tropics, is that of consumers of putrifying flesh, and the Zend-Avesta bears witness to the services in this respect of three birds in particular, the *vulture*, the *ostrich*, and the *raven*. These with the cock, the dove, the eagle, and the hawk, were the sacred birds of the Zarathustran system, and from among them, therefore, must be sought the representatives of the aërial grades of the Mithraic mysteries. The eagle and the hawk were connected with more advanced grades, and there is no ground for supposing that the cock or the dove occupied such a position. Lajard, therefore, has no hesitation in asserting that the vulture, the ostrich, and the raven gave names to the three aërial grades, although of these the raven only is thus actually referred to by ancient writers. Each of these birds is, indeed, consecrated to Mithra in the Zend-Avesta. The reason why the vulture was chosen to represent the fourth grade in the mysteries is not far to seek. This bird was thought by the ancients to be always female, and they believed its eggs to be fecundated by the wind. Hence, the Egyptians made it the symbol of maternity, and gave it the *crux ansata*, the sign of life. The vulture, moreover, was emblematic

of the air, as, owing to its habits, it came to be considered also of purity. In these facts we have the explanation of the office assigned to that bird by the Avesta, in connection with the disposal of the bodies of the dead. That the flesh of such bodies should be devoured after death by the vulture was declared to be all-important. If this were done, the soul was thought to ascend at once to the regions of light, especially if the body was that of a person who had been looked at by a vulture while dying. The dog seems to have performed the same office as the vulture in this respect,¹ and the great regard shewn by the worshippers of Ormuzd for the former animal is thus explained. Many of the cylinders relating to the vulture-grade are those of females and belong to the Assyrian mysteries. This fact may be accounted for, as Lajard suggests by "l'attribution du vautour à Venus Mylitta, considérée particulièrement comme une divinité génératrice et obsétrice. Cette attribution nous expliquerait l'importance que les Assyriens et les Phéniciens semblent avoir attachée à l'accomplissement d'un acte de haute dévotion, qui, en leur faisant obtenir le grade de vautour, devait leur rendre propice une déesse dont les faveurs pouvaient, soit les préserver, soit les guérir de la stérilité, infirmité que les mœurs de l'Orient comptaient au nombre des châtimens infligés par la colère divine."

The monuments representing the fifth grade are very rare; but they confirm Lajard's opinion that it was represented by the *Ostrich*. This bird, called in the Zend-Avesta *aoroschasp*, (raven-horse), was the emblem of swiftness, its speed surpassing that of the horse.

¹ This was probably because on the Zodiacal planisphere the equinoctial points were marked by the figure of a dog. The equinoxes, as we have seen, were considered the most favourable for the descent and ascent of souls.

It had also a moral significance. Thus, with the Egyptians it was symbolical of justice, and it appears to have had this character among the followers of Zarathustra, with whom justice was one of the virtues necessary to be attained to render the soul fitted for its celestial abode. Mithra, like Ormuzd, is entitled the *just judge*, and his emblem may well, therefore, have been the ostrich. The use of this bird in the mysteries would seem to symbolize the passage of the soul to the home of the just. A gnostic gem represents a soul passing from life to death on the back of an ostrich, an idea which at first sight is opposed to that held in the mysteries. It is not so, however, in reality. Death is but the gateway of life, and the soul must appear before the Judge of the Dead before it can pass to the abode of living. Hence, as Lajard points out, the ostrich, like all the other symbolical animals, had a double significance, and was susceptible of a funereal sense.

The sixth grade in the Mithraic mysteries was that of the *Raven*, a bird which occupied an important place in ancient mythology. It was usually the emblem of darkness and cold, as the dove was that of warmth and light. Nevertheless, in the Zend-Avesta, the raven is described not only as spreading light, but also as an embodiment of wisdom.¹ The chief of the four celestial birds, it was the faithful companion of Mithra, as, indeed, it was of Apollo and of the Scandinavian deity Odin. Mithra was called the *friend*; and in the Avesta, a raven, which assisted at an assembly of the gods, was called *Mitra-Saca*, on account of its friendly disposition. Moreover, this bird was a symbol of Mithra himself, and also of *Sarosch*, one of his assistants, and his manifestation as King of the earth. The name of the latter, indeed, appears to denote "raven." On the Roman

¹ For explanation of this, see Lajard, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

monuments this bird is always placed on the rocks which form the Mithraic grotto, assisting at the sacrifice which Mithra, placed in the interior of the grotto, offers to Ormuzd. It occupies a similar position on monuments which represent the Grecian Apollo. "Le corbeau ici," says Lajard, "marque donc aussi la limite qui sépare de la région de la lumière et de la chaleur la région terrestre. . . . Il se constitue, en même temps, le compagnon fidèle de deux divinités, dont la manifestation est la soleil ou la lumière. Aussi, dans l'antiquité, l'apparition et le cri d'un corbeau volant d'orient en occident étaient ils considérés comme un augure favorable, comme le signe de la présence ou du secours du dieu saveur, qui distribue à la terre la lumière, la chaleur et tous les autres bien dus à la nature du soleil et à son action bienfaisante et fécondante." In the mysteries, the grade of the raven marks the highest zone of the region of the air, and when it has been attained, the initiate is prepared to seek for admission to a still higher sphere, the regions of light. To show that he was already clothed with a sacred character, he receives the title of *hierocorax*. The frequent appearance on the cylinders belonging to this grade of the symbols used to express the idea of generation, or of the principle of humidity, shows, however, that it "belongs to a region where souls are still united to one of the elements or principles of matter which contributes to the reproduction of beings."

The seventh grade in the mysteries was the first of the solar region, that which was approached by the two doors of the movable heaven, and which was connected with the region of darkness by the "bridge of dread," *Tschinevad*, where Mithra and his *hamkars* sit to weigh the actions of the departed souls. The entrance to the

region of light is defended by a symbolical animal, "dont les formes, le courage, et la force annoncent à l'initié le peril des combats qui l'attendent s'il persiste dans la sainte résolution de traverser le ciel mobile pour parvenir aux célestes et éternelles demeures." This is the *griffin*, an animal which gave its name to the *seventh* grade in the Mithraic mysteries. Its form was always a combination of the lion and the eagle, to signify the harmonious action of the terrestrial and the celestial warmth; the superiority of the latter, however, being shown by the *head* of the eagle being united to the *body* of the lion. In pursuance of the association of this fabulous animal with the region of light, the chariot of Apollo, as well as that of Artemis, was represented as drawn by two griffins, which were also given to most of the deities connected with the sun or the moon. In its warlike capacity, the griffin was the emblem of victory, and thus belongs to Mars, as well as to Athené and Astarté, Apollo and Mithra. The nature of the warfare which the initiated had to wage in this grade is shown by the representations on the Cyreniac vases of the combats between the Amazons and the griffins, these being analogous to the conflicts between the Arimaspians and the guardians of the regions of gold. The explanation of these mythical stories is thus given by Lajard:—"Selon la doctrine enseignée par les prêtres initiateurs, l'or est consacré au soleil; il est le symbole ou le hiéroglyphe idéographique de l'astre dont il affecte la couleur. De là les prescriptions qui voulaient que les divinités génératrices et solaires fussent représentées par des statues d'or, et que l'usage de ce métal fût exclusivement réservé aux dieux et aux rois. Sous la plume poétique des écrivains grecs, la region de soleil c'est appelée *la région d'or*; le griffon, qui, dans son acception mystique, est le

gardien de la région solaire, a été transformé en gardien de la région d'or; et les initiés qui aspirent à obtenir le grade de griffon, c'est-à-dire l'entrée de leur âme dans la région du soleil, sont devenus des Arismaspes, des Pygmies, des géants, des Amazons, qui, pour conquérir la région de l'or, sont obligés de combattre et de vaincre les griffons préposés à la garde de cette région et appelés, par Hérodote lui-même, χρυσοφύλακας γρύπας."

The next grade in the Mithraic mysteries was that of *Perseus*, and with it, as being the eighth in order, were connected certain ideas pertaining to the number *eight*. Numbers entered very largely into the religious system of Zarathustra, probably by derivation from the Chaldeans, among whom "eight" was sacred. We have a reference to this number in the symbolical towers of the Chaldeans, which consisted of eight stories. These had relation to the mystical *scala*, or ladder, at the summit of which was placed the highest heaven. The steps of this ladder were formed by the seven planetary bodies, but ancient writers are not agreed as to the order in which they were placed. Lajard thinks, however, that the arrangement of Celsus must be preferred, and, according to him, Saturn was the first, then Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, the Moon, and lastly the Sun. This order has no reference to the position of the planets in the heavens, and it is just the reverse of that of the seven days of an ancient week, which commenced with the day consecrated to the Sun, and finished with the day of Saturn. We may suppose, therefore, that some idea was thus intended to be expressed, and the former arrangement was probably to denote that the course of the material life was exactly contrary to the spiritual passage typified by the mystical *scala*. The planetary bodies which formed this ladder were only seven in number, but above them was placed the

Gorotman or *Albordj*,¹ the mountain of light on which Ormuzd and Mithra dwell, and which forms the eighth stage of the spiritual ascent. The initiate admitted into the grade of Perseus was treated as a victorious warrior, and thus it constituted the *hero grade*. Military honours were highly valued by the Persians, and the *Zend-Avesta* itself enforces the worship of the ferouërs of the holy heroes, who are declared to be "the protectors of the just on the earth." Before being admitted to this grade, the initiate had to prove his valour in what was described as a conflict with the moon. Reference was here, doubtless, made to the fabulous *gorgons*, the powers of darkness and therefore of impurity, but more especially to *Medousa*, who may, as Mr Cox asserts,² have originally been the same as *Letô*, "the night in its benignant aspect as the parent of the sun," but who afterwards represented the moon itself as the queen of the night, in like manner as the god of the bright sky became the sun god. The remarkable prayer to the moon contained in the *Khorda-Avesta*³ was probably used in connection with this grade.

The grade of Perseus was succeeded by that of *Helios*, or the sun, which was the ninth in the mysteries. In the former, the initiate had proved his courage and shown that he was worthy to be enrolled among the heroes. Now he was to advance still higher, and to prove that he was entitled to be ranked among those who were declared to be invincible. The condition of this was, however, absolute purity. Lajard says:—"Dans le *Zend-Avesta*, comme dans l'enseignement oral

¹ According to the *Boundehesch*, the *Albordj* would appear to be the highest point in the heavens which the Sun reaches in his ascent. See Dupuis' "Memoire Explicatif du Zodiaque," p. 33.

² *Op. cit.*, ii. 287.

³ See Spiegel's "Avesta," xxiii., Mah-Yasht.

des mages préposés à la célébration des mystères, les idées de pureté et de victoire sont tellement inséparable, la pureté est la condition si absolue du triomphe, qui, récitant sa prière, le djouti ou l'officiant se qualifié lui-même de victorieux, parce qu'il peut se dire pur: 'O vous, Amschaspands, moi qui suis juste, qui officie avec grandeur, qui suis pur, victorieux, marchant avec pureté, ô vous qui êtes bienfaisants et saints, je vous fais izeschné.'” The idea of purity was associated with the sun, and hence this state is one of light, as the condition of sin is one of darkness. Thus, those only who were pure in thought could acquire the title “invincible,” this being given to the sun and to the solar deities, who, like Mithra, were not only *dei invicti*, but also the destroyers of impurity and the saviours of mankind. In pursuance of the association of purity with light, confession of sins was required to be made three times a day in the presence of the sun and of the sacred fire, while the *néaesch* of the sun¹ was being recited. This *néaesch* is the only prayer in the Avesta where the supreme triad is invoked, showing the importance attached to the object towards which it is directed. The comparison there made between the sun and a horse is noteworthy. Mithra is elsewhere represented as a warlike horseman, recalling the exploits of Perseus and Bellerophon. Among the Phenician monuments connected with the grade of Helios is the Scarabæus, a symbol consecrated to the sun. It often bears the image of some celebrated hero who has become identified with the sun by initiation, and who is thus considered as having a solar descent. The most common form of the smaller monuments relating to this grade is the cone.

¹ Khorda-Avesta xxii., Quarshet Yasht (Spiegel's "Avesta") For another invocation to the sun, moon, and stars, see Fargard xxi., Spiegel, Eng. Trans., p. 148, *seq.*

This, as Lajard shows, was owing to the connection which the religious doctrines of Western Asia had established between the sun and the cone, the obelisk or the pyramid. These several symbols were referred to the sun as the great life-giving agent in material nature, and they were retained to symbolize that higher and spiritual life which was associated in the mysteries with the purifying influence of its rays.

The *tenth* grade in the mysteries, called the "Father Eagle," was also the first of three divine grades with which the mysteries terminated. In the religious system of Zarathustra, both Ormuzd and his son Mithra, as the creator and the sustainer of all things, had the title of Father, a title which was bestowed also upon persons of elevated rank, especially upon the kings of Persia, considered as incarnations or manifestations of Mithra. The Father referred to in this grade was, however, Mithra himself, as is evident from the fact that the eagle was attributed to him, and was considered to be his living symbol and representative. This bird was, indeed, a solar animal, and hence it was associated with all the sun deities, and became thus a symbol of power and royalty. Tradition declared that Achemenes, the founder of the great Persian monarchy, was nourished by an eagle, and Lajard refers to the curious custom, according to which an officer of the court was appointed "to shape the nose of the prince royal so as to give it the form of the eagle's beak, that is, to render it aquiline." So, also, ancient writers refer to the aquiline nose of Cyrus the Great, in proof of his Achemenian descent. The eagle-sceptre was always carried before the Persian monarch, as, indeed, the eagle-headed *baton* is to this day. But the royal bird had a further significance as a religious symbol. The sun is the source of energy, and hence the eagle was consecrated to Apollo and Pan, and be-

came a symbol of generation.¹ The relation thus established was, moreover, extended to *fire* and to the ethereal region. The ancients, says Lajard, "supposaient que la sphère ou le principe du feu est dans le soleil, et que le soleil tire son origine de la région éthérée. C'est pourquoi on prétendait que les yeux de l'aigle lancent des flammes, et que le bec de cet oiseau, lorsqu'il plane dans les airs, paraît être tout de feu. C'est pourquoi aussi nous avons vu, chez les Perses, l'aigle tenir, entre le soleil et la lune, la place de Mithra, le maître et le dépositaire de la foudre." The association between this bird and fire was expressed in the doctrine of apotheosis. Thus, it is said of Hercules that, after his body was burnt on the pyre, he received the honour of apotheosis, his soul ascending in the form of an eagle. It was to this end that the followers of Ormuzd were taught to aspire, and to attain to it they had to receive the grade of the *father-eagle*, the possession of which gave the certainty of ineffable felicity, since it assimilated the initiate to Mithra, by conferring on him the honours of apotheosis.² The ascending soul was imaged by the eagle, which thus became the symbol of immortality. The destruction of the body itself by the flames was thought to be a fitting emblem of the removal of material impurity, and hence "the representation of the corporeal death and the spiritual resurrection on a pyre was one of the ceremonies necessarily practised in the celebration of the mysteries of Mithra."

The *eleventh* grade was that of the *Father-Hawk*. It may appear strange that the hawk should thus occupy a

¹ It is strange that the Egyptians thought that the eagle had only male young (Lajard "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 519). Their idea that the vulture was only female was noticed at a preceding page.

² In connection with this subject, see the very valuable Memoir on the Assyrian and Phœnician Hercules, by M. Raoul-Rochette, in the *Mémoires de l'Institut. Acad. des Inscriptions*, Tom. 17.

higher place than the eagle. It must be remembered, however, that the question of rank was here determined by reference to mental rather than to physical attributes. Even in the latter respect the hawk was thought to have a certain superiority. It was noted for the excellence of its eyesight and for the swiftness of its flight. Hence, as Porphyry remarks, it became the symbol of light and of the air, and was considered "a rapid messenger of the will of the creator of the world;" while in an intellectual sense it was emblematic of the rapidity of speech. According to Eusebius, indeed, Ormuzd himself was represented with the head of the hawk, as among the Egyptians this bird was consecrated to Osiris in his capacity of "King of the living and of the dead." Thus, in the Egyptian system the hawk was a symbol of life, and this appears to have been its significance in the Persian mysteries. On one of the only two monuments now remaining relating to this grade, the hawk is placed above a *crux ansata*, which is specially applicable to the grade of the Father-Hawk—of Ormuzd, "the creator of the world, the source of good, the source of intelligence, and of knowledge, the enemy of evil and of ignorance, the supreme protector and sovereign judge of the living and of the dead." Mithra is the preserver of the world and the ever active opponent of Ahriman in his attempts to mar its beauty and excellence, but properly speaking he is only the agent of Ormuzd. It is Ormuzd who is the supreme, the sovereign and infallible judge, because in him resides essentially, the absolute knowledge of good and evil. It is in this character, says Lajard, "qu'il se montre à nos yeux dans le Zend-Avesta, où toutes les prières commencent par une invocation à ce dieu, et où cette invocation fait constamment suivre de la qualification 'juste juge' le nom d'Ormuzd. Aussi ce créateur du monde exerce-t-il à l'égard des âmes une

justice supérieure à toutes les conventions humaines, une justice fondée sur lois éternelles du bien, du vrai, et du beau. Mithra et ses deux assesseurs, Sarosch et Raschna-Rast, lorsqu'ils jugent les âmes sur le pont Tchinevad, ne sont que les organes de cette justice, dont la source remonte à Ormuzd."

The *twelfth* and highest grade in the Mithraic mysteries was that of *Father of Fathers*. The Being referred to in this title is evident. Both Mithra and Ormuzd had the title of "father," the former giving a name to the eagle grade, and the latter to the hawk grade of the mysteries. The Father of Fathers then can be none other than *Zervana* or *Zarvana akarana*, "Time without bounds," the Eternal, to whom Ormuzd and Mithra themselves owe existence. These three divinities formed the supreme triad of the Zarathustran theogony. They form, moreover, a moral triad, perfect purity in thought, in word, and in action; these ideas corresponding to Mithra, who is ever active, to Ormuzd, who pronounced and ever pronounces the creative word, to *Zervâna*, from whom have emanated all the typical ideas of creation. In the three highest grades of the mysteries these three degrees of purity are represented, and the end which they proposed was to enable the initiated to make an approach to the perfectibility of the Gods, "in casting off successively all that which is human, in rendering himself absolute master of his senses and his passions, to become finally like to the gods themselves." Passing through these three grades the soul gradually became assimilated to the deity, and when it attained the last stage, and had finally renounced all alliance with matter and created things, then says Lajard, "arrachée par ce dernier acte au monde matériel et sensible, aux lieux de la dualité, ramenée dans la région de la pure intelligence et des

idées, rendue aux conditions de son existence première, l'unité, elle recouvre immédiatement les privilèges qu'au moment de sa chute elle avait perdus, séduite par l'attrait des formes, des couleurs et des autres qualités de la matière : elle n'a plus rien de sensible en elle ; tout en elle est idée ou pensée et lumière. De la dualité elle est revenue à l'unité. Désormais elle peut, sans crainte d'être rejetée dans le monde créé et ténébreux, se présenter pour rentrer dans le sein de l'Éternel, c'est à dire, dans la pensée de l'Éternel, dans la grande monade. Le myste qu'elle est enfin parvenu à soumettre sans restriction à ses volontés, à ses lois ; le myste qui, plongé dans cet état d'extase dont l'exaltation religieuse des peuples asiatiques nous offre encore des fréquents exemples, s'est, ainsi que son âme, anéanti en dieu ; ce myste, reconnu digne des honneurs de l'apothéose suprême, est proclamé dans le sanctuaire *père des pères*—a title, however, which only the “destour of the destours,” or the *archimage* and the king would have the right to use.

From the description above given of the secret cult of the Persians it is evident that what is usually called “Mithraism” was, in reality, the worship of Ormuzd, whose purity, however, was considered so perfect, that mortal and sinful men could hope to be received by him only through the mediation of Mithra. The sacred fire was the symbol of Ormuzd and representative of his absolute purity. Prayers, with hymns of praise, were nevertheless addressed to other objects of worship besides Ormuzd and Mithra. Thus, for instance, to the sun and to the moon, which were treated as, in some sense, representative of Mithra himself. This was the external worship, that which furnished visible evidence of connection with the Mazdaic faith. The internal religious idea associated with it is shown by the position occupied

by Mithra in this cult. The mediator between Ormuzd and man, he was also the restorer to spiritual purity, the attainment of which was the practical aim of Mazdaism. Purity of life—in thought, word, and deed—was required of its followers, whose ultimate reward was a return to the absolute purity from which all souls were supposed to have emanated, though they had lost their high estate through the fatal attraction of matter. The exercise of purity, and the attainment of its highest condition, were possible only so far as the influence of matter could be neutralized and destroyed. This influence, however, which consisted chiefly in the action of the body over the soul, was so powerful that it required for its defeat continued conflict with the carnal passions, and the exercise of the greatest mental resolution. The difficulty of leading a pure life was recognised by the establishment of the mysteries, the initiatory rites of which had for their object the acquirement of control over the animal passions, and the gradual preparation for that state of spiritual perfection and pure enjoyment, which was to be the lot of those valiant soldiers of Mithra who fought against the powers of darkness, and who did not succumb in the conflict. The mysteries were, therefore, moral aids to religion rather than a religious system in themselves, and hence the importance of fully considering their nature in a history of moral development. The doctrines of the faith were embodied in the Avesta,¹ which was doubtless as open to the multitude as were the Hebrew Scriptures, although in practice the written word would in both cases be very imperfectly known. A general idea of the necessity of purity of life for final happiness, combined with a notion that such a condition could be attained only by the aid

¹ Lajard cites various passages from the Avesta which he supposes to refer to the mysteries. See "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 111.

of Mithra—the mediator between Ormuzd and sinful man—the Saviour God, would be present to the minds of most persons. Mithra would undoubtedly, therefore, apart from his prominent position as being in popular estimation the Sun God, become the chief object of public worship; Ormuzd being thrown into the background, as was the Hindu Brahma, and even the First Person in the Christian Trinity.

