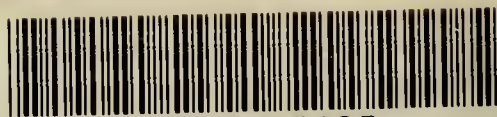


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THE GREAT LAW

THE GREAT LAW

A STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS ORIGINS AND OF THE UNITY
UNDERLYING THEM

BY

W. WILLIAMSON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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DEDICATION

*To the Friend who first prompted
the beginning of this work, and whose
cordial co-operation has made it a
labour of love.*

P R E F A C E

THE author offers no apology for bringing before the public so important a subject as is here dealt with, but he desires to draw attention to the marked contrast between his own very modest attainments, and the magnitude of the task undertaken.

The vastness of the fields of study over which he has had to travel, must itself be the excuse for any errors into which he may have fallen. To analyse and tabulate results drawn from so many different sources—from the religions of India and of Egypt, of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, of Mexico and Peru, of Scandinavia and the Celtic nations, of Greece, of Rome, and of Christendom—would obviously tax the powers of abler writers than the author can hope to be. The complete study of any one of these systems of religion or mythology, would imply an expenditure of long sustained labour which he has not been in a position to undertake, and an extent of detailed knowledge to which he can lay no claim.

But the knowledge of others has been recorded in many works of high authority, and it is to the labours of these distinguished authors, both ancient and modern, that the present writer has been largely indebted for the materials with which this work has been constructed. The scholarly investigation of recent years, by such writers as Robertson-Smith, Tylor, Lang, Hartland, and Frazer, has now placed the study of comparative mythology on a more scientific basis. Care, therefore, has been taken to verify important statements by reference to works written in the light of the most recent scholarship, but many statements here made are amply vouched for by the writers of a more ancient date, while in the majority of instances where the modern authorities only repeat the facts stated by the old, the names of both will be equally recorded.

The facts so stated by all those great authorities in their respective fields of study, have been closely sifted and placed side by side, so as to render mutual support, and supply corroborative evidence, while care has been taken to avoid drawing deductions from insufficient premises, or laying undue emphasis on any individual record.

In the first section of this work, under the

head of "The Symbolism," will be found the great mass of evidence which seems to point so unmistakably to some common origin of the dogma and ritual of the world's religions.

Whatever may be thought at first sight of the theory propounded in the chapters on "The Interpretation," it may at least legitimately claim full and earnest consideration, for it offers a reasonable explanation of world-wide myths, and correlates rites and customs in far separated lands.

Nor can the object in view be materially affected even though errors in the presentation may have crept in. The symbolism may have been imperfectly and even faultily stated, but it is by the reasonableness and the comprehensiveness of the interpretation, which is one that has never previously been offered in its entirety, that this work must win its way.

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BOOK I
THE SYMBOLISM

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THE GREAT LAW

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

No subject can be of greater interest or importance than a research into the origin and growth of human thought.

The Science of Language has, by careful analytical investigation, gradually classified the varying speech and dialects of men. Tracing the derivation of words to their roots, it has established the fact that races of men living in widely separated lands are yet allied through a common ancestry; and thus Philology, by classifying languages according to their real relationships, has laid the foundations of a real Science of Ethnology.

But the study of the means by which human thought finds expression, is merely a preliminary to the study of that thought itself, which in the early days of all nations will be found to be mainly concerned with religious

and ethical ideas. A Science of Religion, therefore, is what the world so greatly stands in need of, but that Science still lies in the womb of the future. The discovery of a purpose running through all religions, the establishment of an idea which may manifestly be seen as underlying them all, would certainly produce changes of the most momentous character. New life would be imparted to religious thought throughout the whole world, and men's feet would be again set towards that "City of God," ridiculed and disbelieved in by the many, dimly perceived by some, and steadfastly sought for by the few.

It was in the hopes of contributing some data—insufficient though they might be to stand alone—towards that great science of the future, the Science of Religion, that the present work was undertaken.

All thinkers must recognise that the religious systems of mankind occupy a commanding position amongst the striking and persistent phenomena of life. But science has hitherto refused, and still refuses, to recognise her duty to investigate these phenomena.

"The definition of the laws which have shaped, and are still shaping, the course of human progress is the work of science no less

than it has been her work to discover the laws which have controlled the course of evolution throughout life in all the lower stages. But the spirit in which she has addressed herself to the one task is widely different from that in which she has undertaken the other. To her investigations in biology, science has brought a single-minded devotion to the truth, a clear judgment, and a mind absolutely unfettered by prejudice or bias: the splendid achievements of the century in this department of knowledge are the result. But when in the ascending scale of life she has reached man, the spirit in which her investigations have been continued is entirely different. . . . From the beginning science finds him under the sway of forces new to her, and with one of the strongest of these forces she herself at a very early stage comes into conflict. He holds beliefs which she asserts have no foundation in reason; and his actions are controlled by strange sanctions which she does not acknowledge. The incidents and events connected with these beliefs occupy, however, a great part of his life, and begin to influence his history in a marked manner. He develops into nations, and attains to a certain degree of civilisation; but these beliefs and religions appear to grow with his

growth, and to develop with his development. A great part of his history continues to be filled with the controversies, conflicts, social movements, and wars connected with them. . . . What then are these religious systems which fill such a commanding place in man's life and history? What is their meaning and function in social development? To ask these questions is to find that a strange silence has fallen upon science. She has no answer."

But the questions thus formulated by Benjamin Kidd in his "Social Evolution" are the most important that can be asked, and no comprehensive view of history, or of man's relative position in the scheme of things, can be realised till the answer has been found. It would therefore seem well to piece together such knowledge as we have at hand, and many extracts will be made in the following pages from the works of deep thinkers and patient explorers in their respective fields of study. But the most careful analysis by the greatest writers would scarcely enable us to build up a logical synthesis without the knowledge about the early races of man, which the ever increasing store of theosophic literature has put at our disposal.

It is, then, from these two sources that we

shall draw. The former provides materials for building up an intelligible theory, while the illumination supplied by the latter will give cohesion to the parts, and weld the whole into something better and more stable, let us hope, than mere theory.

The greater part of this work, then, will be found to consist of extracts drawn from the many high authorities whose writings are the chief sources, and in some cases the only sources, of our knowledge about these archaic religions. Extracts, too, will be quoted relating to customs of high antiquity—customs which, though prevailing among comparatively savage races, are manifestly related by a very close tie to what will be shown to be the very heart and core of all religious observances, the idea of sacrifice.

The inferences to be drawn from the many comparative statements will be sufficiently obvious. At some future time, when the great Science of Religion has come into existence, further and wider generalisations based on these inferences may be established, but in the meantime we must use what light we have, and it will be in the concluding chapters—those dealing more especially with the interpretation—that the great value of the theosophic teach-

ings will be apparent—coming to our aid as they do in helping us to understand the inferences which have already been drawn, and in throwing new illumination over the whole extent of our knowledge. Indeed, were it only from thus rendering intelligible and harmonious facts drawn from so many different sources, the theosophic teachings may be considered as earning a new warrant for consideration in the regard of all such as approach the subject with a mind free from prejudice or bias.

The term “infant humanity” is sometimes used to describe the earliest beginnings of mankind. It is a manifest misnomer with regard to mankind at the date referred to, with so vast an antiquity behind it. It nevertheless suggests the appropriate parallel with the individual, for neither the race nor the individual are left alone to struggle up to manhood. Both alike receive the guidance and instruction needed. The instruction given to the child has too its correspondence with that offered to the race. Symbols are to humanity in its childhood, what picture-books and toys are to the child. Indeed it may very pertinently be asked, what nation or people is there, even at the present stage of the world’s development, about whom it can truly be said that they have passed beyond the

need of symbols? Among the most advanced races there are, no doubt, some few who are capable of rising to relatively abstract thought—capable therefore of worshipping God in spirit and in truth—but of the number who imagine that they are so capable, there are probably few at the back of whose minds some unwitting image of the idea so worshipped does not stand as symbol.

Now the chief object placed before mankind in these early days as the great symbol of Deity was the Sun, and the wisdom and appropriateness of this choice by the divine instructors should become more and more apparent as the concluding chapters of this book are reached.

For there is an appropriateness in symbols as there is in words. “At the root of the problem of the origin of language lies the question why certain words were originally used to represent certain ideas, or mental conditions, or whatever we may call them. The word may have been used for the idea because it had an evident fitness to be used rather than another word, or because some association of ideas, which we cannot now trace, may have led to its choice. That the selection of words to express ideas was ever purely arbitrary, that

is to say, such that it would have been consistent with its principle to exchange any two words as we may exchange algebraic symbols, or to shake up a number of words in a bag and re-distribute them at random among the ideas they represented, is a supposition opposed to such knowledge as we have of the formation of language. And not in language only, but in the study of the whole range of art and belief among mankind, the principle is continually coming more and more clearly into view, that man has not only a definite reason, but very commonly an assignable one, for everything that he does and believes."¹ But it is recognised that some languages express better than others the thoughts intended to be conveyed. It is a rather subtle idea, and one not often dwelt on, but it would seem that the whole power of sound must lie at its base. There must be an eternal fitness in the relation of sound to thought, aye, and to animate and inanimate objects as well. The language which expresses with absolute accuracy the thoughts and objects intended to be expressed, has not yet been brought into existence, though the ancient Sanskrit is said to have approached nearer to that ideal perfection than any other, but it

¹ Tylor's "Early History of Mankind," pp. 56-7.

should be apparent that when that language does arise, its words will be words of power.

As words are the symbols of our thoughts, so the "Book of Nature" spread before us may be considered as the sign or symbol of the Divine thought—may, in fact, be the expression of that Word "without which nothing was made which was made."

"In the symbol proper," writes Thomas Carlyle, "what we can call a symbol, there is ever, more or less distinctly and directly, some embodiment and revelation of the Infinite; the Infinite is made to blend itself with the Finite, to stand visible, and, as it were, attainable there. By symbols, accordingly, is man guided and commanded, made happy, made wretched. He everywhere finds himself encompassed with symbols, recognised as such or not recognised: the Universe is but one vast Symbol of God; nay, if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a Symbol of God; is not all that he does symbolical; a revelation to sense of the mystic God-given force that is in him; a 'Gospel of Freedom' which he, the 'Messias of Nature,' preaches as he can by act and word? Not a hut he builds but is the visible embodiment of a thought; but bears visible record of invisible things; but is, in the

transcendental sense, symbolical as well as real.”

Symbolism we shall thus find to be intimately associated with every form of religion down to our own times.

As will be shown in a subsequent chapter on the Early Races of Man, religious systems have not always been a necessity for the human race. Although a most important point to bear in mind, it cannot be further enlarged on here. It was on the continent of Atlantis that the need first arose, and it is the Adepts of the Fourth root race, who, in anticipation of the destruction of the doomed continent, conducted large groups of colonists to other lands, that we must regard as the founders of those systems of thought, some of which endure to this day as the great religions of the world.

India—the land subsequently colonised and conquered by the first offshoots of the Fifth or Aryan race—was one of the chief scenes of their activity. They also led Atlantean colonists to Egypt, Chaldea, Mexico, and Peru, in fact they settled at different times in most parts of the habitable world. But wherever they went they carried with them the keys of knowledge, and were therefore the natural instructors of mankind, and the development of concrete

religions having become a necessity for man's further progress, it was the founding of these religions (which in later years were destined to develop into such grotesque and curious forms) that had now to be undertaken by them.

The basic truths which they taught may be summed up in a few words, though the multitudinous and ever-varying systems of symbolism in which these truths were clothed, will be a most complicated and difficult subject of study.

They began, then, by teaching the people that there was one great First Cause. This they represented by the circle, which is also the symbol of boundless space, but this symbol was seldom explained to the people. The two aspects of the great First Cause are the active and the passive principles in nature, in other words spirit and matter. The analogy of this differentiation may be recognised throughout the whole scale of evolution, from the first divine outbreathing at the dawn of the building of a universe, down to the fission of the minutest cell of protoplasm. The occult symbol by which it is known is the circle intersected by the horizontal straight line.

The active principle was generally symbolised by the Adept teachers as the Sun, the passive as the Moon (though we shall find later on in

the Babylonian religion a partial reversal of this order). The remainder of the visible universe was treated as the offspring of these two, thus forming an early and archaic trinity.

The powers of the universe were also objectivised as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. This was also regarded as a trinity, though it is not so in reality, as the Preserver and the Destroyer are but two aspects of the One. The Babylonians may be said to have recognised this in their worship of the dual God Bel-Merodach. Whether the Preserver and Destroyer eventually came to be known by the names of Osiris and Typhon, Baal and Moloch, or Mithra and Ahriman, they were recognised as the lords of life and death, and so treated as symbols of rebirth, whether it were rebirth of men, of worlds, of solar-systems, or of the entire Cosmos. They represented Manwantara and Pralaya, life and death, light and darkness—the one inseparable from the other, and in later stages of the world's religions they necessarily became the symbols of good and evil.

In offering the circle or solar-disk as the fittest symbol of the supreme God, the Adept teachers had in view not only natural but cosmic interpretation. The natural interpreta-

tion all of us can recognise. From the sun's beams each morning come the light and heat that revivify the earth, while the same centre of energy in the larger circle of the year gives the first faint shoots of green, the shady leafage, and the glorious harvest. The sun is the beneficent creator and preserver. And he is also the ruthless destroyer. This last interpretation is found in some religions—chiefly in tropical countries—but the much more general one is that the Sun-god is slain by Darkness the Destroyer.

In the cosmic interpretation, as we have seen above, the disk or circle is recognised as the emblem of the eternity of Space, and of the great First Cause which alone endures for ever, whether solar systems be in activity, or the whole Cosmos be sunk in the sleep of Pralaya.

In the religions with which we shall have to deal, we shall also find a system of symbolism originally taught by these Adepts as representative of ceremonies of initiation. In the old days in India and Egypt a candidate for the first degree of initiation, after having passed the necessary ordeals, approached the great ceremony, the first stage of which consisted in his being thrown into a trance, during which he underwent various occult experiences. This

trance typified his "death unto sin," while his revival on the third day for the ceremonies of baptism, and the bestowal on him of the robe of initiation, signalised his "rebirth unto righteousness." The story of Mithra, in Persia, the Osiris-Horus myth in Egypt, as well as the gospel narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus, remain to attest the symbolical nature of these archaic teachings.

Before attempting to trace these systems of symbolism through the various religions of the world, it only remains to discriminate between the religions whose founders were historical persons, around whose names there gradually grew up the ancient symbolism of the sun, and the religions, the names of whose sun-gods were recognised as being merely typical of that centre of light and energy. In the former case a more or less strong personal element was imported into the religion. But the main point which this investigation of comparative religious systems should bring into view is the fundamental unity of conception and of symbolism pervading them all—the two definite systems of symbolism referred to above being in most cases the dominant feature.

Osiris was worshipped as a sun-god in Egypt, but we must also recognise him as an historical

personage, for he was one of the divine kings who, in archaic times, governed and taught the people. His humanity, however, was soon lost sight of in his divinity. The dim memory of this fact, preserved in Egyptian tradition, is referred to in one of the most recent works on Comparative Mythology. Grant Allen expresses the belief "that the original Osiris was a real historical king of This by Abydos."¹

Quetzalcoatl was an Atlantean Adept who migrated in the days of Poseidonis—the last island-remnant of the great continent of Atlantis—to carry the seeds of religion and civilisation to Mexico, and the enthusiastic love and worship of their saviour who came "over the sea from the sun-rising" (Poseidonis lay to the east of Mexico) was for long a significant element in this religion.

Krishna the god was also Krishna the man, the Vrishni king and warrior who fought and conquered on the field of Kurushetra. The metaphysical mind of India, however, did not allow the personal element to obtain much ascendancy.

Gautama Buddha and Jesus, known in His day as Jehoshua, were also historical persons, though the real date of the birth of Jesus

¹ "Evolution of the Idea of God," p. 308.

was about a hundred years earlier than that usually assigned. It is probably in Buddhism and Christianity—these two last great root religions of the world—that the personal element has been most powerful; and the adoration and worship of the founders are still the key-note in these religions of compassion and self-sacrifice.

Apart from the symbolical significance attaching to all the great religions, the rise of the above-named, mark epochs at which the world's need of some spiritual revival was so great that the necessary "Saviours" made their appearance, for it is always "in the fulness of time" that the divine teachers are sent to sow anew the seed of knowledge, and to revive the flagging energies of virtue.

Any reference to Mohamedanism would be out of place here, for though professed by many nations, it is not a great root religion. It is a hybrid growth—in part an offshoot of Christianity, in part a reversion towards Judaism.

No such personal element, however, as above instanced, can be traced in the other great religions of the world. Bel in Chaldea and in Babylon, Apomti in Peru, Bacchus and Apollo in Greece and Rome, Balder in Scandinavia, were all essentially and solely sun-gods.

Symbolism is so involved and so difficult a study, and by most writers it has been treated in so perplexing a manner, that the following attempt is entered upon with the gravest misgiving. If, however, from the analytical research of the many high authorities who will be referred to, a synthetical survey of the whole subject can be evolved, the attempt will not have been in vain. And it must always be remembered that, even from the apparently trivial minutiae of verbal interpretation, some truth may be obtained.

Instead of taking each religion and investigating it completely before passing on to the next, it would seem advisable to consider separately the correspondences existing between all the religions, under the various ceremonies, sacraments, and dogmas which each religion in turn has established.

Chief amongst the ceremonies, of course, stand the great fire festivals of the solar year. Those of the winter solstice and the vernal equinox are by far the most important, and will first be dealt with. The others are certainly recognisable as customs of great antiquity in widely separated lands, and intimately associated with many of the world's religions in their solar aspect, but they have never had any

bearing on the equally important symbolism connected with the ceremonies of initiation, nor have they been specially prominent in Christendom.

While the many necessary references and quotations are being enumerated, it will be inadvisable to turn aside at every moment to point out the symbolic nature of each separate dogma, rite, or custom. A more satisfactory method will be to devote separate chapters to the interpretation of the various symbols. But as each quotation is enumerated, it will be well to note and bear in mind the resemblances in the records of these old religions, for it must be remembered that every new resemblance adds not merely in arithmetical, but in geometrical, ratio, to the proof of the fundamental unity in their conception, and of the symbolic nature of their origin.

CHAPTER II

BIRTH OF THE SAVIOUR

IT is a significant fact that almost every nation of which we have any record has held a festival on or about the twenty-fifth of December in honour of the birth of a divine being, generally worshipped as the sun-god, while the adoration offered to his mother invests her with the purity of a virgin.

Naturally enough it is at the winter solstice that the birth of a sun-god should occur, and though, as has been already pointed out, many of the divine incarnations had no solar origin whatever, the religious systems commemorating them, almost without an exception, eventually adopted solar dates and solar symbols.

Let us now compare the many birth-stories of the world-religions, bearing in mind that the divine incarnation is generally referred to as a Saviour, while his is almost invariably alluded to as an immaculate conception.

While no solar origin can be ascribed to the god Krishna in India, the winter solstice was

nevertheless a period of great rejoicing there. In ancient times it was called "the morning of the gods," when people decorated their houses with garlands and gave presents. Krishna is regarded as an Avatar of Vishnu. He is called in Sanskrit Hāri, which means "he who takes away" (the sins of the world). The name of his mother was Devaki or Deva-Maya, and his birth was of a miraculous nature. It is written in the Vishnu Purana,¹ "Krishna is . . . the very supreme Brahma: though it be a mystery how the Supreme should assume the form of a man." At the time of his birth his foster-father, Nanda, had come to the city to pay his taxes or yearly tribute to the king. Though of royal descent, he was said to be born in a dungeon, which was miraculously illuminated at his birth, while a chorus of angels, or Devas, saluted him. The prophet Narada visited his parents, examined his stars, and declared him of divine descent. By flight he was preserved from the cruelty of his uncle, Kansa (the Hindu Herod), who, in hopes of killing him, had ordered the slaughter of all new-born male children in his dominions. As a child, he astonished his teachers by his wisdom. He performed many miracles, was

¹ Book V. chap. i.

assailed by rakshasas (devils), and washed the feet of Brahmins.¹

The natural phenomena which accompanied his birth are thus described in the Vishnu Purana²—“On the day of his birth the quarters of the horizon were irradiate with joy, as if moonlight was diffused over the whole earth. The virtuous experienced new delight, the strong winds were hushed, and the rivers glided tranquilly when Janárdana was about to be born. The seas with their own melodious murmurings made the music, whilst the spirits and the nymphs of heaven danced and sang; the gods, walking the sky, showered down flowers upon the earth; and the (holy) fires glowed with a mild and gentle flame. At midnight, when the supporter of all was about to be born, the clouds emitted low, pleasing sounds, and poured down rain of flowers.”

Devaki is further described as thus addressing her new-born child:—“God of gods, who art all things, who comprisest all the regions of the world in thy person, and who, by thine illusion, hast assumed the condition of an infant, have compassion upon us.”³

¹ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities."

² Book V. chap. iii.

³ "The Vishnu Purana," Book V. chap. iii.

The miraculous character of his birth, the divine interposition to preserve the life of this divinely begotten child, and the order of King Kansa for the destruction of male children are referred to in the "Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology."¹

A representation of Devaki with the infant Saviour in her arms may be seen in Moor's "Hindu Pantheon."²

"Like those of many solar heroes, his first appearances were beset with perils and obstructions of many kinds. On the very night of his birth his parents had to remove him to a distance beyond the reach of his uncle, King Kamsa, who sought his life."³ Referring to Professor Weber's comments on this Indian legend, Barth remarks that "stress was laid on the monotheistic character of this religion, on the analogy which there is between the theory of the Avataras and that of the Incarnation, on the curious similarities which exist between the legend of Jesus and that of Krishna, in which occur, with more or fewer points of similarity, the pastoral scenes of the nativity, the adoration of the shepherds and the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the massacre of the Innocents,

¹ By Dowson, p. 165.

² Plate No. 59.

³ Barth's "Religions of India," p. 173.

the miracles connected with the Infancy, the Temptation, and the Transfiguration, and all that in connection with a god whose very name has a certain affinity in sound with that of Christ." But while acknowledging the erudition and critical power of Professor Weber (and apart from the fact that there is probably no real philological connection between the two names), the learned author proceeds to point out that a religion of faith and love "was quite as capable of realising itself in India as it has done elsewhere in its own time, and independently of all Christian influence, in the religions of Osiris, Adonis, Cybele, and Bacchus. . . . Bhakti [love and devotion] appears to be the necessary complement of a religion that has reached a certain stage of monotheism."¹

A still more ancient deity of India—the archaic Budha, god of Wisdom—had probably no historical origin. His birth-story describes him as the child of Soma, the moon god, and Tara, the wife of Brihaspati, who, like the Virgin Mary, is represented as standing on a crescent moon.

From the ancient records of India let us now turn to those of Egypt. The birth of Horus,

¹ Barth's "Religions of India," pp. 219-221.

called the Saviour, was celebrated on 25th December. "He is the great god loved of heaven. His birth is one of the greatest mysteries of the [Egyptian] religion. Pictures representing it appeared on the walls of temples. . . . He was the child of deity. At Christmas time, or that answering to our festival, his image was brought out of the sanctuary with peculiar ceremonies, as the image of the infant Bambino is still brought out and exhibited at Rome."¹

But Horus was not the only sun-god recognised by the Egyptians. His own father Osiris, the Saviour (of whom Horus was a re-incarnation), was born—also at the winter solstice—of an immaculate virgin, the goddess Neith, who, like Isis, the mother of Horus, was known by the titles of Mother of God, Immaculate Virgin, Queen of Heaven, Star of the Sea, The Morning Star, The Intercessor.² Osiris and Horus seem also to have represented philosophical ideas. As Brugsch writes, in Osiris they recognised "the symbol of completed existence, for he is that which was yesterday—the past—while the god of light, Horus, the son of Osiris and his divine wife Isis . . . symbolises the return of the new life, that which will be to-

¹ Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief," p. 157, and Dupuis' *Origine de tous les Cultes*.

² Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief."

morrow—the future—the being born again in the eternal cycle of earthly phenomena.” He is, in fact, the symbol of re-incarnation.¹

Isis is constantly represented as standing on the crescent moon with twelve stars surrounding her head,² while in almost every Roman Catholic church on the Continent of Europe may be seen pictures and statues of Mary Queen of Heaven standing on a crescent moon and her head surrounded by twelve stars. This also recalls the description in Revelation of the “woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”³ In “Monumental Christianity” may be seen a representation of Isis and Horus—the infant Saviour on his mother’s knee, while she gazes into his face. There is a cross on the back of her seat.⁴ On the front of her majestic temple at Sais was this solemn and comprehensive description of Isis engraved: “I am everything that hath been, that is, or that will be; and no mortal hath ever yet removed the veil that shades my divinity from human eyes.”⁵

¹ Brugsch’s “Egypt under the Pharaohs,” p. 14.

² Draper’s “Conflict between Science and Religion,” pp. 47-8.

³ Revelation, ch. xii. 1.

⁴ Rev. J. P. Lundy’s “Monumental Christianity,” Plate 92.

⁵ Maurice’s “Indian Antiquities,” Chap. ii. of Dissertation at end of vol. iv.

As the husband of his mother, Osiris was in certain ceremonies called by the name of Kamuth or Kamut, and a song of Osiris used on these occasions was also called by this name. The song seems to have been wordless—the priests merely intoning seven vowels “to a peculiar melody” (which appears to suggest the derivation of our “gamut”). The intoned vowels and their melody are still in use amongst us as the seven tones of Gregorian chanting which, as the name implies, were introduced into the services of the church by Gregory the Great. They are said to have been originally Lydian and Phrygian sacred tunes used in the ritual of Eastern religions.¹

Osiris and his re-incarnation Horus were called “King of Kings” and “Lord of Lords.” Like that of Jesus, the birth of Osiris was proclaimed by angelic voices, announcing amid a great light “the Lord of all the earth is born,”² while all nature hushed and stood still to listen. A similar story is told in the Apocryphal Gospel of St. James, called the Protevangelium,³ to the effect that at the moment of the birth of Jesus

¹ Eustace's “Classical Tour.”

² Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, cap. 12; Wilkinson's “Ancient Egyptians,” vol. iv., p. 310; and Wiedemann's “Religion of the Ancient Egyptians,” p. 207.

³ Chap. xiii.

all nature stood motionless, and a hush fell on the earth and its creatures.

In Babylon we find Tammuz, the sun-god of Eridu, worshipped as the Saviour. He is described as "the only son" of the god Ea. His mother apparently had many names—"Istar, Tillilli, Dav-kina, were all but different names and forms of the same divinity." Istar may also be identified with the Syrian Ashtoreth, the Phœnician Astarte, and even with the Greek Aphrodite, while some writers have found her parallel in the Egyptian Hathor. She was also known under the names of Mylitta, Lady of the Earth, Lady of Eden, The Morning Star, Goddess of the Tree of Life. She is pictured in "Monumental Christianity" as Mylitta with the infant Saviour Tammuz on her knee.¹ In an old Accadian hymn she is invoked as "O Virgin Istar."² In other respects also there are correspondences with the Virgin Mary, for she is represented with her divine child in her arms, her head being surrounded with a halo, and crowned with twelve stars. Like the Virgin Mary too she was addressed by the title of the "Queen of Heaven."³

According to the Babylonian records the birth

¹ Rev. J. P. Lundy's "Monumental Christianity." Fig. 93.

² Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures, 1887," p. 268.

³ Jeremiah, chap. xlv. 18.

of Tammuz was of a miraculous nature. But the most remarkable fact in the whole legend is that he was regarded as both the son and the husband of his mother.¹ The very names Tammuz and Istar bring to mind the ancient poem in which the goddess is described as descending "into Hades in search of the healing waters which should restore to life her bridegroom Tammuz, the young and beautiful sun-god." Though paralleled in the Egyptian and in other religions, this astounding dual relationship is here brought more in view. Can it be that this old Babylonian legend is but an archaic version of the story of the Christian nativity—God the Son incarnating as Jesus Christ while he is at the same time but another aspect of God the Father?

As the Egyptians and Babylonians paid divine honours to Isis and Istar, so "the Carthaginians worshipped a 'great mother' who seems to be identical with Tanith-Artemis the 'heavenly virgin,' and the Arabian Lāt was worshipped by the Nabatæans as mother of the gods, and must be identified with the virgin-mother, whose worship at Petra is described by Epiphanius."²

¹ Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures, 1887," p. 237.

² Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," pp. 56-7.

In Persia the birth of the sun-god Mithra, known also by the name of Tseur or Saviour, was celebrated at the winter solstice. He was said to be born in a cave or grotto. His name is apparently but another version of the Indian Mitra, the deity invoked in some of the earliest hymns of the Rig Veda, and it is manifestly from the Indo-Aryans that the Iranians borrowed the name.

“Their most splendid ceremonials were in honour of Mithras, called the Mediator. They kept his birthday with many rejoicings on the 25th of December, when the sun perceptibly begins to return northward after his long winter journey.”¹

Stukeley observes that the worship of Mithra was spread over all Gaul and Britain. Ornaments apparently of Mithraic origin have, it is true, been discovered in Britain, and have usually been attributed to the Romans; but as we shall see, the Druidic ceremonies point to a similar system of sun-worship in these lands long antedating the Roman invasion.

The conclusions drawn by authors who wrote before the recent period of research are not always to be relied on, but extracts quoted by them from ancient scriptures belong to a dif-

¹ Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. i. p. 272.

ferent category, and the following prophecy about an expected Messiah may therefore be worth recording. It is ascribed not only by Abulpharagius, but apparently by the Celts of Ireland to Zeradusht, who is described by them as a druid or daru of Bokhara. Zeradusht, it is written, "declared that in the latter days a pure virgin would conceive; and that as soon as the child was born a star would appear, blazing even at noon-day with undiminished lustre. 'You, my sons,' exclaimed the seer, 'will perceive its rising before any other nation. As soon therefore as you behold the star, follow it whithersoever it shall lead you; and adore that mysterious child, offering your gifts to him with profound humility. He is the Almighty Word which created the heavens.'"¹ Professor Lee also refers to the prophecy as occurring in the ancient writings of Persia.

Zeradusht, or as he is more commonly called, Zoroaster, himself appears to have been endowed by posterity with an immaculate birth. It is but another illustration of the way in which the sun-god's attributes came to be associated with those who in popular estimation were raised to the rank of deity. Zoroaster is thus described

¹ "*Abulpharagius apud Hyde de Rel. vet. Pers.*," cxxxi., quoted in Faber's "*Origin of Pagan Idolatry*," vol. ii. p. 97.

as born in innocence of an immaculate conception of a ray of the Divine Reason, and as soon as he was born "such a light shone from his body as illuminated the whole room."¹ The supernatural birth of Zoroaster, "a Parsi tradition of which is preserved in the selections of Zâdsparam, who wrote shortly before the year A.D. 881," is also referred to by Sidney Hartland.²

Ages before the landing of Cortez on their shores, the inhabitants of ancient Mexico worshipped a Saviour—Quetzalcoatl, who was born in a miraculous manner, and whose festival was held at the winter solstice. His birth was in the land of Tula or Tlapallan, which he left to visit Mexico and instruct it. Having ruled and taught the people for a time, he announced the completion of his work, and entering a skiff made of serpent skins, he sailed towards the East, saying that his father the Sun had need of him, but promising to return again and reign. He is represented as a tall man, robed in white, of very fair skin, and with golden hair and beard. The literal interpretation of his name, according to Lord Kingsborough, is the "Serpent of rich plumage," according to

¹ Malcolm's "History of Persia," vol. i. p. 193.

² Hartland's "Legend of Perseus," vol. i. p. 121.

Humboldt, "the Serpent clothed with green feathers."¹

One version of the Quetzalcoatl legend, writes Hartland, "records his birth from a precious stone swallowed by his mother Chimalma. In a variant the Lord of Existence, Tonacatecutli appears to Chimalma and her two sisters. The sisters were both struck dead by fright, but he breathed upon Chimalma, and by his breath quickened life within her, so that she bore Quetzalcoatl. Her son cost her her life. Having thus perished on earth she was translated to heaven, like the Virgin Mary in the traditions of the Church, and was thenceforth honoured under the name of Chalchihuitzli, the Precious Stone of Sacrifice."²

In Yucatan the ancient inhabitants worshipped a Saviour, who was known by the name of Bacab, and who is represented as having been born of a virgin of the name of Chiribirias.³

The Aztec sun and war-god Huitzilopochtli had also a miraculous birth, and his chief festival was at the winter solstice, when among

¹ Kingsborough's "Antiquities of Mexico," vol. vi. pp. 166, 175; Brinton's "Myths of the New World," pp. 180-1; and Acosta's "History of the Indies," vol. ii. p. 354.

² Hartland's "Legend of Perseus," vol. i. p. 132.

³ Kingsborough's "Antiquities of Mexico," vol. vi. pp. 164-5.

other ceremonies his image was shot through with an arrow. He is represented as decorated with serpents. "Coatlicue, the Serpent-skirted, was already the mother of many children. She dwelt on the mountain of the Snake, near the city of Tulla, and being very devout, she occupied herself in sweeping and cleansing the sacred places of the mountain. One day while engaged in these duties, a little ball of feathers floated down to her through the air. She caught it and hid it in her bosom; nor was it long before she found herself pregnant. Thereupon her children conspired to put her to death; but Huitzilopochtli, issuing from her womb all armed, like Pallas from the head of Zeus, speedily destroyed his brethren and sisters, and enriched his mother with their spoils."¹

The Aztecs celebrated their New Year, the birthday of the Sun, on dates varying from 9th January to 26th December. Their cycle of fifty-two years commencing on 9th January, and being held every fourth year one day earlier, brought them at the end of the cycle to 26th December. These cycles of four years and fifty-two years, as well as their greater cycles, were all symbolised by serpents. At the close of the

¹ Sidney Hartland's "Legend of Perseus," vol. i. p. 126.

fifty-two year cycle a remarkable festival was held in honour of the "Elements of Fire." During the last five days of the period all fires were suffered to go out, and none were kindled in any dwelling or temple. On the last day of the year—viz., 26th December—the chief priests went to the summit of a lofty mountain, or in the city of Mexico itself to the top of their principal Teocalli or House of God, a pyramid-shaped temple, and there at midnight, with many mysterious rites, kindled new fire by the friction of wood laid on the wounded breast of a human sacrifice. The flame was then communicated to a vast funeral pile on which the victim was laid, while the entire population anxiously watching from all parts of the country, saw with joy the flame shoot upwards announcing that the Sun was born again. Couriers with torches kindled from this holy fire bore them throughout the country, and fire was lit from them on all altars and hearth-stones. For many days the people gave themselves up to festivity. They dressed gaily, feasted, whitened and adorned their houses, and offered oblations and thanksgivings in the temples.¹

Somewhat analogous to the above appear to have been the "Need-fires," which the Celtic

¹ Sahagun's *Hist. de Nueva España*.

people kindled on the hills at the time of the winter solstice. From these all other fires which had been allowed to die out were re-kindled. On the twelfth night thereafter the Need-fires were again lit by friction of sticks, and kept burning till sunrise. Sacred plants were cut and brought into the houses, having first been thrust into the flame for a moment. This custom of the Yule fires is said to be still carried on in the Western Highlands of Scotland—now, of course, in honour of the birth of Jesus; instead of that of Bal, their Sun-deity of old. So fully is this name of Bal, Bel, or Baal preserved that to this day the Highlanders call the year “Bheilaine,” or circle of Bel the Sun. The fires are known both in Scotland and Ireland as “Bheil or Baaltinne,” and in the latter country the common word of greeting amongst the people is “Baal o’ yerith,” meaning literally “are you Baal’s man?” Its real interpretation, however, has been long forgotten, and the meaning usually ascribed to it now is merely “good day to you.”

Nor was the idea of a virgin goddess absent from the Druidic ritual. Ceredwyn, usually pictured with her child in her arms, was represented by a sacred boat or ark; also, like Isis and all other moon-goddesses, by a cow. Her

ark or argha (which again is identical with the crescent moon) was covered with a veil, and could only be touched by her priests.

In the ark or argha we touch upon a system of symbolism which cannot be passed over, but its detailed treatment must be reserved for another chapter.

Among the ancient Scandinavians the greatest festival of the year was that celebrated at the winter solstice. It was said to be in honour of the birth of Freyr, the son of Odin and Freya. It was called by the name of Iuul, thus identifying it with the old German—as well as with our own modern—Yule.¹

Attis, according to Frazer, was regarded as born of a virgin.² The birthdays of the Greek Bacchus and of the Syrian Adonis were both held at the winter solstice, the former being regarded as born from the thigh of Jupiter, and honoured with the title of Saviour, while the cave at Bethlehem, in which the mysteries of the latter were celebrated, was stated by some of the Early Fathers of the Christian Church to be that in which Jesus was born.³

¹ Mallet's "Northern Antiquities," vol. i. p. 130.

² Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i. p. 298.

³ Tertullian and St. Jerome, also Dupuis' *Origine de tous les Cultes*, tome vii. p. 167.

Similar again to the secular or cycle festival in Mexico seems to have been the "Ludi Seculares" of the Romans, while the annual ceremony held on 25th December was known by the name of "Natalis Solis Invicti," the birthday of Sol the Invincible. "It was a day of universal rejoicing, illustrated by illuminations and public games."¹

According to the Chinese writings, Buddha is said to have been born of his virgin mother, Maya, by the overshadowing power of Shing-Shin, "The Holy Spirit"; and the sacred books relate that his birth was announced in the heavens by an asterism which rose from the horizon, and was called the Messianic star.² The Fo-pen-king relates that through all the heavens the Devas joined in this song. "To-day Bodhisatwa is born on earth to give joy and peace to men and Devas, to shed light in the dark places, and to give sight to the blind."³ Buddha is also described as having been visited at his birth by a Rishi named Asita, who foretold of his coming greatness, wept that he should not himself live to see his perfect Buddhahood, and departed to

¹ Rev. J. B. Gross' "Heathen Religions," p. 287.

² Bunsen's "Angel Messiah," pp. 22, 23, and 33.

³ Beal's "Legend of Sakya Buddha," p. 56.

his mountain hermitage rejoicing that his eyes had seen the promised Saviour.¹

Buddha was also called the "King of Righteousness," and his was an immaculate conception, his mother, Maya, like the Virgin Mary, being "the best and purest of the daughters of men." He is, too, at once the Father and the Son, who of his own will became incarnate that he might, as was prophesied at his birth, "remove the veil of ignorance and sin from the world." Heaven and earth at his birth "united to pay him homage, while the angels sang their songs of victory, and archangels were present with their help." His mother had dreams of his future greatness, and to his cradle came saints and wise men to do him reverence. He excelled all his fellows in powers and in wisdom, instructed those appointed to teach him; like Jesus, was tempted in the wilderness by the Spirit of Evil, whom he overcame, and, like Jesus, finally was comforted by angels.²

All Christians know that the 25th December is *now* the recognised festival of the birth of Jesus, but few are aware that this has not always been so. There have been, it is said,

¹ Amberley's "Analysis," vol. i. p. 223; and Beal's "Legend of Sakya Buddha," pp. 58-60.

² Rhys David's "Hibbert Lectures, 1881," p. 148.

one hundred and thirty-six different dates fixed on by different Christian sects. Light-foot gives it as 15th September, others as in February or August. Epiphanius mentions two sects, one celebrating it in June, the other in July. The matter was finally settled by Pope Julius I. in 337 A.D., and St. Chrysostom, writing in 390, says: "On this day [*i.e.* 25th December] also the birth of Christ was lately fixed at Rome, in order that while the heathen were busy with their ceremonies [the Brumalia, in honour of Bacchus] the Christians might perform their rites undisturbed." Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,"¹ writes, "The [Christian] Romans, as ignorant as their brethren of the real date of his [Christ's] birth, fixed the solemn festival to the 25th December, the Brumalia or winter solstice, when the pagans annually celebrated the birth of the Sun." King, in his "Gnostics and their Remains," also says,² "The ancient festival held on the 25th December in honour of the birthday of the 'Invincible One,' and celebrated by the great games at the Circus, was afterwards transferred to the commemoration of the birth of Christ, the precise date of

¹ 1832 ed., vol. iv. p. 21, note.

² Page 49.

which many of the Fathers confess was then unknown"; while at the present day Canon Farrar writes that "all attempts to discover the month and day of the Nativity are useless. No data whatever exist to enable us to determine them with even approximate accuracy."¹

From the foregoing it is apparent that the great festival of the winter solstice has been celebrated during past ages, and in widely separated lands, in honour of the birth of a God, who is almost invariably alluded to as a "Saviour," and whose mother is referred to as a pure virgin.

The striking resemblances, too, which have been instanced not only in the birth but in the life of so many of these Saviour-gods are far too numerous to be accounted for by any mere coincidence.

¹ Farrar's "Life of Christ," p. 734.

CHAPTER III

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

ROUND this kernel of fact—a divine man and his death—are grouped the most solemn doctrines of every one of the world's religions, and we shall also find that the death, by whatever mode it is supposed to have taken place, has generally been regarded as a sacrifice.

This idea of sacrifice seems to lie at the root of all religion. "Every one who reads the Old Testament with attention is struck with the fact that the origin and *rationale* of sacrifice are nowhere fully explained; that sacrifice is an essential part of religion is taken for granted as something which is not a doctrine peculiar to Israel, but is universally admitted and acted on without as well as within the limits of the chosen people."¹

Nowhere is the necessity of sacrifice more dwelt on than in the religion of ancient India. "Life in the Brahmanas (Vedas) is a sequence of sacrifices. Sacrifice makes the sun rise and

¹ Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," p. 3.

set, and the rivers run this way or that.”¹ The Rig Veda represents the gods as sacrificing Purusha the Primeval (man) coeval with the Creator. The legend is more fully developed in the Tandyi Brahmanas. “The Lord of creatures (Prajapati) offered himself as a sacrifice for the gods.”² “When the gods performed a sacrifice with Purusha as the oblation, the spring was its butter, the summer its fuel, and the autumn its accompanying offering. This victim, Purusha, born in the beginning, they immolated. . . . With him the gods, the Sadhyas, and the Rishis sacrificed. From that universal sacrifice were provided curds and butter. It formed those aerial (creatures) and animals, both wild and tame. From that universal sacrifice sprang the Ric and Saman verses. . . . From it sprang horses and all animals with two rows of teeth; kine sprang from it; from it goats and sheep. When the gods divided Purusha, into how many parts did they cut him up? . . . The Brahman was his mouth, the Rajanya made his arms; the being (called) the Vaisya, he was his thighs; the Sudra sprang from his feet. The moon sprang from his soul (Mahas), the sun from his eye,

¹ Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. i. p. 233.

² Monier Williams' "Hinduism," pp. 36-40.

Indra and Agni from his mouth . . . from his head the sky, from his feet the earth . . . in this manner (the gods) formed the world. . . . With sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice. These were the earliest rites.”¹ Though the meaning which the author of the above words intended to convey was probably a hidden one, even in those ancient days, and has certainly been rendered still less intelligible by the lapse of time, it is very apparent that sacrifice lies at its root.

“The fundamental idea of the *Purusha Sukta*, namely, the creation of the world, or portions of the world, out of the fragments of a fabulous anthropomorphic being, is common to Chaldean, Iroquois, Egyptians, Greeks, Tinnahs, Mangaians, and Aryan Indians.”²

The version of the above creation story, which was current among the Chaldeans, fully warrants Lang’s imputation of their having inherited “very savage fancies.” In it a woman named Amorca, and the god Bel-Maruduk, appear to take the place of the Indian Purusha. “Bel-Maruduk arrived, and cut Amorca in two, and out of Amorca, Bel made the world and the

¹ Quoted from “Rig Veda,” x. 90; Muir’s “Sanskrit Texts,” 2nd ed., i. 9, in Lang’s “Myth Ritual and Religion,” vol. i. pp. 243-245.

² Lang’s “Myth Ritual and Religion,” vol. i. p. 246.

things in it. . . . Lastly Bel cut his own head off, and *with the blood* the gods mixed clay and made men." "In [this] Chaldean legend, preserved by Berosus, the belief that men are of the blood of the gods, is expressed in a form too crude not to be very ancient. Not only men, but animals, are said to have been formed out of clay, mingled with the blood of a decapitated deity. Here we have a blood-kinship, not only of gods and men, but of gods, men, and animals."¹

"It is not science," writes Lang, "to fill one's head with the follies of Phœnicians and Greeks, but it is science to understand what led Greeks and Phœnicians to imagine these follies;" and we may add it is true philosophy to pursue the subject till the real interpretation is arrived at. Now, the primitive truth, of which the above savage legends appear to be but perverted forms, may be dimly perceived in the legends themselves, the fact, namely, that animals as well as men—aye, and the lower kingdoms of nature also—have some portion of the divine essence in them, all being expressions in a more or less rudimentary form of the thought and will of our Logos.

Another aspect of this idea of sacrifice is that

¹ Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," p. 44.

“the accumulated misfortunes and sins of the whole people are sometimes laid upon the dying god, who is supposed to bear them away for ever, leaving the people innocent and happy.”¹

A similar idea on the purely human platform, is expressed by Philo of Byblus in his work on the Jews, where he says: “It was an ancient custom in a crisis of great danger that the ruler of a city or nation should give his beloved son to die for the whole people, as a ransom offered to the avenging demons; and the children thus offered were slain with mystic rites.”²

“That the God-man dies for His people, and that His death is their life, is an idea which was in some degree foreshadowed by the oldest mystical sacrifices. . . . And yet the voluntary death of the divine victim, which we have seen to be a conception not foreign to ancient sacrificial ritual, contained the germ of the deepest thought in the Christian doctrine: the thought that the Redeemer gives Himself for His people, that ‘for their sakes He consecrates Himself, that they also might be consecrated in truth.’ But . . . when the death of the god becomes a mere cosmical process, and the most solemn rites that ancient religion knew sank to the

¹ Frazer's “Golden Bough,” vol. ii. p. 148.

² Ibid., vol. i. p. 235.

level of a scenic representation of the yearly revolutions of the season, the features of primæval ritual which contained germs of better things are effectually hidden out of sight, and the offices of religion cease to appeal to any higher feeling than that of sympathy with the changing moods of nature.”¹

That we shall be saved from such an anti-climax as this, will, we hope, be shown in the subsequent pages.

In the previous chapter we have seen that, whatever may have been the names by which the nations called their gods, the similarity in the mode of their conception, as well as in the date of their birth, pointed unmistakably to their solar origin. If further similarities with regard to their death and resurrection can now be established, it must be still more apparent that we are in the presence of a world-wide myth, which has been the common property of all peoples from the very childhood of our race.

But it must be remembered that the solar mythology—adapted to suit the needs of exoteric teaching—was but a degraded expression of the still more ancient cosmic symbolism, while another and most important system of symbolism representative of rites of initiation

¹ Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," p. 393.

supplemented and was interwoven with the symbolism of the sun. This other system we shall find occupying the foremost place in all that concerns the dogmas and ceremonies connected with the vernal equinox.

It is a remarkable fact that in almost every religion of which we have any record, this season of the year is the date assigned to the death and resurrection of a god, or a divine man. Attempts have been made to explain this startling coincidence, for had religious customs solely followed the simple solar symbolism, the autumnal equinox, or some still later date, would manifestly have been a far more appropriate epoch for the death of the sun-god; but the interblending of the two systems is the explanation, and the real reason for the date is found in the underlying facts which one of these ceremonies of initiation symbolised.

A subsequent chapter—The Second Birth—will deal with the interpretation. The resemblances in the records of the old religions must here be enumerated.

The close likeness between the birth-story of Krishna, the Hindu Saviour, and that of the Saviour worshipped by Christendom, has already been referred to, as well as the remarkable simi-

larities in the life episodes of the two. According to some authorities, who in other respects may be considered reliable, there also exists an exact parallel in the mode of their death, for we shall come across many cases in the course of this investigation in which crucifixion is supposed to have been the form of death undergone by the Saviour.

It is, of course, superfluous to remark that probably not one of the world's Saviours actually suffered death upon a cross. It was owing to the very significant and sacred character of the cross symbol (which will be fully dealt with later on) that crucifixion gradually came to be the recognised form of death which the Saviour must necessarily have undergone.

But the case of Krishna is one of the exceptions to the rule. In spite of what has been written by some authors of the last century, there can be no doubt from the older and more authentic records of the Bhagavata Purana that he really died by the arrow of a hunter when seated under a tree in the forest in the act of meditation.

The parallel, however, between the story of Krishna, and that of other Saviours who will be instanced, may be taken up beyond the grave; for he is represented as having de-

scended into the infernal regions,¹ as having risen from the dead,² and as having ascended into heaven.

Referring to the legends about Vishnu, Barth remarks that "they represent him as the personification of sacrifice, and in this regard they speak of his violent death, a feature which accords well with a solar divinity, and which occurs again in the final catastrophe that befalls Krishna."³

There is another incarnation of Vishnu called Wittoba or Balaji. He is represented in the form of a Roman crucifix, but not fixed to the cross, though there is a nail-hole through the feet, and the legs and feet are in the position of one crucified. He wears a pointed coronet or mitre, and there appears to be a glory over him coming from above. In one icon or image of Wittoba there is a hole in his side, and on his breast hangs a heart. He is said to be "reborn on the tree of life." There is a picture of this "man crucified in space," as the Hindu sacred books call it, in Moor's "Pantheon."⁴

¹ "Asiatic Researches," vol. i. p. 249; also Dowson's "Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology," p. 166.

² Dupuis' *Origine de tous les Cultes*.

³ Barth's "Religions of India," p. 166.

⁴ Plate 98.

