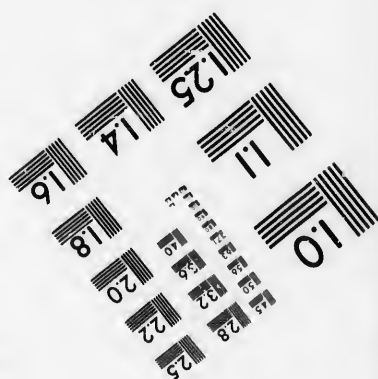
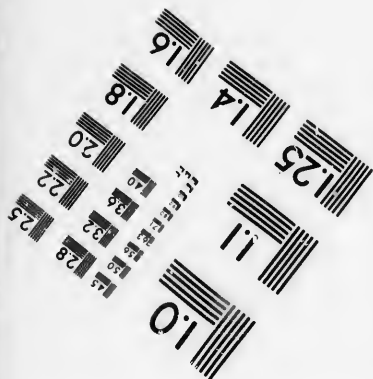
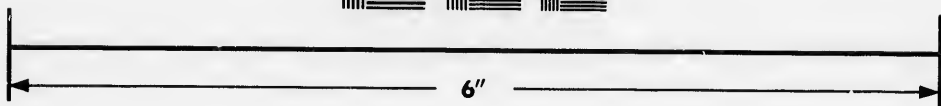
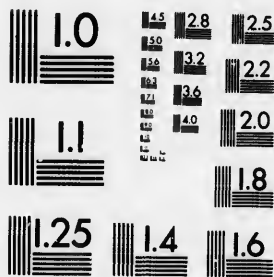


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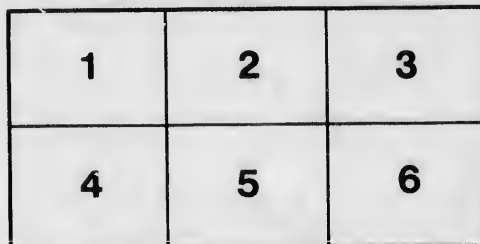
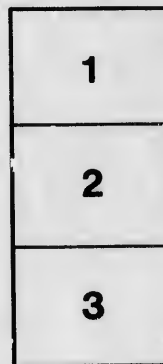
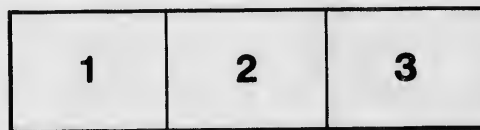
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THE SHADOWS:

OR

CHRISTIANITY THE IDEAL OF OUR RACE.

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Halifax Young Men's Christian Association,

ON TUESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 6, 1859.

BY

WILLIAM GARVIE.

Published by Request.

HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED AT THE WESLEYAN CONFERENCE STEAM PRESS.  
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## THE LIGHT AND THE SHADOWS.

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It was often said of old that the most distinctive feature of humanity, in contrast with earth's other races, was—not Reason, but—Religion. With some rare and unimportant cases which occur exceptionally in its rigid application, there is, notwithstanding, in this principle, a weight and a significance historically manifest. The instinct of inferior life, despite its narrowed and imperfect action, bears yet a faint relation to the majesty of man's intelligence, much the same as the tremulous grey streaks of early dawn bear to the golden flooding sunlight of the day's meridian. Those exquisitely geometric chambers which the wild bee frames, the marvellous structures of the beaver by the waters of the West, evince a capacity of design which almost seems an echo of reflective reason, rendering at least less total the disparity between Intellect and Instinct. But the awful grandeur of our moral nature has not the faintest counterpart within the sphere of brute existence; while the tribes of earth and air, acting by an innate impulse, like man may fashion dwellings, man alone uprears the altar and the temple—to the human soul alone is it permitted to realize in consciousness the vast idea of Divinity, the sublime necessity of Worship; while the mellow minstrelsy gushing in clear, cheery chorus from the woodbirds in the branches, all in the summer mornings since earth's fair prime, was but the utterance of that blind life which stirred within and overflowed in



song, there was higher aim and meaning in the solemn chaunt which rose with either twilight to the skies—especially in that calm pristine happiness, or ever the grim bleak sorrows of the Fall dispelled the glories of the Golden Age—when man, wearing the crown of stainless nature on his brow, was the primate also in its wide spontaneous worship, and uplifted at dawn and evenfall grand ascriptions to Creative power, adhering thus to that religion of nature which rounded in the bliss of his immortality. For when he that was our earliest ancestor walked innocent in Eden, fulfilling in his nature the design of his creation, his being moved in one harmonious circle of fruition; and, irresistibly impelled by its most essential elements of action, the moral consciousness and the sense of dependence on Omnipotence, his soul welled daily up in blissful fulness to his Maker. The earth was then a mighty temple, beautiful, pure, and holy with the homage of the creature—from the blind material atoms that obeyed the laws of the eternal source of all causation, up to man the high priest, offering, in the shrines of Eden, for himself and the subordinate creation, the incense of their adoration to Jehovah.

But that change we wot too well of passed with its train of awful consequences upon the race :

“ Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe  
That all was lost.”

In that disastrous hour which followed upon impious revolt, the bond of beauteous innocence, that, like the golden chain old poets dreamed of, linked earth to heaven's happiness, gave way beneath the heavy weight of human guilt and the curse that like an avalanche burst wrathfully on nature. The rich celestial glory that till then illuminated Eden waned slowly from the withering blossoms—leaving all things blank and

drear with loss and anguished apprehension, for behold, on its receding traces swept the dread *SIN-SHADOW*, darker than eclipse, that overspread the Heavens; and, when the pearly gates above shut in the latest lingering ray, that crept down upon the ruined world where man, the mightier ruin, wander'd horror-stricken in the darkness and the discord that broke stormily around him—as every raving element bewailed the misery of nature, in that, after countless aeons of progressive struggles for deliverance from death and change—long ere man arrived upon the scene—yet once more, shorn of beauty and defiled with suffering, must her death-chilled bosom be a prison and a sepulchre. The chords of harmony were snapped, and all the tones of nature sank in quivering vibrations of discordant sorrow; and when the wonted hymn from all the sounding spheres rolled grandly up in thundering diapason to the throne of the Eternal, one jarring voice disturbed their anthem—and yon far off stars gazed down in wonderment upon their younger sister at whose birth they sang as now together, blending with the joyful shout of seraphim that thronged to hear the Almighty's blessing on his finished work—then fair, but now enshrouded in a gloomy sorrow which the moon, following in her faltering path apart, grew pale with witnessing.