It is desirable, owing to the moral influence it exerted, to note shortly how far the Persian cult was received by other peoples. Although the sacred mysteries were well known in Greece, yet Mithraism would seem never to have been introduced there, probably owing to the influence of the national worship of Apollo, which had somewhat in common with it.¹ It may have been chiefly, however, through the prevalence of the worship of Venus, which, although having many ideas in common with Mithraism,² was, in the hands of the Greeks, far less spiritual.³ The doctrines of Zarathustra were first introduced into Rome, through the agency of the Cilician pirates subdued by Pompey, so late as 70 B.C. Those doctrines soon became extremely influential at Rome, affecting the civil institutions of the empire, and it seemed at one time as though the Persian cult would establish itself in the place of the old national faith. A temple dedicated to Mithra was, long before the triumph of Christianity, built on the sacred Capitoline Mount itself. It was not, however, confined to Rome. It was carried by the legions to the utmost bounds of the empire, and its monuments have been found almost wherever the Roman soldiers established themselves.

¹ Lajard, "Le Culte de Mithra," pp. 803, 366 *seq.*, 489, &c.

² See Lajard's "Le Culte de Venus," pp. 185 *seq.*, 214, 227 *seq.*: also "Le Culte de Mithra," pp. 107, 611.

³ Plutarch: *Vit. Pomp.*

The most conclusive proof to the remarkable position attained by Mithraism at Rome is furnished by the joy with which its downfall was hailed by the adherents of Christianity. Viewed during the first four centuries of our era as the most powerful opponent of the newer faith, the destruction of the temples of Mithra at Rome and Alexandria was described by the Fathers as a glorious victory for the Christian religion.¹ The first grade of its mysteries being that of the *soldier*, and the attainment of the future grades requiring continual conflict, this religion was well fitted to attract the Roman soldier, who was noted both for his valour and his abstinence while engaged on military duty.

The chief distinction between the Roman and Persian Mithraism is to be found in the fact that the former was never a public worship. It was confined to the secret cult of the mysteries, the doctrines of which, however, were the same as those taught among the Persians. Lajard says, indeed, that the religious code and the ritual of Persian Mithraism can be supplied from the Roman monuments and inscriptions, which mention nine of the grades by name. All these inscriptions belong to the last half of the fourth century A.D., and this sufficiently accounts for Cancer and Capricorn being substituted for the Lion and Aquarius as the gates for the descent and ascent of souls. The most interesting of the Roman Mithraic monuments are those which represent Mithra offering the atoning sacrifice. These are of three types, according to their astronomical signs, the earliest having for their characteristic sign the scorpion, and the latest the crab, and their importance justifies an explanation of their symbolism being given. In all, the chief place is occupied by Mithra, who, standing within the sacred grotto, immolates the sacrificial bull. The scorpion

¹ See Lajard, "Le Culte de Mithra," pp. 564-5.

“pince avec ses deux serres les testicules du taureau, et dirige contre les mêmes parties le dard venimeux dont sa queue est armée, tandis qu’un serpent se glisse le long du ventre de l’animal, cherchant à se rapprocher des gouttes de sang qui découlent de la plaie dans laquelle est enfoncé le poignard de Mithra. C’est vers cette même plaie qu’un chien, placé sur une parties du portrail du taureau, dirige sa tête.” On the sides of the grotto are placed the two assistants of Mithra, one of whom elevates a lighted torch, the other having his torch reversed. A raven is perched on the rocks which form one side of the grotto. The bull bears the inscription *Deo Sol Invicto Mithra*, shewing that the worship of Mithra had degenerated, outwardly at least, into that of the physical sun. This luminary is the active agent, the moon—here represented by the bull itself, whose fecundating influence is marked by the ears of corn which proceed from its tail—being passive. The two assistants, with their torches, symbolise the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, and also day and night, light and darkness, life and death. The scorpion, by its malignant action, stimulates the generative faculty of the bull, while the serpent seeks to ensnare the soul as it departs with the blood from the wounded shoulder. On the other hand, the dog of Mithra,—the dog which conducts the soul to the bridge Tschinevâd to be judged—is waiting to perform his office. “Attentif,” says Lajard, “à saisir le moment où l’âme s’échappera de la plaie saignante, il veut s’emparer d’elle et l’empêcher de succomber une seconde fois à l’attrait des formes, des couleurs et des propriétés de la matière. Il veut la défendre contre les séduction, contre les projets criminels d’Ahriman, ce dieu implacable ennemi d’Ormuzd et de Mithra, ce dieu auteur du mal, ce dieu qui, sous la forme d’une couleuvre s’élançe vers le taureau, en même temps que le chien, pour s’emparer de l’âme, la

séduire et la corrompre." From his station above, the raven, the faithful companion of Mithra, watches attentively what is passing below. Besides the monuments just described, there are others which Lajard thinks were reserved for the sanctuary and for the view of the initiated alone. In these Mithra is represented as a lion-headed god, encircled by a serpent, and standing on a globe, while he holds in his hands two keys, those of the doors of the sun and of the moon. This form appears to have been derived from Western Asia, where certain deities to whom Mithra was related had, from a very ancient date, been represented as standing on the back of a lion. It is not improbable, indeed, that it had some connection with the worship of the Roman Mars (*Ares*) whose name associates him with the lion, a symbol of the sun god. Such a connection with the national gods may have been one reason why Mithraism acquired so much influence at Rome, and it seems to be implied in the prayer ascribed to Mithra when he immolates the bull, "Nama Sebesio," which has reference to Jupiter Sabazius, who is identifiable with the Persian Ormuzd.¹

That Mithraism, or its Chaldaic original, exercised great influence over Hebrew religious teaching during the period of the captivity, there can be little doubt. This influence showed itself, not so much in a change in the divine object of worship, as in the raising of the whole tone of religion and morality. The necessity of purity of life was henceforth more fully the burden of the prophet's teaching, and that truth was embodied in the legend of the fall—itself an epitome of the doctrine taught in the mysteries—which was probably derived from a Persian or at least a Chaldæan source. Much of the symbolism used by the Hebrew prophets was also thus derived, and also many of their ideas concerning the

¹ Lajard, "Le Culte de Venus," p. 214.

spiritual world. In the later notions connected with the spirit of evil, Satan, we have clearly a reproduction of the Persian doctrine as to Ahriman, the dark and material adversary of the spirit of light. Above all, we see the influence of Persian religious thought in the idea of a Messiah, the incarnate Logos sent for the salvation of suffering man. This Word is none other than Mithra himself, the son of Ormuzd, and the saviour of mankind from the power of the spirit of darkness. The famous remark made by Philo as to the creation of man in the image of the Divine Word was almost certainly inspired from the same source.¹

The obligations of Christianity to Mithraism will be considered when its moral principles come to be discussed. That those obligations were not small, we may conclude from the observations of a late able writer, who says:—
“The resurrection of the body is clearly and emphatically indicated in the Zend-Avesta; and it belongs, in all probability, to Zoroaster’s original doctrine—not, as has been held by some, to later times, when it was imported into his religion by other religions. A detailed description of the resurrection and last judgment is contained in the Bundelesh. The same argument—the almightiness of the Creator—which is now employed to show the possibility of the elements, dissolved and scattered as they may be, being all brought back again, and made once more to form the body to which they once belonged, is made use of there to prove the resurrection. There is still an important element to be noticed, viz., the Messiah, or Sosiosh, from whom the Jewish and Christian notions of a Messiah are held by many to have been derived.² He is to awaken the dead bodies, to restore

¹ “Philo’s Works,” (Bohn) vol. iv. p. 391.

² On this subject see Milman’s “History of Christianity,” vol. i., p. 72, *seq.*

all life destroyed by death, and to hold the last judgment. Here, again, a later period introduced a plurality, notably a Trinity." The same writer remarks further that an attentive reading of the *Zend-Avesta* reveals new and striking points of contact between Jewish and Christian notions on the one hand, and the Zoroastrian on the other, at nearly every page.¹

Notwithstanding what was said at a preceding page,² it is very questionable whether Mithraism was indebted for any of its ideas to Buddhism. Although the aim which each system had in view was the same—the rescue of the human soul from the malignant influence of matter, or, in later phraseology, the power of the Evil One—the “way” of salvation was quite different. Mithraism was, indeed, in this respect more nearly allied to Brahmanism than to Buddhism. Like the early Hindu cult it was essentially a system of purification. It established, or at least utilised the sacred mysteries for the purpose of securing the spiritual purity which the Brahmans sought by ascetic observances. Buddhism, on the other hand, had less regard for purity than for peace. This it sought to attain by works having for their object the good of others rather of self. Buddhism and Mithraism, therefore, may be said to represent the two opposite poles of the moral being, the active and the passive. Possibly they may both have originated in some common movement having for its object the reform of a more ancient faith; or, what is perhaps more probable, they were the responses, along different lines of development, to the yearning of the human mind for something higher and better than the system of sacerdotalism which at one time appears to have been established throughout the

¹ “Chambers's Encycl.,” Art. *Zoroaster*, vol. x., p. 362.

² *Supra*, p. 305.

whole of the civilised world, and of which Hindu Brahmanism is now the sole relic.

It is not difficult to estimate too highly the moral importance of the altruistic sentiment, and in estimating the relative merits of the systems founded by the Hindu and Persian reformers, it should be stated that, although the Avesta does not give so much weight directly to works of charity as do the teachings of Gautama, yet the doctrines it enforces are much more likely to conduct ultimately to a life of benevolence. The use of charity and self-denial as means to an end, tends to reduce those virtues to a position of secondary importance, and hence they come to be considered, as is the case in modern Buddhism, as of little value. On the other hand, the absolute requirement in the followers of Ormuzd and Mithra, of purity in thought, word, and deed, renders the exercise of the active virtues equally essential. These will surely follow from such a life, and be as much its test as are the passive virtues founded on the rights of others. While, therefore, Buddhism may, and almost must, become a religion of pure selfishness, Mazdaism, so long as it continues a living faith,¹ must conduce to benevolent action, seeing that its central dogma is that spiritual purity from which such action necessarily springs. And yet, notwithstanding the superiority of the Mithraic cult, as shown in the improved motive it supplies for moral conduct, it is retained only by the Parsis of Gujerat and the inhabitants of Kirman, the so-called fire-worshippers of Yezd,² while Buddhism is still the religion of nearly a third of the human race. How can this fact be explained? Simply by the conditions to

¹ Professor Max Müller says that the morality of the modern Parsis "is comprised in these words—pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds." "Chips," vol. i. p. 178.

² The *destours* of Kirman are thought to have preserved an oral tradition unknown to the Parsis. See "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 28.

which the two religions were subjected. Although Buddhism was expelled from its original home, hardly a trace of it being now found in India, yet it was spread by missionary zeal among the peoples of Eastern Asia whose minds, in having a natural tendency to mysticism, were especially fitted for its reception. With the Mazdaic cult it was far different. Like Indian Buddhism, indeed, it came into collision with opposing religions, to the influence of which it was ultimately obliged to succumb; and when once its rites were extinguished at home, it had little chance of becoming reinstated among other peoples. Owing to its somewhat secret character, as associated with the Mysteries, it was not well fitted for dissemination abroad, and the Mazdaians never seem to have been fired by the missionary zeal which animated the followers of Gautama. In this sense even the religion of Zarathustra may be said to have been selfish, and, therefore, to possess within itself the germ of decay, boding ill for it if brought into competition with a faith possessed of wider sympathies. More especially must this be so if, in addition to the lofty tone of Mazdaic purity, the newer cult possessed the livelier faith springing from a charity warmer even than that of primitive Buddhism, while governed by a sense of duty, nothing comparable to which had yet been seen in the world's history. Add to the antagonistic influence of Christian teaching that of the sword of the disciples of a still younger faith, and it is not surprising that the sublime religion of Zarathustra has almost ceased to exist.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIANITY.

A KNOWLEDGE of the ideas embodied in the Mithraic system is as essential to the due understanding of Christianity, as it is valuable for throwing light on the moral and religious notions anciently prevalent among Asiatic peoples generally. Tracing the origin of all things, more especially of light, and of the spiritual essences supposed to be allied with it, up to their source in the universal soul, the association of the human soul with a material organism was considered a mark of degradation, and a proof of spiritual impurity. The soul was said to have been drawn by the fatal attraction of matter down from the abode of light, and thus to have fallen into the paths of generation, in which it must remain until, by its purification, it is enabled to make a return to the regions from which it had descended. So long as its impurity remained, the soul was doomed to wander through a series of material transformations, and the great aim of all the religious systems of antiquity was to provide a means of escaping from the dreaded cycle of metempsychosis. The members of the sacred castes—the children of the sun—were born to the privileges of the “rebirth,” but the generality of mankind had to obtain them either by purchasing the mediation of the “twice-born” priests, or by the exercise of self-denial and the performance of actions which were thought to have a purifying influence over the soul. Gautama sought to secure freedom from rebirth

by mortification of the body, the performance of acts of charity, meditation, and the total abnegation of self. These he supposed to be sufficient to secure the object in view, without having recourse to the offices of the priests, or to the rites of an elaborated religious system. By other peoples, the existence of a clear moral relation between man and God was fully recognised, especially by those connected with the Hamitic or Semitic stock. The Persians, whose relationship to the Chaldeans was far from being merely political, sought escape from the way of generation by the practice of a high morality, the object of which was to secure the attainment of a condition of spiritual purity in this present life. In the last chapter it has been shown that the ideas embodied in the Zarathustran cult exercised considerable influence over Hebrew thought, as revealed in a portion of the Old Testament Scriptures. That influence is still more marked in the writings which seem to date from the period which intervened between the minor prophets and the establishment of Christianity. In the Apocrypha, as a late writer asserts, "the antagonism between matter and spirit, the impurity of the whole material world, and the evil influence of the corruptible body upon the human soul, are proclaimed as unquestionable truths."¹ The same testimony as to a later period is borne by the late Dean Milman, who says that the Zendavesta is "by no means an improbable source in which we ought to discover the origin of those traditional notions of the Jews, which were extraneous to their earlier systems, and which do not appear to rest on their sacred records. It is undoubtedly remarkable that among the Magian tenets we find so many of those doctrines about which the great schism

¹ "Christian Theology and Modern Scepticism," by the Duke of Somerset, p. 62.

in the Jewish popular creed, that of the traditionists and antitraditionists, continued for several centuries. It has already been observed that in the later prophetic writings many allusions, and much of what may be called the poetic language and machinery, is strikingly similar to the main principles of the Magian faith. Nor can it be necessary to suggest how completely such expressions as the 'children of light,' and the 'children of darkness,' had become identified with the common language of the Jews at the time of our Saviour; and when Jesus proclaimed himself the 'Light of the World,' no doubt he employed a term familiar to the ears of the people, though, as usual, they might not clearly comprehend in what sense it was applicable to the Messiah, or to the purely moral character of the new religion."¹ It would seem, however, that there were sects by whom the ideas embodied in the teachings of Zarathustra were especially embraced. Such, doubtless, were the Essenes, who were said to have first arisen on the western shores of the Dead Sea, spreading from thence throughout Palestine, and it is advisable to treat of this little-known sect before entering upon the proper subject of the present chapter, especially as the founder of Christianity is sometimes thought to have belonged to it.

The works of Philo Judæus and Josephus are usually said to be the chief source of our knowledge of the Essenes. The former, in his tract "On the Virtuous being also Free," tells us that originally they were poor and destitute, ignorant of all traffic, commercial dealings, and navigation, and refusing to act in any employment connected with war, or as makers of warlike weapons. They lived in villages apart in order to escape the contamination of cities, and they were all "free, aiding one another with a reciprocal interchange

¹ "History of Christianity," vol. I., p. 68 *seq.*

of good offices," and having all things in common. They met in synagogues on the seventh day to hear the scripture expounded. Their sacred books, says Philo, "present an infinite number of instances of the disposition devoted to the love of God, and of a continued and uninterrupted purity throughout the whole of life, of a careful avoidance of oaths and falsehoods, and of a strict adherence to the principle of looking on the deity as the cause of everything which is good, and of nothing which is evil. They also furnish us with many proofs of a love of virtue such as absence from all covetousness of money, from ambition, from indulgence in pleasures, temperance, endurance, and also moderation, simplicity, good temper, the absence of pride, obedience to the laws, steadiness, and everything of that kind; and lastly, they bring forward as proofs of the love of mankind, good will, equality beyond all power of description, and fellowship."¹ Elsewhere, Philo refers to the community of goods and fellowship among the Essenes in terms such as would lead us to suppose that they led a monastic life, and he dwells with admiration on the fact that although "they repudiate marriage, and at the same time they practise continence in an eminent degree," yet they perpetuate their community. "They are all full grown men," says Philo, "and even already declining towards old age, such as are no longer carried away by the impetuosity of their bodily passions, and are not under the influence of the appetites, but such as enjoy a genuine freedom, the only true and real liberty."²

The account given by Josephus³ of the Essenes and their doctrines is much fuller than that preserved by Philo. He describes their monastic life under the rules

¹ Works of Philo Judæus (Bohn), vol. III., p. 523 *seq.*

² Fragments, *ditto*, vol. IV., p. 220.

³ See Whiston's Translation, "Wars of the Jews," Bk. II., chap. viii.

of chastity, obedience, and silence. Spending much of their time in labour, they ate and drank seldom and with sobriety. Their garments were white, and these they used until they were completely worn out or torn to pieces. Two things only were they allowed to do without consent of their superiors—to succour the distressed, if they were worthy, and to give food to those who were in need. They studied the medicinal properties of herbs and stones, and doubtless acted as physicians to the poor. They were mild in their manner, peaceable and trustworthy, and they declined to confirm what they said by an oath. Those of their members who were found out in any heinous sin were banished from the society, the judgment pronounced being unalterable, but the sentence was always strictly just. They were very superstitious in many of their customs, and were extremely strict observers of the seventh day. Josephus says that the Essenes lived the same kind of life as the Pythagoreans, and their doctrines concerning the soul appear to have been such as Pythagoras is said to have derived from the Egyptians. Thus, they taught “that bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent, but that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever; and that they come out of the most subtile air, and are united to their bodies as in prisons, into which they are drawn by a certain natural enticement, but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward.” This is really the doctrine of the descent and ascent of souls already explained, although there is no positive evidence that the Essenes received the doctrine of transmigration.¹

¹ Josephus remarks of the Pharisees—“They say that all souls are incorruptible, but that the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies,—but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment.”

Dean Milman makes the following pertinent remarks on the doctrines held by the Essenes:—"The main principles of their tenets seem evidently grounded on that wide-spread Oriental philosophy, which, supposing matter either the creation of the Evil Being, or itself the Evil Being, considered all the appetites and propensities of the *material* body in themselves evil, and therefore esteemed the most severe mortification the perfection of virtue. The reverence for the names of the angels points to the same source. There is one ambiguous expression in the account of Josephus, which, taken literally, would imply that they worshipped the sun."¹ This, no doubt, is the prayer that the sun might shine upon them, used by them at daybreak. The words of Josephus are—"Before sun-rising they speak not a word about profane matters, but put up certain prayers which they have received from their forefathers, as if they made a supplication for its rising." Elsewhere the holiness and purity of the sun's light are referred to, ideas which are strictly Zarathustran.

That the Essenes were not a purely Jewish sect is shown by the fact that they did not offer sacrifices at the Temple at Jerusalem; not, as says Josephus, because they had more pure lustrations of their own,² but rather, as Dean Milman suggests, because they abhorred the taking of animal life, a feeling which led them also to abstain from the eating of flesh. This notion was peculiarly eastern as was the use of lustrations. The latter custom was prevalent among the Persians, and its existence among the Essenes confirms the idea that the peculiarities which distinguished them from the other Jews were derived from the followers of Zarathustra. Josephus makes no mention of the existence of mysteries

¹ "History of the Jews," 4th Ed., vol. II., p. 113.

