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Christian Faith and Practice.

The Efficacy of the Gospel in India.

In order to be fully assured of this, let us simply ask, what is the central point around which the whole scheme of Hinduism, in its theory and practice, is made to turn? It is,—that sinful man by his own sufficiency, his own services, his own works, his own meritorious obedience, can propitiate God, and earn to himself a right and title to immortal bliss. If man really knew God in His holiness, and God's law as the perfect transcript of that holiness, he would be overwhelmed with the conviction of his utter inability to propitiate his offended Maker, or fulfil the whole of his law. Hence, would he be filled with hatred and enmity against that law which must denounce, and that God who must punish, all transgression. Hence, too,—as he could not altogether shake of the impression of the being and providence of God, or of the obligation of obeying His holy law,—he would in time be tempted and impelled to feign a deity like unto himself, and a divine law suited to his own impaired capacity of obedience;—a deity whom he could appease if he willed;—a law which he could fulfil if it suited to his own good pleasure. Hence accordingly, the fundamental cause, source, and origin of Hinduism; and of every other scheme of false religion. The system of Hinduism is nothing else than a stupendous superstructure raised upon this one grand central principle as its foundation-stone,—namely, the principle of *exclusive self-reliance*—*exclusive self-righteousness*,—a self-righteousness far more absolute than that of Roman Catholicism itself, which would combine and harmonize grace, and desert faith and good works. Hence, the countless round of daily and almost hourly rites, ceremonies, and observances,—the countless round of fastings, pilgrimages, and rehearsals of holy texts,—the countless round of gifts, offerings, and sacrifices,—the countless round of ablations, expiations, and atonements,—the countless round of austerities, self-inflicted tortures, and religious suicides,—the countless round of inquiries into the nature of things, meditations, and absorbed contemplations;—all, all circulate for ever around the grand central, but false and detestable, principle that man, though fallen and sinful, may work out by his own unaided strength a title to the divine favour, a right to celestial rewards or to supreme beatitude. The colossal scheme of Hinduism, as has already been shown, does embrace, and intimately incorporate with itself, all imaginable departments of Tradition, Literature, Science, and Art. —but these are like so many columns, capitals and minarets, designed to garnish the inner citadel of self-righteousness; or so many walls, towers, and buttresses, intended to render it more firm, secure, and unassailable.

This being the foundation stone of the immense fabric of Hinduism, let us now see with what divine precision Christianity is adapted to wrench it from its position, overturn the superimposed edifice, and drive the ploughshare of destruction over the crumbling ruins. For what, in the mighty system of Revelation, is that central truth around which all other truths revolve? It is,—that not by any exertions, endeavors, works, or sufferings, of our own, can we ever be justified before God; but solely through the "righteousness of God," revealed from heaven—the righteousness which God Himself hath effected and provided,—the real, true, and everlasting righteousness, or perfect obedience to the divine law both in its threatened penalties and inflexible requirements which was exemplified by Christ, our Immanuel;—a righteousness which is freely and gratuitously, out of undeserved love and mere mercy imputed to us; and—without money or price, doing or suffering, service or merit of any kind—received by faith alone;—a righteousness which, when so imputed and received, is as really made over to us, as if we ourselves had wrought it out by a perfect fulfilment of the law in all its penalties and threatenings, as well as precepts and commands—as really accounted to be our own as if we ourselves had endured the infinite and eternal punishment due to our transgressions; and at the same time had magnified the law and made it honorable by a perfect conformity to all its demands, whether in the way of duties to be performed, or of prohibitions to be inviolably respected. The moment this perfect righteousness is—through the instrumentality of that faith which is itself the gift of God—imputed to the believer, he is pardoned and justified from all sin; freed from the sentence of condemnation; acquitted of the guilt of transgression; and entitled to "an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." No wonder that the bringing in of this finished, this spotless righteousness, should be extolled as the chief even of Jehovah's works,—the clear manifestation thereof,

as the crowning excellency of Revelation,—the universal proclamation thereof, as "the Gospel of the Gospel,"—and the free imputation thereof to hell-deserving rebels, as the very consummation of Infinite Wisdom, Holiness, and Love!

