

death; and what ought to be done for those who are dead. Rules are prescribed to him as a sinner or a saint, in joy or in sorrow; directing him how to act towards superiors, inferiors, and equals; towards priests and princes; towards all men on earth, and towards all the gods on earth and in the heavens. No polype, in the vast gelatinous mass which contributes to the building up of a great island from the deep, can be more a part of that mysterious whole than an orthodox Hindoo is of this marvellous religious brotherhood. His individuality is lost. His conscience, will, and affections are in the strong grasp of habits and customs sanctioned by Divine authority, consecrated by the faith of his race, and made venerable by a hoary antiquity. And, what might seem very strange to us if we could not point to parallel phases of human nature within even the Church of Christ, this slavery is not disliked or felt to be a heavy burden—a 'bondage to the elements of the world'—but, on the contrary, is clung to with a desperate tenacity. The elements which give this undying vigour to caste may possibly be found not chiefly in sloth and indifference, or in the supposed deliverance which it affords from the irksome sense of personal responsibility, but in its recognition of two great principles in social life, which, though in this case perverted, are adjusted by the Christian creed and a true Christian Church; the first, that our place in the world is assigned to us by Divine sovereignty; and the second, that the co-operation and sympathy of a brotherhood are essential to our usefulness and happiness in the world. Whatever be the secret of its strength, it is profoundly interesting to gaze on this gigantic system existing like the Great Pyramid—each stone in its place, firmly cemented into the vast whole, towering over the arid plain, defying hitherto the attacks of time, which destroys all that is perishable—an object of wonder because of its magnitude and power of endurance, yet hollow-hearted withal, and preserving only the dust of ages.

"And yet even this tremendous system of caste is not wholly antagonistic to the efforts of the Christian Church. Its very strength may at last prove its weakness. If on the side of wrong it 'moveth all together if it move at all,' it may do so also on the side of right. Let the wall be so far sapped that it must fall, it will do so not by crumbling down in minute fragments, or even in separate masses, but as a whole. If the great army mutinies against Brahmanism, it will desert, not in units, but en masse.

"It is with this system that we have in the meantime to deal; and it may well nerve a Christian's courage, and make him examine his weapons, test his armour, and carefully calculate his resources of power and patience, of faith and love, ere he enters, with a zeal which can be vindicated and a hope that will not be put to shame, on the grand enterprise of substituting pure Christianity in its place. I hesitate not to express the opinion that no such battle has ever before been given to the Church of God to fight since history began, and that no victory if gained, will be followed by greater consequences. It seems to me as if the spiritual conquest of India was a work reserved for these latter days to accomplish, because requiring all the previous dear-bought experiences of the Church, and all the preliminary education of the world, and that, when accomplished—as by the help of the living Christ it shall!—it will be a very Armageddon; the last great battle against every form of unbelief, the last fortress of the enemy stormed, the last victory gained as necessary to secure the unimpeded progress and the final triumph of the world's regeneration!

"In these statements regarding Brahmanism I have said nothing of its effects upon the morals of the people, although this is a most important aspect of it, not only as producing habits congenial to human depravity, but as raising the most formidable obstacles against the reception of Christianity even as a pure and uncompromising system of morals. Not that we would charge the actual vices of a people to their religion, unless, as in the case before us, these could be proved to be the necessary and legitimate consequences of faith in its teaching, and of obedience to its enjoined observances and practices. As far, indeed, as the observation of the ordinary traveller goes, I am bound to say, as the result of our own very limited experience, that nothing meets the eye or ear in any way offensive to good manners throughout India, not even in its temples, unless it be in symbols for worship to which I cannot allude, and the influence of which on the worshippers it is difficult for any stranger to determine, not knowing even how far their significance is understood by the multitude. I must therefore refer to others better acquainted with India to say what its moral condition is as flowing positively from its religion. But I have no doubt whatever myself, from all I have heard, that, except where affected by European influence, it is, among both Hindoo and Mahomedans, as a rule, far below what is generally supposed. In spite of that