The light of immortality departed with that Age of Gold; and while within the universe each night gave place to morning, and sunlight streamed from heaven's dome as heretofore, a vast night, like the funeral pall of former joy, settled on the moral world; a night of blackness in the soul of fallen humankind, unbroken almost—broken only by the flickering light of erring reason, and the solitary ray of promise which gave earnest, as it gleamed across the wide abyss of sorrow, of a dayspring in the far off future; a night that deepened with the flight of years, as the outcast race went wandering grave-ward, marching, generation after generation, in the night,

in the centuries on centuries of night. This haze of moral gloom, and the swelling tide of sorrow that swept tumultuously through the hearts of careworn mortals, almost wholly blotted out the reminiscence of the happy past and the glory that had been—obscuring the true aspect of their present state, just as a heavy sea-mist, driving landward, veils the ocean and enwraps the rocky shores, till every grey crag peers dark and undefined through the shifting folds of the fog-curtains. They lost amid the darkness of such desolation the eternal lustre of the Good and the True which formerly irradiated the spiritual nature, making it thus a reflection, perfect in its kind, of the Divine. Not that they were destitute of a glimmering conception of what they had as well as what they had lost, for though evil had defaced that glorious image, yet was it so constituted that it could never lose its characteristic features, but must constantly exist in the style of the original design. They could not fail to discern that a glory had departed from the earth, that change and imperfection spread where higher things had been, and that humanity was haunted by a blighting sense of happiness forfeited and guilt incurred; they heard it whispered by a boding voice within, they felt it in the life-long yearnings that consumed their hearts—the longings for a lost ideal, for a glance beyond surrounding mysteries, beyond the shadows that separated them from that pure light of immortality, and that knowledge of the True, the Good, the Beautiful, which they felt to be so essential to their happiness, and that to the perfection of their being; they read it on the countenance of earth, scarred by the dread malignity of evil, yet wearing traces of a passive beauty that the spoiler might not totally efface; in their darkened souls sin-gusts stirred up passions which their evil breath had first distempered, to struggle with each other uncontrollably, and yet they felt that it ought not so to be—for a something more than memory hinted at a perfection and

a knowledge belonging, perhaps, to some forgotten life, anterior to their present state, and bedimmed by the sorrows and darkneses which flowed around them as they journeyed on to the Unknown. And then close questionings perplexed them respecting this Unknown, this veil behind which the great life-current glided wave by wave. Was all beyond it nothingness? Or did the stream leap out into a world of light, and mingle with great seas of rest, restored to all humanity had lost and longed for? Like sere leaves drifted through the forest paths by the north wind went the generations of the sons of men; yet yearly did the voice of south winds and warm murmuring rain call up a budding life; did any mighty voice dispel the trance of death, and bid mortality welcome to an immortal home? and if so, could not one voice come back through intervening shadows with tidings of that undiscovered land? So like the "blind bat searching air for light," they strove to solve the enigma of existence; till, wearied with their unavailing toil, they looked out upon the universe, if haply they might find among its labyrinthine mysteries a clue to guide them up to Truth. And Nature met their troubled gaze with an answering glance of sorrow and appeal; on man, wherever he might turn, she fixed an eye of suffering; in the wildest solitude he was confronted by "a presence that would not be put by," a presence out of rock and stream that in his spirit's ear muttered some secret, or perhaps besought him to free creation from her bonds by some mode she strove to make him understand—in vain, for all her tones were strange as those of a forgotten language, and he could only catch the sorrow of her voice, could only feel that matter, like the higher being, grieved for lost perfection, and struggled with the pangs of ruin and decay. Her cry was on the shores; for there the melancholy main broke drearily—its billowy swell now surging wildly up, now sweeping wasted back in restless alternation, uttering to the wave-worn crags a hollow

voice of moaning evermore—a sad monotonous refrain that rang the same upon a thousand shores. And as he looked with longing eyes across the waters for the “light that never was on land or sea,” he heard the gusty wind come trailing through the forests, waking as it went the hoarse grim firs, and blending the deep angry shout of oak and cedar with the fitful wailings of the willow. As when the centre-wheel of some huge machine is broken, and on the instant all the wondrous mechanism rushes rattling into ruinous confusion—every link, and bolt, and wheel grates harshly on its fellow, in a mutual mutilation—round and round the giant iron arms whirl madly through the air, meeting with destructive crash in each successive revolution—till the mighty framework sinks, a shattered, shapeless mass, even so within the once harmonious universe it was evident that the circle of celestial perfection had been rudely snapped, and thus her wide departments clashed discordantly. Inanimate existence was shaken to the centre with elemental war, seathed and wasted by the flame, the flood, earthquake, siroc, and tornado: while an evil more malign vexed every living form; the solitudes were startled with the roar of savage conflict and the death-shriek; ravine roamed the desert, gaunt, and grim, and gory; nor did havoc dwell among the wastes alone—but men met men in vengeful battle-shock, and the clash of blood-stained weapons, and the war-shout, and the tumult of the carnage, rose ever and anon amid the shadows—for the great **SIN-SHADOW** and that other **SHADOW, DEATH**, grew deeper in the universe, enwrapping life and nature closer with a shroud of desolation. The whole creation groaned indeed and travailed mightily in pain, crying in all tones of anguish, from the thunder burst of riven matter to the “still sad music of humanity.” Yet, as it cowered in gloom so cheerless, the spirit heard a secret voice far down in the depths of its benighted nature keep whispering of a great First Cause,

whose power produced existence and whose vengeance wrought this woe : some omnipotent Being to be sought out and appeased, that rest and happiness might return to the race,—and, panting for full knowledge, a cry went out from every heart for light. And yet that darkness need not have been hopeless, for the light of an ancient revelation still remained ; but from it they shrank with guilty trembling ; its ray was far too searching—far too distinctly it lit up the appalling aspect of their wrecking condition, bringing out every mark of degradation in the ghastliest relief. And as our eyesight, overpowered by the intense noon-beams is mocked by many-colored spectra—little unreal images of the sun's bright disk—so they, dazzled by the pure white light of Truth, and neither able to endure its lustre nor to stay the ceaseless cravings of their nature, clamorous without it, were drawn away to follow a thousand phantoms, the creations of distempered fancy—false illusions, whose semblance to Truth was all the falser from the closeness of the semblance. Like "Heosphoros," the star that rides vanward of the dawn, that ancient revelation was the harbinger of Christianity ; and those shadowy substitutes the mythic creeds, begotten of "vain imagination," and by which the human heart was "darkened."

The earliest form of heathenism seems to have been a slavish reverence for the great material powers—especially such as contributed to the genial reproductive influence pervading nature. The most remarkable of these was Fire. As incessant in its action as a spirit, the ascending spire of flame seemed ever to assert a heavenly origin ; like a divinity it purified and inflicted pain ; and, when its myriad burning streams burst roaring from the crater or enwrapped the crackling forest, earth knew no destroyer so resistless in its fury, or more merciless, than fire. Almighty vengeance in the ancient revelation of their Maker to the race was symbol-

led by "consuming fire:" reverting to the traditionary story of the Fall they recalled the circumstance of that mysterious sword of flame which, grasped by guardian cherubim, debarred approach to Eden's portals—flashing with an angry glare upon the tearful gaze of those homeless watchers that lingered in the wilderness beyond. Moreover, light seemed interwoven with the fiery essence; they beheld it radiant in the stars, blazing in the redwinged thunderbolt, and glowing with unmatched excess of splendour from the noonday sky; and when they saw how, day by day, the glorious sun arose, and drove the night from heaven, and cheered the wan creation till it smiled; how with the dappled dawn the flowers awoke in beauty and the woodlands rang with melody; how year by year he led the soft spring through the valleys, and with his genial beams induced the earth to bless her children with abundance ere grim winter should come shivering downward from the snow-capped hills—what wonder that they looked once more upon the skies with hope, and reared in all the sunny East the temples of the Sun-god? By the lilyed margin of Euphrates, among the roses in the Persian vales arose the shrines of Fire; and while the hymns of Zoroaster floated up the mountain-slopes to greet the dawn that gathered grayly round the peaks of Himalaya, far off beyond the nighthung seas—where on the Egyptian sands the mighty shadow of gigantic Memnon trailed behind the statue's base to screen its dark shape from the sinking moon—knelt many a swarthy worshipper within the hearing of the hoary Nile, that murmured in his slumbrous flow; while all—as silent as the solemn sculptured face above them—gazed like it expectant on the far horizon faintly streaked with growing twilight. Slowly in the eastern arch of Heaven a pale light flowed in upon the darkness, and a rosy flush upon the paleness; more brightly burnished grew the distant verge; till all at once a burst of glittering radiance flashed out upon the lands, at

once the streaming splendour poured its fullness on stupendous Memnon's brow; and, in the moment, from the glory-smitten lips brake mystic harmony—a full sonorous welcome to the orient god, his sire Osiris: and catching up the cry, the enraptured throng uttered all their heart in suppliant shouts and salutations, calling skyward to the Day-King, “Hail Osiris! Rise Osiris! Rise and shine, and scatter thou the darkness of the night and of our sorrows! With light and beauty bless our eyes Osiris!” So cried they in their joy to see the sunlight fill the heavens—and all the while the orb was heedless of their orisons, and the gloom of evil and of death grew darker in their souls, even as the early mists crept closer to the bosom of their ancient river.

