

ON
RELIGIOUS PROGRESS
BEYOND THE CHRISTIAN PALE.

An Address .

DELIVERED AT ST. MARTIN'S HALL, LONDON,

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I do not propose to explore the darkness or the twilight of prehistoric time further than to say that the marvellous revelations of geological science—and the words recall to my mind, the judicious advice given by Sir Robert Peel to his very reverend uncle, “Take care how you enter upon a wrestling with the geologists, or you may have a fearful fall”—the revelations of geological science are every day affording new evidence of the existence of our race in very remote ages, and of the progress of man, and of the mind of man, from a very low to a very high condition. There can be little doubt that human beings existed long before the religious instincts could be developed, when the letters of the alphabet were indistinct and few, and few the words of the vocabulary; when fire was undiscovered, and the art of cooking was unknown to man, when no garments clothed his nakedness, and no roof sheltered his head, when he could not count ten upon his fingers, made no provision for the morrow, had no sense of duty, no shrine for worship, no knowledge of God or thoughts of heaven or hell. Between this state of things, of which some still existing, but gradually disappearing, races of men afford living illustrations, and the present days of penetrating enquiry, of ever-brightening light, ever-extending knowledge—what a comparison! what a contrast!

Next to this epoch of utter intellectual darkness came a phase, scarcely to be called religious, in which the frights and fears of men associated their wants and sufferings with some mysterious agencies, generally of a malignant character, and to be conciliated by offerings and sacrifices. Soon priests and preachers seized upon this element of human frailty, and made it the instrument of their own influence, as able to divert the mischief with which busy demons molested men. And of this, too, we may find still busy breathing specimens. In the *Fetishes* of Africa distributed by wandering impostors, in the *Kapus* and *Taboos* of the islanders of the Pacific, by which the native chiefs terrorized; in the belief in witchcraft, not wholly eradicated even among our own people, we may study the weaknesses which once were common to all, and which still linger amidst the masses of mankind. At this hour, millions of almanacs are sold in China, in which many pages are filled with pictures of the varieties of devils, to be studied by parents for the protection of their children, lovers for the fascination of those whom they desire to entangle, merchants for the success of their adventures, sailors for security against tempests, the afflicted for the cure of diseases,—in a word, immunity from all the evils of life.

Next dawns another era, described in a book which I should like to see transferred from the apochrypha to a higher place. It is the "Wisdom of Solomon." From this and its neighbour, the Book of "Ecclesiasticus," and, from the pages of Shakespere, Goethe was wont to say he derived his highest inspirations. Here is the religion which was that of the greater portion of the intellectual world, anterior to the days of Confucius—it was his religion, and that of the sages of his time.

“1.—Surely vain are all men by nature, who are ignorant of God, and could not out of the good things that are seen know Him that is: neither by considering the works did they acknowledge the work-master.

2.—But deemed either fire, or wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the violent waters, or the lights of heaven. to be the gods which govern the world.

3.—With whose beauty, if they were delighted, took them to be gods; let them know how much better the Lord of them is: for the first author of beauty hath created them.

4.—But if they were astonished at their power and virtue, let them understand by them how much mightier He is that made them.

5.—For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably, the maker of them is seen.

6.—But yet for this, they are the less to be blamed: for they peradventure err, seeking God, and desirous to find Him.”

Wisdom of Solomon, xiii.—1 to 6.

