

### The Passage Over.

"When the even was come, he said unto them, 'Let us pass over unto the other side.'—MARK IV. 35.

Go with me, Lord, into that mystic land  
Peopled with shadows all to me unknown;  
Thou know'st the danger, Lord, on every  
hand;

What do I know? I dare not go alone.

Friendship can enter not into the tomb,  
Naught of the struggle can affection  
know;

So far, no farther into that dark gloom  
Can they proceed, but Thou, Lord, Thou  
canst go.

Thou know'st the slippery paths where I  
might fall,  
Thou know'st the evil ones who linger  
there;

Hast Thou not met and overcome them  
all?

This I remember, and shall not despair.

Then when the even comes, O stay with  
me!

Be Thou my friend, companion, and my  
guide;

I shall not fear to cross the narrow sea  
If Thou go with me to the other side.

—The Rev. J. P. Hutchinson, in "British  
Leaflet."

### Principal Religious Beliefs of the World.

BY HELENA MAYNARD.

Granted that "the proper study of mankind is man" there is certainly no more interesting division of that study than that relating to the various religious beliefs held by mankind. Man has been classified as a religious animal, and in every age and clime, amid all circumstances, we find the religious instinct striving for expression in different forms of faith and worship. In the brief limits of this paper we can only glance at the leading features of the principal religious beliefs of the present time.

#### BRAHMINISM.

Should we give the first place to that religion which claims the largest number of followers we must begin with Buddhism; for according to generally received statistics there are 500,000,000 Buddhists, or forty per cent of the population of the earth; but Buddhism sprang from Brahminism or Hinduism with which, though it is very different, it is so closely interwoven that we must first study that.

Traced back to its earliest form Hinduism is a simple, pantheistic doctrine, but it has branched out into such an endless variety of polytheistic superstitions that it has well been likened to the sacred banyan tree "which from a single stem sends out innumerable branches destined to descend to the ground and become trees themselves, until the parent stock is lost in a dense forest of its own offshoots." Thus from a belief in the one universal spirit called Brahman has grown up the belief in the Trimurti of Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer, each with double nature representing male and female characters.

These are known by many different names distinguishing the different traits of their characters and the Hindus, while worshipping all, generally select some one as their particular deity. Vishnu is the favorite god, and his appearance in the various incarnations ascribed to him presents an interesting chapter in Brahminism into which our limited space forbids us to glance. The two most prominent features of Brahminism are caste and the transmigration of souls. There seem originally to have been but four castes the Brahmas or priests, the Kshatriyas, or military class, the Nasyas, or agriculturists, and the Sudras, or servants; but these have been divided and subdivided until to a foreigner they seem endless, and their burdensome restrictions form the most formidable obstacle to progress in India. But it is encouraging to know that the barriers of caste are being gradually undermined by contact with foreigners.

The transmigration of souls, which cannot be proved false by human reason, offers a solution to the sorrows of this life. Does a man suffer? It is because in a previous state of existence he sinned. It presents also an incentive to well-doing, in the hope that by abstaining from evil and gaining merit by good deeds and penances, a soul may pass from lower to higher grades of existence until at last it may be reabsorbed in the universal spirit, who is "pure life (with nothing whatever to live for), pure thought (with nothing to think about) and pure joy (with nothing to rejoice over)."

This doctrine of the transmigration of souls explains the sacredness of animal life among the Hindus; one would not of course wish to kill a chicken, a dog, or even a mouse if he thought he might by so doing kill his grandfather. The abstinence of the Brahminists and Buddhists from all animal food furnishes the vegetarians an argument in favor of the practice.

**K. D. C. Restores the Stomach To Healthy Action.**

bility of their theories. There are some animals which are especially sacred, as the cow and some species of monkeys, there are also some sacred plants and trees, while the sacred cities and rivers are very numerous, and India is crossed in every direction by pilgrims seeking to gain merit at these various holy places.

