

ative religion. It may perhaps be observed here that more might be done in this direction than even de Pressensé has done especially in the way of showing how the ethical and the sentimental interacted upon and helped to educe each other. There is nothing more certain—and this is a principle generally overlooked—than that the sentimental or purely subjective side of religion has never been developed except upon the basis of the ethical. There must have been, in other words, some concrete manifestation of moral excellence in some degree to awaken or develop the instinctive admiration of the soul for what is worthy and provocative of imitation. Men do not build up out of the clouds or draw forth from their own consciousness those images and ideals of purity and holiness which are the master-light of their religious visions. Of course, the highest verification of this great principle is found in the revealed incarnate Son of God, as the Bible itself recognises (1 John i, 1) but it will be found to have been also exemplified, though in another fashion and in a less degree, in the lives of such men as Socrates and Buddha in the ancient world and multitudes of good men in all Christian ages. It is in fact the most fruitful practical principle in the whole history of religion and conduct.

In following out his fundamental idea, the author passes in successive review the religion of Assyria and Babylonia, of Egypt, of Phœnicia, of the ancient Aryans and Zoroastrians, of the Vedists, Brahmanists and Buddhists, of the Hellenic world before Alexander, and of the Græco-Roman philosophies. The whole is prefaced with an introduction on the general plan of the work, and a preliminary chapter on the evolution of religion, and its beginnings among savage and prehistoric races and closed with a picture of the pagan world at the coming of Christ, and a chapter of retrospection and summing up. Of the special treatises, the best are probably those which deal with the religion of Greece and Rome and the general preparation for the coming of Christ. The chapters on the Vedas and on primitive Buddhism are also excellent, and the treatment of the Phœnician religion is also very satisfactory. Concerning the ancient Babylonian religion the author has also written well upon the whole; but our information as to the primitive culture of the oldest of nations is not yet sufficient to justify us in making such bold statements with regard to the sources of its complex civilization and worship as are found in this and most other popular essays on the subject. Of the Akkadians, if such people ever exist at all as a separate race, we can at present say nothing with positive certainty, and also of the second hypothetical non-Semitic element, the Cushites, we know next to nothing. M. de Pressensé's statements on these points are taken from the pre-critical school of Assyriologists whose works are still in vogue and who have not been free from the errors due to over-haste to which all great discoverers are liable. Two features of special excellence in the book may be pointed out in conclusion: the liberal and well chosen extracts from the literature of the several peoples whose religions are reviewed and the striking and instructive way in which their productions of art are made to illustrate their moral and religious ideas.

At the present date when so much is written upon comparative religion, when the Sacred Books of the East and other ancient records