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Essential Theology

Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



Bishop D.R. Vestal, PhD
Larry L Yates, ThD, DMin

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

Essential Theology

Chapter One--The God Idea

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

voice of God.

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter Two--The Mediator

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter Three--Incarnation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter Four--Sacrifice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

some provision?

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter Five--Authority of Essential Theology

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter Six--Origin and Significance of Essential Theology

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

destroy the fundamental conceptions underlying these dogmas.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

explain the first terms in the series.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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