

humble instruments in carrying out the loving will of our Heavenly Father: in lowliness of mind, praying for the Divine blessing, and confident in the Divine promises, ministering the Gospel of the Grace of God to the souls that we love: and thus, in promoting the Kingdom of Truth and Righteousness, may we fulfil the sacred mission of the Church of God, by preparing the world for the Second Advent of our Lord.

A. (1.) *The Duty of the Church to the Followers of Ethnic Religions.*

Your Committee have had in view the non-Christian peoples, other than Jews and Mahommedans, in two great groups, those who may be called literate, inasmuch as their creed rests more or less directly on ancient writings, and implies a more or less complete philosophy of life: and the illiterate, whose beliefs and rites are matter of tradition and custom, and are not, as a rule, associated with any instruction in conduct.

We see that Christian zeal for the conversion of the heathen is apt to be dulled, especially in regard to the literate systems, and perhaps in particular to Buddhism, by an exaggerated or false opinion of their excellence. While we thankfully recognise the work of God the Holy Ghost in many glimpses of truth, theological and moral, which appear in these systems, we are bound to assert, first, that no such system as a whole supplies in any adequate degree the truth about God and about man's relation to Him, or presents any sufficient motive for right conduct, or ministers to man any strength higher than his own to aid his weakness; and, secondly, that, apart from any estimate we may form of such systems, it is matter of Divine Revelation that in Jesus Christ alone there is salvation for men, that He has been constituted the Saviour and King of Mankind, and that to Him are due the loyalty and love of every member of our race.

The books in question are known, to all but very few, by extracts only, and a few passages culled from a mass of what is generally puerile, false, or even corrupt or corrupting; they inevitably appear, when translated into language moulded by Christianity, more Christian than they are. Further, such excellent precepts and ideals of conduct as they exhibit are generally vitiated, for those who profess them, by a philosophy, which destroys or paralyses the sense of responsibility.

This appears in the results. These religions have not produced, to any considerable extent, the conduct which they appear calculated to produce: their temples are too often scenes of vice, and the lives of their so-called priests, in some countries at least, too often conspicuous examples of evil. To the mass of the people the contents of their books are almost unknown, unless in the case of certain popular stories, and the practical religion of the masses is unaffected by them. The majority of those who are classed as believers in these literate religions, are worshippers of demons, or of goddesses of small-pox and cholera, and the like; of most it may probably be said with truth, that they have no notion of any supernatural being who is not malignant. Their religion is one of abject fear, not of love or of moral conduct.

Recent attempts to establish in the light of Christianity a purified Hinduism or Buddhism, while they may claim some admiration, cannot be regarded as providing possible substitutes for the Christianity of the Church, based as such schemes are on pantheism or atheism, and denying, as they all do, the Deity of Jesus Christ. Rather they call for our utmost efforts so to establish and equip the visible kingdom of Christ in these lands, that men who are being now detached from the faith of their ancestors may find their home among His people. With this great end in view, while we rejoice over every individual conversion,