On the Chaldean plains Fireworship assumed the aspect of Astrology; and many a weary vigil did the hoary seeker after wisdom spend gazing from the watch-towers along the walls of sleeping Babylon up into the boundless empyrean thickly strewn with stars. There before his eyes stretched cut the midnight heaven—glittering with its clustered glories ordained to show forth the Almighty's glory, and the grandeur of His handiwork. Nightly for a lifetime did the seer ascend his lonely post, and gaze upon that ample record in the firmament; and at dawning he went down sick at heart and groaning that he could not read it. Day unto day in his hearing uttered speech, night unto night showed knowledge, and sent it earthward like a falling star—and seeing it he knew it not. Every sparkler in yon wandering train, silent though it seemed, uttered forth a glorious voice, a voice all night as loud as when it thunders, and all a choir of voices pealing in illimitable space—“there being no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, their line is gone out through the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” Yet like those great voices which, according to Mahometan fable, go bellowing through the universe unheard by men, those starry tones



that shouted "Behold the True! lo here fair witness of the Good, the Beautiful," failed to pierce the clouded, undiscerning sense of those shepherd seers; to them the sweet influence of Pleiades was inscrutable, silent to them was Mazzaroth in its season, and all voiceless Areturus and his sons; without a sound, it seemed to them, that bright celestial army marched across the azure fields, looking coldly down upon the solitary earth, the star of graves. For this thing had the shadows done—the great Sin-shadow and that Other—they had chilled and weakened reason and obscured the spirit's vision, so that eternal truth was something incomprehensible to men—neither to be known or acknowledged by their blinded eyes. Thus these ancient sages, hungering in their hearts for higher knowledge, turned, through time, their eyes away from that eternal ocean sown with shining worlds; and, fixing them on cabalistic parchment, "changed the truth of God into a lie;" toiling all their evil span of years in vain, and going down into the vast Unknown, with not a star of hope to guide them in the gloom.

The most ancient of the superstitions, Fireworship was purer awhile in its details than many of the systems into which it eventually branched. At first it was simply symbolical, and preserved correctly in its allegories many features of primeval Revelation. The eternal infinity and omnipresence of a Divine nature was represented by the endless, boundless light; night, and storm, and winter—in contrast with light and heat—gave vivid illustration of the intervention of an evil principle whose dark malignity found a theatre for its opposition to the Eternal in this our portion of Creation—which, as was also taught, should be the scene of the last great struggle when a Deliverer, an incarnation of the Divine, should appear and overwhelm forever the dark troubler of the universe. But even truths like these, as we have seen, were overlaid by error and unholiness: and in the growing

degeneracy of the race were wholly misconceived. The struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, afforded grounds in Persian mythology for Dualism—a belief in the eternally independent and antagonistic existence of two rival powers, Ormuzt, the source of light and joy, and Ahriman, the evil soul of darkness ; to both of which, accordingly, homage and propitiation were enjoined by the sacred writings of the Magi. The doctrine of human accountability became the pretext for yet darker rites ; and the votaries who reared high places on the sandy flats of Shinar, or erected altars on the Syrian hills—that from such eminence they might the sooner greet the rising beams of Baal, the lord of light—frequented lonely valleys and dark groves of horror, where the voice of human victims went forth in shrieking, and their blood gushed hissing on the altar-fires of Moloch. The tribes that wandered, time after time, north and west from the shores of the Levant, bore with them the fearful fiery ritual of their fathers' creed, by which their natural depravity was developed more and more. Bel's mystic fire, that burned for ages in the palace-fanes of Babylon and Nineveh, was kindled in his name beside the Northern Sea. The venturesome Phoenician mariners that moored their tempest-beaten barks beside the misty crags of Cornwall or the thickly-wooded shores of Wales, found in Britain of the Druids shrines and rites akin to those they left behind them in their distant homes : echoes of their orient hymns stirred the dark oak branches, and went far resounding through the forest aisles ; grove and heath were grim with holocausts, and a foul fierce mystery, eminently Asiatic in its aspect, brooded like a shadow on the cromlechs of Stonehenge. The heights of our Fatherland, where the genius of Liberty now sits enthroned, glowed with Beal-fires in those dim soul-fettering days ; and the merry makings which still linger in the land—those rustic greetings which the May receives—owe, most of them, their

origin to heathen ceremonial, when praise was wont to be made for gladness that the spring was come; when the sun-god's return from out the South was celebrated with enthusiasm from the daisy-sprinkled slopes of Kent and Devon to the northern deer-trodden glens, where the foaming torrent, swollen with the thaws of Spring, and catching glimpses of the sunshine through the tassels of the larches, thundered out a pæan for its freedom and for the birth of balmy summer days. Nor were the higher intellectual efforts of the parent creed unknown to Druidism; but the Chaldee lore was rehearsed beneath the mistletoe, and the bards recited, in darksome penetralia, the doctrines of the soul's immortality and transmigrations, as also the agency of an Almighty essence, which, diffused infinitely through nature, was the centre and the sum of all existence. This affectation of mystery in the higher points of worship was universal, and arose from the necessity felt by the priesthoods, and the more powerful classes—with which these were almost invariably identified—of holding the masses in check by such appeals to their superstitious awe. And further, humanity was surrounded by so many mysteries that a Divine interposition was acknowledged to be necessary in solving the vast problem: to avow, accordingly, of any system that in it, no such provision had been made for the enlargement of human knowledge would, its wily teachers knew, be fatal to its progress; to offer any satisfactory solution from their own ignorance was on the other hand impossible; so that their sole resource lay in concealing their moral and intellectual destitution behind the veil of solemn mystery—a veil which few might pass, and those chiefly of the higher orders whose interest it was to keep tight the trammels on the public mind, which was directed to content itself with the outward observances of idolatry and the secondary manifestation of Divinity in all natural phenomena. In that materialistic spirit, arising from this selfish tendency to stop short at secondary