Even if the above representation of a crucified Saviour is authentic—and there are doubts as to Moor being a quite reliable authority—it manifestly cannot bear a very ancient date, for the altered form of the symbol is apparent on its face. The cross as we shall see is a symbol of *the highest antiquity*, but the representation of a figure with the hands and feet pierced with nails belongs to a later period. The most ancient delineation of the cruciform attitude, is the figure of the god in the vault of heaven, with outstretched arms, blessing the universe.

In almost every religion the god who is slain rises again from the dead, or is immediately reincarnated. In Egypt, Osiris is slain by his enemy, the serpent of evil, Typhon, who in his turn is destroyed by Horus, the son and immediate reincarnation of Osiris. Osiris then becomes “Lord of the life beyond the grave,” and the “judge of all souls.” As Osiris, he is the setting sun; as Horus, the rising beams of the great luminary. The Egyptians spoke of the sun sinking in the west, as going into the arms of Osiris and the “Land of Rest,” and the dead were said to sleep with Osiris, as the Christian dead are said to sleep in Jesus. Osiris, as well as his son Horus, are repre-

sented as crucified with outstretched arms in the vault of heaven.¹

As Osiris -Horus is slain in conflict with the Serpent, but rising again as Horus-Osiris finally destroys him, and rules the death world, so Jesus in his combat with the principle of evil is put to death, but rising again conquers the "old serpent," and robs him of his power. As it is written, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."² Osiris descends into the underworld of the dead. Christ descends into Hades, and preaches to the spirits in prison.³ Osiris became the judge of souls. Christ was he which was ordained to be the judge of quick and dead.⁴ Plutarch mentions the return of Osiris from Hades, after he had been enclosed for a long season in an ark in a state of death.⁵

Tammuz-Adonis in Babylon, and at a later date in Syria, was another "Saviour." His death was commemorated annually with mourn-

¹ Cox's "Mythology of the Aryan Nations"; also Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief," p. 157.

² Revelation, chap. i. 18.

³ Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief," p. 151; Acts, chap. ii. 31; and 1 Peter, chap. iii. 18, 19.

⁴ Acts, chap. x. 42.

⁵ Bryant's "Analysis," vol. ii. p. 228.

ful chants as his image lay upon a bed or bier. For three days was he bewailed as one dead, but then followed the rejoicing over his resurrection.¹ During the ceremony of the resurrection feast, which took place on 25th March, the priest, after having touched the mouths of the mourners with holy oil, murmured, "Trust ye in your Lord, for the pains which he endured have procured your salvation." The literal translation of the words addressed by the priest appear to have been, "Trust in your Lord ye communicants: the god having been raised, there shall be to us out of pain, salvation!"² Then the people answered, "Hail to the Dove, the restorer of light."³

"The worship of Adonis," writes Frazer, "was practised by the Semitic peoples of Syria, from whom it was borrowed by the Greeks at least as early as the fifth century before Christ. The name Adonis is the Phœnician *Adon*, 'lord.' . . . At Byblus the death of Adonis was annually mourned with weeping, wailing, and beating of the breast; but next day he was believed to come to life again, and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshippers. This celebration appears to have taken

¹ *Classical Journal* of March, 1820, p. 12.

² Taylor's "Diegesis."

³ Calmct's "Fragments," vol. ii. p. 22.

place in spring, for its date was determined by the discoloration of the river Adonis, and this has been observed by modern travellers to occur in spring. At this season the red earth washed down from the mountains by the rain tinges the water of the river, and even the sea for a great way with a blood-red hue, and the crimson stain was believed to be the blood of Adonis, annually wounded to death by the boar on Mount Lebanon. Again the red anemone was said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis, and, as the anemone blooms in Syria about Easter, this is a fresh proof that the festival of Adonis, or at least one of his festivals, was celebrated in spring.”¹

Grant Allen refers to the death of Thammuz, or Adonis, as being annually lamented with a bitter wailing, and adds that “in certain places the resurrection of the Adonis was celebrated on the succeeding day. At Byblus he also ascended into heaven before the eyes of his worshippers.”² “In a Babylonian legend, the goddess Ishtar (Astarte, Aphrodite) descends to Hades to fetch the water of life, with which to restore to life the dead Thammuz; and it appears that the water was thrown over him

¹ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i. pp. 279, 280.

² Grant Allen's "Evolution of the Idea of God," pp. 312, 313.

at a great mourning ceremony, at which men and women stood round the funeral pyre of Thammuz lamenting.”¹

The very name by which our spring festival is called, is traced by Landseer to the virgin-mother of this Babylonian sun-god; for what is Easter but a modern version of the old names of Ishtar, Ashtoreth, and Astarte?² Another possible derivation is suggested by Green, and it may be “Eostre, the god of the dawn or of the spring,” who also “lends his name to the Christian festival of the Resurrection.”³ Or it may be that all these words trace their descent from the original Sanskrit root *vas* or *us*, meaning light.⁴

Mithra, the Persian Saviour, had a similar death-festival at the vernal equinox. Speaking of his resurrection, Dupuis remarks that the religions of Mithra and of Christ have many characteristics in common; Mithra, who was also born on 25th December, like Christ, died as he did; and he had his sepulchre, over which his disciples came to shed tears. During the night the priests carried his image to a

¹ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i. p. 287.

² Landseer's "Sabæan Researches," p. 86.

³ Green's "History of the English People," p. 17.

⁴ Max Müller's "Contributions to the Science of Mythology," vol. i. p. 171.

tomb expressly prepared for him; he was laid out on a litter, like the Phœnician Adonis, while at the end of the funeral ceremonies, corresponding with our Easter celebration, the priest pronounced these words, "Be of good cheer, sacred band of Initiates, your god has risen from the dead. His pains and suffering shall be your salvation."¹

"Perhaps no religious festival was ever more splendid than the annual Salutation of Mithras, during which forty days were set apart for thanksgiving and sacrifice. The procession to salute the god formed long before the rising of the sun. The High Priest was followed by a long train of the Magi, in spotless white robes, chanting hymns and carrying the sacred fire on silver censers. Then came three hundred and sixty-five youths in scarlet, to represent the days of the year, and the colour of fire. These were followed by the Chariot of the Sun — empty, decorated with garlands, and drawn by superb white horses, harnessed with pure gold. Then came a white horse of magnificent size, his forehead blazing with gems, in honour of Mithras. Close behind him rode the king, in a chariot of ivory inlaid with gold, followed by his royal kindred, in embroidered

¹ Dupuis' *Origine de tous les Cultes*, vol. v. pp. 241 and 246, 247.

garments, and a long train of nobles, riding on camels richly caparisoned. This gorgeous retinue, facing the east, slowly ascended Mount Orontes. Arrived at the summit, the High Priest assumed his tiara, wreathed with myrtle, and hailed the first rays of the rising sun with incense and prayer. The other Magi gradually joined him in singing hymns to Ormuzd, the source of all blessing, by whom the radiant Mithras had been sent to gladden the earth, and preserve the principle of life. Finally, they all joined in one universal chorus of praise, while king, princes, and nobles prostrated themselves before the orb of day.”¹

Prometheus was another crucified Saviour. He was said to be an immortal god, a friend of the human race, who did not shrink even from sacrificing himself for their salvation. He is said to have been nailed up, with arms extended, on Mount Caucasus, near the Caspian Sea.²

The god Atys, worshipped in Phrygia, in Asia Minor, was called “the only begotten son,” and also “Saviour.” He was represented as a man fastened to a tree, with a lamb at the foot.

¹ Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. i. pp. 272, 273.

² Æschylus's "Prometheus Bound."

“Attis,” writes Frazer, “was to Phrygia what Adonis was to Syria. Like Adonis . . . his death and resurrection were annually mourned and rejoiced over at a festival in spring. The legends and rites of the two gods were so much alike that the ancients themselves sometimes identified them. . . . The ceremonies observed at the festival of Attis are not very fully known, but their general order appears to have been as follows. At the spring equinox (22nd March) a pine tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele, where it was treated as a divinity. It was adorned with woollen bands and wreaths of violets, for violets were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis, as anemones from the blood of Adonis; and the effigy of a young man was attached to the middle of the tree. On the second day (23rd March) the chief ceremony seems to have been a blowing of trumpets. The third day (24th March) was known as the day of Blood: the high priest drew blood from his arms and presented it as an offering. It was perhaps on this day, or night, that the mourning for Attis took place over an effigy, which was afterwards solemnly buried. The fourth day (25th March) was the Festival of Joy (Hilaria), at which the resurrection of

Attis was probably celebrated—at least the celebration of his resurrection seems to have followed closely upon that of his death. The Roman festival closed on 27th March with a procession to the brook Almo, in which the bullock-cart of the goddess, her image, and other sacred objects were bathed. But this bath of the goddess is known to have also formed part of her festival in her Asiatic home. On returning from the water the cart and oxen were strewn with fresh spring flowers.”¹

Bacchus was another sun-god put to death by the Titans, and, like Osiris, cut to pieces. After three days' sleep in Hades, Jove reanimated the body—Pallas (Wisdom) bringing him the heart.² According to Dupuis, his resurrection from the dead was commemorated with great rejoicing on the morning of the 25th March, but by some it is said to have been celebrated twice in the year—at the vernal and at the autumnal equinox—while others place it at the winter solstice. He is represented as saying to his worshippers, “It is I who guide you, it is I who protect and save you. I am Alpha and Omega.”³ In his

¹ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i. pp. 296-298.

² Bell's "Pantheon," article "Bacchus," p. 118.

³ Beausobre's *Histoire de Manichéisme*. 4

mysteries a sacred ark was borne about in his honour. Dupuis adds, that after his resurrection Bacchus ascended into heaven.

Under his other name of Dionysus the myth is almost identical. "According to some, the severed limbs of Dionysus were pieced together at the command of Zeus by Apollo, who buried them on Parnassus."¹ . . . "Thus far the resurrection of the slain god is not mentioned, but in other versions of the myth it is variously related. One version, which represented Dionysus as a son of Demeter, averred that his mother pieced together his mangled limbs, and made him young again.² In others it is simply said that, shortly after his burial, he rose from the dead, and ascended up to heaven."³ . . . "Turning from the myth to the ritual, we find that the Cretans celebrated a biennial festival at which the sufferings and death of Dionysus were represented in every detail. Where the resurrection formed part of the myth it also was enacted at the rites, and it even appears that a general doctrine of resurrection, or at least of immortality, was inculcated on the

¹ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrept.*, ii. 18, and Proclus on Plato's *Timæus*, iii. 200.

² Diodorus, iii. 62.

³ Macrobius' *Comment. in Somn. Scip.*, i. 12, 12; *Origen e Cels.*, iv. 171.

worshippers; for Plutarch writing to console his wife on the death of their infant daughter, comforts her with the thought of the immortality of the soul as taught by tradition, and revealed in the mysteries of Dionysus.”¹ . . . “Whether this was a spring festival does not appear, but the Lydians certainly celebrated the advent of Dionysus in spring.”²

In the north we have Baldur the beautiful—the white god, just and benignant, whom Christian missionaries thought to resemble Jesus. He dies slain by an arrow shot by the blind Hoeder, god of darkness. This arrow was made of the wood of the mistletoe. He lies dead for forty days while all nature laments him, but at the end of that period he awakens again and reigns. Like Osiris and Jesus, he is ruler of the life beyond the grave, and till the “Great Day” alternately visits both worlds. The rough surface allegory here is clear enough. At latitude 68 the sun is dead for forty days, slain by the darkness of winter: the mistletoe arrow being the hint of new life, from or through, the very means and gate of death, since it was called both the “plant of the cold and icy winter” and the “Healing Branch.”

¹ Plutarch, *Consol. ad Uxor*, 10; *Id. De ei Delphico*, 9; *Id. De esu Carnium*, i. 7.

² Frazer's “Golden Bough,” vol. i. pp. 324-325.

Baldur was also called the "Son of Man." The giantess Thökk, when ordered to join in the weeping for the dead Baldur, replies: "Thökk will weep dry tears at Baldur's bale-fire. What have I to do with the Son of Man, quick or dead? Let Hell keep what she holds." This refusal delayed the resurrection of Baldur, but in due season he rose from the dead, as prophesied by the third sybil of the Volospa. "The fields unsown shall yield their increase. All sorrows shall be healed. Baldur shall come back."¹

In the ancient Celtic faith of Ireland, Samhein, or Bāl Sab, is the god of life beyond the grave. He judges and protects the souls of the dead. He is also said to have died and risen again in three days to immortal life, becoming thereby the Lord and conqueror of death. To him none but bloodless sacrifices were offered. He was himself both the Deity and the "Sacrifice once offered." His name of Samhein is said to mean "Peace-fire." His festival, unlike the others we have been considering, was celebrated on the 1st November, and was called La Samon.

Amongst the ancient people of Yucatan, the Saviour was known by the name of Bacab,

¹ Rhys' "Hibbert Lectures, 1886," p. 534.

and, like Christ, he appears to have been regarded as the second person of their trinity. He is represented as having been scourged and crowned with a crown of thorns before being placed in the crucifixion attitude, "with his arms extended upon a beam of wood." He "remained dead during three days, and on the third day came to life and ascended into heaven."¹

According to some Mexican traditions the god Quetzalcoatl was crucified on a beam of wood with his arms extended. He was said to be thus slain by the ingratitude of those he came to save. Referring to the famous Borgian manuscripts, the learned author of "Antiquities in Mexico" writes: "As in the tradition current in Yucatan of Bacab and his crucifixion, so in these Mexican paintings many analogies may be traced between the events to which they evidently relate and the history of the crucifixion of Christ as contained in the New Testament. The subject of them all is the same—the death of Quecalcoatle upon the cross as an atonement for the sins of mankind. In the fourth page of the Borgian MS. he seems to be crucified between two persons who

¹ Kingsborough's "Antiquities of Mexico," vol. vi. pp. 164, 165.

are in the act of reviling him. . . . In the seventy-second page . . . Quecalcoatle is painted in the attitude of a person crucified, with the impression of nails both in the hands and feet, but not actually upon a cross. . . . The skulls above signify that the place is Tzonpantli, a word which exactly corresponds with the Hebrew proper name Golgotha. . . . The seventy-third page of the Borgian MS. is the most remarkable of all, for Quecalcoatle is not only represented there as crucified upon a cross of the Greek form, but his burial and descent into Hell are also depicted in a very curious manner.”¹ After his descent into Hell he rose again from the dead. At his festival, which was held at the vernal equinox, the image of the god was nailed to a cross and (like Krishna) pierced with an arrow.²

The idea of redemption through the death and sufferings of a divine Saviour is also found in China. In one of the Chinese sacred books—the *Y King*—it is written: “The Holy one [Tien] will unite in himself all the virtues of heaven and earth. By his justice the world will be re-established in the ways of righteousness. He will labour and suffer much. He

¹ Kingsborough’s “Antiquities of Mexico,” vol. vi. p. 166.

² Brinton’s “Myths of the New World,” p. 95.

must pass the great torrent whose waves shall enter into his soul, but he alone can offer up to the Lord a sacrifice worthy of him." ¹

The death of Jesus is but a new version of the oft repeated tale. It is at the vernal equinox that He dies. He is slain by His enemies, *on a cross*, which in all its forms is found associated with His prototypes of other faiths. But it is a remarkable fact that for "six centuries after the foundation of the Christian religion, a crucified Redeemer is entirely absent from Christian art. The earliest known form of the human figure on the cross [in Christendom] is the crucifix presented by Pope Gregory the Great to Queen Theodolinde of Lombardy, now in the Church of St. John at Monza, whilst no image of the Crucified is found in the catacombs at Rome earlier than that of St. Giulio, belonging to the seventh or eighth century."² As we shall see in a subsequent chapter the oldest representation of Jesus was a lamb. The lamb then came to be associated with a cross, and the figure of a man fastened to a cross eventually took the place of the more ancient emblem in Christian symbology.

¹ Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. i. p. 211.

² Gerald Massey's "Natural Genesis," vol. i. p. 433.

But the age of the cross-symbol is not to be measured by the date of its adoption by the early Christians. Hundreds—nay thousands—of years before, it was a sacred emblem in Egypt and in India. “Equally honoured in the Gentile and the Christian world, this emblem of universal nature, of that world to whose four quarters its diverging radii pointed, decorated the hands of most of the sculptured images in the former country, and in the latter stamped its form upon the most majestic shrines of their deities.”¹ The cross used to be placed before all sacred writings, usually in the form of the swastica or cross with handles. On Egyptian tombs it was used as the sign of rebirth, *i.e.*, of life through death. Worn in subsequent ages by the vestal virgins in Rome, its use was merely continued by the early Christians—the *ansa* or handle being after a time dispensed with.² As the sacred tau or *crux ansata* it was also an emblem of Osiris. It was called the “sign of life,” and as such was worn as an amulet over the heart in Egypt. This “symbol of resuscitation and new birth” was “expressive of the idea entertained by the Egyptians and other philosophers, that nothing created

¹ Maurice's “Indian Antiquities,” vol. ii. chap. i. sect. 8.

² Wilkinson's “Ancient Egyptians,” vol. v. pp. 283-4.

was annihilated, and that to cease to be, was only to assume another form—dissolution being merely the passage to reproduction.”¹

But whatever form the cross may have assumed, its original meaning appears always to have been life—new life—and although in subsequent Christian times it came to be regarded as a symbol of punishment and death, texts might be enumerated to show that even its original Christian meaning is identical with that given to it in the older religions, while the flavour of that meaning still lingers in its characteristic appellation of the “Tree of Life.”

But India and Egypt, Rome and Christendom, do not stand alone in their veneration of the cross. The Druids are said to have cut the side branches off tall straight trees, and affixed cross beams—at the same time inscribing on the bark the tau or sign of life. These tree-crosses were also found among Indian tribes in America,² while in the inland districts of Mexico were discovered immense stone crosses somewhat resembling those of Scotland and Ireland, but on a much larger scale. In Mexico the cross was called the “Tree of Life.”³

¹ Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," vol. iv. p. 315.

² Maurice's "Indian Antiquities."

³ Rev. S. Baring-Gould's "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," p. 374.

The cross (of the Maltese form) was also a symbol of Anu, the Babylonian Deity,¹ as well as of Bel or Baal.² Cortes found stone crosses when he landed in Yucatan, in the temple of the sun and rain god. In Anahuac the cross was constantly found portrayed, it being represented on the ruins of Palenque with a figure fastened to it. At the prow of Phœnician vessels was often placed an image of Astarte, pointing the way with one hand and in the other holding a cross. Even on the archaic statues of Easter Island was the cross found carved, and Schlieman's excavations on the site of Troy have brought it there to light. The cave temples of Ellora and Elephanta were carved out of the rock cross-shaped, and cross-shaped were the temples of Benares and Mathura built.³ The early Buddhist crosses have leaves and flowers springing from their extremities, thus demonstrating the life-giving characteristic of the symbol. Plato, it may be remembered, speaks of the Second Power of the Godhead as impressing Himself on the universe in the *form of a cross*.

"It is more than a coincidence," says the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, "that Osiris by the cross

¹ Smith's "Chaldean Account of Genesis," p. 48.

² Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief," p. 218.

³ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. ii. chap. i. sect. 8.

should give life eternal to the spirits of the just, that with the cross Thor should smite the head of the great serpent, and bring to life those who were slain; that beneath the cross the Muysca mothers should lay their babes, trusting by that sign to secure them from the power of evil spirits; and that with that symbol to protect them the ancient people of Northern Italy should lay them down in the dust.”¹

It should now be apparent that the cross must be recognised as one of the most time-honoured symbols of the human race.

But to epitomise some of the important resemblances as to the death and resurrection of the god or divine man, we find Krishna, Osiris, Thammuz-Adonis, Mithra, Attys, Bacchus-Dionysus, Baldur, Quetzalcoatl, and Jesus, to have all descended into the grave, and some into the infernal regions. The period between the death and the rising again was for most of them three days, while the date of resurrection was, as a rule, at or about the vernal equinox.

¹ Baring-Gould's "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," p. 385.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARK IN ITS THREE ASPECTS

IN connection with the argha or ark we come upon a perfect volume of co-related symbolism.

It was as the emblem of the Druidic goddess Ceredwyn that the ark has been referred to, and, along with the moon, it is intimately associated with her, as well as with all the other virgin-mother goddesses. Specially sacred was it to the goddess Isis in Egypt, where her priests dedicated to her each year a new ship laden with the first-fruits of spring. In "Curious Myths," Gould writes that, "strange to say, the carrying in procession of ships or arks on Shrove Tuesday, in which the Virgin Mary takes the place of her prototypes of earlier religions, has not yet wholly gone out of use, although prohibitions have at different times been issued against the practice."¹

The ark was also represented as the crescent moon, but the extremely complex nature of the

¹ Cox's "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," vol. ii. p. 116, note.

moon symbolism will be apparent from the following references. Twofold in sex, and threefold in character, the moon has been regarded as mother, child, and adult male. "Thus the child of the moon became the consort of his own mother. . . . Through ignorance of the symbolism, the simple representation of early times has become the most profound religious mystery in modern Luniolatry. The Roman Catholic Church . . . portrays the Virgin Mary arrayed with the sun, and the horned moon at her feet, holding the lunar infant in her arms as child and consort of the mother moon."¹

The close alliance of the ark and the moon symbolism is illustrated by the fact that the sacrificial vessel, shaped like a crescent moon, which was used in the rites of Astarte, of Isis, and of Venus, was called the "ship of life."

Now the ark in this aspect is representative of the passive or female potency in Nature. The sun-gods were often called Archagetos, born from the ark, or, in other words, born of the divine Virgin-Mother of the heavens, the ship of life carrying through the boundless universe the germs of all being.

But other symbols were not wanting to express the same idea. One of these was spoken

¹ Gerald Massey's "Luniolatry, Ancient and Modern."

of as the mundane "egg," while the pomegranate as one of its types was held sacred in Egypt under the name of the "egg of Typhon." From Egypt, doubtless, Moses obtained the pomegranate symbol. It may be remembered that round the hem of Aaron's ephod were woven pomegranates of blue, of purple, and of scarlet. "A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell, and a pomegranate upon the hem of the robe round about."¹

Owing to the mysterious development of the life germ within it, as well as to its form, the egg has formed part of the cosmological symbolism of almost every people. The great First Cause had no name at the beginning. It was later pictured as an ever invisible mysterious Bird that dropped an egg into chaos. Hence Brahm was called "Kala hansa"—the swan in space and time—the swan of eternity, who lays at the beginning of each Maha-Manwantara a golden egg, which typifies the great circle—itsself a symbol of the universe. In the "Book of the Dead,"² Ra exclaims, "I am the creative soul of the celestial abyss, none sees my nest, none can break my egg. I am the Lord." From the mouth of Kneph is born the egg from which emerges the creative god. The serpent's egg

¹ Exodus, chap. xxviii. 34.

² Chap. lxxxv.

of the Druids was the emblem of the mundane egg or the argha afloat on the waters. It was a symbol of life and immortality. Above the head of the pictured mummy was placed an egg as type of regeneration and reincarnation. Such, too, were the winged globe and the scarab, whose Egyptian names indeed signified rebirth. The egg was sacred to Isis the argha-goddess, also to Osiris; while Dionysus, his parallel, was said to have sprung from the mundane egg. In Babylon it was held sacred to Beltis or Ishtar; and having been adopted as a symbol of resurrection and of eternal life by the early Christian churches, both Greek and Roman, it may to-day be recognised as the Easter egg of Christendom, thus linking the resurrection of Jesus from His tomb and place of death with the older glyphs of half-forgotten nations and peoples.

In addition to the egg symbol, the double sex typified by the argha and its contents is also represented by the Lotus, "floating like a boat on the boundless ocean, where the whole plant signifies both the earth and the two principles of its fecundation."¹ "This plant grows in the water, and amongst its broad leaves puts forth a flower, in the centre of which is formed

¹ "Asiatic Researches," vol. iii. p. 364.

the seed-vessel, shaped like a bell or inverted cone, and punctuated at the top with little cavities or cells in which the seeds grow. The orifices of these cells being too small to let the seeds drop out when ripe, these shoot forth into new plants in the places where they were formed, the bulb of the vessel serving as a matrix to nourish them until they acquire such a degree of magnitude as to burst it open and release themselves, after which they take root wherever the current deposits them.”¹ The plant, being thus reproductive of itself, was naturally adopted as a symbol of the productive power of water, upon which the active spirit of the creator operated in giving life to matter.

And so we find that water too has a deep significance; it was a primitive elemental power, and the Great Deep over which the spirit of God brooded, was regarded as the matrix of all things.

These were some of the ancient symbols current among people who were wise with a wisdom long forced out of sight by the materialistic spirit of the last two thousand years, which seeks to drag every philosophic symbol down to its own level, and which can only

¹ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. iii. pp. 5, 29, 30.

see in the pure and simple glyphs of past ages that which its eyes bring it the power of seeing.

Pure and simple glyphs they certainly were among the pure and simple people who composed the nations of the early Aryan race, but it must not be lost to sight that there was a degraded form of the ark-symbol. Just as Phallic worship was the debased expression of the wide-spread reverence for the cross, so to the ark was ascribed among some nations an equally degraded and somewhat cognate character.

But to conclude our survey of the ark in its first aspect, the Jewish ark will also be found to furnish a parallel with the arks of other nations. "As among the Jews the ark was a sort of portable temple in which the Deity was supposed to be constantly present, so among the Mexicans, the Cherokees, and the Indians of Michoacan and Honduras, an ark was held in the highest veneration, and was considered an object too sacred to be touched by any but the priests."¹

But the ark, in another of its aspects—a less archaic one—is associated with the various deluge legends of the world. It is still the

¹ Lord Kingsborough's "Antiquities of Mexico," vol. viii. p. 250.

bearer of seed and of life, but it is now endowed with more definite characteristics.

It is doubtless to the submergence of the Atlantean continent and the withdrawal from it of the Manu, destined to sow the seeds of the present Fifth Root Race, that all these deluge legends, with the allied symbolism of the ark in this aspect, are to be traced.

To begin with the Hindu legend, Vishnu, in the form of a fish, is said to have revealed to the Manu Vaivaswata—also called Satyavrata—that a great deluge was at hand, and that he must build an ark. Having done so, he entered in, taking with him the seeds of all life. At the appointed time this Fish-Avatar, bidding the Manu fasten the ark to his horn, towed it safely through the waters to the mountain of the North, and instructed the Manu to tie the ark to a tree while the flood lasted, and to descend with the waters as they abated. Ancient temples in India contain representations of Vishnu sustaining the earth from underneath the waters, while a rainbow rests on the subsiding flood.¹

Apollodorus speaks of Deucalion as consigned to a great ark along with his wives,

¹ Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. i. p. 55; also Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. ii. chap. i. sect. 6.

his family, and his animals. In this they floated while the waters covered the earth. Then landing on Mount Parnassus he built an altar. Some accounts mention his wife Phyrra only as accompanying him. Ovid says he sent out a dove, which brought back to him an olive branch.¹ Philo Judæus was evidently convinced of the identity of the stories concerning Deucalion and Noah, for he writes, "This man the Greeks call Deucalion, but the Chaldæans name him Noah, and it was in his time that the great deluge took place."²

Eusebius gives a valuable extract from Abydenus, taken originally from the archives of the Medes and Babylonians: "After him others reigned, among whom Seisithros, to whom Kronos predicted that an extraordinary abundance of rain would fall on the 12th of the month Desius; he ordered him to hide all the writings he possessed in Heliopolis of the Sipparæans. Seisithros having executed this order, set sail at once for Armenia, and there the designs of God were incontinently accomplished. The third day after the rain had

¹ Cox's "Tales of Ancient Greece"; also Lundy's "Monumental Christianity," p. 299, Fig. 137.

² "On Rewards and Punishments," works of Philo Judæus, translated by C. D. Yonge, Bohn's Ecclesiastical Library, vol. iii. p. 461; also Bryant's "Analysis," vol. ii. p. 212.

ceased, he set free birds as a trial to know whether they would discover land free from water. These having traversed a boundless ocean, without finding a resting place, returned to Seisithros. After the first he sent out others, his attempt not succeeding till the third time, for the birds returned with their claws full of mud. The gods carried him away from among men; his vessel, which remained in Armenia, affords to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood amulets made of its timbers, which preserve them against sickness.”¹

Berosus also gives an account of the Chaldean version of the deluge story. He says that the flood took place under Xisuthros, the last of the demi-god kings; that he reigned for 64,800 years; that in the month before the summer solstice the god Chronos appeared to Xisuthros in a dream, and commanded him to prepare a vessel, to enter it with his family, and to take with him specimens of animals and birds.²

The eleventh cuniform tablet of the Epic of Uruk states that this deluge was inaugurated by Bel, because of the wickedness of mankind.

Similar legends are to be found on the other

¹ *Abydeno apud Eusib. præp. Evangel.*, Lib. IX. cap. xii.

² “Ancient Fragments” of Berosus and other writers, translated by J. P. Cory.

side of the Atlantic. In Mexico it is generally Cox-Cox and his wife who save themselves and their animals in a boat of cypress wood. In another Mexican tribe, however, the name given to the hero of the story is Tezpi. As the waters begin to subside, he sends out a vulture and other birds, but it is a humming-bird that eventually returns with a leaf in its beak. They finally disembark on Mount Colhuacan.¹ The Toltec traditions of the flood are said to give the height reached by the waters as fifteen cubits, which figure coincides with that given in Genesis.

The Populvuh of Guatemala describes a great inundation caused by the god Hurakan. Water and fire contributed to the universal ruin at the time of the great cataclysm which preceded the fourth creation.

The Nicaraguans believed that "ages ago the world was destroyed by a flood, in which the most part of mankind perished. Afterwards the teotes or gods restocked the earth as at the beginning." Those who were saved built a tower that should reach to heaven, but the great Spirit destroyed it with thunder.²

¹ Brinton's "Myths of the New World," pp. 203-11; also Humboldt's "Researches," vol. ii. p. 65; and Kingsborough's "Mexican Antiquities."

² Bancroft's "Native Races," vol. iii. p. 75.

Among some American Indians, tradition says that the father of their tribe, being warned of a deluge, built a raft, on which he placed himself, his family, and all animals, and so floated till "a new earth appeared"; while among others it was believed "that one man and one woman saved themselves at the destruction of the world by water on a high mountain near the banks of the Asivera."¹

In China also there was a legend of a great island that was overwhelmed by the sea. Its pious king, with his family and followers, were said to have escaped to China and Japan.

In the Eddas of Ancient Scandinavia there is an account of a deluge, when "earth in ocean sank," and from which but one man, Hyrm, escaped with his family in a ship.

In all the above quoted legends it may be noted that the meaning of the ark is perfectly natural and straightforward, but there are other stories of the flood—notably in our own British Islands—where the more involved archaic symbolism already referred to, is evidently interwoven with the simpler legend. The bardic poems, for example, refer to "the bursting forth of the lake Llion and the overwhelming of the face of all lands, so that all mankind were

¹ Squiers' "Serpent Symbol in America," p. 190.

drowned excepting Dwy-van and Dwy-vach, who escaped in a naked vessel (a vessel without sails), and by whom the island of Britain was re-peopled."¹ Their ship, called Nwydd Nav Neivion,² was said to carry a male and female of every species. Now, it is in the interpretation of these names that the involved symbolism will become apparent. *Dwy* means cause or origin, and also self-existent, while *van* means great or lofty. Dwy-van, therefore, signifies the great self-existent Cause, while Dwy-vach means the lesser Cause. From this it may naturally be inferred that the originators of these symbolic terms must have had some acquaintance with the real facts of the creation and of the destruction of worlds and of solar systems—the beginnings and the endings of Manwantaras and of Kalpas.

Another version in Britain was that one Dylan ail Ton (son of the sea) escaped in his ship "when the floods came forth from Heaven to the great Deep." The earth was said to be saved from a repetition of the flood by the god Hu-Gadarn (Hu the Mighty), who, after the deluge, "held the Plough strong and excellent,

¹ Davies' "Mythology and Rites of the British Druids," p. 95.

² Nwydd Nav Neivion is referred to by Rhys as the triple name of the Welsh Noah, the builder of the ship. "Hibbert Lectures, 1886," pp. 649-50.

with lucid sunshine as his chariot." He was also said to be the "builder of the ark which passed the waters," laden with seed and borne aloft by serpents.¹ But Hu-Gadarn had many other names. Bel or Beli (the radiant Bull), Bûdd (victory), and Bûddwas or Buddogre (the god of victory), "who rises in light and ascends the sky," as well as "he who presides over the mundane circle." He was also called Prydain the Dragon, the Gliding King, the Sovereign of Heaven. He was said to have lived and died alternately—indeed, he seems identified in every possible way with the sun, which to complete the symbology is called the Yellow Tawr (Bull) of Spring. He is also represented as the "keeper of the door of Heaven," or the "deity of the door," being in this capacity endowed with keys like Janus, like Saturn, and like St. Peter. Under the mystic name of Tegid Voel or Bald Serenity he is identified as the consort of the ark-goddess Ceredwyn. Their daughter was spoken of as Criervyn, the "token of the egg," while their son Avagddu, "utter darkness," was reborn in the "Caldron of the Deluge," wedded the Rainbow, and became illuminated. These are very mystic and unintelligible references, but it seems probable that

¹ "Book of the Bard Taliesin."

the symbolism in this instance, as in the above case of Dwy-van and Dwy-vach, has to do with cosmic realities.¹

The goddess Ceredwyn was represented by a heifer as well as by the sacred boat or argha, which was covered with a veil, and which, as already stated, was only permitted to be touched by the priests bound to her service. The Celtic name of her ark was "argat" or "arck," while "arawn" was also a name for it in Welsh and Celtic. Faber points out what is doubtless a relic of the primitive ark worship, the fact namely that "we still call the body of a church, in contradistinction to the chancel, the nave, or ship."²

The ark in its third aspect has still to be dealt with. In this it was regarded as the burial place of the Initiate during his three days' trance. This aspect of the ark seems at first sight to differ somewhat from the other two, but a little consideration shows that in this case also the ark is the bearer and preserver of seed and of life, for the tomb of the Initiate was also his birthplace on the third day—the birthplace of the man who was regenerate or born again. "The person preserved

¹ Davies' "Mythology and Rites of the British Druids," p. 203, &c.; also Faber's "Origin of Pagan Idolatry," vol. iii. pp. 165-7.

² Faber's "Mysteries of the Cabiri," vol. i. p. 216.

is always mentioned as preserved in an ark. He is described as being in a state of darkness, which is represented allegorically as a state of death. He then obtains a new life, which is called a second birth, and is said to have his youth renewed.”¹

The ark in which was placed the dead Osiris was supposed to be wafted by the waves to Byblos, in Syria, at which place, as well as in Egypt, a yearly commemoration of his death took place. A sacred Apis, covered with black, was then shown as emblem of the death of Osiris. The following is a description of the religious ceremony which used to take place in an underground temple. “All of a sudden the surrounding darkness was dissipated by the glare of torches, borne aloft by priests arrayed in white linen vestments which reached down to their feet, and who preceded the disconsolate Isis, anxiously seeking for her lost husband. Other priests arrayed in similar stoles of virgin white followed after. The first priest carried a lamp burning with uncommon splendour, and fixed in a boat of gold, the emblem of Osiris sailing round the world in his sacred scyphus. The second priest bore two golden altars flaming to his honour, and that of his queen. The

¹ Bryant's "Analysis," vol. ii. p. 211.

third priest, in one hand, carried a palm branch curiously wrought in foliated gold, in the other the magic wand or caduceus of Hermes. The fourth priest carried a small palm tree. This plant budding every month was an emblem of the moon. . . . The same priest carried also a golden vase . . . which contained . . . the sacred milk. The fifth carried the golden van, the mystical 'Vannus Iacchi' [or winnowing fan], and the sixth and last priest carried the sacred amphora or vase with two handles, whence copious libations of wine . . . were poured out." This solemn festival lasted during four days, when Osiris was imagined to be found and restored to life, and his return rejoiced over by Isis (Nature). The procession emerged into the day, and the darkness and gloom of the subterranean caverns were exchanged for the vivifying influence of a vernal sun.¹

An ark was also borne about during the celebration of the mysteries sacred to Bacchus, which Dupuis says took place in March, and after which Bacchus "ascended into heaven." The following are some of the exclamations made to him by his votaries: "Io Nissi, Lord be my guide"; "Io Saboi, Lord thou art an

¹ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. iii. chap. ii. sect. 4.

host to me"; "Io Baccoth, God! see our tears"; "Hu Esh, Thou art fire"; "Elta Esh, Thou art life."¹

"Part of the ceremony in most of the ancient mystery celebrations consisted in carrying about a kind of ship or boat." The ship of Isis carried about in public was well known, and one of the names of the navicular shrines was Baris.² The boat-shaped cups used in the mysteries were called the arga of Zeus Soter. Amongst the Athenians at the Panathenæa, what was termed the sacred ship, was borne with great reverence through the city to the temple of Demeter.³

In the Eleusinian mysteries there was a night scene attended with tears and lamentations on account of one supposed to be lost, but at the close a priest used to present himself to the mourning people, and bid them be of good cheer, for the deity whom they lamented was preserved. The exclamations then burst forth, "I have escaped a calamity. I have met with a better portion."

The same thing was enacted in the Syrian rites of Adonis-Tammuz, who was hid in an

¹ Dupuis' *Origine de tous les Cultes*, and Taylor's *Diegesis*, p. 189.

² Apparently synonymous with the Barith or Baal-Berith, the ark god of Canaan, see Judges, chap. ix. 4 and 46.

³ Bryant's "Analysis," vol. ii. pp. 219-223.

ark by Venus, and was supposed to be in a state of death there for a time.

Plutarch writes that "the ship which the Greeks calls Argo, being made in imitation of that of Osiris, was, in honour of him, turned into a constellation," and placed in the heavens.¹ And we find in Dr. Hyde's translation from the Persian of Ulug Beg's table of the fixed stars, that the sign Argo is simply called "Stella Navis," the constellation of the ship. In the Indian Zodiac the sign Virgo is drawn standing on a boat in the water.²

Before closing the subject attention should be drawn to an ark, under this last aspect, which every traveller can inspect at will. Many fanciful theories have been suggested to account for the stone coffer found in what is called the King's Chamber in the great Pyramid at Gizeh, but it is doubtless one of the arks used in the ancient ceremonies. In it was laid the body of the neophite ready for initiation, and in it was performed, three days afterwards, the great baptismal rite.

Finally, though no reference is made in the Christian Scriptures to the ark-characteristic of the tomb in which was laid the body of

¹ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, cap. xxii.

² Sir Wm. Jones' "On the Astronomy of the Hindus" in "Asiatic Researches," vol. ii. p. 292.

Jesus, and while recognising its manifestly mythological origin, "the sepulchre hewn in stone wherein never man before was laid" is obviously but another example of the ark which was both the Initiate's tomb and the place of his resurrection.

CHAPTER V

SOLAR SYMBOLS

REMARKABLY numerous are the sun-god's symbols, and singularly complex is the whole system. The Cross, the Disk, the Ark, the Serpent or Dragon, the Bull, the Lamb, the Fish, and the Dove have all been used at one time or another as solar emblems. Nor do these complete the list, though they are among the most important. The Cross and the Ark have already been dealt with, but the others also deserve attention.

The consideration of the serpent symbol must be prefaced by the recognition of its dual aspect, for the serpent is not only an emblem of the sun-god, but is oftentimes represented as his antagonist, the principle of evil, with whom he is in perpetual conflict, and whom he invariably slays.

Thus in India Krishna is the destroyer of the snake Kaliya. In the representation of the combat he is always figured as bruising or crushing the serpent's head, while the latter

generally bites his heel.¹ This recalls, it will be observed, almost word for word, the mystical reference in the third chapter of Genesis, where it is foretold that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and that the serpent shall bruise his heel.

In Egypt Ra is supposed to be engaged nightly in fighting the serpent *Āpepi*, whom he always conquers. Horus-Osiris is also a serpent slayer. Apollo kills the python, while the infant Bacchus, whom Herodotus identifies with Osiris,² is represented as strangling two snakes.

In Babylon and Nineveh, while Baal, the beneficent sun-god, is typified as usual by the disk and serpent, Moloch, the burning and parching power of the great luminary, is represented by the serpent, *without* the disk or circle. Baal, as Tammuz, also slays a snake or dragon.

In ancient Mexico the great spirit Teotl was regarded as having crushed the head of a serpent, the genius of evil,³ while in Aztec times the goddess Cioacoatl (the Mexican prototype of Eve and of Mary) is pictured in a garden

¹ Moor's "Hindu Pantheon," plate 13; also Calmet's "Fragments," Serpent-Head Plate, Figs. 4 and 5.

² Lib. ii. cap. 42.

³ Humboldt's "Researches," vol. i. p. 228.

with a single tree, round which is twined a serpent with a human face, which seems to whisper in her ear.¹

“Dans la théologie des Islandais,” writes Dupuis, summarising apparently from the great Scandinavian poem—the *Voluspa*, “leur Apollon, Odin tue l’énorme serpent. Aussitôt le soleil s’éteint : la terre se dissout dans la mer, les étoiles perdent leur éclat, toute nature se détruit pour se renouveler.”²

Christ is of course the great serpent slayer of Christendom. It is he who bruises the serpent’s head. In the description of the war in heaven in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, when the great dragon was cast out, “that old serpent called the Devil and Satan,” it is to Michael the Archangel that the victory is ascribed ; but it must be remembered that Michael is but the “Ferouer” or “Double” of the Christos, for while the Christos or Verbum is the Sun, Michael, identified also with Hermes or Mercury, is his nearest representative. The very meaning of the name Michael is he “who (is) like unto God.” For this reason, doubtless, the Roman church assigns to Michael the most honourable place in their hierarchy after

¹ Veytia’s *Hist. Antiq. de Mexico*.

² Dupuis’ *Origine de tous les Cultes*, tome vii. p. 183.

the Trinity and the Virgin Mary. In the book of Daniel he is called one of the "first princes," while, as Mercury, he was worshipped amongst the Celtic races under the name of Dia-cead-ion—"the first God." This name still figures as the Irish Wednesday. At the end of this chapter will be given a table of days of the week, in which may be traced some closely allied symbolism among widely separated races.

But the serpent was also an emblem of the sun-god. In India the Naga, or "divine snake," stands in contrast with the evil Kaliya. Max Müller writes that "the snakes assume at an early time a very prominent part in epic and popular traditions" of India, and they also appear in some of its most ancient architectural ornamentations.¹ It may be observed that it is of the Saviour, or God of Wisdom, that the serpent almost invariably stands as an emblem. In India it is with Vishnu that it is most intimately associated. "Serpent-worship still prevails to a great extent among the native tribes of India, and one of the aboriginal races boasts of being sons of the serpent . . . and worship is paid to the serpent, not merely in deprecation of evil, but in imprecation of good. This worship prevails also in Cashmir and

¹ Max Müller's "Hibbert Lectures of 1878," p. 115.

Nepal, and there is a serpent wall in the city of Benares which is visited once a year for the purpose of offering sacrifices to the serpent-god.”¹ Maurice writes that “in Cashmere there were no less than seven hundred places where carved figures of snakes were worshipped,” and he goes on to remark that the fact of so many deities being represented as grasping serpents, or environed by serpents, can only be intended as a mark of their divinity.²

Students of the mythology of Egypt and explorers of her buried monuments are alike aware that the *uræus* or head-dress, which not only the gods and goddesses but almost every Pharaoh is represented as wearing, is formed of a serpent coiled round a disk, and generally with its hood raised. The serpent was also pictured on the sacerdotal vestments of the priests, and it seems to have been the special symbol of the god Thoth. It was adored in Egypt, writes Maurice, “as the emblem of the divine nature, not only . . . on account of its great vigour and spirit, but of its extended age and revirescence.”³

This worship of serpent-gods, writes Lenor-

¹ Wise's "Paganism in Caledonia," p. 110.

² Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. ii. chap. i. sect. 4.

³ *Ibid.*

mant, "is found amongst many of the primitive Turanian tribes. The Accadians made the serpent one of the principal attributes and one of the forms of Hea," the god who was called both Lord of the Earth and King of the Ocean, and who is recognised as the third member, (according to Lenormant himself, the *second* member) of the Chaldæan triad.¹ Sayce also bears witness to the association of the serpent with the god Ea.²

Writing about the Jewish worship of the serpent, Grant Allen remarks that it is "said to have gone on uninterruptedly till the days of Hezekiah, when, under the influence of the exclusive devotion to Jahweh [Jehovah] which was then becoming popular, the image was broken in pieces as an idolatrous object. It is scarcely necessary to point out in passing that the asp was one of the most sacred animals in Egypt; but, as in the case of the bull, the snake was also a wide-spread object of worship throughout all the surrounding countries; and it is therefore probable that the Hebrew snake-worship may have been parallel to, rather than derived from, Egyptian ophiolatry."³

¹ François Lenormant's "Chaldæan Magic," p. 232.

² "Hibbert Lectures of 1887," p. 281.

³ Grant Allen's "Evolution of the Idea of God," pp. 191, 192.

In Mexico and Peru the serpent was also held in reverence. The chief Teo-calli, or House of God, in the city of Mexico, had a wall entirely covered with carved serpents, and the chief gods of the nation wore serpents as decorations. The very name Quetzalcoatl signified "serpent of rich plumage," while it was in a skiff made of serpent skins that he eventually sailed away from the country.¹

In Central America the narrow passages in the pyramids found by explorers are called the "holes of the serpents," while the people of the country refer to their god Votan—the Noah of their deluge story—as having come from the East, and having built a great city called Nachan, the city of the serpents. We shall have occasion presently to refer to the derivation of this word *chan*, a serpent, in connection with a locality in Scotland where serpent-worship was practised.

In the ancient Celtic and Gaelic sun-worship there are everywhere traces of the serpent. The god Hu, and the goddess Ceredwyn, were both sun-deities, and both were represented in chariots drawn by serpents. During their rites the Druids wore what was called a "serpent's egg" upon the breast, and at certain parts of

¹ Brinton's "Myths of the New World."

the ritual were wont to cry out, "I am a Druid! I am a serpent!" The exclamation may have been intended to assert their divine origin, for the Celts, like the Egyptians, the Peruvians, and the Chinese, claimed to be "children of the sun." The very name Celt is said to be derived from the word Kealtach, one belonging to or connected with the heavens. In the great stone circle at Avebury, in Wiltshire, are two serpentine lines of upright stones, while in Ireland the serpent is found rudely sculptured on the Druidic remains. The old Irish tradition that St. Patrick banished all serpents from the island is doubtless a materialised version of his abolition of serpent-worship. He and his followers in the fifth century certainly destroyed all the Druidic records they could find. It is written in the "Annals of the Four Masters" that more than three hundred of such ancient manuscripts were burnt. In the "Book of Kells," however, which still exists, may be seen the ancient ophite-symbols once so revered, and the exquisite serpent-letters of its capitals afford a study of beautiful and almost incredible intricacies.

Up to the present day, indeed, are relics of the old serpent-worship occasionally unearthed.

Canon Freemantle thus describes the contents of the tomb of Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1205: "The crozier of cedar-wood was perfect, as also the cup and paten, and the ring with its strange gnostic emblem of Chnupis, the serpent-god, with sun-rays about his head, the Egyptian Æsculapius, the giver of health. These relics were not put back when the tomb was re-closed. They are exhibited in a case in the Chantry of Henry IV., on the opposite side of Trinity Chapel." ¹

But the proofs of serpent-worship are not confined to written or sculptured records. The excavation of tumuli has added further demonstration. Two of these mounds deserve special attention. One is in Glen Feochan, in Argyleshire, which was discovered by Mr. Phené, in 1871, the other is in Adams Co., Ohio, in North America. There are close resemblances between them. In both cases the back of the mound is covered with stones, laid like vertebræ descending from a spine which runs along the ridge. The heads face westward, and each is crowned with a circle of stones—the solar circle—resembling that on the heads of the sculptured or painted serpents in Egypt. The Argyleshire mound is about three hundred

¹ Freemantle's "Canterbury Cathedral," p. 43.

feet long, and describes a huge letter S. The raised portion on the head of the serpent "has been formed in such a position that the worshipper standing at the altar would naturally look eastward directly along the whole length of the great reptile, and across the dark lake to the triple peaks of Ben Cruachan. This position must have been carefully selected, as from no other point are the three peaks visible." The American mound is on a larger scale, being altogether about a thousand feet long, but the position, both of the serpent and of the altar at the serpent's head, is identical with that of the Argyleshire mound—the head in each case lying towards the west, while the worshippers at the altar must have faced east, in the one case towards the three-pointed mountain, in the other case towards the junction of three rivers.¹

We have seen above, that in Central America the word "chan" denoted a serpent, but here are two names in our own country where the same word enters into combination, the name of the glen containing the serpent-mound, and the three-peaked mountain towards which the altar faced. It is now generally admitted that

¹ Gordon-Cumming's "From the Hebrides to the Himalayas," vol. i. p. 37, *et seq.*; and Squiers' "Serpent Symbol in America," pp. 137-139.

the Celtic tongue, with its Gaelic offshoot, is one of the least mixed descendants of the primitive Aryan language, which is probably now represented in its purest form in Sanskrit. It is true that traces of ancient Celtic are to be found in most of the languages of Europe and Asia; with resemblances to those of South and Central America. In any case the similarity between the Guatemalan name and that in the Scottish Highlands is remarkable.

Although in early days the sun-rites of all nations were pure and bloodless, there is no doubt that those of later times were marked with cruel victim-offerings; and in token, doubtless, of the many sacrifices offered to the deity, the triple-peak of the shadowing mountain came to be called by the significant name of Ben Cruachan (literally, cruach-chan), the hill of the bloody serpent.