There is a wonderful resemblance between the religious rites, creeds and worship of nations passing through the transition state from the lower to the higher conceptions of God—from the ignorant and unphilosophical views of creation to the recognition of the great eternal laws, which are every day more and more developed by scientific inquiry, and better and better understood, as they convey us into wider and wider fields of space and time. Miraculous agencies form a part of the machinery of all rude religions. They have been always, in half-informed ages, claimed by those who professed to have messages to deliver from Heaven. Vambéry, lately travelling as a Dervish in Eastern Asia, carried with him a bag of dust, picked up in the streets, which he was supposed to have brought from the Tomb of the Prophet. He obtained the credit of having wrought numerous miracles, and passed in all the odour of sanctity through localities where any detection of his real character would have imperilled his life. I once saw, in the neighbourhood of Damascus, a companion smitten with dumbness, and his speech after some time restored by a green turbaned magician, a descendant of Mahomet, and in the supposed miracle I am quite sure there was no collusion between the parties. I collected in the East evidences of the displays of the necromantic art which would appear incredible to European intelligence; but let a believing, ignorant and timid man be delivered over to one whom he fancies to be possessed of supernatural power, and the prostration will exhibit itself in forms marvellous, and seemingly miraculous. Miracles even now are not unfrequently appealed to by the Catholic Church, and there is scarcely a spot in Southern Europe where some popular patriot saint is not believed to have the power of influencing supernatural change. A Mormon missionary came to me in China with a message from the leaders of this latest exhibition of fanaticism and folly. He reminded me that tens of thousands of my countrymen had been converted by the signs and wonders which Mormon saints had wrought, on which he asked me to become a leader in the great revolution. I stopped a long outpouring by saying, "Work a miracle: walk on the ceiling with your head downwards, or make the inkstand move which is now before me." He said "You are one of the faithless and unbelieving generation," and left me not a little exasperated at my incredulity.

A narrow selfishness characterised most of the religious credences of remote time. The gods of ancient nations were always those who regarded them alone with special favour, and excluded other people from their paternal regards. The Chinese call their country—the land o'er-canopied by Heaven—the central flowery kingdom—beyond whose circumference nothing is to be found but barbarism and weeds and darkness. The

ancient Hebrews looked upon heathens with pitiless scorn and hate. Of the old religion of the Hungarians I find this description in a Magyar book :

"They believed in one God, whom they called Isten, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the director of the elements, and the source of all good. They had their sacrifices of fire, and addressed the winds and the waters as his manifestations. They pictured Isten as an old grey-bearded king—sovereign of life and death,—having his abode above, whence he directed all the events below—sometimes he visited earth as a wandering judge, and distributed justice among good and evil doers—working miracles—speaking in thunder, and punishing by the lightning flash. (The Hungarians still call the lightning "the arrow of God.") They imagined he was their especial protector, and called him, as they still call him, the "God of the Magyars," as the Jews called Jehovah the "God of Israel." They believed that he placed a conquering sword in the hands of Magyar believers, and was engaged in perpetual conflict with Ördög, the Spirit of Evil. Multitudinous angels were his ministers and messengers, whose doings form the groundwork of the traditional mythology of the people."

The paternal relations of God to his children are seldom referred to in the Old Testament. Only thrice is he there called by the designation so frequently applied to him by Jesus Christ and Paul, that of our "Our Father;" and when it is used, it is not in the spirit of a general, filial character and brotherhood, but as "the Lord God of Israel," (I. Chron. xxix., 10), the Redeemer of the Hebrews, and as belonging only to His chosen people.

The Hebrew *cultus* was well suited to the civilization of the days in which it was taught. Mingled with conceptions of the Deity which have no where else been reached in sublimity and beauty, are material pictures of Elohim and Jehovah, as King and Priest, which have left a permanent impress on all the theological literature and especially on all the devotional poetry of Christendom. He who, on the one hand, is represented as the invisible, "whom no eye hath seen nor can see;" the Unapproachable, the Unchangeable, is also painted as sitting on a regal throne, arrayed in splendid garments, holding a sword and sceptre, surrounded by angels and archangels, and giving audible expression to regrets and to repentance, to hatred and anger, and all the infirm passions of man; as a high priest he presides over and enjoys the altar sacrifices and oblations, listening to harps and psalteries and directing the minutest details, not only of ceremonial observances, but of domestic life. In the book of Leviticus many usages are

prescribed and prohibitions inculcated which Buddhism and Brahminism have preserved. They suited a low civilization. To this hour, among the Christian Copts of Upper Egypt, the Hebrew practices of circumcision and polygamy are maintained: for all religions will represent the civilization of those who profess them. None can endure which are stationary in their conditions. Not long ago, an image was picked up near Penang which the Catholics claimed as being the Virgin Mary, and insisted that it should have a place in their chapel. The Chinese demanded it as being the Queen of heaven, and, as they were the stronger party, they carried it away, and placed it in a Buddhist temple.

