300,000;[1] and all the cities were divided into districts placed under the charge of parochial clergy, who regulated all acts of religion. In this enormous strength of the priestly class we have the secret of that frightful development of religious delusion and its attendant atrocity which marks off Mexico from the rest of the world. The system was, of course, polytheistic, and, equally of course, it exhibits the usual tendency towards pantheism or monotheism; but the overwhelming priesthood necessarily perpetuated the separate cults. There were at least thirteen principal deities, and more than two hundred inferior.[2] Indeed, some reckon as high as three thousand the number of the minor spirits,[3] who would answer to the genii and patron saints of Europe; and it is obvious that in Mexico as in Christendom there must have been many varieties of religious temper and attitude.[4] In many of the forms of prayer and admonition which have been preserved,[5] we see a habit of alluding reverently to "God" (*Teotl*) or "our Lord," without any specification of any one deity, and with a general assumption that the Lord loves right conduct. This universal God was in origin apparently the Sun, who was worshipped in the temples of all the Gods alike, being prayed to four times each day and four times each night.[6]

At the first glance it is plain that the Mexican pantheon represented the myths of many tribes, myths which overlapped each other, as in the case of the ancient and widely worshipped God of Rain and his wife the Goddess of Water, and which survived separately by being adapted to the different usages of life. In connection with the rite of infant

[1] Prescott, as cited, pp. 32, 283–4. Torquemada thought there might be 40,000 temples in all Mexico, and Clavigero held there were many more. B. vi § 12 (p. 269).

[2] Prescott, B. i, c. 3, p. 27. Cp. Spencer, as cited, p. 37.

[3] J. G. Müller, as cited, p. 572. [4] Cp. J. G. Müller, p. 564.

[5] Sahagun, *Hist. of the Affairs of New Spain*, French trans. 1880, *passim*.

[6] Clavigero, B. vi, § 15 (i, 272–3); J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473–4; Réville, as cited, p. 46. There is reason to infer that sun-worship is the oldest and most general cult of the American races, and that it came with them from Asia. Special deities of vegetation seem in their case to be a later evolution.

baptism, which the Mexicans practised most scrupulously, the officiating women prayed to "Our Merciful Lady," Chalchiuhtlicue or Cioacoatl, the Goddess of Water.[1] At the season when rain was wanted for the harvest, again, prayer was made to the God or Gods named Tlaloc[2]—for both the singular and plural forms are used—who controlled the rain; and whereas the Goddess of Water invoked at baptism was held merciful, the Tlaloc had to be propitiated by the regular sacrifice of a number of sucking infants, bought from poor parents or extorted from superstitious ones.[3] And there is no more awful illustration of the capacity of the human mind for religious delusion than the record of how the merciful people, believing in the efficacy of the sacrifice, would yet keep out of the way of the sacred procession which carried the doomed babes, because they could not bear to see them weep and think of their fate; while others, weeping themselves, would take comfort if the children wept freely, because that prognosticated plenteous rains.[4] But even under the spell of religion men could not sacrifice infants to the very deity invoked at baptism: so the benign Water-Goddess was sundered from the child-devouring Water-God. And by the same law of adaptation to social function it came about that the most prominent of the worships of Mexico, a state periodically at war, was that of the War-God Huitzilopochtli, who figured as the patron God of the nation.

In Huitzilopochtli we have a very interesting case of mythological evolution.[5] It has been argued that he was originally a simple bird-God, the humming-bird, his early name being the diminutive Huitziton, "the little humming-

[1] Sahagun, as cited, p. 441 (l. ii, c. 32).

[2] Probably "the Tlalocs" were the clouds—children of the Rain-God. Cp. Réville, p. 72. But they were Gods of mountains, like the chief Tlaloc, whose throne was a mountain so named, though he had also a mountain-seat in heaven, called Tlalocan. Tlaloc was one of the oldest deities. Müller, *Amerik. Urrelig.* p. 500; Prescott, p. 41, *n.* citing Ramirez.

[3] Sahagun, as cited, p. 84 (l. ii, c. 20) speaks of purchase only. There seem, however, to have been special dedications. In Carthage, we know, the aristocracy came to substitute bought children for their own. Diodorus, xx, 14. The same process would take place anywhere. See above, p. 379.

[4] Sahagun, p. 58 (l. ii, c. 1), and pp. 84–7.