causes, the Pagan world drifted into Pantheism—a system which in every age has formed a common standing ground for various opinions, even for such so apparently opposed as those of the Atheist and Polytheist. It was fascinating to the first from the facility it afforded in evading the insoluble problems which hemmed in the reason; while the latter found in it full scope for the morbid propensity of his terror-goaded mind, which led him to pay an abject and indiscriminate deference to all forms and powers of nature, if haply he might stumble, as it were, upon their hidden source. Materialistic Pantheism most affected Egypt, where the sublime ideas of life immortal and incarnate deity gradually lost their high significance in a grossly servile adoration of all the phenomena of Being, even to the meanest. Acting in its idealistic phase, it sapped the early lofty spiritualism of India: a grand religious structure which, rising on the truths revived from the pristine revelation in the venerable pages of the Shasters and the Vedas, was magnificent with the spoils of ancient science, and enriched by the abstract speculations of the remarkable Hindoo mind. Infected by the subtle poison of a misapplied philosophy, and influenced by the sensuous spirit of the times, Hindoo Theology became encumbered early with Mythology. They had at first the grand conception of a Divine Triad proceeding from a self-existent Unity. Brahm, they taught, was the eternal One—existing without power, intellection, or moral attributes; and since no direct act could be performed by a being so devoid of all efficiency, three divine emanations from his essence respectively contrived and ruled the universe: Brahma, the Creator, Seeva, the Destroyer, Vishnu or, perhaps more strictly, Ishnu, (the man with us,) the Deliverer whose successive incarnations were for the restraint of overflowing evil, and the ushering in of more regenerated epochs. The attributes and actions of these three were in the pantheistic spirit personified as their de-

scendants until Gods were numbered by millions, or rather they were numberless. And as this gigantic Theogony was the creation of an unrestrained imagination, so did it reflect the weakness and corruption of that and all the fallen faculties, being in the highest degree contradictory to Intellect, and loathsome to Morality.

Thus throughout the world the murky pestilence of superstition was more and more diffused; and though in every generation master spirits burned with ceaseless aspirations to thread the labyrinth of nature, and gain the presence chamber of the Eternal, ever baser and more sottish grew the masses—deeper, deeper, deeper, did they sink into the slime of their depravity. The creeds and systems that arose in Shinar, and Ormuz, and Memphis, spreading, with varied alteration, eastward to the hazy waters of the Indian Archipelago, and westward to the seas that boom among the icefloes on the rugged shores of Thule—or even further, till the golden light, traversing giant Andes, met the children of the Sun standing by their curiously carven altars, whereon mingled blood and fire gave a welcome similar to that which shot from Zendavistic fanes within the shadow of the Himalaya—all the idolatries, in short, of all the nations, had but involved them more fatally in the darkness of the SHADOWS, in the horror and the sorrow of that great SIN-SHADOW and the OTHER. In the moral world, as in ancient Egypt, there was darkness that might be felt; and yet as in the dark Egyptian land there was a heaven-born light, so was there a great central light amid the moral darkness, and that, as then, in the dwellings of the Israelites. This light, in early days enkindled at the source of truth, and kept alive in a line of Patriarchs, had been brought within the reach of those mighty Canaanitish races who sat within the shadows; and being thence withdrawn that these, departing from its remembrance, might multiply iniquities until their cup was full, it shed its lustre

from the tents of Jacob upon the besotted Paganism that reigned around the Pyramids, till its mission of warning there had been accomplished, when it was recalled; and shining in the centre of the chosen people, was renewed at Sinai, and finally established in the land of promise—there to beam a star of hope unto the nations “until Shiloh come.” Separated from all the other races, the Jewish nation basked in the clear calm light of a Theocracy which secured to them that lofty spiritual appreciation of the Divine, and that speciality of Providence so fully evidenced in their character and history. The humblest Hebrew lad that tended the bleating flocks on the breezy slopes of Hermon—the simple maiden gleaner in the harvest fields of Bethlehem—had a pure conception of the Good and True, so elevated that the colossal intellect of Plato has achieved immortality in soaring to such level; but which a Tacitus, with all his intellectual pride, could never comprehend.

The Hebrew records are emblazoned with many a story of deliverance and triumph, accomplished for his chosen people by Jehovah; and while they abode by their allegiance to their heavenly king the nation's growth and progress were rapid and remarkable. Then Judah's bowmen braved the onset of Philistia's spears, and rolled the battle backward to the gates of Gath; they held the robber Edomite at bay among his rocky mountain passes; and when the mailed invader dared dispute the sacred soil, many a wounded fugitive plashed across the fords of Jordan with tidings of disaster, to awake the voice of lamentation in the homes beyond the hills of Moab. Neither conquerors nor merchants in the full sense of such terms, and wanting much that seems essential to a nation's greatness, their monarchy reached the zenith of a splendour under Solomon that no time has seen surpassed. The wealth and luxuries of distant countries flowed into the land; the voice of gladness and festival was yearlong in her

borders; the gorgeous ritual of their worship was worthy of its sacred grandeur. Their majestic temple, rearing up its pillared beauty and its fretted pinnacles, massive with the strength of cedars, richly decorated with the highest reach of Tyrian art, sumptuous with the gold of Ophir, the treasure and the fragrant products of Araby the Blest, had a refulgence yet more dazzling in the awful Shekinah—the burning sign of the presence of the Holiest for the reception of His people's adoration. The Levite laid the sacrifice upon the altar when the rising day began to brighten towards Hebron, while his brethren raised the chaunt of praise; wreaths of incense met the falling dews, and the quiet grove-hung terraces of Olivet gave echo to the evening psalm; while ever at appointed seasons the multitudes of Israel hastened in glorious procession—with the grave, sweet melody of voiceful anthems, of timbrels, harps, and viols, and at intervals the loud, long flourish of the trumpet,—to the Queen-like Jerusalem where, with resplendent ceremonial, they paid their vows, and making, through the high priest, atonement for iniquity, renewed their remembrance of that mighty promise which pointed to a coming renovation of the race, and a complete deliverance from the domination of evil.

Yet they wandered again and again from that pure light into the darkness of the evil shadow: preferring as time sped on, the polluting rites of Baalim, and the revels of Astarte, to the noble majesty of Eternal Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Judgment followed judgment, yet they clung with perverse infatuation to the Syrian idols, seeking guilty groves, to listen to the tale of wounded Tammuz, and do homage to the queen of heaven. Dark, fierce clouds of woe swept trailing through the land, and the oracles of Heaven uttered in their ear denunciations of their impious outbreaks, and threatenings of imminent, terrific ruin. The voices of the seers—animated by prophetic fire—poured forth, in awful

and impassioned imagery, warnings of the coming crash of tempestuous calamity; from one came, in inspired strains of epic, unapproachable sublimity, the burden of the Valley of Vision; from another burst the eloquent appeal to the wanderers, and the heathen whom they joined in worship of the host of heaven, to "seek after him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night, and calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth;" and from all wild lamentation for the waning of the Light, and the ruin that should burst on Judah's cities, and sweep joy and gladness from the vales of Palestine. The people, notwithstanding, held their downward way—until the ruthless oppressor came up against the land, trampling down their power, and bearing off the miserable population that survived the fury of the sword into mournful exile, to toil for strangers, or to wander by the alien's river and weep for far off Jordan, and Zion's vanished glories, till their hearts were breaking.

During the years of his captivity, the prophecy of the Messiah lost its primal meaning in the mind of the vindictive Jew: his nationality, at all times narrow, was now fiercely exclusive; and instead of looking for that Light which should overpower the Shadow, and unveil the True, the Good, the Beautiful to redeemed humanity, he madly pined for a warrior prince who should break the Gentile yoke, and, with garments rolled in blood, take fearful vengeance on the oppressor—unfurling the triumphant banner of the House of David by the glare in Edom of flame-ravaged cities; and, amid the wailing of the stricken nations, leading up the victor hosts of Israel to Zion's gates, with harp and trumpet all, and shouting like the sea—till the tumultuous swell of exultation should go onward in the land, and rouse in Lebanon a responsive crash of echoes, rolling like the sullen summer thunder through his craggy precipices.