What a revolution would the effectual lodgement of this single primal truth—"that we are made righteous before God, and continue so, by grace alone;—through the mere imputation of the righteousness or meritorious obedience and sufferings of Christ; the only perfect righteousness which can be maintained against wrath, sin, death, and hell,"—achieve in the national mind of a people so impregnated with the spirit of self-righteousness as the native inhabitants of India! And blessed be God, that in attempting to secure an effectual lodgement of it in the understandings and hearts of men, we are not left to mere human instruction, to mere human persuasion. No; we have the promise of the presence of the Divine Redeemer Himself, and of the efficacious influence of His Almighty Spirit. Behold, then, how the believing and influential embracement of his one vital and fundamental doctrine would hurl away the entire mass of morbid fears, and legal sentiments, and meritorious observances, which, in the course of ages, have grown up into a gigantic system, crushing and paralyzing the souls and bodies of myriads of myriads! Let the great body of the people be once brought—through the word of truth, sent home by the energy of the Holy Spirit—to sing along with Luther, "Thou Lord Jesus art my righteousness, but I am thy sin; Thou hast taken to thee what was mine, and hast given to me what was thine; Thou hast taken upon thee what thou wast not, and given to me what I was not,"—and how must the all-comprehending system of Hinduism vanish! An absolute confidence in one almighty, omniscient, omnipresent Mediator and Advocate, would at once supersede the necessity of applying to any one of the legions of secondary mediators whether on earth or in heaven. Hence would the power and tyranny of the Brahmanical and celestial hierarchies be for ever broken; and the constantly recurring demand for gifts and invocations, to secure their favor and intercession, be for ever removed. An absolute belief that an almighty and all-merciful Redeemer hath actually fulfilled, to the uttermost, all the righteous ordinances of an immutable law, in the stead of sinners—and that he is both able and willing to impute to them, on believing, his own all-perfect obedience or active righteousness,—would at once expose the futility of their own poor, lame, inadequate self-justifying performances.—Hence would follow a clear perception and operative conviction of the worse than uselessness of the attempts to restore peace and comfort in a troubled, pained, and restless conscience, or to earn a heavenly recompense, by resorting to the endless rites, forms, and ceremonies,—with all the half-gorgeous, half-barbaric pomps and vanities of Brahmanical worship,—and the whole vast apparatus of works and services of minor, secondary, or transcendent merit. For who, to adopt, once more, one of Luther's pointed expressions, "Who, that could soar with eagle's wings to the Sun of Righteousness itself, would not be rejoiced to throw his crutches away?" An absolute assurance that an almighty Saviour hath actually offered himself in the stead of sinners, as a complete oblation and satisfaction to divine justice—and that he has thereby drained off the full cup of merited retribution, and exhausted the full measure of threatened vengeance,—must lay bare the utter negativeness of the endeavor to supplant or supplement, in whole or in part, and all-perfect and freely imputed passive righteousness, by any voluntary sufferings of their own. Hence, at once, would be swept away the boundless variety of self-inflicted austerities, penances, and mortifications, which are intended to diminish and gradually to exhaust the amount of penalties incurred by transgression; as well as the entire host of expedients designed to affect a deliverance from the purgatorial processes of transmigration in this world, and of penal severities in the regions below.

In this way would the gospel of salvation at a single stroke,—by its one grand essential doctrine of justification through faith alone in the meritorious obedience and sufferings, or all-sufficient all-prevailing righteousness, of Immanuel—"God manifest in the flesh,"—smite the stupendous fabric of Hinduism and grind it to powder;—and, over its scattered dust erect a temple, the foundation of which would be the Rock of Ages; and every stone of which would be a living stone, glistening in the radiance of celestial truth, and tuneful with the hosannahs of seraphic melody. How different the Divine from every human instrument of reformation! How wise, how grand, how mighty the scheme of Divine appointment compared with the weak, partial, inadequate, temporary expedients and devices of man! The former, the latter, confine itself to mere external works. It is not satisfied with the attempt

to do?" show you the way. Both these sinners not only laid down, before God, those arms which they had previously borne against him and his ways; but they also surrendered the fortress of self-righteousness, in which they expected to be able to force from the Almighty the prize of his good pleasure, and renouncing all self-justification, despairing of all self-redemption, and not knowing what to do, they appealed for free mercy in Christ, and committed their fate, in self-condemnation, as sincere as their surrender was unconditional, whilst confessing, weeping, and supplicating, into the hands of eternal love. The Lord then inclined the sceptre of his grace, and the words, "Ye are forgiven!" descended into their wounded hearts like harp notes from on high. Heaven celebrated the happy peace with loud acclamations; hell murmured; and two new names were added to the citizens of God's kingdom.

