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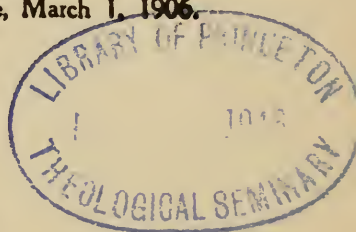
THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS INADEQUATE

BY ROBERT E. SPEER, M. A.

THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS INADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MEN

An address delivered before the Fifth International Convention of the
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BY
ROBERT E. SPEER, M. A.



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The Non-Christian Religions Inadequate to Meet the Needs of Men

It is of course as Christians that we approach this question. On grounds of history and of reason and of personal experience we hold unswervingly to the Evangelical faith. But this fact does not incapacitate us for a just judgment of the non-Christian religions. Men must inevitably approach these religions with some preconceptions, either the preconceptions of agnosticism, or the preconceptions of atheism, or the preconceptions of earnest religious faith; and the fact that we have already entered into deep sympathy with the religious needs of mankind does not constitute a disqualification for judging the great religions of the non-Christian races. No intellectual bias prevents us from believing that we can fairly judge whether or not the non-Christian religions are adequate to the needs of men.

And just as we are not prohibited from this discussion by any intellectual bias, we are not incapacitated for it by any prejudiced sentiment. We love the non-Christian nations more than the atheists and the agnostics love them. We understand them better than those who have never gone forth to live among them and to lay down their lives for them understand them. And in the light of our sacrifices for the non-Christian peoples, the fact that we are engaged in a great aggressive campaign to

displace and transcend their religions does not create any presumption that we are incapacitated by prejudice from judging justly whether these religions can meet the needs of men.

There are some considerations on which we shall not rest our conviction that the non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet the needs of men. We shall make very little of the obvious fact that great masses of men have broken away from these religions. I think the new character these men have attained makes their testimony to the inadequacy of the religions under which they had lived valid testimony. But we do not urge as against the non-Christian religions the defection of their own sons; for men have broken away from Christianity, and what we will not allow against Christianity we have no right to urge as against the non-Christian faiths.

Neither will we rest our contention on the alleged superiority or real superiority of what we call Christian civilization over the civilizations that have been developed under the non-Christian religions. For, first of all, there is no such thing as a real Christian civilization. We believe that the civilization that we call Christian is vastly superior to the non-Christian civilizations, but it is not Christian. It is at the best merely a midway resultant of the divine force pulling upward and the dead inertia of human sin and evil holding down. And we realize quite clearly that other elements than religion enter into the making of civilization. Racial and climatic elements enter. And we dare not overpress the argument for the superiority of Christian civilization until we have first learned to differentiate the sources from which that which we call civilization springs. Alas! there are many of us who are none too proud of what we describe by

this name. We would all share the conviction that our civilization is superior to the greatest of the non-Christian civilizations; and yet, even in this contrast, I think we must hang our heads in shame, as we look back over the last hundred years. We must confess, for example, that in spite of her stupidity and her crime, the great Empire of China has borne her wrongs with a patience and a self-control that we must fear would never have characterized our Western peoples. Yes, even of that great upheaval of six years ago, we must still say that given such provocation, the Boxer Uprising itself was tame and childlike in comparison with the rage that we Western peoples would have felt against wrongs so hideous and so infamous as those from which China suffered. We will not rest our contention that the non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet the needs of men on any overpressure upon the superiority of our Christian civilization as against the civilizations of the non-Christian world.

Nor, in the third place, do we intend to rest this contention on the declaration that the non-Christian religions are products of the evil one. A case might be made out for that contention. I remember very well a statement of Dr. Nevius at the first Student Volunteer Convention in Cleveland—and he was a grave and a sober man, and had lived for many years among a people whom he truly loved, and among whom he numbered many of his truest friends—that the bitter experiences of his life convinced him that the non-Christian religions, instead of being steps in an upward evolutionary movement of man toward the truth, were in practical effect just what St. Paul had described them, devices by which men fell away from the truth and