[5] J. G. Müller, p. 591 sq.

bird."[1] An old legend tells that while the Aztecs still dwelt in Aztlan, a man among them named Huitziton chirped like a bird, "Tihui"="Let us go," and that he thus persuaded them to migrate and conquer for themselves a new country. As the later God actually bears the symbol of a humming-bird on his left foot, and his name Huitzilopochtli means "humming-bird on the left," there has evidently occurred some process of assimilation; but it is not quite certain that it was in this wise. If the humming-bird were originally a totem-God, the hypothesis would seem sound; but this, I think, has not been shown; and there remains open the possibility that the symbol was not primary but secondary.

The singular fact that, even as the Mexican War-God has a humming-bird for his symbol, so Mars, the Roman War-God, has a wood-pecker for his, is in this regard worth a moment's attention. We can draw no certain conclusion in the matter; but it seems likely that the evolution in the two cases may have been similar. Now, there is no clear evidence that the wood-pecker was a totem-God; and the whole question of Mars's name *Picumnus*, which he was held to have from *Picus*, the wood-pecker, is obscure.[2] Oddly enough, the Sabines had a legend that the wood-pecker led them to *their* settling-place, which they consequently called Picenum. When we note that a number of ancient communities similarly had legends of birds or animals who guided them to their settling-place,[3] and that the name of the place sometimes accords with the name of the guide and sometimes does not, we seem obliged to recognise three possibilities.

1. The animal or bird was in some cases very likely a totem-God, the legend of guidance being a late way of explaining its association with the community.

2. A place, however, might easily be named by new-

[1] This seems a very debatable point. "Huitzlin," the full name, seems as much of a diminutive as "Huitziton."

[2] Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, ed. 1865, pp. 297–8; Cox, *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, ed. 1882, pp. 523–4.

[3] Cp. J. G. Müller, p. 595; K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythology*, Eng. trans., pp. 109, 172.

comers because of the number of birds or animals of a given kind, seen there; and the explanatory legend on that view is naught.

3. A symbolic animal, connected with the worship or image of a God, would also give rise to explanatory legends. One would prompt another.

If then the Sabines put the wood-pecker on their standard, the question arises whether it may not have been because it was the symbol of the War-God.

It is noted concerning the humming-bird that he is extraordinarily brave and pugnacious;[1] and the same might readily be said of the wood-pecker, who is as it were always attacking. Supposing the symbol to be secondary, there is no difficulty in the matter: all the legends would be intelligible on the usual lines of myth-making. In regard to Huitzilopochtli, again, there is a symbolic source for his curious epithet "on the left." In one legend he sits after death at the left hand of his brother Tezcatlipoca,[2] the Creator and Supreme God; and whether or not this is the earliest form of the idea, it suggests that the placing of the symbol on the left foot of the War-God may have arisen from the previous currency of the phrase "Huitzlin on the left" in another signification, though on this view the God had been already named after his symbol.

Leaving open the problem of origins on this side, we come upon another in the fact that neither Huitzilopochtli nor Mars was primarily a War-God. The former, who was practically the national God of Mexico, was also called Mexitli;[3] and it seems likelier that this should have been his original name, and Huitzilopochtli a sobriquet, than *vice versa*. And so with the function. A War-God, specially known as such, is not a primary conception: what happens is that a particular God comes to be the God of war. Among the redskins, the "Great God" or Creator and Ruler, or else the Heaven- or Sun-God, was the War-God;[4]

[1] J. G. Müller, p. 592, and refs.
[2] *Id.* p. 593.
[3] Prescott, p. 9; Müller, p. 574, citing Acosta and Humboldt; Gomara, in *Historiadores Primitivos de Indias*, i (1852), p. 347, col. 2.
[4] J. G. Müller, p. 141.

and we know that Mars was originally a sylvan deity,[1] concerned with vegetation and flocks and herds. How came he to preside over war? Simply because, we may take it, he was the God of *the season at which war was usually made*. Campaigns were begun in spring; and so the God of the Spring season, who was specially invoked, became War-God. Mars was just *Martius*, March; and he lent himself the better to the conception, because March is a stormy and blusterous month. Mars strictly retains these characteristics, being a blusterous rather than a great or dignified God in both the Greek and Roman mythologies. But here suggests itself another possible source for the symbol of the War-God. *Picus* means speckled,[2] coloured; and the speckled woodpecker might figure the coming of speckled spring, as the humming-bird would do the colour-time in Mexico. Perhaps there may be a similar natural explanation for the further striking coincidence that Huitzilopochtli is born of a virgin mother, Coatlicue, who is abnormally impregnated by being touched by a ball of bright-coloured feathers,[3] while Juno bears Mars also virginally, being impregnated by the touch of a flower.[4]