There is only one refuge from the terrors of judgment—Christ, sought as the last resource, under the pressure of inward distress, and hell clung to as the only tenable point. In Him who presents us to the judge, divested of our sins, we only hear the soft and gentle music of peace. The heavens are azure over us; light and free the air we breathe. The thunders aloft terrify us no longer; nor does the blood cease to flow in their veins, when a passing funeral reminds us of the nearness of our own exit from this world. That which so often lay like a heavy and oppressive incubus on our souls, even in our happiest hours, entirely leaves us, for it was nothing else but the special consciousness of our misunderstanding with God, and the horrible dangers to which it exposed us.

Whoever, therefore, wishes to save his soul, let him flee to Christ. Our Zoar, our Pella, lies where the cross is exhibited. Embrace the horns of the altar on Calvary, and ye are safe. Around this city of refuge, the Divine command, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," sets bounds to every hostile power.—"One thing is needful." Long for and entreat till you obtain it; and what is that? "Ye that hath ears to hear, let him hear," is resounded in the following lines:

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Sprinkle the threshold of my heart,
Thou Prince of Peace, with thy dear blood;
And bid each stain of sin depart,
Wash'd out by that all cleansing flood.

Whatever else may dark remain,
Let me thy cross in glory see,
And teach me what those words contain;
'Tis finished, Christ hath died for me!

Then boldly I pursue my way;
My soul the curse no longer heeds;
I seek no other guiding ray,
Than that which from thy cross proceeds.

'Tis there that wrath was turned to grace,
Thine mercy gained the victory;
Redemption for our fallen race,
Was purchased on Mount Calvary.

Krummacher.

An Illustration of the Value of the Fathers as Guides to Faith.

The 1st epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians is esteemed by the admirers of tradition, the earliest preserved piece of writing produced during the apostolic age. Of Clement, its author, the following things are pretty generally believed;—that he is the Clement so honorably referred to by Paul, in Phil. 4: 3—that he became bishop or pastor of the church at Rome, through the united recommendation of the apostles, Peter and Paul—and that he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, in the name of the Church of Rome, not very long after the martyrdom of the apostles, Peter and Paul, about A. D. 70 or 75.

The epistle of St. Clement appears to have been held in high esteem by many of the early churches. By some of them it was even read in their public religious assemblies, together with the holy scriptures. In the Alexandrian MS., it is found to have been written in the same volumes with the books of the New Testament. Eusebius designates it "that wonderful epistle of St. Clement to the Corinthians."

It has been disputed, indeed, by some learned men, whether we possess the genuine epistle of this holy father. It appears to us however, that there is not sufficient reason for the indulgence of this doubt, seeing that the passages which are quoted by the succeeding fathers from this epistle, are found to agree exactly with the copy which we possess.

The manner in which this epistle was first published in this country was as follows:—Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, having removed to Constantinople, there met with Sir Thomas Roe, the British Ambassador to the Sultan. Through this gentleman, Cyril sent as a present to Charles the First, then King of England, a very ancient manuscript copy,

Christian Refuge.

Truly "our God is a consuming fire!" Let no deceitful inferences be drawn from the forbearance and long suffering which he exercises, frequently for years together, towards the vessels of wrath.—"Though it may rest for a time, his sword does not rust in its scabbard. Oh, whatever may be your pursuits, my friends, do not think yourselves happy, so long as you have not concluded a lasting peace with God? But this peace is not made merely by your showing the white flag; he must unfurl it also; and this he only does when the individual surrenders at discretion, and calls out for mercy. The "remembrance" of the dying thief, as well as the exclamation of the "wretched disciple of the Pharisees, on his way to Damascus, "Lord what wilt thou have me to