

We are constantly taught that "real religion" means many things which have nothing on earth to do with religion proper, in any sense, but are merely high morality, tintured by emotional devotion towards a spiritual being or set of beings.

Owing to all these causes, modern investigators, in searching for the origin of religion, are apt to mix up with it, even when dealing with savage tribes, many extraneous questions of cosmology, cosmogony, philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, and mythology. They do not sufficiently see that the true question narrows itself down at last to two prime factors—worship and sacrifice. In all early religions, the practice is at a maximum, and the creed at a minimum. We, nowadays, look back upon these early cults, which were cults and little else, with minds warped by modern theological prejudices—by constant wrangling over dogmas, clauses, definitions, and formularies. We talk glibly of the Hindu faith or the Chinese belief, when we ought rather to talk of the Hindu practice or the Chinese observances. By thus wrongly conceiving the nature of religion, we go astray as to its origin. We shall only get right again when we learn to separate mythology entirely from religion, and when we recognise that the growth and development of the myth have nothing at all to do with the beginnings of worship. The science of comparative mythology and folk-lore is a valuable and light-bearing study in its own way : but it has no more to do with the origin of religion than the science of ethics or the science of geology. There are ethical rules in most advanced cults : there are geological surmises in most sacred books : but neither one nor the other is on that account religion, any more than the history of Jehoshaphat or the legend of Samson.

What I want to suggest in the present chapter sums itself up in a few sentences thus : Religion is practice, mythology is story-telling. Every religion has myths that accompany it : but the myths do not give rise to the re-