It was when the spiritualistic Ideal of humanity was obscured by the decline of the Jewish Kingdom, that the human intellect awoke to fuller activity and reached its culmination in the halls and Academic groves of Greece. From earliest days the Greek had been an ardent worshipper of the Beautiful—and while he drew the materials for his creed from the venerable gloom of the Egyptian and Phoenician superstitions, yet did his sunny, exquisite imagination so deftly shape them from their native rudeness, and so shed full splendour round the whole, that his mythology seemed rather a new creation than what in fact it was, a higher effort after the Ideal made upon the topmost reach of those elder structures. Feeling as keenly as any within the circle of ancient civilization that vague sense of want which bowed down humanity, the Greeks sought early to discover more surely than the rest had done the precise nature of the soul's distress, and to attain the remedy. Out of the old, old time, the plaintive burden of a mournful song comes down to us; a cry that from out the "depths of some divine despair" rose in the heart of the simple peasantry dwelling in the quiet Ionian vales—who, instead of rejoicing in the glad plenteousness of Autumn, as with sickles flashing on the harvest-yellowed uplands they followed on the falling corn, turned waywardly to sorrow; as, every year, the dreariness recurred and moved them in blind melancholy to renew among the vine's ripe clusters the lament for Linus, for dead Linus—an impersonation, like Syrian Adonis, of the stirring life and beauty of the vanished Spring. To stay their sadness they turned to the gods of such as Cadmus and Cecrops who wandered to their shores; they made

"Commodious place for every God:  
Promptly received as prodigally brought  
From the surrounding countries, at the choice  
Of all adventurers."

So that a little further on, but yet within the twilight of the legendary past, we find the "heroic song of ancient days" celebrating the deeds and glory of the immortals who in well-ordered concert ruled the universe, and, circling round majestic Zeus, held high state upon Olympus. These divinities were known through nature. Zeus, the cloud-compeller, rode rumbling on the thunder-glooms; Apollo was the sun-god, with his shafts of light; while Vulcan glowed among the nether fires; Ocean even, the earth-shaker, was the home of a billowy deity, from whose deep-sea halls went many a wierd immortal to dance among the shore-fretted foam, or wind the sounding blast from wreathed shells away upon the rolling blue. The hills too had their habitants, the woodlands, and the streams; every sunny slope of olden Greece was crowned with marble fanes, with sacred shades of olive and of myrtle; altars to the water-nymphs—the Naiads—stood among the lilies at the placid fount of every river; and when straying in the forest glades where the light came quivering through in checkered gleams, the wanderer trod with holy awe such spots where mighty Pan—the spirit of the wilds—might but a little space before have lain and charmed the listening fauns and dryads with his melodious reed, till interrupted by the coming tread of mortal feet among the rustling leaves. Not a green leaf stirred, not a foam-bubble danced, that did not suggest to the charmed Greek that in each and all

"Some shape of beauty moved away the pall  
From his dark spirit."

This imaginative religion—luxurious in its sensuous though subtle perception of the Beautiful—pervaded all the life of the Greek people. It was the motive in their games, their arts, their literature—in all of which they sought to look on their Ideal face to face. And in the development of the

other department of our intellect, the reasoning power, the same object was kept in view—an approach to the Beautiful, the True, the Good, as inherent in the Eternal. “Toiling with patient steps of thought,” the mighty intellects who longed for a loftier range of purer knowledge than the realms of sense afforded, sought in the domains of proud philosophy the solution of life’s twofold problem—what was contradictory in the human, and unexplained in the Divine. At first their philosophy, like their mythology, was reproduced from the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile. Thales and his disciples in the Ionian philosophy—the eldest of the Grecian systems—arrayed and amplified the dogmas of the ancient pantheism ranging from Egypt to India; and, setting out from the doctrine of an Eternal, absolute unity—the cause of all existence—assigned to it a material essence in the form of water.

Differing from this purely physical system, the Pythagoreans regarded the universe in a more moral and scientific aspect. Improving, with a grander mathematical method, on the physical theories of Thales, and bringing out in clearer lines the harmonious working of the universal laws of nature, they distinctly taught, besides, the agency of good and evil,—maintaining the soul’s immortality, and its transmigrations in the inheritance of rewards and punishments. Other sections of the philosophic method were, the Eleatic, with an ardour of impassioned aspiration throbbing underneath its rigid metaphysical abstractions; the specious slippery teachings of the Sophists; and the mighty towering palace of intellectual truths which Plato upreared on the symmetrical basis founded by his master. There is nothing more sublime in the history of philosophy than that Platonic system; after the Gospel of Christianity it has exerted the greatest influence on the mind of man. To the majestic utterances on his lofty pages noble souls have, in all the ages, thrilled respon-

sive, and have followed spell-bound in his awful path across the vast immensity of thought, till filled with solemn awe, and wearied with delight. It rouses up the life about one's heart to think of this

“ Gray spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought ”

—to watch him wandering apart upon untrodden heights of speculation under the dark shadows ; climbing higher, and still higher ; moving on and onward through the profound Unknown that stretched endlessly around ; till he reached the last attainable limit of his consciousness, and standing, as it were upon that verge, desecrated afar the Light and Darkness bordering each other with a roseate fringe of dawn. Forced to pause upon the threshold of this higher knowledge he dwelt beside it, eagerly wishing for power to cross the intervening chasm and journey to the halls of light : and seeking to dispel the night-cloud overhanging human knowledge by the lamp of his philosophy, through which the finer instincts of his spirit beamed in clear reasonings and wondrous allegories, enkindled by the glimpses he had caught of Truth and Goodness immutable and Divine. Yet his solitary ray could not overcome the Shadows, but was overcome of them ; and after his era—despite the bright influence of the Stagyrte—philosophy burned dimmer gradually ; flickering feebly in the Schools of Scepticism, in the chilling porticoes of Stoicism, and in the corrupt haunts of wallowing Epicureanism.

Such were the chief struggles of the ancient race to pierce beyond the darkness into the light of Heaven ; and such, after centuries of agonizing effort, was their melancholy issue. The night is at its darkest when the day is born ; and the darkness of the moral and intellectual world was deepening

thicker as the coming hour of light drew nearer hand. Degeneration was plainly written on the features of the systems of antiquity whose aim at first had been elevation of humanity to perfection—to a glad and glorious communion with the Divine. Every portion of man's nature had vented itself for this end—in vain. The energies of sense—the simply animal principle—had sought development in the stupendous schemes of earlier days, when “there were giants on the earth;” when they reared with unremitting toil the towers of Belus and the Pyramids, and wrought misshapen sculptures in the caves of Elephanta; when the swords of Nimrod, Sesostris, and a kindred host of conquerors flashed victoriously throughout great empires which it was their pride to sway as forcefully as they had won them. Yet their ancient civilizations were disappearing. Egypt had been early smitten, never again to recover her national independence, or to stand straight in the fierce presence of the foreign spoilers. The royal magnificence of Babylon and Nineveh was wholly blotted out; and, in their stead, huge grass-grown mouldering mounds were cumbering the marshes near the rivers. The splendid Macedonian empire, measured by the bannered march of royal Alexander, crumbled with the crumbling of the hero's dust; the free swords of Greece were broken long before; and Rome alone of all the nations sat at this time in the splendor of unrivalled power, crushing with colossal strength the native liberties of all who fell within her reach. Her veteran cohorts stirred with songs of victory the moss-hung branches in the far Sarmatian forests; beneath her banner on the British heights, the sentinel paced, hearkening to the thunder of indignant seas; the haughty eagles of her legions glanced in Libya's sunlight; and basking in the peaceful lustre of Augustus' sway, the queenly city dreamed only of endless prosperity and dominion. This calm look of strength, however, was more seeming than substantial. Rome, in

fact, despite her wide-spread territorial sway and lavish opulence, had outlived her grandest days. From her primitive republican simplicity the change was for the worse to the luxurious glitter and the trailing purples of the empire. The lusty hardy summer of her growth was past; and the borrowed Asiatic splendour which she wore was but the hectic flush which hints too surely at decline; or as the variegated richness of our forests when the Indian summer dyes the maple leaves with gorgeous hues—so mournfully beautiful because they bode decay. In the listless enervation of the imperial days were sown the fatal seeds of dissolution; and it was early felt that the later Roman, more refined than his stern ancestors, the Bruti and the Scipios, had lost the noble spirit of the “brave days of old;” so that while the courtly bard could attune his lyre to strains of flattery, and sing in Cæsar’s hearing