There is no part of the world where the Jews are more cruelly persecuted and oppressed than in the land of their fathers. When travelling in Judea, I had a Hebrew attendant, a young man, whose name was Joseph. He once startled me with a sudden question—"Was your prophet one of our nation? Did he teach you to hate and wrong us? If so, what must we think of him? if not, what must we think of you?" The answer was obvious as to the instructions of the great Christian teacher. But what could I say of the practice of Christendom?

But we are amending our conduct, as are the Jews their creed; and this metropolis is now giving striking evidence of our emancipation from the thralldom of religious prejudice. All is progress. The requirements of Moses are no longer the laws of the Hebrew people. The Talmud and the Mishna are losing their authority. The spirit of Mendelshon is spreading among his race. They, too, are entering upon an inheritance of emancipation, and showing how worthily, by their contributions to every demand of charity, of education and of progress.

It would seem as if in the advance of ages there are grand epochs in which the world is brightened by unwonted effulgences of intellectual light. The present century is one of those eras. That which preceded the advent of Christ, by about five or six hundred years, is yet more remarkable. It was then the voice of Confucius was heard, which is now listened to reverentially by five hundred millions of men—he was one of the wisest and calmest of moralists, who pretended to no miraculous powers, established no religious rites, professed no intimacy with the councils of heaven. Into his temples up to this hour no idolatry has penetrated. Buddhists and Taouists speak with equal reverence of his name. Then lived Zoroaster, the founder of the Parsee religion. He said that light was the type of good, darkness of evil; but that in the struggle, which might long continue, good would finally prevail. He held that behind the light the source of light was hidden; brightest in the sun, manifest in

the flame, reflected on the ocean's face and in all that is grand and beautiful. Then, too, Gaudama taught—the last manifestation of Buddha—the incarnate perfection wrought out by millions of ages, the object of worship now of a third of the human race. There is no reason to believe that while living he ever put forward a claim to immortality. Pythagoras, the Samian sage, was a contemporary. He declared that the soul of man was a portion of the Spirit of God, and that truthfulness and purity were the best offerings to be rendered to the Deity. He proclaimed that all the world's concerns were under the control of law and harmony and order, and first announced the sun, and not the earth, to be the centre of our system. Plato and Socrates belong to nearly the same period; and here I cannot but refer to the beautiful and eloquent recognition by Mr. Gladstone of the splendid services—too little appreciated—which the Greeks have rendered to art, science, literature—aye, even to religion. This too is about the period when the great Hebrew prophets poured out their passionate denunciations of the wickedness of the people while they presented to them visions of future hope and joy. What, in those glorious days, was the condition of these islands and their inhabitants? Since then it may well be said “the course of empire westward took its way,” and to the new developments of mind we are bringing noble and becoming contributions.

No religions have ever obtained or maintained a stronghold among men, unless they have had in them many elements of truth; and were our missionaries, instead of endeavouring to depreciate and root up whatever they find in the fields which they explore, and as if they had the monopoly of all verities, repudiating alike the gold and the dross—the right and the wrong—the good and the evil which abound there—were they honestly to acknowledge that there is some wisdom other than their own—some authorities beyond themselves to which they owe respect, if not reverence, they might present pictures of fewer disappointments and better promises. When the Jesuits fixed themselves about two centuries ago at Peking, they had so studied the habits of the Chinese people, and obtained so much popularity from their sagacity and the aid they gave to astronomical and geographical sciences, that one of the Emperors wrote with his own hand the inscription which was placed over the portal of the Christian Church, in which a Prime Minister soon became a worshipper; and to this hour is regarded as a saint, both by Chinese and Catholics. The intemperate ignorance and fanaticism of the Franciscan and Dominican friars, led to the expulsion of the whole body of missionaries from China. They called the observances