In both cases, certainly, we have a sufficiently marked primary type for the myth of the Virgin-Birth, the idea in each being simply the birth of vegetation in spring. Though the mythical Coatlicue, like Mary, is a God-fearing woman, who frequents the temple and lives in a specified village, Coatepec, near Tula, the Virgin Mother is simply the ancient Mother of all, the Earth; and the concept of virginity is a verbally made one, in virtue of the mere fact that the whole is a metaphor. But if Huitzilopochtli be thus admittedly in origin a God of Vegetation,[5] there arises a stronger

[1] Cato, *De re rustica*, 141 (142); Virgil, *Aeneid*, iii, 35. Mars, too, was identified with the sun. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i, 19. So was Arês, according to Preller (*Griech. Myth.*, ed. 1860, i, 257), who, however, only cites the Homeridian hymn, which does not bear him out. That identifies Arês with the planet Mars.

[2] So White. Bréal derives it from a root meaning to strike. Cox, as cited.

[3] Clavigero, B. vi, § 6 (p. 254). [4] Ovid, *Fasti*, v. 231–256.

[5] J. G. Müller, pp. 602, 607, 608, recognises that the God is himself symbolised by the bunch of feathers. Like so many of the Egyptian and other Gods, he is thus "the husband of his mother."

presumption that he too was originally symbolised by his bird because of its seasonal relation to his worship. It is denied that in his case the seasonal explanation of the choice of Mars as War-God can hold good,[1] because the spring in Mexico is a time of heavy rains, when campaigns are impossible. In his case then the selection of the War-God is presumably a result on the one hand of his symbol, which further seems to have been spontaneously made a symbol of the sun,[2] and on the other hand of his special popularity—a constant feature in the cult of the Vegetation-Gods. And when we note further that the chief God of the Caribs, Yuluca, was represented with a head-dress of humming-bird feathers, and that the Toltec God Quetzalcoatl, also a God of fruitfulness, was figured with the head of a sparrow, which was the hieroglyth of the air,[3] we are led to surmise, not that all of these Gods were originally Bird-Gods, but that they were all originally Spring-Gods or other Nature-Gods to whom the birds were given as symbols, though the sparrow *may* have been originally a totem-God. Throughout the whole of Polynesia, the red feather of one small bird, and the tail feathers of the man-of-war bird, are "the ordinary medium of extending or communicating supernatural power," and are regarded as specially pleasing to the Gods.[4]

§ 5.—*Mexican Sacrifices and Sacraments.*

Of deeper interest is the moral aspect of the worship of the Mexican Gods, especially the most memorable feature of all, human sacrifice. Though this, as we have seen, is primordial in religion, there can be no question that its enormous development was the work of the organised priesthood,

[1] Müller (pp. 609–610) denies the explanation even for Mars, arguing that early wars were made in harvest, for plunder. For this he gives no evidence; nor does he meet the obvious answer that those plundered at harvest would want to seek revenge as soon as winter was over. Spring campaigns have in point of fact been normal in Europe.

[2] Müller, p. 592. It was called "sun's hair"=sunbeam.

[3] *Id.* pp. 583–4, 592, 594.

[4] Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 2nd ed. i, 338; Moerenhout, *Voyage aux Îles du Grand Ocean*, 1837, i, 472–3.

and of the cultivated religious sentiment. The Roman War-God remained subordinate, warlike though the Romans were; the Mexican became one of the two leading deities, and received the more assiduous worship. Whence the divergence? Mainly, we must conclude, from the multiplication of the Mexican priesthood, which was primarily due to the absorption of the priesthoods of the conquered races; and from the prior development of the rite of human sacrifice in the cult of the Gods or Goddesses of Vegetation. Among the Aztecs the tradition went that human sacrifices were of late introduction;[1] and this view would no doubt be favoured by the priests, who would represent that the latter-day power of the State was due to the sacrifices. But we have seen that they were practised on a smaller scale by the American peoples at much earlier stages of social evolution; and in the midway stages they were also common. In northern South America, the chief God of the Muyscas, Fomagata, was worshipped with many human sacrifices, as he was also under the name Fomagazdad, with his wife Zipaltonal, in Nicaragua, where he and she were held the progenitors of the human race;[2] and similar usages, often in connection with the Sun-God, sometimes with the God of Rain, were common in Yucatan, Chiapa, Tobasco, Honduras, and elsewhere.[3] The Mexican Otimias, also, who were not conquered by the Aztecs, sacrificed children and ate their flesh, carrying it with them, roasted, on their campaigns.[4] Such sacrifices then were well-established in Mexico before the Aztecs came, being found in some degree even among the relatively peaceful Toltecs.[5] What the Aztec priesthood did was to multiply them to a frightful extent.[6]