² Josephus' "Antiquities," Book xviii. ch. i. § 5.

among them, but the customs usual on the admission of a member to the sect reveal some trace of such an institution. Thus "if any one hath a mind to come over to their sect, he is not immediately admitted, but he is prescribed the same method of living which they use, for a year, while he continues excluded ; and give him a small hatchet and the pre-mentioned girdle, and the white garment. And when he hath given evidence, during that time, that he can observe their continence, he approaches nearer to their way of living, and is made a partaker of the waters of purification ; yet is he not even now admitted to live with them, for after this demonstration of his fortitude, his temper is tried two more years, and if he appear to be worthy, they then admit him into their society. And before he is allowed to touch their common food, he is obliged to take tremendous oaths ; that, in the first place, he will exercise piety towards God ; and then, that he will observe justice towards men ; and that he will do no harm to anyone, either of his own accord, or by the command of others ; that he will always hate the wicked, and be assistant to the righteous ; that he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in authority, because no one obtains the government without God's assistance ; and that if he be in authority, he will at no time whatever abuse his authority, nor endeavour to outshine his subjects, either in his garments, or any other finery ; that he will be perpetually a lover of truth, and propose to himself to reprove those that tell lies ; that he will keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains, and that he will neither conceal anything from those of his own sect, nor discover any of their doctrines to others, no, not though any one should compel him so to do at the hazard of his life. Moreover, he swears to communicate their doctrines to no

one any otherwise than as he received them himself; that he will abstain from robbery, and will equally preserve the books belonging to their sect, and the names of the angels." ¹

The girdle which the applicant for admission to the sect received, would seem to be the *kosti*, or girdle of chastity, used in the mysteries, as also by the modern Parsis. Absolute continence does not appear to have been imposed on all the members of the sect, or at least there was one branch of the Essenes who permitted marriage, but for the sake only of raising children. All, however, "reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be virtues." It should be mentioned that Josephus refers to the affection the Essenes had for one another and also to their possession of the prophetic faculty, which they obtained "by reading the holy books, and using several sorts of purifications, and being perpetually conversant in the doctrines of the prophets." That they knew how to die for their faith, as well as to live in it, is evident from the persecutions they endured at the hands of the Romans. If we may believe the Jewish historian, "although they were tortured and distorted, burnt and torn to pieces, and went through all kinds of instruments of torture, that they might be forced either to blaspheme their legislator, or to eat what was forbidden them, yet could they not be made to do either of them, no, nor once to flatter their tormentors, or to shed a tear; but they smiled in their very pains, and laughed those to scorn who inflicted torments upon them, and resigned up their souls with great alacrity, as expecting to receive them again."

The idea derived from the statements of Philo and Josephus, that the opinions held by the Essenes had

¹ "Wars of the Jews," Book II. ch. viii. § 6.

much in common with those of the ancient Persians, is confirmed by the enquiries of modern writers. Bellerman refers to the similarity of the Essenes to the Pythagoreans,¹ whose doctrines were undoubtedly of an Eastern origin. He points out, moreover, that the former are not unknown to the Talmud, in which they are called Baithosenes, meaning "the School of the Essenes."² Bellerman says that they were known as Essenes at the time of Jonathan, the brother of Judas Maccabeus, about 166 years before Christ.³ Among other names given to them by the Jewish books is that of *Nazirim*, or Abstinent, and they appear to have been a class of men who took upon themselves the Nazir vows, which enjoined abstinence from wine, flesh, and other general enjoyments, but made them perpetual.⁴ According to the latest research as to the ideas and manners of the Essenes, they considered the body as enchaining the soul which, formed of the finest ether and originally pure, fell and became fettered by the body. Freed by death from confinement the soul rises heavenward, while the material body perishes. Abstinence and labour constituted the principles of their practical life. Pleasure was considered wrong; luxury was banished. Slavery was not tolerated. The highest duty was truth, and therefore no oath was allowed. The day was begun with prayer. Then they worked to the fifth hour, followed by ablutions with cold water, and a simple meal, interspersed with prayers. After this they worked again to the dusk of the evening, and a second simple meal closed the day. They kept the Sabbath strictly, but rejected all bloody sacrifices,

¹ "Geschichtliche Nachrichten ueber Essaeer und Therapeuter" (1821), p. 157. ² Do., p. 146. ³ Do., p. 20.

⁴ This subject is well treated in Chambers' Encyclopædia, art. *Essenes*.

although they sent presents to the Temple at Jerusalem.¹

Supposing the Essenes to have been a Jewish sect, they appear to have borne much the same relation to Judaism (except in their want of missionary zeal) as the followers of Gautama held to Brahmanism. Their monachism, indeed, and their lives of practical charity, have so much in common with the teaching of Buddhism, that the Essenes might well have owed their origin as a sect to Indian missionaries, whose presence in those days on the shores of the Dead Sea is far from improbable.² The Mithraic element, which constitutes the religious side of Essene teaching, must not, however, be lost sight of. On the usual hypothesis as to the race character of the Essenes, we may suppose them to have been Jews who had embraced the religious views which were common to the followers of Ormuzd and other Eastern religionists, and also the monasticism which was developed so largely by Buddhism, if it did not originate with the followers of Gautama. If it were not for the express statement of Josephus, we might be tempted, however, to doubt the Hebrew origin of the Essenes. They certainly did not sacrifice at the temple, and, therefore, they were excluded from its common court. It is not improbable, indeed, that the Essenes, as a political body, were descendants of Chaldæan colonists, who had settled near the shores of the Sea of Galilee during the later captivity, and whose original cult was in course of time somewhat altered by contact with Judaism. In default of this we may believe them to have been Jews who, in Babylonia, received many of the tenets of the Chaldæan faith (which so closely resembled Mithraism), and who afterwards embraced the

¹ Zerzog, "Real Encyclopedie."

² As to the ancient extension of Buddhism, see *supra*, p. 302 *seq.*

monastic mode of life. Later Judaism has so much in common with the faith of Zarathustra, that there is no difficulty in accepting this explanation of the Essene creed, the more so as the therapeutic studies for which the Jewish sect were famed were practised also by those who were initiated into the Mysteries.¹

The Essenes have been thus fully dwelt upon, owing to the fact that some writers have sought to trace the origin of Christianity itself to them. Wachter argued that Jesus was an Essen, because he agreed with this sect in rejecting the letter of the Mosaic law, and because the Jews were divided into three sects—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes—to one of which Jesus must have belonged. But Jesus opposed the first two, and showed his agreement with the last by not contradicting them. Bellerman, in quoting this opinion, says that there can be no doubt that Jesus knew of the piety and the social arrangements of the Essenes, but that historically it is not proved that he was a member of their sect.² The same writer points out, however, that Tertullus, the Jewish accuser of Paul (Acts xxiv. 5), included Christians under the term *Nasorcei* (Nazarenes), although it is not certain whether he referred to the *Nazirim* (Essenes) or to the town Nazareth.³ The probability, arising from these considerations, and from the similarity of doctrines and practices, of some connection between the Essenes and the early Christians is very strong. Dean Milman, indeed, while saying that popular opinion undoubtedly associated John the Baptist with the Essenes, affirms that “the attendance of Jesus at a marriage festival, his contributing to the festive hilarity, more particularly

¹ *Supra*, p. 325.

² *op. cit.*, p. 34.

³ *Do.*, p. 20; but comp. with what Higgins says as to the Nazarites and Nazareth, “*Anacalypsis*,” ii. pp. 44, 239, 240.

his sanctifying the use of wine on such occasions, at once separated and set him apart from that sect with which he was most likely to be confounded.”¹ This is perfectly true, but so far from supporting the inference deduced from them, the facts are quite consistent with Jesus having in reality been an Essen, not necessarily during his whole life, but at least up to the time of the commencement of his public ministry. The fact is overlooked that, supposing the incident of the marriage feast not to be apocryphal,² its occurrence may have been made the occasion by Jesus for breaking with the sect to which he had hitherto belonged. Those who say that he was originally an Essen, do not thereby affirm that he always continued to be such, and Dean Milman himself supplies a very good reason why Jesus should thus act. He says that the religion of the Essen was altogether unfitted for aggression, and he adds that, “however apparently it might coincide with Christianity in some material points, in fact its vital system was repugnant to that of the new faith.”³ It was, no doubt, this want of vitality or aggressive power which, in great measure, led Jesus, while retaining the material points in which his teaching agreed with that of the Essenes, to break away from them. This step was, moreover, necessitated by his wider and more active sympathies, to the operation of which, rather than to the nature of his doctrinal opinions, the success of the ministry of Jesus was due, although it may have been hastened by his perception that the austerities of John the Baptist were not acceptable to the people.⁴

If the early Christians could be identified with the Therapeutæ, their connection with the Essenes would be

¹ “History of Christianity,” vol. i. pp. 142, 161.

² If apocryphal, it may have been introduced for the purpose of showing that Jesus dissociated himself from the Essenes as a sect.

³ *loc. cit.*, p. 297.

⁴ See St Matthew xi. 18.

more than probable, since the two latter sects evidently had some special relation, although its nature is somewhat doubtful. Some authors completely identify them, whilst others separate them, and consider the Essenes perfectly independent of the Therapeutæ. Uhlhorn thinks the middle course the best, and he points out that, in order to properly determine the relation between them, it is necessary to keep in view the practical direction taken by the asceticism of the former sect. This writer supposes that the same spiritual tendency and wants which gave rise in Egypt to the Jewish-Alexandrian religious philosophy, and its practical realisation among the Therapeutæ, created in Palestine the sect of the Essenes, which however distinguished itself by their practical tendency. Uhlhorn adds, that whether the impulse came direct from Egypt, and they thus emanated from a common base, or that the principles of the sect became realised in two branches of asceticism (as Dähne thinks), cannot be determined with any certainty, although it seems very probable.¹ It would seem to be more probable, however, that Palestine was the original home of the sect, in which case the Therapeutæ would, according to the above view, be Essenes modified in Egypt, instead of the reverse.² Although the Egyptian deserts appear to have been the favourite abode of ascetics, it does not follow that asceticism originated there, whatever modification the genius of the locality may have induced in it. Fuller information would probably show that the doctrines which the Essenes and Therapeutæ had in common were derived from an Eastern source, that to which Christianity was,

¹ Herzog, *op. cit.*, vol. iv., art. "Essenes."

² Jahn says, that the principal ground of difference was that the Essenes were Jews speaking Armenian, and the Therapeutæ, Greek Jews,—“Biblical Archaeology,” Upham’s trans., p. 411.

directly or indirectly, indebted for so many of its ideas. It was, doubtless, owing to a perception of a certain community of opinions having such an origin, which led Eusebius¹ to use language which seems to identify the Christians with the Therapeutæ.²

Whatever may have been the relation between Christianity and the Essenes,³ there can be no question that the former was indebted, directly or indirectly, for many of its doctrines to the ancient Persian religion. When, indeed, the faith founded or reformed by Zoroaster is considered, it is surprising how many points of contact with Christianity are revealed. The Holy Trinity is prefigured by the divine Triad of Zoroaster, Ormuzd, and Mithra, the first person of which is the Eternal Spirit, the second the Divine Father, and the third the word. Mithra, moreover, like Christ the incarnate son of God, is not only the Creator and Sustainer (subordinate however to Ormuzd) of the world, but he is the Mediator,⁴ the Saviour of fallen man, the pattern for his guidance, and his friend in need and distress. But, further, Mithra does not merely intercede for man, he offers the atoning sacrifice, the bull, which in one aspect is typical of himself, as, in the teachings of Christ's disciples, the lamb is symbolical of the founder of Christianity.⁵ Even the mysteries of the Persian

¹ Book II. ch. xvi.

² On this point see Taylor's "Diegesis" (1832), p. 64.

³ This sect appears, during the Jewish wars, to have been driven to the East, where it coalesced with the Christian churches. Herzog, *loc. cit.*

⁴ As to the connection of this idea with the Oriental Doctrine of Incarnation, and also as to the Eastern origin of the Doctrine of Incarnation through the medium of a pure virgin, see Milman's "History of Christianity," vol. i. pp. 72 *seq.*, 97 *seq.*

⁵ Probably the bull was considered as in some sense an Incarnation of Mithra, as *Apis* was an avatar of Osiris, and the Mendesian Goat probably of Khem. If the latter deity were a form of Osiris, the fact would explain Plutarch's statement that the Goat of Mendes was called *Apis*.—Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, vol. v., p. 190.

cult were not unparalleled in the Christian Church. Probably the initiatory rites of the latter more nearly resembled those used by the Essenes than the stricter ones practised in the old religions. Among the Christians, however, they were no doubt connected with the holy feast in which was really represented the death and resurrection of their divine leader—such a feast as the Essenes would seem to have held daily, with doors closed to every one but the members of their own community.¹ However this may be, after admission to the church, the convert was henceforth called the soldier of Christ, receiving his mark in baptism, and the spiritual weapons of warfare, with which he was to contend with the powers of darkness, the world, the flesh, and the devil. There is a remarkable analogy between the figures used by St Paul, in describing the warfare of the Christian soldier, and the symbols by which it was represented, and the language and rites used in the initiation of the neophyte into the mysteries of Mithra.² In this similarity of ideas,³ we have the true explanation of the joy which the Christians exhibited at the downfall of the Mithraic cult, in the fourth century. As already mentioned, the destruction of the temple of Mithra on the Capitoline Mount was hailed as the removal of the last and most powerful impediment to the final triumph of Christianity. We may almost be tempted to see in the rivalry between these two religions, a struggle between the secret Mithraism of the mysteries and the open teaching of the same faith, modified by contact with Jewish, or what is still more

¹ Josephus likens the dining-hall of the Essenes to "a certain holy temple," and he says that they met there, dressed in white garments, after purifying themselves ("Wars of the Jews," Bk. II. chap. viii. § 5.)

² See *supra*, p. 320.

³ Dean Milman points out that Jesus refers to the *ferouërs* of children being in heaven, Matt. xviii. 10.

likely, with Buddhist thought. This contact gave to Mithraism an expansion it had not hitherto had, and made it fitted to be the universal religion which it became at the hands of the founder of Christianity and his immediate disciples. In this view alone can it be said that "life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel."

The agreement in many other points between Mithraism and Christianity is curiously precise. This is so no less in moral ideas than in theological dogmas. The Avesta insists on the necessity of a threefold moral purity, that of thought, word, and deed, and the whole of the Zarathustran teaching, with the rites and ceremonial observances of the Mithraic mysteries, were directed towards the perfect attainment of that purity. An examination of Christian teaching shows that its aim was exactly the same. Absolute purity in thought, word, and deed, was declared to be necessary to the perfection of the Christian life. The whole nature—body, soul, and spirit—was required to be dedicated to God, whose absolute holiness was the standard to which man was taught to aspire. The principle which governed this doctrine was the same in both Christianity and Mithraism. The latter, founded on the philosophical ideas common to the religions of the East, treated the soul as the noblest part of man's being, and taught that the evils which it suffered, and the corruption which it exhibited were due to its connection with the body. This was the case also with Christianity, which, therefore, like other Eastern religions, supposed that the soul could regain its natural condition only by freeing itself from the influence of the material organism. The conflict which St Paul describes as going on within himself, is between "the body of this death," and "the inward man," which delights in the law of God. "With the

mind," he says, "I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."¹ Elsewhere, the apostle declares that "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."² And to those whom he is addressing, he says: "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."³ The change which is supposed to result from this operation of the Holy Spirit partakes of the nature of a new birth after the death of the carnal mind. Thus St Paul asks:—"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."⁴ This doctrine is stated most explicitly in St John's Gospel,⁵ where Christ himself is made to declare to Nicodemus, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of Christ." This rebirth is spiritual as distinguished from the material birth of the flesh: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (v. 6.) It is true that in the other gospels the notion of "regeneration" is rather assumed than directly referred to. It would appear to be taught in the saying of Jesus, "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."⁶ It is implied, moreover, in the teaching relative to the "kingdom of God." As to the meaning of this phrase there

¹ Epistle to the Romans, vii. 14 *seq.*

³ Epistle to the Romans, viii. v. 13.

⁶ Ch. iii. 3 *seq.*

² Do. viii. 5, 6.

⁴ Do. vi. 2 *seq.*

⁶ Matt. xviii. 3.

can hardly be a doubt. To the question of the Pharisee, as to when that kingdom should come, Jesus answers, "the kingdom of God is within you."¹ It was, indeed, synonymous with a spiritual change which should not only fit the soul for the kingdom of God, but also actually constitute it such. Thus only can we understand the parallel drawn between that kingdom and the grain of mustard seed, and the leaven,² or the promise that those who seek after the kingdom of God shall have provided for them the things necessary for the body.³

The "kingdom of God" as a present phenomenon was, in fact, simply the condition of *re-birth*, which, according to the teaching of St Paul, was the result of the operation of the Holy Spirit, and which rendered those subject to it fitted to be members of that kingdom. The mark of admission was baptism, which thus became, as the articles of religion of the Church of England declare, "a sign of regeneration or new birth," the change consequent on the gift of the Holy Ghost. The cases of St Paul himself, of Cornelius, and of the Corinthians baptised "unto John's baptism," are in point, although the Corinthians are said to have been baptised by St Paul before they felt the regenerating influence of the Spirit.⁴ The re-birth, moreover, puts the soul into a certain new relation towards God. Before, it was dead and a stranger to Him, but now, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."⁵ It would seem as though we have here a reference to the old idea of *the descent of souls* on which the doctrine of the new birth was founded.⁶ In the passage

¹ Luke xvii. 21.

² Do. xiii. 18 *seq.*

³ Do. xii. 31.

⁴ Acts ix. 17, *seq.*, x. 44, *seq.*, xix. 2, *seq.*

⁵ Romans viii. 14, *seq.*

⁶ It is impossible not to see the influence of this idea in St Paul's doctrine of the Resurrection (1 Cor. xv. 42, *seq.*).

of Genesis where that idea is preserved, the descending souls are called "sons of God,"¹ a title which, if not actually shown to have been given in the mysteries to those who attained to the spiritual purity necessary to enable the soul to reascend to its place of origin, is implied in the neophyte taking the name of the presiding deity, and also in the titles given to the three Father grades in which the mysteries culminated. It is true that St Paul speaks of the "spirit of adoption,"² as though to distinguish between the relation of man to God and that held by Jesus as the only begotten Son of God. This distinction was the more necessary, since Jesus was supposed to have been begotten of the Virgin Mary,³ by the Holy Ghost, who was also instrumental in the re-birth of every Christian believer. Even in relation to himself, however, there appears to be a reference to the "new birth;" as in the answer given by Jesus to those who told him that his mother and his brethren awaited him. Stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."⁴ The only relationship recognised here is the spiritual one, arising from the possession of the higher life derived from the action of the Holy Spirit, which constitutes a "regeneration" into a common brotherhood. That Jesus, or at least his biographer in the fourth Gospel, was thoroughly imbued with the doctrine of the new birth, is evident from the conversation reported as having taken place between Jesus and Nicodemus. The former

¹ See *supra*, p. 185.

² Romans viii. 15.

³ Nothing is more remarkable than the universality among the ancients of the idea of the birth of a divine being from a virgin mother. (See Mure's "Calendar and Zodiac of Ancient Egypt," p. 139 *seq.*, and Dupuis' "Origine de Tous les Cultes," Vol. I., p. 513; V. pp. 109, *seq.*, 130, *seq.*)

⁴ Matt. xii. 49.

expressed astonishment that a master in Israel did not know "these things." Jesus might well be surprised when Nicodemus suggested that for a man to be "born again," it was necessary for him "to enter the second time into his mother's womb."¹

The Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit certainly differs, in some respects, from that enunciated by Zarathustra. The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Divine Trinity instead of the first, which he should be to answer perfectly to the Persian Zervana. That was inevitable, however, when the doctrines of Mithraism came to be remoulded in the Hebrew mind. The monotheistic idea was too deeply ingrained in Jewish thought to allow the plurality of deities, exhibited in the Persian triad, to be accepted; and in resolving this triad into a trinity, the Jews would naturally give the first place to the Father-God who, as Jehovah, had been their national deity from, at least, the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy. Hence the Father and the Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity have somewhat exchanged attributes, although not so much so as to prevent the identity of the latter with Zervana, and of the former with Ormuzd, being recognised. Thus Zarathustra asks that Ormuzd would tell him his name—the name the most powerful for subduing evil, and the reply would fit the Christian Father-God rather than the Third Person in the Trinity. "My name," says Ormuzd, "is, The to-be-questioned, O pure Zarathustra; the second, the Gatherer; the third, the Spreader abroad; the fourth, Best Purity; the fifth, All good things created by Mazda which have a pure origin; the

¹ St John iii. 5 *seq.* Dean Milman remarks that "when the heathen proselyte was admitted into Judaism, he was considered to be endowed with new life." ("History of Christianity," Vol. I., p. 172).

sixth, I am the Understanding; the seventh, I am endowed with Understanding; the eighth, I am Wisdom; the ninth, I am endowed with Wisdom; the tenth, I am the Increaser; the eleventh, I am endowed with Increase; the twelfth, the Lord; the thirteenth, the most Profitable; the fourteenth, He who is without harm; the fifteenth, the Steadfast; the sixteenth, the Reckoner of service; the seventeenth, the All-observing; the eighteenth, the Healing; the nineteenth, that I am the Creator; the twentieth, that I bear the name of Mazda."¹ The title of "Creator" given to Ormuzd shows that it is not Mithra, any more than Christ, who is the real creator of the world. He is, properly speaking, says Lajard, "only the executor of the decrees and of the will of Ormuzd, his father, and the agent whose duty and care it is to combat everywhere and without intermission the agents of Ahriman, to watch over the preservation of all that has been created by Ormuzd, over the reproduction of good beings, and the destruction and non-reproduction of everything created by Ahriman."² Ormuzd is also the Supreme Judge. All the prayers in the Zend Avesta commence with an invocation to him, his name being always followed by the title of "just judge." Thus, when Mithra weighs the actions of souls after death on the bridge Tschinevad, he does so only as the agent of Ormuzd;³ as Christ himself is said to have declared that all judgment was given into his hand by the Father.