connected with reverence for ancestors, so universal in China, blasphemous and idolatrous, and the bulls of two foolish Popes confirmed their decision. Since then the higher regions of influence have never been approached in China, and until they are, it will not be easy to move the people. The King of Siam once said to me, "Your religion does not suit my people, nor would my religion suit yours; and you and I may be equally engaged in the search of truth. Now, if your religion teach you to love me, and my religion teach me to love you, that part of both religions is true." And at another time, "If in our sacred books there are teachings inconsistent with the discoveries of science, such teachings are not sacred for me." And he was a Buddhistic priest, who passed eleven years in the seclusion of a convent, where he delivered himself to the study of the ancient books, and is now at the head of the Buddhist religion.

The three first characters of the "Trimetrical Classic," which is the earliest book used by every child in China, are "Man is born pure,"—and this is the foundation of Buddhism. The book goes on to say that the infant is like "an unwrought gem" committed to the responsibility of parents and teachers for education and improvement. Our life is one of a succession of probations, probations of punishments and recompenses, all to end in the final absorption of the reformed and purified spirit into the *Nirvana*, the serene, passionless and reposing God-head, which was the primary creator of all. In the processes of millions upon millions of ages, manifestations in the shape of a Buddha, the highest incarnations of knowledge and excellence, are made to man, and the present Buddha is supposed to have appeared five or six hundred years before the Christian era.

The leading tenets of Buddhism are: that in a remote eternity of the past, not calculable by man, a primal, self-existent energy, called, by slow processes, the whole creation into being, subjected it to eternal and irrevocable laws, and satisfied with its great work, the creating spirit sank into ever during repose, into which all that is pure and spiritual will be attracted and finally absorbed, there to dwell in everlasting peace and serene blessedness. They do not hold that the beginning of the history of our race was sin, and that its ending will be woe, but proclaim the innocence of the babe, and the final salvation of man.

There are seven Buddhist hells, the representation of whose tortures often cover the walls of the Buddhist temples. The distribution of penalties is left to seven judges, whose tribunals receive the dead and fix their doom. The liar is delivered over to demons who, with fiery pincers, pull out his tongue; the glutton has his bowels slowly removed from his living body; the drunkard

is chained down to burning sands, close to beverages which he cannot reach; the incontinent are punished by cruel mutilations. Horrors, worse than those of Dante's Inferno, and which are represented with all the vivid and varied coloring of Chinese art, constantly meet the eye of the devotee. They are great advances on the monotonous pictures of purgatory and hell—the sufferers, flames and devils, which adorn the convents and the churches of Catholic nations.

Buddhism is an inert, inactive religion. Its highest virtue is the contemplation of Buddha. Its catalogue of merits and demerits gives to observances, often frivolous and foolish, a ridiculous position in the scale of excellence; yet it recommends strict examination and the knowledge of self as an all-important duty. I have a collection of pictures, the work of a Chinese artist, representing the various employments of two young slaves, whom the Emperor gave to one of his sages. To the youths he entrusted two phials, one of a bright red, the other of a dark blue color. They were to accompany him wherever he went. In the red bottle were to be thrown every sensible word he uttered, and every kind deed he did; into the blue all his foolish sayings and unworthy acts; and every evening they were to be produced, that he might draw the balance between his virtues and his defects, and take care that every day the amount should be increased on the side of virtue. Such self-examination may be not unworthy of our imitation.

The spirit of Buddhism is generally tolerant. The King of Siam once told the Catholic Bishop of Bangkok, that as he had not much success among the Siamese he would hand over to him 130 Annanite prisoners, whom he might try to convert to the Catholic faith. Toleration has been called indifferentism; but as the doctrine of fatalism, in some shape or other, pervades the oriental world, the notion prevails that no man ought to be punished for that he could not prevent or counteract. The doctrine of exclusive salvation is superseded by the teaching that an All-knowing, All-directing Creator could never punish a half-informed wandering creature for erroneous opinions, such opinions being beyond his control.