covered it over in the interests of lies. Indeed, in his book, "China and the Chinese," he says plainly of the religious systems of that Empire, "These forms of idolatry, while they evidence God's revelation of Himself in the human soul, are, with the most consummate art, so devised as to lead the soul farther and farther from God and to turn the truth of God into a lie." And it might be urged further in support of some such position, that we should only be ranging ourselves with the consistent position of the Christian Scriptures from the first to the last. The modern, tolerant, easy-going attitude of some students of comparative religion is not the attitude of the Hebrew prophets, nor of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. They never saw in the idolatry of men any upward moving of men's hearts toward a purer faith. They denounced that idolatry as puerile, as childish, as ignominious, as false, as sinful. The prophets saw in all the faiths around them before Christ came—and all the great faiths of the world, whether known to the prophets or not, were here then, save Islam—they saw in those faiths, just as the Apostles saw in them, merely a falling away of men from a primitive and clear vision of the only living God and Father of mankind. But I will not press this view. I know there are many of us who would feel that to press such a view betokened such an inveterate prejudice against the non-Christian religions as to make any calm judgment of them an impossible thing.

Neither, yet once more, are we going to rest our contention on the claim that there is no good in the non-Christian religions. Of course there is good and truth in the non-Christian religions. It is the good and the truth that is in the non-Christian religions that has enabled them to survive, that gives them their great

power; but regarding this good and truth which we joyfully admit in all the non-Christian religions, several great facts are to be recalled. In the first place, there is no great truth in the non-Christian religions which is not found in a purer and richer form in the Christian religion. It is true that Hinduism teaches the immanence of God; it is true that Mohammedanism teaches the sovereignty of God; it is true that Buddhism teaches the transitoriness of our present life; it is true that Confucianism teaches the solemn dignity of our earthly relationships and our human society. But are not all these truths in Christianity also? And in Christianity each one of these truths is balanced by its just corrective, which is absent from the non-Christian religions. Hinduism teaches that God is near, but it forgets that He is holy. Mohammedanism teaches that God is great, but it forgets that He is loving. Buddhism teaches that this earthly life of ours is fleeting, but it forgets that we must therefore work the works of God before the night comes. Confucianism teaches that we live in the midst of a great framework of holy relationships, but it forgets that in the midst of all these we have a living help and a personal fellowship with the eternal God, in whose lasting presence is our home. And in the second place, the setting in which these truths are found in the non-Christian religions makes them often not a help but a positive hindrance to men. It is just the fragment of truth that there is in the non-Christian religions—I speak as a matter of sober fact, and I think I can appeal to the experience of most of missionaries with reference to this—it is just that truth which constitutes, not the leading on of men's hearts to the larger truth, but that with which men's hearts, already loving sin, satisfy themselves as

against the claims and appeals of the larger truth. Of course, it is this truth which in honest hearts gives us our point of contact and sympathy, but it is often harder to convince of error the man with the half truth than it is the man with nothing but demonstrable error. And in simple fact it is the partial truth in the non-Christian religions which is made a reason on the part of those who cling to those religions for not abandoning their error and accepting the perfect truth of Christianity. The possession of half truth is valuable in a man who is ready to go on to the whole, but it is a positive hindrance to the man who is satisfied with it and refuses to leave it for the truth that is complete. And beyond all these things, the non-Christian religions, with all their good, are yet seamed through and through with great and positive and hideous evils. I am frankly ready to admit that there are great evils in our Christian lands, but there is one profound and distinctive difference between our Christian lands and the non-Christian lands. The great evils under which we suffer here are all of them directly condemned by our religion, and are practiced in the face of its prohibitions, while the great evils from which the non-Christian people suffer are imbedded in their religions and derive their most terrible power from the religious sanctions by which they are surrounded.

I can illustrate this readily with one cardinal fact out of each of the great non-Christian religions.