So also the attributes of Zervana, the Eternal, the first person of the Persian triad, agree well with those of the Holy Ghost of the Christian Trinity. He is the mysterious spirit who encircles all things, into whose being all created things,—and even Mithra and Ormuzd,

¹ Ormuzd-Yasht, § 6 (Spiegel, *op. cit.*, Khordah-Avesta, p. 22).

² Do., p. 554.

³ Do., p. 555.

as well as Ahriman and his infernal agents, are finally to be absorbed.¹ The idea of Zervana thus answers to that of the all-pervading Spirit which, according to early Christian teaching, proceeds from the First Person of the Trinity.² But this is not all. In the mysteries, when the last grade—that of Zervana, the Father of Fathers—is reached, the initiate attains to a spiritual condition, which finds its exact parallel in Christian experience. “Arrachée par ce dernier acte au monde matériel et sensible, aux lieux de la dualité, ramenée dont la région de la pure intelligence et des idées, rendue aux conditions de son existence première, l’unité, elle recouvre immédiatement les privilèges qu’au moment de sa chute elle avait perdus, séduite par l’attrait des formes, des couleurs, et des autres qualités de la matière : elle n’a plus rien de sensible en elle ; tout en elle est idée ou pensée et lumière. De la dualité elle est revenue à l’unité. Desormais elle peut, sans crainte d’être rejetée dans la monde créé et ténébreux, se présenter pour rentrer dans le sein de l’Eternel, c’est à dire, dans la pensée de l’Eternel, dans la grande monde. Le myste qu’elle est enfin parvenu à soumettre sans restriction à ses volontés à ses lois ; le myste qui, plongé dans cet état d’extase dont l’exaltation religieuse des peuples asiatiques nous offre encore des fréquents exemples, s’est, ainsi que son âme, anéanti en dieu.”³ This eloquent description of the mystical absorption of the soul of the initiated into the absolute existence, a condition which may be said to answer to the *Nirvâna* of the

¹ *Supra*, p. 178.

² The idea that the Third Person of the Trinity answers to the female principle, while the First Person is the male principle, is not unknown to Christian speculation. In the same way Zervana, as the circle of being, was identified with the female element. The Duke of Somerset well remarks that “the word Spirit, in its passage from Jerusalem to Rome, changed its gender more than once” (*op. cit.*, p. 58).

³ Lajard, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

Buddhist saint, would do well for an account of the spiritual ecstasy of the Christian mystic. It is, in fact, simply the condition known to theologians as *sanctification*, the attaining to perfect holiness by the action of the Holy Spirit, with which the soul is said to be wholly pervaded. This, like the final absorption into the Divine Essence sought by the ancient myst, is only the full fruition of the earlier change which the soul undergoes when it attains to the first stage of the new birth. Mr Baring-Gould has some curious remarks bearing on this subject when speaking of the religious notions of our Keltic forefathers. Among the Kelts, he says, "reception into the sacred inner circle of the illuminated was precisely analogous to the received dissenting doctrine of conversion. To it are applied by the bards, terms such as 'the second birth,' 'the renewal,' which are to this day employed by Methodists to designate the mysterious process of conversion."¹ Elsewhere, Mr Gould expresses his belief that Methodism is really only the old Druidic religion revived ;² but a wider view of the subject shows that the mystic element of the former is simply an expression of that peculiar internal illumination, which Christianity and all other developed religions would seem to have possessed in common,³ and which, no doubt, formed an important element in the ancient mysteries.

The practical subordination, then, of the Holy Ghost to the Father and the Son, which would seem to flow from the Christian dogma of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the one or both of the other members of the Trinity, is due partly to His position and partly to the

¹ "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," Second Series, p. 294.

² Do., p. 362.

³ See Vaughan's "Half Hours with the Mystics;" also Baring-Gould's "Origin and Development of Religious Belief," Part I., p. 360, *seq.*

offices assigned to Him. He proceeds from, and is sent by, the Father or the Son, on whom he is thus made dependent. It is exactly the opposite with the Persian Zervana, who is the source of all things and from whom both Ormuzd and Mithra proceed. Again, the Holy Ghost is the Comforter, and the active agent in the spiritual changes which the Christian cult supposes the soul to undergo. According to the teaching of Zoroaster, on the other hand, Ormuzd was the Enlightener, the active power in the threefold purification which the initiate has to attain consequent on the new birth; while Zervana is the Absolute principle from which all existence and power is derived, and to which all is again returned, Himself being nevertheless merely passive and receptive. Except in these and a few subsidiary points, the three persons of the Christian Trinity answer perfectly to those of the Mithraic triad, and the resemblance is seen to be all the greater when the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of Christian theology are treated as having each a separate Divine personality. Under this condition, the Christian Trinity as clearly consists of three Gods as does the Mithraic triad, a conception which was known to all the elaborated religions of antiquity.¹ It is only by sinking their separate personalities, and looking upon the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as co-existing principles forming together one Divine Being, that the monotheistic idea can be preserved. Nor need the phraseology used in relation to the Christian trinity be changed; since the terms "Father" and "Son" can rationally have reference merely to the human incarnation of its second element.

The moral aspect of Christianity already considered,

¹ As to the origin of the triad, see Lajard, "Le Culte de Mithra," p. 66. *seq.*; but compare with Inman's "Ancient Faiths embodied in Sacred Names," Vol. ii. p. 881, *seq.*

being that which presents so striking an analogy with Mithraism, has relation to the passive virtues. The condition of spiritual purity which the votaries of both religions alike are taught to attain to, is inconsistent with those actions which interfere with the rights of others, and the performance of which is, in theological phraseology, sinful. In relation to the active virtues, however, Christianity was more akin to Buddhism than to the Persian religion,¹ as known to us through the Avesta. The wonderful influence exercised by Gautama was due in great measure to the universality of his benevolent sympathies, and, although in its later developments Buddhistic belief is consistent with utter selfishness, yet its earliest adherents felt the full weight of his example and followed in his footsteps. So, also, was it with Christianity. The direction to go and preach the Gospel to all nations was in the true spirit of Jesus' teaching, and it was founded on the idea that all men are brethren and capable of becoming co-heirs of the divine kingdom. The life of Jesus was a continual declaration of this truth; and although, according to St John's gospel, his "miracles" seem to have been performed to lead men to believe that He was the Son of God,² yet it is much more probable that the benevolent actions of Jesus were simple acts of charity designed to draw men unto him. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and

¹ The relief of the faithful, which the Christians at first were especially careful about (Acts xi. 27, *seq.*), was probably not unknown to the initiated followers of Mithra. The establishment of "Community of goods" may have been the result of the first enthusiastic recognition by the Christians of the fact of universal brotherhood, but it was probably only an adoption by the new Church of a custom which Jesus and his early disciples must, if they were Essenes, have already practised, or at least been cognisant of.

² See especially Chaps. v., ix. 35, x. 38, xi. 6, xiv. 10, *seq.*

lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”¹ This was the burden of the preaching of Jesus, and this was the spirit in which he performed the acts of love and charity which will ever be associated with his name. There was no respect of persons with him, and in the parable of the man fallen among thieves,² he shows that the only test of duty in the performance of benevolent actions is the necessity of others, be they our neighbours or strangers, our friends or enemies.

The paramount duty of relieving distress for its own sake, is still more clearly enunciated in the striking scene where Christ identifies the poor and suffering with himself, awarding reward and punishment according to the conduct of men in this life towards the hungry and thirsty, to the stranger and the naked, to the sick and the imprisoned.³ This is a remarkable passage in the life of Jesus, as enforcing ideas which have almost been forgotten, through the influence of the theological teaching of the Church, founded more especially on certain passages of the Gospel of St John. The great aim of these was undoubtedly to insist on the essential divinity of Jesus, but the tendency thenceforth was to substitute dogmatic belief in the place of holiness of life as the criterion of “brotherhood.” The reference made by Jesus to the places of future reward and punishment as sanctions to his teaching, shows that he was not wholly freed from the old ideas, according to which a life of charity and purity was valued as a means of securing personal salvation, instead of for its own sake. It was reserved for his followers, however, to make the escape from hell the chief consideration, and thus to reduce Christianity to the selfish level of earlier religions. That this was not the intention of its founder is evident

¹ Matt. xi. 28, 29.

² Luke x. 29, *seq.*

³ Matt. xxv. 31, *seq.*

from the fact that the motive to benevolent action which he chiefly insisted on was of a totally different nature : "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. . . . For if you love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them."¹ This contains the great principle of his doctrine, elsewhere embodied in the simple command "love one another, as I have loved you."² When the Pharisees tempted Jesus, asking him which was the great commandment in the law, he answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."³ In the teaching of Jesus the motive, not only to the religious life, but also to benevolent action, is thus founded on the principle of *love*. It is this fact which distinguishes Christianity from all earlier religions. Addressing itself to the emotional part of man's nature, it must meet with a response in most minds, and it was thus better fitted to become an universal religion than either Buddhism or Mithraism. The author of "Ecce Homo" has finely termed the passion which was touched in the human soul, and thus made use of by Jesus as the great agent in the establishment of the new faith, "the enthusiasm of Humanity." No phrase could more fitly express the mental condition which was sought to be produced, and which actually operated as the vitalising principle of Christianity. No doubt St John, or the author of the Gospel ascribed to him, had more than this object in view when he dwelt upon the love of Jesus

¹ Luke vi. 27, *seq.*

² St John's Gospel, xv. 12.

³ Matt. xxii. 34, *seq.*

to man. The love of man for man was subsidiary to, although it would necessarily flow from, the love of man for Jesus, and this was sought to be aroused by elevating his nature, thus making his sacrifice for man so much the greater. The author of "Ecce Homo" truly says, "As love provokes love, many have found it possible to conceive for Christ an attachment the closeness of which no words can describe, a veneration so possessing and absorbing the man within him, that they have said, 'I live no more, but Christ lives within me.' Now such a feeling carries with it of necessity the feeling of love for all human beings. It matters no longer what quality men may exhibit, amiable or unamiable; as the brothers of Christ, as belonging to his sacred and consecrated kind, as the objects of his love in life and death, they must be dear to all to whom he is dear."¹

Christianity at its earliest inception was, then, essentially a *religion of humanity*, founded on the law of universal love. It was addressed almost wholly to the emotional part of man's nature, thus differing widely from Mithraism, which may be said to have been rather intellectual than emotional. Zarathustra proclaimed the absolute purity of Ormuzd, and that no man could hope to attain to the regions of bliss where Ormuzd dwelt unless he was equally pure. The performance of acts of holiness is here placed first, as that which will lead to communion with the Deity. On the other hand, although Christianity taught the necessity of purity of life, yet it put love first, declaring that all the rest would follow. "Love God and love thy neighbour as thyself," was the brief summary of the whole law as expounded by Jesus. It is evident that the passion here appealed to is one and the same, although differing in its objects,

¹ P. 157 (Ed. 1867).

which, however, on the assumption of the divinity of Jesus, become identified in him as God-Man. Even granting the truth of the assumption, the position that Christianity is essentially a religion of humanity is not weakened. Whether the feeling of love which man entertains towards God, *i.e.*, towards Jesus, viewed as God, would have been possible, if God were not thought to have been incarnated in human flesh, is open to question. There is no evidence that, until the establishment of Christianity, the founder of any religion was ever supposed by any of his immediate followers to have been actually divine. It is true that most of the civilized peoples of antiquity either had legends of the existence of a race of Gods on earth, or traced the ancestry of their rulers to a divine source. Some of them, indeed, as the Hindus, in the case of Vishnu more especially, speak of divine incarnations, but this only long after the death of the person supposed to be the avatar of the God, if the existence of such a person was not, indeed, purely mythical. Gautama himself was thus declared to be an avatar of Vishnu, and he is undoubtedly looked upon by some Buddhist sects as a divinity. But the idea of the divinity of Gautama was formed long after his death, and there is not the slightest evidence that he ever claimed such a character for himself. It may be that the Egyptians believed that Osiris was actually born among them in the flesh, but they did not suppose that this god appeared to them in human form. Even the worshippers of Ormuzd and Mithra never went so far as this. They certainly represented the latter as a noble youth, offering the sacrificial bull, which we may suppose was intended to represent himself, even as Jesus was said to have offered himself for the sins of the world. The human form appears, however, to have been given to Mithra merely as the highest under which he could be repre-

sented to his followers, and it was required, indeed, by the belief that the priests of the deity were in some sense his incarnations. It is evident how much the feeling of reverence would be increased by intercourse with the human representatives of the God, if these revealed in their characters the attributes ascribed to the God himself. And thus it would be if Jesus was looked upon by his followers to be God incarnate. By his sympathy and teaching he aroused into passionate activity the emotion of love, which was at first concentrated not on God so much as on himself. Meditating on his life and death, the early Christians naturally thought that a man who could so live and die, and who could thus stir up within them the divine passion, must be himself divine, the Son of God in deed and in truth. It required only the application, whether by St Paul or St John, of the ideas embodied in Mithraism to the phenomena presented by the history of Jesus, to see in him the divinely-begotten Son of the heavenly Father, who was incarnate that he might, by the offering up of himself as an acceptable sacrifice, take away the sins of the world. The love at first generated towards the man Jesus, was perpetuated towards him as the Son of God; and it is this love, centred in the person of the divine Christ, which is still the strength of Christianity.

As a religion of humanity, it must be affirmed, nevertheless, that, while recognising the claims of God to love and reverence, primitive Christianity was rather a moral system than a religious one. Essentially "the law of love," its aim was to arouse into vital activity that part of man's moral nature which had hitherto remained almost in abeyance. The author of "Ecce Homo" expresses this truth, when he says "the Christian reformation may indeed be summed up in this—humanity changed from a restraint to a motive." He adds, "we

shall be prepared, therefore, to find that while earlier moralities had dealt chiefly in prohibitions, Christianity deals in positive commands."¹ The former statement in this sentence is true in relation to the Mosaic religion, but it is not true so far as Buddhism, or even Mithraism, is concerned. Gautama strongly insisted on the importance of the active virtues, on the necessity of cultivating the benevolent side of the moral nature. Indeed, Buddhism may be said to agree with early Christianity in the moral precept, differing only in the motive for its observance. The command "do good to all men," belongs as much to one system as to the other, but while, according to the former, obedience to the injunction is urged on the ground that it will aid in the obtaining of salvation, according to the latter it is insisted on because it is the necessary fruit of the Christian character. That which to the Buddhist is expedient becomes to the Christian a duty, springing from the authority of the law of love. No doubt, the latter betokens a considerable advance in the development of the altruistic side of the moral nature, but it springs from the same source as the former. The original motives of the two faiths differed, indeed, so little, that the teaching of Gautama might well have been the source of the altruistic sentiments which actuated the conduct of Jesus. The "salvation" of man was the aim to which the apostle of Buddhism, as well as the founder of Christianity, devoted his life, attracted by pity for the sufferings of poor humanity. Moreover there is so much

¹ P. 175. Dean Milman indeed says, that the distinctive characteristic of Christian morals is, that "it is no *system* of positive enactments; it is the establishment of certain principles, the enforcement of certain dispositions, the cultivation of a certain temper of mind." ("History of Christianity," vol. i., p. 206). It is evident, however, that there is no real contradiction here to the statement in the text.

similarity between the legends which have gathered round the birth and early life of Jesus, to those which are associated with Gautama,¹ that it is almost impossible to doubt that the early Christians had by some means come in contact with Buddhist missionaries, and been affected by their teaching. Buddhism having originated at least six centuries before Christianity, must be supposed to have given its ideas to the later faith rather than the reverse. On the other hand, Christianity, by the fact of its later origin, can hardly fail to have improved on the earlier system to which it was indebted. And it no doubt was so. The subjective value of an action depends more on the motive which actuates it than on its result, and Christianity provided the principle which was to give to Buddhist practice the moral tone which it required. The new element is that which the more modern system possesses in common with, if it did not obtain it from, Mithraism, and the addition to which of the altruistic element must result in a type of morality far in advance of any which had preceded it.

We thus see that Christianity takes a very advanced position as a system of morals. It exhibits the stage of moral development which was sure to be reached, so soon as it was perceived not only that it was a duty to abstain from those injuries of one's fellows which are the fruits of the non-exercise of the passive virtues, but that there were certain actions beneficial to others, the performance of which was required as a duty towards self. When once the idea was enounced that the performance of benevolent actions would be attended with a spiritual result beneficial to the agent, or would be pleasing to the deity, and that those who thus acted would be

¹ One of the most remarkable of these legends has been translated by Dr Muir into English verse. See Trübner's "Literary Record," Feb. 28, 1871, p. 95.

rewarded in the future life, there would be an ever increasing tendency to look upon the practice of benevolence as a duty, the neglect of which would be visited with future punishment. Much, of course, depends on the motive by which such action is governed. Where, as with Buddhism, the motive is almost purely selfish, the idea of moral obligation in relation to the active virtues would necessarily be defective. But where it is founded in love, the case is far different. The practice of benevolence would meet with a response in the mind itself, and the feeling from which it springs would increase in strength from generation to generation, until the observance of the active virtues came to be regarded as the duty of every man, just as that of the passive virtues was so regarded long before the former existed in human experience. Thus it is with Christianity, which was not possible until the age in which it appeared, and which was possible then only because the mind of man had been prepared for it by the gradual moral progress which has been traced in the preceding pages. Then it was that the moral maxims of earlier systems were replaced by the living precepts of Christianity, which by their very utterance seem to awaken in the mind the feeling necessary for their observance. "He that giveth," saith St. Paul, "let him do it with simplicity, he that ruleth with diligence, he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer. Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and

curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink ; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”¹

Christianity being at first rather a moral than a religious system, the theological element was among its earliest followers subsidiary to that of practical morality. But there soon showed itself a tendency to develop out of the simple moral teachings of Jesus a system of theological dogma, which was destined in future ages to almost destroy Christianity itself. It is true that the “dogmatism” of the apostles was founded on a passionate love for its object. “Believe in Jesus because he showed his love by dying for you,” was the teaching of the Apostolic Age. The author of the gospel of St. John sought further to measure the love of Jesus by his divinity,² thus introducing a principle which led in later ages to the doctrine that belief in Jesus was required, not on account of his love, but of his nature as God. This resulted in a complete misapprehension of the object and value of the miraculous acts ascribed to Jesus. From being proofs of his love, they became evidence of his divinity, a notion which in its turn affected other portions of Christian teaching. In the Greek and Romish Churches the manhood of Jesus is lost sight of in his Godhead; while Mary and the Saints

¹ Romans xii., *seq.*

² Compare various passages referring to the pre-existence of Jesus as the Divine Word, S. John, i. 1, *seq.*; vi. 32, *seq.*; x. 36; xvii.

have almost entirely taken his place as the sympathizer with human sorrows, and become the mediators between God and man. These results were doubtless, under the conditions of thought to which the early Christian Church was subjected, inevitable so soon as the idea was formed that Jesus was more than man. It is not difficult to trace the origin of this notion, which shows how much Christianity was indebted to earlier moral systems for its ideas. In a preceding chapter it has been shown that according to ancient belief the souls of men exist in a pure spiritual form before they become united to material bodies.¹ There was nothing, therefore, unique in the notion that Jesus had existed before the foundation of the world, this being true, according to oriental philosophy, of every man; although, when the source of that idea was forgotten, the pre-existence of Jesus was considered one of the chief proofs of his divine nature. This, however, does not appear to be referred to in the earlier gospels, which are in fact almost wanting in actual assertion of the divinity of Jesus. He certainly claimed to have a special relationship to God, but there can be little doubt that this idea was only gradually developed, and that it had an analogous origin to the notion of his pre-existence. The doctrine of *the descent and ascent of souls* was intimately connected with that of the *second birth*, a spiritual condition the attainment to which was supposed to place its subject in a special relation to the deity.