Once conversing with Dr. Falconer on the boundlessness of geological eras, he pointed to a dial, and said, "Look at these figures—the sixty minutes that make up the hour—now, our discoveries have not reached to the first five." If astronomy have given us some notions of infinite space—taught us to contemplate stars which, with railway speed, we could not reach in hundreds of years, the contemplations of Buddhism have given us some notions of infinite time; and when we talk, as we sometimes lightly do, of eternity and eternal punishments, if we

will listen to some Buddhistic imagery, we shall get some perception of what is meant by that terrible word.

"Take every drop of water," says one Buddhistic teacher, "from ten thousand oceans and multiply them by every atom in ten thousand worlds, and you may form some idea of the cycles which belong to eternity."

"There is no spot," says another, "in heaven, earth or sea, of the size of a pin's head, which, in his progress towards perfection, has not, in some personal shape or other, been visited by Buddha."

Again,—“Erect a vast encircling wall, let it be miles in circumference and hundreds of yards in depth, fill it with grains of sand, and let an angel once in ten thousand years remove a single grain, when all are removed, you are but at the beginning of eternity.”

Of all the religions in the world, Buddhism is by far the most extensively professed. It is the creed of more than four hundred millions of the human family, yet of all religions it is perhaps the least understood. It resembles Brahminism in its leading outlines and there are ancient temples in Java—where Islamism is now on the ascendant—where the symptoms of the two faiths are strangely blended. I am not aware that any representative of the more intelligent Buddhists has ever made his way to English society. If he should have something to learn amongst us, he would have much to teach, and he would help to confirm the conclusion at which I have arrived, after a long experience, that “Good men and true,” the excellent of the earth, are to be found among all tribes and tongues.

No religion has a stronger hold than Buddhism upon its followers. In Siam, and some other countries, the priests are dependent upon the people for their daily bread. Every morning a certain number of them come forth from the convents. They are allowed to enter no houses, to ask no alms, to return no thanks, yet, in the morning, before almost every door, an offering is found, which the priest collects and silently transfers to his scrip, or to his pot.

The Brahminical faith has been undergoing a great and a wholesome purgation. Rammohun Roy gave the first important impulse to Brahminical reform. A Brahmin of high caste, and rising superior to the prejudices of his race, he determined to visit Europe, which he did in spite of the vehement opposition of his order, and especially of the women of his Zenana, who were powerful enough to prevent his carrying out his intention of bringing with him his son and heir. In Europe he died, and was first interred in the park of the beloved friend with whom he was a guest, at Stapleton Grove, near Bristol; his

coffin was removed to the Cemetery of Amo's Vale, when, on the death of the owner, the property passed into other hands. He spoke and wrote English with purity and power; partook of English hospitalities, mingled with English society, and won the affectionate regards of all who were privileged, as I was, to know him, and assuredly those who knew him best honoured him most. In his volume, entitled "Precepts of Jesus," he renders a touching and emphatic homage to the divine teachings and divine life of Christ. His object, and that of his followers, has been to repudiate the authority of the more modern Brahminical books, to renounce all idolatrous worship, and to restore the faith in the spirituality of God, as taught in the Vedas. These reformers will accept no prophets as the expounders of their principles. They have now a considerable number of temples in India, from which all images are excluded, and men of considerable influence, among them the Rajah of Burdwan, have taken an active part in patronizing and promoting their doctrines. I have been present at their religious assemblies, and heard no word offensive to the highest notions of God and duty. They have a priesthood, whose task it is to expound the test of the Vedas. Music, both vocal and instrumental accompanies their devotions. The language of the Vedas is "that Brahma is self-existent, over all exalted—the Great Father—the Creator and Ruler of worlds—that He has no beginning, and can have no end—that all is derived from Him,—and as the spark from the fire, so the human soul proceeds from Him, and he who seeks and obtains a true knowledge will be purified, and finally merged in the Deity, as rivers are merged in the sea."