I have in mind, first of all, the positive immorality of Hinduism. You can put it in grand words, if you like, such as those Macaulay uses in the introduction to his famous speech on The Gates of Somnauth: "As this superstition is of all superstitions the most irrational, and of all superstitions the most in-

elegant, so it is of all superstitions the most immoral. Emblems of vice are objects of public worship. Acts of vice are acts of public worship. The courtesans are as much a part of the establishment of the temple, as much the ministers of the gods, as the priests. Crimes against life, crimes against property, are not only permitted but enjoined by this odious theology." And if you do not want it put in Macaulay's grand way, you will find it cogently expressed in Mr. Meredith Townsend's essay on "The Core of Hinduism," where he is dealing especially with Vivekananda's representations at the Parliament of Religions. There, and in other essays, Mr. Townsend, the present editor of the London "Spectator," for years a resident of India, and a careful student of its life, complains that the great curse of India is just what he says is the worst idea of all Asia, namely, that morality has no immutable basis, but is deemed by every man a fluctuating law, and that it is a characteristic of the Hindu mind that it is able to hold, and actually does hold, the most diametrically opposite ideas, as though all such ideas were true; and that the great weakness in Hinduism, making it utterly insufficient for the needs of men, is the absolute want of that ethical reality which is one of the essential characteristics of Christianity, the absolute want of any vinculum binding religious faith to moral life. This explains why the holiest city of India is so vile. This explains why it was necessary for the British government by statute to prohibit the obscenities of public worship in India. But the British government has not cleansed all the holy places. I suppose that of all the obscene carvings in the world there are none more loathsome than the friezes around the temple of the

Rajah of Nepal, in the holiest city of Hinduism, on the bank of its most sacred river. Even some of the great languages of Hinduism have no adjective for chaste, as applied to men. Can an unclean religion be adequate for the needs of sinful men?

I speak, in the second place, of the sterility and unprogressiveness of Buddhism. Now here is a religion which, as Dr. Kellogg would say, deliberately, "stamps human nature as evil, not because it is sinful, but simply because it exists, for all existence is evil;" a religion that pronounces our holiest relationships, husband and wife, father and child, evil relationships, and that tells every man who would attain Nirvana at the last that he must cut loose from such things; a religion that deliberately denies the most necessary convictions of our minds, that pronounces our consciousness of personality, our belief in our possession of a soul simple delusions; a religion that condemns our holiest ambitions to eternal punishment. It is facts like these that explain why no Buddhist nation ever has fought a great unselfish war—they have fought, but not unselfishly—why no Buddhist nation has ever set up a patent office, why no Buddhist nation has ever wrought a great achievement. Buddhism has just held men tight in the clasp of its denial of the reality of our present life. Can a dead religion be adequate for the needs of living men?

I refer, in the third place, to the puerility and the childishness of those great Shamanistic and fetishistic religions which the people of Africa follow, which the people of Korea have followed, which have constituted, so far as the Chinese may be said to have any religion at all, the actual religion of the Chinese people. Here are religions that have absolutely no answer to

give to the intellectual problems of men, the problem of a man's origin, the problem of his destiny; that have nothing to say to man about his social relationships or the foundations of his moral life. Dr. E. H. Richards says that the terms for sin and love do not occur in many of the African languages. A man would speak of loving his wife with exactly the same word that he would use of wanting his food. Can religions whose languages contain no words for "sin" and "love" adequately meet the needs of suffering and hungering men?

I refer, once again, to the stagnation, the impotence, and the moral inferiority of Mohammedanism. You may turn, if you like, to Mr. Bosworth Smith's "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," the most effective and persuasive apology for Islam ever written in English, and Mr. Smith has to admit, when he comes to his comparisons at the end, that there are in Christianity whole realms of thought, and whole fields of morals, that are all but outside the religion of Mohammed; that Christianity teaches men ideals of personal purity, of humility, of forgiveness of injuries, of the subjection of the lower life to the demands of the higher life, ideals which are absolutely foreign to Mohammedanism; that it sets before men possibilities of progress and boundless development of the mind such as Mohammed never dreamed of; that in the various paths of human attainment the characters that Christianity has developed have been greater, more many-sided, more holy, than any of the characters that Islam has produced. Mr. Bosworth Smith himself has to admit as much as this, that the great religion for which he is saying the best that can be said is a religion that for 1,200 years has been sterile intellectually. And, what is worse

than that, Mohammedanism is held by many who have to live under its shadow to be the most degraded religion, morally, in the world. We speak of it as superior to the other religions because of its monotheistic faith, but I would rather believe in ten pure gods than in one God who would have for his supreme prophet and representative a man with Mohammed's moral character. Missionaries from India will tell you that the actual moral conditions to be found among Mohammedans there are more terrible than those to be found among the pantheistic Hindus themselves, and the late Dr. Cochran of Persia, a man who had unsurpassed opportunities for seeing the inner life of Mohammedan men, told me, toward the close of his life, that he could not say, out of his long and intimate acquaintance as a doctor with the men of Persia, that he had ever met one pure-hearted or pure-lived adult man among the Mohammedans of Persia. Can a religion of immorality, of moral inferiority, meet the needs of struggling men?

