

tical form as the "esoteric doctrine" of the Egyptian priesthood ; from whom, with their peculiar views as to emanations and Triads, the Christian dogmas of the Trinity, the Logos, the Incarnation, and the Holy Ghost were in large part borrowed. The Jews of Alexandria, that eastern London, formed the connecting link between Egyptian heathenism, Hellenic philosophy, and early Christianity ; and their half-philosophical, half-religious ideas may be found permeating the first writings and the first systematic thought of the nascent church. In none of these ways, therefore, can we regard Christianity as affording us any direct or immediate guidance in our search for the origin and evolution of the concepts of many gods, and of one God the creator.

Still, in a certain secondary and illustrative sense, I think we are fully justified in saying that the history of Christianity, the religion whose beginnings are most surely known to us, forms a standard of reference for all the other religions of the world, and helps us indirectly to understand and explain the origin and evolution of these deepest among our fundamental spiritual conceptions.

Its value in this respect may best be understood if I point out briefly in two contrasted statements the points in which it may and the points in which it may not be fairly accepted as a typical religion.

Let us begin first with the points in which it may.

In the first place, Christianity is thoroughly typical in the fact that beyond all doubt its most central divine figure was at first, by common consent of orthodox and heterodox alike, nothing other than a particular Deified Man. All else that has been asserted about this particular Man—that he was the Son of God, that he was the incarnation of the Logos, that he existed previously from all eternity, that he sits now on the right hand of the Father—all the rest of these theological stories do nothing in any way to obscure the plain and universally admitted historical fact that this Divine Person, the Very God of Very God, being of