Such conceptions as these are a notable advance upon the familiar picturings of the Book of Genesis—suited, no doubt, to the uncultivated human mind—where God is introduced as a great workman, creating man out of dust in his own image, walking with him, talking to him, labouring and resting, planting gardens, and rearing therein a miraculous tree, driving the cattle and fowls which he has made out of the ground into the presence of Adam, taking a rib out of Adam for the formation of woman, and with his own fingers closing the flesh over the wound. Compare this with the grander revelations of the spiritual God, whom "the heaven of heavens cannot contain"—"hidden in the dark waters and the thick clouds," humbling Himself even to behold the things of earth, "dwelling in light which no man can approach," a "Spirit only to be worshipped in spirit and in truth."

Through the world the great work is going on of separating the ignorant and the perishable elements, which belong only to the past, from those divine and immortal principles, which

are the inheritance of the present, and will form an undoubted portion of the religions of the future; and it is the main object of this Address to show that we are not the only labourers in the great field of progress—to carry you with me beyond the narrow pale within which alone we are sometimes taught divine knowledge is to be found; and to interest you in those heavings of the human intellect which betoken a restlessness to be calmed only by the final triumphs of truth and freedom.

One of the great instruments of influence wielded by Mahomet was his teaching the unity and the spirituality of God. There was at one time a missionary passion among the professors of Islamism, as energetic and as adventurous as that which now moves the Christian world. Among the different sections of teachers who are endeavouring to convert the Chinese, there is no end of controversy as to the name which is to be given to God. The Jews introduced one designation, the Nestorians another, the Jesuits a third, the English missionaries a fourth, the Americans a fifth; and during the controversy the name of God was left blank in the translation of the Scriptures, which was superintended, at Shanghai, by a committee of missionaries from both sides of the Atlantic. The truth is, that there are no characters in Chinese by which the combined personality and the spirituality of the Supreme Being can be represented. I visited a Mosque in China, founded in the century immediately after the death of Mahomet, and, enquiring of the priest by what name they called the God of the Koran, "Allah," they said—which is the Hebrew Elohim—"for in Chinese there is no corresponding word;" and it may be remarked that while Christian missionaries have often employed names associated with idolatry as representatives of the God-head, the Mussulmans have everywhere introduced the name of *Allah*, bringing with it new and nobler associations. The work of civilization and of religious progress in Africa has been greatly promoted by Moslem priests, and their influence is widely extended. A friend of long experience, as governor of one of our African colonies, informed me that he had invariably found the most intelligent men from the interior, professors of Islamism, and acquainted with the Arabic tongue, and this is confirmed by my own experience in Eastern Africa. Though the Koran has many fierce denunciations against unbelievers, and there prevails very much fanaticism among the religious teachers, I was assured lately by Vambéry, the great oriental traveller, that he has found in English society an intolerance and a bigotry scarcely equalled, and certainly not exceeded, among the wildest dervishes of Bokhara.

In an address lately delivered by the Arab notables of Algiers

to the Emperor Napoleon, I find words which I would recommend as a study to some of our own prelates and pastors, urging them to "look on this picture and on that."

"Sire—We respectfully draw near your Majesty's throne to protest against the allegations which represent the natives of Algeria as a wily and fanatical people, insensible to the benefits of France.

"These exaggerated assertions, after going the round of all the most impassioned and least enlightened journals in Algeria, have even found an echo in the tribune of the Corps Législatif. It needs no laborious research in the Koran to find several verses which seem to command us to hate and war against all people not professing the Moslem faith. It is known that all religions believe they alone possess the truth and worship the true God, and consequently condemn all creeds differing from their own. It would be more useful to the general interest to bring to light the words of our Holy Book which preach concord among all nations, which render homage to all sincere religious convictions, and which remind men that they are the children of the same God.

