

Their value lies in their nearness to nature, and their close connection with the fuller truth which is unfolding age by age.

Some of the cosmic myths are almost universal. Each race has its creation story, and nearly every race has its story of a flood. The tale of homicide, in connection with the building of a city has been handed down in many languages; while man's first thought of God, and his relation to the divine forces which he felt, but could not understand, have been strikingly similar, whether he was Caucasian or Malay, Indian or Esquimo.

The child is often spoken of as the epitome of the race. It is urged that his development reproduces in miniature each stage, through which the race has passed; and, however we may regard this as a working theory, I think that it is generally conceded that every child passes through his legend period—a time when his wondering and questioning soul finds an answering note in those world stories which have come down to us through countless years.

He has not attained the spiritual stature of the nineteenth century man, nor can he always see his moral obligations, in the light which they assume unto his elders; but the simple truths, which were revealed to man in the childhood of the races, find kindred thoughts to welcome them and form the stepping stones to broader knowledge.

Therefore, because they appeal to him so strongly; because they are instinct with nature's teaching, and because they bear unerring witness unto the light of ages, these earliest embodiments of man's religious thought are important factors in the education of the child.

In their bibles or collections of sacred writings, are to be found many of the myths and legends of the races. Their long existence as tradition has had a tendency to emphasize their

great and at first half-recognized truths, and to eliminate much of the local and purely accidental coloring, so that while these legends were transmitted with a faithfulness, which seems marvellous in this age, each generation did contribute something to the story by emphasizing the features which appealed to it most strongly, and neglecting those which the races had outgrown.

The Hebrew Scriptures stand pre-eminent among the bibles of the world, both because of the peculiar mission of that people, and because in them we have the entire literature of a nation, "with a genius for religion."

Upon legend, poetry, history, law, and philosophy is found the impress of their developing monotheism. Read in its proper sequence, the Old Testament is a wonderful story of the evolution of religious thought—from the crude conception of Jehovah as a national deity, a God among many gods, more righteous but not more powerful than the deities of other races, and a being very human in his attributes, to that of the just judge and ruler of all the earth, looking with especial favor, it is true, upon his chosen people, but foreshadowing the universal Father whom it was the mission of Jesus to proclaim.

Doubtless all are now familiar with the theories of the formation of the Hebrew canon, which are current among scholars. We have also heard much of late about the myths and legends of the Hebrew people, and how these were handed down from age to age, changing and growing as the race developed, until at last they crystallized, first in the form of national ballad, later in the earliest forms of Hebrew prose.

These editions of the national legends were unlike in many respects. They grew up in different parts of the country, and names of men and places, and even incidents became confused.

Each being separated by a generation or more from the one which pre-