It is not pleasant to speak of these things. I am not speaking of them because a Christian man finds any joy in denouncing these evils in the non-Christian religions. We would denounce these evils if we found them in our own land; we speak no more harshly about them in other lands than we speak about them in our own. But we will not let the fact that these great evils are cloaked by religious sanctions abroad compel us to speak of them with less condemnation; we will speak of them with more condemnation because they are imbedded in the midst of those very forces out of which men's whole hope of holiness must flow. I can honestly say that for myself I should like to believe that the non-Christian religions are ade-

quate to the needs of men. I should like to believe that God is finding the hearts of His sons and that His sons are finding the heart of their Father in all of these great non-Christian religions. But what we would like to believe must not be allowed to blind us to the facts that we must believe, and the facts force us to acknowledge that we stand in the face of a thousand millions of our fellowmen who are held in the grip of religions absolutely inadequate to meet their needs, religions that constitute, not educational influences leading them on to a better faith, but the greatest barriers between them and the acceptance of the incarnation of God in Christ.

For, looking at the matter more generally, what are the great needs of men that a religion must meet?

Man has his intellectual needs. As Mr. Ruskin says in a note, there are three great questions that inevitably confront every man: Where did I come from? Whither am I going? What can I know? Men must have those questions answered. All over the world every honest, thoughtful man is confronted by the great problems of his origin and his duty and his destiny. The non-Christian religions have no satisfying message to speak to such seeking men. Their philosophies of the world may stand for a little while in any metaphysical discussion, but they collapse, they are passing before our eyes, at the touch of the physical sciences. Philosophies of the world that cannot endure contact with reality cannot satisfy the intellectual needs of men.

The non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet the moral needs of men. In the first place, the non-Christian religions do not dream of presenting a perfect moral ideal to men.

Mr. Bosworth Smith goes on, in the same chapter which I was quoting just a moment ago, to say: "When I speak of the ideal life of Mohammedanism, I must not be misunderstood. There is in Mohammedanism no ideal life in the true sense of the word, for Mohammed's character was admitted by himself to be a weak and erring one. It was disfigured by at least one huge moral blemish; and exactly in so far as his life has, in spite of his earnest and reiterated protestations, been made an example to be followed, has that vice been perpetuated. But in Christianity the case is different. The words, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' forced from the mouth of Him who was meek and lowly of heart, by the wickedness of those who, priding themselves on being Abraham's children, never did the works of Abraham, are a definite challenge to the world. That challenge has been for nineteen centuries before the eyes of unfriendly, as well as of believing readers, and it has never yet been fairly met; and at this moment, by the confession of friend and foe alike, the character of Jesus of Nazareth stands alone in its spotless purity and its unapproachable majesty." And this is true of all the non-Christian religions. Confucius never dreamed of setting himself up as a moral ideal for men. The idea never crossed Buddha's thought; and as for the Hindu gods, we are better gods ourselves than they are. I mean that our moral characters are superior to the moral characters of the Hindu gods. Can such religions satisfy the moral needs of men?

Not only do the non-Christian religions erect before the eyes of men no perfect moral ideal, but they do not offer to men any living, transforming power by which the ideals that they do present can be realized. No great non-Christian teacher

ever spoke to men such words as Christ spoke. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." But even if you suppose that the non-Christian religions did make upon men a perfect ethical demand, of what value is it to a man to have a perfect ethical demand made upon him? His own conscience already makes ethical demands upon him beyond his ability to reply. What men need is not a fresh moral demand. What men need is a fresh moral re-enforcement, a power in their wills to enable them to attain the ideals which are held out before them. Jesus Christ did not come to create a new set of moral obligations; He did not come to multiply the number of "oughts" under which life was to be lived; He came to give men more power to fulfil the "oughts" under which they already lived. The non-Christian religions are impotent to meet the moral needs of man, because not only do they hold up before him no perfect moral ideal, but they offer him no sufficient power to attain even the best ideal which they do present.