"Moreover, we cannot refrain from protesting against what has been said on the subject of the Mussulman religious brotherhoods (Khouans). These pious associations have been made the subject of every superficial observation, and have been most unjustly commented upon by those who have written about them. Taking into account a few isolated facts, and placing faith in the replies of ignorant informants to captious questions, particular incidents have been generalised, despite the reflection that such inconsiderate judgments were raising feelings of suspicion and aversion against the whole Mussulman population.

"Upon closer investigation, it will be found that the Khouans are, for the most part, poor people, bitterly tried by the miseries of life, who seek in religious practices an assuagement of their sufferings. Moreover, religious associations are not peculiar to Algeria and Islamism; they also exist in all Catholic countries in the south of Europe, and yet none ever dreamt of transforming the penitents, congregations, and Catholic confraternities into political *secret societies*. If such accusations were true, if the Zaouias of Algeria were incessantly inciting the people in the name of the Koran, to a hatred of and holy war against the Christians—if we were really the fanatics we are said to be, is it to be supposed that our race—the pride and courage of which were attested in the Imperial letter addressed on the 6th February, 1863, to the Duke de Malakoff—would not respond to similar appeals by acts of disorder and violence in every portion of the territory? Should we have let the European

colonists peacefully settle in the midst of us, often to the detriment of our most cherished interests ?

"The great heart and elevated mind of the Emperor have not been deceived by false representations like those who mistook dignity of character for guile, and attachment to national and religious traditions for fanaticism.

"It is, therefore, under the protection of the Emperor that we place ourselves, trusting that the French people may not be prevented from esteeming and loving us as we are inclined to love and respect them. We are, Sire, &c." (Here follow the signatures.)

On one occasion, a very zealous missionary sent to Mahomet Ali, the great Pacha of Egypt, a copy of the New Testament, with a letter calling upon him to "renounce the false prophet and to accept the only saving faith." He read the letter in his Divan, and there was a great explosion of indignation, and a demand that summary punishment should be inflicted on the audacious intruder. "La! La! No! No!" said the old Viceroy, "the man is mad," and as madness is held in reverence among the Mahometans, the courtiers were silent, but the Pacha sent a message, through the English Consul-General, that it would be safer for the injudicious adviser not to tarry too long in Cairo, and he took an early departure.

The belief in an inevitable destiny has a wonderful influence among the Mahometans. A leading official in the East told me that the great instrument of his government was the judicious employment of the words *Koran*, the book, and *Kesmet*, destiny. In visiting the hospitals in the Levant, one is struck with the general resignation of the suffering patients. I once was conducted to a cave near Aleppo, in which were three men, one a powerful chieftain, who were about to be executed. They talked of death with great complacency. "It was the will of Allah, it would not be otherwise. Why should they complain?" A Mahomedan never mentions a future purpose without adding "Inshallah! if Allah will!"

The Parsees are the most adventurous and the most prosperous of Oriental merchants. Victims of religious and political persecutions, they migrated from their Persian fatherland, and took with them the ancient faith for which they had suffered. That faith was represented by the undying fire from heaven, which they profess to have received, and to have preserved, in an unbroken perpetuity from immemorial time, and which is kept ever burning in their temples. They are likely to be better known among us, as more than a hundred Parsee merchants are established in England, some of whom have brought hither the females of their family. Bombay is the principal seat of their

wealth and influence, many of them having removed there from the less promising parts of Bagdad and Bussorah. Branches of the Bombay establishments settled in China, where they occupy a very high position among the merchant princes of the celestial empire.

They have not, I believe, up to the present time ever been accompanied by any of their priesthood, or established in foreign countries any temples for the celebration of their religious rites, and especially for the becoming disposal of their dead. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are found among the Parsees, the struggle between what is stationary and what is progressive. They cast horoscopes at the birth of their children, and consult astrologers to fix an auspicious day for their weddings. Polygamy is not permitted. After death the corpse is placed in a round building, erected on an airy hill, and called "the Tower of Silence." The funeral rites are always accompanied with charitable donations, and bread, fruits and flowers are brought as oblations to the dead. But when away from home, the Parsees bury their people in cemeteries of their own, with their faces turned towards the rising sun. A common inscription on the grave stones is taken from the book of Ecclesiastes—"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity."

