

ON THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS.

THERE can be only one answer in the present day to the question whether a comparative study of religions should have a place in the curriculum of our theological colleges and in the training of our students for the ministry.

A knowledge of other faiths besides, and beside our own, is not only essential to the man who would go forth as a missionary to gain converts to the Christian faith from other creeds, but it is singularly helpful, if not positively essential to the man whose mission is to fill the office of the ministry even in a Christian community.

There was a time when the defender and propagator of the Christian faith thought he had nothing to do but claim divine authority, infallibility, for his creed—nothing to do but say to one and all outside—my creed is right—all other creeds are wrong: nothing to do but ignore or abuse all other systems and hold forth Christianity as the one only pure and true system. Christianity alone was revealed by God, inspired of God—all other religions were invented by man and inspired, so far as they had any inspiration at all, of Satan. It was long a prevalent and popular idea that the best way to magnify Christianity was to belittle, disparage, condemn all other religions—Christianity was divinely re-

vealed—all others were “natural” growths or human inventions. Christianity was of God—all other religions of man or worse. We have learnt to see that to take up any such attitude is to do a grave and serious injustice to Christianity and a wrong to God. Such a view would make the mission of Christianity only to destroy; we believe that it came not to destroy but to fulfil whatever of truth—whatever of God, there was not only in Judaism, but in every religion of the world. That old arbitrary, infallible method of treating other faiths, instead of bringing glory to Christianity only showed that it was not wide enough to meet the wants of humanity that find expression in any and all religions. The true glory of Christianity is that it recognizes, welcomes, fulfils every truth, that it meets every want, that it reveals in clearness the light that had only been seen in dimness, that it declares what men everywhere had been ignorantly worshiping. But not only is an injustice done to Christianity and an initial resentment raised against it by such an attitude, but a wrong is done to God and His Providence—it is tantamount to a denial of God's care for, or interest in, the greater part of His creation. Can we believe that for all these ages God has utterly overlooked the lar-