“Custode rerum Cæsare non furor  
Civilis aut vis exigit otium  
Non ira quæ proculdit enses  
Et miseros inimicat urbes”

—he was yet compelled, in graver moments, to give wild expression to his sorrow for the doom so plainly heralded by angry thunderspots rising in the political horizon—

“Altera jam teritur bellis civilibus ætas  
Suis et ipsa viribus Roma ruit,” &c.—

and to utter the hope that yearned within him for the renovation of the earth in that golden age expected now so eagerly in every land—for the night was darkest now. The mythic fancies of the Heathen had deceived them. They had called upon the Gods to give them light, repining in the chilling darkness, and dying with the cry “No light!” The fabled days of the intercourse on earth between Gods and men they never realized; and while clinging to the promise, how-

ever obscured, of an incarnate Deliverer, they sought further to raise the human to the Divine. They deified the mighty and the wise of earth in hopes that thus they should succeed in supplying the lost link between themselves and the Divine. From Western Asia they sent Zoroaster to represent the race in the "land of the hereafter," and from the East Confucius. From Egypt went Thoth, Menu, and Osiris; Perseus, Theseus, Cadmus, and Alcides, from the hills of Greece; and Odin from the Northland. These and a host of others departed with Divine honors; but never more did they return—Prometheus like—with heavenly fire and light to bless the race. A Phidias might carve the marble till he shrank with awe to see the Thunderer's frowning brows beneath his chisel; and an Apelles bring out upon his canvas the foam-born goddess in such beauty that his spirit thrilled and he stayed his brush for fear of sacrilege; and yet the human heart, out-poured in moaning at the statue's base, met no responsive sympathy in the cold, stony eyes of the idol. The Delphian and Memphian oracles, ambiguous from the first, were now faltering into silence; and such higher mysteries as those of Eleusis were fallen into disrepute—having, from their jealous exclusiveness, no hold upon the heart of humanity. "It was easier," we are told, "to find a god than a man in Athens;" but men's hearts mistrusted that the Eternal One was not yet found; and often did the votary turn dispirited from the soulless Pantheon—whose beauty mortal hands had given—and lay his offering by the altar dedicated to the "Unknown God." Then amid the heartless, sullen apathy that followed on the failure of systems, men heard more distinctly the great undercurrent of the promise of incarnation and deliverance which was hidden amid the moral gloom and the massive lumber of mythology—even as I have heard, in the solemn stillness of the forest, a stream go gurgling underground—dashing blindly, with many a trip and tumble, over sunless

stones, to leap out into the light. Inspired, therefore, with new hope, a murmur of expectation ran throughout the lands that an era of renovation was about to dawn upon the world. The Hebrew, as the glitter of the Roman spears upon Moriah dazzled his weeping eyes, muttered, amid suppressed maledictions, a prayer for him whose chariot seemed to linger, to arise speedily and scatter yon accursed cohorts who defiled, with overweening pomp and bloodstained steel, the beautiful courts of the temple: the Heathen, on the other hand, more vague in their ideas, looked chiefly for some Divinity who, like ancient Saturn, should descend to earth and lead back the peaceful innocence and tranquil glory of the Golden Age—when the gods would come shining again in the likeness of man, and love and justice with white hands should sway from sea to sea. It was dark, the night was wearing late. “What of the night?”—men cried, “Watchmen, what of the night?”—and after a space a voice came out of Shinar, from the venerable sages who pored upon the heavens, saying, “*Arouse*, oh earth, thy *LIGHT is COME*, thy King is born—we have seen His star in the East!”—and afterwards the doors of heaven opened, and a glittering throng swept grandly down so near to earth that the groves of Bethlehem, steeped in quiet moonlight, echoed to that glorious anthem—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men!”

Yes, THE LIGHT was risen! there was morning in the world! Over the hills of Palestine Christianity poured its conquering rays into the evil shadow, uttering the Glory of God and Love to human-kind—those golden keys which unlocked the doors of darkness and let in the new, clear light: higher did it climb in the world’s horizon; and behold, the shadows fled before it, and many an evil phantom, many a brooding terror, begotten in those centuries of night, and oppressing poor, forlorn humanity like a night-mare, spread their foul goblin



wings and disappeared before the widening day. The marvellous changes which followed the inauguration of the newborn faith are portrayed with marked distinctness on the pages of history ; and wondrous tales of portents attending the advent of Emmanuel teem in the traditions of the early Church, and the contemporaneous writings of the Heathen. One of the most remarkable of these may be cited here from Plutarch, a Pagan writer, rather to shew the striking coincidence in the tendency of Heathen and Christian thought at such a time, than to place much stress upon the intrinsic merits of the legend itself, which relates to an event occurring about the time of the Redeemer's resurrection, and, as some suppose, connected with it. In the hazy twilight—according to the legend—when the glowing flush of sunset had empurpled all the waters interlaced among the Ionian isles, a solitary bark lay with lagging sails and idle prow, becalmed upon the deep. Her mariners—all weary of the oar—were gazing at the shadow of the shores beside which their vessel lingered as if spell-bound, and wondering what kept the loitering wind so long from following them upon the seas, when, suddenly, rustling wings were heard aloft ; a voice among the shrouds then hailed the steersman who, like the rest, stood awestruck, listening with dumb, white lips, as thrice in tones of terrible command he was enjoined, when sailing past a certain spot, to slack his vessel's course, and call over to the shores, "Great Pan is dead !" The speaking ceased, the wind came up and filled the sorely sighing sails ; and pressing forward—heavily at first, then faster with the rising gale—the vessel held right on her way. With beating heart the pilot saw the spot the unearthly voice had mentioned looming gradually up athwart the distant boundary of sky and sea : and many an anxious look the seamen cast to windward—for they had resolved, if the breeze held fresh, to sail past unheeding, nor perform the wondrous command unless becalmed. But, as they drifted nearer