There is an old bardic poem descriptive of the religious rites of the ancient Britons, in which the worshipper, while calling on Bel (the Dragon or Serpent King), is represented as making the orthodox turn *dheasul*, or sun-wise, first round a consecrated lake, then round the sanctuary whereon was depicted the "Gliding King."¹

¹ Dean's "Worship of the Serpent," p. 256.

“The serpent was sacred to Odin, and Scandinavian mythology has assigned the names Ofnir and Sfoenir to the two serpents of this god who guard the nether world.”¹

Throughout Hellas, Æsculapius, the healing god and saviour, was also worshipped under the form of a serpent.² The wonder-working caduceus of Hermes was twined with serpents, and bears a marked resemblance to the serpent-rod of Moses, with which he wrought so many miracles.³ In connection with Moses there is also the lifted-up brazen serpent in the wilderness, on which to look was to live for all those bitten by the plague of fiery serpents, sent as a judgment on the rebellious children of Israel.⁴ In this the serpent figures both in its good and evil aspect. Finally Jesus himself declares that “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”⁵

The disk or circle, as already pointed out, was probably the most archaic, and for ages remained certainly the most important of all the solar symbols.

¹ *Archæologia*, S.A., vol. xxxvi. p. 143.

² Cox's "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," vol. ii. p. 36.

³ Exodus, chap. iv. 2, 3, and following chapters.

⁴ Numbers, chap. xxi. 6-9.

⁵ St. John, chap. iii. 14.

Among the Eastern nations the serpent, in the form of a ring or circle, was the emblem of Divinity and Eternity. Pre-eminently was this the case in Egypt, where this figure is constantly represented. The plain circle typified both the sun and his yearly course, just as the crescent was emblematic of the moon and her phases. The glyph of the sun-god Ra was a circle with a point at its centre. Osiris and Horus were also symbolised by the sun's disk variously depicted. On the altar of every Egyptian temple was a disk of gold, sometimes as a plain circle, sometimes with rays streaming from it, and sometimes with the addition of a human face inscribed on its surface. There is a reference to these disks in Jeremiah,¹ where the prophet foretells that the sun-faces (wrongly translated as images, with a marginal reading of images in the house of the sun) of Bethshemesh shall be destroyed by the king of Babylon.

When studying the rites and customs of a bygone race, it is a great addition to the picture if some piece of contemporary evidence can be adduced. This is supplied by the following prayer of Queen Nefer Thii, the consort of Khuenaten of the Eighteenth Dynasty: "Thou

¹ Chap. xliii. 13.

disk of the sun! Thou living God! There is none other beside thee; thou givest health to the eyes through thy beams, creator of all beings. Thou goest up from the eastern horizon of the heavens to dispense life to all that thou hast created. . . . Thus they behold thee, and they sink to sleep when thou settest. Grant to thy son, who loveth thee, life in truth . . . that he may live united with thee in eternity.”¹

In the tombs of Gizeh and Sakkarah have been found representations of an obelisk crowned with a sun disk and rising from a truncated pyramid. A sun disk was placed on the front of the mitre worn by the chief priests. The Druidic high priests are said to have worn a similar head-dress when performing their rites, while it is apparent from the description in Exodus² that the mitre worn by the Jewish high priest must have been similarly decorated.

Over the altars of the Persian sun and fire temples was displayed a disk surrounded by the solar rays, and graven with a human face. The images of the gods in Assyria and Phœnicia were similarly surmounted with a metal disk. In China and Japan the same custom prevailed—indeed, the circular plate of polished

¹ Sir Erasmus Wilson's "Egypt of the Past," p. 250.

² Chap. xxviii. 36-7.

metal, which to-day may be seen in the Shinto temples, is doubtless a survival of the archaic disk.

In Mexico we find that the sun-god Tezcatlipoca, who stood next in honour to the Supreme Being (of whom there was no image), was symbolised by and represented as wearing for his chief adornment a circular plate or disk of bright metal, which saw "and reflected all the doings of the world."¹

The Peruvians, however, stand pre-eminent among the nations of antiquity for the elaborate ritual of their sun-worship. From beginning to end of their history—so far as it is known—the sun was the central object of their rites, customs, and traditions. Their royal Incas, indeed, were believed to trace their direct descent from the sun and moon, and all the descendants of this royal sun-race wore in the ear a great circle or wheel of gold.² On solemn occasions the sovereign, who was also high priest, wore a head-gear adorned with a sun-disk resembling that of Egypt. In the great temple of Cuzco—the holy city—"on the western wall, was emblazoned a representation of the deity consisting of a human coun-

¹ Humboldt's "Researches."

² Montesino's MS., *Antiq Hist. del Peru.*

tenance looking forth from amidst innumerable rays of light, which emanated from it in every direction, in the same manner as the sun is often personified with us. The figure was engraved on a massive plate of gold of enormous dimensions, thickly powdered with emeralds and precious stones. It was so situated in front of the great eastern portal that the rays of the morning sun fell directly upon it at its rising, lighting up the whole apartment with an effulgence that seemed more than natural, and which was reflected back from the golden ornaments with which the walls and ceilings were everywhere encrusted. Gold, in the figurative language of the people, was 'the tears wept by the sun,' and every part of the interior of the temple glowed with burnished plates and studs of the precious metal."¹ The above description recalls that of the golden vessels of King Solomon's temple given in II. Chronicles and I. Book of Kings.

In Greece and Rome the rayed disk also symbolised the solar gods, while the statues of Greek deities had bright metal plates above their heads.

The ancient Irish flag, called the "sun burst," was what its name implies, the sun-disk with

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

its rays of glory. The Scandinavian nations, too, inscribed this on their banners.

In the worship of Buddha the sun-disk—already accepted long before his time in India as an emblem of deity—was one of the many symbols employed, and on some images of Buddha he is represented as wearing the mitre adorned with the sun-disk and the cross.

Lastly, in the Christian religion we once more come upon the familiar emblem in the monstrance, or sacred vessel in which the Eucharist is placed for exposure to the kneeling congregation at the service called Benediction in the Roman Catholic Church. The monstrance, made either of gold or some gilded metal, is of the old sun-disk pattern, round and rayed. Here is the whole so-called “pagan” imagery in full force—the sun—the allegoric figure of deity, which it at once reveals to and veils from the profane gaze, and the God invisible and spiritual worshipped under an aspect visible and material. In the halos, too, which usually surround the heads of divine beings and saints of Christian art, may be recognised a survival of the idea of the solar rays, though their truer, albeit more occult origin, is to be traced to the aura which surrounds every human being.

But the consideration of the sun-disk would not be complete without some reference both to the Round Towers of Ireland and other countries, and also to the sun-wise movement which not only our ecclesiastical processions but some even of our social customs to this day commemorate.

The round towers have afforded subject for much controversy. They *may*, it is true, have been used as watch-towers for protection against the Danish invaders; they *may* also have been used as baptistries by the early Christian community, and some have certainly served in modern times as belfries for the neighbouring churches; but the theory that they were constructed for any of these purposes falls to the ground when we consider the testimony of Diodorus Siculus, who lived about 44 B.C., and who refers to them as "singular temples of round form."

Ireland is the country where these towers exist in greatest number. There are over a hundred of them in the island. The Rev. R. Smiddy states the number at 118. Similar towers are also found in the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and there are two fairly preserved specimens in Scotland, at Brechin and Abernethy.

But it is not only in the British Islands that

these ancient structures are to be found. Precisely similar round towers exist in a more or less perfect condition not only in Central Europe and Sardinia, but in Eastern Russia, Afghanistan, Persia, and India; and even across the Atlantic, in Colorado and in Central America.

All this indicates the universality of the object for which they were constructed, and takes us back to the ancient times of sun and fire-worship, while the form in which they were built points to the archaic symbol of the solar disk.

The principal round towers of Ireland are those of Rosecrea, Cashel, Ardmore, Cloyne, Glendalough, Clondalkin, and Kilkenny. All are built in the same round pillar form, and in most there is an underground chamber or vault, in which were found vitrified stones, or other evidence of fire. The narrow windows in all the towers face the four cardinal points, the doorway facing eastwards; while the outline of both door and window space is generally of the Egyptian pylon form—*i.e.*, less wide at the top than at the bottom.

In his "Enquiry on the Round Towers of Ireland,"¹ Petrie mentions a similar one at

¹ Page 380.

Luxheil in Burgundy. It is, he says, of unknown origin, and is called by the inhabitants of the district "Lucerna." Both of these words would seem to be derived from the Latin "*lux*," while the former further suggests the Greek *ἥλιος*.

In his "Travels in India,"¹ Lord Valentia gives a sketch of two round towers at Bhau-gulpore in Bengal, remarking in the text that "they much resemble those buildings in Ireland which have hitherto puzzled the antiquaries of the sister kingdoms, excepting that they are more ornamented." In his "Travels in Persia," Hanway describes four temples of the Guebri, or Fire Worshippers, round in form, about twenty feet in diameter, and one hundred and twenty feet in height; while the measurements of the round towers in Ireland are given by Smiddy² as varying in height from fifty to one hundred and forty feet, and in the circumference at the base from forty to sixty feet. Palgrave also gives an account of round towers situated on the shores of the Persian Gulf.³

The round tower figures on old Buddhist coins in company with the sacred tree. In fact,

¹ Vol. i. p. 85.

² "The Druids, Ancient Churches and Round Towers of Ireland," p. 190.

³ Palgrave's "Central and Eastern Arabia," vol. ii. p. 308.

it is to be found in most parts of the globe, combining in its form, as it does, more than one of the symbols of the various faiths.

The sun-wise turn is the only subject connected with the sun-disk which still remains to be considered. Emblematic of the earth's course round the sun, this custom has been hallowed by use from the earliest times, and practised in widely separated lands. "Dheasul" is the Celtic word signifying sun-wise, while its literal interpretation, "with the sun on the right hand," is still more explicit.

To this day the Brahmin in India bows to the rising sun, exclaiming, "May the sun quicken our minds," which, according to Max Müller, is "probably the oldest prayer in the world." Turning slowly to the south and then to the west, he repeats the following words: "I follow the course of the sun; as he in his journeying compasses the world by the path of the south, so do I, thus following him, obtain the merit of his journey round the world by way of the south." In the now-abolished rite of Suttee, the victim walked sun-wise round the funeral pile before her death; while to this day the Santhals, a tribe of sun-worshippers, carry the corpse three times in like manner round the pile before laying it on its fiery resting-place.

In Egypt the same sun-wise turn was taken by the numerous sacred processions, while, like the Persians, the Arabians also, as stated by Palgrave, turn their faces to the east in prayer, as being the direction of the light.¹

The Mexicans faced east in prayer, and in their baptismal rites there was a sun-wise turn made with the infant at the conclusion of the ceremony.² The Aztec teocallis were ascended by a spiral staircase, starting always from left to right. In Burma and Java, where there are temples of similar construction, the author has been assured that the ascent is made in the same way. The Jewish temple, built after the captivity, had a like spiral staircase round the outside of the building, encircling it several times.³

The Peruvians also faced east in prayer, and at the rising of the sun on the day of the summer solstice, they marched sun-wise round their great temple.

The Buddhist prayer-wheels are scrupulously turned so as to follow the course of the sun, it being considered impious to reverse the motion. Even when passing one of these "prayer-mills" care is taken that it shall be on the

¹ "Central and Eastern Arabia," vol i. p. 8.

² Sahagun's *Hist. de la Nueva España*.

³ Ezekiel, chap. xli. 7.

right.¹ Andrew Wilson mentions a similar custom with reference to the mounds or stones carved with Buddhist symbols, which are to be met with in some of the Himalayan districts.

In Greece and Rome all sacred processions marched from left to right at starting.

The Kaaba of Mecca still witnesses seven sun-wise turns made round it by its Mohamedan devotees. This stone was held sacred long before the time of Mohamed, and the dheasul circuits are doubtless but the continuation of the custom of the earlier cult.

The Celtic and Gaelic customs which still linger in Ireland, and might have been witnessed quite recently in the Highlands of Scotland, are directly traceable to the three or seven sun-wise turns which the ancient inhabitants of these islands, as well as the Celts of Continental Europe, used to make round their Baal-fires. It is said that a circular pathway may still be traced at Stonehenge, round which the priests and people made their daily dheasul circuits.

The priests of the Christian Church in Abyssinia when using incense still take three turns sun-wise round the altar. Processions

¹ Gordon Cumming's "From the Hebrides to the Himalayas," vol. ii. p. 226.

in the Greek Church pursue the same course ; in the marriage ceremony, for instance, the bridal pair following the officiating priest three times round the altar from left to right. In the Easter ritual of the Roman Church the priest, after blessing the water in the baptismal font, sprinkles it towards the four corners of the globe, beginning at the east and continuing by the south. Our own ecclesiastical procession at the consecration of a burial-ground, follows the old sun-wise turn, for the bishop and clergy, emerging from the western door, turn to the north, and so round by east and south to the western door again.

The symbols of the Bull, the Lamb, the Fish, and the Dove still remain to be considered.

The Bull and the Ram or Lamb appear to have been venerated by nearly all the nations of antiquity. One of the most archaic of Indian deities, Budh or Budha, the god of Wisdom and Holiness, was represented by a bull. By some writers he is identified with Hu, the great god of the Welsh, who was also called Bûd and Budwas, the god of Victory. To this day in India the bull is sacred to Shiva.

In Egypt, writes Flinders Petrie, "the bull is connected with Ra, with Osiris, with Set, and with Ptah, and four sacred bulls are

specified," while the gods Khnum, Amen, and Osiris, and the goddess Neit were adored under the form of a ram.¹

The bull was also a symbol of the sun-god in Babylon. "There is some evidence," writes Sayce, "that the primitive Bull-god was Merodach himself. Ea and his wife had each two divine Bulls attached to them, those of Ea being named 'the god of the field of Eden' and 'the god of the house of Eden.' . . . We need not be astonished, therefore, at finding Merodach entitled in early astronomical literature *Gudi-bir*, the 'bull of light.' . . . It was as the Sun-god, moving through the twelve Zodiacal signs of the year, that Merodach, it is asserted, was known by this particular name."²

Dionysus at his festivals was believed to appear in bull-form. The women of Elis hailed him as a bull. They sang, "Come here, Dionysus, to thy holy temple by the sea; come with the Graces to thy temple, rushing with thy bull's feet, O goodly bull, O goodly bull."³

It is a significant fact that the bull-headed deity seems invariably to have preceded the

¹ Flinders Petrie's "Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt," p. 72.

² Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures of 1887," p. 289 *et seq.*

³ Plutarch's *Quæst. Græc.*, 36; *id. Isis et Osiris*, 35, quoted in Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i. p. 326.

ram-headed, indeed some which were originally bull-headed became ram-headed in later times. The bull of Budh in India continued to be adored long after the ram-worship of other deities arose. Apis similarly held sway in Egypt when the worship of Ammon was at its height. The cult of Ashtoreth or Astarte in Syria lasted for ages, but in course of time her symbol changed its form, becoming the ram in place of the bull, and as we have seen, both the bull and the ram were emblems of Osiris.

There is a hymn, writes Lang, in which Osiris is thus addressed: "King of eternity, great god, risen from the waters that were in the beginning, strong hawk, king of gods, master of souls, king of terrors, lord of crowns, thou that art great in Hres, that dost appear at Mendes in the likeness of a ram, monarch of the circle of gods, king of Amenti (Hades), revered of gods and men. Whoso knoweth humility, and reckoneth deeds of righteousness, thereby knows he Osiris.' Here the noblest moral sentiments are blended with Oriental salutations in the worship of a god who, for the moment, is recognised as lord of lords, but who is also a ram at Mendes."¹ The author proceeds to suggest a confusion of ideas, but

¹ Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. ii. p. 96.

surely there is no more confusion here than is to be found in Christendom to-day, where Jesus is worshipped as Lord of lords, and yet is constantly represented as a lamb carrying a flag.

The earliest representation of Jesus was the figure of a lamb,¹ alongside of which was sometimes placed the archaic symbol of life—the cross. In the course of time the lamb was represented *on* the cross, but it was not until the sixth synod of Constantinople, held about the year 680, that it was ordained that instead of the ancient symbol, the figure of a *man* fastened to a cross should be represented. This canon was confirmed by Pope Adrian I.²

The Fish also was a sacred symbol in ancient times, not only in India, but among the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Phœnicians. As we have already seen, Vishnu is sometimes represented as a fish, and so, too, is the sun-god Dagon, both having the attributes of Preserver and Saviour. The fish was also held sacred to Venus.³

Lenormant apparently identifies Ea or Hea,

¹ Illustrations of Jameson's "History of our Lord in Art," vol. ii. p. 335.

² Dupuis' *Origine de tous les Cultes*, and Lundy's "Monumental Christianity," p. 246, &c.

³ Inman's "Ancient Faiths," vol. i. pp. 528-9.

the third person in the Babylonian trinity, with the Oannes of Berosus. "A representation," he writes, "of the Fish-god as a legislator and protector, corresponding exactly with the legend of Berosus, has been found in the sculptures of the Assyrian palaces and on the Babylonian cylinders,"¹ while Sayce remarks that "Oannes, or Ea, it was ever remembered, had the body of a fish, and, like a fish, he sank each night into the waters of the Persian Gulf when the day was closed, which he had spent among his favoured disciples of Eridu."²

One of the earliest symbols of Jesus was a fish. As such it is found depicted in the Catacombs. Lundy remarks that "next to the sacred monogram the fish takes its place in importance as a sign of Christ in his special office of Saviour."

The Dove, too, was an ancient symbol, the remarkable fact about it being that "among all religious and civilised nations" it has been emblematic of the holy spirit.³

Adonis was called the Dove, and at the ceremonies in honour of his resurrection from the dead, the priest addressed the company by saying, "Comfort yourselves; all ye who have

¹ Lenormant's "Chaldean Magic," pp. 157-8.

² Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures of 1887," pp. 279-80.

³ Lundy's "Monumental Christianity," p. 293.

been partakers of the mysteries of the Deity, thus preserved: for we shall now enjoy some respite from our labours.' To which were added these words, 'I have escaped a sad calamity, and my lot is greatly mended.' The people answered by the invocation, 'Hail to the Dove, the restorer of light.'"¹

The Dove was also held sacred to Venus, as well as to other of the virgin-mother goddesses.

In Christian symbolism it is representative of the Holy Ghost, and it has also apparently some subtle connection with fire. According to Justin Martyr, a fire was lighted at the moment of the dove's descent on Jesus at his baptism in the river Jordan. It was again in the form of tongues of fire that the Spirit descended on the apostles,² while the words of St. John the Baptist ring with the significance of some hidden meaning, known doubtless in early days. "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."³

¹ Calmet's "Fragments," vol. ii. pp. 21-2.

² Acts of the Apostles, chap. ii. 2-3.

³ St. Luke, chap. iii. 16.

SOLAR SYMBOLS

Angels of the Days according to the Kabbalah.	Celtic Names of the Gods.	Translation.	Latin Names of the Gods.	French Days of the Week.	Scandinavian Names of the Gods.	English Days of the Week.
Raphael.	Dia Sul or Bheil.	God the Sun.	Apollo.	Dimanche.		Sunday.
Gabriel.	Dia Tuan.	God the Moon.	Luna.	Lundi.		Monday.
Chamael.	Dia Moirt.	God the death (god).	Mars.	Mardi.	Tiw, God of war.	Tuesday.
Michael.	Dia Cead-ion.	God the first god.	Mercurius.	Mercredi.	Woden.	Wednesday.
Zadykiel.	Dia Ard-ion.	God the high god (Jupiter).	Jupiter.	Jeudi.	Thor.	Thursday.
Hamiel.	Dia Bean-ion.	The Woman God.	Venus.	Vendredi.	Freya.	Friday.
Zapkiel.	Dia Satarn.	God Saturn.	Saturnus.	Samedi.	Saetere.	Saturday.

CHAPTER VI

FASTS AND FIRE-FESTIVALS

IN addition to the festivals of the winter solstice and the vernal equinox, which have already been dwelt on, there were other fire-festivals which marked the progress of the solar year, and the consideration of the ceremonies with which they were celebrated may still further exemplify some of the detailed correspondences which are to be traced in the religious rites or local customs of nations.

A few preliminary remarks, however, on the subject of fasts, will bring to notice the fact that the period immediately preceding the vernal equinox, has apparently been a season almost universally appropriated to a great yearly fast.

Easter amongst us is preceded by Lent. The Lenten fast, as ordained by the early Church, was but for one week, what is now called "Holy Week." It was subsequently extended to three weeks, and finally, by a decree of the Council of Aurelia, in 519, it was further ex-

tended to forty days, thus bringing it into line with the fasts practised by other nations.

For this was by no means the first fast of forty days in the records of the world's religions. A precisely similar fast at the same time of year was held by the ancient Mexicans in honour of the sun.¹ Bonwick, in his "Egyptian Belief,"² remarks that "the Spaniards were surprised to see that the Mexicans kept a forty days' vernal fast." Acosta, in his "History of the Indies,"³ writes that the Mexicans "used great fastings of five or ten days together, before *any* of their great feastes, and they were unto them as our four Ember weekes." Similar fastings and penances of the Peruvians are also described by him.

In Egypt, too, at about the same time of year, the people mourned for forty days in remembrance of Osiris,⁴ when there was great bewailing for the god as for one dead.⁵

In Babylon and Assyria the vernal fast was in honour of the slain Tammuz, in whose mournful rites the Jewish people were rebuked for taking part—"women weeping for Tammuz."⁶

¹ Humboldt's "Researches."

² P. 370.

³ Lib. v. cap. 17.

⁴ Landseer's "Sabæan Researches," p. 112.

⁵ *Classical Journal*, March 1820, p. 12.

⁶ Ezekiel, chap. viii. 14.

The Hindus still hold a fast in honour of Siva in the latter half of February.¹

In Greece and Asia Minor a fast in honour of Bacchus was held in the spring, while the Persians fasted for forty days, with sacrifice and thanksgiving, at the festival of the Salutation of Mithra.²

There are records, too, of fasts having been undertaken at some period of their career by many of the world's Saviours. Now the origin of all these fasts, as we shall see, is to be traced to the fast which for long ages used to be the invariable preliminary to one of the great rites of initiation—that one which took place at the vernal equinox.

The festival of the Annunciation, while traceable to an entirely different source from that which gave rise to the ceremonies commemorating the death and resurrection of the crucified Saviour, nevertheless also takes place at the vernal equinox. But the immaculate conception by the Virgin Mary on the 25th of March—now called Lady Day—has its correspondence in ancient Egypt. “Upon the new moon of the month Phamenoth, which falls in the beginning of the spring, they celebrate a festival,

¹ Williams' "Hinduism," pp. 182-3.

² Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. i. p. 272.

which is expressly called by them the entrance of Osiris into the Moon. According to these philosophers, therefore, by Osiris is meant the power and influence of the moon, as by Isis, whom they suppose to be married to him, they understand that generative faculty which resides in it; and accordingly they call the moon the mother of the world, and hold it to be of both sexes, female as it receives the influence of the sun, and is made pregnant by him, male as it scatters and disperses through the air, in its turn, the principles of fecundity.”¹

In Babylon and Nineveh, at the same time of year, was held a feast in honour of the virgin-mother Ishtar, and at the same time also, during subsequent centuries, was celebrated a festival of Venus. At these feasts were offered in sacrifice, round cakes dedicated to the “Queen of Heaven,” and eggs dyed and painted in many colours.

The Romans also held a feast on the 25th of March in honour of Cybele, whose title, “*Domina Nostra*,” speaks for itself as linking her with “Our Lady” of the Christian Church.

The May-day festival is also but the reminiscence of an ancient solar feast. It was celebrated in India, in Persia, in Egypt, and in

¹ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, cap. 43.

Rome, and in the first-named country it is still observed in honour of Bhavani—vernal nature.

“The first of May,” writes Rhys, “must, according to Celtic ideas, have been the right season for the birth of the summer sun-god [whose] mother . . . is Kerridwen, the Minerva of Welsh poets.”¹ This is manifestly the same goddess as Ceredwyn previously referred to. To this day, in parts of Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man, the old Druidic observances still linger. It was the custom to rise early in the morning, and gather bunches of juniper, rowan, and ivy, care being taken that no branch should be cut with a knife. The sacred fires were kindled by friction, and the hill-tops blazed with them, while even before sunrise worshippers assembled at the holy wells to drink the water, and wait in the meadows to see the sun dance at his rising on this first May morning. Sacred crystals, too, were dipped in the holy water, and the people and their cattle were sprinkled with the drops.

“It is from this great spring festival that we still retain our poetical name for the eve of May day, Beltane or Beil-teine, which means

¹ Rhys, “Hibbert Lectures, 1886,” p. 546.

Baal's fire."¹ Beltien is referred to by Frazer as constituting a "rural sacrifice."

"The first of May is a great popular festival in the midland and southern parts of Sweden. On the preceding evening huge bonfires, which should be lighted by striking two flints together, blaze on all the hills and knolls. Every hamlet has its own fire, round which the young people dance in a ring."²

Greatest, however, of all the fire-festivals—that of the winter solstice alone excepted—was the feast celebrated at midsummer. Such an one in ancient Egypt appears to have been known by the name of the "burning lamps." "Herodotus," writes Sayce, "seems to have been at Sais when the festival of 'burning lamps' was celebrated there. On the night of the festival, lamps were lighted round about the houses in the open air, the lamps being cups filled with salt and oil, on the surface of which a wick floated. All who could, thronged to Sais to take part in the ceremonies; those who could not be there, lighted their lamps at home, and so observed the rites due to Neit. The festival took place in the summer, probably at the time of the summer solstice, and the

¹ Gordon-Cumming's "From the Hebrides to the Himalayas," vol. i. p. 220.

² Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. ii. p. 257.

illuminations characteristic of it, are still perpetuated in some of the numerous festivals of modern Egypt.”¹

In Tipperah, in the north of India, there was a festival which began at noon and lasted for two days, during which time no fire was kindled nor water drawn. The sacrificial fire was then rekindled by friction of two pieces of bamboo by the officiating Brahmin, and from this all other fires were lighted.²

In Peru the feast of Raymi at the summer solstice (equivalent to our winter solstice) was preceded by a general fast of three days, during which no fire was lighted in the dwellings. “When the appointed day arrived, the Inca and all his court, followed by the whole population of the city, assembled at early dawn in the great square to greet the rising of the sun. They were dressed in their gayest apparel. . . . Eagerly they watched the coming of their deity, and no sooner did his first yellow rays strike the turrets and loftiest buildings of the capital, than a shout of gratulation broke forth from the assembled multitude, accompanied by songs of triumph, and the wild melody of barbaric instruments, that swelled louder and louder as his

¹ Sayce's "Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus," pp. 218-19.

² Wise's "Paganism in Caledonia."

bright orb rising above the mountain range towards the east, shone in full splendour on his votaries. After the usual ceremonies of adoration, a libation was offered to the great deity by the Inca from a huge golden vase filled with the fermented liquor of maize or of maguey, which, after the monarch had tasted himself, he distributed among his royal kindred. These ceremonies completed, the vast assembly was arranged in order of procession, and took its way towards the Coricancha. As they entered the street of the sacred edifice, all divested themselves of their sandals, except the Inca and his family, who did the same on passing through the portals of the temple." Preparations were then made to commence the sacrifice: animals, grain, flowers, and incense were offered, and occasionally, in later times, a child or a maiden. A fire was then kindled by means of a concave mirror of polished metal, which focussed the rays of the sun upon dried cotton and set it on fire. (Plutarch mentions the similar use of triangular concave mirrors at Rome under Numa.) When the sky was overcast it was considered a bad omen, and in this case the fire was kindled by friction. This sacred fire was entrusted to the care of the virgins of the sun. A llama was killed and tasted by the

Inca, and distributed by him, together with cakes made by the virgins of the sun, and a fermented liquor.¹

The ancient inhabitants of Russia worshipped a god Kupalo, who was patron of the fruits of the earth. In his honour they lighted fires on the 24th of June, over which leaped the young people, who were decorated with flowers.² "In the Russian midsummer ceremony," writes Frazer, "the straw figure of Kupalo, the representative of vegetation, is placed beside a May-pole or midsummer-tree, and then carried to and fro across a bonfire. Kupalo is here represented in duplicate, in tree form by the midsummer-tree, and in anthropomorphic form by the straw effigy."³

The Druids held a great feast at the summer solstice. All fires were then allowed to die out, and had to be rekindled from the altar. The hearth was thus sanctified afresh, while penalties were exacted from those who got their fire in any other way. A similar custom was said to prevail among the Parsis—the household fire being allowed to die out, and each family having to procure the sacred fire from the temples to

¹ Prescott's "Conquest of Peru," pp. 50-51; also D'Acosta's "Hist. of the Indies," Lib. V. chap. 28.

² Wilcock's "History of Russia."

³ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i. p. 292.

re-kindle on the hearth, while the Israelites, captive in Persia, are stated by the Talmud to have adopted this practice.

“According to a mediæval writer, the three great features of this [midsummer] festival were the bonfires, the procession with torches round the fields, and the custom of rolling a wheel. . . . From his description, which is still applicable, we see that the main features of the midsummer fire-festival are identical with those which characterised the spring festivals. In Swabia lads and lasses, hand-in-hand, leap over the midsummer bonfire . . . and they set fire to wheels of straw and send them rolling down the hill. In Lechrain, bonfires were kindled on the mountains on midsummer day; and besides the bonfire, a tall beam thickly wrapped in straw, and surmounted by a cross-piece, is burned in many places. Round this cross, as it burns, the lads dance.”¹

Looking north-east from the centre of the circles at Stonehenge, “a block of stone, set at some distance from the ruin, is so seen that its top coincides with the line of the horizon, and if no mist prevails, the sun, as it rises on the longest day of the year, will be seen coming up exactly over the centre of the stone, known

¹ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. ii. pp. 258-9.

from this circumstance as the 'Pointer.' The first rays of the sun then strike the so-called altar-stone of the ruins."¹ It is said that at Stonehenge, on the morning of the 21st June, numbers of people used to assemble to witness the sunrise, and this custom was probably a survival of some ancient Druidic ceremony on that occasion.

In many parts of Europe the midsummer fire-rites are still practised, cattle being made to pass through the bonfires for good luck; the people also leaping over them, and even throwing their children from hand to hand through the flames. At sunset on midsummer-eve the common mugwort used to be gathered; it was then carried three times sun-wise round the fire, touched with the flame, and carried home to be hung up over the doorway to keep off evil influences. St. John's-wort, fennel, and green birch were also used. Torches, too, were lit at the fires, and were borne sun-wise round the fields and cattle on which was desired the blessing of increase.

"In our own country the custom of lighting bonfires at midsummer has prevailed extensively. In the North of England these fires used to be lit in the open streets. Young and

¹ Gordon-Cumming's "In the Hebrides," p. 219.

old gathered round them; the former leaped over the fires and engaged in games, while the old people looked on. Sometimes the fires were lit on the tops of high hills." Frazer also quotes from a writer who witnessed the festival in Ireland in 1782. "I had a further satisfaction in learning from undoubted authority, that the people danced round the fires; and at the close went through these fires, and made their sons and daughters, together with their cattle, pass through the fire; and the whole was conducted with religious solemnity."¹

Up to the present day, indeed, have these customs prevailed in parts of Ireland, and the author is assured of the fact by one who has often witnessed these fire-festivals during quite recent years.

At Carnac, in Brittany, there is a great mound or tumulus now dedicated to St. Carnely, and on midsummer eve the inhabitants kindle a great fire, which is called Lan Neol, or fire of the sun. Now the name by which the Celts called the festival of the summer solstice was "carneus," which is philologically linked not only to the "Carna" of India, which signified "Radiant One," and was one of the names of Krishna, but to the Karnak

¹ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. ii. pp. 262-3-4.

of Egypt, one of the most ancient temples on the face of the earth. The word also survives in Carnac, the name of this wonderful remnant of a sun-circle in Brittany; in Carnach, the Gaelic name of certain sun-mounds in the Highlands of Scotland; in the "carn fires" of the north of England; and also apparently in the term carn-ival, converted by some without due regard to philology into carni-vale, "adieu to flesh"; for while the former is probably derived from the archaic Sanskrit or the only less ancient Celtic, and its meaning with due remembrance as to the convertibility of the *b* and the *v*, was Baal the Sun or Baal the Radiant, the derivation of the latter is made to appear to be from the comparatively modern Latin, whose roots in this instance have a totally different meaning. The word is probably also represented by the name Cornwall—a county in which more than any other in England (with the exception of Wiltshire) are found the relics and monuments of the ancient sun and serpent worship.

In subsequent Christian times this festival of the summer solstice came to be identified with the eve of the birthday of St. John the Baptist, being just six months before the date ultimately fixed on as the birthday of Jesus.

St. Bridget's day in Ireland does not seem to be connected with any special festival. It is probably an example of some continuous fire worship. The recital of its observance, however, will show the way in which the Christian Church has incorporated so many customs and ceremonies prevalent in pre-Christian times.

Bright—also called Griane—was the golden-haired daughter and mother of the Sun. On her altars daily libations of milk were poured, and to her cattle were sacred. She was generally represented with a child in her arms. Her temples were served by vestals of noble birth called Breochnidh, the “daughters of fire” or the “fire keepers.” It was their duty to keep a fire constantly burning on her altar, and this they fed with but one kind of wood. Her chief temple was in Kildare. When Ireland was Christianised under the influence of St. Patrick and his monks, the goddess Bright was converted into the Saint Bridget, while her temple at Kildare became a convent whose nuns still kept up the fire of the pagan divinity in honour of the Christian Saint. It is said that this fire was kept constantly burning till the year 1220 A.D., when, by order of the Archbishop of Dublin, it was extinguished. “So great, however, was the veneration in which it

was held by the people, that it was speedily re-kindled, and was kept burning steadily on, till the monastery was suppressed in the time of Henry VIII.”¹ A curious custom is still kept up on St. Bridget’s day. The children of the neighbourhood go from door to door carrying a large doll, which they call St. Bridget’s baby, and asking for “something to buy the saint’s candles,” some dim survival, doubtless, of the old fire offerings.

The last ceremony to be noted is the great autumnal rite of the British Celts, which took place on the 1st of November. In it we must recognise not only the fire festival but the death-celebration of their Saviour Samhein. In ancient Britain at this time “all fires, save those of the Druids, were extinguished,” and from their altars alone the sacred fire had to be obtained by all householders, care, however, being taken by the priests that it was only distributed to such as were at peace with God and man. At this ceremony fruit and grain were the only offerings made.

Samhein, it may be remembered, was also called Bal Sab or the Lord of Death, and it was in this capacity as the judge of souls and the

¹ Gordon-Cumming’s “From the Hebrides to the Himalayas,” vol. i. p. 255; and Elton’s “Origins of English History,” p. 270.

dispenser of rewards and punishments, that prayers were offered up to him on this particular night. "It was a night for special intercession by the living for the souls of those who had died in the preceding year." It may now be apparent from what source the infant church of Christendom, long ages after, obtained another of its "Holy days," for while the 1st of November has been dedicated to "All Saints," it is also the vigil of "All Souls."¹

¹ Gordon-Cumming's "From the Hebrides to the Himalayas," vol. i. p. 236, &c.

CHAPTER VII

THE TREE AND THE BRANCH

IN the whole range of symbolism, from the earliest faiths to Christian times, no emblem occurs more frequently than the Branch or Tree.

So many references to it are found even in popular Folk-Lore that it has given rise to one of the many recent theories offered as an interpretation of comparative mythology. This "god of vegetation" theory, if it may be so named, can truly be upheld by many instances drawn from the records of early races. The worship of many of the ancient gods, as we shall see, was intimately associated with that of sacred trees. But if pushed to its logical conclusion, this theory must necessarily identify the Founder of Christianity also as a "god of vegetation." He, too, is spoken of as a Vine, a Tree, and a Branch; while corn and the vine are the emblems of His Eucharist. The one set of facts appear to be as clear as the others. But it is manifestly absurd to refer to Jesus as a

“Tree-god”; and we are thus driven to seek a deeper and wider interpretation than that which the vegetation theory provides for the great death and resurrection stories of the world’s Saviours.

Unlike the other symbols which we have been considering, that of the Tree does not derive its origin either from sun-worship or ceremony of initiation. It is unconnected with the religious ritual either of the winter solstice or of the vernal equinox. Its interpretation will therefore be dealt with separately in the present chapter.

The interpretation we shall find to be complex, as the sources are multiform. The Tree-symbolism, in its wider aspects, may appropriately be treated first; while its relation to individual Deities or Saviours will receive subsequent consideration.

In the heavens of Indra there is a tree which sprang from the Amurnam when churned by the gods, and those in the heavenly world who eat of its fruit have immortality and whatsoever they desire.¹ “From the whirlpool of the deep [when churned for ambrosia] sprang the celestial Párijáta tree, the delight of the nymphs of heaven, perfuming the world with its

¹ Dubois' *Mœurs des Indes*.

blossoms.”¹ When transplanted on earth by Krishna, its powers were still miraculous, for all who approached and beheld their faces in its bark of shining gold recalled the events of their previous lives.²

Yama, the god of death, was said to sit under the cosmic Tree of Life.

The Rig Veda refers to “the offering of the pleasant juice, the holy fig-tree which victorious priests surround.”³ This is the sacred Aśwattha which represents the Tree in its cosmic aspect, but the following quotation manifestly implies an ethical development of the cosmic idea. “Men say that the sacred fig-tree (Aśwattha) that has its roots above and its branches downwards, is eternal: its leaves are metrical hymns: he who knows it knows the Vedas. Down and on high its branches are extended, enlarged by the modes (of Nature): its buddings are the objects of the senses; and downwards its roots are drawn—the bonds of action in the world of men. Here below its form cannot be known, nor its end, nor its beginning, nor its whole nature or constitution. When one has cut down this large rooted Aśwattha by the solid weapon of indifference, then that seat may be

¹ “Vishnu Purana,” Book I. chap. ix.

² Ibid., Book V. chap. xxx. and xxxi.

³ Book I. hymn cxxxv. 8.

sought for, from which they who have reached it never return.”¹

“It is the cedar,” says Sayce, “which played the same part in Babylonian magic as the rowan ash of northern Europe, and which was believed to be under the special protection of Ea; and the parallel therefore between the ash, Ygg-drasil of Norse mythology, and the world-tree of the poet of Eridu, becomes even closer than before.”² Sayce adds “that in later Babylonian belief the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were one and the same.”

Tammuz, the Babylonian Saviour, in the following fragment of an ancient bilingual hymn, is apparently identified with the sacred tree. His primitive home indeed would seem to have “been in that ‘garden’ of Edin or Eden which Babylonian tradition placed in the immediate vicinity of Eridu.” But the hymn is manifestly a record of the Tree in its cosmic aspect—the identification, consequently, of the god with the tree is of minor importance:—

“In Eridu a stalk [of the vine] grew overshadowing; in
 a holy place did it become green;
 Its root was of white crystal, which stretched towards
 the deep;

¹ “Bhagavad Gita,” chap. xv. 1-4.

² Sayce’s “Hibbert Lectures, 1887,” p. 240.

Its seat was the central place of the earth ;
 Its foliage was the couch of Zikum the primeval mother.
 Into the heart of its holy house, which spread its shade
 like a forest, hath no man entered.
 There is the home of the mighty mother who passes
 across the sky.
 In the midst of it was Tammuz."¹

The Chaldæan Rabbi Nahan speaks of the great Tree in the midst of Paradise, whose leaves are letters, and whose twigs and branches form words.

According to the Persians, the sacred Tree was planted by Ahura Mazda. It is called Haoma, or the Tree of Life, and is described as growing on the mountains of Haraiti. The waters of a celestial sea surround and protect it. Its juice is healing and "death-removing." The Zend-Avesta also refers to the sacred tree growing in the fountain of Ardonisour. Though differently located, its characteristics appear to be almost identical, for it is called the White Hom, the juice of which gives immortality, while its touch at the resurrection will render back life to the dead.

The possible analogy between the two trees in the Garden of Eden and two trees revered by the Persians, is referred to by Max Müller. "Dr. Windischmann," he writes, "has shown

¹ Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures, 1887," pp. 237-38.

that the Iranians, too, were acquainted with two trees, one called Gaokerena, bearing the white Haoma, the other called the Painless tree." While doubting the identity of the Tree of Knowledge and the Painless Tree, the learned author acknowledges that "the white Haoma tree might remind us of the Tree of Life, considering that Haoma, as well as the Indian Soma, was supposed to give immortality to those who drank its juice."¹

In Genesis the tree figures not only as the Tree of Life planted in the midst of the garden, but also as the Tree of Knowledge, to eat the fruit of which makes men as gods knowing good and evil. For when Adam had tasted of the forbidden fruit, "the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden . . . and he placed at the east of the garden . . . the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."²

Ezekiel too refers to the tree "whose leaf

¹ Max Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," vol. i. p. 157.

² Genesis, chap. iii. 22-24.

shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat and the leaf thereof for healing.”¹

On the Scandinavian Mount Asgard, where the inhabitants rest in security and bliss, grew the tree Yggdrasil, whose roots were watered by the well of life, over which the Norns kept watch. The mighty ramifications of this vast world-tree are referred to by Rhys: “This ash is the greatest and best of trees; its limbs spread over all the world, and three roots of it stretch across the heaven and hold it up.”² According to one version of the Edda, this Yggdrasil, the tree with the three roots, appears to be the origin of the universe. It is a remarkable fact that in the Popol-Vuh of the Guatemalans, as well as in Hesiod and in the above Scandinavian story, the human race is described as produced from a tree—Hesiod agreeing with the Edda in calling it the Ash-tree.

In Thibet there is a legend of untold antiquity in which the great world-tree, there called Zampun, is described as stretching its

¹ Ezekiel, chap. xlvii. 12.

² Quoted in “Hibbert Lectures, 1886,” p. 557.

three roots up to heaven and down to the nether regions.

Finally there is the Tree of Life referred to in Revelation. By the side of the river proceeding out of the throne of God was "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. . . . Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."¹

The Tree in its more personal aspect, as related to special Deities or Saviours, must now be considered, as well as the symbolism of the Branch, which indeed will be found to bear some of the mystical characteristics which we have seen to be associated with the Tree in its cosmic aspect.

In Egypt various divinities appear in connection with trees. "The Sycamore," writes Flinders Petrie, "has always a goddess, generically described as Hathor, or specifically as Nut, Selk, or Neit. This variation shows that the tree does not belong to any of these deities in particular, but is only the residence of a beneficent tree-goddess, who was identified with

¹ Revelation, chap. xxii. 2 and 14.

any goddess that was prominent. . . . In one case a god is named when a tall palm is identified with Tahuti."¹

In Wilson's "Egypt of the Past"² there is a representation of the goddess (Neith) dispensing gifts of life out of the Tree of Knowledge. The gifts of life are in the shape of food and drink, while the kneeling recipients represent the man and his soul.

"When," writes Robertson-Smith, "we find that no Canaanite high place was complete without its sacred tree standing beside the altar, and when we take along with this the undoubted fact that the direct cult of trees was familiar to all the Semites, it is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that some elements of tree-worship entered into the ritual even of such deities as in their origin were not tree-gods."³

Abraham is described in Genesis⁴ as calling on the name of the Lord, after having planted a tree in Beersheba, and it may be remembered that Jehovah is referred to in Deuteronomy⁵ as dwelling in the bush, it having been in the

¹ Flinders Petrie's "Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt," pp. 35-6.

² P. 64.

³ Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," pp. 170-1.

⁴ Chap. xxi. 33.

⁵ Chap. xxxiii. 16.

fiery bush which seemed to burn, and yet was not consumed, that he appeared to Moses.

“The oldest altars, as we gather from the accounts of patriarchal sanctuaries, stood under actual trees; but this rule could not always be followed, and in the period of the kings it would seem that the place of the living tree was taken by a dead post or pole, planted in the ground like an English Maypole.” By the affixing of a cross beam, it will be observed, that this, in its turn, would become a representation of the “Tree of Life.” In any case it is apparent that “in early times tree-worship had such a vogue in Canaan that the sacred tree, or the pole, its surrogate, had come to be viewed as a general symbol of deity, which might fittingly stand beside the altar of any god.”¹

Isaiah refers to the day when the Branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious. “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.”² Then follows a description of the power of this Branch, and the reign of peace and blessing which his advent inaugurates, “when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and

¹ Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," pp. 171-2.

² Isaiah, chap. xi. 1-2.

the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . and the child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den." "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute judgment and justice in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness."¹ Zechariah too writes in a similar strain. "Behold the man whose name is The Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place . . . and he shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."²

"At Dodona, perhaps the oldest of all Greek sanctuaries, Zeus was worshipped as immanent in the sacred oak, and the rustling of its leaves in the wind was his voice."³ This sacred oak appears to have been known by the name of Gogard, and a serpent was supposed to dwell among its branches.

"Like most of the Olympians, Artemis was connected . . . with plant-worship. She was known by the names Daphnæa and Cedreatis;

¹ Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. 5-6.

² Zechariah, chap. vi. 12-13.

³ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. ii. p. 291.

at Ephesus not only the olive but the oak was sacred to her; at Delos she had her palm tree.”¹

Dionysus, “as Dendritis, is, like Artemis, a tree-god, and probably succeeded to the cult of certain sacred trees; just as, for example, St. Bridget, in Ireland, succeeded to the cult of the fire goddess and to her ceremonial. Dionysus was even called *ενδενδρος*, ‘the god in the tree,’ reminding us of Artemis Dendritis, and of the village gods which in India dwell in the peepul or the bo tree. . . . According to a Corinthian legend, the Delphic oracle bade them seek the tree and worship it with no less honour than the god (Dionysus) himself. Hence the wooden images of Dionysus were made of that tree, the fig tree, *non ex quovis ligno*, and the god had a ritual name, ‘The fig-tree Dionysus.’”²

“Where a tree was worshipped as the symbol of an anthropomorphic god, we sometimes find a transformation legend directly connecting the life of the god with the vegetative life of the tree. This kind of myth, in which a god is transformed into a tree, or a tree springs from the blood of a god, plays a large part in the sacred lore of Phrygia, where tree-worship had

¹ A. Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. ii. p. 219.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 235.

peculiar prominence, and is also common in Greece. . . . The most important of [the Semitic examples] is the myth told at Byblus in the time of Plutarch, of the sacred *erica* which was worshipped in the temple of Isis, and was said to have grown round the dead body of Osiris. At Byblus, Isis and Osiris are really Astarte and Adonis, so this may possibly be an original Semitic legend of a holy tree growing from the grave of a god.”¹

Virgil thus describes the sacred and wonder-working Branch without which Æneas might not face the perils of the underworld. It is the Sybil of Cumæ who thus addresses the hero: “But if so strong your love, if your desire so ardent twice to sail the Stygian lake, twice to visit gloomy Tartarus, and if it gives you pleasure to indulge in this mad feat, learn what must first be done. On a shaded tree there hangs a bough, concealed from view, golden in its leaves and pliant stem, held sacred to Juno of the nether world. . . . To none is it given to enter the hidden recesses of the earth till from the tree he pluck the bough with golden locks. Fair Proserpine has ordained that this be given her as her proper gift. When the first is torn off, a second fails not to appear,

¹ Robertson-Smith's “Religion of the Semites,” pp. 174-5.

and a twig of gold again shoots forth.”¹ Æneas is further warned not to cut it with steel, but to break it with the hand. And so, guided by his goddess-mother’s doves, the hero at last wins the golden bough, and with it penetrates the mysteries of the underworld.

In Greece as well as in Rome suppliants used to approach the altars bearing boughs to lay before the deity, while in the ritual of some of the mysteries, branches were dipped in holy water, and were then used to sprinkle it on the worshippers, from which they were called lustral branches.

No ancient people made more use of the tree-symbolism than the Celts. The mistletoe was the chief feature in some of their most solemn festivals. It was called by them *wile*, “all-heal,” from which comes their name for the feast of the winter solstice, which, translated literally, means “New-all-heal.” These words were shouted by the Druids who headed the great procession into the forest at Christmas time in search of the sacred branch. When found, the chief priest cut it with a golden knife shaped like a sickle, for it was illegal to allow steel or iron to touch the sacred bough. Before it could reach the earth, the other priests caught it in a

¹ Virgil’s “Æneid,” Book VI., translated by A. Hamilton Bryce.

white linen cloth. They then sacrificed two white bulls, and with their blood touched the stem of the sacred plant, which was carried in triumphal procession to the temple. Here it was laid beneath the altar-stone for *three days*, and on the morning of the fourth day (23rd December) was brought forth, broken into small fragments, and distributed among the worshippers. Its berries were used by the priests as a remedy for various diseases, and as an antidote to the effects of poison. The juice when applied to wounds was said to heal them, and when drunk by women ensured children. If the branch was found on an oak tree, it was taken as a good omen for the whole community. The oak was cut down and its logs distributed, the limb on which the All-Heal was found, being reserved for the undying fire of the temple. On this day, too, some of the holy berries were taken back to the forest, and grafted upon the first suitable tree on which the sacred doves of the temple rested.¹

The association of the serpent with the tree is also a significant fact. They are found together on many ancient sculptures of Celtic and Gaelic origin, a notable instance being the celebrated Farnell stone in Scotland. There is also

¹ Pliny's "Natural History," Lib. XVI. cap. 95.

a stone near the manse at Glamis which represents the tree as loaded with fruit, while there is a serpent by the tree and a human figure on each side. On ancient coins dug up at Tyre, the holy tree is figured with its serpent guardian, while coins bearing a similar representation have been discovered in both Americas. We have seen above that in the sacred oak or Gogard of ancient Greece, a serpent was supposed to dwell, while the association of the serpent with the tree in the story of the Garden of Eden is too well known to need repetition.