Of these the city Benares and the river Ganges are the most sacred, and it is held that if any one dies within ten miles of the city, or upon the banks of the river, "no previously incurred guilt, however heinous, can prevent his attainment of celestial bliss."

#### BUDDHISM.

From time to time reformers have arisen among the Brahmins, and at present there are several theistic societies among them, the most noted of which is the Progressive Somaj, with a pure Unitarian faith, whose great leader was the great Keshub Chandra Sen. It was in some such movement that Buddhism seems to have arisen in the fifth century before Christ. Buddha is only a title meaning "The Enlightened One," and it is believed Gautama was preceded by other Buddhas, and it is to be followed by others still.

The main authenticated facts in his history is his forsaking a life of luxurious ease and leaving home, family and position, to seek in the austere life of a hermit, by penances and self-abnegation, the freedom from sin and peace of soul which he craved. It was only after a thorough and vain trial of these methods that he discovered their utter fruitlessness, and then it is claimed that he became Buddha or enlightened; and rejecting Brahminism he taught a new religion which was to become still more powerful. Buddhism has been called the best of man-invented religions, but it is really not so much a religion as a system of morals.

Theoretical Buddhism and practical Buddhism are very different. Theoretical Buddhism says you shall make no idols; practical Buddhism has filled Siam, Burma and Ceylon with idols. Everywhere may be found images of Buddha with "bland-sleepy-looking faceless faces" and fingers and toes of equal length with ears reaching to the shoulders. These are mostly images of Gautama, though many are images of previous Buddhas, and some represent the Buddha of kindness and mercy who is yet to come.

Practically, Buddhism lays even greater stress than Brahminism on the transmigration of souls, but there is a fine distinction between the two creeds. For as the Buddhists really reject all belief in a soul, they cannot of course believe in its transmigration, and teach instead belief in Karma. "This is the doctrine that as soon as a sentient being (man, animal or angel) dies, a new being is produced in a more or less painful and material state of existence according to the Karma, the desert or merit of the one who died."

We can perhaps understand it better by the use of the Buddhist simile which likens the life of man to the flame of a lamp. "One life is derived from the life of another as one flame is lit at another—it is not the same flame but, without the other it would not have been. As flame cannot exist without oil, so life, individual existence depends on the cleaving to low and earthly things, the sin of the heart. If there is no evil in the lamp, it will go out, though not until the oil which the wick has drawn up is exhausted, and then no new flame can be lighted there. And so the parts and the powers of the sinless man will be dissolved, and no new being will be born to sorrow. The wise will pass away, will go out like the flame of a lamp, and their Karma will be individualized no more."

It will be seen that the practical results of this belief and that of the transmigration of souls are the same, and Buddhism is commonly said to teach that doctrine. In the transmigration of souls lies the only hope which either Brahminism or Buddhism has for woman. There is the bare chance that by the accumulation of merit she may be born again as a man. As the Buddhist priests teach that the sins of one woman equal those of three thousand of the worst men, her hope of attaining Nirvana can hardly be called a bright one.

#### CONFUCIANISM.

Nirvana is an untranslatable term; the Buddhists will not allow it to be called annihilation, but describe it as an unconscious state of existence. At about the time Gautama became Buddha and began teaching his new doctrine to his countrymen, Confucius, in China, was laying foundation of another faith. He was a philosopher and statesman, whose life was a continual struggle to obtain a position under the different rulers of the Chinese tribes, where he could have op-

**The worst disease—Dyspepsia. The Best Cure—K. D. C.**

portunity to carry out his plans for the reformation of society, and he died at the age of seventy-nine little dreaming of the immense influence he would exert for centuries to come. He had gathered about him early in life, as a teacher, large numbers of young men, some of whom became his disciples, and followed him throughout his life. They recorded every event which concerned him, and every word he spoke.