The Christians adopted these ideas, and with them every one who was thought to have received the Holy Spirit—that is undergone spiritual regeneration—became a Son of God, a title which constituted them (in Scripture phraseology), “co-heirs with Christ.”² That

¹ *Supra*, p. 184, *seq.*

² Romans viii. 14, *seq.*

Jesus was himself cognizant of the old ideas on which this notion was founded, is evident from his saying to his disciples "call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven."¹ Even before the gift of the Holy Spirit, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, the followers of Christ were thus considered by him as standing in the relation of children to God. When, therefore, Jesus addresses God as his Father, and describes himself as the Son of God, we must suppose, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that this relationship had the same origin in his case as in that of his disciples. Having attained to the condition of the "new birth"² during his noviciate, just as Gautama may be said to have acquired it when he reached the stage of Buddhahood, he thus became a Son of God, and rightly, according to the ideas he had received, addressed God as his Father. It is noticeable, however, that the title ordinarily used by Jesus was "Son of Man," a title which expresses the marvellous depth of the "enthusiasm of humanity" which had been developed in his breast during the years of his ascetic life. Jesus was essentially the Son of Man, but entertaining, as it cannot reasonably be doubted that he did, the ideas of the pre-existence of the soul, and of the new-birth, with its corollary, the formation of a special relation between the re-born one and the deity—that of Father and Son—there is no wonder that when the importance of his mission broke in upon him, Jesus began to teach that he was the Son of God in a more intimate manner than other men.³ When once formed, the idea would become associated in the mind of Jesus with that of the Messiah, the Anointed One, who

¹ Matt. xxiii. 9.

² On this subject see further, *supra*, p. 221.

³ The confession of the devils whom Jesus cast out (see Matthew's Gospel, ch. viii., ver. 28, *seq.*), would be considered by those who received it decisive proof of the Sonship.

was undoubtedly expected by the Jews, and apparently also by the Eastern world generally at that epoch.¹ These ideas would re-act on each other ; since, if Jesus was the Messiah, he must be pre-eminently the Son of God ; and if he stood in a nearer relation to the Heavenly Father than all other men, he must surely be the Messiah, and he would naturally be credited with all the actions which it was supposed would evidence his mission. The Christian idea of the Messiah was in reality very different from that formed by the Jews of the time of Jesus, who looked for a temporal deliverer rather than a spiritual being. The notion itself was, however, no doubt originally derived from a foreign source, one to which that of a divine incarnation was by no means strange, being, in fact, that to which Christianity was indebted for so many of its ideas.

In the Mithraic, or rather oriental, notion of a sacrifice made for the sins of the material life, we have, no doubt, the source of those Christian dogmas which deal with the relation of man towards God, as distinguished from those which concern the personal nature of Jesus. Of the former Jesus seems to have been as little conscious as of the latter. That man was in a certain relation of sin towards God he undoubtedly believed. Sin, according to the notions entertained by all oriental peoples, was a condition of impurity, and as this condition was a consequence of association of the soul with the body, all men were considered to be sinful (*i.e.* impure) until they had attained to the second birth, which required the offering up, as a sacrifice, of the material desires. This was evidently the view held by Jesus, but that he did not think that sin required an atoning sacrifice, one into the conception of which the idea of punish-

¹ See Milman's "History of Christianity," vol. i. p. 56, *seq.*

ment, vicarious or otherwise, entered, is shown by his own action in relation to it. It has been said that Jesus must have been divine because he forgave sins. The Jews who doubted his mission certainly accused him of blasphemy, when he said to the man sick of the palsy, "thy sins be forgiven thee;"¹ since God alone was thought to have power to forgive sins. But the Jews were clearly wrong, and Jesus justly reproached them by saying, "whether is it easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise and walk?" We see that these expressions were practically equivalent, which is understood when it is considered that anciently diseases, especially congenital ones, were looked upon as punishments for sin.² It follows that if the disease is cured the sin is forgiven, and hence Jesus said, "that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The forgiveness of sins is thus connected with the curing of diseases, and the former can supply no further evidence of the divinity of Jesus than the latter. Nothing can be gained by reference to those cases, such as that of Mary Magdalene and the woman taken in adultery, where there is a statement of forgiveness of sin without the performance of such a cure; since, so far as such forgiveness implies the divinity of Jesus, its assertion throws doubt on the authenticity of the incidents with which it is associated. But the most important point to consider is that the profession to forgive sins shows that Jesus did not hold those ideas as to the necessity of an atoning sacrifice which afterwards became prevalent among his

¹ Matt. ix. 2, *seq.*

² See the case of the man born blind from his birth (Gospel of St. John ix. 2). As to the Jewish notion of a connection between disease and sin, see Milman's "History of Christianity," vol. i., pp. 103, *note*, 202.

followers. If, indeed, the declaration be true that the justice of God requires that sin shall be atoned for by the death of a victim, Jesus clearly could not forgive sins previous to, or in default of, such a sacrifice, even assuming that he was God, and much less if he were only man. His teaching, however, is quite inconsistent with the truth of that declaration, as are his references to the power of faith as an element in the wonderful works he performed. To the woman who was a sinner Jesus said, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace,"¹ and it was to the subjective condition of the individual, and not to any fancied satisfaction for broken law, that reference was made by Jesus when he was about to heal the sick or to comfort the broken-hearted. The conclusion to be deduced from this fact is required also by the appeals made by Jesus to the love or mercy of God. The only requirement supposed in the parable of the prodigal son is repentance, and the same spirit is seen in the parables of the lost piece of silver and the lost sheep, where it is said, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," and that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."² Here simple trust in the mercy of God is supposed. So, also, the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," was accepted,³ without any such sacrifice being required as that which was introduced by later Christian teaching, partly through the influence of Mithraic ideas and partly as a consequence of the judaizing tendency of the early disciples.

It cannot be denied that Jesus sought to enforce his ideas by the sanction of a future state of reward or punishment. His reference to the day of judgment, when those who have done good shall inherit the king-

¹ Luke vii. 50.

² See Luke xv. 2, *seq.*

³ Do., xviii. 10, *seq.*

dom of God, and those who have done evil shall be banished to the place of everlasting fire,¹ shows that, like the founders of most other religious systems, he sought in the Divine will the origin of his doctrines.² But the relation between God and man, which the idea of a future judgment as taught by Jesus supposes, is very different from that which the sanction has been used to enforce. "Believe that God requires a satisfaction for sin, and that such a satisfaction has been made by Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, or you shall be damned," is a totally different proposition from "Be merciful or you shall find no mercy." The difference accounts for the infrequency of Jesus' appeal to the sanction, as compared with the constant use of it made by the preachers of later dogmatic Christianity. Whatever response the denunciation of future punishment may meet with in the heart of man, it has but little moral efficacy, while the simple teaching of Jesus awoke sympathies which, by their own native force, were amply sufficient in many cases to lead to obedience to the command. Feeling is more easily aroused, and has more intensity for the time, at least, than belief, especially when this is founded on such a temporary feeling as fear of an event for the happening of which there is no actual guarantee. It was because primitive Christianity was essentially emotional rather than intellectual that it met with so wonderful a success.

The comparatively slight reference made by Jesus to the acts condemned by the Mosaic law is in keeping with the general character of his teaching. Love to God and man was the fulfilling of the law, and it was necessary, therefore, only to enforce the paramount importance of that passion. Even when the passive duties were mentioned, the sinful act itself was not condemned

¹ Matt. xxv. 31, *seq.*

² See Matt. vii. 21.

so much as the condition of mind which leads to it. Jesus went at once to the centre, and insisted not merely on purity of life, which was analogous to the fruit of the tree, but on purity of thought, the condition on which the goodness of the fruit depends. Hence the great value set by Jesus on *humility* as a Christian virtue. In likening the regenerated man to the child, it would seem as though Jesus considered that humility¹ was the truest sign of the new birth. In the washing of his disciples' feet, Jesus himself gave a practical lesson in that virtue, agreeing perfectly with the teaching of the sermon on the mount. Here, characteristically enough, the first place is given to humility and to those virtues with which it is most intimately connected. Thus Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."² Jesus rightly saw that the only way to reform the life was to regenerate the soul; for, as he said, "those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."³

The appeal to the emotional element of man's nature, which occupies so prominent a place in Jesus' teaching, was attended at a later period with results of a very deplorable nature. The enthusiasm of humanity was

¹ Matt. xviii. 4. The mildness which distinguishes the followers of Buddha often approaches real humility. See *supra*, p. 282.

² Matt. v. 3, *seq.*

³ Matt. xv. 18, 19.

kindled, and the love of which it is a phase showed itself for a time in a purity of life and an activity of benevolence which might well call forth the admiration even of persecuting enemies. The emotional element alone, however, forms a very unstable foundation for a life of holiness,¹ and hence, as the fire of enthusiasm began to wane, corrupt practices² showed themselves among the Christians to such an extent that, when Christianity finally triumphed in the Roman empire, it would seem to have been in a condition of moral decadence.³ Mr Lecky remarks that "the two centuries after Constantine are uniformly represented by the Fathers as a period of general and scandalous vice."⁴ This result was the necessary consequence of the predominance given to the emotional element. The love to God and man, which centred in the passion for Jesus, the God-man, required by primitive Christianity, however pure and spiritual, differs nothing in kind from the carnal affection which the church so long condemned, if not as sinful, yet as a sign of spiritual weakness and material impurity. When, therefore, the elevating influence of the first enthusiasm was lost, the mental excitement would naturally show itself in the lower form of emotion, and the result would be seen in a general depravity of manners, which would, however, be quite consistent with the practice of the active virtues of benevolence constituting the other side of the Christian character. Yet, although primitive Christian teaching had that result, not only was it absolutely necessary for the success of Christianity itself, but it

¹ See "Ecce Homo," p. 141.

² St Paul makes various allusions to these. See also the denunciations of the Eastern Churches. Rev. ii., iii.

³ On this point see "Milman's History of Christ.," vol. iii., pp. 54, 528.

⁴ "History of European Morals," vol. ii., p. 17.

was certain ultimately to produce, from a more permanent source, the fruits of holiness and benevolence which sprang at first from the new-born enthusiasm of humanity. The gradual corruption of manners in the early Christian church was accompanied by great intellectual activity in relation to the dogmas of the faith, the bitter rivalries attending which must, doubtless, be in great measure ascribed to the moral deficiencies of those engaged in them. When that activity was brought to bear on the question of morals, as it was sure to be so soon as certain theological questions were disposed of, something more than an appeal to the principle of love was seen to be required to ensure a performance of the duties of the Christian life. It was long, however, before the proper answer to the question thus raised could be arrived at, although the teaching of Jesus and St Paul contained the germ of the truth, could it be discovered. The condition of the Christian mind was such that it could not recognise the true basis of morality. Jesus himself had supported his commands by reference to the will of the Father in heaven, although the punishment he proclaimed for those who hearkened not to his words was not for disobedience to the will of God, but for evil-doing. There is not much wonder, therefore, that when Christian moralists recognised the fact that the enthusiasm springing from the activity of the emotions was not sufficient to ensure a moral life, and that an intellectual basis for morality was necessary, they had recourse to the sanction derived from the "will of God." During the ages of unreasoning faith this remained sufficient, and reference to the divine displeasure for disobedience ensured a compliance to some extent with the commands of Christian morality. The general condition of Christendom, however, was deplorable. There might be occasional outbursts of religious zeal against

the infidel, such as the Mohammedans in their turn have displayed, but the moral tone of Christian society on the whole was much akin to that which modern Buddhists exhibit. The object of all religious observance was to escape the torments of hell or of purgatory, and the performance of moral duty became a wholly secondary concern. The Christian hell took the place of the Buddhist metempsychosis, and under the influence of ideas connected with it, Christianity bid fair to develop into a system as intensely selfish as the religion of Gautama has become. But fortunately for the interests of morality, the development of modern thought which led to the Reformation resulted in the sufficiency of the divine sanction as a foundation for morals being called in question. The will of God could never be a guarantee for the commission of evil or falsehood, and reason declared that God could only will that which was right and true. At this point a further step was inevitable. That which is right, so soon as it is ascertained, is morally binding on the human conscience whether it is actually willed by God or not. It required little further thought to rouse the conviction that the principles of morality are quite independent of any divine or religious sanction, and that they must be discovered simply by reference to the experiences of humanity, and the laws which govern its moral development.

Although Jesus did sometimes refer to the will of God, yet the truth that morality derives its sanction from human nature itself is clearly deducible from his teaching. The belief in the "new birth" which occupies there so important a position, is quite consistent with that truth. That the regenerated soul was in a certain close communion with the Divine Spirit was of course supposed, but there is nothing to show that the spiritual gift bestowed on those who were the "children

of God" was more than the completion of the inward work, operating as an aid to a life of holiness, but not supplying the principles of it. In fact, Jesus throughout the whole of his ministry, refers to the Holy Spirit only incidentally. His teaching is founded on the assumption that man is naturally capable of that passion, which was not only to produce in them a life of holiness, but also to overflow towards others as a tender compassionate love. Although the sinfulness of man is implied, nothing supernatural is supposed in the recovery from such a condition; and from the parable of the lost sheep, it would seem indeed that Jesus thought that there might be some persons who did not need repentance.¹

The supernatural in the teaching of Jesus was *consequent* on the regeneration he endeavoured to lead men to seek after, and not antecedent to it. The gift of the Holy Spirit is to the regenerate, and in a higher sense it was the kingdom of God which those who were reborn were said to have within them. So also those who refused to receive him—that is, to listen to his warnings and to repent—were to undergo punishment in the world to come. These ideas, with the belief in the impurity of the material life which can also be traced in his teaching, were due to the influence of the Oriental religious philosophy with which the mind of Jesus, no less than that of his disciples, was imbued. If he had been governed by these alone, he might have been a zealous Essen, but happily his was no ordinary mind. Stirred to its utmost depths by a strange emotion, which, by meditation on the sorrows of mankind, became a veritable "enthusiasm of humanity," consecrated by a perception of the high destiny of man as possessing the stamp of divinity, it found the simple but mighty truth that love

¹ See Luke xv. 7.

is morally omnipotent. This was the secret of the success which attended the teaching of Jesus, confirmed as it was by the loving actions of his life.

Even these, however, could not bear perfect fruit until they were freed from the influence of certain notions associated with early Christian doctrine. Especially was this the case with the old belief in the impurity of matter. This belief—softened, however, in the mind of Jesus by its association with sorrow for the ills of poor human kind, springing, as he supposed, from that impurity—showed its influence in the opinions entertained by the early Christians on the subject of marriage. In the face of Hebrew teaching, the actual sinfulness of marriage could hardly be asserted; and, indeed, the Jewish laxity was condemned by Jesus, who insisted on the unlawfulness of divorce.¹ This is quite consistent, however, with the idea that marriage is only a state of *relative* impurity. Such would appear to be the meaning of the statement that “in the resurrection” there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage.² The reference to the condition of the angels is confirmatory of that idea, since it evidently refers to the ancient doctrine of *the descent and ascent of souls*, according to which the souls of men existed in heaven as pure spirits before they were drawn to earth by the fatal attractions of matter. Marriage was the union of bodies rather than of souls, whence the saying that man and wife are but one flesh.³ Hence arose the opinion held by various Oriental sects that marriage is impure. Doubtless, the opinion of Jesus on this subject was that marriage was allowable, and, when once entered into, indissoluble, but that a state of virginity was preferable, as being one of greater moral purity. Such seems to be implied in the curious saying of Jesus to those who objected to his doctrine of adul-

¹ Mark x. 2, *seq.*

² Matt. xxii. 30.

³ Gen. ii. 24; Mark x. 8.

tery:—"There are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."¹ Jesus showed, in his opinion on the subject of marriage, that his mind was not so deeply imbued with the ideas derived from the Oriental philosophy as were the minds of some of his followers, or, rather, that those ideas were subjected to the master passion of his soul, the "enthusiasm of humanity." It was reserved for his biographers to apply that philosophy to the phenomena of his own birth, and to allow its influence so to sway their judgment—to say the least—as to lead them to claim for him an immaculate conception. They who looked upon matter as impure, and the carnal life sinful, could hardly teach that the founder of their religion owed his human nature to an act of ordinary generation. Hence, in accordance with Eastern teaching, the mother of Jesus was said to have been a virgin, and the Holy Ghost, operating like the fecundating wind of ancient philosophy,² was declared to have begotten him, although elsewhere God the Father stands towards him in the paternal relation. It may be added here, however, that the notion of a spiritual union with God, which was very prominent in the teaching of the Hebrew prophets, evidently affected the opinions of Jesus and his disciples in relation to marriage. The idolatrous Hebrews were stigmatised as whoremongers and adulterers; and, on the other hand, the whoremonger is called by the Christian apostle an idolator.³ The spiritual marriage of the believer with God is referred to also in the parallel drawn by St Paul between the union of the man and the woman as one flesh, and

¹ Matt. xix. 12.² *Supra*, p. 326.³ Ephes. v. 5.

that of the soul with God as one spirit.¹ The same idea is distinctly expressed in the statement that the Church is the bride of Christ ;² and the parable of the marriage of the king's son³ clearly had reference to the same notion, the wedding garment, which one of the guests wanted, being the white robe of the Apocalypse, given to the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were sealed, and who were virgins, "not defiled with women."⁴

Notwithstanding the dependence of Christianity on the religions that preceded it, there is no doubt that, as a system of morality—that in which the practical value of all religions consists—it was in advance of either Buddhism or Mazdaism. It, indeed, resumed the best features of both of these systems—insisting, with one, on the essential importance of personal holiness, and, with the other, on the absolute necessity of benevolence. Moreover, Christianity did not, like Buddhism, place charity on the basis of expediency. It declared that the exercise of the active virtues was a duty which every one owed to his fellows ; but it went even further than this. The duty which one man owes to another supposes the existence of a correlative right in himself. Christianity taught, however, that the true charity from which spring the fruits of benevolence is the greatest of all gifts—the highest virtue. "Though I speak," says St Paul, "with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17.

³ Matt. xxii. 1, *seq.*

² See Rev. xix. 7, *seq.*

⁴ Rev. vii. 13, *seq.*; xiv. 3, *seq.*

Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth. . . . And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.”¹ The apostle here, as though by a sudden burst of inspiration, declares the special characteristics of Christian teaching—the obligation of love to others as the highest duty which man owes to his own being. This it is which has made Christianity a great fact, notwithstanding the cloud of myth and error which has centred around the person of its founder, and the action of those who have sought to pervert it from a system of morals and religion into one of dogmatic theology, and, in so doing, have almost quenched the spirit of “charity” which gave it vitality.

¹ 1 Cor. xiii.

CHAPTER VIII.

POSITIVISM.

JUDGING from what was said in the preceding chapter, Christianity can hardly be called a new system of either religion or morality. It was the supplement to, or rather the product of, the fusion of earlier systems, and the addition or solvent which it introduced was the "enthusiasm of humanity," or the principle of love, which distinguished it from all prior religions. It is not likely, however, that this new principle was first introduced by the founder of Christianity. It was more probably due to the influence of Greek philosophic teaching, which before the advent of Jesus had recognised the brotherhood of the human race, and which, by the mouth of Aristotle, had declared that social order is based on love rather than on justice.¹ This idea might well have been derived by the founders of Christianity from the great Greek philosopher, although at their hands it received fresh development. The conduct of man to his fellows became more humane, and governed by practical sympathy rather than by the maxims of philosophy. Such a change was, however, attended by a serious danger. The absence of a rational basis for the practice of the other virtues rendered this strictly empirical. Moreover, Christian morality being almost purely emotional in its origin, had a tendency to become very unequal in its action, and to suffer in tone with the decay of religious feeling. This was accompanied by

¹ *Supra*, p. 124.

an active display of theological speculation resulting in the establishment of Christianity as a system of belief rather than a system of moral conduct. The teachings of the founder of their religion seem to have been almost forgotten by the Christians of that era.¹ They were, however, taught to reflect, and the way was prepared for a morality of a higher, because more rational type than that which had disappeared. During the supremacy of Sacerdotalism and Scholasticism, "conduct" occupied a wholly secondary place as compared with "religion," but there was a gradual quickening of the moral consciousness, which betrayed its activity from time to time in a series of agitations which culminated in the Great Reformation. This movement, although directed finally against religious, or rather theological, abuses, originated in a protest against immorality, and if the discussion raised by Luther on the subject of indulgences had ended, as it at one time appeared likely to do, the Reformation might have been still further delayed. It would not have been for long, however, as the general mind was ripe for one of those great changes which mark a permanent advance in the condition of the human race. The age of reason, as distinguished from that of authority on the one hand and emotionalism on the other, was to be inaugurated, and Luther was its apostle. The movement which resulted in the Reformation could not, however, by its very nature, be final. Based as it was on Revelation, the application of reason to the phenomena of religion and morality was far from being free, and the result was still somewhat empirical. It still remained to apply the principles of reason to those phenomena so as not only to establish the true relation between religion and morality, but also to show their real position as organic

¹ *Supra*, p. 96.

products of the human mind. It was reserved for the profound thinker, who, twenty years ago, gave to the world the *Politique Positive*, to give the logical completion to the work commenced at the Reformation, and we propose to devote the present chapter to an examination of Positivism.