The banyan or bo-tree, which to this day is sacred in India, is the tree under which Buddha is said to have attained Buddhahood, but there is probably no mystical reference involved in this fact.

Finally, there is the statement which Jesus himself made, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh it away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. . . . As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same

beareth much fruit, for apart from me ye can do nothing.”¹

Though necessarily anticipating, to a certain extent, the fuller interpretation of the whole system of symbolism, as well as involving reference to points which can only be elucidated in subsequent chapters, the following explanation of the Tree and Branch emblems, incomplete though it is, may yet be rendered fairly intelligible.

Under whatever aspect the tree may be viewed, it seems never to be an indigenous growth, but is invariably represented as “planted,” whether in a garden, as in Eden, or on a mountain, as on Meru. The planting of the tree thus manifestly typifies a fresh creative act.

The interpretation, as we have seen, is manifold. The cosmic aspect itself has a double import. There is first its loftiest and most transcendental meaning. This pictures the tree and its branches, its twigs and its leaves, as the whole celestial Hierarchy. The root of it all is the Great First Cause from whom proceed the three Great Logoi. From the Third Great Logos, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, proceed the countless host of the Solar Logoi,

¹ St. John, chap. xv. 1-5.

the creators of the Solar Systems, while below them again stand the Planetary Spirits, the guardian angels and rulers of planetary systems and of worlds. The Thrones, and Dominions, and Principalities, and Powers which St. Paul speaks of in his Epistle to the Colossians, are sometimes considered as intended by him to refer to the lower grades of this Great Hierarchy. Such, then, is the so-called system of Emanations which the ramification of the great Tree symbolises in its first and most exalted aspect. This is the meaning which was usually ascribed by the Jewish Kabbalists, and as such it was known by the name of the Sephirothal Tree.

The Tree in its second cosmic aspect represents the unfolding of the universe. During the Night of Brahma its seed has been preserved in the ark floating on the waters of the great deep, but the dry land appears on the morning of the Day—the Mahamanwantara. A seed is planted, and it becometh a great Tree. In other words, the great limbs of the Cosmic Tree stand for the Solar Systems in all the complexity of their planes and sub-planes, while the smaller branches, the twigs, and the leaves represent the planetary schemes and their systems of evolution, down to the smallest world that circles round its sun.

Some such ideas are manifestly at the root of many of these old-world legends, of which the Indian, the Babylonian, and the Scandinavian are notable examples. In the Indian *Aśwattha* tree, indeed, the symbolism is carried a stage farther, for the branches extending downwards typify the external world of sense, while an ethical lesson is added to the story by likening the cutting down of the tree to the severing of all attraction to objects of the senses.

The Tree is also a mundane symbol typifying the Races of man in all their ramifications. In this aspect it represents the seven great root-races, whose vast span of life is contemporaneous with the occupancy of this planet in each round. Each of these root-races is composed of seven sub-races, which in their turn are divided into a similar number of family-races. These family-races, or nations, are further divisible into tribes formed of families, the ultimate constituent element of which is the individual, the unit. From the mighty trunk, through the greater and the lesser branches, and the tiny twigs, we thus reach the leaves of the great mundane Tree. Even in the more contracted circle of a family is the symbol still recognised, and the "Family-Tree"

expresses the idea that the family, like the race, has a life of its own, of which the individual lives are only parts.

Finally, there is the Tree in its mystical aspects. As the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life it may be recognised in many of the sacred scriptures, but in none does it figure more prominently than in our own Testaments, both old and new.

The eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was the attainment of Manas (mind), but this only endowed mankind with the potentiality for further progress, and the whole subsequent course of evolution had to be gone through before he could rightly put forth his hand and pluck of the Tree of Life. Indeed he has himself to be crucified on that Tree before he can taste the fruits of the sacrifice.

The story of the Garden of Eden is very involved, and there are points in it which require elucidation. The association of the serpent with the tree, as we have seen, has its parallel in other religions. Now, whether found on Mexican coins or on Celtic sculptures, the serpent is usually represented as coiled round the tree. The form it thus takes is that of a simple spiral. Later on, when the serpent symbolism is more fully dealt with, it will be

shown that what we may call the creative spiral—which is a somewhat complicated figure—represents the mode of motion of the energy present in every atom of matter. But whether in its simple or in its complex form, the spiral must be regarded as typifying the force that makes for evolution, and as such is it represented in the story of the Garden of Eden. It is the force impelling towards evolution that urges mankind to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, and so the serpent of Genesis is not a power of evil but an agency of good.

But the Cherubim with the flaming sword to guard the way of the Tree of Life is a still more mystical portion of the allegory, and its explanation will involve reference to a most transcendental subject. The eating of the fruit of the Tree of Life refers here to the attainment of that highest state of consciousness attainable by our humanity. The only way in which this can truly be gained (in anticipation of its attainment by mankind generally at the end of the Manwantara) is through the series of initiations which will be referred to in a subsequent chapter, the progress through each stage necessarily involving mental and moral development of a higher and higher order. But apart from this way,

it is possible by intense concentration so to kill out all earthly desires that this most exalted state can be reached, so to speak, prematurely, with the result, however, that the ascetic so reaching it may be unable *consciously* to function in it. Having reached it, he of course remains in it, in a condition of absolute or partial unconsciousness till the end of the Manwantara. He has freed himself truly from the wheel of re-birth, but having failed to acquire the spiritual and mental attributes necessary for conscious functioning on that exalted plane, he fails to reap the expected bliss, while his growth has been, and remains, mentally and morally stunted, and in the next Manwantara he will doubtless have to take up the duties he abandoned, and begin again where he left off.

This process of obtaining liberation from conditioned existence has, during past ages and up to the present day, been widely practised in India. The distaste and loathing for this earthly life, for "this body with all its hateful needs," is an intelligible and natural enough feeling in those who have risen above the grossest of the physical desires; but from the foregoing it is apparent that this purely selfish process of obtaining liberation (like suicide on

the smaller scale) defeats its own ends. The laws of Nature may take millenniums for their fulfilment, but they cannot be disregarded.

And so we find the Cherubim represents the gateway of initiation through which lies the only safe road for man to approach the Tree of Life, while the flame of the sword typifies the living sacrifice which alone can loosen the bonds of Karma that bind man to the wheel of existence.

But the mystical aspects of the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life are numerous. Initiates were in past ages called holy Trees—trees of the Lord; while their initiations—intellectual and spiritual—were figured as the fruit respectively of the Tree of Knowledge and of the Tree of Life, the former without the latter being evil. The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge *alone*, is death, the fruit of the Tree of Life is healing and immortality. Together they constitute the union of Manas and Buddhi (mind and soul), the measure of perfection, the fulness of the stature of Christ.

In Chinese Buddhistic writings a garden of Wisdom, inhabited by Dragons, is spoken of as existing in Central Asia, while in the midst of the garden stand the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. This may have further

mystical meanings, but it manifestly refers to the fact that, after the destruction of Atlantis, certain districts in Central Asia became the gathering place of the Initiates of the Good Law—the expression dragons, they who see and watch, being a term constantly used for Initiates. Appropriately, too, should the spot chosen as the residence of the governing Hierarchy of our planet, be described as a garden containing the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge.

From the cosmic aspects of the symbol, the interpretation has been traced to its manifold mystic meanings, but one is still wanting to complete the number. It is as the Tree of Sacrifice, too, that we must regard it, the sacrifice which is also at-one-ment, the union of man with God. The hidden life of the tree is the sap which nourishes its remotest twigs and leaves, and this is the symbol of the divine life poured forth—the divine life which preserves and vivifies the whole creation. The Cross itself, too, as we have seen, is called the Tree of Life.

The Branch of Peace and Healing is also but another aspect of the Tree of Life, with its inevitable corollary of sacrifice. The symbolism of the Branch is the symbolism of the New-

Birth, the symbolism of the risen Christ. The new budding of the leaf has been adopted by all peoples as the sign of life from death, and the Druidic ceremonies in which the mistletoe figured, were peculiarly suggestive of the same idea. The cutting off of the branch was the killing of its material life, but the quickening of its spiritual life was figured in its healing properties, while the grafting of the berries typified the new life springing from its seed.

And this idea it is which binds together the manifold interpretations of the Tree symbol, for its application is equally appropriate to the new birth of the individual, of the race, of the world, and of the entire Cosmos.

CHAPTER VIII

SACRAMENTS AND BLOOD-COVENANTS

THE Sacraments of Baptism and of the Eucharist have borne, as we shall see, an important part in the world's religions.

In India the Brahmins have, from the earliest times, had many sacramental rites, but none of them seem quite to have corresponded with the ceremonies of baptism practised in so many other countries both in ancient and modern times. In India the rites began even before the birth of the child, and were continued until he was in a position to assume the responsibilities of manhood. From the Laws of Manu there appear to have been ten such rites. But although water does not seem to have been used, the idea underlying the ceremonies was that of purification and initiation into the responsibilities of life.

Among the ancient Egyptians, however, there was a recognised rite of baptism with water, in which the candidate was immersed, and which was known by the term of "water of

purification." It was supposed absolutely to cleanse the soul, and the person was said to be regenerated.¹

The ancient Persians carried their infants to the temple a few days after birth, and presented them to the priest before the Sun and his symbol the sacred fire. Then the priest took the child and baptized it for the purification of the soul. Sometimes he plunged it into a great vase full of water. It was at the same ceremony that the father gave a name to the child.²

In Tibet and Mongolia, candles were burnt and incense was offered during the ritual. The priest read the prescribed prayers, dipped the child three times in water, and gave it a name.³

In the old Mexican rite of baptism, the midwife touched the breast and lips of the child with water, repeating a long prayer, of which the following is part: "I pray that this celestial water, blue and light blue, may enter into thy body and there live. I pray that it may destroy in thee, and put away from thee, all the things evil and adverse that were given to thee before the beginning of the world . . . wheresoever thou art in this child, O hurtful

¹ Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief," p. 416.

² Beausobre's *Histoire Manichéenne*, Lib. IX. chap. vi. sect. 16.

³ Amberley's "Analysis," vol. i. p. 61.

thing, begone! leave it! . . . for now does it live anew, and anew is it born.”¹ “Among the Mexicans,” writes Baring-Gould, “the newborn child was bathed, with these words spoken by the nurse: ‘Take this water, for the goddess Chalchinhcueja is thy mother. May this bath cleanse thee of the impurity contracted in thy mother’s womb, may it purify thy heart, and procure for thee a good and honourable life. May the unseen God descend on this water, and free thee from all evil and pollution, and from all ill-luck. Dear child! the gods Ometenetli and Omekihnatl created thee in heaven, and sent thee on earth, but know that the life on which thou enterest is full of woe. Thou wilt not be able to eat bread without toil, but may God support thee in all the troubles that await thee.’ The second baptism of the child took place later, and it was a baptism in fire.”²

The Aztec ceremony began with such words as these: “O child! receive the water of the Lord of the world, who is our life: it is to wash and to purify; may these drops remove the sin which was given to thee before the creation of the world, since all of us are

¹ Bancroft’s “Native Races,” vol. iii. pp. 372-3.

² Baring-Gould’s “Origin and Development of Religious Belief,” vol. i. pp. 399-40.

under its power." And, as more water was poured over the child, the exorcism proceeded as follows: "Quoi que tu sois, toi qui es chose nuisible, laisse-le; toi qui es chose nuisible à l'enfant laisse-le, va t'en; éloigne-toi de lui, parce qu'en ce moment il prend une nouvelle vie; cette enfant renait; il se purifie encore une fois et se blanchit, et notre mère Chalchinhtlicue le forme et l'engendre à nouveau."¹

In Yucatan children were baptized when they were three years old, and the ceremony was there called "regeneration."²

In Peru the child was immersed in the water, and the priest then exorcised the evil, bidding it enter the water, which was then buried in the ground.³ The purifying effect ascribed to water, receives further illustration from another Peruvian custom, for in Acosta's "History of the New World,"⁴ we read that after the Inca had been confessed "hee made a certaine bath to cleanse himself in a running river, saying these words: 'I have told my sins to the Sunne, receive them, O thou river, and carry them to the sea where they may never appear more.'"

¹ Sahagun's *Hist. de la Nueva España*, Lib. VI. chap. xxxvii.; also Bancroft's "Native Races," vol. iii. p. 373.

² Lundy's "Monumental Christianity," p. 390.

³ Ternaux-Compan's *Pièces rel. à la conquête du Mexique*, p. 233.

⁴ Lib. V. cap. xxv.

Among the Druids the purification is sometimes referred to as taking place by water, sometimes by water and fire, the water being consecrated with a flaming torch. After the immersion of the candidate, the water remaining in the cauldron of baptism was poured away as unclean, "as it now contained the sins and pollutions of the noviciate."¹

Long before the days of Christianity, infant baptism was practised among the Scandinavian nations also. Water was poured on the head of the child, who then received a name.²

In Greece and Rome the newly-born children were sprinkled with holy water—males on the ninth, females on the eighth, day. It was at this time also that the name was given, and the priest provided the parents with a document certifying to the regeneration of the infant, who was henceforth duly recognised as a legitimate member of the family and of society.³

"John the Baptist simply adopted and practised the universal custom of sacred bathing for the remission of sins. Jesus Christ sanctioned it, and the Church inherited it from his

¹ Baring-Gould's "Origin and Development of Religious Belief," vol. i. p. 399; also Davies' "Mythology and Rites of the British Druids," p. 220.

² Mallet's "Northern Antiquities," vol. i. pp. 335-6.

³ Taylor's "Diegesis," pp. 233-4.

example.”¹ In the early Christian days baptism was only administered to adults in full possession of their faculties, for the catechumen, before receiving the rite, had to understand the faith he was embracing, and to be prepared to assume its obligations. In those days entire immersion was also practised.

Saint Justin, who was born in the second century, and who, for priority of time, is regarded as the first of the Fathers of the Church, writes that “Baptism is called Illumination,” while the following quotation from St. Jerome brings into prominence not only the symbolical quality of the West as Hades—the place where the sun goes down being regarded as the entrance to the nether world²—but the somewhat solar characteristic which the baptismal ceremony had by that time assumed, although, as we shall see later on, its origin had nothing solar in it. “In the mystery of Baptism we first renounce him who is in the West, and dies to us with our sins, and so turning to the East we make a covenant with the Sun of righteousness, promising to be his servants.”³

From the Sacrament of Baptism let us turn to that other Sacrament, which in modern days

¹ Lundy's "Monumental Christianity," p. 385.

² Jevons' "Introduction to the History of Religion," p. 310.

³ Augustine's *De Serm. Dom. in Monte*.

is known as the Eucharist or Communion. The underlying idea of sacrifice will here be found to unite by a common bond, customs which at first sight appear dissimilar, for the archaic rite of the Blood-Covenant and the killing of the totem god among savage or semi-civilised tribes, must be recognised as indissolubly connected with the sacramental ceremonies practised among more highly cultured and religious peoples.

“Why sacrifice is the typical form of all complete acts of worship in the antique religions, and what the sacrificial act means, is an involved and difficult problem. The problem does not belong to any one religion, for sacrifice is equally important among all early peoples in all parts of the world where religious ritual has reached any considerable development. . . . The one point that comes out clear and strong is that the fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion, and that all atoning rites are ultimately to be regarded as owing their efficacy to a communication of divine life to the worshippers, and to the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between them and their god.”¹

The consideration of the savage rituals will most appropriately take the first place, but

¹ Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," pp. 197 and 418.

when, later on, the solution of the problem is offered, it will be seen that even the more ethical views, on which are based the sacramental customs of civilised races, are still but inadequate expressions of the sublime conception involved in the great Law of Sacrifice.

“Wherever a society has passed beyond the nomadic stage, it will be found to have a definite place consecrated to social reunion and worship.” As Sidney Hartland remarks, this is often a rough stone, the emblem or dwelling-place of the god himself. “There the totem beast is slain, some of its blood is dashed upon the stone, and around it the rest of the blood is drunk and the flesh eaten by the clansmen. This is probably the primitive form of sacrifice. It is not a gift to the god, but a sacrament, in which the whole kin—the god with his clansmen—unites. In partaking of it, each member of the kin testifies and renews his union with the rest. The god himself is eaten, and yet he is at the same time embodied in the sacred stone.”

But the Blood-Covenant has specially to do with the acquisition of kinship. “To acquire kinship, the blood of the candidate for admission into the kin must be mingled with that of the kin. In this way he enters into the

brotherhood, is reckoned as of the same stock, obtains the full privileges of a kinsman. The mingling of blood—the Blood-Covenant, as it is called—is a simple, though repulsive ceremony. It is sufficient that an incision be made in the neophyte's arm, and the flowing blood sucked from it by one of the clansmen, upon whom the operation is repeated in turn by the neophyte. . . . The form, indeed, has undergone numberless variations. Sometimes the blood is dropped into a cup, and diluted with water or wine. Sometimes food eaten together is impregnated with the blood. . . . But whatever may be the exact form adopted, the essence of the rite is the same, and its range is world-wide."

"True, these rites are gradually modified, but, alike by their symbolism and by their barbarity, they bear unfailing testimony to their real birth. Such was the Hebrew practice of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice before the Lord, or upon the mercy-seat, daubing it upon the horns of the altar, or pouring it out at the base, and the converse practice of sprinkling it upon the congregation, or putting it upon the priest at his consecration. . . . This is doubtless the meaning of the passage relating to the antics of the priests of Baal in the con-

test with Elijah, when they leaped about the altar, crying aloud, and cutting themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them. Their object was not to maim or torture themselves, but to renew their union with the god, by shedding their blood upon him. In course of time the rite would cease to be understood, its practice would change, and then the mere torture or outpouring of blood, without any care to bring it into contact with the god, would be regarded as its object. . . . In the Hebrew ritual it was the blood of the sacrifice, and not of the worshipper, which was sprinkled, and so in many other instances. But then the victim was identified with the worshipper, or the latter partook of it by being himself sprinkled with the blood or eating its flesh."

"The sacramental essence of the rite has escaped many . . . yet it might have been thought obvious enough. It is perhaps most clearly brought out, where the blood is mingled with the food of the participants. . . . But it can excite no surprise that the rite should have degenerated into a solemn meal, eaten together by the persons entering into the new bond [that of kinship]. . . . Eating together is—not merely on solemn occasions, as the

sacrifice of a totem-beast, but in a lesser degree at other times—an act of communion. The sharing of a common substance as food, unites those who partake of it in a common life; it makes them parts of one another; they incorporate one another's substance. This is the significance of eating 'things sacrificed to idols.' . . . The idol is supposed to have partaken of the meat, and those who afterwards eat of it, share by that act the idol's life; they partake of his substance. This is the significance of the offering of first-fruits; the bulk is holy and fit for the worshippers' food, because a portion, and through that portion the whole, is first united with the god."¹

The same ideas are somewhat differently expressed by Robertson-Smith. "In ancient times this [sacramental] significance seems to be always attached to participation in the flesh of a sacrosanct victim, and the solemn mystery of its death is justified by the consideration that only in this way can the sacred cement be procured, which creates or keeps alive a living bond of union between the worshippers and their god. This cement is nothing else than the actual life of the sacred and kindred animal, which is conceived as residing in its

¹ Sydney Hartland's "Legend of Perseus," vol. ii. pp. 236-49.

flesh, but especially in its blood, and so, in the sacred meal, is actually distributed among all the participants, each of whom incorporates a particle of it with his own individual life.”¹

From the above it should be apparent that the sacrifice of an animal was not in those days considered as a gift to the god, but was an act of communion, in which the god and his worshippers were united by sharing alike in the flesh and blood of the victim.

“It is the belief of societies which are held together by the bond of blood-relationship, that it is the same blood which runs in the veins of all blood-relations—it is the blood of their common ancestor. Hence the blood-covenant between two individuals is a covenant between their respective kins: it is not merely the blood of the two persons that has been mingled and made one, but the blood of the two clans. It follows, therefore, that the blood of any one animal of the totem species is not the blood of that individual merely, but of the whole species. In the same way, therefore, that the blood of the tribe, as a whole, is communicated in initiation ceremonies to the youth, by allowing the blood of the older members to flow over him, so it is obvious the blood of the totem species, as

¹ Robertson-Smith's "Religion of the Semites," p. 295.

a whole, might be communicated to the person or thing over which the blood of any individual of the species was allowed to flow. But the blood is the life: it is—like breath, heart, &c.—one of the things identified with the spirit or soul. The blood of any individual totem animal, therefore, is the spirit, not of that particular animal, but of the totem species: it is, if not the totem-god, at any rate that in which he, as the spirit or soul of the species, resides, and by which his presence may be conveyed into any person or thing.”¹

A very typical embodiment of the main ideas that underlie the sacrifices of the Semites generally, will be found in the Arab form of sacrifice, as described by Nilus. In it the slaughter of the victim, the sacramental drinking of the blood, and devouring in wild haste the pieces of still quivering flesh, recall the details of the Dionysiac and other festivals. “The plain meaning of this is that the victim was devoured before its life had left the still warm blood and flesh—raw flesh is called ‘living’ flesh in Hebrew and Syriac—and that thus in the most literal way, all those who shared in the ceremony, absorbed part of the victim’s life into themselves. One sees how

¹ Jevons’ “Introduction to the History of Religion,” p. 130.

much more forcibly than than any ordinary meal, such a rite expresses the establishment or confirmation of a bond of common life between the worshippers, and also, since the blood is shed upon the altar itself, between the worshippers and their god. In this sacrifice, then, the significant factors are two: the conveyance of the living blood to the godhead, and the absorption of the living flesh and blood into the flesh and blood of the worshippers. Each of these is effected in the simplest and most direct manner, so that the meaning of the ritual is perfectly transparent.”¹

The fact of the passover having to be eaten in haste, and the necessity that no part of it should remain till the morning, “becomes intelligible, if we regard it as having come down from a time when the living flesh was hastily devoured beside the altar before the sun rose.” But in later times the worshippers ceased to drink the blood, while the flesh of the sacrifice was, as we know, “roast with fire.” It is a remarkable fact that “among the Hebrews, the conception that Jehovah eats the flesh of bulls and drinks the blood of goats, against which the author of Psalm L. protests so strongly, was never eliminated from the ancient technical

¹ Robertson-Smith's “Religion of the Semites,” p. 320.

language of the priestly ritual, in which the sacrifices are called the food of the deity.”¹

A curious modification of the paschal rite is exemplified in Rome at the present day, for every year a ceremony takes place in the church of St. Agnes, at which two lambs are offered before the altar, and the wool of these lambs is woven into the *pallium*, or sacred scarf, which the Pope confers as a sign of office upon arch-bishops of the Church.

“There were two ways in which early man sought to effect an external union between himself and the god he worshipped: by the sacrificial meal he incorporated the substance of the god into his own body; by blood-letting rites and the hair-offering, he, so to speak, incorporated himself with the god.”²

“In their origin the hair-offering, and the offering of one’s own blood, are precisely similar in meaning. But the blood-offering, while it presents the idea of life-union with the god in the strongest possible form, is too barbarous to be long retained as an ordinary act of religion. . . . The hair-offering, on the other hand, which involved nothing offensive to civilised feelings, continued to play an important part in religion

¹ Robertson-Smith’s “Religion of the Semites,” pp. 326 and 207.

² Jevons’ “Introduction to the History of Religion,” p. 220.

to the close of paganism, and even entered into Christian ritual in the tonsure of priests and nuns.”¹

We find, too, that “the sacramental rite is also an atoning rite, which brings the community again into harmony with its alienated god, and the idea of sacrificial communion includes within it the rudimentary conception of a piacular ceremony. In all the older forms of . . . ritual, the notions of communion and atonement are bound up together, atonement being simply an act of communion designed to wipe out all memory of previous estrangement.”²

It is manifest that the real meaning of the word atonement is correctly rendered in the above quotation. The word indeed bears its *original* meaning on its face, “at-one-ment,” restitution, the bringing again into harmony. It is only in comparatively recent times that a second meaning has been attached to the word—the theological idea, namely, of expiation for sin.

The various expressions of the idea underlying the sacramental rite, and the different forms which the rite itself has assumed among

¹ Robertson-Smith’s “Religion of the Semites,” p. 316.

² *Ibid.*, p. 302.

various races and in different lands, must now be enumerated.

“Among the ancient Hindus, Soma was a chief deity. He is called ‘The giver of life and health,’ ‘The Protector,’ ‘He who is the guide to immortality.’ He became incarnate among men, was taken by them and slain, and brayed in a mortar; but he rose in flame to Heaven to be the ‘Benefactor of the world,’ and the ‘Mediator between God and man.’ Through communion with him in his sacrifice, man [who partakes of this god] has an assurance of immortality, for by that sacrament he obtains union with his divinity.”¹

The ancient Egyptians celebrated the resurrection of Osiris by a sacrament, eating the sacred cake or wafer after it had been consecrated by the priest, and thereby becoming veritable flesh of his flesh.² Part of the ceremony is said to have consisted also in drinking from a cup of mingled wine and water.

The ancient Mexicans had their Eucharist called the “most Holy Supper,” in which they ate the flesh of their god. It was a cake made of the seed of the bledos, and “having made it, they blessed it in their manner, and broke

¹ Baring-Gould's “Origin and Development of Religious Belief,” vol. i. p. 408.

² Bonwick's “Egyptian Belief,” p. 163.

it into pieces, which the high priest put into certain very clean vessels, and took a thorn of maguey, which resembles a thick needle, with which he took up with the utmost reverence single morsels, which he put into the mouth of each individual in the manner of a communion.”¹ From another source we learn that an image of the deity was made with maize flour mixed with blood. This, after a form of consecration by the priest, was distributed among the people, who, as they ate it, “showed signs of humiliation and sorrow, calling it the flesh of the deity.”² This sacrament seems to have been partaken of chiefly during the seventeenth month, corresponding to the period between our 25th November and 14th December, when the standard of the god Huitzilopochtli was carried in the processions, and the festival was called that of “Teocualo, or the god eaten by the faithful, under the form of flour of maize kneaded with blood.”³

The custom of “eating bread sacramentally as the body of a god, was practised by the Aztecs before the discovery or conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. Twice a year, in May and December, an image of the great

¹ Kingsborough’s “Antiquities of Mexico,” vol. vi. p. 220.

² Veytia’s *Hist. Antiq. de Mexico*.

³ Humboldt’s “Researches,” vol. i. p. 292.

Mexican god Huitzilopochtli, or Vitzilipuztli, was made of dough, then broken in pieces, and solemnly eaten by his worshippers.”¹ Another account of this festival refers to the dough statue of the god as being made of certain seeds mixed with the blood of children. The statue “was formally ‘killed’ at the conclusion of the ceremonies, by means of a flint-tipped dart, and then cut up and eaten by the male part of the population. This was called the killing and eating of the god.”² Acosta furnishes us with still further particulars. “The priests and superiors of the temple tooke the idoll of paste . . . and made many pieces, as well of the idoll itselfe, as of the tronchons which were consecrated, and then they gave them to the people in manner of a communion, beginning with the greater and continuing unto the rest, both men, women, and little children, who received it with such teares, feare, and reverence as it was an admirable thing, saying that they did eate the flesh and bones of God, wherewith they were grieved. Such as had any sicke folkes demanded thereof for them, and carried it with great reverence and veneration.”³

¹ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. ii. p. 79.

² Sidney Hartland's "Legend of Perseus," vol. ii. p. 285.

³ Acosta's "Nat. and Mor. History of the Indies," vol. ii. pp. 356-60, quoted in Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. ii. p. 81.

“The Tontonacs, a tribe of the Mexican Chichimecs, used to slay periodically three of their children, and mix the blood with certain herbs from the temple garden, and the sap of the *cassidea elastica* into the consistency of dough, which was called *toyoliayt la quatl* (Food of our Life). Every six months all adults of the tribe were required to partake of it as a kind of Eucharist.”¹

The Peruvians also had sacramental rites which, according to Hartland, contrast favourably with those of the bloodthirsty Aztecs, who ate their human sacrifices. “The Yncas,” he writes, “offered and ate animals called by De Molina, sheep. Their sacrament consisted of a pudding of coarsely ground maize, of which a portion had been smeared on the idol. The priest sprinkled it with the blood of the victim before distributing it to the people.”² “The high priest then said in a loud voice, so that all might hear, ‘Take heed how you eat this *sancu*; for he who eats it in sin, or with a double will and heart, is seen by our father the Sun, who will punish him with grievous troubles. But he who with a single heart partakes of it, to him the Sun and the Thunder

¹ Sidney Hartland's "Legend of Perseus," vol. ii. p. 284.

² Markham's "Rites and Laws of the Yncas," pp. 25-28, quoted in "Legend of Perseus," vol. ii. p. 252.

will show favour, and will grant children, and happy years and abundance, and all that he requires.' . . . The priest of the Sun then took what he could hold on three fingers, put it into his mouth, and returned to his seat. In this order and in this manner of taking the oath, all the tribes rose up, and thus all partook, down to the little children. . . . They took it with such care that no particle was allowed to fall to the ground, this being looked upon as a great sin."¹

The ceremonies at which the worshippers of Bacchus or Dionysus sought to obtain union with their god appear to have varied according to the aspect under which he was regarded.

"The rending and devouring of live bulls and calves appear to have been a regular feature of the Dionysiac rites. The practice of representing the god in bull form, or with some of the features of a bull; the belief that he appeared in bull form to his worshippers at the sacred rites; and the legend that it was in bull form that he had been torn in pieces—all these facts taken together leave no room to doubt that in rending and devouring a live bull at his festival, his worshippers believed that they were

¹ Markham's "Rites and Laws of the Yncas," p. 27, quoted in Jevons' "Introduction to the History of Religion," p. 218.

killing the god, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood. Another animal whose form Dionysus assumed was a goat. One of his names was 'Kid.' To save him from the wrath of Hera, his father Zeus changed him into a kid; and when the gods fled to Egypt to escape the fury of Typhon, Dionysus was turned into a goat. Hence when his worshippers rent in pieces a live goat and devoured it raw, they must have believed that they were eating the body and blood of the god."¹ "The sacrifices," remarks Lang, "in the ritual of Dionysus have a very marked character, and here, more commonly than in other Hellenic cults, the god and the victim are recognised as essentially the same. The sacrifice, in fact, is a sacrament, and in partaking of the victim the communicants eat their god. . . . Thus M. Decharme says of the bull-feast in the Dionysiac cult, 'Comme le taureau est un des formes de Dionysos, c'était le corps du dieu dont se repaissaient les initiés, c'était son sang dont ils s'abreuvaient dans ce banquet mystique.'"²

But when worshipped as god of the vine the rite was different. "The soul or life," writes Frazer, "is in the blood, and wine is the blood

¹ Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i. pp. 326-7.

² Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. ii. pp. 231-2.

of the vine. Hence, whoever drinks the blood of an animal is inspired with the soul of the animal . . . and whoever drinks wine drinks the blood, and so receives into himself the soul or spirit of the god of the vine.”¹ “By eating the bread and drinking the wine, the worshipper partakes of the real body and blood of his god. Thus the drinking of wine at the rites of a vine-god like Dionysus is not an act of revelry, it is a solemn sacrament.”²

Those who were initiated into the mysteries of Mithra partook of a sacrament of bread and wine, and were marked on the forehead with a cross.³ Dupuis remarks that “St. Justin établit la résemblance de la religion de Mithra avec celle de Christ, surtout sur le Sacrement de l’Eucharistie, ou de la consécration du pain et de l’eau; car l’eau fut souvent employée au lieu de vin, même par les sectes Chrétiennes.”⁴

At the Eleusinian mysteries a consecrated cup of wine was handed round, called the cup of Agathodæmon, or the good divinity. Throughout the ceremony the name of the Lord (Bacchus) was many times repeated, and his glory not only exhibited to the eye by the

¹ Frazer’s “Golden Bough,” vol. i. pp. 184-5.

² Ibid., vol. ii. pp. 89-90.

³ King’s “Gnostics and their Remains,” p. 52.

⁴ Dupuis’ *Origine de tous les Cultes*, vol. v. p. 249.

rays which surrounded his monogram, I.H.S., but it was made the peculiar theme of their triumphant exultation.¹ Serpents also were carried about in covered baskets. Cakes and new bread were given to the votaries, and the cup was received with shouting.

“The Ophites,” writes Epiphanius, “attribute all wisdom to the serpent of Paradise, and say that he was the author of knowledge to men. . . . They keep a live serpent in a chest, and at the time of the mysteries entice him out by placing bread before him on a table. Opening his door, he comes out, and having ascended the table, folds himself about the bread. This they call a perfect sacrifice. They not only break and distribute this among the votaries, but whosoever will may kiss the serpent. This . . . they call the Eucharist. They conclude the mysteries by singing a hymn through him to the Supreme Father.”²

In the Druidic ceremonies of initiation there were said to be three drops distilled from a cauldron which “conferred immortality” on the candidate, but “deprived him of utterance.” This apparently refers to some oath of secrecy. Reserved for those already initiated, was a cere-

¹ Taylor’s “Diegesis,” p. 214.

² Epiphanius, Migne’s edition, Lib. I. tom. iii. para. 268.

mony of drinking consecrated wine mixed with honey, water, and meal, which was called *gwîn a bragawd*. A similar custom was celebrated in the mysteries of Ceres. The Druids also offered a sacrifice of bread and wine before cutting the mistletoe and selago.¹

Among the ancient Scandinavians the sacrifice of bread and wine was celebrated by the priest with bare and washen feet.²

A Chinese sacramental custom is referred to by Jevons. "The Chinese pour wine (a very general substitute for blood) from a beaker on the straw image of Confucius, and then all present drink of it, and taste the sacrificial victim, in order to participate in the grace of Confucius."³

In Tartary sacramental wafers were used, as one eye-witness, Father Grueber, thus testifies: "This only do I affirm, that the devil so mimics the Catholic Church there, that although no European or Christian has ever been there, still in all essential things they agree so completely with the Roman Church, as even to celebrate the sacrifice of the Host with bread and wine; with my own eyes have I seen it."⁴

¹ Davies' "Mythology and Rites of the British Druids," p. 218; also Clemens Alexandrinus.

² Archæologia, S. A.

³ Jevons' "Introduction to the History of Religion," p. 148.

⁴ Ibid., p. 219.

The celebration of an ancient Persian custom is said to be practised at the present day among the Parsis. It is a sacrament of Haoma juice and cakes, offered to, and consecrated by the world-fire, the priest partaking of a small portion.

In Genesis, Melchizedek is described as bringing out bread and wine, the mystic elements of the divine presence.

Finally there is the Christian Eucharist, otherwise called the "Lord's Supper." The actual transubstantiation of the elements into the flesh and blood of the crucified man-god is a recognised dogma in the Greek and Roman rituals, but the majority of the Reformed Churches have adopted a more rational attitude, and regard the bread and the wine as mere symbols.

CHAPTER IX

TRINITIES

ON approaching the subject of Trinities, we shall find ourselves involved in a perfect maze of symbolism, while the similarities of verbal derivation, which will be instanced, may also seem to add unnecessary complexity, but they should ultimately supply important and suggestive inferences.

“Throughout the whole world a Triad of Deity shines forth, of which a Monad is the head.” The Duad is said to “sit by” the Monad, governing all things.

In the theology of India the doctrine of such a trinity forms one of the most important features. Even in the ancient Vedic days such a triad seems to have been recognised. “Apart from the philosophical doctrine, that all gods are only manifestations of the Supreme Self—the Atman,” there was a trinity whose three persons represented respectively the earth, the air, and the sky. “Agni . . . has his place

on earth, Vâyu or Indra in the air, and Surya in the sky.”¹

But the great Hindu triad was composed of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva. “By Brahmā it is universally acknowledged the Indians mean God the creator. . . . Vishnu, in Sanskrit, literally signifies a cherisher, a preserver, a comforter, and Siva a destroyer.”² Thus the first Christian missionaries who arrived in those regions found the people already “in possession of this fundamental doctrine of the true religion. . . . They adored an idol fabricated to resemble as near as possible a Trinity in Unity.”³ In “Asiatic Researches”⁴ we read: “Reverence be to thee, O God! . . . Thou art Brahmā, Vishnu, and Mah-esa (Siva). I adore thee, who art celebrated by a thousand names, and under various forms in the shape of Budha, the God of mercy.”

Brahmā is sometimes called Narayana or “The Spirit moving on the face of the waters,”⁵ but it is more commonly Vishnu who is thus identified.

¹ Max Müller’s “Contributions to the Science of Mythology,” vol. ii. p. 475.

² Maurice’s “Indian Antiquities,” vol. iv. chap. i.

³ Ibid., Chap. vi. of Dissertation at beginning of vol. v.

⁴ Vol. iii. pp. 285-6.

⁵ “Vishna Purana,” Book I. chaps. iii. and iv.; also the Ode to Narayana, in Sir W. Jones’ “Asiatic Miscellany.”

The third person of the trinity—Siva, known also as Rudra, which is sometimes used as a synonym for the Vedic Agni—“is the Mahā-yogī, the great ascetic, in whom is centred the highest perfection of austere penance and abstract meditation, by which the most unlimited powers are attained . . . the highest spiritual knowledge is acquired, and union with the great spirit of the universe is eventually gained.” “Under the name of Rudra or Mahā-kāla he is the great destroying and dissolving power. But destruction in Hindu belief implies reproduction; so as Siva or Sankara, ‘the Auspicious,’ he is the reproductive power which is perpetually restoring that which has been dissolved, and hence he is regarded as Iswara, the supreme lord, and Mahā-deva, the great god.”¹

Analogous ideas are expressed by Hermes Trismegistus. “For generation is not a creation of life, but a production of things to sense, and making them manifest. Neither is change death, but an occultation or hiding of that which was.”²

As Barth truly points out, this Indian conception of a trinity is not “a cosmographic

¹ Dowson's “Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology,” p. 298.

² “The Divine Pyramider,” Book XI. 102.

distribution of the deified forces of nature, but a threefold evolution of the divine unity. The Brahman—the Absolute—manifests himself in three persons, Brahmā, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Çiva, the destroyer. It is in them that he becomes capable of action, and that he partakes of the three ‘qualities’ of goodness, passion, and darkness, subtle principles that pervade everything, and in which the ancient Sāṅkhya philosophy sums up the energies of nature. Each of these persons is represented by one of the three letters A, U, M, the combination of which forms the sacrosanct syllable OM, the symbol of the Absolute.”¹

In “Asiatic Researches”² the triple divinity is spoken of as “Vishnu, Siva, Brahmā, for that is the order in which they are expressed by the letters A, U, and M.”

The derivation of this word “Aum” co-relates many mystic references in widely separated lands. Am, om, or um, means in most languages which have affinity with the Sanskrit, circle, cycle, or sun-disk. Hom or hama in Persian means the Sun. Hence the origin of the word Amon : Am = the Sun, On = the creative powers of Nature. Bacchus was called Om-

¹ Barth's “Religions of India,” pp. 180-1. Authorised translation by Wood.

² Vol. i. p. 242.

estes (the Devourer) and Oma Deus (the holy Om). This Om-estes finds its parallel in the Persian Om-esta; "esta" being simply the old Sanskrit affirmative from which have sprung the names Hestia and Vesta.

In Faber's "Origin of Pagan Idolatry"¹ we are again reminded of the solar nature of the deity, for Brahmā typifies the sun as he rises in the east, Vishnu as he sets in the west, while Siva represents the noon-day heat. A similar idea is expressed in the Atharva-Veda with reference to the deities of that still earlier time. "In the evening Agni becomes Varuna; he becomes Mitra when rising in the morning; having become Savitri he passes through the sky; having become Indra he warms the heaven in the middle."²

But the underlying unity beneath the three-fold manifestation must always be kept in view, and the following reply of the deity to an inquiry as to which person of the trinity was the greatest, exemplifies the fact that there were not wanting in India, in archaic ages, minds fit to grasp these subtle ideas. "Learn, O devotee, that there is no real distinction between us; what to you appears such is only

¹ Book IV. chap. i.

² Quoted in Max Müller's "Origin and Growth of Religion," Lecture VI., pp. 290-1.

by semblance. The single Being appears under three forms, but He is One.”¹

Egypt had many trinities, varying at different epochs and in different parts of the country. Here they were mostly anthropomorphised, consisting generally of father, mother, and child. Such was the Abydos triad of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, also that worshipped at Thebes, consisting of Amon, Mut, and Chonsu. But more abstract ideas also were not wanting, and Dr. Pritchard, in his “Analysis of Egyptian Mythology,” describes a trinity composed of a generative, a destructive, and a preserving power. The ancient Egyptians are also described as using a triangle to denote the three-fold deity. The sun and fire they regarded as his chief emblems, being themselves trinities of flame, light, and heat.

But, according to Maurice, “it is Osiris, Cneph, and Phtha that form the true Egyptian triad of deity”—a triad which most nearly approached to the trinities of India. “As Osiris was a title afterwards applied to the sun, so Phtha was to the fire that issued from the solar orb, while Cneph was the mighty spirit, the *ψυχη κοσμου*, that pervaded and animated the whole world.” “This supreme and

¹ Allen’s “India.”

uncreated god Cneph" was "symbolically represented by the figure of a being of a dark blue complexion, holding a girdle and a sceptre, with a royal plume upon his head, and thrusting forth from his mouth an egg. From this egg there proceeded another god, whom they denominated Phtha, a term which, Dr. Cudworth remarks, is at present used among the Copts to signify the Divine Being." Commenting on this description of the birth of Phtha, the learned author proceeds to point out the parallel between it and the birth of Vishnu, a spirit likewise of a blue colour.¹

Ptah seems to have been worshipped specially at Memphis, and the inscriptions honour him with the title of "father of the gods." "He is the architect," writes Brugsch, "in the highest sense of the word. This is at once indicated by his name, for Ptah, in the Egyptian language, signifies 'architect.' There are inscriptions which throw light on the sacred attributes of this Architect of the Universe. The following texts, on the walls of the temple of Denderah, call the god 'the chief of the society of the gods, who created all Being.' 'All things came into existence after he existed.' 'He is the

¹ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," Chap. ii. of Dissertation at end of vol. iv.

lord of truth and king of the gods.' At Philæ it is written, 'He who created all being, who formed men and gods with his own hands.'"¹

Another Egyptian trinity apparently claims Ptah as one of its members. "In Memphis," writes Wiedemann, "where Ptah with Sekhet and Nefer Tûm or Imûthes, formed the divine triad, he was held to have been the first king of Egypt, and the creator of the world, and therefore bore the titles 'Father of the mighty fathers (the other gods), father of the beginnings, he who created the sun egg and the moon egg.'" Although in the inscriptions there is apparently no trace of any mythological event connected with the name of Ptah, yet "Porphyrus, who was well informed in Egyptian matters, tells us that the god came forth from an egg which had issued from the mouth of Kneph." This last-named god, known as Khnum or Khnef by the Egyptians, and as Khnumis or Kneph by the Greeks, is apparently the Cneph referred to above by Maurice. Wiedemann writes that he "was specially worshipped in the neighbourhood of the first cataract, and was regarded, as his name would indicate, as the 'Modeller.' In many Egyptian texts, he is set forth as being the creator, 'he

¹ Brugsch's "Egypt under the Pharaohs," p. 13.

who created all that is, who formed that which is existent, the father of fathers, the mother of mothers'; 'he who constructed men, who made the gods, who was father in the beginning.'" ¹

The association of these two gods is referred to by O'Neill: "The supreme divinity Kneph-Agathodemon, as the Greeks called Khnum, . . . it should be remembered is associated with Ptah, and is sometimes found moulding the cosmic Egg on a potter's wheel, out of matter furnished by Ptah." ² The same author also sees an apparent confusion between them, in that the Egyptians are described as painting "the god whom they called Kneph, like a man in a blue garment," which colour, apparently, would be appropriate for Ptah, while Khnum is usually represented as green.

The solar nature of the deity also is referred to, in a dialogue between Râ and Isis, in which the god exclaims "I am Khepera in the morning, Râ at noon, and Tum in the evening." ³

In the following quotation, however, which Auberon Herbert, in a discourse called "Nimrod," makes from Manetho, we get in touch with ideas which approach more nearly to those of the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria, and which

¹ Wiedemann's "Religion of the Ancient Egyptians," pp. 128-32.

² O'Neill's "Night of the Gods," vol. ii. chap. iv. p. 732.

³ Wiedemann's "Religion of the Ancient Egyptians," p. 57.

are also embodied in the opening chapter of St. John's gospel. The passage refers to Alexander, who was hailed by the Egyptians as Vulcan, and as the Second Sesostris, and it proceeds: "On his return through Africa he entered the sanctuary of the oracle *ἐν υπερφανια*, saying, 'Tell me, O Thou strong in fire, who before me could subjugate all things? and who shall after me?' But the oracle rebuked him, saying, 'First God, then the Word, and with them the Spirit. Go, mortal, and accomplish thine unknown destinies.'" ¹

The Word, above referred to, is described as being "the first person after Himself, uncreated, infinite, ruling over the things that were made by Him." ²

We have seen that the Indian conception of a trinity is but the evolution of the divine Unity, and the same idea was doubtless held by the deepest thinkers of Egypt. "The various forms in which the one real existence manifests himself, are his own creation, whether they be material, human, or divine. Thus he, according to an expression of the Egyptian theologians, perpetually 'creates his own members, which are the gods,' or says, 'I am the

¹ *Manetho ap. Malal.*, li. c. 55.

² Quoted from "Eastern Sacred Books" in Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief," p. 404.

maker of heaven and of the earth. . . . It is I who have given to all the gods the soul which is within them.' . . . But though maker of the earth, the one reality is a spirit more spiritual than the gods; the holy soul which clothes itself with forms, but itself remains unknown."¹

Chaldea and Babylon also furnish examples of trinities, although a pure monotheism appears to have prevailed in certain quarters. "Certaines écoles," writes Maspero, "celle d'Eridou entre autres, proclamèrent l'unité absolue de la divinité, et adressèrent leurs prières au dieu unique." But he goes on to remark: "Leurs doctrines ne prévalurent pas, et disparurent assez tôt, plus de trois mille ans avant notre ère."²

As in the case of Egypt, the local worship of special deities appears to have tended to increase their number. "The only genuine trinity that can be discovered in the religious faith of early Chaldæa, was that old Accadian system, which conceived of a divine father and mother by the side of their son, the Sun-god."³ But in subsequent ages many trinities arose. Ana, the old Accadian "sky-god," eventually became the Semitic Anu, who appears as

¹ Jevons' "Introduction to the History of Religion," p. 384.

² Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 139.

³ Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures, 1887," p. 193.

the first member of a triad, which consisted of Anu, Bel of Nipur (otherwise called Mul-lil), and Ea. Anu's realm was the heavenly firmament, Bel ruled over the lower world, while Ea represented the watery deep, and was also regarded as god of wisdom. This trinity is described as follows by François Lenormant: "Next to Ilu, the universal and mysterious source of all things, came a trinity composed of his three first exterior and visible manifestations, which were placed at the summit of the scale of the gods in popular worship; Anu the primordial chaos, the god of time and the world, uncreated matter issuing from the fundamental and unique principle of all things; Hea, the intelligence, or we would willingly say 'the Word' which animated matter and rendered it fertile, which penetrated the universe, directed and inspired it with life; being at the same time the king of the element of water—in one word, 'the spirit which moved upon the face of the waters'; and lastly Bel, the demiurgus and ruler of the organised universe."¹

A secondary trinity, representative of the sun, the moon, and the evening star, was recognised under the names of Samas, Sin, and

¹ Lenormant's "Chaldæan Magic," pp. 114-5.

Ishtar; but the remarkable fact about this triad was, that the ancient moon-god of Ur, Sin, was the chief person, and was regarded as the father of the other two. Commenting on this reversal of the usual order, Professor Sayce observes that it seems singular to the comparative mythologist "that, according to the official religion of Chaldea, the sun-god was the offspring of the moon-god. Such a belief could have arisen only where the moon-god was the supreme object of worship. It is a reversal of the usual mythological conception, which makes the moon the companion or pale reflection of the sun. It runs directly counter to the Semitic Baal-worship. To the Semite, the Sun-god was the lord and father of the gods; the moon was either his female consort, or, where Semitic theology had been influenced by that of Chaldea, an inferior god."¹

Referring to the great trinity of Anu, Bel, and Ea, Maspero writes: "Cette première trinité ne renferme que des êtres d'un caractère vague et indéterminé; la seconde contient des personnages nettement définis, emanations et symboles des précédents. Elle se compose du dieu-lune, Sin, du dieu-soleil,

¹ Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures, 1887," p. 155.

Shamash, et de l'atmosphère, Ramanon. Les Chaldéens, astronomes avant tout, accordaient le pas au dieu-lune sur le dieu-soleil."¹ Maspero apparently differs from Sayce in the distribution of this second trinity, as Ramanon here takes the place of Ishtar.

On the rise of Babylon to be the capital of a great empire, its local god Merodach, who, like his Assyrian prototype Moloch, was a god of destruction, became merged with Baal the Preserver, in one person known as Bel-Merodach. This dual god, along with his wife, the goddess Zarpanit, and his son Nebo, the god of prophecy, formed a further trinity.

The relationships ascribed to the various deities are somewhat confusing: Tammuz (the Sun-god of Eridu), as well as Merodach, being regarded as sons of Ea or Wisdom, the third person in the first-named trinity, while Tammuz, as we have previously seen, is both the spouse and the son of Ishtar, whose later husband, Rimmon, became the Syrian Sun-god.