thither, the sails flapped backward, and drooped motionless,—the prow paused dripping in subsiding foam—the soft wind left the seas—and, hushed in tranquil calm, the great deep slumbered—widely placid—save where here and there a gentle ripple bent in wavering lines the shadows of the spars, or brightened as it glanced upon the rising moon. It was then that, stepping to the bulwarks and looking out upon the hushed expanse, the pilot called aloud, “Great Pan is dead.” Immediately, as the words rang through the stillness, a sigh—from out the very heart of horror as it were—surged upward from the depths, the air was stirred with rushing wings, and the tumult of innumerable voices that caught up the cry, “Great Pan is dead!”—that repeated it with shriek, and roar, and shout,—that bellowed it on every side till aether was rent with mad reiteration. High above the wind that came up wailing, and the hoarse resoundings of the affrighted surges, swept that tempestuous burst of sorrow to the moaning shores—when cry on cry awoke the startled hills to multitudinous reverberations; till all voices of blast and wave and precipice swelled the deep dire crash of lamentation, “Great Pan is dead!” Ever and anon brake forth the clamour—waxing fainter as it went toward the stars, or died away among the far off mountain lakes, whose gushing wavelets were sobbing in low syllables of sorrow to the trembling reeds, “is dead—is dead—is dead!” Yes—DEAD! Great Pan, the mythic centre and embodiment of universal agency in the erring though beautiful mythologies of former times was gone.—Old things had passed away, behold all things had become new. The glory was departed from the Delphic and Olympic shrines—“their oracles were dumb”—and, amid the cheerless twilight of decay, the shadows were fast gathering round the portals of the idol fanes, for Reason’s torch was carried forth to meet the Crucified—who, travelling in the greatness of his strength, brought life and immortality to light within the world.

Humanity had gotten its Ideal ; a higher than it dreamed of—higher than any Avatar promised to the devotee kneeling by the lotus-beds of Ganges ; higher yet than that gleam of glory from the Eternal which made great Plato's spirit shine—like Moses' face—with looking on it ; higher even than the Hebrew hoped for in his spiritual degeneration. That ideal was Christianity, as represented in the Divine life of its Eternal Founder, and continued by him through all ages to His redeemed Church, by which the dark world is lightened.

Within the limits of the present sketch, of necessity so imperfect, little but a general allusion can be made to the ceaseless progress of the Christian system as it went forth conquering and to conquer. Brought into conflict as deadly as any between the True and False must be, it triumphed signally in each successive shock, and emerged from tribulation—as the moon from clouds, higher on its upward path than when it entered. It abashed the philosophic pride of Greece ; it scorned the proffered place in the Roman Pantheon ; it sought to reign supreme in the human heart, and held it base to share with the Olympian Deities the sacrificial offerings of the Pontifex Maximus ; and the opposition of that ancient Heathenism to it—even in the subtle form of later Platonism—was as helpless as “the dreamy struggles of the stars with light.”

The Gods of all nations, all the glory and power of ancient civilization, had been centred on the seven hills to confront the new creed, and every effort was put forth for its extinction. Its noble army of martyrs in their dying added to its life. “To the lions with the Christians,” was the cry in every amphitheatre ;—notwithstanding the christian gladiator stood unmoved on the arena, looking homeward above the sea of relentless faces that begirt him, to the circle of calm blue sky crowning the uncovered building. His voice was missed among

his brethren that night—that day there was another harp in heaven; and, fired by the martyr's illustrious example, many another heart beat bolder for the Truth, till the Truth prevailed—till the altar fires died out upon the Capitol, and the voice of Christian triumph under Constantine resounded in the empire. And when that empire fell with fatal crash—when the foundations of ancient politics were broken up as the fountains of the great deep, and floods of rude, resistless barbarism swept away the former landmarks—when the turmoil of nations, clashing like contending seas, had left its traces in the tossing groundswell, to pursue our metaphor, which agitated society, the light of Christianity beamed undimmed upon the troubled waters, and scattered a glad shimmering flash of glory far and near. The conquerors of Rome, Huns, Goths, Vandals, and the other warrior races, were themselves conquered by the Cross. The Light prevailed over the darkness irresistibly as far as the Scandinavian shores; it woke up a new life in the noble Northern heart with such rapidity as the Northern Spring awakes the flowers in the foot-prints of departing winter. The dawn-glory of Balder the Beautiful, the thundrous majesty of Thor, and all the wild grandeur of Valhalla paled before the "White Christ;" in the entrancing utterance of Revelation they found promise of a mightier, brighter future stretching on beyond the lurid "Twilight of the Gods." In seeking to account for conquests so remarkable, Gibbon has been forced to eulogize when labouring to disparage; and, while the reasons he assigns for the unrivalled spread of Christianity are palpably insufficient, some of them are such as many a hostile creed might be proud to urge for its extension.

Christianity, however, did not progress uniformly and without occasional interruption. Like an advancing flood, whose waves sweep back before they roll up higher on the beach, it too had its seasons of seeming reflux:—such as when Mah me;

and his Caliphs led the desert spears resistlessly against the cross; when their proselytizing steel flashed terribly throughout the East, and Saracen swarms made their war-cry the creed of millions conquered in their long, victorious ride as far as the Atlantic. Another ebbing-time was in the dark ages, when worldly luxury and selfishness spread enervation through the Church, and chilled the heart of civilization. The light of Truth came through the Evil shadow in distempered hues, as the white light changed in passing through the stained cathedral windows of those mediæval days. Art forgot its mission, and ministered to superstition; science lay in prison with a Galileo, and waited in timid silence for the morning wind to waft away the mists of error. Lawless partizan violence harrassed communities: Ecclesiasticism by turns was either inactive or encroaching, as the humour of successive pontiffs varied—some parading in pompous, endless ceremonial, sauntering through years of heedless ease, or brooding on wild, ambitious schemes of empire. In this state was the Church, averse to progress, drowsed with superstitious incense, and narrowing to unworthy aims—when she was startled from her fatal lethargy by the hammering knock of Luther nailing up his theses—the first standard of the Reformation—on the Cathedral doors of Wittenberg. That knock electrified all Europe, and roused a deep, strong current of Reform, civil and religious, which is rolling still. Again the even tenor of advancement to a full Ideal was hampered in these last centuries, by the implacable hostility of Atheism and the frenzy of Revolution; and, in addition to these spiritual and social obstacles, the more subtle intellectual pride of still later days. But these are merely the ebbing of Christianity's advancing billows, which recede but to roll in huger volume further up the sands of Time.

And what is its position now? It stands at present—especially in those lands in which it has been evolved from the

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cumbrous crudities of earlier days—the highest Ideal of the True, the Good, the Beautiful which humanity has yet attained or ever can attain. Its widening circle has a dark circumference, the black wings of the shadows hover still around it, but they serve by contrast to intensify the light. Christianity in its social aspect—as an intellectual and a moral ideal—gains by coming in contact with the falser creeds. Freedom and Improvement are identified with its cause, art and science are its hand-maids; among these it moves “a finer light in light.” It has asserted the divine right of manhood, and proclaims freedom to the slave; it has triumphantly recognised the proper social sphere of womanhood; it has given expansion to the intellect, and opposed a barrier to moral wrong; and, raising man to the vantage ground of its Ideal, it points through the glorious vistas of the future to a higher existence—a happiness ennobling and immortal!—and having done this can it meet a rival in any age or clime? Has the cross not conquered in the conflict with the antique creeds and systems, powerful though they were, and leaving after them imperishable traces of their splendour? Its brightest rays stream over to the nations from that peerless land which, under its fostering guidance, has become sacred to a liberty unknown to Athens in her palmiest days, and supereminent in such impregnable, colossal strength as makes Rome’s high majesty show dimly beside the grandeur and the glory of the great name of ENGLAND. Has it met a superior in those new realms which its civilizing power enabled men to seek? Not so—for Polynesia’s groves are polluted with abominations; Africa and the dreary wastes which prison in the polar seas. China, cramped by idol-worship, has stood for centuries upon the threshold of invention: with childish wonder has she gazed upon the title-page, so to speak, of Nature’s Book, nor got beyond the headings of the chapters. By the blaze of

Christianity Europe has deciphered Nature's context, and lit successive lamps of Science to search still farther, so that a Guttenburg has, with more than wizard skill, summoned from the printing press a gigantic power to mould the whole destinies of mankind; a Newton, "sailing in strange seas of thought alone"—the first human soul who followed the Eternal in those paths—has interpreted, as one inspired, the true harmony of the spheres; and a shining phalanx of the sons of thought and enterprise have curbed the elements and trained them to man's service—and, by giving almost an intelligence to matter, and a growing perfection to its energies, are fast redeeming nature from her helpless prostration under blighting Evil. Christianity is triumphant in Divine Philosophy; and its enemies who frequent such schools as those of German Pantheism and Rationalism feel more and more bewildered by the intellectual maze wherein they stray,—the cry from the dying lips of the great German Master is also theirs, "More light!"