The work just mentioned is the necessary supplement to the *Philosophie Positive*, and by it M. Auguste Comte sought, not to form a system of sociology merely, but to found a religion which should take the place of all previous cults as a real "religion of humanity." How far a system which excludes God from its formularies is entitled to be classed as a religion will soon be considered. For the present it must suffice to cite the testimony of its author as to its possession of the elements necessary to constitute it such. M. Comte says: "Soit pour régler, soit pour rallier, toute religion doit subordonner l'ensemble de notre existence à une puissance extérieure. Elle doit donc apprécier d'abord ce maître suprême, afin de déterminer ensuite la conduite qu'il prescrit et la vénération qu'il comporte. Ainsi, le régime suppose le dogme, et le culte résulte de tous deux, pour consolider nos croyances et nos devoirs par leur liaison continue avec les affections qui nous dominent. Cette marche naturelle prévalut toujours, même quand la religion se rattachait à des êtres purement fictifs, dont les premières notions furent spontanées. A plus forte raison, convient-elle à la religion finale, relative à une existence profondément réelle, mais très-compliquée et longtemps inappréciable. Si donc la *théocratie* et la *théolatrie* reposèrent sur la *théologie*, la *sociologie* constitue certainement la base systématique de la *sociocratie* et de la *sociolatrie*."¹ In the new religion of humanity sociology takes the place of theology, but

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. i., p. 403.

the emotional element which constitutes the chief religious basis of both is undoubtedly the same. With Auguste Comte not only is affection the source of human unity, but it dominates and co-ordinates all animated existence.¹ The affection which expresses itself in the religion of humanity is thus something more than mere individual attachment. It is an universal love, such as that which the founder of Christianity enforced, and which Gautama showed forth in his life: the "supreme term of affective progression" which, says Comte, "est bientôt apprécié comme notre meilleure ressource pour améliorer nos destinées, avant que l'on sente assez son aptitude, plus pure et plus directe, à constituer, par son seul exercice, notre principal bonheur."²

We thus see that the system of Comte does not essentially differ from earlier systems in that which constitutes the subjective side of religion. The difference between them must therefore be objective, a fact expressed in the statement that sociology takes the place of theology for the religious government of humanity.³ What then is the object of the religious passion which Positivism substitutes for the supernatural deity of the old faiths? In title it differs little, if at all, from that which it replaces. The Grand-Etre is in reality, however, totally distinct from the Supreme Being of Christian Theism. This is shown by the comparison of them which Auguste Comte makes when he says that the latter "fut toujours simple et absolu, surtout depuis l'établissement de l'unité théologique. Au contraire, le véritable Etre Suprême est, par sa nature, relatif et composé. De là résultent nécessairement l'omnipotence de l'un et l'intime dépendance de l'autre, sources respectives des destinées, provisoire ou définitive,

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. i., p. 686, seq., 633, 728.

² *Do.*, pp. 702, 419.

³ *Do.*, p. 448.

propres aux deux systèmes religieux.”¹ The fundamental distinction between the new and the old Supreme Being becomes still more evident, however, when the character of the relativity of the former is understood. M. Comte says, “outre ses lois propres, le vrai Grand-Etre subit, en effet, l’empire nécessaire des lois communes à toutes les existences connues, mêmes inorganiques. D’après sa réalité caractéristique, il est encore plus relatif que tous les êtres moins éminents. Comme tout autre organisme, mais à un degré supérieur, son existence reste toujours subordonnée à deux sortes de conditions essentielles : les unes, extérieures, se rapportent au milieu où il se développe ; les autres, intérieures, concernent les éléments dont il est composé.”² This follows from the nature of the Grand Etre, as not having an independent existence, but as in some sense deriving its being from individual existences which constitute its several organs.³ Thus, the members of the vegetable kingdom, “as the definite basis of the elementary existence of humanity,” are “les ministres nécessaires du Grand-Etre, qui respecte en eux les principaux agents de sa providence matérielle.”⁴ This lower form of life is, however, so far removed from the human type that some intermediate one is necessary. This is found in the animal kingdom, among the higher classes of which the sympathetic instinct and domestic affection exist as well pronounced as with man, although not productive of so important a result. Thus, “l’animalité ébauche spontanément le grand principe sociologique qui représente l’amour comme la base nécessaire de toute union durable des êtres indépendants.”⁵ From this it results that the tendency of each phase of animal life is to form a Grand-Etre of its own, a tendency which is defeated through the continual conflict

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. i., p. 408.

² Do., p. 412.

³ Do., p. 587.

⁴ Do., p. 595.

⁵ Do., p. 612, *seq.*

which goes on between the various kinds of animals, preventing any of them from acquiring the attributes of immensity and eternity essential to the true Grand-Etre.¹ This is reserved for man, who is entitled to the privilege owing to the high intellectual and moral development which belongs to him exclusively, as the result of his advanced social condition.² In reality, however, the *ensemble* of humanity and the sociable animals, forms the true Grand-Etre, who "intégralement considéré, devient le chef de cette immense ligne, avec ces animaux pour agents volontaires, et les végétaux pour instruments matériels: les forces inorganiques s'y joignent ensuite comme auxiliaires aveugles, à mesure qu'elles se trouvent conquises."³

We thus see that in the mind of Auguste Comte the Grand-Etre was the whole of organic nature—limited, however, by the requirements of the Positive science to this earth—the members of the animal kingdom, including man, being its organs, and the vegetables its instruments for acting on matter. That this was Comte's idea, is shown by his statement that the knowledge of the various animal organisms ought to be regarded as "a simple preparation for the study of the Grand-Etre which has emanated from the most noble among them."⁴ It is required, also, by the declaration that, in general, "on ne peut connaître profondément chaque science que d'après ses vraies relations, statiques et dynamiques, avec l'ensemble du Grand-Etre d' où elle émane;"⁵ which agrees with the further declaration that the only true unity of the various kingdoms of nature is subjective, "en rapportant au vrai Grand-Etre toutes les études réelles, tant abstraites que concrètes."⁶ Comte, more-

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. i., pp. 620, 629.

² Do., pp. 609, 638, *seq.*

⁴ Do., p. 661.

⁵ Do., p. 542.

³ Do., p. 615.

⁶ Do., p. 579.

over, refers to the *active providence* of the Grand-Etre, which results in the amelioration of external nature.¹ Elsewhere he says, "alors la nature vivante, entièrement unie sous un seul chef, constituera réellement une immense hiérarchie, dont l'activité permanente modifiera de plus en plus la constitution spéciale de la planète humaine ;" these modifications, however, being "limitées par l'ensemble des lois cosmologiques, auxquelles les lois biologiques se trouvent objectivement subordonnés."² It is always the Grand-Etre which acts by its individual organs,³ although "the immense and eternal existence" is itself subordinated to the "ensemble de l'ordre extérieur."⁴

In the Supreme Being of Auguste Comte, then, we have the totality of Humanity, as resuming in itself the whole of organic nature on our globe. But the fundamental principle of the existence of the Grand-Etre is love,⁵ and hence it cannot be said to be constituted of all the human beings who have ever existed, nor yet of those whose existence is still *in esse* or has not begun. "Il consiste davantage dans la prééminence intellectuelle et surtout morale. . . . Aucun véritable ensemble ne pouvant résulter que d'éléments vraiment associables, le nouveau Grand-Etre ne se forme que par le concours, dans le temps ou dans l'espace, des existences suffisamment assimilables, en excluant celles que ne furent qu'un fardeau pour notre espèce. C'est surtout à ce titre qu'il est essentiellement composé de morts, qui, d'ordinaire, sont les seuls pleinement jugeables, outre leur croissante supériorité numérique. L'admission des vivants n'y sera presque jamais que provisoire, afin d'accomplir l'épreuve qui, d'après l'ensemble de leur vie collective, leur procurera ou leur interdira une irrévocable

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. i., pp. 616, 667.

³ Do., p. 421.

⁴ Do., p. 449.

² Do., p. 617

⁵ Do., p. 417

incorporation subjective. Tous ses vrais éléments sont donc nécessairement honorables. Ils ne peuvent d'ailleurs se combiner que par leurs nobles aspects, en écartant, du souvenir final de chacun d'eux, toutes les imperfections qui, pendant leur première vie, les poussaient à la discordance. Quand la poésie régénérée aura fait assez sentir cette double propriété, la supériorité nécessaire du nouveau Grand-Etre envers ses propres adorateurs deviendra aussi incontestable par l'intelligence et l'amour qu'elle l'est déjà la puissance." ¹

This last sentence shows that the Supreme Being, the worship of which Auguste Comte wished to substitute for Christianity, was not imagined merely as a "Grand Fetiche," but is intended to be an object for the exercise of the affections as well as of the intellect. The last is sufficiently proved by the very nature of the Grand-Etre, which cannot be understood except by the exercise of a high degree of intelligence. It is equally so as to the affective principle. Although the dead only are entitled to be declared incorporated with the Grand-Etre, yet every man, whether now alive or yet to be born, may possibly receive that distinction. Moreover, all animated creatures are organically connected with it, and hence the love and benevolence which are due from us to every man by virtue of our common nature, have relation to the totality of humanity as much as to the individual. In fact, love to the individual is required because he forms part of the great whole—the supreme object of regard, rather than as due to his own individual being. This agrees with the organisation of scientific study which Comte insisted on, as required by the dependence of everything on the Grand-Etre, the benefit and progress of which should be considered as the aim of all intellectual activity. "Ce n'est point une vaine

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. i, p. 411

curiosité qui doit présider à l'étude directe du vrai Grand-Etre, comme partout ailleurs, le sentiment y doit toujours dominer l'intelligence, sous peine de compromettre la moralité fondamentale. Sans doute, le grand phénomène du développement social constitue le plus admirable de tous les spectacles réels, et même, par suite, idéaux. Mais la noble satisfaction mentale attachée à sa pure contemplation, ne doit jamais faire méconnaître ou négliger sa sainte destination. Au fond, nous ne devons étudier le véritable Etre-Supême que pour le mieux servir et l'aimer davantage. Notre principale récompense personnelle, dans une telle étude, résulte des nouveaux perfectionnements de tous genres, et surtout moraux, qu'elle nous procure nécessairement."¹

It is evident from the description given above of the new religion of humanity, that the object of its worship differs essentially from the god of earlier faiths. The difference, however, as we have already seen, is chiefly objective; the subjective element, which is the most permanent, being much the same in all religions. Apparently, therefore, there is little reason why the worship of the Grand-Etre should not be as truly a religion as Christianity itself. Let us see, however, whether the moral principles embodied in the Positivist cult justify its taking the place in the development of mankind claimed for it by its author. It is supposed that a continual conflict is being waged in every man between personality and sociability, a conflict which must ultimately end in the triumph of the latter.² This is the subjugation already referred to of the intelligence to the sentiment, the affective life which "dominates and co-ordinates the whole being," viewed in its external relations.³ The life of man thus becomes, by virtue of his social

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. i., p. 435.

² Do., pp. 507, 692.

³ Do., p. 689.

attributes, essentially relative, as distinguished from the vegetative existence of the animal.¹ All his study, therefore, should have for its object the good of his fellows (*d'améliorer les êtres*),² and all his actions should be directed towards that end. "Le principal progrès de chaque être vivant doit," says Comte, "sans doute, consister à perfectionner ce consensus universel où réside l'attribut essentiel de la vitalité. C'est pourquoi le bonheur et le mérite, meme personnels, dépendent par-tout d'un juste ascendant des instincts sympathiques. *Vivre pour autrui*, devient ainsi le résumé naturel de toute la morale positive, dont la biologie doit déjà ébaucher le principe universel, mieux dégagé alors des diverses influences perturbatrices."³ To live, not for ourselves, but for others, is then the summary of Comte's moral teaching, the practical expression of the supreme instinct of humanity, "the goodness or the universal love, of which the *charity* of Christians constituted the theological sketch."⁴

The fundamental position of the positivist system is thus, as Auguste Comte expresses it, "to subordinate egoism to altruism,"⁵—self to others. It is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance in this and other points between that system and Buddhism. The latter, also, not only taught the desirability of universal benevolence, but in some sense it enforced the entire abnegation of self. This idea is embodied in the legend that Gautama once gave his body to be devoured by a famished tigress which could not supply food for its young.⁶ The kindness to animals, which is one of the best features of Buddhist morality, occupies also an important position in the teaching of Comte. With the

¹ *Politique Positive*, p. 620.

² Do., p. 428.

³ Do., p. 700.

⁴ Do., p. 701.

⁵ Do., p. 733.

⁶ Barthelemy St Hilaire, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

latter, the extension of the principle of altruism to the members of the animal kingdom, is the natural consequence of their association with man as organs of the Grand-Etre, and as possessing the germs of all the moral and intellectual attributes fully developed in man,¹ while that extension in the former case, is probably connected with the doctrine of emanations so prevalent among eastern peoples. The positivist system may be thought to agree with that of Gautama in another important particular. The former knows nothing of a future life, death of the body being also that of the soul.² Such also is, according to usual opinion, the teaching of Buddhism. The Nirvana of this system, however, is not actual annihilation of being. As has been shown in a preceding chapter,³ it is simply the extinction of all desire, accompanied by the loss of personal consciousness in an all-absorbing sense of oneness with the divine essence. It is thus distinguished from the *absorption* of Hindu religious philosophy, although evidently founded on the same idea as to the relationship of the individual soul to the universal soul. The incorporation of the individual after death in the Grand-Etre, is not unlike the doctrine of *absorption*, which also implies the loss of separate existence. Comte, however, does not admit the possibility of a future life, even in this modified sense, and still less does he allow it to those human beings who are not worthy of incorporation into the Grand-Etre. His system has nothing, therefore, in common with the doctrine of transmigration, which is known to Buddhism no less than to Hinduism, as the consequence of a condition of moral impurity.

The absence from the system of Auguste Comte of a belief in a future state of existence removes an element

¹ Barthelemy St Hilaire, p. 614, 672, *seq.*

² *op. cit.*, p. 586. ³ *Supra*, p. 291.

which has had a seriously deteriorating influence over the practice and principles of Buddhism. The object of Gautama's teaching was to make known to man the way to secure personal salvation, *i.e.*, the deliverance from the evils of metempsychosis, and his morality, therefore, was not of so high a type as that of Comte, which requires the exercise of universal benevolence, not for the sake of self, but for that of others. The system of Auguste Comte is, indeed, founded on the entire abnegation of self, and on the necessity of living for others as a duty owing to them as organic parts of the Grand-Etre humanity. This is certainly a noble thought, and yet as a principle of action it constitutes a serious defect. Buddhism, owing to its being in reality founded on essentially egoistic principles, ultimately became in most of its developments a system of pure selfishness.¹ The Positivist religion, on the other hand, being based on the benevolent sentiments, must become purely altruistic. This, probably, would be no reproach in the eyes of Auguste Comte, whose adoption of the motto *vivre pour autrui* shows that he considered the cultivation of those sentiments as the chief aim of life. While not losing sight of the other side of human nature, the positivist treats the exercise of the intellectual powers as strictly subordinate to that of the moral attributes. In this he is correct so far as the ultimate test of the propriety of action may be said to be its effect on the moral nature of the agent, but not in the more exact sense required by the positive philosophy. According to the positivist view there is an intimate and special harmony between these two orders of functions. Comte says, "L'altruisme, quand il est énergique, se montre toujours plus propre que l'égoïsme à diriger et stimuler l'intelligence, même chez les animaux. Il lui fournit un champ plus vaste,

¹ *Supra*, p. 278.

un but plus difficile, et même une participation plus indispensable. Sous ce dernier aspect surtout, on ne sent point assez que l'égoïsme n'a besoin d'aucune intelligence pour apprécier l'objet de son affection, mais seulement pour découvrir les moyens d'y satisfaire. Au contraire, l'altruisme exige, en outre, une assistance mentale afin de connaître même l'être extérieur vers lequel il tend toujours. L'existence sociale ne fait que développer davantage cette solidarité naturelle, d'après la difficulté supérieure de comprendre l'objet collectif de la sympathie. Mais déjà la vie domestique en manifeste nettement la nécessité constante, chez toutes les espèces bien organisées." ¹

That which is opposed to sociability, however, is not the intellect, the development of which is declared to be aided by altruism, but "self" with its egoistical instincts. Between these a continual conflict has been waged from the moment that action ceased to have relation only to self. This was not until the maternal instinct, called into existence through the exercise of the function of reproduction, profoundly modified the fundamental personality. Comte says as to this: "Il y suscite une ébauche, toujours touchante et souvent admirable, de la vie de famille, première base de la vie sociale. L'intelligence propre à chaque organisme se trouve excitée par une destination qui n'est plus purement individuelle. Ses calculs sont même poussés ainsi au delà du besoin actuel, de manière à ébaucher la liaison de l'avenir au passé. Cessant d'être entièrement dominée par les instincts personnels, l'existence devient susceptible d'une certaine discipline morale, en s'adaptant à un ordre extérieur, envers lequel l'affection commence à tempérer la nécessité." ² The defect in Comte's system before referred to becomes evident when it is thus seen that

¹ *Supra*, p. 693.

² *Supra*, p. 601.

altruism is based on the maternal instinct. When tracing the genesis of moral ideas, it was shown that the development of that instinct can never do more than give rise to the active virtues, and that these are preceded by another series which, owing to their fundamental character as depending on the instinct of self-preservation, are more important than the later ones. The idea of duty, which is essential to a system of morals, is, indeed, wholly wanting to the benevolent sympathies, when these are divorced from the passive virtues based on the instinct of self-preservation. Admirable, therefore, as the object of Auguste Comte's moral teaching may be, it would be found to be practically inoperative if applied on a wide scale, owing to the impossibility of deducing from its principles the idea of duty on which their moral efficacy depends. No doubt for those who have derived that idea from some other source, the new religion of humanity may supply every incentive necessary to ensure a life of the most perfect morality. It would be otherwise, however, with those who first applied themselves to the positivist cult for moral guidance. If their minds were prepared by the instruction which Positivism declares to be requisite, no doubt they would, if intellectually capable of such appreciation, be struck with the loftiness of its moral sentiment. In the presence of the conflict between sociability and personality, however, they would seek in vain for any firm moral basis. Nor could it be otherwise. Apart from the sense of right which is inextricably bound up with that personality, benevolence can be supported by sentiment alone, the predominating influence of which, however beneficial for a time and under certain conditions, must ultimately result in moral anarchy. The positivist, no doubt, would demur to this conclusion. He declares that duty follows directly upon

the relation of the individual to humanity, altruism thus containing its own moral sanction. This doubtless is so, if the individual stands in the special relation to humanity which Positivism teaches, that is, assuming the principles of the religion of humanity to be well founded. But if the relation of individuals to each other, as forming parts of a common organic whole, be of secondary and not of primary importance, the idea of duty does not necessarily arise. That it exists cannot be questioned, but it has a totally different foundation from that supposed by the positivist. This is proved by the reference made in support of his position to the special relations between individuals, as parent and child, master and servant, as also to that between a citizen and the state, from all of which duty is supposed to directly spring. It is not so, however, in reality. Reference to the principles laid down in the preceding pages,¹ will show that the genesis of the idea of duty in these cases is dependent on the preceding perception and recognition of certain rights which have their basis in the egoistic instincts. And so also must it be with the duty which the individual owes to humanity at large. Instead of following directly upon a peculiar relation supposed to subsist between the individual and the organic whole, it is based on the egoistic instincts, and in this case also the idea of duty is the result of a process of genesis.²

The fact is that Comte, owing to his treating man as part of the Grand-Etre rather than in his individual character, has subordinated too much the personality, with its so-called selfish instincts, to social feeling. He declares that "to the Positivist the object of Morals is to make our sympathetic instincts predominate as far as possible over the selfish instincts; social feelings over

¹ *Supra*, vol. i., p. 296 *seq.*

² *Supra*, vol. i., p. 414 *seq.*

personal feelings.”¹ He adds that the primary principle of Positive morality is “the preponderance of social sympathy. Full and free expansion of the benevolent emotions is made the first condition of individual and social well-being, since these emotions are at once the sweetest to experience, and are the only feelings which can find expression simultaneously in all.”² The same principle requires that personal virtues should be placed upon a social basis. And thus Comte affirms that, in this elementary part of ethics, Positivism “appeals to social feelings, and not to personal, since the actions in question are of a kind in which the individual is far from being the only person interested. For example, such virtues as temperance and chastity are inculcated by the positivist on other grounds than those of their personal advantages. He will not of course be blind to their individual value ; but this is an aspect on which he will not dwell much, for fear of concentrating attention on self-interest. At all events, he will never make it the basis of his precepts, but will invariably rest them upon their social value.”³ We have here a clear expression of what appears to be the great defect of Comte’s moral system, which is summed up in the short sentence, “the whole tendency of positivism is to encourage sympathy; since it subordinates every thought, desire, and action to social feelings.”⁴ That defect, which it cannot be denied has a noble source, is indeed essential to the very system itself. This is based on the relation of the individual to the organic whole, duty towards which demands the cultivation of sympathy as the supreme object of life. No doubt the good of the race is a much nobler principle of action than mere self-interest, and universal love is a higher ideal than

¹ “A General View of Positivism,” translated by Dr Bridges, p. 98.