As a moralist Confucius is entitled to the highest respect, and most of his maxims might well be heeded by all. In his words, "What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to them." We see an approach to the Golden Rule. He lays especial stress on filial piety and encourages the worship of ancestors, which is an inseparable part of modern Confucianism. With the exception of a few references to Shangte, the supreme ruler of heaven Confucius does not allude to what we consider religion. He has nothing to say on spiritual matters, but confines himself to rules for good conduct with reference to individuals, the family and the state.

One of the greatest blots on his teaching is his failure to recognize the sanctity of the marriage relation. We cannot better illustrate the position Confucianism assigns to woman than by quoting a few lines from the Book of Poetry:

"Sons shall be his, on couches lulled to rest,  
The little ones, enrobed, with scepters play;  
Their infant cries are loud as stern behests,  
Their knees the vermeil covers shall display.  
And daughters also to him shall be born,  
They shall be placed upon the ground to sleep;  
Their playthings, tiles, their dress the simplest worn;  
Their part alike from good and ill to keep,  
And ne'er their parents' heart to cause to mourn,  
To cook his food, and spirit malt to keep."

About two hundred years after Confucius' death we read of an emperor visiting his tomb and offering sacrifices there, and from that time until the present the emperors of China have with great ceremonies made him the object of devout worship. Throughout the kingdom temples have been erected in his honor, and for the last twelve hundred years his worship, which was at first confined to his own province, has been as "universal as the study of the literature that goes by his name."

It is difficult to understand the secret of Confucius' influence; it is sometimes attributed to the peculiarly phlegmatic, unspeculative nature of the Chinese and to the fact that all classes are benefited by it; and it must be largely owing to the study, century after century, of his writings, as textbooks in the schools, until the entire nation is thoroughly permeated by his ideas.

But we find in Confucianism no explanation for the numerous idols with which China is filled; for this we must examine Taoism. This, too, we can trace back five hundred years before Christ. There lived contemporaneously with Confucius a philosopher named Lao-tse, who was more inclined to the subtleties of metaphysics than Confucius, and whose explanations of Tao, "The Way," are certainly unintelligible enough to be "deep." Taoism became in the latter centuries the synonym for the wildest superstitions of magic, alchemy and witchcraft, and it has gradually developed a Pantheon of numberless deities, gods for all physical forces and for all classes and conditions of men. It will perhaps be unnecessary to say that among them all, Tsai-sin, the god of wealth, is worshipped most fervently.

The following severe arraignment of modern Taoism from the pen of Prof. Douglas is a fitting conclusion of this division of our subject:

Every trace of philosophy and truth has disappeared from it, and in place of the keen searchings after the infinite to which Lao-tse devoted himself, the highest ambition of his priestly followers is to learn how best to impose on their countrymen by the vainest of superstitions and to practice on their credulity by the tricks of legerdemain—having drifted century after century further and further away from all that is noble, unselfish and true, the modern Taoists have sunk lower in the estimation of their fellowmen than any but the most degraded of idolaters.

#### MOHAMMEDANISM.

It is a relief to turn from the degraded and degrading superstitions of Taoism to the purer form of religion presented by Mohammedanism, the main tenets of which are expressed by the familiar sentence, "There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet."

**K. D. C. CURES MIDNIGHT DYSPESIA.**

Mahomet lived five hundred years after Christ, and was slightly acquainted with both Judaism and Christianity, and while we call him the false prophet, we cannot but think he was self-deceived and not an intentional imposter. The revelations which he claimed God made to him are recorded in the Koran. They lay especial stress on the unity of God and the great sin of idolatry. Prayer is an important part of their religion, and at five set times each day the faithful, wherever they are or whatever they may be doing, are expected to spread their prayer-rugs and with their faces toward Mecca perform their devotions. They are very strict in observing fasts; during the entire ninth month of the Mohammedan year neither food nor drink is allowed to pass their lips from dawn until sunset. To prayer and fasting must be added alms-giving and going on pilgrimages. To those who faithfully perform these duties the Koran promises a sensuous heaven of fruitful gardens, where, reposing on luxurious couches, their wants are all supplied by beautiful damsels. In the prohibition of wines and the allowing of polygamy we see the strange mingling of good and evil with which the Koran is filled. Its doctrines were to be promulgated by the sword, and so faithfully has this been done that there are to-day a hundred millions of Mohammedans.