The Chaldæan and Babylonian records lead naturally to those of the Jewish people. In the oracles of Zoroaster, it is written: "The Chaldæans alone, with the Hebrews, have wisdom for their portion, rendering a pure

¹ Maspero's *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 140.

worship to God, who is the eternal king.”¹ Now, the Jewish Kabbalists recognised a trinity consisting of the three great Sephiroth: Kether (the Crown), Chochmah (Wisdom), and Binah (Understanding)—all emanations of, and synthesised in, En Soph, “The Infinite.” The second person of this trinity, Chochmah, is the creative power, the Word, Logos, or Wisdom. The Chaldæan paraphrasts called this second person Shechinah-Sephira, who, according to the Talmud, had the keys of the womb, and of the grave, of life, and of death. This Chochmah, or Wisdom, is the brightness of the everlasting Light, the unspotted mirror of the Power of God, and the image of his goodness.²

But different writers used different terms, and this second person of the trinity—the Logos, or Wisdom—is sometimes represented by the word Rasit, and the third person of the trinity, by the word Ruh or Ruach, which means the Spirit of God—the second mind or æon, while the word Aleim was used to synthesise the whole triad.

According to Maurice, “the first Sephira, who is denominated Kether the Crown, Kadmon the pure light, and En Soph the Infinite,

¹ M. Gaiet's *Monothéisme des Peuples Primitifs* in *La Bible sans La Bible*, vol. i. p. 662.

² Hebrews, chap. i. 3; also Wisdom of Solomon, chap. vii. 26.

is the omnipotent Father of the Universe. . . . The second is the Chochmah, whom we have sufficiently proved, both from sacred and Rabbinical writings, to be the creative Wisdom. The third is the Binah, or heavenly Intelligence, whence the Egyptians had their Cneph, and Plato his *Nous dēmiurgos*. He is the Holy Spirit who . . . pervades, animates, and governs this boundless universe.”¹

It was apparently after the separation of the Iranians from the main stem of the Aryan race that arose the great Indian trinity of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Siva, but even that earlier triad of Agni, Indra, and Surya, which the forefathers of the Persians must have recognised, finds no prominent place in the records of the Zoroastrian religion. A creative, a preserving, and a destroying power may, it is true, be identified with Ahuramazda, Mithra, and Ahri-man, but these do not appear to have been regarded as a trinity. Indeed Ahriman is much more like the Devil of medieval Christendom, than a divine being at all, while it was not till ages long subsequent to the composition of the five Gathas, that Mithra emerged from the position of an angel in the Zoroastrian faith, and became the Sun-god and Saviour not

¹ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," vol. iv. chap. iv.

only of the Persian but of many of the Celtic nations.

The idea of a trinity may nevertheless be traced in the Zend-Avesta. The first person, or Father, is Ahuramazda. Then come the two creative spirits, or the pair (of opposites), thus exhibiting the duality which we shall see later to be characteristic of the Second Logos, while Armaiti, the Mind, or the goddess of Wisdom, completes the triad, and manifestly bears a marked resemblance to the Binah, or Intelligence of the Kabbalists, as well as to the Word, or Logos of the Neo-Platonists and early Christians.¹

The Celts were nearly as rich in trinities of father, mother, and son, as were the Egyptians; but they were far more philosophical, and approached more nearly to the Hindu symbolism in its earlier and less anthropomorphic phase. The most archaic of such trinities appears to be that of Aesar, Anu Mathar, and Ain. The Druids invoked first of all Aesar, the all-healing and saving power. Aesain means to make or create. Aes-ar is literally the fire creator (compare the derivation of Osiris). The Etruscans worshipped a god

¹ "Sacred Books of the East," vol. xxxi.; "The Gathas," Yasna, xxx. 3, 4, and 7.

Aesar; with the Hindus he is Aeswar or Iswara—the first mover, the creative power. It may here be noted that *aesh* is the Hebrew word for fire.

The second person in this triad, Anu Mathar, is also called Eirinn (night), and Ith (desire). This is a female potency, which, along with the male Aesar, may most truly be regarded as the dual aspect of the One; while the first emanation, or, in anthropomorphic language, the son of these two, was called Ain, meaning the “First Breath.” The idea here suggested of the creative power brooding over the night or chaos of Eirinn, recalls not only the creation of Narayana, “the spirit moving on the waters,” but the description in the first chapter of Genesis, “And the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters”; and again, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath [in Hebrew ‘spirit’] of his mouth.” Aristophanes, in “The Birds,” expresses a similar idea: “Sable-winged night produced an egg, from which sprang like a blossom, Eros the lovely.”

Another Celtic trinity of subsequent growth, was that which recognised the third person of the foregoing triad as its synthesis. Ain, the “First Breath,” is here the triple godhead,

known by the names of Taulac, Fean, and Molc. Taulac is now the creative power; Fean or Baal-Samhan the Preserver; and Molc the Destroyer. This Baal-Samhan, Bal-Samin, or Baal-Samhein, as he is variously called, seems to be identical with Baal-Samin of the Phœnicians, at whose festivals only fruits of the earth were offered. The same was the case with celebrations in honour of the Celtic god, whose title Samhein, when translated, means "peace-fire." He was also called Ionn—the Almighty God—the just and merciful. Like the second person of other trinities which have been instanced, he is likewise the Mediator, Saviour, and Judge of souls, and, like Osiris, Lord of the Death world.

Now, it must be noted that both Bel or Baal, and Ion or Ionn, were titles of the Sun, and there is little doubt that Baal-Saman was the evening sun, and identical with the Baal or Bel of so many other nations. Baldur is evidently the Scandinavian equivalent, while even in India Baal is to be found, for at Malvali Puram there is a temple to the god Bali, who is described as having been slain on earth.¹

Equally curious is the exact resemblance of the Celtic Molc or Mollach—the third person

¹ Crawford's "Researches," vol. ii. p. 91.

of this trinity—to the Moloch of Nineveh. The word Molc in old Celtic meant “fire.” In modern Irish the word *miollach* means “to burn,” while its equivalent in Hebrew is *MLK*.

Scandinavia, too, had its trinity, in which Odin the All-Father has the first place, and is a personification of the heavens. Thor and Freya or Frigga completed the triad. Thor, as we have seen, corresponds with the Latin Jupiter, and gives us our Thursday (French *Jeudi*); while Freya was a personification of the earth, the symbol of fertility. The union of Odin and Freya was supposed to have produced the sun-god Baldur—the good and beautiful—who, as we have seen, was slain, but rose again from the dead, and who, along with Odin and Freya, thus formed a second trinity.

In “Antiquities of Mexico”¹ a trinity is mentioned consisting of Tezcatlipoca, who “had all the attributes and powers assigned to Jehovah by the Hebrews,” and two other gods, who occupied places on his right hand and his left. In Yucatan, too, the ancient inhabitants recognised a trinity which apparently bore a very close resemblance to the Trinity acknowledged by Christendom.²

¹ Vol. vi. p. 164.

² *Ibid.*, vol. vi. pp. 164-5.

Even more intimately associated with the solar symbolism than among other nations, was the trinity worshipped in Peru, for Apomti, Churunti, and Intiquoqui were represented as three images of the sun, the terms signifying respectively Father or Lord-Sun, Son-Sun, and Brother - Sun. Maurice, after quoting from Acosta, goes on to remark that according to this writer, the Peruvians "go a step farther than the acknowledgment of a mere triad of deity, and worship a direct trinity in unity; for in Cuquisaco there is a certain oratory where they worship a great idol, which they call Tangatanga, which signifies One in Three, and Three in One.¹ Garcilasso de la Vega describes a Peruvian trinity composed of *Icona*, answering to the Father; *Racab*, corresponding with the Son; and *Estrua*, the Holy Spirit.² The name of the second person in this trinity, it may be observed, suggests a close connection with *Bacab*, the Saviour god of Yucatan.

In ancient China the emperors used to sacrifice every third year to "Him who is one and three."³ There was a Chinese saying, "Fo is

¹ Acosta's "History of the Indies," Lib. V. chap. xxviii.; also Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," chap. vi. of Dissertation at beginning of vol. v.

² Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. ii. p. 341.

³ Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. i. p. 210.

one person, but has three forms,"¹ while Navrette, in his account of China,² writes: "This sect" [that of Fo] "has another idol they call San Pao. It consists of three, equal in all respects. This, which has been mistaken for an image of the blessed Trinity, is exactly the same with that which is on the high altar of the Trinitarians at Madrid. If any Chinese whatsoever saw it, he would say the San Pao of his country was worshipped in these parts." In the lofty philosophical system known in China as Taoism, a trinity also figures: "Eternal reason produced One, One produced Two, Two produced Three, and Three produced all things," which, as Le Compte goes on to say, "seems to show as if they had some knowledge of the Trinity."³

An ancient Siberian medal is referred to by Maurice as representing three figures joined in one. "The image which appears upon one side, and which represents a Deity, is one human figure as to the body, and lower extremities, but is distinguished above by three heads and six arms. The figure sits cross-legged upon a low sofa or stool in the manner

¹ Davies' "China," vol. ii. p. 184.

² Book II. chap. x., and Book VI. chap. xi.

³ Le Compte's "Memoirs of China," p. 321; also Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," vol. i. p. 210.

of eastern sovereigns." The inscription on the reverse side of the medal may be translated thus: "The bright and sacred image of Deity conspicuous in three figures. Gather the holy purpose of God from Them: Love Him." As the writer goes on to remark, "The mode of expression, and the alternate use of the singular and plural noun decisively mark the real sentiments and intent of those who caused it to be thus engraved."¹ The same writer also informs us, that among the Tartars of Siberia a trinity was worshipped. The first person was recognised as the Creator of all, the second was the "God of Armies," and the third the spirit of Heavenly Love. Yet the three were regarded as one.

According to Timotheus in Cedrenus, Orpheus, the Greek philosopher and theologian, asserted the existence "of an eternal incomprehensible Being, the creator of all things." This supreme Demiurgos is called by him Light, Counsel, and Life, a threefold distinction which bears resemblance to the three great Sephiroth of the Hebrews, above referred to.² He also refers to the three great Kabiri, apropos of which Greek

¹ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," chap. vi. of Dissertation, at beginning of vol. v.

² Ibid., chap. iii. in "Dissertation on Pagan Triads of Deity," at end of vol. iv.

word it is curious to find, in an old Celtic glossary, an allusion to "Samhan, that is Kabur." He further speaks of the Deity as "Three minds, three kings, him that is, him that hath, and him that beholds." He teaches that the Deity is at once male and female, containing as it does within It the generative powers of all things.

"The three hypostases that form the trinity of Plato, it is well known, are το αγαθον, νους, often denominated by him λογος, and ψυχη κοσμου." ¹ Macrobius, in his commentary on the "Dream of Scipio," describes "an immense graduated chain of beings, commencing with the First Cause, born or produced from itself." The first three links of this chain are the Father, his Logos, *nous* or *mens*, and the *anima* or *spiritus mundi*. He goes on to describe how the spirit proceeds from, and the Son is begotten by, the Father.

This brings us to the Trinity recognised by Christendom, the three persons of which it consists, being known by the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The second person in this, as in so many other trinities, is regarded as the Saviour and Redeemer; while his identity

¹ Maurice's "Indian Antiquities," chap. vii. of Dissertation in vol. v.

with the "Word," or "Logos" of St. John's Gospel, is also apparent. Born in the schools of the philosophers of Alexandria, the Christian doctrine naturally reflects the ideas of the Neo-Platonists, which, in their turn, may be traced to earlier and more archaic systems.

But the lesson to be learnt from this study of the trinities of the world's religions is, that within and behind them all must lie enshrined some deep truth, which has given them so much persistence throughout the ages, and of which one and all are a more less perfect, or imperfect, expression.



BOOK II

HISTORY AND ETHICS

CHAPTER X

EARLY RACES OF MAN

So much valuable work has recently been done in the field of comparative Mythology, that one is tempted to wonder how much greater might the results have been, were the facts about the early races of man more widely recognised.

Though the subject may at first sight appear inappropriate in a work the main object of which is the interpretation of religious symbolism, the views presented in this chapter about the early races of man fill a gap in the survey of the whole vast scheme, and will, it is hoped, be recognised as supplying an intelligible solution of many of its problems.

The following quotations may serve to focus the primary consideration of the subject on the question, whether "savages or nomads represent an earlier stage of culture than even the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans;" which view would seem to be upheld by the fact that savage tongues, such as the Kaffir, are still in their childhood—belong, in fact, to an earlier stratum of language

than the Sanskrit;¹ or whether it must be held, with Max Müller, "that purity and reasonableness are nearer the beginning, than absurdity and unreasonableness . . . that in the Veda we have a nearer approach to a beginning, and an intelligible beginning, than in the wild invocations of Hottentots or Bushmen;" or, again, whether the answer to the question is not considerably more complicated than either of the above hypotheses would suggest.

"The question of the origin of a belief in deity does not come within the scope of a strictly historical inquiry. No man can watch the idea of God in the making or in the beginning. We are acquainted with no race whose beginning does not lie far back in the unpenetrated past. . . . The notions of man about the Deity, man's religious sentiments and his mythical narratives, must be taken as we find them. There have been, and are, many theories as to the origin of the conception of a supernatural being, or beings, concerned with the fortunes of mankind, and once active in the making of the earth and its inhabitants. There is the hypothesis of an original divine tradition, darkened by the smoke of foolish mortal fancies. There is the hypothesis of an innate and intui-

¹ Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. ii. p. 326.

tive *sensus numinis*. There is the opinion that the notion of Deity was introduced to man by the very nature of his knowledge and perceptions, which compel him in all things to recognise a finite and infinite. There is the hypothesis that gods were originally ghosts, the magnified shades of ancestral spectres. There is the doctrine that man, seeking in his early speculations for the causes of things, and conscious of his own powers as an active cause, projected his own shadow on the mists of the unknown, and peopled the void with the figures of magnified non-natural men, his own parents and protectors, and the makers of many of the things in the world.

“Since the actual truth cannot be determined by observation and experiment, the question as to the first germs of the divine conception must here be left unanswered. But it is possible to disengage and examine apart the two chief elements in the earliest as in the latest ideas of Godhead. Amongst the lowest and most backward, as among the most advanced races, there co-exist the *mythical* and the *religious* elements in belief. The rational factor (or what approves itself to us as the rational factor) is visible in religion; the irrational is prominent in myth.”¹

¹ Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. i. pp. 327-8.

Other writers, too, have similarly dealt with the idea of the relative function of religion and mythology.

“Mythology,” writes Robertson-Smith, “ought not to take the prominent place that is too often assigned to it in the scientific study of ancient faiths. So far as myths consist of explanations of ritual, their value is altogether secondary, and it may be affirmed with confidence that in almost every case the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth; for the ritual was fixed and the myth was variable, the ritual was obligatory, and faith in the myth was at the discretion of the worshipper.” . . . “Religion in primitive times was not a system of belief with practical applications; it was a body of fixed traditional practices, to which every member of society conformed as a matter of course.” . . . “The conclusion is that in the study of ancient religions, we must begin not with myth but with ritual and traditional usage.”¹

“The notion,” says Jevons, “that mythology is religion, is the outcome of the erroneous and misleading practice of reading modern ideas into ancient religions. It is but one form of the fallacy that mythology was to the antique

¹ Robertson-Smith's “Religion of the Semites,” pp. 19, 20, 21.

religions what dogma is to the modern—with the superadded fallacy that dogma is the source, instead of the expression, of religious conviction. Mythology is primitive science, primitive philosophy, an important constituent of primitive history, but it is not primitive religion. It is not necessarily or usually even religious. It is not the proper or even the ordinary vehicle for the expression of the religious spirit. Prayer, meditation, devotional poetry, are the chosen vehicles in thought and word ; ritual in outward deed and act.”¹

The author then proceeds to trace the origin of mythology, and ascribes its survival among comparatively civilised races, to the fact that they were incapable of being influenced by the religious spirit, till a late period in their development, and hence the necessity of ascribing an allegorical meaning to the irrational or revolting myth.

This theory may be appropriate with respect to the *mythology* of the nations who were emerging from barbarism into more civilised conditions, but the endeavour will here be made to show that the *symbolism* of the great world-religions took its rise from an entirely different source. The symbolism, in fact, resulted from

¹ Jevons' "Introduction to the History of Religion," pp. 266-7.

the effort to express eternal verities in language fit to be understood by the multitude. The great gods, such as Osiris, were not myths—they were symbols. There may have been cases where the myth evolved into the dignity of a symbol, but the earlier and more universal process was that in which the symbol was through ages degraded into the myth. The two ideas in any case are never parallel.

It has been the object aimed at throughout this work, to confine the investigation as much as possible within the sphere of religion (regarded by Lang as the “rational factor”), and to digress as little as possible into the domain of mythology, in which the irrational is so prominent.

In judging of religions, too, it must be remembered that their loftiest and not their lowest phases should be taken into account. The element of aspiration entering so largely into their composition, it should be obvious that the only fair way to judge of them, is by the thoughts and actions of their most intellectual and spiritually-minded devotees, rather than by the thoughts and actions of their least developed and most degraded followers.

It now remains to find the answer to the question above formulated as to the early races

of man, and we may then discover that the origin of a belief in Deity *does* "come within the scope of a strictly historical inquiry." In fact the two questions are indissolubly bound together. True it is that the existence of God, and of the immortal and divine life of man, can no more be demonstrated than can the existence of the ultimate atom of matter. It is by the exercise of pure reason that Science has inferred the existence of the atom, and it is by a similar exercise of pure reason that we must arrive at the recognition of Deity.

If, in the government of the world, a reign of law and justice is shown to exist, below the outward-seeming appearance of injustice and of chance, the fact of an intelligent and Divine Ruler of the universe may surely be considered as proved. If, again, the religious rites and dogmas which have been found unintelligible, or revolting to the conscience, are shown to have their origin in doctrines whose "sweet reasonableness" is only to be equalled by the power, wisdom, and love of the Divine Beings whose actions they record; and if, finally, the teachings founded on the great doctrine of Re-birth, the Law of Karma, and the Law of Sacrifice, are seen to constitute a theory of existence, no single premiss of which can be

refuted, while the inferences from these premises are obviously traceable in logical sequence, it would, indeed, seem as if we were on the track of what the seekers after truth have so long dreamed of—a doctrine which should at once satisfy the demands of the intellect and the desires of the heart.

It is the doctrine of Re-birth just mentioned, which we shall find to be the speedy solvent of all the difficulties involved in the question about the early races of man. The fact that this doctrine has, in Europe, been well-nigh forgotten, is indeed the sole, but efficient, cause for the many accusations of injustice in the government of the world, for truly the ignorance of this great law of nature makes the very fact of birth itself, with its inequality of conditions, appear to be a primary and unintelligible piece of injustice.

Progress must be recognised as a law underlying all life. There are cases in which it is manifestly operative. But it must be shown to be equally operative in all. The law is universal. It is just as operative in cases where, to outward appearance, degeneration instead of progress seems to be the rule. Applying equally in the larger scale to races of men, it will be sufficient here to deal with it in its

application to the individual, though this will of course entail incidental reference to the races also.

All men can see that progress is the law with regard to our own Teutonic race; but it is not so apparent—in fact the converse would seem to be the case—with regard to many of the decaying races. Take, for example, the modern Egyptians. Under no aspect can the “fellaheen” be regarded as anything but degenerate descendants of the great race who ruled in Egypt some thousands of years before the Christian era. The same is true about the Chinese, indeed about all races who are going backwards instead of forwards. But it is only necessary to “stand behind the scenes” in order to realise that, in spite of partial or apparent retrogressions, progress is nevertheless the standing rule. It is rightly recognised that decaying races, such as those above referred to, are yet far ahead of savage tribes, and that even among savage tribes there are degrees of barbarism.

Now, it is the constantly repeated life-experience which is the humanising factor, making the savage races less barbarous, and the civilised more humane. The process naturally occupies stupendous ages—the life of man on earth

bearing such an infinitesimal proportion to the life of man on the subjective or spiritual plane—but the repeated life-experience is bound to bear its fruit, the ultimate result of which is an automatic advancement in the scale of nature. From being the member of a purely savage community, it is a manifest advance to be born in a tribe which has more culture and fewer savage characteristics. It is obvious, too, that the continued repetition of the process must eventually lead out of savage, and into civilised conditions, for each one of the host of souls constantly pressing towards re-birth, is bound to find its fitting vehicle. When therefore the individuals composing a certain race, outgrow the characteristics of that race, and when there is no longer a stream of entities thronging up from lower conditions, for whom such a race would provide fitting vehicles, the type of that race is destined to become extinct. This extinction of type is a fact which can be demonstrated. It will presently be referred to again.

So far we have regarded the subject from the point of view of the re-incarnating entity; but while recognising the means which nature thus provides for the progress of the individual, or in other words, for the evolution of the soul, it must be remembered that simultaneously with

this process, there is on the physical plane a double scheme of evolution taking place. Apart from the special impetus given to the improvement of type, by the founding of each successive root-race, *every race*, until its zenith is reached, is manifestly the field for the gradual improvement of type, and thus are provided the fitting forms for the gradually improving individuals who constitute the race. But when the zenith is past, degeneration sets in. This seems to constitute a reversal of the law; but it is so, only in appearance, for even a decaying type provides fitting forms for those advancing from still lower conditions, while the tracing of this degeneration of type to its ultimate conclusion, the extinction of a race, will itself be found to supply proof of the general progress of humanity. There are, for example, instances of aboriginal tribes in Australia and New Zealand who have, even in our own time, become extinct. These were recognised as among the lowest types of humanity on earth. The inference from this is obvious. The general progress achieved, had reached a stage where forms of a superior type were required to express the growing human attributes of even the lowest savages then ready to return to incarnation.

“It is of course on a misconception of the subject, that geologists and palæontologists base their researches—the mistaken idea that they can ever find the ancestors of the cultivated European or Asiatic amongst the ‘cave’ or the ‘river-drift’ men. The shell-mounds on the shores of Denmark, and the ‘lake-dwellings’ of Switzerland and Italy are duplicated to-day among the savages of Tierra del Fuego and New Guinea. These are—as they were—the laggard races. The same entities have returned with [almost] the same characteristics, and follow [almost] the same mode of life, and it will require a considerably longer period in the future than we can measure in the past, since man was first endowed with mind, to lift them out of their innate barbarism.”¹

In a subject so complex, and at the same time so unfamiliar, it may be permitted to approach it from yet another point of view. Let us start, say, with Max Müller’s Sanskrit-speaking Aryans. That a belief in an intelligent and orderly government of the world existed in the very earliest ages to which scholarship can look back, seems to be proved by his analysis of the Sanskrit and Zend words *rita* and *asha*. Having

¹ “The Evolution of Humanity.” Transaction No. 17 of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

traced both the word and the concept to a time anterior to the separation of these two branches of Aryan speech, he thus concludes: "This will suffice to show that a belief in a cosmic order existed before the Indians and Iranians separated, that it formed part of their ancient, common, religion, and was older therefore than the oldest Gâthâ of the Avesta, and the oldest hymn of the Veda."¹

While an intellectual, religious, and philosophically minded people are thus exhibited as filling the earliest page of history, subsequent pages exhibit crude mythological conceptions, savage rituals, and fetich worship, extending even to the present time. The whole subject is, in fact, an inextricable tangle, which can only be unravelled by recognising the truth of the theory of re-birth, as well as the existence of extinct races, the rise and fall of whose systems of civilization, have extended over periods of far greater duration, than has hitherto been acknowledged in the Western world. Little surprise need therefore be expressed, at the contending theories which modern scholarship puts forward.

It is now obvious that along with the most

¹ Max Müller's "Origin and Growth of Religion," Lecture V. p. 251.

highly civilised peoples of their time, there exist, and *have always existed*, savages in every stage of development; the only important point of difference being that in early ages the depth of barbarism was lower than that represented by even the most degraded savage of to-day. The Sanskrit-speaking Aryans, who represented the highest point of culture of their age, had savage contemporaries of many types. The stone age, the bronze age, and the iron age were all doubtless represented on some portion of the earth's surface, as they have been through subsequent ages. Dramatic interest is, however, added to the historical sketch, when it is realised that we, doubtless, are those very Aryans ourselves. The individuals who have reached the highest stage of development, form a class from which naturally are drawn the representatives of the highest civilisation—not of one epoch but of all epochs; and those Sanskrit-speaking Aryans, who are therefore our forefathers in a double sense, may be recognised as ourselves in various garbs throughout the ages—on the plains of Babylon, by the river Nile, and in the streets of Rome. The lesson to be drawn from this, lies in the comparison of human standards at different epochs, for the rate of human progress—individual and

racial—is obviously to be gauged by the improvement in the standards of to-day, as compared with those early ages. It is very apparent that the advance established has been in the intellectual, rather than in the moral sphere. The development of the physical brain-power and intellect is indeed the special function of this Fifth or Aryan race—a broader and more general diffusion of knowledge, being a marked feature of our own time.

But while a wider, and we would suggest a more intelligible, basis is thus provided for the interpretation of the natural facts, it may be objected that we are no nearer to the beginnings of the race. Indeed the result of our investigations, so far, has been to show that the beginning is further off than ever, that the evolution of man is an infinitely slower process than even Science is generally prepared to admit. If the same individuals who inhabited savage forms in the days of the early Aryans, have not yet completely emerged from their barbarism, and still inhabit more or less savage forms to-day; if all the advance made by the more civilised races during these thousands of years, is represented by the difference between our standards to-day, and those of the early

Aryans, the progress can scarcely be said to have been rapid.

But however far into antiquity researches may be carried, the beginning appears as far off as ever. The beginning of man on this planet, only leads back to his occupancy of the previous planet, and that in turn to the previous rounds of the whole planetary chain. The beginning even of this Manwantara leads back to the last, for the beginning of man was on a chain of worlds which, with the exception of a single planet, has ceased to exist.

To draw a sketch of the whole scheme of evolution in its infinite complexity, would necessitate a volume; while any attempt to summarise so stupendous a subject, must result in the omission of many important facts. The task, too, is far from easy. It will simplify the issue, if we confine our attention, as above, to the Sanskrit-speaking Aryan, in *his* day the flower of humanity, and the lowest savage, its most degraded representative.

The object of all existence being the evolution of the soul, its necessary corollary is the development, in every kingdom of nature, of forms which shall express its growing characteristics.

Now the goal placed before humanity, or

what stood for humanity, in the Lunar Manwantara,¹ was the attainment of complete individuality. But by the time it had run its course, a minority only had attained this goal. A second group, while failing to touch Manas or mind, succeeded nevertheless in developing an amount of self-consciousness which may be defined as the knowledge that "I am I." The third group failed even to reach that level, having only developed the germ of such self-consciousness. Now these three great hosts are known by the name of the Lunar Pitris—the Lunar ancestors, that is of mankind, in this Manwantara. They were, in fact, our present humanity in a lower stage of development.

The last-named group, being most in want of life-experience, had naturally to rejoin the evolutionary stream, at the beginning of this Manwantara. They had failed to the greatest extent, in taking advantage of their opportunities. They had most lee-way to make up. The occupation of the lower types of humanity, during the early rounds of this Manwantara, had therefore to be undertaken by them. When their development was brought more in line

¹ "The last Manwantara is called the Lunar, owing to the fact that the dead globe, which now acts as our moon, was then a living planet, and played the part of the Earth, or fourth globe, during that period."

with that of the group above them, that second great host joined the stream. This took place during the Third round. It was not until the wave of humanity had reached this planet, at about the middle point of the Fourth round, that the first group of the Lunar Pitris began to return to incarnation. During the progress of our Third root-race, sometimes spoken of as the Lemurians, the least advanced individuals of this group dropped in, while the most highly developed were not required to take birth till the Fourth root-race was established on Atlantis. It was of course in some subjective spiritual condition suited to their degree of development, that this first group of the Lunar Pitris spent these intervening ages.

The inquiry now naturally arises, what races of man are to-day the representatives of these three groups? While allowing for many cases of individual retardation, as well as many cases of individual progress at more than the normal rate, it may be stated in a very general way, that all the spiritually and mentally cultivated classes in our Aryan race, originally constituted that first group.

The second group are probably represented by the more backward in our own race, as well as the most advanced among the Chinese, the

Mongolians, and other peoples belonging to the Fourth race, while the lowest types of our Aryan race and the unprogressive masses of the Fourth race are those who probably constituted the third group.

It will be observed that we have now identified the Sanskrit-speaking Aryan, as belonging to the first group of the Lunar Pitris, but it has still to be shown where the savage comes in, for he had apparently no human ancestors whatever on the Lunar chain. This, indeed, is the fact, for he is the direct outcome of that which was the animal kingdom of that Manwantara.

From the foregoing it will be apparent, that the different stages of mental and moral development, represented by the different races on the earth to-day, are to be accounted for by the varying rate of progress of the individuals who compose these races—progress begun in lower kingdoms during previous Manwantaras, and destined to lead to godlike levels in the future.

While the above is the roughest outline-sketch of the whole scheme of which we form a part, a reference to some of its more detailed aspects, is necessary to explain expressions used in the opening chapter. It was there stated

that symbolic religious systems have not always been a necessity for the human race. It may be added that a time will arrive when they will similarly cease to be a necessity.

We have seen above that the development of the physical brain and intellect, is the special function of our Fifth race. Now the exclusive cultivation of intellect has the inevitable result of stifling the psychic senses. But the psychic senses are the natural appanage of humanity. Man was possessed of them before the present age of material intellectuality set in, and he will similarly be possessed of them, when the results of this age have been garnered. The activity of the psychic senses even in these days, is occasionally to be met with, but as a rule they must be considered as more or less in abeyance.

But in the early days of the Third root-race, man, being still able to use his psychic senses, could experience a higher state of consciousness in a way that is impossible for us, while the immaturity of his mind made it unnecessary that knowledge about still higher states of consciousness, should be reduced to concrete thought. In other words, the necessity for definite systems of religion had not then arisen.

With the evolution, however, of the later Third root-race, and still more of the Fourth root-race, the possession of the psychic senses became a rarer and rarer gift, and faith had gradually to take the place of sight. The descent in the arc of evolution, was inevitably carrying man to lower depths of materiality, in which all remembrance of his spiritual attributes was destined gradually to be extinguished, and naturally, mankind then began to require the insistence of some divine sanction for human conduct.

But the relevant fact, as regards our present investigation, about this Third race is that, whereas, in the days of its ascendancy, it provided the forms required by the most advanced races then living on earth, its type has now reached such a depth of degradation, that the remnants of the race which still exist, scattered about the globe, belong to the category we have been considering—that of the lowest savage.

A similar identification, so far as is possible, of tribes and peoples existing to-day, as descendants of the various sub-races of the great Atlantean and Aryan stocks, will complete the analogy, and should better enable us to realise the general scope of the evolutionary scheme, indicating as it does the manner in which one

race overlaps another, and the many stages that intervene between the lowest barbarism and the highest culture.

The following is a list of the sub-races composing respectively the Atlantean and the Aryan stocks :—

<i>Atlanteans.</i>	<i>Aryans.</i>
1. Rmoahal.	Hindu Aryan.
2. Tlavatli.	Aryan Semite.
3. Toltec.	Iranian.
4. First Turanian.	Celtic.
5. Original Semite.	Teutonic.
6. Akkadian.	
7. Mongolian.	

“Some explanation is necessary as to the principle on which these names are chosen. Wherever modern ethnologists have discovered traces of one of these sub-races, or even identified a small part of one, the name they have given to it is used for the sake of simplicity,”¹ but in the case of the first two sub-races, there are hardly any traces left for science to judge by, so “the names by which these peoples called themselves have been adopted.”

The identification of the localities where these sub-races arose and flourished, will necessitate a reference to the maps published with “The Story of Atlantis,” from which work

¹ W. Scott-Elliot’s “The Story of Atlantis.”

extracts will be made relating to these Fourth race peoples.

The Rmoahals who inhabited the southern lands of Atlantis, were gradually absorbed by the black Lemurian aborigines, but some of their tribes wandered north, where, however, they led so precarious an existence, owing largely to the incursions of their powerful neighbours the Tlavatli, that they eventually crossed the narrow straits which separated the northern part of the continent from Greenland, and it is in the modern Lapps that we must recognise the scattered remnants of this ancient race. The Lapps, however, have had some infusion of other blood. Fossil remains, too, of this Rmoahal race have been discovered in France, in the quaternary strata (Brittany and Picardy then formed part of the Scandinavian island), "and the brachycephalous or round-headed specimen, known as the 'Furfooz' man, may be taken as a fair average of the race in its decay."

The Tlavatli people seem to have colonised widely. Reaching India and mixing with the indigenous Lemurian population, they thus formed the Dravidian race. "In later days this in its turn, received an infusion of Aryan blood, from which results the complexity of

type" now found in that country. "The only people who can be cited as fairly pure-blooded specimens of the race at the present day, are some of the brown tribes of Indians of South America. The Burmese and Siamese also have Tlavatli blood in their veins, but in these cases it was mixed with, and therefore dominated by, the nobler stock of one of the Aryan sub-races." Fossil remains of the Tlavatli have also been found in the quaternary strata of Central Europe, and "the dolichocephalous 'Cro-Magnon man' may be taken as an average specimen of the race in its decadence, while the 'Lake Dwellers' of Switzerland formed an earlier and not quite pure offshoot."

"Students of geology and palæontology will know that these sciences regard the 'Cro-Magnon man' as prior to the 'Furfooz,' and seeing that the two sub-races ran alongside each other, for vast periods of time, it may quite well be, that the individual 'Cro-Magnon' skeleton, though representative of the second sub-race, was deposited in the quaternary strata thousands of years before the individual 'Furfooz' man lived on the earth."

The Toltecs were incomparably the greatest of all the Atlantean peoples. The power and

magnificence of their empire can scarcely be overstated. Thousands of years after the zenith of the race was past, their still great descendants founded empires of importance in Mexico and Peru, but the average Red Indian of North or South America, is to-day the best representative of this once highly civilised people.

The trend of the Turanian race was steadily eastwards, and the nearest approximation to the type of this people, is to-day to be found in the inland Chinese. But a curious freak of destiny may be recorded about one of their western offshoots. "Dominated all through the centuries, by their more powerful Toltec neighbours, it was yet reserved for a small branch of the Turanian stock, to conquer and replace the last great empire that the Toltecs raised [in Mexico], for the brutal and barely civilised Aztecs were of pure Turanian blood."

From the mother-continent of Atlantis, the Semites spread both west and east—"west to the lands now forming the United States, and thus accounting for the Semitic type to be found in some of the Indian races, and east to the northern shores of the neighbouring continent, which contained all there then was of Europe, Africa, and Asia. The type

of the ancient Egyptians, as well as of other neighbouring nations, was to some extent modified by this original Semite blood; but with the exception of the Jews [who will presently be referred to] their only representatives of comparatively unmixed race at the present day, are the lighter-coloured Kabyles" of the Atlas range.

The Akkadians, though great sailors and traders, did not apparently colonise very distant lands. From their birthplace—the land now occupied by the basin of the Mediterranean, somewhere about the present island of Sardinia—they spread chiefly eastwards, "occupying what eventually became the shores of the Levant, and reaching as far as Persia and Arabia." . . . "They also helped to people Egypt. The early Etruscans, the Phœnicians, including the Carthaginians, and the Shumero-Akkads, were branches of this race," while the Basques of to-day have probably a large percentage of Akkadian blood.

"The Mongolian people were an improvement on their immediate ancestors of the . . . Turanian stock." To such an extent has this seventh sub-race multiplied, that at the present day "a majority of the earth's inhabitants technically belong to it," though many of its

divisions are deeply coloured with the blood of other races. "Born on the wide plains of Tartary, their emigrations for long, found ample scope within those regions; but more than once, tribes of Mongol descent have overflowed from Northern Asia to America, across Behring's Straits, and the last of such emigrations—that of the Kitans, some thirteen hundred years ago—has left traces which some Western savants have been able to follow. The presence of Mongolian blood in some tribes of North American Indians has also been recognised by various writers on ethnology. The Hungarians and Malays are both known to be offshoots of this race, ennobled in the one case, by a strain of Aryan blood, degraded in the other, by mixture with the effete Lemurians. But the interesting fact about the Mongolians is, that its last family-race is still in full force—it has not, in fact, reached its zenith, and the Japanese nation has still got history to give to the world."

With the advent of the Fifth root-race, however, we approach an age which is recognised, more or less, as historic. That portion of the Aryan race which overflowed into India in Sanskrit-speaking times, manifestly composed the first sub-race. Intermarrying, as they did,

with Dravidian people, their descendants, especially towards the south of the peninsula, are of very mixed blood, but many true Aryans are left even in the southern provinces.

The second sub-race, to which belonged the Chaldeans and Assyrians of ancient times, may to-day be considered as represented generally by the Arabs. There is so little difference of opinion about the peoples who compose the Iranian, the Celtic, and our own Teutonic sub-races, that they need not be dwelt upon.

But the question of paramount importance which still awaits a solution, and which must already have occurred to the reader's mind, is, what really constitutes the difference between one root-race and another? The gulf that lies between them, it is true, may not seem to be a great one in some individual cases; it nevertheless constitutes the difference between a higher and a lower type, for the one has a capacity for mental and moral development, which the other lacks. We have seen in the course of this investigation, that development of type is the rule, in every race, until its zenith is reached, but that degeneration then becomes the law for the latter part of its course, until final extinction ensues. Mankind would obviously be revolving in a "vicious circle" were

it not that a fresh impetus is periodically given, by the founding of an entirely new race, with added potentialities, and further capacities for development.

It is only by the intervention of an exalted Being belonging to the governing Hierarchy of the planet, that this great achievement can be accomplished. He is known by the name of the Root Manu of the race. The image or model of the race to be founded, having been conceived from the beginning, in the mind of our Logos, the exact copying of this pattern, and the reproduction of it in humanity, is the task undertaken by the Manu. But before He Himself incarnates, to give this new impulse to physical heredity, the chosen colony, among whom He has eventually to take birth, has to be carefully segregated, and guarded for generations. The individuals or families are naturally chosen from the best developed sub-race then existing on earth.

The development of physical brain-power and intellect, being, as we have seen, the special function of our Fifth root-race, it was naturally from the fifth or Semite sub-race (whose office in a lesser degree was that same development), that was chosen the nucleus destined to become the new root-race. The spot

selected for this segregation, was an oasis in the Arabian desert. Here the colony was watched with care, and guarded as far as was possible, from admixture with lower races. But this was not entirely avoided, for some of their number intermarried with a neighbouring Lemurian tribe, to the inevitable deterioration of the type. The Manu therefore effected a further segregation, from those still untouched by the infusion of the Third race blood, and caused them in turn to migrate to the shores of the Central Asian sea, which then occupied the site of the present Gobi desert. This time all went well, and in due course the Manu Himself, incarnated as leader and teacher of the growing community, transmitted to His heirs the "appropriate characteristics, the continuation of which, under the law of heredity, should constitute the beginning of the new race."

When its first sub-race was well established, a handful of its members were sent back to Arabia to Aryanise the descendants of the original segregation, who by that time had grown into a collection of large and powerful tribes. By slow degrees the new blood permeated the nomad clans, and thus it comes to pass that the later Semites, though retaining

much of their old physical type, are truly Aryan, and in fact formed the second Aryan sub-race.

A curiously perverted recollection, however, of the fact that their ancestors had been a "chosen people," led one small branchlet of the originally segregated Semites, to decline altogether the admixture of the newer and nobler blood, and to this day the Hebrews look back with pride to their far-off tradition of a chosen and peculiar people! Such is the history of the birth of the Jewish race, who thus constitute a sort of link between the Fourth and Fifth root-races. Descended from individuals who formed part of this original colony, they have, through persistent intermarriage, accentuated the keenness of intellect which formed their chief characteristic, at the time of the segregation, but they naturally want the qualities transmitted by the Manu, the qualities that give to our Aryan race its dominant and progressive character.

CHAPTER XI

IDEAS OF GOD

THE underlying unity of the world's religions has been traced through the various ceremonies, sacraments, and dogmas, but the object of this work would scarcely be accomplished, without also demonstrating the similarities in the moral teaching, which each religion in turn has inculcated.

In spite of the necessarily wide variation in the standard of ethics, in different lands, and at different stages of the world's progress, the marked resemblances of the religious teachings will supply still further evidence in detail, while the foregoing chapters have already indicated the general trend, for in every one of man's religions, may be apparent the consciousness of sin and evil, and the need of some higher and better life.

On approaching the subject of Ethics, we have unfortunately to face the fact that literary records of all the great religions are not

available, and in such cases the traditions handed down, or the description of the rites that were practised, form the only material from which inferences can be drawn as to the character of the teaching.

On some of the long-buried tablets of Nineveh and Babylon, there have, it is true, been found hymns to the gods, and texts dealing with cosmogony and magic, but those which have so far been deciphered, deal mainly with historical events, or with the minutiae of private life. Concerning the ethical ideas of Mexico and Peru, we are equally in the dark, while the sculptured records which alone remain in these countries, give no such hope of further light, as do the still undeciphered inscriptions of Babylon. So too with the Celtic and Scandinavian faiths: some few literary records of these may be found, but they are embodied in works written in Christian times, works therefore which probably reflect Christian ideas, and much scholarly labour will have to be expended on them, before we can be certain that the ideas of the ancient faith, have been disentangled from the new.

Of the other great religions, however—and they form the majority—the records are ample, and in some cases so voluminous, as to render

the search through the ancient scriptures no inconsiderable task.

The great subject of Ethics will naturally divide itself under two heads. The ideas which men in different ages, have held about deity, will first be dealt with, while the ethical teaching in its stricter sense, will be reserved for the following chapter.

That favourite theory of Anthropologists, the evolution of the idea of God from ghost or ancestor-worship, has received, let us hope, its death-blow, for Lang's last great work is a scholarly vindication of the innate idea of true religion and worship in the heart of man. "We meet," he writes, "among the most backward peoples known to us, among men just emerged from the palæolithic stage of culture, men who are involved in dread of ghosts, a religious Idea which certainly is not born of ghost-worship, for by these men, ancestral ghosts are not worshipped.

"In their hearts, on their lips, in their moral training we find, (however blended with barbarous absurdities, and obscured by rites of another origin,) the faith in a Being who created or constructed the world; who was from time beyond memory or conjecture; who is eternal, who makes for righteousness, and

who loves mankind. This Being has not the notes of degeneration; his home is 'among the stars,' not in a hill or in a house. To him no altar smokes, and for him no blood is shed."¹

Let us now trace the ideas of God through some of the scriptures of the great world-religions.

Over the thoughts and ideas of the men who composed our Aryan race, in its earliest days, there hangs the mist of ages. The hymns of the Rig Veda, it is true, give us the names of deities, but the hymns of the Rig Veda require an interpretation to which we have lost the key, and which even modern scholarship can not supply. Verbal criticism alone has place here, but it is not without its value. "In the hymns of the Rig Veda we can already distinguish a period during which Agni or Indra were not yet the principal, or representative deities, but when such gods as Dyū (nom. Dyaus), and Varuna occupied a far more important place. That this period was antecedent to the Agni or Indra period, we may, I think, conclude from the fact that the names of neither Agni or Indra, as gods, can be discovered in the mythology of other Aryan

¹ Lang's "The Making of Religion," p. 292.

nations, while Dyu has retained his place in Greek, Roman, and Teutonic mythology, and Varuna has left clear traces of himself in Persia and Greece.”¹

Here are the names of four gods, but as to their reputed attributes, or their relation to the great First Cause, we must be content to remain in partial ignorance, for the system of thought evolved by those far-off ancestors of ours—the worshippers of these gods—is not to be gauged by us, and modern speculations on the subject are worse than useless. One fundamental idea, however, may be ascribed to the thinkers of those far off days—one, too, that greatly illuminates the surrounding darkness—and that is the idea of an All-Father.

“Five thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier [there seems no doubt that it was very much earlier], the Aryans, speaking as yet neither Sanskrit, Greek, nor Latin, called him *Dyu patar*, Heaven-father.

“Four thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier, the Aryans who had travelled southward, to the rivers of the Penjâb, called him *Dyaush-pitâ*, Heaven-father.

“Three thousand years ago, or, it may be

¹ Max Müller's "Contributions to the Science of Mythology," vol. ii. p. 492.

earlier, the Aryans, on the shores of the Hellespont, called him *Ζεὺς πατήρ*, Heaven-father.

“Two thousand years ago the Aryans of Italy looked up to that bright heaven above, *hoc sublime candens*, and called it *Ju-piter*, Heaven-father.

“And a thousand years ago the same Heaven-father and All-father was invoked in the dark forests of Germany by our own peculiar ancestors, the Teutonic Aryans, and his old name of *Tiu* or *Zio* was then heard, perhaps, for the last time.”¹

When, however, we leave the Vedic age, and approach that of the Vedanta, firmer ground is reached, for the Upanishads with their allied literature, constitute a system of definite teaching. “The key-note of the old Upanishads is ‘Know thy Self,’ but with a much deeper meaning than that of the *Γνῶθι σεαυτόν* of the Delphic oracle. The ‘Know thy Self’ of the Upanishads means, know thy true Self, that which underlies thine Ego, and find it and know it in the highest, the eternal Self, the One without a Second, which underlies the whole world.”²

¹ Max Müller's “Origin and Growth of Religion,” pp. 216-17.

² *Ibid.*, Lecture VII., p. 317.

The Self which underlies the Ego is thus described in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: "He who dwells in the mind and within the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body the mind is, and who rules the mind within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal,"¹ while the following may be taken as applying equally to the Self which underlies the Ego, and to the Self which underlies the whole universe—the one, indeed, being but a ray of the other. "That Brahman . . . is unseen, but seeing; unheard, but hearing; unperceived, but perceiving; unknown, but knowing. There is nothing that sees but it, nothing that hears but it, nothing that perceives but it, nothing that knows but it."² "If a man clearly beholds this Self as God, and as the lord of all that is and will be, then he is no more afraid."³

The Khandogya Upanishad expresses the same idea in different words. "Now that light which shines above this heaven, higher than all, higher than everything, in the highest world, beyond which there are no other worlds, that is the same light which is within man."⁴ This is indeed the "Light which lighteth every

¹ B. U. Ad. iii., Br. 7. 20.

² Ibid., Ad. iii., Br. 8. 11.

³ Ibid., Ad. iv., Br. 4. 15.

⁴ Kh. U. Prapathaka iii., Kh. xiii. 7.

man that cometh into the world," as our own Scriptures put it.

Other names may be used in other Upanishads, but it is invariably God that is referred to. "The person (Purusha) . . . dwelling within, always dwelling in the heart of man, is perceived by the heart, the thought, the mind; they who know it become immortal. The person (Purusha) with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, having encompassed the earth on every side, extends beyond it by ten fingers' breadth. That person alone (Purusha) is all this what has been and what will be; he is also the lord of immortality. . . . Its hands and feet are everywhere, its eyes and head are everywhere, its ears are everywhere, it stands encompassing all in the world. Separate from all the senses, yet reflecting the qualities of all the senses, it is the lord and ruler of all, it is the great refuge of all. . . . Grasping without hands, hasting without feet, he sees without eyes, he hears without ears. He knows what can be known, but no one knows him; they call him the first, the great person (Purusha)." ¹

"That God the maker of all things, the great

¹ Svetesvatara Upanishad, Ad. iii. 13-19.

Self, always dwelling in the heart of man, is perceived by the heart, the soul, the mind; they who know it become immortal. . . . No one has grasped him above, or across, or in the middle. There is no image of him whose name is Great Glory. His form cannot be seen, no one perceives him with the eye. Those who through heart and mind know him thus abiding in the heart, become immortal.”¹

In the Bhagavad Gita, too, we find clearly expressed ideas as to the nature and attributes of God, although, as is stated in the following verses, real knowledge in those old days, as in our own, was naturally the possession only of such as “led the life.” “Among thousands of men scarce one striveth for perfection; of the successful strivers scarce one knoweth Me in essence. . . . I am the going forth of the whole universe, and likewise its dissolving. . . . Know Me, O Partha! as the eternal seed of all beings. . . . This deluded world knoweth Me not, the Unborn, the Imperishable. I know the things that are past, that are present, that are to come, O Arjuna, but not one knoweth Me.”²

“From the Unmanifested all the manifested stream forth at the coming of day; at the

¹ Sv. Up. Ad. iv. 17-20.

² B. Gita, chap. vii. 3, 6, 10, 25, 26.

coming of night they dissolve, even in That called the Unmanifested.”¹

“By Me all this world is spread out, the embodiment of the Unmanifested; all beings have root in Me, I am not established in them. . . . I, the oblation; I, the sacrifice; I, the ancestral offering; I, the fire-giving herb; the mantram I; I also, the butter; I, the fire; I, the burnt-offering; I, the Father of this universe, the Mother, the Supporter, the Grandsire.”²

“The multitude of the Gods, or the great Rishis, know not My forthcoming, for I am the beginning of all the Gods and the great Rishis. He who knoweth Me, unborn, beginningless, the great Lord of the world, he among mortals is without delusion, liberated from all sin. . . . I, O Gudâkesha, am the Self, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings. . . . And whatsoever the seed of all beings, that am I, O Arjuna! nor is there aught, moving, or unmoving, that may exist bereft of Me.”³

“That splendour issuing from the Sun that enlighteneth the whole world, that which is in the moon and in fire, that splendour know as from Me. . . . And I am seated in the hearts of

¹ B. Gita, chap. viii. 18.

² Ibid., chap. ix. 4, 16, 17.

³ Ibid., chap. x. 2, 3, 20, 39.

all, and from Me memory, wisdom, and faculty of reason.”¹

The great vision of Arjuna, is described in still more poetical language, and the following extract, like those which have preceded it, bears witness to what the mind of India thought on this subject thousands of years ago :—

“ Within thy form, O God, the Gods I see.