² Do., p. 99.

³ Do., p. 104.

⁴ Do., p. 115.

general happiness. But there is another aspect of egoism besides that of vulgar self-interest. The individual not only stands in a certain objective relation to humanity, but viewed subjectively he possesses the faculties and attributes which constitute his personality, and the development and due exercise of which is essential to the due performance of his external obligations. Positivism, in pursuance of the principle that "individuals should be regarded, not so much as distinct beings, but as organs of one Supreme Being,"¹ subordinates that personality to personal feeling, whereas the latter should, if either have the predominance, be subordinated to the former. The exercise of sympathy is required not by duty to mankind at large, but by duty to self. No doubt its aim will be the increased happiness of mankind, but its immediate result will be the improvement of the moral nature of the individual and the greater perfection of his whole being, the beneficial influence over the race, although certain, being merely consequential. Positivism does not merely undervalue that result, but treats it as of subsidiary importance to the social advancement of mankind at large, in relation to which the value of all individual action is judged.

It is this which constitutes the great defect of Comte's system.² Nor is it lessened by the statement that, "l'amour universel est bientôt apprécié comme notre meilleure ressource pour améliorer nos destinées, avant que l'on sente assez son aptitude, plus pure et plus directe, à constituer, par son seul exercice, notre principal bonheur."³ This is not sufficient for those to

¹ "A General View of Positivism," translated by Dr Bridges, p. 386.

² The opinions expressed by Comte in his "Philosophie Positive," (see Martineau's translation, Vol. ii., p. 554,) have more in common with those laid down in the text. Comp. also *op. cit.* Vol. ii. p. 130 *seq.*

³ *Do.*, p. 419.

whom happiness is not the chief object of life. If that were the only ground on which universal benevolence is desirable, the new religion of humanity would be placed almost on a level with Buddhism, which sees in Nirvâna the end of misery, if not actual felicity. It is intended to be based, however, on duty to humanity, but this, as we have seen, derives its ultimate authority from duty towards self. There is, indeed, no safe ground for the establishment of a system of pure benevolence except the principles of man's own being. We must find in universal love the satisfaction of our personal requirements to give it the authority of law. Both Mithraism and Christianity made an approach to this when they insisted, not merely on charity towards others, but also on the necessity of holiness of life. Neither of them, however, rose to the height of the conception, seeing that the sanctions for that holiness were found in the will of a deity and the fear of his displeasure, rather than in the nature of man. The new religion of humanity is not content with getting rid of the supernatural sanction, but in founding its morality on the benevolent sentiments, it estimates very lightly, as elements essential to morality itself, those principles of human nature on which the obligation of altruism can alone be based. Positivists in denying this, will cite the fact that they insist on the "inevitable character" of the egoistic propensities, which are not merely regulated and controlled, but are utilised as a force to be directed towards higher ends. This does not, however, meet the objection. It is impossible to get rid of those propensities altogether, and Positivism itself cannot do more than subordinate them, although it declares that even personal virtues are to be placed on a social basis. If the latter position could be established, no doubt the objection would fall to the

ground. But the aim of the present work throughout is to show, that the egoistic instincts form the essential foundation of all morality, and that, so far from the personal virtues being placed on a social basis, not only do the social virtues themselves derive their moral sanction from those instincts, but their supreme importance depends on the reflex action they have on the personality. The chief concern with every individual should be the perfect development of the powers and faculties of his own being, the attainment of which would necessarily be attended with the perfecting of humanity as a whole, whereas to Positivism the supreme aim is the advancement of humanity, the Grand-Etre, that of its individual organs, although necessarily accompanying it, being subordinate and consequential rather than designed.

The recognition of the absolute necessity to a system of morals of the elements which Comte's altruism so completely subordinates, has an important bearing on the constitution of the Grand-Etre. In accordance with the principle that, "although every sociable species spontaneously tends to form a Grand-Etre, one alone can really attain to that result,"¹ man being the favoured species, it is required that among all the nations into which mankind is divided, each of which might form the nucleus of humanity, one alone should be chosen around which the rest must group themselves.² In like manner, although the Grand-Etre may be said to represent all the attributes of humanity, yet as love constitutes the fundamental principle of its existence,³ we must suppose the affective life to be the most important element of man's being. This is, indeed, required by Comte's declaration that the fundamental harmony of the soul is perfectly expressed in the sentence, "agir par affection,

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 628.

² *Do.*, p. 630.

³ *Do.*, p. 417.

et penser pour agir.”¹ The Grand-Etre may thus be said to be the embodiment of the principles operating in the sympathetic part of man’s moral nature. If, however, man possesses certain principles of being on which is based the very idea of duty, and which are wholly distinct from the altruistic instincts, although essential to them viewed as binding on the moral conscience, those principles must occupy an equally important position in the constitution of the Grand-Etre. To those who, while viewing man as an organic whole, believe this totality to express but one phase of a more wide-spreading existence, the endowment of the Grand-Etre with all the principles which are concerned in the moral development of mankind would seem to lead to a result very different from that which the positivist requires. Comte, in the course of his comparison between the new and old Supreme Being, says :—“ par un contraste nécessaire, la supériorité réelle de la nouvelle religion tient surtout à la dépendance fondamentale qu’on reproche aujourd’hui à l’être qui en devient l’objet. Elle est ainsi assurée directement d’une durée aussi prolongée que celle de l’existence correspondante. La suprématie de notre vrai Grand-Etre reste purement relative à nos recherches et à nos besoins. On peut, sans doute, concevoir que, même sans sortir de notre monde, il existe, sur quelque autre planète, un organisme encore plus éminent. Mais, outre que nous n’en pouvons rien savoir, cette question demeurera toujours aussi oiseuse qu’inabordable, puisqu’un tel être n’affecterait aucunement nos destinées.”² Whether or not the existence of such a being as here supposed could affect our destiny, is just the question of which the religious conscience has ever been seeking a solution ; and although the principles of Positivism will not admit of any weight being given to the possibility

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 688.

² *Do.*, p. 409.

of such an existence, those who think that philosophy has to do with something more than the mere laws which govern the development of the Grand-Etre will not allow themselves to be thus limited. It is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance between M. Comte's conception and the ancient notion of the earth being a living organism, of which plants and animals are outgrowths. No doubt Comte's conception is superior to that. Instead of the earth being endowed with a soul, this is given to the organic whole, which is gradually evolved as its vegetable and animal organs are formed and perfected, matter being entirely subordinated. Practically, however, the earth, and all the existences which it contains and which are dependent upon it, form a totality, every part of which bears a certain relation to the Grand-Etre thus constituted. In this totality, however, may we not have an existence which bears the same relation to some more widely extended organism as that in which each man or animal stands to the Grand-Etre of Comte? Every man is a microcosm in himself, embodying all the elements which may be found separately or in less complex union in other portions of the organic whole, but the parasite on the body of a man would certainly be in error if it were to declare that he is *the* Grand-Etre. So, also, the man, who can see beyond this globe, and who has faculties by the exercise of which he can be reasonably satisfied that the earth with its various organic forms must stand in some definite relation to the other worlds which surround him on every side, apparently in endless series, may safely assert that, although for some purposes "Humanity" is to him a Grand-Etre, yet that there must be a greater whole which includes even humanity itself as one only of its parts, the Infinite Existence.

The only real objection to the recognition of this as a

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fact sufficiently probable to furnish the warrant for religious belief, arises from the scientific principles of Positivism, according to which it is useless to speculate as to first causes, and therefore, as to the existence of an absolutely Supreme Being. But, if the mind cannot do without an object of actual worship, some such a conception as this must be accepted even by Positivists themselves, since their Grand-Etre is not, as will now be shown, in reality a fitting object for religious reverence. This may seem strange, considering that the new religion of humanity has been thoroughly elaborated by its author in every detail. The truth of the statement, however, requires little proof after the description of the Grand-Etre already given in Comte's own words. How can that be a fit object of worship which, notwithstanding its immensity and eternity, is subordinated to the "ensemble de l'ordre extérieur,"¹ which has only gradually been developed under the conditions furnished by that order, the immutability of which constitutes "la première base systématique de la religion finale, pour régler et rallier, non seulement nos opinions et nos actions, mais aussi nos affections elles-mêmes."² Not only, however, has the Grand-Etre no existence as such until the appearance of man on the earth, but its attributes, as being those of existences "suffisamment assimilables," must depend on the intellect and moral conduct of particular human beings. Viewed in this light, the Grand-Etre of Auguste Comte is as unsatisfactory, considered as an object of worship, as the idol-fetiché. Of course the conception is vastly superior, but, as depending altogether on man himself, they are equally wanting in the elements required to constitute a fitting object for the exercise of the religious emotions; an opinion which would seem to be consistent at least with Comte's asser-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 449.

² *Do.*, p. 504.

tion that the positivist religion is a rehabilitation of fetichism.¹

It is the dependence of the Supreme Being on man which shocks the ordinary religious sense. If the Grand-Etre were an actual organic existence which, by a process of incarnation, becomes revealed as man, its worship could be understood, since, being antecedent to man, and the source of his being, it would possess the elements necessary to constitute an object of reverential regard. But it is far otherwise with a Being which, taking its rise from man himself, could not have existed before him, and which can never possess the moral or intellectual superiority to man looked for in an object of worship, seeing that its intelligence or morality is simply that of the human beings which have been incorporated with it. How far, indeed, the Grand-Etre of Comte can be said to have any real existence is a question. It is possible to understand that mankind, as represented by the individuals who have from age to age lived and been agents in the great work of human culture, constitutes an organic whole. But the Grand-Etre receives only those who have, not merely passed away from this life, but have really ceased to exist, except in the memory of succeeding generations, and its existence, therefore, may well be declared to be no more actual than that of the individuals whose memory rather than whose being it has incorporated.

The majority of earnest thinkers, even among Positivists themselves, will probably be of the opinion that the true value of the conception of the Grand-Etre is moral rather than religious. The recognition of humanity as an organic whole, towards which every individual bears a definite relation and owes certain duties, forms in some respect an advance even on the Christian idea

¹ *Politique Positive*, vol. ii. p. 135.

of humanity as a brotherhood. In Christianity, as in all earlier religions, moral obligation in relation to others is more or less subordinated to the "salvation" of the individual; whereas, with Auguste Comte, universal love is the first principle of action, founded on the claims of the Grand-Etre, which include those of each of its individual organs. So far then as the conception of "humanity" requires the generalisation of the idea of duty as between man and his fellow, it is of the utmost value. It constitutes a moral organisation which the selfish element innate in all earlier religio-moral systems prevented them from ever effecting. As an apostle of humanity, therefore, Auguste Comte, who may be said first to have clearly formed that conception, deserves the grateful recollection of all men interested in moral and social progress, and there is little doubt that his name is destined to be handed down to posterity in connection with a movement which, if rightly directed, may almost amount to a moral regeneration of mankind. It by no means follows, however, that the superstructure which Comte has raised on the basis of "Humanity," will be that which is fated to be worked out in the future. The conception of mankind as an organic existence, which has undergone, and is still undergoing, a process of development destined to result in the attainment of a physical and mental perfection, is not restricted to Positivism. Comte has, however, the merit of having entered more fully into the conception, and of having been the first to point out its bearings on the development of man's intellectual and moral nature, if, indeed, any other writer can be said to have done so. He has, moreover, so thoroughly worked out the conception, that there is little left for positivists to do beyond applying and carrying out the principles which their master has laid down, if not established. It may

be doubted, indeed, whether there are many persons outside of the positivist circle who have any idea of the completeness of Comte's design, and of its execution. The system of Positivism is truly original. It not only forms a synthesis of the whole of human progress, co-ordinating the various phenomena, intellectual and moral, which accompanied it, and formulating the laws which govern its gradual development, but it seeks to fix the goal towards which humanity is tending, and to ensure its attainment by the control of all man's powers and the systematic direction of all his moral and intellectual activity.

The marvellous product of Comte's thought is truly a philosophy of humanity, having for its aim the social regeneration of mankind on the basis of a perfect morality. When considered in this light, the *Positive Philosophie* and the *Positive Politique* are seen to be essential to each other as integral parts of a general design. Thus the rejection of the *Politique* destroys the very motive for the *Philosophie*, as the destruction of this cuts away the base of the *Politique*. While, however, we grant to Comte the admiration required by his genius, which displays itself, not only in the conception of humanity as a Grand-Etre, but in the scientific expression of the laws which govern its development and their application to the explanation of the phenomena of human progress, it is not necessary to accept all the principles which he has enforced. This is true particularly in relation to his moral system, and still more so with reference to the notions which are embodied in the religion of humanity. The latter, indeed, is not essential to Positivism, which it can hardly be doubted was originally intended by its author to be a purely moral synthesis. When once, however, mankind was conceived of as an organic existence, subject to the same laws of development as, and

exhibiting analogous phenomena to, those presented by individual man in his progress to maturity of nature, it is not surprising that such a mind as Comte's should advance a step further. Of a richly sympathetic nature, when once he found a kindred soul he gave himself up unreservedly to the feeling of love, which quickly absorbed almost his entire being. To love, however, was with Comte to worship, and as the whole system of Positivism rests on, or rather centres round, the principle of love,¹ its legitimate development in the mind of its founder could not result otherwise than in the religion of humanity. Life to him became truly "a continuous and earnest act of worship; worship which will elevate and purify our feelings, enlarge and enlighten our thoughts, ennoble and invigorate our actions."² But this worship is only another name for love, and it is an act of religion only so far as love forms an integral part of religion. Whether love, in the sense here supposed, can be thus predicated, is at least questionable. It is no doubt an essential element in Christianity, but so only because it is concerned with a being having a human personality, meditation on whose life and suffering arouses a strictly human emotion. There is a strict analogy between Positivism and Christianity in this respect,—Comte says that it is a peculiar character of the Grand-Etre "to be compounded of separable elements. Its existence depends therefore entirely upon mutual love knitting together its various parts."³ The worship of the Grand-Etre is thus in reality love to the individuals which constituted it, and although the depth of this feeling may be shown in praise and constant service, Positivism cannot be said on that account to answer to what is usually intended by religion, any more than

¹ "A General View" (Eng. Trans.), p. 349.

² Do., p. 350.

³ Do., p. 349.

Christianity would be entitled to this character if it were concerned only with the human Christ. It is of course open to Positivists to affirm that what Comte described is a religion to them, but it is certainly not such to those who, although no longer trammelled by the teachings of "imperfect and provisional systems resting on the primitive basis of theology," yet worship the Infinite One in a spirit of reverence and holy fear. This is the spirit of all true worship, and the co-operation of the principle of love may make it more intense and passionate, but not more real. The great value of the emotional element is its influence over the life, since love, as Comte affirms of worship, can and does "elevate and purify our feelings, enlarge and enlighten our thoughts, ennoble and invigorate our actions." Love is, therefore, a moral rather than a religious element, and hence we see how Positivism, in which that element acts so important a part, is a system of morals, and not a religion. Even as a system of morals, however, it is not perfect, and unless it restores to its proper point of dignity that personal element which is necessary to furnish an immutable basis of moral obligation,¹ the regeneration which it seeks to bring about may end in social anarchy.

So far, then, as Positivism endeavours to replace God by Humanity as a fit object for the exercise of the religious emotions, it must, for the reasons above stated, be declared to have failed. It could not, indeed, have been otherwise. That which has hitherto been understood as religion, as distinguished from simple superstition, is indissolubly associated with considerations as to man's origin, and as the reference to such a question is excluded by the first principles of the Positive philosophy, there is wanting to this the only foundation on which a

¹ *Supra*, vol. i., p. 308, *seq.*

religion can really be constructed. The conception of humanity as forming an organic whole, may be attended with the happiest results as a further advance in the evolution of morality, but it is difficult to see how the deification of man under the form of the Grand-Etre, as required by the system of Auguste Comte, can truly satisfy the religious wants of man's higher nature, however much it may enlarge the bounds of sympathy and deepen the feeling of love. The position that Positivism does not really constitute a religion is confirmed by the fact, recognised apparently by many positivists themselves, that its moral conception of mankind as a Grand-Etre may be fully accepted by those who still retain their belief in the existence of God. Pascal, as Comte himself points out, spoke of the human race as one man,¹ saying, "toute la suite des hommes, pendant le cours de tant de siècles, doit être considérée comme un même homme qui subsiste toujours et qui apprend continuellement."² The same idea has been repeated by other Christian writers since his day, and notably by Dr Temple, the present Bishop of Exeter, who apparently sees nothing in it inconsistent with Christianity itself. Nor is the belief in the future life of the individual inconsistent with a recognition of the Grand-Etre, not as an existing entity, but as denoting the organic connection of mankind as a whole. That conception may have an ennobling influence even over the mind of the man who believes that there is a God, from whom the human race has somehow had its origin, and that the individuals of which the Grand-Etre is constituted do not cease to exist when they have passed away from the visible stage of life. Those opinions, indeed, are not so irrational as they appear to minds otherwise constituted. The most advanced Positivist would probably not deny the *possi-*

¹ "A General View," p. 357.

² "Pensées," Pt. i., Art. 50.

bility of there being a Grand-Etre whose being is co-extensive with the universe, or that man *may* possibly live after death. The principles of Positivism require only the impossibility of our having a knowledge of the facts. Positivism is relative, and it cannot properly affirm more than that, in the absence of certain proof of God's present existence, or that man will exist hereafter, it is useless forming any opinion on the subject. But to some minds the probability that such is the case appears so strong, that they cannot help believing that there is both a God and a future life. Although the "religion of humanity" knows nothing of the existence of such a being, or of the immortality of man, yet both may hereafter be capable of proof, and even Positivism itself, which is the expression only of the noblest altruistic morality, and, therefore, can have relation only to the present life and its experiences, cannot, consistently with its own principles, say anything to the contrary.¹

¹ The relation of Positivism as a system of morals to earlier systems would be an interesting enquiry. Buddhism, with its nihilism and apparent want of a deity, combined with its altruism, must have been peculiarly attractive to the mind of Auguste Comte, whose followers seem to regard the Chinese as holding ideas much akin to those of Positivism. Among the writings of the Greek philosophers probably the Nicomachean ethics of Aristotle had the most influence in moulding the opinions entertained by the French *savant*. His indebtedness to his master St. Simon must not, however, be forgotten.

CHAPTER IX.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

THE limit of our enquiry has now been reached, but before bringing this work to a conclusion, it is desirable to supplement the historical retrospect of the various phases of moral development given in the preceding pages, by some observations on the relation between morality and religion. But first let us retrace slowly the steps by which we have arrived at our present position. It has been shown that, originally, the "conduct" of man towards either his fellows or himself, was governed by no fixed moral principles. His actions were purely selfish, and were directed by the instinct of self-preservation, and of that instinct on which the perpetuation of the race depends, which determined the lines along which the development of morality was to proceed. The exercise of man's primitive instincts is at first uncontrolled. When brought under control, and when man's conduct in relation to his fellows comes to be guided, to some extent at least, by the lessons of experience, the idea of moral obligation is formed, and the passive virtues are gradually established. These are the first to be recognised, as they require only abstention from wrong-doing, and possess no element of activity beyond that of self-control. As the parental instinct acquired force, and the duties springing from the family relationship were recognised, the active virtues were developed. The exercise of these was early exhibited in the primitive system of "brotherhood," which em-

bodied the idea which underlies all the later phases of altruism. The development of the active and passive virtues proceeded together ; but the latter, as being the most fundamental, were the most generally recognised, and the most insisted on in the religious systems of antiquity. An exception, however, is formed by Buddhism, which, like the parental system of Confucius, is based more especially on the altruistic sentiment, and is concerned with the active rather than the passive virtues. Christian teaching made the nearest approach to the due recognition of the relative importance of negative and positive morality. The law of love proclaimed by its founder embraced duty towards oneself as well as to others. Nevertheless Christian teaching was imperfect, not so much owing to any defect in moral ideas, as in its aim and in the sanctions by which they were enforced.

