

in knowledge have long been restricted, and for this assistance Comparative Religion frankly owns its indebtedness. Nevertheless, the greatest of these mysteries still remain unsolved. Of Primitive Religion, so-called, we know to-day practically nothing—notwithstanding the ingenuity of numerous anthropological philosophers. As Professor Foucart puts it: 'A la vérité, cette religion n'a jamais existé réellement, mais la ténacité subtile de ses fondateurs lui a communiqué une vie factice; d'aucuns l'estiment même un peu briyante.'¹ But even had Anthropology been much more successful than it has proved to be in its attempt to determine the nature of man's earliest faith, Comparative Religion would still insist that the religious consciousness can best be studied in its highest and fullest expressions. Dr. Carpenter, in principle at least, recognizes the force of this contention when he writes: 'The history of religion is concerned with the process by which the great gods rise into clear view above the host of spirits filling the common scene, . . . with the manifold combinations which finally enable *one* supreme power to absorb all the rest.'² Dr. Fairbairn, in one of his latest volumes, delineated the situation admirably in the following forcible sentences: 'The attempt to find the origin and roots of religion—or to define and determine its function in history, and in the evolution of society—through the study of its meanest and most barbarous forms seems an altogether fallacious procedure. For religion is neither a peculiarity of the savage state, nor is it there that its social action can best be studied. . . . Like all things which do not die, its higher and more perfect forms are more significant of its real nature—and, therefore, of its actual source and cause—than any multitude of low forms or rudimentary types.'³

In a word, as it has elsewhere been emphatically affirmed,⁴ the dividing line between Anthropology and Comparative Religion must be drawn much more firmly and sharply than has been the custom hitherto. The pathways of these sciences, though for a considerable distance contiguous, are by no means the same. The major part of the data with which Anthropology busies itself has nothing whatever to do with religion—a subject with which Anthropology is only incidentally concerned. Yet to the anthropologist must be left the task of unravelling the origins of religion, whether in its general or in its particular forms. This quest makes high demands; it calls for the training and conscious

¹ Cp. George Foucart, *La Méthode Comparative dans l'Histoire des Religions*, p. 21. Paris, 1909. [New ed., 1912.]

² Cp. p. 103.

³ Cp. Andrew M. Fairbairn, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 214. London, 1902.

⁴ Cp. Louis H. Jordan, *The Review of Theology and Philosophy*, p. 688. Edinburgh, May, 1913.