Superstitious beliefs and practices are repudiated by the rising generation, who contend that they are not warranted by their sacred books; and what is more important still is, that female education is making way under the enlightened patronage and generous contributions of the opulent among them. Parsee ladies have been introduced at the Court of our Queen Victoria, who honoured with a baronetcy one of them, Sir Jamsejee Jejhahoy, whose philanthropic endowments for the advancement of knowledge and the relief of suffering have been of the most splendid character.

Of the present state of Parsee opinions in religious matters, I can hardly do better than cite some passages from the work of Dadabhay Naoradji, the Professor of Gujarati in the London University, and an eminent merchant in our city—"We believe in only one God, and do not believe in any besides him. The God who created the heavens, the earth, the angels, the stars, the sun, the moon, the fire, the water, all the four elements, and all things of the two worlds. That God we believe in, Him we worship, Him we invoke. Our God has neither face, nor form, colour nor shape, nor fixed place. There is no other like Him. He is Himself such a glory that we cannot praise or describe

Him, nor our mind comprehend Him. He is the Creator of all things, but cannot create another like Himself. His is the omnipotent, highest of spirits, the distributor of justice, the provider, the protector."

"We received our religion from Zoroaster, God's true prophet, and should worship with our face towards some of the creatures of light and glory and brightness, the sun, the stars, the fire, the water, and such other things of glory; because God has bestowed on these a small spark of his own pure glory, and being exalted in creation more worthily represent him, and these are his principal commands:

"To know God as one, to know the exalted Zoroaster as his true prophet, to believe his religion as true beyond all manner of doubts, to believe in the goodness of God, not to disobey any of the divine commands, to avoid evil deeds, to be diligent for good deeds, to pray five times a day, to believe in the reckoning and justice on the fourth morning after death, to hope for heaven and to fear hell, to consider doubtless the day of general destruction and resurrection, to remember always that God has done what he willed, and shall do what he wills, to face some luminous object when worshipping God."

"Our prophet cannot save us, if we commit sin. He has told us we shall receive according as we do. None but God can save us from the consequences of our sins, and if any pretend to save another, he, the deceiver and the deceived, shall be damned to the end of the world."

"Our Saviour is our own good deeds and God. Repent and reform, and you will be deemed worthy of pardon, and you shall be benefitted and blest if you do virtuous deeds, give in charity, are kind, humble, speak sweet words, wish good to others, have a clean heart, acquire learning, speak the truth, suppress anger, are patient and contented, friendly, sensitive to shame, paying due respect to youth and age, are pious and reverent for parents and teachers; such are the friends of good men, the enemies of the bad."

I add an extract or two from the prayers used by the Parsees:

"I worship Thee from whom flow all virtuous thoughts, all virtuous words, all virtuous deeds. By my deeds I exalt and honour Thy name. Under the protection of Thy wisdom I acquire wisdom."

"Great and wise Lord, the reward that is due to the religious may I and mine receive; that reward do Thou give from Thy stores of bounty, so that here and in the spiritual world I may be exalted, and live for ever under Thine all holy leadership, Thine all virtuous protection."

"If I by thought, word or deed, intentionally or unintentionally,

have not kept Thy commands and thereby saddened Thee, I invoke, I pray, I praise Thee and beseech Thee for Thy pardon."

In these restless days, when inquiry can be no more arrested than the flow of the tide, or the march of the planets, when on every side we hear multitudinous aspirations after "more faith! more light! more knowledge!"—our duty is clear: courageously and reverently to follow truth wherever it may lead us, and honestly and openly to avow our convictions; to discharge the duty, and to exercise the right of private judgment for ourselves, and to claim the same privilege for those who come to different conclusions from ourselves. The rags and remnants of error are being scattered to the winds. In the midst of much that is discordant.

"Sounds have gone forth, that never, never die."

Let our voices be all in harmony with that divine calling, whose utterance is Excelsior! Onwards! Upwards!

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