With mouths, eyes, arms, breasts, multitudinous,
I see Thee everywhere, unbounded Form.

Blazing as fire, as sun, dazzling the gaze
From all sides in the sky immeasurable.
Lofty beyond all thought, unperishing
Thou treasure-house supreme ; all-immanent
Eternal Dharma’s changeless Guardian, Thou ;
As immemorial Man I think of Thee.

I see Thy face, as sacrificial fire
Blazing, its splendour burneth up the worlds.
By Thee alone are filled the earth, the heavens,
And all the regions that are stretched between ;
The triple worlds sink down, O mighty One,
Before Thine awful manifested Form.”²

Of the three great religious systems of China — Tâoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism — Tâoism probably bears the most ancient date, though like Confucius, Lâo-tze also acknow-

¹ B. Gita, chap. xv. 12, 15.

² Ibid., chap. xi. 15-20.

ledged that he was "a transmitter and not a maker" of the doctrines of antiquity.

From the following quotations from Lâu-tze's *Tâu-Teh-King*, and from the writings of Kwang-tze or Chuang-Tzũ, the greatest of his followers, may be gathered the ideas about the Great First Cause, which prevailed in China long ages ago, while it may be noted how closely these archaic teachings, like those of the Hindus, approximate to the doctrines formulated in the subsequent Chapters of Interpretation.

"The Tâu produced One; One produced Two; Two produced All things. All things leave behind them the Obscurity (out of which they have come) and go forward to embrace the Brightness (into which they have emerged)."¹

The Tâu manifestly here means the Great First Cause; but it also apparently signified the path by which It might be reached. "The Tâu that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tâu. The name that can be named, is not the enduring and unchanging name. (Conceived of as) having no name, It is the Originator of heaven and earth (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things."²

¹ *Tâu-Teh-King*, Part II. chap. xlii. 42.

² *Ibid.*, Part I., chap. i. 1-2.

“What then is Tâo? There is the Tâo of God, and the Tâo of man. Inaction and compliance, make the Tâo of God: action and entanglement, the Tâo of man. The Tâo of God is fundamental: the Tâo of man is accidental. The distance which separates them is great.”¹

“There was something undefined and incomplete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere, and in no danger (of being exhausted)! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tâo (the Way or Course). Making an effort (further) to give it a name, I call it the Great.”²

“This is the Tâo—there is in It emotion and sincerity, but It does nothing, and has no bodily form. . . . It may be apprehended (by the mind), but It cannot be seen. It has Its root and ground (of existence) in Itself. Before there were heaven and earth, from of old, there It was securely existing. From It came the mysterious existences of spirits, from It the mysterious existence of God. It produced heaven. It produced earth. It was before the

¹ Giles' *Chuang-Tzŭ*, p. 134.

² *Tâo-Teh-King*, Part I., chap. xxv. 1-2.

Thâi-ki [the primal ether out of which all things were fashioned], and yet could not be considered high ; It was below all space, and yet could not be considered deep. It was produced before heaven and earth, and yet could not be considered to have existed long ; It was older than the highest antiquity, and yet could not be considered old.”¹ “It may be obtained but cannot be seen. Before heaven and earth were, Tâo was. It has existed without change from all time.”²

“That which was One was One, and that which was not One was likewise One. In that which was One, they were of God ; in that which was not One, they were of man. And so between the human and the divine no conflict ensued. This was to be a pure man.

“Life and death belong to Destiny. Their sequence, like day and night, is of God, beyond the interference of man, an inevitable law.

“A man looks upon God as upon his father, and loves him in like measure. Shall he not then love that which is greater than God? [The Tâo]. A man looks upon a ruler of men, as upon some one better than himself, for whom he would sacrifice his life. Shall he not then do so for the Supreme Ruler of creation?”³

¹ “Sacred Books of the East,” vol. xxxix.; *Kwang-tze*, Book VI., Part I., sect. vi. 7.

² Giles' *Chuang-Tzŭ*, p. 76.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4.

“In the Grand Beginning (of all things) there was nothing in all the vacancy of space; there was nothing that could be named. It was in this state that there arose the first existence; the first existence, but still without bodily shape. From this, things could then be produced (receiving) what we call their proper character [the qualities]. That which had no bodily shape was divided; and then without intermission, there was what we call the process of conferring. (The two processes) continuing in operation, things were produced. As things were completed, there were produced the distinguishing lines of each, which we call the bodily shape. That shape was the body, preserving in it the spirit, and each had its peculiar manifestation, which we call its Nature. When the Nature has been cultivated, it returns to its proper character; and when that has been fully reached, there is the same condition as at the Beginning.”¹

“Knowledge of the great One, of the great Negative, of the great Nomenclature, of the great Uniformity, of the great Space, of the great Truth, of the great Law—this is perfection. The great One is omnipresent. The great Negative is

¹ “Sacred Books of the East,” vol. xxxix.; *Kwang-tze*, Book XII. Part II., sect. v. 8.

omnipotent. The great Nomenclature is all-inclusive. The great Uniformity is all-assimilative. The great Space is all-receptive. The great Truth is all-exacting. The great Law is all-binding.

“The ultimate end is God. He is manifested in the laws of nature. He is the hidden spring. At the beginning he was. This, however, is inexplicable. It is unknowable. But from the unknowable we reach the known.”¹

In the above quotations the attempt is made to express in human words, ideas about the incomprehensible great First Cause. As another verse declares, “He who knows (the Tâo) does not (care to) speak (about it); he who is (ever ready to) speak about it, does not know it.” But the following apparently refers, not to the unthinkable Tâo, but to one of Its emanations, doubtless to our Solar Logos, the direct God and Father of every human spirit.

“To those who are good (to me) I am good, and to those who are not good (to me) I am also good; and thus (all) get to be good. To those who are sincere (with me) I am sincere, and to those who are not sincere (with me) I am also sincere; and thus (all) get to be sincere.”² This is manifestly paralleled in the

¹ Giles' *Chuang-Tzŭ* pp. 333-4.

² *Tâo-Teh-King*, Part II., chap. xlix. 2.

description of Him who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The following also expresses the same idea. "The Master I serve succours all things, and does not account it *duty*. He continues his blessings through countless generations, and does not account it *charity*."¹ And the following and concluding extracts may be said to constitute a philosophy of life. "[Your body] is the delegated image of God. . . . Your life is not your own. It is the delegated harmony of God. Your individuality is not your own. It is the delegated adaptability of God."²

"Birth is not a beginning; death is not an end. There is existence without limitation; there is continuity without a starting-point. Existence without limitation is *Space*. Continuity without a starting-point is *Time*. There is birth, there is death, there is issuing forth, there is entering in. That through which one passes in and out without seeing its form, that is the Portal of God. The Portal of God is Non-Existence. All things sprang from Non-Existence."³

¹ Giles' *Chuang-Tzū*, p. 88.

² *Ibid.*, p. 282.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

In spite of the multiplicity of gods developed in subsequent ages, the Unity of God would seem to be the chief characteristic of the religion of ancient Egypt. "God, One, Sole and Only; no others with him.—He is the Only Being—living in truth.—Thou art One, and millions of beings proceed from thee.—He has made everything, and he alone has not been made. . . . The second characteristic of the religion was a mystery which does honour to the theological intellect of the Egyptians. God is self-existent; he is the only being who has not been begotten; hence the idea of considering God under two aspects, the Father and the Son. In most of the hymns we come across this idea of the Double Being who engendereth himself—the Soul in two Twins—to signify two persons never to be separated. A hymn of the Leyden Museum . . . calls him 'the One of One.'

"Are these noble doctrines, then, the result of centuries? Certainly not; for they were in existence more than two thousand years before the Christian era. On the other hand, Polytheism . . . develops itself and progresses without interruption until the time of the Ptolemys. It is therefore more than five thousand years since, in the valley of the

Nile, the hymn began to the Unity of God and the immortality of the Soul, and we find Egypt in the last ages arrived at the most unbridled Polytheism. The belief in the Unity of the Supreme God and in his attributes as Creator and Law-giver of man, whom he has endowed with an immortal soul—these are the primitive notions, enchased, like indestructible diamonds, in the midst of the mythological superfetations accumulated in the centuries which have passed over that ancient civilisation.”¹

But while the Unity of God was the fundamental idea, the names by which he was known, appear to have been numerous. Upon the walls of the temple in the oasis of El-Khargeh is inscribed a hymn copied by Brugsch which records “the mysterious names of the God who is *immanent in all things*, the soul of Shu (breath) to all the gods. He is the body of the living man, the creator of the fruit-bearing tree, the author of the inundation; without him nothing liveth within the circuit of the earth, whether north or south, under his name of Osiris, the giver of light :

¹ M. Emmanuel de Rougé, *Conférence sur la religion des anciens Egyptiens, prononcée au Cercle Catholique, 14 avril 1869*, published in the *Annales de la Philosophie Chrétienne*, tome xx. p. 327 ; quoted in Renouf's “Hibbert Lectures, 1879,” pp. 89-91.

he is the Horus of the living souls, the living God of the generations yet to come. He is the creator of every animal under his names of Ram of the sheep, god of the goats, Bull of the cows . . . he is the god of those who rest in their graves. Amon is an image, Atmu is an image, Chepera is an image, Rā is an image; he alone maketh himself in millions of ways. He is a great architect who was from the beginning, who fashioned his body with his own hands, in all forms according to his will.”¹

But the image is sometimes endowed with the characteristics of the Supreme, and what was at first a local name comes to represent the totality of the Godhead. “The Osirian type, in its long evolution, ended in being the symbol of the whole deified universe—underworld, and world of earth, the waters above and the waters below. It is Osiris that floods Egypt in the Nile, and that clothes her with growing grain. His are the sacred eyes, the sun that is born daily and meets a daily death, the moon that every month is young and waxes old. Osiris is the soul that animates these, the soul that vivifies all things, and all things are but *his body*. He is, like

¹ Renouf's “Hibbert Lectures, 1879,” p. 233.

Rā of the royal tombs, the earth and the sun, the creator and the created.

“Such is the splendid sacred vestment which Egyptian theology wove for the mangled and massacred hero of the myth. All forces, all powers, were finally recognised in him; he was sun and moon, and the maker of all things; he was the truth and the life; in him all men were justified.”¹

In the prayer of Rameses II. the human touch of fatherhood is added to the sublimer attributes of the deity. “Who then art thou, O my father Amon? Doth a father forget his son? Surely a wretched lot awaiteth him who opposes thy will; but blessed is he who knoweth thee, for thy deeds proceed from a heart full of love. I call upon thee, O my father Amon!”² while the following prayer speaks for itself as to the loftiness of the aspirations that gave it utterance: “O my God and Lord, who hast made me and formed me, give me an eye to see, and an ear to hear thy glories.”³

“To the enlightened [even] in the later empire, God was self-proceeding, self-made, manifest in the deities that were members to-

¹ Lefébure's "Osiris," p. 248, quoted in Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. ii. p. 122.

² Renouf's "Hibbert Lectures, 1879," pp. 227-8.

³ Ibid., p. 216.

gether in him of Godhead." The perfections of Amon-Rā for example were thus hymned by the clergy of the twentieth dynasty: "So high that man may not attain unto him, dweller in the hidden place, him whose image no man has beheld."¹

In the Old Testament we have ample evidence of the ideas held about God by the Jewish people, and in this religion too we shall find him regarded as the Father of all. The following is taken from the speech of David, on the occasion of his abdication in favour of Solomon, the son who had to carry out the father's idea, and build the great temple.

"And David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all."²

¹ Lang's "Myth Ritual and Religion," vol. ii. p. 87.

² 1 Chron., chap. xxix. 10-12.

The prophet Isaiah, too, strikes the same keynote. "O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name, for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. . . . For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat."¹

"Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer, thy name is from everlasting."²

"Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go."³

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."⁴

"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer."⁵

"Touching the Almighty," writes Job, "we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power,

¹ Isa., chap. xxv. 1 and 4.

² Isa., chap. lxiii. 16.

³ Isa., chap. xlvi. 17.

⁴ Isa., chap. xlix. 15.

⁵ Isa., chap. liv. 8.

and in judgment and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.”¹

In addition to the attributes above expressed, the unity of God, and his all-pervading presence, are dwelt on, both in the Psalms and in the Prophets. “For thou art great and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.”²

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”³

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God and there is none else: I am God and there is none like me.”⁴

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made; thou art God from everlasting and world without end.”⁵

“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit; or whither shall I go from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me: and thy right hand shall hold me.”⁶

“Can any hide himself in secret places that

¹ Job, chap. xxxvii. 23.

³ Isa., chap. xlv. 22.

⁵ Ps. xc. 2.

² Ps. lxxxvi. 10.

⁴ Isa., chap. xlvi. 9.

⁶ Ps. cxxxix. 6-9.

I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.”¹

The qualities of righteousness and mercy are also dwelt on in the Psalms. “For thou art the God that hast no pleasure in wickedness: neither shall any evil dwell with thee.”²

“For he shall judge the world in righteousness: and minister true judgment unto the people.”³

“For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness: his countenance shall behold the thing that is just.”⁴

“Thy mercy, O Lord, reacheth unto the heavens, and thy faithfulness unto the clouds. Thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains; thy judgments are like the great deep. Thou Lord shalt save both man and beast; how excellent is thy mercy, O God: and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”⁵

“The Lord is loving unto every man: and his mercy is over all his works.”⁶

“For look how high the heaven is in comparison with the earth: so great is his mercy also toward them that fear him. Look how

¹ Jer., chap. xxiii. 24.

³ Ps. ix. 5.

⁵ Ps. xxxvi. 5-7.

² Ps. v. 4.

⁴ Ps. xi. 8.

⁶ Ps. cxlv. 9.

wide also the east is from the west: so far hath he set our sins from us. Yea, like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him.”¹

“When my father and mother forsake me: the Lord taketh me up.”²

The above quotations testify to the Jewish idea of a benignant and merciful God, who is also their Father in heaven, but the attitude of the Jews would not be adequately represented without some reference to the jealous and vindictive character ascribed to Jehovah. “Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”³ This aspect of Jehovah unfortunately runs no chance of being forgotten, for the Jewish Decalogue has been adopted in the Christian ritual, and the second commandment expresses the idea in unmistakable language, though the more tolerant attitude of thought to-day may find in the words a deep-seated reference to the law of heredity. “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.”⁴

¹ Ps. ciii. 11-13.

² Ps. xxvii. 12.

³ Exod., chap. xxxiv. 14.

⁴ Exod., chap. xx. 5.

The religions both of India and China were to so great an extent saturated with the secret teaching, that they will be found to correspond in many particulars with the doctrines set forth in the concluding chapters of Interpretation, which are, of course, exclusively based on the same secret teaching; but the esoteric tenets of Zoroaster and of Jesus—and indeed of most of the other great religious founders—have been almost entirely lost. On the other hand, the secret teaching of the Jews, while embodied in no part of their sacred scriptures, remains to the present day in the form of the traditionary Kabbala, and the following quotations will doubtless recall similar extracts from the sacred writings of India and China.

“The Ancient of the Ancients, the Unknown of the Unknown, has a form, yet also has not any form. It has a form through which the Universe is maintained, It also has not any form, as It cannot be comprehended. . . . It is the Ancient of the Ancients, the Mystery of the Mysteries, the Unknown of the Unknown. It has a form which appertains to It, since It appears (through it) to us, as the Ancient Man Above All, as the Ancient of the Ancients, and as that which there is the Most Unknown among the Unknown. But under that form

by which It makes Itself known, It however still remains the Unknown.”¹

“Come see! The mystery of the word. There are three degrees, and each exists by Itself, and yet all are One, and are knotted in One, nor are they separated one from another.”²

“Three come out from One, One exists in Three, it is the force between Two, Two nourish One, One nourishes many sides, thus All is One.”³

The conclusion reached here is identical with many of the texts of Tâoism, indicating the ultimate and all-enfolding Unity of the Godhead. But the duality is also dwelt on in the Kabbalistic writings. “The ineffable name—Jehovah—expresses a duality . . . a he and a she (Hû, that is *he*), and his Schechinah. ‘The divine husband and wife’ is mentioned in the Jewish liturgy for Pentecost, and also in the daily formula. ‘In the name of the union of the holy and blessed Hû and his Schechinah, the hidden and concealed Hû, blessed be Jehovah for ever.’ The name Hû, and the familiar name Yah, are of masculine and feminine gender respectively, and the union of the two, forms the

¹ Zohar (“Idrah Zootah,” iii. 288a.), quoted in Myer’s *Qabbalah*, pp. 274-5.

² Zohar, ii. fol. 161b, 162a, Amsterdam ed., quoted in Myer’s *Qabbalah*, p. 375.

³ Zohar, i. fol. 22b, col. 87, Cremona ed., quoted in Myer’s *Qabbalah*, pp. 375-6.

name of one Jehovah, one, but of a bi-sexual nature, according to the Kabbalists.”¹

The duality expressed in the name YHVH, or Jehovah, is doubtless to be traced to the underlying duality which a subsequent chapter will show to be characteristic of the Second Great Logos. For YHVH was a representation of the Deity in Time, “a symbol of the the Past, Present, and Future,” while Ain Soph was the name used to express the Great First Cause before the emanation of the Universe. Ain Soph, without end, is thus a parallel of the Tâo, “the Eternal, which is . . . above man’s comprehension, and to man’s thought is as the No-Thing.”²

“Whereas in India the fiends were daily driven further and further into the background . . . in Persia . . . the Evil became a power of itself, engaged in an open and never-ceasing warfare with the Good. The Good was centred in the Supreme God, in Ahura Mazda . . . the all-knowing Lord, the Maker. . . . In front of him, and opposed to him, slowly rose the Evil Spirit Angra Mainyu.”³

If, however, we regard this Spirit of Evil,

¹ “Rabbinical Comment on Genesis,” by P. J. Hershon (1885), pp. 138-302, quoted in O’Neill’s “Night of the Gods,” vol. i. p. 238.

² Myer’s *Qabbalah*, pp. 128, 378-9.

³ “Sacred Books of the East,” vol. iv., Introduction to *Zend Avesta*, Part I. p. lxii.

Angra Mainyu or Ahriman, as equivalent to the Devil of Christian theology, the Zoroastrian religion presents the appearance of an essentially monotheistic system. Mithra, it is true, also received wide-spread worship, but this can no more be taken as implying polytheism, than can the worship of Jesus in Christendom be so regarded. Mithra indeed, to a great extent, supplanted Ahura Mazda in popular reverence throughout the Persian Empire, about five hundred years before the Christian era.

The practical identity of Father and Son is a topic dealt with in the *Mihir Yasht*. Ahura Mazda is there represented as addressing Spitama Zarathushtra. "I created Mithra, who rules over large fields, to be of the same rank and dignity as I myself am. . . . Mithra, who always speaks the truth, has a thousand ears, ten thousand eyes, and is always watching, without falling asleep, over the welfare of the creation. He first, of the celestial spirits, crosses the mountain Haroberezaiti, on its eastern side, where the immortal sun with his swift horses is stationed; he first, covered with gold, reaches the summits of that mountain, and thence overlooks the whole of Iran."¹

The sacred Scriptures of Buddhism, so rich

¹ Hang's "Essays on the Parsis," pp. 202-3.

in moral teaching, stand nevertheless in an almost unique position, with regard to their scanty references as to the nature of God. The reason for this is not far to seek. While embodying many of the ancient Brahmin doctrines, the teachings of Buddha were mainly directed to the reform of abuses in the older faith. There was no need to dwell on ideas of God, when these ideas formed the very groundwork of the thoughts and aspirations of those he came to teach. References, however, of a deeply philosophical nature to the Great First Cause, may be found scattered throughout the Buddhist writings, the following example being taken from the Udanam: "There is, O Bhikshus, That which is unborn, which has not become, is uncreate, and unevolved. Unless, O Bhikshus, there were That which is unborn, which has not become, is uncreate, and unevolved, there could not exist here the manifestation of what is born, has become, is created and evolved. It is only because, O Bhikshus, there is That which is unborn, has not become, is uncreate and unevolved, that therefore the manifestation of what is born, has become, is created and evolved, does here exist." ¹

¹ Udanam, viii. 3, quoted by J. C. Chatterji in the Theosophical Review of May 1898, pp. 225-6.

Our knowledge concerning the doctrines of Pythagoras, is not directly derived from his original teaching, for all the works of that great Master have unfortunately been lost. But Plato's account of the teaching of Socrates and the works of other writers down to the time of Plutarch and Epictetus, supply satisfactory evidence of the loftier religious ideas of the Greeks and Romans.

The importance of holding correct ideas of God, as well as the far-reaching quality of divine justice, are dwelt on by Plato in his tenth book of *The Laws*, and recall some of the passages quoted above, from the scriptures of other nations. "To possess right conceptions respecting the Gods, though to you at present it appears to be a thing of no consequence, is of the greatest importance, as to living well or the contrary.

"This then, O boy and young man, who think that you are neglected by the Gods, is the judgement of the Olympian divinities: that he who is more depraved shall depart to more depraved souls, but he who is better to such as are better, both in life, and in *all deaths*, and that he shall both suffer and do such things as ought to be done, by similars to similars. But neither you nor any other should

pray that you may be exempt from this judgement of the Gods. For those who ordained this, established it more firmly than all judgements, and as that which ought to be venerated in every respect. Indeed you will never be neglected by this judgement; not though you were so small, that you could descend into the profundities of the earth, or so elevated, that you could fly into heaven. But you shall suffer from these Divinities the punishment which is your due, whether you abide here or depart to Hades.”

The conclusion of the long arguments detailed in this tenth book of *The Laws* is thus summarised: “that there are Gods; that they take care of all things; and that they are not in any respect to be moved by gifts, contrary to what is just.”¹

The following extracts dealing with the inscrutable nature of the Deity, and with the great work of creation, are taken from the *Timæus*: “To discover, therefore, the *artificer* and *father* of the universe is indeed difficult; and when found it is impossible to reveal him through the ministry of discourse to all men.”

“For as the Divinity was willing that all

¹ Works of Plato, trans. by T. Taylor, 1804 ed., vol. ii. pp. 297, 318-19, 321.

things should be good, and that as much as possible, nothing should be evil; hence, receiving everything visible, and which was not in a state of rest, but moving with confusion and disorder, he reduced it from this wild inordination into order."

But "it was impossible for intellect to accede to any being, without the intervention of soul. Hence, as the result of this reasoning, placing intellect in soul, and soul in body, he fabricated the universe; that thus it might be a work naturally the most beautiful and the best. In this manner therefore, according to an assimilative reason, it is necessary to call this world an animal [entity] endued with intellect, and generated through the providence of Divinity."

"With respect, however, to the most principal and excellent species of the soul, we should conceive as follows: that Divinity assigned this to each of us as a dæmon; and that it resides in the very summit of the body, elevating us from earth to an alliance with the heavens; as we are not terrestrial plants, but blossoms of heaven."¹

Plutarch dwells on the eternity and unity of God. "What then is that which really exists?

¹ Works of Plato, trans. by T. Taylor, 1804 ed., vol. ii. pp. 474, 477-79, 567.

It is the Eternal, the Uncreated, the Undying, to whom time brings no change. For time is always flowing and never stays: it is a vessel charged with birth and death: it has a before and after, a 'will be' and a 'has been': it belongs to the 'is not' rather than to the 'is.' But God is: and that not in time but in eternity, motionless, timeless, changeless eternity, that has no before or after: being One, he fills eternity with one Now, and so really 'is,' not 'has been,' or 'will be,' without beginning and without ceasing."¹

"There are not different gods among different peoples, nor foreign gods, and Greek gods, nor gods of the south and gods of the north; but just as sun, and moon, and sky, and earth, and sea are common to all mankind, but have different names among different races, so, though there be one Reason who orders these things, and one Providence who administers them . . . there are different honours and appellations among different races."²

In the writings of Epictetus, however, we probably reach the highest expressions of Greek

¹ Plutarch, *De Ei ap. Delph.*, 18, quoted in Hatch's "Hibbert Lectures, 1888"; "On the Influence of Greek Ideas upon the Christian Church," p. 242.

² Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, 67, p. 378, quoted in Hatch's "Hibbert Lectures, 1888"; "On the Influence of Greek Ideas upon the Christian Church," pp. 173-4.

or Roman thought, and what nobler appeal is to be found in the records of any faith, than that embodied in the following extracts ?

“ We also are His offspring. Every one of us may call himself a son of God. Just as our bodies are linked to the material universe, subject while we live to the same forces, resolved when we die into the same elements, so by virtue of reason our souls are linked and continuous with Him, being in reality parts and offshoots of Him. There is no movement of which He is not conscious, because we and He are part of one birth and growth ; to Him all hearts are open, all desires known ; as we walk or talk or eat, He Himself is within us, so that we are His shrines, living temples and incarnations of Him. By virtue of this communion with Him, we are in the first rank of created things : we and He together form the greatest and chiefest and most comprehensive of all organisations.

“ If we once realise this kinship, no mean or unworthy thought of ourselves can enter our souls. The sense of it forms a rule and standard for our lives. If God be faithful, we also must be faithful ; if God be beneficent, we also must be beneficent. If God be high-minded, we also must be high-minded, doing

and saying whatever we do and say in imitation of and union with Him. . . . What He says to each one of us, is, 'If thou wilt have any good, take it from within thyself.' To this end He has given us freedom of will; there is no power in heaven or earth that can bar our freedom. We cry out in our sorrow, 'O Lord God, grant that I may not feel sorrow,' and all the time He has given us the means of not feeling it. He has given us the power of bearing and turning to account whatever happens, the spirit of manliness and fortitude and high-mindedness, so that the greater the difficulty, the greater the opportunity of adorning our character by meeting it. . . . Life is in reality an Olympic festival: we are God's athletes, to whom He has given an opportunity of showing of what stuff we are made. . . . He has given to every one of us, a post to keep in the battle of life, and we must not leave it until He bids us. His bidding is indicated by circumstances. When He does not give us what our bodies need, when He sends us where life according to nature is impossible, He, the Supreme Captain, is sounding the bugle for retreat, He, the Master of the Great Household, is opening the door and saying to us, 'Come.' And when He does so, instead of bewailing your misfortunes,

obey and follow: come forth, not murmuring, but as God's servant, who has finished His work, conscious that He has no more present need of you.

"This, therefore, should take the place of every other pleasure, the consciousness of obeying God. Think what it is to be able to say, 'What others preach I am doing: their praise of virtue is a praise of me: God has sent me into the world to be His soldier and witness, to tell men that their sorrows and fears are vain, that to a good man no evil can happen whether he live or die. He sends me at one time here, at another time there: He disciplines me by poverty and by prison, that I may be the better witness to mankind. With such a ministry committed to me, can I any longer care in what place I am, or who my companions are, or what they say about me: nay, rather, does not my whole nature strain after God, His laws, and His commandments?'"¹

"The idea which the Aryans of India sought to express under the names of Brahman and Atman, the Aryans of Europe strove to signify by the name of Wuotan. That idea centred in the conception of Will as a power which

¹ Epictetus, quoted in Hatch's "Hibbert Lectures, 1888"; "On the influence of Greek Ideas upon the Christian Church," pp. 155-58.

brought all things into being, and preserves them in it; of a Will, which followed man wherever he could go, and from which there was no escape; which was present alike in the heavens above and in the depths beneath, an energy incessantly operating and making itself felt in the multiplication, as well as in the sustaining, of life. Obviously there is no one thing in the physical world which more vividly answered to such a conception, than the wind, as the breath of the great Ether, the moving power which purifies the air. Thus the Hindu 'Brahman' denoted originally the active and propulsive force in creation, and this conception was still more strictly set forth under the name Atman, the breath or spirit, which becomes the atmosphere of the Greeks, and the *athem* of the Germans. Atman is thus the breathing—in other words, the self-existent being—the actual self of the universe, and the meaning thus assigned to the word was so impressed upon the minds of the Aryans of India that no mythology ever grew up round it. . . . The conception of the Teutonic Wuotan was at first not less exalted. Like Brahman and Atman, it is the moving strength and power of creation.”¹

¹ Cox's "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," vol. i. pp. 373-4.

It is a remarkable fact that in the New Testament are found so few direct references to the nature of God. The teaching of Jesus being chiefly directed towards demonstrating the unity of God and man, under the symbol of his own divine Sonship, is doubtless the reason why so few statements are met with, dealing directly with the Deity, as apart from humanity.

The opening of St. John's Gospel is a most mystical utterance, referring as it manifestly does to the Great Logoi. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."¹ "God is a Spirit," writes the same Apostle, "and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."²

St. Paul's address to the Athenians contains a closer definition of the Christian idea. "The God that made the world and all things therein, he being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands as though he needed

¹ St. John, chap. i. 1-4.

² St. John, chap. iv. 24.

anything, seeing he himself giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one, every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live and move and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.'"¹

"We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no god but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there be gods many and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things."²

"And this," says St. John, "is the message which we have heard from him, and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."³ It is St. John too who gives voice to the great and crowning expression of the Christian faith, that "God is Love."

But nothing can surpass in sublimity of utterance, the Ode in which Kalidasa addresses the Supreme. Bearing witness, as it does, to

¹ Acts of the Apostles, chap. xvii. 24-28.

² I Corinthians, chap. viii. 4-6.

³ I Epistle of St. John, chap. i. 5.

the loftiest phase of the Brahman faith (though at a late period of its career),—that religion, first evolved by our Aryan race—it may equally express the worship rendered by Christianity, its latest outcome. Indeed the main doctrines which almost all the great religions have united in adopting, may be traced in the following translation of the original poem :—

“Glory to Thee ! before the world was made
 One single form thy Majesty displayed.
 Next thou, to body forth the mystic Three,
 Didst fill three Persons : Glory, Lord, to Thee !
 Unborn and unbegotten ! from thy hand
 The fruitful seed rained down ; at thy command
 From that small germ o’er quickening waters thrown
 All things that move not, all that move have grown.
 Before thy triple form in awe they bow :
 Maker, preserver, and destroyer Thou !
 Thou, when a longing urged Thee to create,
 Thy single form in twain didst separate.
 The Sire, the Mother, that made all things be
 By their first union, were but parts of Thee :
 From them the life that fills this earthly frame
 And fruitful Nature, self-renewing, came.
 Thou countest not thy time by mortals’ light ;
 With Thee there is but one vast day and night.
 When Brahmá slumbers, fainting Nature dies,
 When Brahmá wakens, all again arise.
 Creator of the world, and uncreate !
 Endless ! All things from Thee their end await.
 Before the world wast Thou ! each Lord shall fall
 Before Thee, mightiest, highest Lord of all.
 Thy self-taught soul thine own deep spirit knows ;

Made by thyself thy mighty form arose ;
Into the same, when all things have their end,
Shall thy great self, absorbed in Thee, descend.
Lord, who may hope thy essence to declare ?
Firm, yet as subtle as the yielding air :
Fixt, all-pervading, ponderous, yet light,
Patent to all, yet hidden from the sight.
Thine are the sacred hymns which mortals raise,
Commencing ever with the word of praise,
With three-toned chant the sacrifice to grace,
And win at last in heaven a blissful place.
They hail Thee Nature, labouring to free
The immortal soul from low humanity ;
Hail Thee the stranger Spirit, unimpressed,
Gazing on Nature from thy lofty rest.
Father of fathers, God of gods art Thou,
Creator, highest, hearer of the vow !
Thou art the sacrifice, and Thou the priest,
Thou, he that eateth ; Thou the holy feast.
Thou art the knowledge which by Thee is taught,
The mighty thinker, and the highest thought.”¹

¹ Kalidasa's "Birth of the War God," translated by Griffith.

CHAPTER XII

MORAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

THE ideas entertained by man about deity have been traced back to the earliest times of which we have historic records, and from first to last he is represented, not only as bowing in worship before a Being he cannot comprehend, but what is still more remarkable, as claiming sonship, and as addressing this unknown God, as his Father in Heaven.

The moral teachings by which man in all ages has attempted to regulate his conduct, will manifestly constitute an equally important and still more practical test of the underlying similarity of his thoughts and aspirations throughout the ages.

If the Vedic literature could not supply us with definite conceptions of deity, still less does it provide a detailed code of morality. In this respect, however, the Upanishads are voluminous, while in subsequent treatises the ideas there formulated are elaborated often at great length.

The Laws of Manu, in the form they have come down to us, bear on their face the signs of a decadent religion, ritualistic formulæ having to a great extent replaced the earlier and more spiritual teaching. But though the Laws of Manu in their present form, bear a much later date than the Upanishads, their origin undoubtedly goes back to Vedic days, and many texts remain as records of the earlier and purer faith.

“The Ten Commandments for the twice-born are : Contentment, patience, self-control, not to steal, purity, control of passions, devotion (or wisdom), knowledge, truthfulness, and freedom from anger. These are concisely summarised again in the following : Manu declared the condensed rule of duty for (all) the four castes to be : not to injure a living thing ; to speak the truth ; not to steal ; to be pure ; to control the passions ;” while the incentive of companionship in the life to come is dwelt on in the following precept : “Let him, without giving pain to any creature, slowly pile up virtue, as does an ant its house, that he may have a companion in the next world. For after death neither father, nor mother, nor son, nor wife, nor relations are his companions ; his virtue alone remains with him.”¹

¹ Hopkins' "Religions of India," pp. 268-9.

The paramount importance of the moral qualities, as compared with the mere observance of ritual, is also worthily emphasised in the Laws of Manu. "After all the forty sacraments have been recounted, there are given 'eight good qualities of the soul,' viz., mercy, forbearance, freedom from envy, purity, calmness, correct behaviour, freedom from greed and from covetousness. Then follows, 'He that has performed the forty sacraments, but has not the eight good qualities, enters not into union with Brahmā, nor into the heaven of Brahmā. But he that has performed only a part of the forty sacraments, and has the eight good qualities, enters into union with Brahmā, and into the heaven of Brahmā.'"¹

The inevitable results of conduct on the character, are repeatedly dwelt on in the Upanishads. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," is a well-known saying in our own religion, but ages before it was recorded, the subject was dealt with in a still more detailed manner. "Now, as a man is like this or like that, according as he acts, and according as he behaves, so will he be: a man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad. He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad

¹ Hopkins' "Religions of India," p. 255.

deeds. And here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap."

This tracing of the origin of act and conduct to the will, and ultimately to the desire, is a process which, apart from its moral aspect, represents a high standard of intellectual culture, and yet, it should be observed, these thoughts were recorded at a time in the world's history, synchronous with that which some writers on comparative mythology regard as the starting-point of primitive man!

The Upanishad continues: "To whatever object a man's own mind is attached, to that he goes strenuously, together with his deed; and having obtained the end (the last results) of whatever deed he does here on earth, he returns again from that world (which is the temporary reward of his deed) to this world of action. So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire, who, not desiring, freed from desires, is satisfied in his desires, or desires the Self only, his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere—being Brahman, he goes to Brahman. . . . When all desires which once entered his heart are undone, then does the

mortal become immortal, then he obtains Brahman.”¹

So deeply philosophical, and so imbued with the idea of the underlying divinity in man, was the religion of our early Aryan forefathers, that what must be recognised as its moral standards of conduct, are yet often incapable of being dissociated from its ideas of God. “The Self which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it ought to desire, and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine, that it is which we must search out, that it is which we must try to understand. He who has searched out that Self, and understands it, obtains all worlds and all desires.”²

“He therefore that knows it, after having become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient, and collected, sees self in Self, sees all as Self—evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil.”³

Nor could any religion express in greater detail, or with more reiteration, the idea that the love of God was the object and end of all human action, and all human thought. The reiteration tends to become monotonous, as in

¹ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, Ad. IV. Br. 4, 5-7.

² *Khandogya Upanishad*, Khanda VII.

³ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, Ad. IV. Br. 4, 23.

the dialogue between Yagnavalkya and Maitreyi in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. But the form in which the idea is expressed, will be made apparent by quoting a few of the verses.

“ Verily, a husband is not dear, that you may love the husband ; but that you may love the Self, therefore a husband is dear.

“ Verily, a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife ; but that you may love the Self, therefore a wife is dear. . . . Verily, the worlds are not dear, that you may love the worlds ; but that you may love the Self, therefore the worlds are dear. . . .

“ This which is nearer to us than anything, this Self, is dearer than a son, dearer than wealth, dearer than all else. . . . He who worships the Self alone as dear, the object of his love will never perish.”¹

“ The *Bhagavad Gita* is a scripture of Yoga : now Yoga is literally Union, and it means harmony with the Divine Law, the becoming one with the Divine Life, by the subdual of all outward-going energies. To reach this, balance must be gained, equilibrium, so that the self, joined to the Self, shall not be affected by plea-

¹ *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, Ad. II. Br. iv. 5, and Ad. i. Br. iv. 8.

sure or pain, desire or aversion, or any of the 'pairs of opposites' between which untrained selves swing backwards and forwards. Moderation is therefore the key of the Gita, and the harmonising of all the constituents of man, till they vibrate in perfect attunement with the One, the Supreme Self. This is the aim the disciple is to set before him. He must learn not to be attracted by the attractive, nor repelled by the repellent, but must see both as manifestations of the one Lord, so that they may be lessons for his guidance, not fetters for his bondage. In the midst of turmoil, he must rest in the Lord of Peace, discharging every duty in the fullest, not because he seeks the results of his actions, but because it is his duty to perform them. His heart is an altar, love to his Lord the flame burning upon it; all his acts, physical and mental, are sacrifices offered on the altar; and once offered, he has with them no further concern. . . . That the spiritual man need not be a recluse, that union with the Divine Life may be achieved and maintained in the midst of worldly affairs, that the obstacles to that union, lie not outside us but within us—such is the central lesson of the *Bhagavad Gita*.”¹

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, trans. by A. Besant. Preface pp. vi.-vii.

The following quotations will exemplify the above :—

“ If thou thinkest of it [life], as constantly being born, and constantly dying, even then, O mighty-armed, thou shouldst not grieve. For sure is the death of him that is born, and sure the birth of him that is dead; therefore over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve.”¹

“ When a man abandoneth, O Pârtha, all the desires of the heart, and is satisfied in the Self by the Self, then is he called stable in mind. He whose Manas [mind] is free from anxiety amid pains, indifferent amid pleasures, loosed from passion, fear, and anger, he is called a Muni of stable mind.”²

“ Freed from passion, fear, and anger, thinking on Me, taking refuge in Me, purified in the fire of wisdom, many have entered into My being.”³

“ As the burning fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so doth the fire of wisdom reduce all actions to ashes. Verily there is no purifier in this world, of the same worth as wisdom; he that is perfected in Yoga finds it in the Self with the efflux of time. The man who is full of faith, and who hath mastery over his senses,

¹ Chap. ii. 26-7.

² Chap. ii. 55-6.

³ Chap. iv. 10.

obtaineth wisdom, and having obtained wisdom he goeth swiftly to the supreme Peace.”¹

“One should neither rejoice in obtaining what is pleasant, nor sorrow in obtaining what is unpleasant; with Buddhi [soul] firm, unperplexed, the Brahman-knower is established in Brahman.

“He who is able to endure here on earth, ere he be liberated from the body, the impact produced by desire and passion, he is harmonised, he is a happy man. . . . Having known Me as the Lord of sacrifice and of austerity, the mighty Ruler of all the worlds, and the Lover of all beings, he goeth to Peace.”²

“He who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept from the purified self, offered as it is with devotion.

“Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou doest of austerity, O Kaunteya! do thou as an offering unto Me.

“Thus shalt thou be liberated from the bands of actions of good and evil fruits: thyself knit to the Yoga of renunciation, thou shalt come unto Me when set free.”³

¹ Chap. iv. 37-9.

² Chap. v. 20, 23, and 29.

³ Chap. ix. 26-8.

The verses just quoted will naturally remind the reader of many passages in our own Scriptures expressive of similar ideas. For example: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

The twelfth chapter offers an interesting example of the various stages of devotion, for the man is classified according to his idea of the God he worships. As it is very truly pointed out, the worship of the Unmanifested, and therefore the Unthinkable, is almost impossible for man while chained to the body.

"Yet if thou hast not strength firmly to place thy mind on Me, then by constant practice in Yoga seek to reach Me. . . . If also thou art not equal to constant practice, perform actions for My sake; performing actions with Me for object, thou shalt attain perfection. If to do this even thou hast not strength, take refuge in union with Me; thus renouncing all fruit of action, act thou with the self-controlled. Better indeed is wisdom than constant practice; than wisdom, meditation is better; than meditation, renunciation of the fruit of action; on renunciation close follows peace."¹

The sixteenth chapter opens with a list of virtues, the practice of which must manifestly

¹ Chap. xii. 9-11.

produce the perfect man, but the vast ages which have elapsed since they were recorded, bear silent witness to the slowness of man's moral progress, for aspiration towards this unattained ideal, is still our attitude to-day.

“Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in the Yoga of wisdom, almsgiving, self-restraint, and sacrifice, and study of the shastras, austerity, and straightforwardness, harmlessness, truth, absence of wrath, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of calumny, compassion to living beings, uncovetousness, mildness, modesty, absence of fickleness, boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, uprightness, amity, absence of pride.”¹

Similar lists of vices to be avoided, might be culled from this scripture of Yoga, but a single verse may summarise them. “Triple is the gate of Hell, destructive of the self—lust, wrath, and greed: therefore let man renounce these three.”²

“Renouncing all Dharmas, come unto Me alone for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins.”³ This recalls the parallel passage in our own Scriptures, “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

¹ Chap. xvi. 1-3.

² Chap. xvi. 23.

³ Chap. xviii. 66.

It was the custom, as is well known, in early Aryan days, to retire before the end of life into the forest, and to exchange the business of the market-place, for the meditation of the hermitage. "Though the circumstances of modern life do not allow us to retire into the forest when we are tired of this busy life, nay, though in our state of society it may sometimes be honourable to 'die in harness,' as it is called, we can yet learn a lesson even from the old dwellers in Indian forests; not the lesson of cold indifference, but the lesson of viewing objectively, within it, yet above it, the life which surrounds us in the market-place; the lesson of toleration, of human sympathy, of pity, as it was called in Sanskrit, of love, as we call it in English, though seldom conscious of the unfathomable depth of that sacred word. Though living in the *forum*, and not in the forest, we may yet learn to agree to differ with our neighbour, to love those who hate us on account of our religious convictions, or, at all events, unlearn to hate and persecute those whose own convictions, whose hopes and fears, nay, even whose moral principles differ from our own. That, too, is forest life, a life worthy of a true forest-sage, of a man who knows what man is, what life is, and who has learnt to keep

silence in the presence of the Eternal and the Infinite.”¹

Very similar to, indeed almost identical with the teachings just quoted, were the moral precepts of Tâoism. Like the *Bhagavad Gita* in India, the writings of Lao-tze and his pupils constituted for China a scripture of Yoga, the central idea of which is always self-control in all its many aspects—the attainment of that equanimity in which the lower self and its earthly desires shall gradually be extinguished, and which shall thus render possible that ultimate union of the real self with the Supreme.

“The sage is entirely restful, and so (his mind) is evenly balanced and at ease. . . . He does not indulge any anxious doubts; he does not lay plans beforehand. His light is without display; his good faith is without previous arrangement. . . . His spirit is guileless and pure; his soul is not subject to weariness. . . . But the human spirit goes forth in all directions, flowing on without limit, reaching to heaven above, and wreathing round the earth beneath. It transforms and nourishes all things, and cannot be represented by any form. Its name is ‘the Divinity (in man).’ It is only

¹ Max Müller’s “Origin and Growth of Religion,” Lecture VII. pp. 365-66.

the path of pure simplicity which guards and preserves the Spirit. When this path is preserved and not lost, it becomes one with the Spirit, and in this ethereal amalgamation, it acts in harmony with the orderly operation of Heaven.”

“There is the vulgar saying, ‘The multitude of men consider gain to be the most important thing; pure scholars, fame; those who are wise and able, value their ambition; the sage prizes essential purity.’ Therefore simplicity is the denomination of that in which there is no admixture; purity, of that in which the spirit is not impaired. It is he who can embody simplicity and purity, whom we call the True Man.”¹

“The stillness of the sages does not belong to them as a consequence of their skilful ability; all things are not able to disturb their minds:—it is on this account that they are still. When water is still, its clearness shows the beard and eyebrows (of him who looks into it). It is a perfect level, and the greatest artificer takes his rule from it. Such is the clearness of still water, and how much greater is that of the human spirit! The still mind of

¹ “Sacred Books of the East,” vol. xxxix.; *Kwang-tze*, Book XV. Part II. sect. viii. 2, 3.

the sage is the mirror of heaven and earth, the glass of all things." ¹

"If man could always be pure and still, heaven and earth would both revert (to non-existence). Now the spirit of man loves Purity, but his mind disturbs it. The mind of man loves stillness, but his desires draw it away. If he could always send his desires away, his mind would of itself become still. Let his mind be made clean, and his spirit will of itself become pure." ²

While the above quotations give an example of the general style of the teaching—the conquest of the lower self, and the stilling of desire, being in this, as in all Scriptures of Yoga, the dominant note—the following embody definite references to specified virtues.

"But I have three precious things which I prize and hold fast. The first is gentleness, the second is economy, and the third is shrinking from taking precedence of others. With that gentleness I can be bold; with that economy I can be liberal; shrinking from taking precedence of others, I can become a vessel of the highest honour." ³

¹ "Sacred Books of the East," vol. xxxix.; *Kwang-tze*, Book XIII. Part II. sect. vi. 1.

² "The Classic of Purity," chap. i. 2-3.

³ *Táo-Teh-King*, Part II. chap. lxvii. 2-3.

“Coarse, and yet necessary to be set forth—such are Laws. Remote, and yet necessary to have dwelling (in one’s self)—such is Righteousness. Near, and yet necessary to be widely extended—such is Benevolence. Restrictive, and yet necessary to be multiplied—such are Ceremonies. Lodged in the centre, and yet requiring to be exalted—such is Virtue. Always one, and yet requiring to be modified—such is the Tâo. Spirit-like, and yet requiring to be exercised—such is Heaven.”¹ These last aphorisms are understood to mean that even the sage who has attained the stillness, or, as we would prefer to term it, equanimity, has yet, while chained to the body, got necessary earthly duties to perform.

“Meddling with matters which do not matter to you, is prying.

“To push one’s way in, regardless of neglect, is to be forward.

“To adapt one’s thoughts and arrange one’s words, is sycophancy.

“To applaud a person right or wrong, is flattery.

“To love speaking evil of others, is slander.

¹ “Sacred Books of the East,” vol. xxxix. ; *Kwang-tse*, Book XI. Part II. sect. iv. 7.

“To sever friendships and break ties, is mischievousness.

“To praise people falsely with a view to injure them, is malice.

“To give ready assent with a view to worm out the wishes of others, good and bad alike, is to be a hypocrite.

“These eight blemishes cause a man to throw others into confusion, and bring injury upon himself. The superior man will not have him for a friend; the enlightened prince will not employ him as his minister.

“To love the conduct of great affairs, and to introduce change into established order, with a view to gain reputation—this is ambition.

“To strive to get all into one’s own hands, and to usurp what should be at the disposal of others—this is greed.

“To know one’s faults but not to correct them, to receive admonition but only to plunge deeper—this is obstinacy.

“To suffer those who are like oneself, but as for those unlike, not to credit them with the virtues they really possess—this is bigotry.”¹

The following extracts are taken from the

¹ Giles' *Chuang-Tzŭ*, pp. 416-17.

undoubtedly genuine sayings of Lâo-tze himself, scattered throughout early Chinese literature, and the parallels to many of them will be found, not only in the Brahmin, but in the Buddhist, and Christian Scriptures, extracts from which two last-named religions, will be placed side by side on a subsequent page.

“When merit has been achieved, do not take it to yourself. On the other hand, if you do not take it to yourself, it shall never be taken from you.

“Keep behind, and you shall be put in front. Keep out, and you shall be kept in.

“Good words will gain you honour in the market-place. Good deeds will gain you friends among men.

“Mighty is he who conquers himself.

“He who is content has enough.

“To the good I would be good. To the not good I would also be good, in order to make them good.

“Recompense injury with kindness.

“The wise man’s freedom from grievance is because he will not regard grievances as such.”¹

The following extracts from the writings of Chuang-Tzŭ, the worthy follower of a sublime

¹ Giles’ *Chuang-Tzŭ*, Introduction, pp. vii.-viii.

Master, will fitly close the record of the teachings which China was privileged to receive long ages ago.

“By nourishment of physical courage the sense of fear may be so eliminated that a man will, single-handed, brave a whole army. And if such a result can be achieved in search of fame, how much more by one who extends his sway over heaven and earth, and influences all things; and who, lodging within the confines of a body, with its channels of sight and sound, brings his knowledge to know that all things are One, and that his soul endures for ever!”¹

“Such a man will bury gold on the hillside, and cast pearls into the sea. He will not struggle for wealth, nor strive for fame. He will not rejoice at old age, nor grieve over early death. He will find no pleasure in success, no chagrin in failure. He will not account a throne as his own private gain, nor the empire of the world as glory personal to himself. His glory is to know that all things are One, and that life and death are but phases of the same existence.”²

“For the vast majority of Egyptians of all periods, conviction of a life beyond death, was

¹ Giles' *Chuang-Tzŭ*, p. 58.

² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

bound up with the worship of Osiris, and on this groundwork they pictured for themselves in detail, the fate of soul and body, and developed a doctrine of immortality, which in precision and extent surpasses almost any other that has been devised. The scientific importance of the Osirian doctrine arises first from its extreme antiquity — for even in Pyramid times, it was complete in all its essential parts — and also from its many points of affinity to Jewish and Christian dogma.”¹

The following are some of the specified words which the deceased was to speak in the judgment hall before Osiris.

“I have not committed fraud and evil against men.

“I have not diverted justice in the judgment hall.

“I have not (as overseer) caused a man to do more than his day’s work.

“I have not given way to anxious care.

“I have not caused a slave to be ill-treated by his overseer.

“I have not brought any to hunger.

“I have not caused any to weep.

“I have not committed murder.

¹ Wiedemann’s “Religion of the Ancient Egyptians,” p. 234.

“I have not wrought deceitfully against any man.

“I have not added to the weight of the balance.

“I have not taken milk from the mouths of children.

“I have not turned aside the water (from a neighbour's field) at the time of inundation.”¹

“The significance of this Negative Confession lies in the fact that it gives us the standard of Egyptian morality, showing the nature and multiplicity of the misdeeds to be avoided by him who would enter into the realm of Osiris. This testimony to the emphasis which the Egyptians laid on morality, is confirmed from the most various sources.” “We have several examples of papyri containing exhortations to good conduct, and strict injunctions as to the right course to pursue under varying circumstances. . . . In much of their matter, and sometimes even in verbal expression, these papyri recall the collection of proverbs in the Bible, the Wisdom of Solomon . . . and many of the other Biblical exhortations. For instance, in the Prisse Papyrus the Fourth Commandment [Fifth in the Protestant ritual] is

¹ “Book of the Dead,” chap. cxxv., quoted in Wiedemann's “Religion of the Ancient Egyptians,” pp. 250-251.

found in almost identical terms: 'The son who hearkens to the word of his father, he shall grow old thereby.' Other texts exhort to the study of wisdom, to regard and respect for parents and superiors, to mercifulness, generosity, discretion, integrity, sobriety, chastity, and the like. In the funerary inscriptions the dead often plead their good deeds. 'I did that which was right,' says one Egyptian; 'I hated evil; I gave bread to the hungry and water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, succour to him who was in need.' 'I harmed not a child, I injured not a widow; there was neither beggar nor needy in my time; none were anhungered, widows were cared for as though their husbands were still alive.' 'I did that which was pleasing to my parents; I was the joy of my brethren, the friend of my companions, honourably minded towards all my fellow-citizens. I gave bread to the hungry and shelter to the traveller; my door stood open to him who entered from without, and I refreshed him.'"¹

"We cannot resist the conviction," writes Renouf, "that the recognised Egyptian code of morality was a very noble and refined one. 'None of the Christian virtues,' M. Chabas

¹ Wiedemann's "Religion of the Ancient Egyptians," pp. 252-253.

says, 'is forgotten in it; piety, charity, gentleness, self-command in word and action, chastity, the protection of the weak, benevolence towards the humble, deference to superiors, respect for property in its minutest details . . . all is expressed there.'"¹ "Doing that which is Right, and hating that which is Wrong, I was bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, a refuge to him that was in want; that which I did to him, the great God hath done to me."²

While wanting, on the philosophical and mystical sides, as compared with the two great religions we have just been considering, and while dealing almost exclusively with character in its mere external aspect, many of the Egyptian aphorisms which have come down to us, recall similar texts in the scriptures of other nations.

"Guard thyself from sinning in words, that they may not wound; a thing to be condemned in the breast of man, is malicious gossip which is never still. Discard the man who errs (thus), and let him not be thy companion."

The value of self-control and strength of character, is also dealt with in a thoroughly

¹ Renouf's "Hibbert Lectures, 1879," p. 72.

² *Dümichen, Kalenderinschriften*, xlvi., quoted in Renouf's "Hibbert Lectures, 1879," p. 74.

practical way. "If thou art found good in the time of prosperity, when adversity comes thou wilt find thyself able to endure."¹

The following sums up the personal character which the Egyptians strove for, and even considered in many points to be essential for those who would enter into the kingdom of Osiris. "He should be strong, steadfast, and self-respecting; active and straightforward; quiet and discreet; and avoid covetousness and presumption. Yet with all this, while striving for the highest character, he was to keep the use of life before him, and to avoid miserliness or asceticism. . . . So far as the solely personal qualities go, this picture of the Egyptian mind is as fine a basis of the principles of character, as has been laid down by any people."²

The moral teaching among the Jews may be summed up by a reference to the Ten Commandments, which, however, it is needless to quote here.

Although mere rules and orders about ceremony and ritual, fill so large a portion of the Old Testament, yet definite moral precepts are to be found in it, and the following will indi-

¹ "Maxims of Any," quoted in Flinders Petrie's "Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt," pp. 113 and 117.

² Flinders Petrie's "Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt," pp. 121-2.

cate the attitude taken by the great teachers of the race, with regard to man's duty towards his brother man.

"If thine enemy be hungry," writes Solomon, "give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."¹

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart."²

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."³

Isaiah, like the great teachers in so many other lands, dwells on the valuelessness of mere outward observance, and the importance of moral action springing from the heart.

"Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord?"

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out,

¹ Prov. xxv. 21.

² Prov. iii. 3.

³ Prov. xvi. 32.

to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"¹

"And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus hath the Lord of Hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."²

The central ethical idea of the Zoroastrian religion—one which is repeated over and over again in the oldest Gathas, as in the latest Yasnas of the Zend-Avesta—is the necessity of truth and purity in thought, in word, and in deed. The practice of these virtues leads to the heaven of Ahuramazda, as their disregard conducts to the Hades of Ahriman. "The soul of the righteous attains to immortality, but that of the wicked man has everlasting punishment. Such is the rule of Ahuramazda."³ Nothing could be plainer or more explicit. The following quotation from the Vendidad deals with the fate of the soul after death in greater detail. "What events are met

¹ Isa. lviii. 5-7.

² Zech. vii. 8-10.

³ *Zend-Avesta Yas.*, xlv. 7; quoted in Hang's "Essays on the Parsis," p. 162.

with when a man shall give up his soul in this world of existence? Then said Ahuramazda, After a man is dead, after a man has departed . . . he reaches Mithra rising above the mountains resplendent with their own rightful lustre. . . . It [the soul] goes on the time-worn paths, which are for the wicked and which are for the righteous, to the Chinvad bridge, created by Mazda, and right, where they ask the consciousness and soul their conduct in the settlements (*i.e.*, the world). She [the maiden who is the personification of one's life] dismisses the sinful soul of the wicked into the glooms (hell). She meets the souls of the righteous when crossing the (celestial mountain) Harô-berezaiti, and guides them over the Chinvad bridge. Vohu-manô rises from a golden throne; Vohu-manô exclaims: How hast thou come hither to us, O righteous one! from the perishable life, to the imperishable life? The souls of the righteous proceed joyfully to Ahuramazda, to the Ameshaspentas, to the golden throne, to paradise."¹

The readiness with which, even in the old scriptures of this religion, those who disagree with its tenets are consigned to "eternal damnation," recalls the similar attitude of the Christian

¹ Hang's "Essays on the Parsis," pp. 254-5.

Churches. This likeness, however, does not here concern us, who are in search of ethical unity, not a unity of dogmatism and intolerance.

Leave may be taken of the Mazda worship, in words which again repeat its spiritual and its most dominant characteristics.

“La Religion de Zoroastre consistait dans ces trois articles capitaux—*dans la pureté de la Foi ; dans la sincérité et l'honêteté des paroles ; dans la justice et la sainteté des actions.* Elle ne reconnoissoit qu'un seul Dieu, et défendait l'adoration de tout autre que de lui.”¹

Neither the doctrine of Reincarnation nor the law of Karma, rendering to every man according to his deeds, were new ideas in the religion of Buddha. He discovered neither a new system of morality, nor a new system of religious life. His eight commandments, it will be seen, are very similar to the Hindu ten, already quoted. “‘Do not kill ; do not steal ; do not lie ; do not drink intoxicating drinks ; do not commit fornication or adultery ; do not eat unseasonable food at night ; do not wear garlands, or use perfumes ; sleep on a mat spread on the ground.’ The first five of these commands are given to every Buddhist, monk or layman ; the last three are binding only on the monk.”

¹ Beausobre's *Histoire de Manichée*, Liv. ii. chap. i. sect. iv.

But what was new in the religion of Buddha, and what materially helped its growth, was his doctrine of the religious equality of all men. “‘He that is pure in heart is the true priest, not he that knows the Veda. . . . The Vedas are nothing, the priests are of no account, save as they be morally of repute. Again, what use to mortify the flesh? Asceticism is of no value. Be pure : be good : this is the foundation of wisdom, to restrain desire, to be satisfied with little. He is a holy man who doeth this.’ And Buddha also added : ‘Go into all lands and preach this gospel ; tell them that the poor and lowly, the rich and high, are all one, and that all castes unite in this religion, as unite the rivers in the sea.’”¹

The following verses from the Vasalasutta, express similar ideas to those enunciated in our Ten Commandments :—

“The man who is angry and bears hatred, who is wicked and hypocritical, who has embraced wrong views, who is deceitful, let one know him as an outcast.

“Whosoever in this world harms living beings, whether once or twice-born, and in whom there is no compassion for living beings, let one know him as an outcast. . . . Be it in the village or in the wood, whosoever appro-

¹ Hopkins' "Religions of India," pp. 317-19.

priates by theft what is the property of others, and what has not been given, let one know him as an outcast.

“Whosoever having really contracted a debt, runs away when called upon (to pay), saying, ‘There is no debt (that I owe) thee’; let one know him as an outcast.

“Whosoever for love of a trifle, having killed a man going along the road, takes the trifle, let one know him as an outcast.

“The man who for his own sake, or for that of others, or for the sake of wealth, speaks falsely when asked as a witness, let one know him as an outcast.

“Whosoever is seen with the wives of relatives or of friends, either by force or with their consent, let one know him as an outcast.

“Whosoever being rich, does not support mother or father when old and past their youth, let one know him as an outcast.

“Whosoever strikes, or by words annoys mother or father, brother, sister, or mother-in-law, let one know him as an outcast. . . . Whosoever is a provoker, and is avaricious, has sinful desires, is envious, wicked, shameless, and fearless of sinning, let one know him as an outcast.”¹

¹ “Sacred Books of the East,” vol. x. Part II. *Vasalasutta of the Uragavaga.*

The idea expressed in the above second verse of the Vasalasutta is further amplified in the Mettasutta.

“As a mother, at the risk of her own life, watches over her own child, her only child, so let every one cultivate a boundless (friendly) mind towards all beings.

“And let him cultivate goodwill towards all the world, a boundless (friendly) mind, above and below and across, unobstructed, without hatred, without enmity. . . . He who, *not* having embraced (philosophical) views, is virtuous, endowed with (perfect) vision, after subduing greediness for sensual pleasures, will never again go to a mother’s womb.”

The exhortation given in the first two of the above verses, stands on a par with many Christian precepts. To love every being in the world as a mother loves her own child, is manifestly a counsel of perfection. The attainment of this state of mind, and the permanent establishment of it, is, nevertheless, said to be a requirement, preliminary to one of the last stages of initiation. From the concluding verse may be gathered the relative importance, which, not only Buddhism, but all great religions, rightly attach to a virtuous life, as compared with any mere cultivation of the intellect.

Like the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Táo-Teh-King*, the *Dhammapada* of the Buddhists is a scripture of Yoga, and as may be seen from the following extracts, in none is more vividly pictured, the contrast between the worldly life, with all its attractions and delights, and the life of the sage who has entered on the Path of liberation, which leads through the gateway of Initiations to the great goal—that goal which is one and identical, by whatever name it may be called. By the Buddhists, as is well known, it is called Nirvana.

“If a man is tossed about by doubts, full of strong passions, and yearning only for what is delightful, his thirst will grow more and more, and he will, indeed, make his fetters strong.”¹

“Those who are slaves to passions, run down the stream (of desires), as a spider runs down the web which he has made himself.”²

“There is no fire like passion, there is no shark like hatred, there is no snare like folly, there is no torrent like greed.”³

“Follow not after vanity, nor after the enjoyment of love and lust! He who is earnest and meditative, obtains ample joy.”⁴

“Let the wise man guard his thoughts, for

¹ “Sacred Books of the East,” vol. x., *The Dhammapada*. Ver. 349.

² Ver. 347.

³ Ver. 251.

⁴ Ver. 27.

they are difficult to perceive, very artful, and they rush wherever they list: thoughts well guarded bring happiness.”¹

“There is no satisfying lusts, even by a shower of gold pieces; he who knows that lusts have a short taste and cause pain, he is wise.”²

“The gods even envy him whose senses, like horses well broken in by the driver, have been subdued, who is free from pride, and free from appetites.”

“If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors.”⁴

“It advantages a Brâhmana not a little if he holds his mind back from the pleasures of life; when all wish to injure has vanished, pain will cease.”⁵

“Him I call, indeed, a Brâhmana, who is free from anger, dutiful, virtuous, without appetite, who is subdued, and has received his last body.”⁶

“Him I call, indeed, a Brâhmana, who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with fault-finders, and free from passion among the passionate.”⁷

“Him I call, indeed, a Brâhmana, from whom anger and hatred, pride and envy have dropt

¹ Ver. 36.

² Ver. 186.

³ Ver. 94.

⁴ Ver. 103.

⁵ Ver. 390.

⁶ Ver. 400.

⁷ Ver. 406.

like a mustard-seed from the point of a needle.”¹

“Him I call, indeed, a Brâhmana, who calls nothing his own, whether it be before, behind, or between, who is poor, and free from the love of the world.”²

What the *Dhammapada* is to the Southern Church, the *Udanavarga* is to the Northern. The one is the Pali, the other the Tibetan version of the Buddhist Canon. Similar ideas are expressed by both, as may be seen from the following quotations from the *Udanavarga*.

“He who is virtuous in body, speech, and mind, obtains increasing happiness here and in the other world.”³

“There exists no spot on the earth, or in the sky, or in the sea, neither is there any in the mountain-clefts, where an (evil) deed does not bring trouble (to the doer).”⁴

“An evil deed kills not instantly, as does a sword, but it follows the evil-doer (even) into the next world.”⁵

“The wise man in this world holds fast to faith and wisdom; these are his greatest treasures; he casts aside all other riches.”⁶

¹ Ver. 407.

² Ver. 421.

³ Trübner's "Oriental Series," Rockhill's *Udanavarga*. Chap. vii. 6.

⁴ Chap. ix. 5.

⁵ Chap. ix. 17.

⁶ Chap. x. 9.

“He who shows hatred to those who hate, will never be at peace; he who is patient with those who hate, will find peace; this is the spirit of religion.”¹

“He who bears ill-will to those who bear ill-will, can never become pure; but he who feels no ill-will, pacifies them who hate.”²

“He who delights not in life, finds no sorrow in death; he knows the reward of earnestness, and is without pain even in the midst of sorrow.”³

“He who, though he is lord over others, is patient with those who are weak, him I call the most patient of men, submitting always to the opinions of the weak.”⁴

“He who, having been chided, is patient though he is strong, him I call the most patient of men, submitting always to the opinions of the weak.”⁵

“He who, for a hundred years, makes a thousand sacrifices each month, is not worth the sixteenth part of him who is merciful to sentient creatures.”⁶

“Happy in this world is he who honours his father, so likewise he who honours his mother is happy.”⁷

¹ Chap. xiv. 11.

² Chap. xiv. 12.

³ Chap. xvi. 11.

⁴ Chap. xx. 8.

⁵ Chap. xx. 9.

⁶ Chap. xxiv. 29.

⁷ Chap. xxx. 23.

“In this world the holy man is neither elated or depressed by joy or sorrow; the steadfast are not made vain by the objects of desire.”¹

“He whose mind, like a rock, remains without being moved, who in the midst of passions is without passions, in the midst of anger is without anger, with such a mind as this it is not possible to experience suffering.”²

So many of the doctrines enforced in the Buddhist scriptures, were practically repeated with a mere change of the phraseology in our own, many centuries later, as they had been in India and in China many centuries earlier, that, in conclusion, a few of the parallel passages may with advantage be quoted side by side.

BUDDHIST.

“Not the perversities of others, not their sins of commission or omission, but his own misdeeds and negligences should a sage take notice of.”³

“If a man make himself as he teaches others to be, then, being himself well subdued, he may subdue (others): one’s own self is indeed difficult to subdue.”⁴

CHRISTIAN.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged, For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? or how wilt thou say to thy brother,

¹ Chap. xxx. 53.

³ *Dhammapada*, 50.

² Chap. xxxi. 53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 159.

BUDDHIST.

“The fault of others is easily perceived, but that of oneself is difficult to perceive; a man winnows his neighbour’s faults like chaff, but his own faults he hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the gambler.”¹

“A man does not become a Brâhmana by his platted hair, by his family, or by birth; in whom there is truth and righteousness, he is blessed, he is a Brâhmana.”²

“What is the use of platted hair, O fool! what of the raiment of goat skins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean.”³

“Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love, this is an old rule.”⁴

“Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us! among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred.”⁵

“Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil

CHRISTIAN.

Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”⁶

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness, even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”⁷

“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.”⁸

“If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire

¹ *Dhammapada*, 252.

² *Ibid.*, 393.

³ *Ibid.*, 394.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁶ *St. Matt.*, chap. vii. 1-5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. xxiii. 25, 27, 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. v. 43, 44.

BUDDHIST.

by good ; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth." ¹

"Him I call, indeed, a Brâhmana, who, though he has committed no offence, endures reproach, bonds, and stripes, who has endurance for his force, and strength for his army." ²

CHRISTIAN.

upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." ³

"For this is acceptable if for conscience towards God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye sin and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." ⁴

Plato's *Phædo*, in which are given the pathetic details of the death of Socrates, is one long dissertation on the immortality of the soul. It is impossible here to enter upon the many and lengthy arguments used, but the following extracts summarise the conclusions resulting from them, on the subject of the past and future of the human soul, as well as on the importance of leading a virtuous life.

"For if the soul had a prior subsistence, and it is necessary when it proceeds into the present life, and is generated man, that it should be generated from nothing else than death, and to be dead; how is it not

¹ *Dhammapada*, 223.

³ Romans, chap. xii. 20, 21.

² *Ibid.*, 399.

⁴ 1 Peter, chap. ii. 19, 20.

necessary that it should also subsist after death, since it is requisite that it should be generated again? Its existence, therefore, after death, is even now, as I said, demonstrated.

“That I shall go to gods who are perfectly good rulers, you may consider as an assertion, which, if anything of the kind is so, will be strenuously affirmed by me. So that on this account, I shall not be afflicted at dying, but shall entertain a good hope that something remains for the dead; and as it was formerly said, that it will be much better hereafter for the good than the evil.”

“While we live in the body, as it appears, we shall approach in the nearest manner possible to knowledge, if in the most eminent degree we have no association with the body, nor any communication with it (except what the greatest necessity requires), nor are filled with its nature, but purify ourselves from its defiling connection, till Divinity itself dissolves our bonds. And thus being pure and liberated from the madness of body, it is proper to believe that we shall then associate with others who are similarly pure, and shall through ourselves, know everything genuine and sincere: and this, perhaps, is the truth

itself; for it is by no means lawful that the pure should be touched by that which is impure.”¹

“So live among men,” writes Seneca, “as if the eye of God was upon you; and so address yourself to God, as if men heard your prayer.”²

“God is near thee; he is with thee. Yes, Lucilius, I say a holy spirit resides within us, the observer of good and evil, and our constant guardian. And as we treat him, he treats us. At least no good man is without a God. Could any one ever rise above the power of fortune without his assistance? It is he that inspires us with thoughts upright, just, and pure. We do not, indeed, pretend to say *what God*; but that a God dwells in the breast of every good man is certain. . . . And if you see a man unterrified with danger, untainted with lustful desires, happy in adversity, calm and composed amidst a storm, looking down as from an eminence upon man, and on a level with the gods; seems he not a subject of veneration? Will you not own that you observe something in him, too great and noble to bear any similitude to the little body of the man that it

¹ “Works of Plato,” trans. by T. Taylor, 1804 ed. vol. iv. pp. 288, 263, and 269-270.

² Seneca, “Ep. X.,” trans. by Thos. Morell.

inhabiteh? Yes; a divine power descendeth hither from above; a soul of such excellence and moderation, as to look down with a noble scorn on earthly things, and to laugh at those trifles we are apt to wish for or fear, cannot but be enkindled by the deity within; so great a quality cannot subsist but by the help of God: he is there in *part*, though still remaining above in the heavens. As the rays of the sun reach, and with their influence pierce the earth, and yet are still above in the body from whence they proceed; so a *mind*, great and holy, and thus humbled, to give us a more adequate knowledge of divine things, dwells indeed with us, but still adheres to its original; it depends upon that; thither tend all its views and pious endeavours, vastly superior to, however concerned in, human affairs.”¹

“When, then, you have shut the doors,” says Epictetus, “and made darkness within, remember never to say that you are alone, for you are not; but God is within, and your ‘Daimôn’ is within, and what need have they of light to see what you are doing? To this God you ought to swear an oath, just as the soldiers do to Cæsar. But they who are hired

¹ Seneca, “Ep. XLI.,” trans. by Thos. Morell.

for pay, swear to regard the safety of Cæsar before all things; and you who have received so many, and such great favours, will you not swear, or when you have sworn, will you not abide by your oath? And what shall you swear? Never to be disobedient, never to make charges, never to find fault with anything that He has given, and never unwillingly to do, or to suffer, anything that is necessary.”¹

In the following and concluding extract, Epictetus, it will be observed, strikes the key-note of the great doctrine of free-will. A man's *circumstances* during life may be considered as predestined, or moulded, by the actions of his previous life, but the region of his thoughts must be recognised as the arena of free-will, while the effort of controlling thought, will, in its turn, produce faculty.

“That which is best of all things and supreme, have the gods placed in our power—the faculty of rightly dealing with ideas: all other things are out of our power. Is it that they would not? I, for my part, think that if they had been able, they would have placed the other things also in our power; but they absolutely

¹ Epictetus' Disc. Book I. chap. xiv., trans. by George Long.

could not. . . . For what says Zeus? 'Epic-tetus, if it had been possible, I would have made thy body and thy possessions free and unhindered. But as it is, forget not that thy body is not thine, but only clay deftly kneaded. And since I could not do this, I gave thee a part of myself, the power of making, or not making, effort, the power of indulging, or not indulging, desire; in short, the power of dealing with all the ideas of thy mind.'"¹

To quote from the Scriptures of the New Testament, so familiar, and to many so sacred, through old association, must be considered a rash courting of criticism; but the task of comparing the ethical teachings of the great religions having been undertaken, must be carried to its close, though the author is sadly conscious of his inadequate power to choose the most appropriate and representative extracts from the records of this last great religion—or, indeed, of any of those which have preceded it.

The Sermon on the Mount, from which were chosen so many of the passages quoted above, as parallel to Buddhist scriptures, will also be

¹ Epictetus' Disc. Book I. chap. i. 10, quoted in Hatch's "Hibbert Lectures, 1888," p. 213.

found to supply evidence of the deeper and more spiritual interpretation with which Jesus illumined the Jewish Decalogue.

“Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment.

“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

“Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.

“Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute

you ; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.”¹

In a subsequent chapter of the same Gospel, the whole ten commandments are summarised in the well-known words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second, like unto it, is this : Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets.”²

According to St. Luke, the following also are words uttered by the great Master—words which raise the same thoughts as were suggested by the sixteenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the persistence, namely, throughout the ages, of an exalted standard of moral teaching, which, nevertheless, man is terribly slow in adapting to daily life.

“Love your enemies ; do good to them that hate you ; bless them that curse you ; pray for them that despitefully use you. To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other ; and from him that taketh away thy cloak, withhold not thy coat also. Give to every one that asketh thee ; and of him that

¹ St. Matt., chap. v. 21-45.

² Ibid., chap. xxii. 37-40.

taketh away thy goods, ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind towards the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”¹

The familiar words in which St. Paul compares the three virtues of faith, hope, and love, stand forth among the greatest utterances of religion.

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give

¹ St. Luke, chap. vi. 27-36.

my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now I see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”¹

The same subject is dealt with in the Epistles to the Colossians and Galatians. “Put on therefore, as God’s elect, holy, and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and

¹ 1 Cor., chap. xiii.

forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any: even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.”¹

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.”²

Nothing can surpass the divine simplicity of St. James’ most practical precept. “Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world”; while the following quotation from the writings of the “beloved disciple” may worthily bring this long series of extracts to a close, summing up as it does the great gospel of love as expressed in this last revelation of God to man.

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought

¹ Col., chap. iii. 12-15.

² Gal., chap. v. 22-29.

to love one another. No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: hereby know we that we abide in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”¹

¹ 1 John, chap. iv. 7-13.



BOOK III

THE INTERPRETATION



CHAPTER XIII

THE COSMIC ORIGIN OF SOLAR MYTHS

To those who have no more extended a view of the origin of things, or of the divine government of the world, than is afforded by any one of the various exoteric religions, the fact of ascribing to such a source as symbolism, so many of their cherished and time-honoured beliefs, must appear equivalent to explaining them away. And certainly symbolism, when interpreted without some knowledge of the facts that lie behind it, and on which it was based, does lie open to some such accusations.

But this is no mere destructive criticism, and to those who have read the previous pages with understanding, it will be apparent that the interpretation of symbolism now offered, may not only supply a proof of the fundamental unity of all the religions that have arisen in the world, but will also suggest the cosmic and planetary facts on which much of the symbolism was founded, and the deep spiritual significance underlying the metaphors.

Corresponding with the seven planes of being, through which courses the life impulse of our system of evolution, every symbol bears a seven-fold interpretation. These are not known to us in their completeness, but enough is known to supply illumination on this hitherto mysteriously shrouded realm.

In tracing the solar disks or circles back to their prime source, we find them representative of the loftiest conceptions with which religion can deal.

The simple disk or circle, as we have seen, symbolises the great First Cause—eternal as space—the attributeless Deity, in Whom all that exists in this boundless universe, lives, and moves, and has its being.

The circle with the point at its centre, may be taken as representing the first emanation from the absolute—the Unmanifested Logos—while the circle intersected by the horizontal straight line, is the symbol of the First Manifested Logos known in His dual aspect as spirit and matter—or Purusha and Prakriti, as the Hindus term it—the two aspects of the one universal Substance. The analogy of this first manifestation may be found throughout the whole scale of evolution, from the first divine outbreathing at the dawn of the building of a universe, down to the

fission of the minutest cell of protoplasm. From the union of spirit and matter proceeds the Third Logos—Mahat, the universal mind, from which, in turn, emanate the countless hosts of the solar Logoi—the creators and upholders of the starry multitude of the heavenly spaces. What their symbols are we know not. But the Logos who stands behind our solar system, and from whose outbreathed energy in the sun's rays we get our daily renewed life, has, as His emblem, the circle intersected by the perpendicular straight line. When analysed, this symbol resolves itself into the pillar and the circle—in other words, the number 10. This then is the monogram of our Logos — of our system of evolution when brought to perfection. Thus the number 10 is rightly called the perfect number, and the following considerations will show the appropriateness of the term.

While the number seven is the complete number, in all that concerns physical manifestation in our system, three spiritual states are required to supplement the evolution of our chain. This is so, as regards both time and space. As stated in the "Evolution of Humanity," three spiritual periods will succeed the seven Rounds of the seven Planets, each of these periods being equi-

valent in duration to one Round of the Planets, and the last of these three periods constituting what is called the "Crown."¹

As in time, so in space. Seven schemes of evolution, each having one or more physical globes, circle round our sun,² but there are three other schemes belonging to our solar system, into whose constitution nothing of the physical plane enters. It is these three super-physical schemes which make up the perfect number of 10.

The next symbol, in natural sequence, that we come to consider, is the cross within the circle. This is representative of our system of evolution on reaching the physical plane, with the male and female potencies combined, before the separation of the sexes. Not having yet reached the nadir of its downward arc, the physical is here still dominated by the spiritual—the cross being still within the circle. But the cross, when taken out of the circle, represents the descent into generation, accomplished by the separated sexes. This idea, in many countries, became degraded into what is sometimes spoken of as Phallic worship, but the ultimate origin of it all is the cross, which, as we may see, is thus the

¹ Transaction No. 17 of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

² Sinnett's "Growth of the Soul," p. 265.

emblem of life and of generation, as well as of re-generation.

The four points of the cross are spoken of as the cardinal points, losing themselves in infinite space, or as Birth, Life, Death, and Immortality, while the two cross-beams are sometimes taken as representing spirit and matter. Tertullian gives us to understand that those initiated into the mysteries by baptism, were marked with the sign of the cross on the forehead, as was then beginning to be the custom among his Christian countrymen in Africa.¹

It is interesting to note that the Swastica, or cross whose four arms are bent back at right angles, was originally intended to represent a cross whose four points had been set on fire, and which had then been set revolving. As such it was an emblem of the outgoing power and energy of the Logos, and of the whirling cycles of evolution caused thereby. The Maltese cross, which converges to a point in the centre, and whose arms widen towards their extremities, was also intended to symbolise the same idea.

Archaic astronomy, whose symbols are still used, though their meaning has been lost, here

¹ *De Præscript. Hæret.*

provides two very appropriate examples. The symbol of the planet on which we live, ♂, is recognised as the circle dominated by the cross, that is, with physical life in the ascendant, and this is natural, seeing that the life of the planet is but halfway through, being in its Fourth Round, and man has hardly passed the point where matter ceases to dominate spirit. The significance of the symbol for Venus ♀, viz., the cross dominated by the circle, becomes apparent, when we know that Venus is in her Seventh Round, and that spirit is therefore once more dominating matter.¹

Such were the original ideas taught under the form of symbols, by the old Atlantean Adepts. But "custom too often takes the symbolism out of the symbols, and the poetry out of the verse. Then the people begin to worship the symbols, and make a fetich of the words." "A pure and undefiled flame," writes Monseigneur Meurin,² "is certainly the most sublime natural representation of Him who is in Himself eternal Light," but it is not difficult to understand how the sun itself soon became the object of worship, instead of the presiding Deity who stands behind it, and thus

¹ Sinnett's "Growth of the Soul," p. 275.

² Formerly R.C. Bishop of Bombay.

arose the worship of the physical sun, imaged by the sun-disk, which to this day endures in various parts of the world.

A further degradation of the symbol, however, was immanent. It was a man, made in the same mould as themselves, that the people required to worship—a man with human attributes, but with superhuman powers ; and so, as we have seen, almost every nation created for itself its own sun-god. Naturally too the gods of each nation assumed the characteristics which the nation bore. Witness the amorous and pleasure-loving deities of the Greeks and Romans, the feasting and fighting gods of Scandinavia, the exacting and vindictive Jehovah of the Jews.

In the chapter on the "Birth of the Saviour," it has been shown that the birth festival has, as a rule, been celebrated at the winter solstice. Now, the day on which the sunlight first begins to lengthen, may rightly and naturally be called the birthday of the sun ; it is thus apparent how, amongst those nations whose saviours were identified with the sun-god, the date of the festival should have been so fixed. But it has also been shown that the attributes of the sun-god gradually clustered round the memory of the great historical founders of other religions,

to whom some date of birth had naturally to be ascribed. And thus it came to pass that the winter solstice became the recognised date for the birth festival.

The taking of a human form by the divine being who thus incarnates, is referred to in the various birth stories, but in our own sacred writings the fact is dwelt on with some insistence, illustrative of its need and object. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews,¹ writes: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." And again in his Epistle to the Philippians²: "But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Rarely is it the case that the facts underlying the great dogmas of the world's religions, are traceable only to a single source. The present is no exception to the rule. Symbolic of an eternal reality, symbolic also of an historical fact, the doctrine has a complex origin. In the case of those religions whose divine Saviours

¹ Chap. ii. 16-17.

² Chap. ii. 7.

were also their historical founders, there is of course a third additional source—the birth, namely, of the special Saviour whose commemoration ostensibly constituted the chief or sole object of the scriptural record. But putting this aside, the doctrine thus enshrined in *all* religions, whether founded by historical persons or not, may be traced to two distinct and separate sources. The eternal and cosmic reality is the emanation of the Manifested Logos from the Unmanifest. This subject will be dealt with later, in the chapter on the “Real Meaning of the Trinity.” But the primary source of the doctrine of a divine Saviour who incarnates among men, and takes their nature upon him, will be found in the events which happen at the founding of each new root-race.

The very abstruse subject of the impulse required in sowing the seed of a new race of men, has already been alluded to in the chapter on the Early Races of Man. Now, this achievement can only be accomplished by the direct intervention of an exalted Being, belonging to the governing hierarchy of the planet, and known in the language of occultism as the Root Manu of the race. The level of initiation which must have been reached by such a Being,

“is attainable by the Adepts of our own evolution, and the Root Manus of the races yet to be developed, will be advanced representatives of the humanity to which we actually belong; but when the time came for giving the impulse, which set the fifth, [and previous races], going, the humanity of the earth had not produced any Adept of a rank enabling him to undertake this function. The Being, therefore, who became the Root Manu of the fifth race, was one of those belonging to a more advanced scheme of evolution. . . . But it was necessary for the Manu to take our nature very fully upon him, in order that he might be able to perform his great task, and to this end he assumed human incarnations, for a considerable time in advance of the period at which it was appropriate for him to set the new race on foot.”¹

And so the idea of a divine Saviour descending to earth, and becoming man, is but a far-off echo, borne along through the centuries and the millenniums, of the work accomplished by those exalted Beings who left their home in distant realms, to take our nature upon them, in order that they might truly be “faithful high priests in things pertaining to God.”

¹ Transactions of the London Lodge of the T. S., No. 31, “The Beginnings of the Fifth Race.”

Among the facts relating to the birth of the divine Saviour, the most important as well as the most widely recognised, is the fact of his being born of a virgin. The solar symbolism here reasserts itself, for it is the adoption by each religion in turn of the ancient solar ideas, that has bestowed on its founder or Saviour the immaculate conception of the sun-god. The virgin, it will be remembered, is always found to be identified with the argha or ark, as well as with the crescent moon. The ark, in its first and most important aspect, was seen to be the symbol of the Divine Virgin of the spheres, and its door is referred to as the gate of re-birth, while the sun-gods are spoken of as Archagetos, or born from the argha. But, whether under the name of the virgin, the ark, or the moon, all three must be recognised as types of the female potency in nature, which in its ultimate aspect can only be spoken of as Prakriti—matter in its archetypal condition.

The lunar symbolism, however, does not end here. There is a further interpretation which is most significant. While the Logos whose life force is constantly streaming on us from the sun, is essentially the Father and Creator of our whole solar system, with its seven, or rather ten, schemes of manifestation, the moon is in a

very special manner the direct mother of our earth. It has been vividly described how, at the formation of our earth, the fiery nebula stretched out in all directions, including in its embrace, that planet (the moon) which in the Third Manwantara of our scheme, occupied the place corresponding to that which our earth now occupies. The temperature of this nebula appears to have been considerably higher than any temperature we are acquainted with, "and by this means the old planet was superficially heated afresh, in such a manner that all atmosphere, water, and volatilisable matter upon it, was brought into the gaseous condition, and so became amenable to the new centre of attraction, set up at the centre of the new nebula. In this way the air and seas of the old planet were drawn over into the constitution of the new one, and thus it is that the moon in its present state, is an arid, glaring mass, dry and cloudless, no longer habitable, and no longer required for the habitation of any physical beings."¹

But though the moon thus gave up what really constituted her life, at the birth of our planet, she is down to the present day recognised—and rightly so—not only as controlling

¹ Sinnett's "Growth of the Soul," p. 280.

the tides, but as measuring by her periods, and therefore presiding over, the process of generation. The occult reasons for this do not lie within our knowledge, but it is manifest that the influences streaming on this earth and its inhabitants, from the moon, are of a definite though very subtle nature.

We must now turn to the other solar symbols which have still to be dealt with. The interpretation of the Bull, the Lamb, and the Fish symbols is but a repetition of the meaning ascribed by many previous writers. We have seen that in very early times the bull and cow were held sacred in India and Egypt, while the veneration for the animal in India exists to the present day. In subsequent times the ram or lamb became the most sacred symbol—the lamb indeed continuing to be a significant emblem in the Christian Church up to the present time. Later on again—in the early Christian era—the fish was adopted as an emblem, “*Icthys*,” the fish, becoming a title of the Christ, while the early Christians often referred to themselves as “*Pisiculæ*” or little fishes.

Now, any one who has even a small acquaintance with astronomy, knows, that while the sun passes every twelve months through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, there is a

small yearly retardation, the result of which is the "Precession of the Equinoxes," so that the sign which the sun enters at the vernal equinox at one epoch, will in course of time be changed to the sign that lies behind it.

Writing on the great Babylonian work on astronomy compiled for the court of Sargon of Accad, Professor Sayce remarks that "this astronomical system is based upon the assumption, that the sun enters the first point of the constellation Aries, at the time of the vernal equinox. The system must, therefore, have come into existence, later than the twenty-sixth century before the Christian era, when Aries first became the starting-point of the Zodiacal signs. But the signs themselves were named, and the path of the sun through them was mapped out, when the vernal equinox still coincided with the sun's entrance, not into Aries, but into Taurus. The whole pre-Semitic nomenclature of the Zodiacal signs, and the months of the year that correspond to them, rests on the supposition that the Zodiacal bull ushers in the vernal year. Its Accadian name was "the directing Bull," the bull that directs the course of the year. . . . We can now understand why the sun-god Merodach, whom even the astronomers of the historical period con-

tinued to identify with the typical constellations of the twelve months of the year, should have been entitled "the Bull of Light," in the primitive astronomical records. He was, in fact, the celestial bull who ploughed the great furrow of the sky, and from whom the first sign of the Zodiac borrowed its name."¹

It was, indeed, about seven thousand years ago, while the civilisations of India and of Egypt were still in progress, that the sun entered Taurus at the vernal equinox. It is thus that the bull and cow came to be regarded as symbols, which the ignorant multitude naturally enough translated down into the worship of these animals.

Between two and three thousand years later, the sun entered Aries at the vernal equinox, which similarly accounts for the ram or lamb becoming the sacred emblem; while at a correspondingly later period of time—about the beginning of the Christian era—the sun entered Pisces at the vernal equinox, with a similar result in the transference of the stellar symbol.

A significant characteristic of the nations referred to, here presents itself. While the

¹ Sayce's "Hibbert Lectures of 1887," pp. 292-3.

sacred Apis in Egypt was housed and fed like royalty while alive, and embalmed and entombed like royalty when dead; while the cow or Brahmin bull in every Indian village, is, to the present day, treated with the utmost honour, the worshippers of Jehovah are represented to us, as having *slain* the lamb, or, as it is otherwise called, the Paschal victim. This word Paschal again brings us back to the origin of the symbol, for its root is *pesach* or *pasch*, which means "transit," *i.e.* the transit of the sun at the vernal equinox, into the sign the animal represents.

In attempting to explain the serpent symbol, we approach a subject not only complex in its nature, but one of whose aspects, in importance and suggestiveness, bears comparison with the disk or circle itself. Whether originally chosen as being the only animal which could place itself so as to form a complete circle, or whether the great age to which it was supposed to live, or its repeated renewals of life, by the casting of its skin, were further reasons for its adoption, there is no doubt that the serpent in the form of a circle, has, from the earliest ages, been recognised as the symbol of the great cycles—the Manwantaras and Mahamanwantaras—or,

in the crudity of unphilosophic language, the symbol of eternity.

But the serpent, when coiled round a tree or pole, represents a different form. It is then a simple spiral, while the more complicated spiral technically known as the lemniscate is identical with the figure represented by the interlaced serpents on the caduceus of Hermes. The meaning of this symbol is not so apparent, indeed it offers a characteristic example, in miniature, of the general evolution of mythology.

Students of chemistry are aware that one of the greatest of living chemists, Sir Wm. Crookes, has, in his "Genesis of the Elements," expressed the latest theory of physical science, with reference to the mode of motion of that ultimate atomic energy, present in every molecule and atom of this physical world. "We have," he writes, "adduced reasons for believing that primitive matter was formed by the act of a generative force, throwing off at intervals of time, atoms endowed with varying quantities of primitive forms of energy. If we may hazard any conjectures as to the source of energy embodied in a chemical atom, we may, I think, premise that the heat radiations propagated outwards through the ether, from the ponderable matter of the

universe, by some process of nature not yet known to us, are transformed at the confines of the universe, into the primary—the essential—motions of chemical atoms, which, the instant they are formed, gravitate inwards, and thus restore to the universe the energy which otherwise would be lost to it through radiant heat.”

This essential motion appears to be the result of “three very simple simultaneous motions. First, a simple oscillation backwards and forwards (suppose east and west); secondly, a simple oscillation at right angles to the former (suppose north and south), of half the periodic time—*i.e.* twice as fast; and, thirdly, a motion at right angles to these two (suppose downwards), which in its simplest form would be with unvarying velocity.”

The resultant figure of these three simultaneous motions, would then appear to us as the figure 8 (of course in space of three dimensions), or as it is technically called the “lemniscate,” and as the learned author remarks, “it fulfils every condition of the problem, inasmuch as the curve has to pass through a point neutral as to electricity and chemical energy twice in each cycle.”¹ An interesting occult investiga-

¹ Sir Wm. Crooke's Address to the Chemical Society on 28th March 1888.

tion recently took place, in which atoms of hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen were again and again disintegrated in clairvoyant vision, until from the gaseous condition, they were raised to the fourth (or ultimate) etheric sub-state. In all the three cases, the ultimate atom was found to be identical, and to be composed entirely of spirals of this lemniscate or figure 8 description, "the spiral in its turn being composed of spirillæ, and these again of minuter spirillæ."¹

Now, the figure of the entwined serpents on the caduceus of Hermes, presents itself to us in exactly the form which the lemniscate or figure 8 (in three-dimensional space) describes. It would thus appear that this symbol is but a reminiscence of the archaic knowledge, as to the mode of motion of the energy which created, and which upholds in manifestation, this physical universe.²

But while the above interpretation belongs to the region of physics, the metaphysical interpretation may also be stated, for both doubtless helped to give the symbol its persistent character. The metaphysical interpretation then,

¹ A. Besant's article on "Occult Chemistry" in *Lucifer* of November 1895.

² In the great work on Creation, viz., "The Book of Dzyan," it will be remembered that Fohat is described as "tracing spiral lines."

is that the interlaced serpents represent "the pairs of opposites," or, as they are sometimes called, the light and the dark sides of Nature. Duality, as we have seen above, is a fundamental characteristic of evolution. The First Manifested Logos is recognised in His dual aspect as Purusha and Prakriti—spirit and matter—while the two poles between which the universe is builded, may be stated as the positive and the negative, as male and female, or as life and death. Our very thought implies duality, for there must be both the thinker, and the thing thought of.

Whatever further deep-seated meanings may have led to the establishment of the serpent symbol, imagination need have no difficulty in picturing the process of its degradation, and in thus spanning the gulf that lies between the above subtle ideas, and the blood-stained practices of the nations who offered human victims on the altars of their serpent-gods.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SECOND BIRTH

THE "second birth" is a mystic term, but it must be recognised as a remarkably appropriate one. It has been used in the inner teaching of many religions with reference to rites of initiation. This was notably the case in the teachings of Jesus, though Christendom gradually lost or misunderstood the true meaning of the term.

Until quite recent times, very little has been known to the world at large, about initiations, except the vague tradition that such rites existed; but the fact that these initiations are a reality, has been once more brought to light.

Now the term second birth, has been, and may be, appropriately used for either the first or the last in this series; in fact, each and all of these ceremonies may be called a new birth, for each signalises the entrance to a new life. Just as the new-born infant is ushered into the world of physical life, where fresh experiences

await his untried powers, so is the initiate introduced into a new state of consciousness, where he has similarly to adapt himself to new conditions, and while he still retains hold of his previous heritage, and continues to function in the consciousness of the physical plane, each step gained is a new birth, which ushers him into an entirely new realm. However difficult it is for those who can only function on the physical plane of consciousness, to imagine what these other, and higher, realms of consciousness are like, it must nevertheless be apparent that man's mental and spiritual horizon must be enormously enlarged by their attainment, and that when the last great initiation has been taken, the man may perhaps be fitly described as something more than man. It is indeed a fact that each rite conducts to a higher level, until that stage is reached which is the goal of all humanity in the present Manwantara.

It must always be remembered that this progress is an advance towards *moral perfection*, and that moral perfection must be reached before the last great initiation can be taken; for each rite is merely the sign and seal of the moral and spiritual progress achieved by the individual's own effort and struggle.

At a very early stage, too, on the "Steps of the Path" (as the series of initiations are sometimes called), the aspirant is forced to realise, not only that the consciousness connected with the personality is nothing but an illusion, and must be got rid of, "but that even the individuality, which endures eternally, can never have any interests opposed to those of its brethren, and that it is most truly progressing when it most assists the progress of others." "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself." The initiate's motive for action, indeed, is bound gradually to become more and more, an all-absorbing love and sympathy for humanity, urging ever to help the laggards onwards towards that "far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

From the very first, he is taught to live and labour for others, whether by sowing the good seed in their minds, or by extending to them his love and sympathy in times of trial and of suffering. It is said that when a certain stage is reached, the sympathy becomes so intense and so extended, that he realises what it is to bear in his own body the sins and sorrows of the world. As the "Book of the Dead" expresses it, "His heart is in every wound."

Wider and wider fields of usefulness await his every effort, and as each step of the Path is taken, he becomes more and more powerful to help—powerful with an ever-increasing means of action, and to an extent we cannot dream of. Significant, too, of the wider realm into which he is being ushered, and the greater powers with which he is being endowed, are the words addressed each time to the candidate by the initiating Hierophant—words which may appropriately be conceived as echoing the familiar sentence, “Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

With each new birth there thus comes increased ability to help others on the same road that he has trodden, until, on taking the last great step, the power is gained to bestow the sign and seal of this “second birth,” and to open the gates of initiation to those who have won the right to the extended fields of consciousness, which each rite in turn signalises. With remarkable fitness, then, may such be described as—

“Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.”

It naturally follows that the ceremonies of initiation must vary very greatly in character, from that one at which the white-robed neophyte is privileged to enter the communion of saints, and to take his first step on the Path of difficulty and danger, to that other one at which—many lifetimes later—the Perfected Man records his final victory, while “all nature thrills with joyous awe” at the birth of a new “Master of Wisdom.”

Now each and all of these ceremonies have given rise to much of the symbolic teaching and practice which we have been considering, more especially in connection with the incidents commemorated at the vernal equinox, or, it may be more correct to say, that both the rights of initiation and the religious dogmas, are alike symbolic of realities lying behind them.

So far as can be gathered from the sources of information open to us, the whole series of rites has been subject to modification and alteration throughout the centuries; so much so, that the comparatively simple rites of to-day, are said to stand in marked contrast to the detailed and ornate ritual of Egypt. But the striking resemblances which will be elicited, between these ancient Egyptian rites, and the dogmas of the

more recent religions, especially of Christianity, indicate the probability of the former having been in some sort the origin of the latter, so far at least as regards the special form in which the dogmas have found expression.

With reference to the more ancient religions which antedated the period of Egyptian culture—such as the Indian—and to those which prevailed in countries separated by wide seas from Egypt—such as the Mexican and Peruvian—it must be apparent that the similarity of their dogmas has to be accounted for by tracing them all—and the rites of initiation as well—to some common root, of which both rites and dogmas were merely types.

The subject is rendered more complex by the threefold nature of this common root, for both rites and dogmas were originally intended to be types:—

- 1st. Of the growth of the soul of man.
- 2nd. Of the progress of humanity through this Manwantara.
- 3rd. Of eternal and cosmic verities.

The materialising tendency inherent in man at this middle point of the Manwantara, is found exhibited in all the religions with which we have been dealing, for instead of treating the symbolical teaching of the death, the burial, and

the resurrection, as typical of the soul's progress, each religion in turn has, as we have seen, formulated for itself (on the lines of the initiation rite) an historical narrative of a personal Saviour who dies, is buried, and rises again.

No such perversion of the real meaning could ever take place in the rites themselves, for all who were privileged to take part in such ceremonies were, of course, cognisant of the facts that lay behind. A description of one of these rites as practised in Egypt—a most important one, although occurring early in the series—gives a clue to the real meaning of the religious dogmas of the death, the burial, and the resurrection.

The aspirant for initiation, having undergone the trials and the sufferings necessary for purification, described in the Christian doctrine as the temptation, the passion, and the crucifixion, by which was meant, that he had successfully grappled with, and had slain, the desires of his own lower nature, was received at the appointed time and place, by the initiating Hierophant, amidst the assembled conclave of initiates. He was then thrown into a deep trance, and so passed into the astral world "Hades," there to wrestle with the last foe, "death," and with the

powers of darkness. In other words, he had to gain the necessary experience on this, to him, new plane of nature—the astral plane. He had to pass through what in the Egyptian rite were called the tests of earth, water, fire, and air; to learn that is, and to know by repeated experience, that when functioning on that plane in sleep, none of these things could possibly hurt him, as they can in the body, or be any obstacle in his way, as they are on the physical plane. He had also to learn to face with equanimity and courage, the awful sights and appearances on that plane, and similarly to realise that with a mind firm-set, he was the master of all such apparitions, and was therefore fit to undertake whatever work might be given him to do in this new field of labour. To “preach to the spirits in prison,” as St. Peter expresses it, is now, as it was then, a very important part of that work: to comfort and help those most in need of help and comfort, among the great host who have recently died, and who are held down on the astral plane by their unexhausted desires and their still clamorous passions: to impress upon their minds the true course of their evolution, and to stir within them the desire to help it on.

