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I. Literary.

WILLIAM WALLACE SPENCE.

BY PROF. W. W. MOORE, D. D., LL. D.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that has been said about our age as an era of young men, it is undeniable that much of the world's best work is still done by men who are well advanced in years. The adage, "Old men for counsel, young men for war," while true in general, cannot be taken literally, as many of our most useful men of action are old men. Longfellow, in his *Morituri Salutamus*, recognized this fact in his catalogue of literary achievements by the elderly:

"Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles
Wrote his grand *Œdipus*, and Simonides
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,
When each had numbered more than fourscore years,
And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,
Had but begun his *Characters of Men*;
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,
At sixty wrote the *Canterbury Tales*;
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,
Completed Faust when eighty years were past."

Von Moltke, Bismarck, Gladstone, Hannibal Hamlin, Justin Morrill, John Hall, Moses Hoge, William Henry Green, John I. Blair, of New Jersey, and Charles Reid, of Norfolk, are examples of immensely active old age from the recent past, while we still have with us such leaders in public life as Lord Salisbury, such preëminent soldiers as Lord Roberts, such teachers as Pro-

OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

FROM many sides there presses in upon us the evidence of a most significant change of front toward all not-Christian faith. The question suggests itself as to the causes of this cordial friendliness and even "comity" on the part of many whose creed calls for a very different attitude.

Largely responsible, perhaps, is the old feeling about these pathetic strivings after God as the most noxious fruits of mankind's utter vileness. "No judge," wrote Max Müller, "if he had the worst criminal, would treat him as most historians and theologians have treated the religions of the world." This attitude was harsh, unsympathetic, ignorant. There was in it, too, a certain timid and hence cruel fearfulness, which arises really from a lack of faith. At any rate, men have realized the essential falsehood and injustice of it. They are discovering many undreamed of excellences in the modern all too friendly expositions of these systems. Naturally, therefore, there is a violent reaction. Besides, this suits the spirit of the hour. Narrowness and bigotry are the most heinous sins in the sight of modern culture. And the religion of Christ is uncompromisingly exclusive.

Again, it is worth noting that all accounts of these Oriental beliefs are necessarily expressed in language that has caught from Christian teachings a peculiar sense. Our religious vocabulary has now an essentially Christian coloring, and in using it to describe other religions we impart a richer, fuller meaning than the corresponding words of the original convey. It is impossible to describe them through a transparent and uncolored medium of thought. Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* is a rarely beautiful interpretation of Gautama's life and influence, but very misleading, because of the Christian nomenclature he was compelled to employ.

The coincidences, often startling at first view, tend to unsettle, or, as an anti-Christian writer puts it, to disillusion one. The incarnation-myths and trinities, the sacred writings and lofty ethics, of which we hear so much, are read of and discussed in a superficial *dilettante* spirit by people little given to earnest reflection and research. Further study would clear away much of this misty glamour.

With frequent "parlor" or platform lectures on Brahminism, and Buddhist missions holding Sunday and Wednesday night preaching services here and there in California, and contemporary literature flooded with sympathetic studies of the Asiatic cults, and a liberalizing trend abroad that knows no bounds, attention to comparative religion is not an idle matter for ministerial students. We are glad to have it studied here—as to the application as well as the theory. It is in keeping with our emphasis upon an educated ministry, but while informing our heads, it should also inflame our hearts. While by its shadows it brings our own great blessings into clear, white light, it ought to arouse in us a more throbbing zeal to illumine the way for these groping dwellers in the lightless lands. "I am the light of the world," said Christ; and then, with deepest meaning, to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world." J. L. S.

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THE attention of our readers is called to the book reviews of this issue, particularly to that of the *American Standard Revision of the English Version of the Bible*, by Prof. W. W. Moore. In addition to the work of our review editors, we are greatly indebted to Dr. English, of our faculty, and to Rev. W. W. Elwang, of Columbia, Mo., and to Prof. W. S. Currell, of Washington and Lee University.