They are inadequate to meet his moral needs because there is in them no conception of sin. A religion that has no idea of a holy God cannot have any idea of a sinful man. It is because under the non-Christian religions men have no conception of such a God as Christ disclosed that they have never sat down in the midst of shame and sorrow at the hideousness of their sin. And, of course, with no message showing man the reality of sin, the non-Christian religions have no message of deliverance and of forgiveness.

And further, the non-Christian religions are inadequate to man's moral needs because they are all morally chaotic. I mean more than one thing by that. I mean, for one thing, that there never was a consonance between the best ideal and the reality in the non-Christian religions. No great non-Christian religious teacher ever lived up to his own ethical ideals, and that chasm which was real in the beginning is becoming a wider and wider chasm with the years. It is perfectly true that there is no Christian country in the world; it is true that there is no society that entirely embodies in itself the principles of Christ. But there is this great difference between the Christian societies and the non-Christian societies. The gulf between the ideal and the actual in the non-Christian world is widening every year, while the gulf in the Christian world is narrowing with each passing generation. The people of the non-Christian lands, most of them, have sunk ethically below the level in which they were when their great religious teachers arose. There never was an era in the history of the world when Christian lands were as near to the moral ideals of Christ as they are to-day. It is true that Christianity is not pure, but Christianity has in itself the self-purifying power; and whereas all the non-Christian religions, instead of being steps upward, are degenerating from the great catastrophic moral upheavals from which they sprang, the Christian religion moves on in a steady ascending stream toward the great fountain from which first of all it came.

Yet once again, the non-Christian religions break down at the very central and fundamental point. They have not perceived the inviolable sacredness of truth. "Verily," said Mohammed, "a lie is allowable in three cases: to women, to re-

concile friends, and in war." And the god Krishna himself, in one of the Hindu sacred books, the Mahabharata, declares that there are five different situations in which falsehood may be used: in marriage, for the gratification of lust, to save life, to secure one's property, or for the sake of a Brahman. In these cases, says Krishna, falsehood may be uttered. "These five kinds of falsehood," he states, "have been declared to be sinless." Let the story of "The Forty-seven Ronins" testify to the failure of Japanese religion to perceive and enforce the inviolability of truth. Now, if there is one place where religion and the men of religion meet their certain testing it is here. Here are two of the great non-Christian religions which deliberately proclaim that no man is under obligation to tell the truth to women. Both proclaim that there are cases in which lies are justified. Now there is nothing in this world that is absolutely sacred and inviolate but truth. Human life is not sacred and inviolate; God is wiping it out like water every day, and that which is not sacred and inviolate to God may not be sacred and inviolate to man. But there is one thing that to God Himself is absolutely and inviolately sacred; God cannot lie, and what God cannot do no religion dare pronounce to be allowable in the sons of God. Any religion or religious teacher proclaiming the possibility, the allowability of lies, excavates the foundations under human confidence, under all living faith in a real God, and makes impossible an answer to the moral needs of men.

And, once more, the non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet man's moral need because they have no adequate sanctions buttressing morality. You cannot support morality on the basis of pantheism; it liquifies the sanctions of morals. You cannot do it

on a basis of such hard monotheism as Islam because in actual fact it kills the moral restraints. Dr. H. O. Dwight, of Constantinople, was speaking, a little while ago, of a voyage which he took in the Levant with a Turkish official as they sat down in the cabin at the dinner table the Turkish official, inviting Dr. Dwight to drink with him, said: "You may think it strange that I, a Mohammedan, should ask you, a Christian, to drink with me, when wine drinking is forbidden by our religion. I will tell you how I dare to do this thing." He filled his glass and held it up, looking at the beautiful color of it, and said: "Now, if I say that it is right to drink this wine, I deny God's commandments to men, and He would punish me in hell for the blasphemy. But I take up this glass, admitting that God has commanded me not to drink it, and that I sin in drinking it. Then I drink it off, so casting myself on the mercy of God. For our religion lets me know that God is too merciful to punish me for doing a thing which I wish to do, when I humbly admit that to do it breaks His commandments." His religion furnished this pasha with no moral restraints or power for true character. Theorists about Mohammedanism may talk to their heart's content, 5,000 miles away from actual Mohammedanism, about the effects of a pure monotheistic faith upon morals. The simple fact is that the pure monotheistic faith of Islam has not prevented a horrible tarn of immorality over all the Mohammedan world. Neither that lifeless monotheism nor the pantheism of the other non-Christian religions can furnish the sanctions by which alone moral behavior can be sustained.