Positivism is the only serious attempt to systematise morality since the commencement of the Christian era, and its altruism is, at first sight, more all-embracing than that of Christianity, which appears to concern itself little with man's relation to the animal kingdom. The omission is, however, more apparent than real, as the love which the founders of Christianity proclaimed was inconsistent¹ with cruelty to animals, as it is contrary to various social habits prevalent among the peoples of antiquity, which nevertheless they did not refer to. Positivism agrees more closely with Buddhism than with the later religious system in its actual teachings as to the conduct of man towards the lower forms of animated life. This, however, exhibits the fundamental defect of the system of M. Comte, in that it not merely subordinates

¹ Of course it is not meant that a "Christian" cannot be cruel to animals. If tried by this test, perhaps Christians would be found somewhat rarer than is usually supposed.

man's personal to his social instincts, but makes the altruistic sentiment the basis of moral obligation.¹ Noble as is the sentiment "live for others," its application to the conduct of life must have an unsatisfactory result, since it reverses the order of things. The primary motive to right action should be duty to one's own being as "man," and not duty towards one's fellowmen, which is strictly a secondary motive. The true ground of morality is in fact to be found in the nature of man, as part of the universal whole of nature, i.e., God, although his relationship to mankind at large, as well as to the members of the animal kingdom, gives rise to special obligations. Or, as it may be stated, morality is based, so far as concerns the passive virtues, on man's duty to himself as a child of God; and, as to the active virtues, on his duty to others as common members of the human brotherhood. The distinction between these two classes of virtues is, however, purely objective. Subjectively they have a common basis in the nature of man, as derived from a divine original, and therefore it must be traced to the Infinite or Universal Existence, of which mankind forms part. The active no less than the passive virtues spring from the condition of moral purity which characterises those whose being is in perfect harmony with the organic whole.

Viewed in this light, religion and morality are seen to be intimately related. But this does not apply

¹ Comte says :—"Positivism alone holds at once both a noble and true language, when it urges us *to live for others*. This, the definitive formula of human morality, gives a direct sanction exclusively to our instincts of benevolence, the common source of happiness and of duty." See "The Catechism of Positivism" (Eng. trans.), p. 313, and also Introd., p. 52 *seq.* The exercise and gratification of the personal instincts are allowed in the interests of humanity, but this fact is not inconsistent with the statement made at a preceding page (p. 410), of the insufficient recognition of the importance of those instincts as elements in moral culture.

to what may be called *dogmatic* religion, as distinguished from the emotional. On the contrary, as the principles of a high and pure morality become established, and the conscience is quickened and rendered perfect in its intuitive action, the influence of *dogmatic* religion becomes correspondingly weakened.¹ To those who have not attentively considered the matter, it will sound strange to be told that the most "religious" peoples are the most "immoral." And yet in the strictest sense this is perfectly true. It cannot be denied that, if morality is judged of by the test furnished by the high standard of the normal Christian conscience, the civilised peoples of antiquity were, on the whole, less moral in their conduct than are the modern European peoples; nor that the moral principles which the former recognised were more advanced than those which are known to uncultured man. On the other hand, if by being "religious" is meant the practical recognition of an invisible power, the moderns cannot compare with the ancients in this respect, and not even with many existing peoples. The civilised nations of the ancient world seem to have lived in an atmosphere of religion. The worship of the gods, and the performance of the services which that worship required, filled the chief place in their thoughts. Religion had, indeed, a much greater practical influence over the general life of the peoples of antiquity than it has over the conduct of modern society; and no wonder, when everything—the produce of the fields, offspring, wealth, health—was thought to be the gift of the gods. It is not necessary here to cite facts in support of that view. Numerous illustrations of it will be found in the preceding pages,

¹ Mr Lecky remarks that "the formation of a moral philosophy is usually the first step of the decadence of religions." ("Rationalism in Europe," 4th ed., vol. i. p. 305.)

as well as evidence that an essentially "religious" life is no less characteristic of many uncivilized peoples.

The belief in the existence of spirits seems to be one of the very earliest to be formed in the savage mind, and its great influence is shown in the scrupulous regard for the "rights of the dead" exhibited by peoples of a low degree of culture.¹ It would not be difficult to prove that this *spiritism* underlies all the developments of later faiths, which are in fact only more generalised expressions of the primitive belief, with the modifications required by a truer interpretation of nature, and the perception of man's real relation to it. It cannot be objected that the "religion" of savages or of so-called *pagan* nations has no practical influence over life. Its chief feature is its wonderfully practical character, tinging as it does the whole web of daily existence with a completeness that has hardly a counterpart among Christian sects or communities. It will be said, however, that the influence which religions—allowing this title to the systems of heathenism and paganism—other than Christianity, exert over their followers, is not productive of the holiness of life which the latter creates. There is much truth in this observation, but it has not exactly the force intended. The state of "holiness" is often spoken of as though it supposed some peculiar relation to the Divine Being. This is so, however, only in the sense that the Divine nature in man asserts its influence in that condition, placing him *en rapport* with the Deity. By "holiness," then, is meant perfect conduct in the social relations of life—in other words a high moral tone, and this agrees exactly with what has already been established, that the moral system of Christianity is superior to that of any other religion, exhibiting, in fact, the latest phase of moral

¹ See *supra*, vol. i., p. 311, *seq.*

development. But judging from the analogy presented by the heathen, who, while essentially religious, are, as tried by our elevated standard, highly immoral, Christian peoples must be declared to be less "religious" than those who are inferior in morality. There must be some error to lead to this result, and it is to be found in the false views entertained as to the nature of religion. This is not naturally antagonistic to morality, although it may appear to become so if it is falsely defined. Far from religion and morality being inconsistent, it can be shown that if they are not actually identifiable, the practice of the one constitutes the spiritual essence of the other. This must be true of any faith which seeks to establish its claim to be recognised as the final phase of religious development. But if so, no place is left for dogmatic theology. The sole practical use of this is to lead to a life of "holiness," and therefore the establishment of perfect morality in the life of man must inevitably be accompanied by the destruction of purely dogmatic teaching. The attainment of the end renders the instrument no longer necessary. Hence when the moral nature of man has become so perfected that it is a law unto itself, and when the response to the instinctive operations of conscience is so complete that the life is simply an expression of that law, there will be no more need for the agency which has aided in educating the mind to such a condition. Not that man has yet reached this stage of moral perfection. That it will ultimately be attained is absolutely required by the principles of the moral development which has been traced through its various stages, and the final term of which must be the perfection of the powers and faculties of man's nature. When this final stage has been reached, religion and morality will become identified as the opposite sides of the same idea,

or rather as the perfect expression of the duty which man owes to his own being, as standing in a certain relation on the one hand to God and on the other to his fellows.

The distinction here insisted on between dogma and religion is one which may easily be missed. The latter has so long been mixed up with particular theological notions that it is difficult for most minds to understand how religion can exist without them. Their true relation has been well expressed by a late writer, whose language in the use of the term "supernatural" is, however, not unexceptionable. He says—"The essence of all *religion* in all its various forms is, the deep feeling excited by the sense of a mysterious, supernatural (?) power, higher and greater than we can understand, acting in the universe and related to us." On the other hand, "*theology* consists of the notions, the conceptions, the doctrines, by which the mind interprets and explains the power whose influence upon it excites the feelings of wonder, awe, and dependence which constitute religion." In short, "religion is the feeling excited by the sense of an unknown power, theology is the explanation the mind endeavours to give of that power."¹ If this be a correct expression of the difference between religion and theology, it is clear that the former may continue almost unchanged, while the notions of which the latter is made up have entirely altered their character. No doubt the emotional element undergoes certain modifications according to the idea entertained as to the nature of the object towards which its attention is directed. The dread of the semi-civilized inhabitant of the tropics, and the holy fear of the more cultured Semite, alike give place in great measure to the love of the Christian. But the same emotional element is present in the minds

¹ "Credibilia." By the Rev. James Cranbrook, pp. 28-30.

of all ; whereas the theological notions formed of the invisible agency, the thought of which arouses various phases of activity, are practically wholly different. Moreover, there is no reason to suppose that the limit of transformation of those notions has yet been reached. Theological changes, required by the elevation of our ideas and the increase of our knowledge, may result in the ordinary Christian notion of deity being as greatly transformed as the conception of a supernatural power has been when the modern idea of God is compared with that held by the lowest savage. Even this conception has not received its final form. God has hitherto been usually viewed as a supernatural existence, but this idea, in the sense that His being is outside of or apart from nature, may yet prove to be untenable.

The question as to the existence or nature of God is a very difficult one, but a like conception of the Divine Being may be so framed as to be less objectionable than that of the Grand-Etre of Positivism. This Supreme Being is, as we have seen, the totality of mankind viewed as resuming in itself the whole of organic nature on the globe. Animals and vegetables, equally with man, are its organs, and the inorganic kingdom also performs certain functions having relation to its activity. Those, at least, who hold these notions, ought not to have any difficulty in accepting the wider view that universal nature itself forms a single Grand-Etre. Of this Supreme Being, the animal and vegetable kingdoms, not of this earth only, but of all the planetary bodies throughout the universe would constitute the several organs. Man himself would also stand in this relation to the Universal Existence. Every individual, human, animal, or vegetable, would thus form a part of the great whole which shows its vitality in the evolution of organic nature. According to this view, nature is identified

with God himself, and man, as the final product of the evolution of nature—that is, of God—is entitled to be described as a Grand-Etre. There is no warrant, however, for saying that God only consciously exists as man, and therefore Humanity, as being only a part of the great whole, is not a proper object of worship, this being reserved for the Being who, as identifiable with universal nature, is the Supreme Grand-Etre.

This conclusion as to the being of God is required by the very existence of man, whose evident connection with the animal world, notwithstanding the mental and moral phenomena he presents, can be explained only on the assumption that he is the last and necessary product of the organic evolution of nature. That nature, treated as an organic whole, must be identified with God, is provable by several considerations. We cannot suppose that the phenomenal products of evolution possess aught which nature, as a whole, does not possess; and the latter, therefore, must have, either actually or potentially, all the faculties which man, the latest of such products, exhibits in exercise. But the Universal Existence having, according to this view, the faculties of reflection and reasoning, must be conceived as organic, and being so it can be no other than the Supreme Being, the Deity himself. That the material universe can be otherwise than infinite in extension is contrary to reason. There may be space where the planetary systems which we see around us are wanting, but the absence of matter, cosmical or ethereal, could only be admitted on the inadmissible assumption that space itself is finite. Space indeed is, so far as we know, only the extension of matter, and if the former is infinite, so also must be the latter. But unless the material universe thus extended has an intimate relation to the Deity, as in some sense a part of his own being, we must

conclude, either that as an infinite being he does not exist, or that there can be an infinite existence outside of, and apart from, himself. The latter idea is absurd, and therefore, on the assumption that God is infinite, we must believe that he and the material universe, which has an endless extension, form together but one whole. "Organic nature," then, is only a name for the Supreme Being of whom the universe is the material covering, this, like the body of man to which it bears analogy, owing its activity to the presence of the energizing spirit, the Deity of theologians.

No objection to this view can be derived from the gross condition in which matter is known to us. Although nature is God, yet this is only in the sense that God is nature before it has passed through that grand and gradual process of evolution which, starting from matter in its ethereal or cosmical form, or it may be in a simply organic condition, has ended in man. The existence of gross material substance furnishes, therefore, no greater difficulty than does that of the human body itself. Both present matter in what may be termed a *degraded* form, and as such they are no longer God, except in a relative sense, as having been derived from his own being. To some minds a more serious difficulty is created by the idea that the possession by "organic nature" of the power of reflection or reasoning requires that it shall have "personality." If nature be God, we must suppose it to have personality, and the difficulty in conceiving of the possibility of this leads to the rejection of the identity between God and nature. The objection, however, is founded on the mistaken idea that, by the hypothesis, nature must be capable of reasoning or reflection at every part. But this is by no means necessary, as may be shown by reference to the analogous case of the human body.

Here, although the muscular fibres reach to every extremity, and the nervous system is equally extended, yet consciousness resides alone in the brain as the organ of thought. Man may, therefore, be said to reflect and reason only by his brain, although every part of the body goes to make up his "personality;" seeing that there could be no thought or consciousness without the fibres which centre in the cerebral mass. By analogy, as the material part of organic nature answers to the human body, the organ of divine thought is doubtless situated at some central point of the universe which we cannot hope to discover by the aid even of the most powerful instrument. That organ will, however, differ as widely from the brain as the impalpable ether differs from the human body; and the divine thought must be equally superior in its activity to that of man. The "personality" of nature, in fact, requires only the presence at some point within its circumference of such a principle of thought activity; bearing the same relation in all respects to the material universe as does the thinking principle to the body of man.¹

This view differs little, practically, from that entertained by the advocates of the creational hypothesis. In either case, God may be said to reside in some central spot from which he governs the universe. It is irrational, however, to suppose that he exists outside of material nature, and the question resolves itself into one of probabilities—whether it is more reasonable to believe

¹ A living writer, with whom I should be glad to find myself in agreement, says, "the warp and woof of the mind of God may be made up of the totality of the individual threads of consciousness, extending through the countless worlds of which this is a mere speck—a grain of sand." ("On Force and its Mental Correlates," by Charles Bray, p. 58). This idea appears, however, to *identify* the Divine Mind with the products of its evolution, making the latter portions of the being of God, and therefore actually divine. In this it differs materially from the position taken in the text.

that the universe, in which God exists, was absolutely and spontaneously created out of nothing, or that it formed part of his own being, the laws of which govern the ever-changing forms resulting from the gradual evolution of nature. The latter supposition, on the assumption that there is a God, appears to be incomparably the more rational, and it is supported by the nature of man himself, as shown in the "evolution of morality" exhibited in the preceding pages. The existence of man is the best and only positive proof of the existence of God, since by this alone can be explained the possession by the former of his peculiar faculties. These can only have been derived from God, of whose being man, as a product of the evolution of organic nature, partakes. Man himself undergoes a process of gradual development, showing itself at first as an awakening consciousness to the experiences of life, followed by certain differentiations, the nature of which depends on that of the phenomena which have been influential in originating them. The laws of moral evolution are perfectly analogous to those which govern the development of the intellectual faculties. The beginning of both is the simple consciousness, which becomes resolved into conscience in response to external stimuli, the conscience differing morally and intellectually only in the ideas about which it is concerned. In either case, the teachings of experience are appropriated by thought or reflection, giving rise to a feeling of fitness or unfitness, which, through its habitual activity, becomes instinctive. In relation to moral action, agreement with this instinct is the test of propriety, which thus becomes fixed in the mind itself, instead of being sought in the consequences of the action to be judged. That which is evil will thenceforth be avoided, because it does not agree with the *instinct of moral propriety*—or goodness—which

has thus been formed in the mind as the moral conscience. The "evolution of morality" may be explained then as the gradual formation of conscience as the result of the activity of consciousness in relation to the experiences of the social life. The soul, that which displays its activity in consciousness, being, however, derived from God himself, not as having been made in his image, but as an evolutionary product of his own essence, the development of the soul's faculties display the unfolding of the divine nature in man. Viewed in this light, the conscience may be described as the expression in the human soul of the divine consciousness, which becomes revealed as an instinct of moral propriety, as the soul's experiences are enlarged and the intellectual faculties become perfected in their operation.

The divine origin of the soul here supposed has something in common with the ancient belief expressed in the dogma of the *descent and ascent of souls*. It has, however, one point of superiority. That dogma was founded on the idea of the impurity of matter, which was thought to have attracted the soul, imprisoning it in the body, by escape from which alone could it hope to attain to the proper exercise of its faculties. This notion is exactly opposite to that on which the evolution of morality is founded. According to this view, the body, so far from being an incumbrance, is really an aid to the soul, and is, in fact, absolutely necessary to the development of its powers and faculties. The body is just as much a part of the man as the soul itself, and instead of the former being a source of impurity, its intervention is required that the latter may attain to the knowledge which can alone fit it for existence in a higher sphere. Unless, however, the soul itself partakes of the nature of matter, this statement requires some qualification, since we cannot imagine the existence of

spirit independent of a bodily organism. The analogy between the being of God, who has the universe for his garment, and that of man, the conditions of whose present existence requires some material adjunct more gross than the ethereal substance of organic nature, would lead us to believe that in the future life man may have this for his material covering.

But, although the old doctrine of the *descent and ascent of souls* was vitiated by its depreciation of the value of the bodily organism as a means of developing the soul's faculties, yet the notion that the body is the source of impurity is not without an important element of truth. There is no doubt that the less influential, under healthy conditions of mind, the mere physical requirements are over the life of man, the more are the higher faculties of the soul exercised and the nobler part of man's nature becomes developed. The material nature must not, however, be kept under by the artificial means of asceticism or spiritual tyranny. The ascendancy of the soul over its material associate, can be permanent only when it is arrived at as the result of the perfect development of man's whole being. Hence the impropriety of the early denunciations against marriage which, although certainly a consequence of man's material existence, is yet required by the organic laws to which he is subjected, and the instincts in which they find expression. The opposition to marriage and to the sexual act on which it is based must, to be just, spring from some other source than that of the exploded idea of the impurity of matter. Such intercourse between the sexes will cease only when the intellectual side of man's being perfectly predominates over his animal nature, and wholly, therefore, only when the gross material organism of the present life shall have given place to the more ethereal frame of a fully

developed condition. In the meantime, however, its actions may be governed by a sense of its importance as the medium provided by nature for the perpetuation of the human race, and therefore as an essential element in the progress of humanity towards intellectual and moral perfection.

The recognition of the real nature of man leads to a perception of what should be the true aim of human life. The Universal Existence embracing all things must be perfect in itself, and display perfect harmony in the action of its forces or faculties. That which man ought to strive after, and which he must ultimately attain, is such a moral and intellectual perfection as is exhibited by the Divine Being from which he is an emanation. This can be effected only by a perfect life in all its relations, and particularly the observance of the true law of love, which requires that nothing pertaining to one's duty towards one's-self and one's fellowmen shall be neglected. This rule embraces all morality; not merely the lower, which has to do with man, but also the higher, which has relation to God, and which embraces, if it is not synonymous with, religion, as distinguished from theology. The sanction for both the active and the passive virtues is to be found in man's duty to himself as a child of God, and moral obligation may therefore be placed on the deeper basis of duty to God himself. The requirement is to live in strict accordance with the principles of man's nature, and as this is derived from God, His being may be said to supply the real test of moral conduct. The moral precept "be ye pure, as God is pure," *i.e.*, "be perfect, as God is perfect," expresses that truth, and its observance constitutes the chief requirement of religion. In this we have the condition of holiness which is required to place the human soul *en rapport*

with the Divine Soul. Communion with the Divine Being, is thus no doubt the necessary result or accompaniment of a condition of spiritual perfection. The closeness of communion will depend on the degree of "holiness," perfect harmony with God being possible only when perfect purity has been attained to; or, in other words, when the Divine nature in man has been perfectly developed, so far as this is possible under the limiting conditions of the human organism. What has been said as to passive morality is no less true in relation to the active virtues. As was stated above, however much these two phases of moral conduct may differ objectively, subjectively they have a common basis which is to be sought in the nature of man as derived from the Universal Existence. The "purity" which is so essential an element of the religious life, implies therefore a life of active as well as of passive virtue. That which has to be considered is the perfection of one's own being, and duty to one's-self, no less than that to our fellow-men as members of a common brotherhood, requires the practice of benevolence and the cultivation of the altruistic sentiment. This view is not inconsistent with the teaching of those who declare that actions are right because they "conduce to the well-being of mankind;" since no action can be for the moral benefit of the individual which has a tendency to injure others. Something more is required, however, than a *criterion of morality* such as is thus supplied.¹ The ethical quality of actions has to be accounted for, and this can be done only by recognising that "morality is the product of the evolution of the divine idea in man under the conditions imposed by his present life, to be perfected only when man's higher being has proved itself victor in the conflict it is ever sustaining with the

¹ See *supra*, vol. i. p. 6.

malign influences of material existence." With the progress of the race in general culture those influences will become weaker and weaker, and the soul's faculties will gradually attain their full development and unerring exercise. At this epoch God in man will be constantly revealed, and the teachings of conscience will supply a perfect standard of right conduct. We have here the answer to those who object that no explanation can be given of what is meant by "moral perfection." This is the attainment by the human soul of the highest degree of internal illumination of which it is capable, accompanied by the complete performance of all the moral obligations which the laws of its nature require, for their own sake merely and without any reference to the pleasurable consequences attendant upon virtuous action. Possibly this perfection will never be attained by the race during the existence of man on this earth, and, if at all, it must be looked for in the future state of immortality, which the individual rather than the race is undoubtedly born to.

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- Page 149, line 24, for "Arbors," read "Abors."
,, 157, note 5, for "Ed. 1870," read "Ed. 1807."
,, 216, line 24, for "Masters," read "Musters,"
,, 296, line 29, for "deprive one of," read "deprive one of it."
,, 405, note i., for "Wilkins," read "Burckhardt."
,, 448, note 3, for "*op cit*," read "Grote *op cit*."
,, 460, line 27, for "paternal," read "fraternal,"

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- Page 147, note 1, for "Philostati, &c." read "Philostrati de Tyanensi Apollonio Libri viii. 7."
,, 151, note 1, for "The Laws of Menu," read "Chips."
,, 201, line 16, for "deities," read "duties."
,, 220, line 16, for "Vead," read "Veda."
,, 226, line 27, for "Robillas," read "Rohillas."
,, 288, line 15, for "Work," read "Word."
,, 319, for "*hypobase*" and "*anabase*," read "*hypobosis*" and "*anabasis*."
,, 357, note 1, for "Zerzog," read "Herzog."
,, 365, line 28, for "their heirs" read "their heirs;"