#### CHRISTIANITY.

It is unnecessary in this connection to speak of Judaism and Christianity, and I will only add an interesting extract from an address of the great German scholar, Max Muller, whose studies in comparative religion have probably been more extensive than those of any living man. After speaking of the Veda of the Brahmins, the Puranas of Siva, and Vishnu, the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Zend Avesta and other sacred books, he adds:

"They all say that salvation must be purchased, must be bought with a price; and that the sole price, the sole purchase money, must be our own works and deservings. Our own holy-Bible, our sacred Book of the East, is from beginning to end a protest against this doctrine."

Good works are indeed enjoined upon us in that sacred Book of the East far more strongly than in any other sacred book of the East; but they are only the outcome of a grateful heart—they are only a thank offering, the fruits of our faith. They are never the ransoming of the true disciples of Christ. Let us not shut our eyes to what is excellent and true and of good report in these sacred books, but let us teach Hindus, Buddhists, Mohammedans, that there is only one sacred Book of the East that can be their mainstay in that awful hour when they pass all alone into the unseen world.

It is that Book which contains that faithful saying worthy to be received of all men, women and children, not merely of us Christians—that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—*Independence, Iowa.*

### The Young Man who will be Wanted.

If we could only get the ear of that boy in school, or that young man in college, we would say most earnestly to him, that the time is coming, and perhaps not far distant, when you will be wanted. The opportunity is ready to develop when you will be needed,—a most important opportunity,—when, if you are ready, you can enter into a great life work, a time which taken at its flood will lead on to fortune and fame. This is a broad and populous country, and opportunities for eminent achievement and large usefulness are constantly occurring in religious work, in educational work, in business, in professional life, or in politics, and the service of the country possibly in war. You may be wanted never so much; but if you are not ready when wanted you will be passed by. The opportunity, just the one you would most like, will not wait for one not ready. Somebody else will take the place. You will certainly be wanted, and you should be ready to respond at the right moment. The important places require men of character, fixed principle, education, power. No man gets mental power and discipline without hard, stern work—and years of it. And no weak, undisciplined, and unprincipled person is fit for command, or can ever expect to hold a commanding position. There is no lack of important positions for those competent to fill them. But it should be remembered that important positions can always find those able to fill them, and the world will not wait for you if you are not ready.

Many an old man to-day is looking back to see another in just the one

place designed for him, and in which he might have been perfectly content, happy, and useful, in which he might have done a great and important life work and achieved distinction; but when opportunity's hour struck he was not ready, and he now feels that his life has been a failure, because he neglected to prepare himself for the time when he would be wanted. The late Professor H. B. Smith used to say to his students: "Young gentlemen, have a hobby, have a hobby!—that is, have some one line of study of which you will be master, where you will stand *facile princeps*; and when opportunity calls you will be the one wanted. Always study with this thought in mind, that before long the opportunity will occur when you will be wanted."—*The Javelin.*

### Speaking-Trumpet Help.

Professor Drummond tells of a report which an Italian life saving station sent in to the Government. A ship had been wrecked and many lives were lost. "We attempted," says the report, "to give assistance through the speaking trumpet, but next morning twenty bodies were washed ashore. Professor Drummond believes in less preaching and more Christian contact. It is true that many of our pulpits are ball-buoys and fog horns, and little else. The most eloquent and effective preacher can never cope with the faithful pastor, because the former is but a speaking-trumpet which sounds a note of warning and a call to the refuge; but the latter will brave the darkest night and bitterest storm and save with his hands the lost ones."—*Evangelical Messenger.*

Let no knowledge satisfy but that which lifts above the world, which weans from the world which makes the world a footstool.—*Spurgeon.*

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