And just as the non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet alike the intellectual and the moral needs of men, so they are

utterly inadequate to meet the social needs of men. Religions which deny to one-half of society the right to the truth cannot meet the social needs of mankind. Religions which proclaim that women may be lied to sinlessly are anti-social in the very principles upon which they rest, and I should be almost willing to rest the whole case against the adequacy of the non-Christian religions here. There is not in one of the non-Christian religions any thing like the Christian home. A woman missionary from Japan spoke recently of the pathetic desire of many people in Japan to learn about the constitution of the Western home. As she went to and fro, she said, even among the country villages she always found the people eager to sit down with her and talk about the home. They had heard of a better social organization than theirs, and they were anxious to know where the secret of it was to be found. More than one Japanese statesman in earlier days beheld a revelation in Christian home life. We hold here in our Christian faith the one secret of a pure social life, speaking with reference to the relation of sex to sex and of the adult to the child. The non-Christian religions condemn women in principle or legal right to the place of chattel or of slave. The very chapter in the Mohammedan Bible which deals with the legal status of woman, and which provides that every Mohammedan may have four legal wives, and as many concubines or slave girls as his right hand can hold, goes by the title in the Koran itself of "The Cow." One could get no better title to describe the status of woman throughout the non-Christian world. I gladly acknowledge the exceptions, but I am setting forth the general facts and principles. A religion which denies to woman her right place in society, which even

proclaims that no woman, as a woman, can be saved, as Buddhism does proclaim, cannot meet the social needs of humanity.

These religions cannot meet the social needs of men because they are absolutely incapable of, and inconsistent with, progress. Now there are three great elements in religion: the element of fellowship, the element of dependence, and the element of progress. The non-Christian religions, I grant, satisfy man's sense of dependence, but they have no message to deliver, as I hope to show in a moment, to his need of fellowship; and I say here that they have no word to speak to his absolute necessity of progress. Each one of the non-Christian religions to-day is bound up with a degenerating civilization; and the peoples who live under the non-Christian religions are making no progress, are even slipping socially backward, save as they break free from these old restraints and feel the transforming power of the Christian principles. This is true of Islam. Have you ever thought upon the significant fact that almost all the deserts of the world are under the faith of Islam? Wherever Mohammedanism has gone, it has either found a desert or has made one. Twelve hundred years ago it bound down all human life in the Arabian institutions of the seventh century, and until this day, and so long as Mohammedanism abides in the world, progress will be inconsistent with that faith. It is just as Lord Houghton put it:

“So while the world rolls on from age to age
And realms of thought expand,
The letter stands without expanse or range,
Stiff as a dead man's hand.”

And that which is true of Mohammedanism is essentially true of all the non-Christian religions. Not one of them is capable of, or consistent with, progress. Japan offers no exception. "Japan," said the "Japan Mail," not long ago, "is an interesting country. It has been an interesting country for the last forty years. The moribund condition of its only religious creed is certainly not the least interesting feature of its modern career." Japan's progress has sprung, not from Buddhism, but from an abandonment or modification of Buddhism.