With these objects in view, then, the candidate in those early Egyptian days, had to spend the three days and the three nights away from his body, during which time he had to pass the above-named tests of earth, water, fire, and air, in order that he might become qualified to "preach to the spirits in prison," having learnt to guide and to comfort the living and the dead. His body, during this death-like trance, was actually laid in a coffin of hewn stone, while a cross was placed upon its breast, emblem of death as the gate of life. According to an ancient rubric of initiation, the body of the candidate must sometimes have been actually bound to a wooden cross, which in that case was hollowed out, so as to receive and support the human figure.

The hall of initiation being usually some secluded chamber in one of the pyramids, or in an underground temple, no sunlight could ever reach it, so on the morning of the fourth day, when the candidate was to be called back to physical life, his still inanimate body was carried to the entrance of the chamber, while the spices already prepared were lit as incense. Then, when the first rays of the rising sun (emblematic of the spiritual illumination of his soul) shone on his face, as he lay in the

entranced condition, he woke, and "rose from the dead," no longer a "natural man," but a "spiritual man," having overcome death and hell, "nailing them to his cross."

To this special rite may also be traced the fact of the almost universal celebration, *at the vernal equinox*, of the death and resurrection festival. Owing probably to causes connected with the increased vital energy imparted to the vegetable kingdom, indeed to all nature, by the sun's rays at this period of the year, and to their special potency when reflected from the moon, the first full moon after the vernal equinox¹ was of old chosen as the day on which the accepted candidate should be recalled to life, from the trance into which he had been thrown three days before—the trance which, as we have seen, typified his "death unto sin," while his revival on the morning of the fourth day, signalled his "re-birth unto righteousness."

It may parenthetically be noted here that while Jesus' own saying "the son of man shall remain three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," corresponds exactly with the custom at this initiation rite, the interval re-

¹ Easter, as is well known, is celebrated on the Sunday following the date of the next full moon after the vernal equinox.

ferred to in the Christian resurrection story does not so correspond, for the time between Friday evening and Sunday morning, can in no sense be regarded as three days and three nights.

As an exception to the rule, a departure from the usual order of dates, may be instanced in the death festival of the Celtic Bal-Samhein, which, it may be remembered, was held in the autumn. A reversion to the pure solar symbolism must also be recognised in the story of the death and resurrection of the Scandinavian Baldur; for while the period of three days between the death and rising again of most of the sun-gods, manifestly typified the three days' trance of the initiate at the ceremony of the vernal equinox, the interval of forty days, in the case of Baldur, is evidently due to the length of the dark winter in northern latitudes.

It may now be seen in what manner arose the whole story of the death, burial, and resurrection of a crucified Saviour. It is the story of the soul's progress, the story of its triumph over sin and death, repeated in every age of the world's history, and enacted to-day among ourselves. The details of the ceremony may have been altered, to correspond with the altered

characteristics of the race. The symbolism of the world's religions naturally represents the archaic custom followed in ancient times, traditional fragments of which have been handed down to us, even in exoteric literature, from India, from Egypt, and from Greece.

But though the growth of the soul of man stands first in importance, as the origin of the symbolism contained both in religious dogma, and in initiation rite, the common root, it must be remembered, was threefold.

The death, the burial, and the resurrection, will be found to convey ideas of still wider significance, when we come to consider the progress of humanity through this Manwantara. As students of occult teaching are aware, the cyclic process is destined to evolve from the undifferentiated monadic essence, outpoured from our Solar Logos at the beginning of our Maha-Manwantara, the individualised, perfected, and glorified humanity, which is to crown its close. Now, this cyclic process repeatedly runs through the whole gamut of existence; starting from the spiritual plane, descending through less or greater depths of materiality, and returning again by the upward arc to the plane from which it started. Whether, therefore, this cyclic process be

thought of as taking place in the single sweep of evolution round the seven planets, or in the still more stupendous scope of the whole Manwantaric cycle—the seven times repeated sweep of evolution through the chain of worlds—the death, the burial, and the resurrection must be recognised as facts, which are repeated at every stage of the cyclic process.

While the above may be taken as generally appropriate, the special significance attaching to the symbolism of the death, burial, and resurrection, is, that whereas the first few rounds of this Manwantara constituted for “that” which was destined to become humanity, a crucifixion and a burial; the turning point of the Manwantara was the resurrection morning, when the light from the Logos first shone on the heaven-born but earth-bound race; when the divine spark was given, which conferred immortality, and man was first privileged to assume his real title, and to enter upon his heritage.

If we may venture to refer to the still more exalted cosmic origin of the symbolism, it is to be found in the sacrificial act of our Logos, whose putting forth of Himself in the worlds which He called into existence, can only be called a crucifixion and a burial. But with

the quickening of the immortal principle in humanity (and a similar process must doubtless take place in the other schemes of evolution which combine to form our whole solar system), the resurrection of the Godhead must also be considered as accomplished.

But there are religious doctrines and ceremonies, other than those associated with the vernal equinox, which will also be found to be intimately connected with ceremonies of initiation. Such is the doctrine of the Ascension. As we have seen from the records of the old religions, the sun-god was generally said to have ascended into Heaven, and to be ruler of the life beyond the grave. Now, this is only another symbolic record of a further step taken by the initiate, in his progress to perfection. It was the last great ceremony of initiation above referred to (if, indeed, a still loftier one, which has not been mentioned, did not also lend some symbolical characteristics), from which the real meaning of the Ascension was derived. In exoteric Christianity, the lesson intended to be taught has been materialised into the bodily ascension of Christ into Heaven. But, when spiritual teaching is given in the Bible, the physical body is hardly ever referred to; what is meant by "body" and "flesh" being

almost invariably the personal man within—the man of desires. Now, when the lower nature has been entirely conquered, the purified personality, which has nothing belonging to lower levels to leave behind, is ready to become one with the divine individuality, and this drawing up of the personality into the individuality, is typified by the ascension into Heaven of the now perfected Christ.

The origin of the sacrament of baptism is also to be traced to an early rite of initiation—that one, indeed, at which the neophyte first presented himself. This rite was intended to be illustrative of the purification of character, which the disciple had already achieved. The old worldly life having been cast aside, and the occult path entered upon, the candidate for still higher spiritual development, was, in this ceremony, sprinkled with holy water, clad in a white robe, and signed with a cross. The office of god-parents, too, was not wanting, for it was necessary that two or more persons should present the candidate to the initiating Hierophant. We have already seen how closely the great religions of the world have followed the ancient ritual, while to a great extent mistaking its meaning.

The Eucharistic ritual also took its rise from

one of the observances at initiations. At many of these ceremonies it used to be the custom for those present to partake of bread and wine. This was in recognition of the fact, that all men are formed of one substance, and informed by one spirit. In very early days, however, it became degraded into a means of producing abnormal conditions. Whether under the name of soma or homa-juice, the drinks used on these occasions were liable to induce a sort of frenzy, which the people came to regard as a state of inspiration, believing that the deity actually descended on such as tasted the sacred liquid and produced the ecstasy. Sometimes, indeed, the drink used was so potent as to throw the body into a state of trance, thus releasing the astral vehicle.

In later days, again, the idea became still more perverted and materialised. Instead of believing that the *Spirit* of the God descended on the communicant, they came to believe that the bread and wine were actually transmuted into the flesh and blood of the Deity, and this strangely misguided fancy may be found existing among us at the present day!

The doctrine of the Real Presence may indeed with truth be affirmed, though in a sense very different from that imagined by believers in the

dogma of Transubstantiation. As it is written, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." If, then, a mere assembly, with the common object of prayer and worship, can call down the Divine Presence, how much more will that Presence be invoked, by the exalted feelings of communicants, whose minds are attuned to the still more sacred character of the Eucharistic rite? Though not in the bread, or in the wine, the Real Presence *is there*, and that in exact proportion to the intensity of the aspiration that invoked It.

All through the ages, too, the words used in the rite of the Christian Eucharist have been more or less significant of the original meaning—the fact that is of the underlying unity in this complex and multiform creation, while the sacrificial character of the ceremony hints vaguely at that mysterious sacrifice, which will be dwelt on in the concluding chapters—the mystery of the body and the blood—the body of our Logos self-crucified in space—the blood of the Lamb slain "from the foundation of the world." "The body of our Lord, which was given for thee—the blood of our Lord, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life," are the words of our modern ritual,

expressive of the hope of that ultimate union, which, as we have seen, is also symbolised by the "Ascension"—the preservation of the "body," that is, of the personality which our real Self projects into physical form, at each successive birth, and of their ultimate union with the "soul"—our true Self, or individuality—in other words, a unity attained "by taking of the manhood into God."

To sum up the foregoing, we find that the rite of baptism practised by all nations, is to be traced to the baptismal ceremony, which used to be performed at one of the early rites of initiation, while the sacrament of the Eucharist was similarly derived from the custom, on those occasions, of partaking of bread and wine.

We also find that the ideas, which in each and every religion have become crystallised into dogmas concerning the death—often by crucifixion—the burial, and the resurrection on the third day, of a divine Saviour, while symbolising cyclic and cosmic realities as well, received their chief vitality and sanction, from the death unto sin and the new birth unto righteousness, which the rites at one of the great initiations were also meant to typify; and finally that that dogma known in some religions as the "ascension into heaven" is similarly to be traced to

that union of the personality with the divine individuality, which is symbolised in the still loftier ceremony, when, the "ten fetters" binding to earthly life having been cast off, the Master of Wisdom attains practical omniscience as regards our planetary chain, standing, as he then does, on the heights of moral perfection.

That this investigation into the origin of religions is, as above said, no mere process of destructive criticism, should now be apparent, for the facts underlying the world-wide myth of the death, burial, and resurrection of a crucified Saviour, are surely of infinitely more value and life-giving power than the symbolic myth itself in which they were enshrined. When the kernel is reached, the husk may be thrown away. Freed from the dead letter interpretation, the notable words of the initiate St. Paul in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians (in spite of the distortion and interpolation to which it has been subjected), stand out with a deeper and more spiritual meaning. It was no resurrection of the mere physical body to which he alluded, but the "taking of the manhood into God"—the attainment of the stage of initiation last referred to.

Through the eyes of the world's religions men saw darkly, but now they may see with

clearer vision. For long centuries, the cloud of ignorance and materialism has hung like a pall over our western world, but there are signs of the clouds breaking, and the sunshine of a brighter day will show this Path of spiritual advancement, though steep and difficult, to be the only path worth treading.

With equal truth may it be described as a battle—the battle that is ever being waged. But the guardians of man's welfare, the fighters for his liberation, are all too few in number. Nothing but welcome, then, can be extended to any who are ready and willing to join their ranks. It is indeed written that "no warrior volunteering fight in the fierce strife between the living and the dead—not one recruit can ever be refused the right to enter on the path that leads towards the field of battle."

The noblest hope that can inspire the heart of man is thus the heritage of the human race, and each one of us may to-day embark on the conquest of that wider empire of Love, Wisdom, and Power, whose gateway is the "Second Birth."

CHAPTER XV

THE REAL MEANING OF THE TRINITY

IT will have been already realised that the doctrine of a trinity, which every religion has enshrined, is not traceable to any system of symbolism (save in so far as all human words are symbolic of realities), but takes its rise in the Ultimate Reality Itself. Deeply mystical as all reference to such a subject is bound to be, the mind of man must still in some way be capable of grasping the idea, for it must be remembered that essentially he is one with that Infinite Reality Itself.

The first Trinity that can be conceived of, will find its best expression in the form of a triangle whose apex is lost in the Inconceivable Unmanifested Godhead, and whose lower angles represent Its first manifestation of spirit and matter.

The triangle, with its apex pointing downwards, may also be regarded as symbolising a trinity. Spirit and matter are in this case represented by the two upper angles, while the

single angle pointing downwards may be called the offspring of these two, viz., the manifested Universe—the Architypal Man.

These two triangles are complementary of each other. In combination they are figured as interlaced, and the idea they thus represent is one of deep significance. Co-eternal and of the same substance, but differing in manifestation, are the three aspects of all true trinities. The manifested Cosmos—the Architypal Man—represented by the downward pointing angle of the last-named triangle, is therefore co-eternal with, and of the same substance as, That which is represented by the upward pointing angle of the first triangle, viz., the infinite, inconceivable, unmanifested Godhead. In other words—man, a ray from the Logos, has within him the potentiality of the ultimate and absolute Deity. And so the beginning and the end of all knowledge, may be summed up in the old Sanskrit formula, “Tat tuam asi—thou art that.”

The lesson, therefore, to be learned from the symbol of the interlaced triangles, is the lesson which all evolution teaches. When the long journey through the desert of matter and of illusion has been accomplished, the angle which pointed downwards will again point upwards—

difference will exist no longer—faith will be lost in knowledge—manhood will be merged in Godhead.

But no symbol can be explained in a single interpretation—all interpretations being but means to bring eternal verities home to the mind of man. The following explanation of the interlaced triangles represents a different aspect, but is equally true. Leaving out of account the unutterable and unmanifested Cause of all things, whose only appropriate emblem is the illimitable circle, the upper triangle must now be thought of as representing the Three Great Logoi. At its apex stands the first emanation from the Absolute—the First Logos—which we must regard as still abiding in the realm of the Unmanifest. Then the Second Logos, in whom duality first finds expression—the duality of spirit and matter—Purusha and Prakriti. From this Being, in turn, emanates the Third Great Logos—Mahat, the Universal Mind—the Creator of the manifested Universe.

Corresponding with this upper triad, and at the angles of the inverted lower triangle, stand the three great cosmic forces wielded by the Logoi. First, “Fohat,” the creative energy, or rather the power which, when wielded by the creators, produces the manifested Universe—the

power, too, which in their hands disintegrates the same. It is the first manifestation of Jivic energy, and may thus be called the *noumenon* of life. Second, "Akasha," which is similarly the first manifestation of the universal substance, bearing on its broad bosom the records of all thoughts and deeds, and out of which was moulded every form. Akasha may be called the "Great Waters," on which, at the beginning, Fohat—the breath of God—brooded. The third is the spirit of Love, which may be regarded as akin to the most primeval force of all, for this it was which first impelled the very beginnings of manifestation. Standing at the inverted angle of the second triangle, it is nevertheless identical with the First Logos at the apex of the first triangle, for as it is written, "God is Love."

And so is completed the Trinity of Power, Wisdom, and Love, with its corresponding Triad of the Three Great Logoi.

The above, it is true, may appear to be but abstract propositions; and while it must be recognised that our thought on this most exalted of all subjects must necessarily be imperfect, and therefore inaccurate, indications may yet be given, which may in some ways render the subject more comprehensible. The

consideration of the respective functions of the Three Great Logoi in regard to evolution would seem to be such a process.

At the beginning of a solar system, and during its evolution, there take place what are known as the "three great outpourings." Now, the functions of the Three Great Logoi pertain to *cosmic* evolution only. It is from the Logos of the solar system that those streams of energy really proceed; but there still is complete correspondence, for the three highest principles of the Solar Logos may be regarded as identical with the Three Great Logoi.

The first great outpouring may be said to have for its object the vitalising of primordial Substance, and so bringing into existence the planes and sub-planes of the solar systems, and the atoms and molecules of matter destined to form their chains of worlds.

The second outpouring consists of what is sometimes called the "monadic essence," the ensouling principle, which, sweeping through the seven kingdoms of nature, develops the consciousness of each in turn, the elemental, the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal, until it culminates in the self-consciousness of man.

When the most advanced entities have

reached the consciousness of the "I," in other words, have developed the beginnings of mind, that which has hitherto been the ensouling principle, is in its turn ready to act as the vehicle for a still higher expression of the Divine Thought—ready, in fact, to be in its turn ensouled. Then takes place the third great outpouring of the divine spark, which endows man with an individual soul, and assures to him his immortality.

Now, it is from the *third* principle of the Solar Logos, which, as we have seen, is equivalent to the Third Great Logos—Mahat, the Universal Mind, or the Holy Ghost of the Christian system—that proceeds the *first* outpouring, which we must consider as containing the triple power of the Godhead. Atma, Buddhi, Manas, are the terms which denote the corresponding principles in the constitution of man, and though now used to express the infinitely more exalted idea of the triple essence of Deity, the common use of the words must be regarded as significant of the intimate connection between humanity and Divinity.

The second outpouring comes from the second principle of the Solar Logos, equivalent to the Second or Dual Logos—"God the Son" of the Christian system, and it must be considered as

composed of Atma-Buddhi, while the third outpouring consists of the divine spark of Atma alone, coming as it does from the highest principle of the Logos of the system, equivalent to the First Great Logos—"God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

The significance of the double use of the terms Atma, Buddhi, Manas may now receive further illustration, for another aspect of the Trinity is to be found in this upper triad of principles which enters into the constitution of man. Atma, Buddhi, Manas (corresponding with the Kether, Chochmah, Binah of the Kabbalists), is a trinity in unity—a unity in potentiality, but a trinity until that potentiality is realised. The higher and eternal part of Manas may be said to correspond with the "Word" or "Son." Its lower part, which is left behind on the astral plane after death, being the personality—the "flesh" in which the "Word" incarnates in order to "dwell among us," and it is only as we unite our personality to the "Word" or "Higher Self" that "Christ is formed in us," and so much of our personality as can absorb, or rather be absorbed into that "Christ" becomes immortal—hath everlasting life. "Because I live, ye

shall live also." This brings us back to the same idea which has been already dwelt on, when tracing the origin of the doctrine of the Ascension into heaven, when all of the personality has been drawn up into the individuality—when Buddhi-Manas has been merged in Atma.

The identity of the Three Great Logoi with the Three Persons of the Christian Trinity, has been indicated above, but a more detailed consideration of the creeds of Christendom, will bring to light the underlying meaning of terms which many have rightly considered as hard to understand. While the beliefs of the older religions have, as a rule, to be disentangled from many portions of their sacred canon, it is a remarkable fact that this last great religion of the world, is the only one which has elaborated to anything like the same extent, a detailed confession of faith. There are three forms of this in use in our Church Service, known respectively as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Creed of St. Athanasius. The Nicene Creed is the only one to which a fairly reliable date can be assigned. The first Council of Nicea, convened by the Emperor Constantine, was held in 325 A.D., and this creed is understood to be the result of its deliberations on the famous Arian controversy. The Apostles' Creed

is first mentioned by the historian Rufinus, who lived in the fourth century. It is probably somewhat older than the Nicene, though no one nowadays contends that the Apostles had any hand in its compilation. The creed of St. Athanasius was known as early as the beginning of the sixth century. It was not then embodied in the offices of the Church, and the name by which it was called was "Athanasius' Tract on the Trinity." Modern criticism assigns its origin to Southern Gaul, about the end of the fifth century, while Athanasius himself is known to have lived and died in Egypt more than a hundred years before. Much has been written and said of recent years, about what are called the damnatory clauses of this Creed, while diametrically opposed opinions on the subject are held by those who still call themselves by the common name of Christian. When, however, the underlying meaning has been made apparent, the words even of the damnatory clauses will shine out with new significance.

The various statements made in the Creeds are all found to be traceable to one of three sources. First, and most important, is an ancient document, which, whether written by his own hand, or repeated by him to others who ultimately wrote it down, is to be traced to the

real Jesus himself. Whether the compilers of the Creeds, some centuries later, ever saw this document, or even knew of its existence, or whether they were merely aware of its substance traditionally handed down, it is nevertheless from it that was drawn the vital truth of the Trinity which it was the chief purpose of the Creeds to set forth.

Secondly, there are statements of a different nature, referring to ceremonies of initiation, especially to those as practised in Egypt; and thirdly, there are passages in which it is apparent that the compilers or interpolaters, (for there has been falsification and interpolation in the Creeds, as well as in many a chapter of the Old and New Testaments) have attempted to identify the divine man Jesus with the Second Person of the Trinity, and consequently to make the actual or supposed history fit in with this theory.

The passages in the Apostles' Creed, which may be traced to the first source—the ancient document—are those which are simple affirmations of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The concluding sentences also probably belong to this category. The words would thus read somewhat as follows: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in his only Son our Lord. And I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of Sins; the Resurrection in a body; and the Life everlasting.”

The parallel passages in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds may easily be identified.

By “God the Father Almighty” is doubtless meant the First or Unmanifested Logos, about Whom naught but such simple affirmation *can* be made, for neither human words, nor human thought, can reach to that unthinkable height. This is the First Person of the Trinity; while the Second is described as the “only Son our Lord”—“God of the substance of the Father begotten before the worlds, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world.” Thus is the underlying duality of the Second Logos hinted at in the Christian Creed. The Holy Ghost is the name given to the Third Logos—Mahat, the Universal Mind, from whom in turn emanate, or it may be equally correct to say, who in some mystical manner comprehends within Himself, the countless host of the creative Gods—the Logoi or Words, who in their turn called into existence the countless hosts of the solar systems.

It is interesting here to note the rock on

which, ostensibly, the Western and the Eastern Churches split asunder, though doubtless political and dynastic reasons also largely contributed to the result. The Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds give the view upheld by the Church of Rome. In the former the words are: "And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father *and* the Son," while the latter goes into still greater detail: "The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father *and* of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." The Church of Constantinople, it is well known, held that the Holy Ghost proceeded direct from the Father without any intervention of the Son, and this view is still held by its successor, the Orthodox or Greek Church. That they were in the wrong and the Western Church comparatively in the right, may now be apparent to all occult students, for the Third Logos is a direct emanation of the Second Logos, who in His turn is an emanation of the Unmanifest.

The Holy Catholic Church and the Communion of Saints are sometimes bracketed in the minds of Christians, as implying but one

idea ; sometimes regarded as the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. This last interpretation is not so very far from the truth, for the real meaning which "The Holy Catholic Church" was originally intended to express was the great spiritual hierarchy at various stages of initiation—the *real* Universal Church drawn from all creeds, all nations, and all peoples—the great Hierarchy, in fact, who stand behind the scenes, but with power in their hands, governing and controlling, though within very definite limits, this planet and its ostensible kings and rulers. The Communion of Saints, on the contrary, is the term used to signify the blissful Hosts of the Planetary Spirits—the perfected humanity, that is, of other schemes connected with our own, or it may be, with other solar systems.

The forgiveness, or as the Nicene Creed calls it the remission, of sins is not a correct rendering of the original expression. Demission, not remission, should be the word used, a putting away of the sins with intent to lead a new life, not a forgiveness or wiping out either of the sins or of their result.

The resurrection in a body bears its meaning on its face, and but for the grossly materialistic interpretation with which it has been overlaid,

exemplified in the alteration of two little words, it might be recognised for what it is, neither more nor less than an affirmation of the doctrine of re-birth.

The expression of belief in the Life everlasting is a worthy ending to the Creed—the assertion of the glorious heritage of the human soul.

From the explanation attempted in the previous pages, of the origin of the story of the death, burial, and resurrection of the crucified Saviour, it is not difficult to identify the passages which are traceable to the second source—that of the initiation ceremony; while the interpolation of the words “Jesus Christ” in the second sentence of the Apostles’ Creed, the statement about his birth, and the reference to Pontius Pilate (who was a Roman Governor about one hundred years after the real Jesus had lived and died), may similarly be traced to the third source, the attempt which, as we have seen above, was successfully made in so many of the world’s religions, viz., that of identifying the Saviour or Redeemer with one—usually the Second—Person of the Trinity.

The Nicene Creed would seem to take a wider range than that of the Apostles, for while the affirmation in the latter about “God the

Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," might conceivably have been intended to refer to our Solar Logos, the extra words "and of all things visible and invisible" in the Nicene Creed, makes the statement still more applicable to the First Great Logos, who may naturally be invested with the title of the Father.

The mode in which the Second Logos comes into being, absolutely by the will-power of the First, is also dwelt on at greater length, though in somewhat materialistic language, in the more philosophical Nicene Creed. But when we come to the words, "And was incarnate *by* the Holy Ghost *of* the Virgin Mary," it would seem as if the gross misunderstanding of ages had left no place for any underlying meaning. This, however, is not so. The change of a few words has in this case also perverted the real sense. The phrase should read "and was incarnate *of* the Holy Ghost *and* the virgin (Maía) mother." This simply alludes to a further stage of the "great sacrifice." It will be remembered that the second outpouring—that of the monadic essence—was said to proceed from the Second Great Logos, but it must really be considered as an outpouring *of Himself*. The words of the Creed thus represent

the fact that the monadic essence takes form, not merely of "virgin" or atomic matter, but of matter differentiated sevenfold, in other words, matter which has already received the *first* great outpouring, and is pulsating with the life of the *Third* Logos, the Holy Ghost.

The reference to Pontius Pilate is a most remarkable instance of the original meaning having been, not merely obscured, but absolutely falsified, by the simple insertion of an *iota* and the alteration of an *eta* into an *alpha* in the Greek text. The earliest Greek manuscripts all read ΠΟΝΤΟΥ-ΠΑΛΑΤΟΥ, the meaning of which is "a densified sea." This is the dense sea of astral matter in which He, in this further stage of the descent, endured the limitation and the imprisonment, "for us men and for our salvation." The original meaning of this perverted clause will thus be seen not merely to harmonise with, but to elucidate, the context.¹

The next and last stage of the descent is represented by the crucifixion—the crucifixion on the cross of *physical* matter, the lowest point reached by the Son of God, who was made man—the turning point, in fact, of the great Manwantaric cycle.

¹ C. W. Leadbeater's "The Christian Creed," in the *Theosophical Review* of 15th November 1897, pp. 265-66.

The following extract from the rubric for the officiating Hierophant in the old Egyptian rite, will show the alterations which had to be made, in adapting the orders for a ceremony to the expressions of a creed. The whole series of directions had, in fact, to be recast into the form of an historical narrative. "Then shall the candidate be bound upon the wooden cross, he shall die, he shall be buried, and shall descend into the underworld; after the third day he shall be brought back from the dead, and shall be carried up into heaven, to be the right hand of Him from Whom he came, having learnt to guide (or rule) the living and the dead." ¹

The preceding chapter dealt with various experiences of the candidate on the astral plane, while temporarily released from the body. This is summarised in the Creed as the "descent into Hell," but the lessons which he had to learn did not end here, for the next step is the "ascent into heaven." One of the privileges of the first great initiation is, to-day, as it was in those past ages, that the candidate receives, with the Master's help, his first touch of a more extended consciousness; a mere

¹ C. W. Leadbeater's "The Christian Creed," in the *Theosophical Review* of 15th January 1898, p. 446.

touch, it is true, but one which can never be forgotten, one that opens a new world before him, and entirely transforms his view of life. Then, for the first time, by means of the extended consciousness of that exalted plane, he truly realises the underlying *Unity of All*. The appropriate words in which this idea is symbolised in the Creed are, "He ascended into heaven," but the words which follow—"And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead," are manifestly a distortion of the above quoted rubric, "to be the right hand of Him from Whom he came, having learnt to guide (or rule) the living and the dead."

No more unequivocal language can be imagined, than that with which the Athanasian Creed begins: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." And yet a very few words of explanation will show that the idea which lies behind, and which these words were intended to, and ought to, have expressed, is not only far from revolting, but is eminently reasonable and worthy of con-

sideration. The fact here referred to is what is spoken of in Theosophic literature, as the weeding out of humanity at the critical period of the Fifth Round,¹ and it is not only reasonable but almost self-evident that those who, at that advanced stage of human evolution, are unable to rise to a belief in, and an understanding of, the Trinity—to the recognition of the Three Great Logoi, and the general course of human evolution, should have to wait for another Manwantara to continue their progress. Without doubt such shall—not “perish everlastingly,” as it is erroneously translated, but *fail æonially*—be suspended, that is, for countless æons, till another “Day of Brahma” shall break—another dawn of creation shall awaken.

Nor is there any cruelty or injustice in this weeding out of Nature’s candidates. The surprising thing would be that all should pass the great ordeal, for it must be remembered that the bulk of those who fail, will doubtless have been descended from animal ancestors in the last Manwantara. All have their chance of progress, but such could scarcely have been expected to succeed so quickly. Amongst the

¹ See the chapter headed “Progress of Humanity” in Sinnett’s “Esoteric Buddhism.”

failures there will doubtless also be some who reached the human kingdom in the Lunar Manwantara, and who came over as members of the third, or least advanced group of Lunar Pitris, possibly even of the second group, and who can say that none even of the first group shall fail? but the moral culpability of such, will be in terribly increasing ratio, and the consequent retribution awaiting them, owing to the very inherent capacity of their nature, will correspond with the magnitude of their sin of failure.

While the above survey of the Christian Creed, as traceable to three sources, is true, so far as it goes, it will be rendered more complete by a further reference to the underlying meaning of the ancient document, and of the initiation rite, for the story of the birth of a Redeemer, embodied in so many of the religions of mankind, through untold past ages, has been but a materialised version of the fact of the emanation of the Manifested Logos from the great Unmanifest—grossly and unphilosophically rendered in our creeds, as the begetting by the Father of the Son. The descent into manifestation—the taking of form by the formless Spirit, is a symbolical characteristic of the sacrifice performed, not only by every Son of

God who comes down to earth for the redemption of men, but by each one of those great Beings, in the endless chain of Deity, who puts Himself forth in the worlds which He creates.

And it is not only a birth into a lower condition—rightly also is it described as a crucifixion and as a burial—a binding to the cross of generation, a burial in the sepulchre of matter.

In the Creed, too, may be read the history of the Manwantara itself, as of the Logos, who is its God and its Guide. Steadily is the divine and unborn essence plunged lower and lower in the sheaths of each plane of the descending arc, until it may be said to be “dead and buried in matter.” But the resurrection morning is at hand, when this body, the sepulchre of humanity, shall become the temple of the risen life. Nor does the symbolical appropriateness of the language end here, for the risen humanity has still to “ascend into heaven,” to rejoin its Father and its God. Through the long ages that progress will be accomplished, and when our Manwantaric Day is ended, the perfected and glorified humanity which originally came forth from our Solar Logos as undifferentiated essence, will again be merged in Him, but then, as separate and eternal individualities.

And so, too, when the Cosmic night approaches will the Great Logoi themselves return to That from which They came forth. Manifestation will be merged in the Non-manifest, and the Son will return into the bosom of the Father. For "when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."¹

And thus the Unity in Trinity, in other words the Trinity in manifestation, becomes again the Trinity in Unity.

¹ 1 Cor., chap. xv. 28.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

THE idea lying at the root of all religion is, as we have seen, the idea of sacrifice. It is the central and fundamental conception, round which are grouped all dogmas and all rites.

At its one extreme lies the savage ceremony of slaying the totem god, while the great doctrine of a crucified Saviour represents its higher aspect. In it, too, is contained the vital principle of the Eucharistic Sacrament, which indeed in the Roman Church is entitled a "sacrifice." The mere ritual of the celebration has been traced to an ancient rite of partaking of bread and wine at certain ceremonies of initiation; but, as in other cases, the rite had a dual origin, and its essence consists in the underlying idea of the sacrifice of the god. All through the ages, and in every land, has this underlying idea been traced. The blood-covenants of primitive peoples have their

root in it. The tearing in pieces and devouring the still palpitating flesh of the victim at the Dionysiac festival, bears witness to the idea, as also do the kneeling figures of the worshippers at our own communion tables.

It is a momentous fact, that while the origin of the idea of sacrifice has been entirely lost sight of, the meaning ascribed to it has undergone a complete transformation. The idea has, indeed, been degraded almost out of recognition in blood-stained rituals, while the misunderstanding of it still exists in the most advanced religions.

It will be well to consider first how sacrifice became so uniformly associated with suffering and blood-shedding. The blood in connection with sacrifice is a confusing symbol. "The blood is the life," but while on the higher planes, as we shall see, life is the living, *giving* force poured out, the blood-giving on the physical plane implies pain and death, the *taking* of life. In early times, in token of a great offering of himself for the service of others, it was customary for a man to draw some drops of his own blood. This was doubtless the origin of the blood-covenant, in which the neophyte identified himself with, and

devoted himself to, the welfare of the tribe into which he was admitted. Though practised among races who had attained no high stage of development, the original meaning of sacrifice is still fairly apparent in the rite. It was still a free gift, as well as a binding together.

But when the blood which men shed was no longer their own, the degradation of the blood-symbol was accomplished. The idea was, in fact, fundamentally altered, and the original meaning of sacrifice was replaced by one of a totally different character. This was the case when men began to slay animals in sacrifice, in order that they might gain something for themselves, or unite themselves with the god for their own benefit. At a still later date it was imagined that if the blood of animals was efficacious, the blood of a man should be much more so, and thus were the horrors of human sacrifices instituted.

Great, indeed, is the gulf that lies between sacrifice in its sublime origin, and the terrible travesty that mankind have made of it. The explanation will lead us to the very heart of things, and will necessitate a further reference to the most exalted Beings on whom man's

thought can dwell. The consideration of the subject will also render still more apparent the appropriateness of the choice of the solar symbolism, when first arose the necessity of implanting religious ideas in the minds and hearts of mankind.

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The Law of Sacrifice might perhaps more truly be called the Law of Manifestation, or the Law of Love and of Life, for throughout the Universe, from the highest to the lowest, it is the cause of manifestation and life.

The Supreme Sacrifice is the first self-limitation of the great First Cause—the putting forth of Itself as the Logos that *is* Itself when It poured Itself forth in a supreme act of giving, in order that, in the fulness of time, many individualities should be drawn back to share with It that bliss, which is Its very nature and essence.

In turn, the manifested Logos puts Himself forth in the Solar Logoi, one of whom stands behind our solar system, which He holds in manifestation by His outbreathed energy. The whole solar system is upheld and manifested through, and in, His aura, which embraces its uttermost limits, and the life-forces of ourselves

and the planets are supported by His outgoing spiritual energy, *not* directly poured on us, but through those spoken of as "His ministers—a flaming fire," those called the "Angels of the Presence"—mysterious two-faced Beings, who receive on one side, and give out on the other.

The influences of the sun are simply the life-forces of the Logos poured out through These. He is the "man crucified in space" of Hindu mythology—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," while His life and His love are sometimes mystically referred to as His "blood," from which manifestly are derived such expressions as "Washed in the blood of the Lamb"—identified, that is, through sacrifice, with His life and His love.

Now, according to the law of the conservation of energy, the spiritual force which He puts forth at the beginning can neither be increased nor diminished, but only *transmuted*. As it descends into matter, it becomes more and more subject to limitation, and hence to imperfection, since form is the expression of the Divine Essence seen from without, expressing to the ignorant That of which they would otherwise remain uncon-

scious; while from the Divine side it is limitation — keeping back That which it is unable to let through. In short, viewed from below, form is *expression*, from above *repression*.

The Divine force acting through limitations is a sacrificial out-giving, in order that the forms it energises may, by and through it, grow into more perfect modes of Divine expression; and as evolution proceeds, and man attains self-consciousness, he in his turn becomes a conscious outgiver of spiritual energy, since he is one with the Divine, by right of his immortal ego—a ray from the Logos, whose spiritual energy he is privileged to draw upon. This energy, it is true, can neither be increased nor diminished; but every act of loving service, every thought of devotion for the good of others, transmutes and makes available some of this love-force which would otherwise remain in its unmanifested condition. It is exactly analogous to the mode by which our Logos draws from the Universal Mind *Its* love-force—the love-force which produced, and which maintains, the whole Cosmos in manifestation.

The love-principle, or giving principle, has always been associated with the heart. “Those

who knew" called Him who stands behind the sun, the "Heart of Heaven,"¹ from His giving us all things. This symbol, too, as we know, was dragged down to the lowest levels by the brutal practice of many nations, of offering the human heart and its life-blood, as the choicest sacrifice to their demon-gods.

Thus sacrifice lost all trace of its true meaning, and became a term implying only pain and loss, whereas it is, in its real significance, an outpouring or giving forth of the spiritual life-principle, to and for others, a sharing of the highest within each one. It is Love in the fullest and deepest sense of the word. "Greater love hath no man than this"—this eager willingness of the spirit to pour itself forth in a free gift of its best. On the higher planes, such giving is pure joy. True, there is self-limitation in the giving, but this is not, and cannot be, *pain* to natures which are essentially Bliss. It is the desire of our Logos that many should, through the cycle of evolution, return to be with Him, to share His bliss and glory, "that His joy may be full," to

¹ Among "those who knew," however dimly, must be placed the Guatemalans, for the title given to their supreme divinity, Hurakan, was the "Heart of Heaven" (see *Popul Vuh*).

“bring many sons to God,” as the Bible puts it.

It is only on the lower human plane that the element of pain mingles with the sacrificial offering. Then, too often, “renunciation means sorrow, though sorrow borne willingly,” for here is the plane of conflict between the lower nature blinded by ignorance, which desires only to grasp and to hold, and the higher nature which knows that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

On all planes sacrifice may be a resigning or giving up of something, that more may be given to others, since every renunciation sets free some spiritual force.

The “Silent Watcher” renounces His bliss in highest Nirvana, in order to guard humanity through the whole Manwantara. He not only fulfils this purpose, but He pours forth through His sacrifice a flood of what we must call specialised spiritual energy — that which would otherwise have been expended in the immense æons of bliss that He might have taken, and which instead becomes a mighty fund of spiritual force for the good of all.

It is so henceforth all the way down in ever lessening degree. The “guardian wall”

of the Nirmanakaya; the Adepts who renounce Nirvana for the sake of still working for their younger and weaker brethren; the disciples who renounce their Devachan that they may more quickly return to labour for humanity; all these add to the store of specialised spiritual energy, and all are acting in concert with the Powers which uphold the Cosmos.

And now we come to man as we know him, to ourselves, and we are told that, wonderful as it seems, we too, by giving ourselves in living service, in unselfish devotion, in renunciation for the good of others, so transmute the love-force we give out, that we raise it to the plane where Love *is* spiritual Life and sustains manifestation, and thus we add our tiny stone to the great temple not made with hands, and become "fellow workers together" with Those who build it. Or we may think of it as a note struck, vibrating in harmony with the great over tone, which is sounding through all creation, and adding by so much to the volume of the whole.

It is only by such selfless giving forth that we free ourselves from the bondage of Karma, for such "sacrificial" action bears its fruit on a plane beyond the reach of Karma, as *we*

understand it, and with every act which sets free spiritual force for the good of all, we loosen one of the links that bind us down.

All nature must give forth or die. It may be that the giving forth causes what *we* call death, but such death is the door to some new life. It is only if the corn of wheat die that it "bears much fruit." And this too is the *parable*¹ of the withered fig-tree, so grossly misrepresented and misunderstood. No life is true life when it is not reaching forward towards fruit, to the giving of its life essence. The hidden life of the tree urges always to fruit, to a gift of its best to the world: the leaves and blossoms are only a stage to the end. The healthy tree must bear fruit; the healthy soul must give out love and service. If either fail to do so, the force within it, which should be for life-giving, turns to disease and death for itself.

There are two things for man to do in his smaller way, as for the Angels of the Presence in their great service; to receive from the Divine World, and to give out to his fellow men. There

¹ This is an example of the errors that have crept in. The story of the withered fig-tree is *no* piece of history repeated by the Evangelist about the Great Master. It was a parable uttered by the Great Master himself.

is no fruit without drinking in the sunshine of God, "no true tasting the sunshine which is not a gathering in for the outgiving of fruit," and the fruit to be given forth is Love, and the Love is the Life.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

THE chief result of this investigation into the origin and growth of religion, apparently is that sacrifice must be regarded as the fundamental law of life.

Enshrined—in a travestied form, it is true—in every religion in turn, this Law of Love, or Law of Sacrifice, has been shown to be that ultimate force which produced and which maintains the whole Cosmos in manifestation.

And in proportion as man makes it his daily law of life, in proportion as he becomes a fellow-worker with the Powers which uphold the Universe, to that extent will he free himself from the bondage of Karma, and enter on wider and wider fields of beneficent work in which no effort is ever wasted—work which is joy because its outcome is at the same time the good of man and the glory of God.

We have also seen that that most mystical

conception—a Triad of Deity—which, in one form or another, has been a leading doctrine in most of the great religions, is to be traced to the Trinity of the Three Great Logoi. It is to be hoped, too, that the distinction between the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity may have been rendered somewhat more intelligible.

The foregoing scheme, too, will be found to account for the world-wide story of a divine Saviour in all its many aspects, or it would be more correct to say that it explains how the real life-record of the historical Saviour so invariably became merged in the conventional story, while in those cases where no such historical record exists, it naturally accounts for the myth pure and simple. The Birth story we have seen to be of complex origin. Symbolic of that stupendous fact, the emanation of the Manifested Logos from the Unmanifest, its origin must also be considered as derived from the incarnation of those great Beings spoken of as the Manus, who from age to age take birth at the beginning of a new root-race as its Teachers, Guides, and Saviours, while the dogmas of the Death, the Burial, and the Resurrection, symbolising as they do cyclic and cosmic realities as well,

trace their true origin to the fact of the soul's growth—to the death unto sin and the new birth unto righteousness, which the rites at an old ceremony of initiation were also meant to typify. Indeed, though many passages in our gospel-story are real life-records of the historic Saviour of Christendom, the whole narrative may be taken as symbolic of the progress of the Initiate, from the position of a disciple to that of an Adept.

The many methods, also, by which man in all ages and in different lands, has sought to obtain union with his God in rites of sacrament, have been traced to their symbolic sources.

Progress towards a more advanced type being the standing rule in the mighty tide of man's evolution, it would seem natural to infer that each great religion must show some advance on the one before it, but a truer mode of judging, would probably be to regard each religion in turn as charged with the duty of inaugurating and developing some specially distinctive quality, needed for the gradual building up of the character to the fulness of the stature of Christ.

It may help the elucidation of this idea, if we regard each great religion as registering

the high water-mark of each successive tide of civilisation, and it is only now that the tide is again reaching its flood, that the real function of the last great religion of the world can be truly gauged. Born during the ebb-tide of the previous civilisation—the Roman—Christianity has endured through the intervening period of comparative barbarism, the dismal night of the Middle Ages, till the tide of civilisation is again reaching its flood, and we are now in a position to measure the work which was given to it to do. The record of what it has accomplished will at least demonstrate the advance which our civilisation has made upon the last. (The previous eras of culture are not apparent to our view, but it would be a stultification of all evolution to imagine that progress had not been the rule throughout.) The triumphs of Christianity need no blazon, but its greatest deeds are apt to be overlooked. It is certainly the religion which has most impressed upon the minds of men the rights of their brother-men, and their obligations towards them; while one of its noblest achievements is that under its influence the curse of slavery has been well-nigh abolished. Life also is more truly recognised as a sacred trust. In Roman days a

very little provocation was considered necessary to authorise, or indeed to require, a man to take his own life, but suicide is now rightly regarded as a cowardice and a crime. Christianity, too, is the religion which has most dwelt on and exalted the ideas of love and self-sacrifice, and this necessarily constitutes its most glorious crown.

While recognising the identity of the goal attained by those who reach the highest level in any religion, whether of ancient or modern times, the way in which the idea of sacrifice has been presented to the world (leaving out of consideration its most degraded expressions), will afford an example of the higher standard reached by religious teaching in our own days, or, it may be more correct to say, will demonstrate the advance made by humanity from millennium to millennium; for however omniscient the founder of any religion may have been, the needs of the masses who had to be instructed, were necessarily a limiting and controlling factor in the expression of the teaching.

So far, then, as we can follow the ancient scriptures, the lesson of sacrifice taught in the earliest days seems to have been limited to the giving up of material things for the sake

of gaining material things in fuller measure. Whether in the form of charity from man to man, or in what are referred to as "sacrifices to the gods," an immediate surrender of some desirable possession was held out as ultimately ensuring some greater good. The incentive here is manifestly not a high one, but it is only by slow degrees that man can be taught the full import of the Law of Sacrifice.

The next step reached was when men learned to sacrifice material things for bliss beyond the grave. The giving up of earthly possessions or delights for the hope of heaven, necessarily brought into play the more spiritual side of man's nature, for a great effort of faith is needed to give up the visible for the invisible. The long list of martyrs in all lands and ages bears witness to the grandeur of this higher level of sacrifice. That it still lies open to the charge of being only another form of exchange or barter, is but to express in other words that the lesson was not yet fully learnt.

But religion is now teaching, and many are now learning to perform duty simply for duty's sake, to do what is right without looking for the reward; for love's sake to

endure, to help, and to comfort, regardless of the result for the self. This is the third stage in the long lesson of sacrifice, and it is one that needs a soul of heroic fibre to accomplish it fully. That the lesson is not even yet completely learnt must be apparent, for the element of pain still mingles with the sacrificial offering. But a further stage opens up before the prophetic vision, when love itself has grown so strong that all recognition of the separated self is lost, and "the soul sees itself as part of the life of God, and knowing no difference, recognising no separation, pours itself forth as part of the life universal, and finds its joy in the expression of that life."¹

Before concluding, it will be well to refer again to a point raised in the first chapter. A distinction was there made between the religions whose founders were historical persons, and the religions whose deities were worshipped merely as symbols of the sun. About some of those historical persons no information can be offered, but in order to avoid any misunderstanding, it should be stated that with reference to the founders of the last two great religions, no more appropriate term can be used than Incarnations of Deity. For whether manifesting in

¹ A. Besant's Lecture No. III. on Esoteric Christianity.

the body of Gautama Buddha or of Jesus Christ, we must bow in worship before *One* who holds a very exalted rank in the Divine Hierarchy connected with our scheme in the solar system.

As above said, too, it is always "in the fullness of time" that the divine Teachers descend on earth, and the words of the Song Celestial may be taken as descriptive of all such Incarnations—

"When righteousness
Declines, O Bharata! when wickedness
Is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take
Visible shape, and move a man with men,
Succouring the good, thrusting the evil back,
And setting Virtue on her seat again."

It cannot be too often repeated that every religion may lead to the entrance of the path of spiritual advancement spoken of in the previous pages. There are said to be four ways by which that entrance may be reached.

First. By the companionship of those who have already entered upon it.

Second. By the hearing or reading of definite teaching on Occult Philosophy.

Third. By enlightened reflection: that is to say, that by sheer force of hard thinking and close reasoning, a man may arrive at the truth or some portion of it.

Fourth. By the practice of virtue; which means that a long series of virtuous lives does eventually develop in a man sufficient intuition to lead him to the Path.

The mode of reaching it is, of course, a matter of character and temperament, but it is obvious that the due fulfilment of the duties enjoined by all the great religions must be a help in the search. True it is that in each religion there is often mingled a considerable amount of superstition, prejudice, and intolerance, but there are not wanting among ourselves teachers who, while rightly discarding dogma and ritual alike as useless, rest on the heart and core of all true doctrine. This heart and core of true doctrine is the Unity whence we came, the Unity to which we return, the Unity, too, hidden and obscured to outward appearance, but fundamentally existent, of the poor scattered fragments of humanity blindly groping for the way back to their home. The Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man, are other words intended to express the same idea, always significant of union—the union which we cannot see around us among mankind, with its vast diversity of motive and of aim, but which will be finally realised as *Union in God*.

All such as are imbued with these ideas rest on the Eternal Truth. To them the Theosophic teaching has only got greater certainty and precision to offer, a certainty and precision, however, both in scope and in detail, that may well seem to constitute a new revelation, as was St. Paul's memorable address to the Athenians descriptive of *their* "Unknown God."

Unknown to-day, as on that other day when St. Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, our Solar Logos yet pours out on His creation the love-force which alike constitutes our physical and our spiritual life. He is the origin of all the solar symbolism we have been considering. The sun itself is naturally His first and most glorious emblem, and all symbols of that symbol are ultimately traceable to Him, while in the sacred emblem of the Cross may be recognised His constant and living sacrifice for us His children. He is the origin of the symbolism. He is our crown of sacrifice.

We have seen that even beyond our Logos there exist still more exalted heights of Deity. But how can the Unmanifested Word—still more, how can that Absolute and Uttermost Source and End of all, the Supreme God—be much more than names to our so far limited

understanding? Progress along the Path will doubtless gradually open the eyes of the Spirit.

“Yet, hard
The travail is for such as bend their minds
To reach th’ Unmanifest. That viewless path
Shall scarce be trod by man bearing the flesh.”

For us, who can barely wing our thoughts to our own Logos, the God and Father of our spirits, the veil may well be drawn before those awful heights of Deity. Indeed, how many are there who even find it difficult to believe in the existence of men endowed with such goodness, wisdom, and power as are the great Adepts, the Masters and Guardians of wisdom? And yet they constitute but one of the many necessary links of the chain, for there is no break in the hierarchy, and no link wanting in the endless chain of being.

The Path trodden by those Masters of Wisdom is sometimes spoken of as the Path that leads from manhood to godhead, and certainly those who reach that highest stage of initiation, and stand on the heights of moral perfection, are as gods to us, but with greater truth may they be regarded as perfect men, for however stupendous to our view may be the powers they wield, and however awe-struck

we may stand before their spotless purity, their illimitable wisdom, and their boundless love, they are but the first fruits of our race, *for every stage of initiation only anticipates the progress which mankind will make throughout the coming cycles.*

The common humanity which we share with them should indeed be manifest when we consider that the God of our adoration is theirs also, and that the heights attained by them have only added intensity to the flame of their never-ceasing worship of our Father in Heaven, in whom we all live and move and have our being.

The Revelation of St. John provides an illustration; for the scene in the seventh chapter is a prophetic allegory, descriptive of what will take place towards the close of this Manwantara, and the "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," are manifestly the perfected humanity of the seventh Round—the Elder Brothers who have trodden the steep and difficult Path leading straight to the goal, as well as all those who through the ages, and in ordinary course of evolution, have reached that level. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their

robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And now they stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. And the exultant cry from the great multitude goes up. "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."

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