

watchman on the towers of Christianity.

The religions of China and Japan, apart from Buddhism, are Confucianism and Sintoism. The latter is simply Polytheism, the poem, like those of Greece and Rome, of Egypt and Assyria, that looks back to the days when earth was young, and celebrates the heroes of a golden age who still rule the world from Olympian heights. Some of the gods of Sintoism are not very savory deities, but they are no worse than the Roman Cloaca, and, on the whole, are as moral as the Greek and Sanscrit divinities. The absurdity of their pretensions to divine honors no doubt helped Buddhism to its position among the Japanese. As for Confucianism, it is no religion at all, but simply an ethical system. Confucius says, 'Worship your ancestors and thus be a polytheist, or worship Tien, that is heaven, and be a pantheistic unitarian, as you will, only in practice, follow my system of morals, and you can't be wrong whose life is in the right.' Now there is real danger to Christianity from Confucianism, be it the genuine Chinese article or a European or American substitute. He who says 'Christianity is a life,' may state the sublimest truth or be guilty of a most pernicious error. If by a life he mean a mere ethical system, he is far astray, for this is life eternal to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. From that knowledge gained by actual fellowship, comes the life of God in the soul of man, which alone has true ethical value. Confucianism, with its permissive theology, while it inculcates obedience and Spartan-like subserviency to the state, is otherwise as atheistical as Buddhism, or the Stoicism of Marcus Aurelius. It minimizes God and magnifies self, and that is the work the devil is intent upon in every human heart.

There have been materialist philosophers from very early days, but there

never has been a materialistic religion in any land. All religions are spiritualistic, believing in the continued existence of souls after they have parted company with the body, or in the existence of spirits that never were embodied. Materialism, therefore, is far from the only form of Atheism; for Buddhism and modern spiritualism show, as plainly as African devil worship, that one may deny the existence of the Infinite Spirit, who is God, and yet cling to the belief in finite spirits, good or evil. Materialism cannot conquer, because the forces that are striving for the mastery in our humanity are not forms of matter but of spirit, and, save to the besotted mind, these assert their individuality. Man who is alive and awake, knows of a Holy Spirit that strives with him in the direction of holiness; man who is alive but in sensual dreamland also knows, or thinks he knows, of spirits, phantoms, ghosts, that visit him from the realms of the departed. What Christianity has to fear is not materialism, but a pseudo-spiritualism; for, whether it be Matthew Arnold or Herbert Spencer, or Stead, or John Stuart Mill that is prophet, the vaticination invariably overrides matter, and points to a vague, indefinite, intangible something which cannot be classified among material phenomena. What is this spirit in its entirety? What are we mortals to it? In what relation does it stand to us? Such are the questions the world's religions invite us to consider.

Human lives close, and unclad souls go out into the void. Where do they go? The poet of Proverbial Philosophy, who addressed you once in these halls, looked upon the moon as 'The hell of damned souls,' but the lost ones are far nearer us than the moon, shrieking and meaning and rushing past us in the stormy blast, revelling in flood and fire, in battle and wreck. The disembodied souls go to meet their kind, just as the living find their con-