Again, Mohammedanism, once the fierce rival of our faith, lies faint and crippled on the confines of civilization. The crescent moon of Islamism that, gleaming on the green banners of the Faithful, carried terror through continents, draws surely to its setting. Once it shone triumphant from the mountain-passes of Cabul, where the jeweled minarets Ghizni, "the Celestial bride," flashed out like a vision of enchantment—to the sunny borders of Castile, where the Moor rolled back the serried bands of Christian Spain, and lorded it in Alhambra's gorgeous halls. That pageantry has passed away. The ancient Paynim fire—so brilliant once when Saladin and his scimitars braved the heavy onset of the Latin lances, and matched the red-cross chivalry—has long since burnt out; and the Moslem now sees other masters of the realms once subject to the Caliphate; sitting in a contracted empire which was won, and ruled, and therefore ruined by steel

—cities and districts desolated by rapine and the constant feverish reactions of oppression and revolt—he sees the Christian West continually increase in power and opulence; her bulwarks, while they protect, are powerful, as he feels, to prostrate him in irremediable ruin. Christian Churches in Constantinople confront his sombre Mosques; with regretful eyes he watches many new forms of thought and action born of Christianity striking deep root and flourishing, when the throne of Solyman is tottering to its fall. While the daughters of Islam pined prisoned in the harem, the slaves of sensual despotism, the Sovereign Lady of the West has poured beyond the Bosphorus a brave array of Champions to battle for the right; and the lady Florence Nightingale, actuated by Christianity's most vital element, Philanthropy, has in his sight moved, like a ministering angel, among wounded warriors, asserting the noblest right of womanhood—the right to sympathize and so to confer encouragement, and blessing, and assistance. So—beholding all this—he sits in sullen apathy and waits the end. And so do they all, Brahmanism, Buddhism, the innumerable mythic fancies of earth's dark places, all wait the end. The key-note of the angels' anthem on the night of Advent is to them the voice of doom—thousands, sitting shackled in debasing forms of corrupt worship, start to their feet at the words of life which come over the seas, calling on all to “Give glory to God in the highest.” The world's heart is awed by the cruel murderous wrong which has died the skirts of Paganism with blood. For even in the clear atmosphere of Greek and Roman philosophy the heart's highest affections were shrivelled with the frost of evil. Men could not love humanity. While their passion for their native spots was ardent, a stranger was to them an enemy—they had but one word to denote both. The priest fenced in his faith, the philosopher his dogmas, with dark mystery; and while the voice of Christi-



anity is "Ho, everyone," their cry was, *Procul O procul este profani!* Under Stoic teachings men moved through a barren existence in joyless circles, running counter each to each, like ripples on a rainy sea; and even the Epicurean, by no means over precise, could say "I hate and scout the vulgar throng." The terms Philanthropy and Public benevolence, in their Christian acceptation, are absent from their language; their heathenism cannot show, like Christianity, a Howard and a Wilberforce; there are no remains in ruined Thebes, or Sparta, or Pompeii, of hospitals, asylums, and those humane institutions which abound in countries blessed with Gospel light. Ask the Hindoo of his belief, and he points to the car of Juggernaut, the Suttee, and the weapon of the Thug; the African, hugging his monstrous fetish, points to piles of grinning skulls,—and the bright Pacific Seas gird haunts of violence and wiles. To such as these the cross comes with its arms spread wide as east and west—proclaiming peace and good will—and coming it prevails. If its path is crossed by Evil—if the phantasms of error, gigantic with the growth of centuries, are gathering all their force to grapple with the advancing power of Truth, their efforts are but the convulsive agonies which precede the powerlessness of death. The winds of Liberty are abroad upon the earth, a stir of life runs throbbing through the moral wastes. There is ever a roar and a crash in the voes and the vales of the North, when Winter, who keeps the land in swoon, vanishes before the fair-faced Spring; the prolonged thunder of icefields rending, many a mile,—the deafening echoes in the hills when avalanches, like armies in the battle burst, dash headlong downward,—must precede the surging music of the free flashing waves and the breezy murmurs of the opening leaves. So the wide resounding roar of roused humanity in either hemisphere betokens surely that a heavenly energy is awakened. From continent to continent the Light sweeps,

reviving men's hearts ; Truth's ranks are filling up ; and, like deep calling unto deep, men bid each other arm for the impending struggle with the darkness of civil and religious oppression which hangs still above the horizon. Aye, still there above the horizon are the Shadows,—but higher yet in the heaven the Cross shines out against the storm clouds, where it once shone out to Constantine ; and, like him, men read the motto underneath "Through This The Victory !" What though the sky be dark with tempest and foreboding, we can see that hope of coming victory stream through—even as the voyager on the Pacific, when the deep is canopied with night, and the rosy flush of the day-break east of the Andes has not passed his silent peaks, sees rays of the risen sun beyond stream along the fissures in the mountain's-heart, and leap out into the darkness to announce the coming day. The blood-built thrones of despotism totter, and tyrants gaze with trembling on their palace-walls, where the hand of retribution, in characters of fire, writes Mene—Mene—Tekel ! Under the wings of the Shadows men pine at the imperfection of their soul's Ideal—there is a void, they feel, like that between the Red sea waters when they parted in the night. But the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared—and when a higher morn shall dawn, the current of a better life shall course again into the long deserted human heart. Against that morning the darkness struggles even now ; but vainly shall it struggle ; for, hurling her heavenly shafts of light into the shadows, great Christianity shall march resistlessly from shore to shore ; and nations now benighted shall discern in it humanity's Ideal, and shall flock around it to win the bliss of the Beautiful, the treasure of the Good, and the wisdom of the True. Then shall Truth

“Rule the spacious world from clime to clime,  
Her hand-maid arts shall every wild explore,  
Trace every wave, and culture every shore.  
Where barbarous herdes on Seythian mountains roam,  
Truth, Mercy, Freedom, yet shall find a home ;  
Where'er degraded nature bleeds and pines,  
From Guinea's coast to Siber's dreary mines,  
Truth shall pervade the unfathomed darkness there,  
And light the dreadful features of despair !”

Farther shall the discomfited Shadows flee away : farther,  
farther, and still farther shall the Light pursue them : till,  
spreading their dark vans of horror, they shall flee from under  
our heaven ; and as the waters cover the sea, Truth's efful-  
gence shall pour in upon the planet ; and humanity delivered  
into light eternal shall realize its full Ideal ; a celestial splen-  
dour, brighter than the light of countless suns, shall rise on  
the new earth ; shall rise but never set, AND NIGHT SHALL BE  
NO MORE !

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