And yet once more, the non-Christian religions are inadequate to the social needs of men because every one of them denies the unity of mankind, Hinduism with its caste, Confucianism with its conceit, Islam with its fanatical bigotry, and Buddhism with its damnation of all women. It was given to Buddha in his destiny never to be born in hell, or as vermin, or as a woman. "A Brahman," says the Code of Manu, the highest Hindu law book, "may take possession of the goods of a Sudra with perfect peace of mind, since nothing at all belongs to the Sudra as his own." "The system of caste which is one of the most characteristic institutions of Hinduism and the basis of Hindu Society," says the Bishop of Madras, Dr. Whitehead, "is a direct denial of the brotherhood of man. The idea that the Brahman is the brother of the pariah is contrary to the first principles of Hinduism, and abhorrent to the Hindu mind. Whatever enthusiasm there may be for brotherhood in the abstract, it stops short of the brotherhood of the Brahman and the pariah. To apply to Hindu society the principle of Christian brotherhood would mean a social revolution; and it is for this practical reason that the spread of Christianity in India

is so bitterly opposed. The western dress has little or nothing to do with it: the real ground of the opposition is the fundamental principle of the brotherhood of man." To be sure, the phrase, "The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," is a common phrase throughout the world, and some of our Oriental visitors used it as a very familiar phrase in Chicago, at the Parliament of Religions years ago; but the ideas of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are alien to all the non-Christian nations. Both of these great conceptions are sheer plagiarisms from the Christian revelation. When all the world comes to us to borrow our phrases, it only makes confession of its own lack of the conceptions which those phrases imply. Every one of the non-Christian religions cuts humanity up into sections and bars from privilege great bodies of mankind.

And now, lastly, just as the non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet the intellectual and the moral and the social needs of man, so they are inadequate to meet his spiritual needs. For one thing, all these non-Christian religions are practically atheistic. Dr. Dwight's pasha's god amounts to no god at all. Hinduism has 333,000,000 gods, but the man who has 333,000,000 gods has no god except himself. Buddhism deliberately denies the existence of any god. "Buddha," says Max Müller, "denies the existence, not only of the Creator, but of any absolute being. As regards the idea of a personal Creator, Buddha seems merciless." These great non-Christian religions have no satisfying word to speak to man about God. They represent, as they actually are—and this is the most charitable view that you can take of them—they represent the groping

search of man after light. They show us the non-Christian peoples stumbling blindly around the great altar-stairs of God, the more pitably because they do not know that they are blind. As over against all these, Christianity stands as the loving quest of God after man, the full, rich revealing of His light and life, the unfolding of His love toward His children, whom He has come forth to seek in a way of which none of the non-Christian religions has ever conceived.

They are inadequate to meet the spiritual needs of men, because they have never taught men to say "Father." Not one of the great non-Christian religions contains the conception of God's loving fatherhood. By so much as we love to call Him Father, by so much as we delight to kneel down alone, in all the joy of our own dear and loving intimacy with Him, and call Him by the precious name in which Christ revealed Him, by so much are we under the noble duty to make our Father known to all our Father's children throughout the world.

And these non-Christian religions are inadequate to meet man's spiritual need, also, because they speak to him no word of hope. Mohamedanism has no word of hope to speak to him. When, after a little while, the honest man's heart has revolted from its idea of a sensual paradise, whither can he turn for hope, except where poor Omar turned?

"One moment in annihilation's waste,
One moment of the well of life to taste.
The stars are setting, and the caravan
Starts for the dawn of nothing. Oh, make haste."

What better syllable of hope does the Mohammedan world

know? And some of you will recall the lines of the old folklore song in southern India:

“How many births are past I cannot tell;
How many yet to come no man can say.
But this alone I know, and know full well,
That pain and grief embitter all the way.”

In those first days, when Christianity first shone on men, men realized that the great hope was the hope of Christ, that those who were without Christ were without God, and also without hope. I know it is narrow to speak so to-day; but we are content to be as narrow as Jesus Christ, the only Savior; and as Paul, the greatest heart that ever went out to make Him known to the world. The world without Christ is a spiritually hopeless world.

And now, if anything needs to be added to what I have said, I think it may be put briefly in two simple statements.

In the first place, the great non-Christian religions are confessing their inadequacy, even in our own ears. I have seen myself—and my life has been no long life—I have seen great non-Christian religions die. I have seen Confucianism slain in Korea. I have seen Shintoism publicly degraded from the status of a religion to a mere code of court etiquette in Japan. We are—all of us are—witnessing now one of the greatest religious transformations that ever took place in the non-Christian world passing over Hinduism. There is a very interesting letter in the “Life of Phillips Brooks,” written from Calcutta to his brother Arthur, after Phillips Brooks had had an interview with Keshab Chander Sen. Phillips Brooks thought that he saw in

the rise of the Brahma Somaj a great schism running through Hinduism that was to issue in a reform movement that would bring up in India great masses of men to a pure theistic conviction, from which they would be ready to step over into a Christian faith. If you will compare the actual facts to-day with Phillips Brooks' prophecy, you will see that he misread not at all unnaturally, but entirely, the signs of the coming days. Why? Hinduism has so readjusted itself as to make it unnecessary for the Brahmos to revolt from it. It has simply made room in its expansive folds for the ethical conceptions of Christianity, so that it is comfortable for a man who wants to hold those conceptions to stay inside the Hindu faith and live the Hindu life, if that is his desire. Hinduism is engaged in a great apologetic adaptation. All the great non-Christian religions are disintegrating, or undergoing some form of significant transformation. What Mr. Griffith Jones says in "The Ascent Through Christ" is manifestly true: "The nations called Christian are everywhere pressing hard upon all other nations. Western civilization in all directions is disintegrating both the customs of savage nations and the more stable civilization of the East, and it is everywhere being shown that in this general break-up of old and effete orders there is an imminent peril. For where our civilization penetrates without our religion it is invariably disastrous in its effects. It never fails to destroy the confidence of subject races in their own creeds and customs, without furnishing anything in place of their sanctions and restraints. The result is everywhere to be seen in the way in which heathen nations neglect our virtues and emulate our vices. The advice sometimes given to the missionary, therefore, to leave the people to whom he ministers to their

simpler faith, is beside the mark. These faiths are inevitably going—soon they will be gone—and the question presses, what then? If history proves anything, it proves that a nation without a faith is a doomed nation; that it cannot hold together; that it inevitably decays and dies. From this point of view alone, then, there is a tremendous responsibility laid upon us. The impact of our civilization is breaking up the fabric and undermining the foundations of the ethnic religions. Without religion of some sort, nations must perish. Therefore we must see to it that we give something in the place of what we take away, and that something must be the Christian faith, or it will be nothing."

We stand in the midst of a great world of wrecked religions. Heresy after heresy has shot schism upon schism through what we used to look upon as the solid mass of Mohammedanism, and all the other non-Christian religions are attempting, in greater or less degree, to transform themselves beneath our eyes. They are confessing, every one of them, their inadequacy to meet the needs of men.

And, last of all, I might say what would have saved us all of this discussion, if said at the beginning. For us Calvary closes this question. All the non-Christian religions, except Mohammedanism, which in actual consequence rejects and supersedes Christ and therefore condemns itself—all the non-Christian religions except Mohammedanism were here when Jesus Christ came. If the missionary enterprise is a mistake, it is not our mistake; it is the mistake of God. If the laying down of life in the attempt to evangelize the world is an illegitimate waste, let the reproach of it rest on that one priceless Life that was,

therefore, laid down needlessly for the world. Nineteen hundred years ago, to the best of all the non-Christian religions—the religion between which and all the other non-Christian religions a great gulf is fixed—Judaism, Jesus Christ came; and that, the best of all religions, He declared to be outworn and inadequate. The time had at last come, He taught, to supplant it with the full and perfect truth that was in Him. It will be enough for us, quietly, as men and women who love Jesus Christ, and to whom He is in no sham and unreal way Master and Lord—it will be enough for us to recall His own great words: “I am the good shepherd.” “All that came before me are thieves and robbers.” “I am the light of the world.” “I am the way, and the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” “No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.” We bow our heads beneath the cross on which our Savior hung, and for us no other word needs to be spoken regarding the absoluteness of His faith and the inadequacy of the half-teachers who have gone before Him, or who were to come after Him. No word needs to be spoken to us beyond His word, “I came to save the world,” and the great word of the man who had loved Him dearly, whose life had been changed from weakness into strength by His power, and who was to die in His service: “And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.”

As the owners and the bearers of that name, how can we withhold from the hearts of men the sufficient message of

their Father's life, their Father's love, made known alone in our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?

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