The causes of expansion and restriction in such cases are no doubt complex; but when we compare those of the Aztecs and the Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans, we can trace certain decisive conditions. Firstly, human sacrifices tend to multiply among peoples much given to war, by way

[1] J. G. Müller, pp. 502, 597, 600.
[2] *Id.* 437.
[3] *Id.* pp. 476–7, 492, 502, and see above, p. 375.
[4] *Id.* pp. 502–3.
[5] Prescott, p. 41, *n.*; Müller, p. 664.
[6] Müller, p. 492, 502.

of offerings to the Gods; but where there is only a limited priesthood the natural force of compassion leads men in time, as they grow more civilised, to abandon such sacrifices; while a priesthood tends to maintain them. Thus among the civilised peoples of the old world they lasted longest with the priest-ridden Carthaginians; and the reason that they did not continue late among the Jews was probably that these did not possess a numerous priesthood till after the Captivity, when their religion was recast in terms of the higher Oriental systems. On the other hand, an expanding or expanded empire, powerfully ruled by a warrior autocrat, like those of Babylon and Egypt, is led in various ways to abandon human sacrifice even if the priesthoods be numerous. Alien cults are absorbed for political reasons, and it is no part of the ruler's policy to be habitually at war with neighbours: hence an irregular supply of captives. The priesthoods, too, can be conveniently provided for through other forms of sacrifice; and on those other lines they are less powerful relatively to the king. Thus in the empire of the Incas the practice of human sacrifice was well restrained. But where a warlike and priest-ridden State is established among well-armed neighbours, with cults of human sacrifice already well-established all round, the sacrificing of captives is apt to serve as a motive to war, and the priests tend to enforce it. The process is perfectly intelligible. The stronghold of all priesthoods is the principle of intercession; whether it be in the form of simple prayer and propitiatory worship, or a mixture of that with a doctrine of mystic sacrifice, as among Protestants; or in the constant repetition of a ceremony of mystic sacrifice, as among Catholics; or in actual animal sacrifice, as among ancient Jews and Pagans. In these cases we see that, the more stress is laid on the act of sacrifice, the stronger is the priesthood—or we may put it conversely. Strongest of all then must be the hold of the priesthood whose sacrifices are most terrible. And terrible was the prestige of the priesthood of Mexico. The greater the State grew, the larger were the hecatombs of human victims. Almost every God had to be propitiated

in the same way; but above all must the War-God be for ever glutted with the smoking hearts of slain captives. Scarcely any historian, says Prescott,[1] estimates the number of human beings sacrificed yearly throughout the empire at less than 20,000, and some make it 50,000.[2] Of this doomed host, Huitzilopochtli had the lion's share; and it is recorded that at the dedication of his great new temple in 1486 there were slain in his honour 70,000 prisoners of war, who had been reserved for the purpose for years throughout the empire. They formed a train two miles long, and the work of priestly butchery went on for several days.

At every festival of the God there was a new hecatomb of victims; and we may conceive how the chronic spectacle burnt itself in on the imagination of the people. The Mexican temples, as we have seen, were great pointless pyramids, sometimes of four or five stories, and the sacrifices were offered on the top. The stair was so made that it mounted successively all four sides of the pyramid, and when the train of torch-bearing priests wound their way up in the darkness, as was the rule for certain sacrifices,[3] to the topmost platform, with its ever-burning fires and its stone of sacrifice, the whole city looked on. And then the horror of the sacrificial act! In the great majority of the sacrifices the victim was laid living on the convex stone and held by the limbs, while the slayer cut open his breast with the sacred flint[4] knife—the ancient knife, used before men had the use of metals, and therefore most truly religious—and tore out the palpitating heart, which was held on high to the all-seeing sun, before being set to burn in incense in front of the idol, whose lips, and the walls of whose shrines, were devoutly daubed with blood.[5]

[1] As cited, B. i, c. 3, p. 38.

[2] The Franciscan monks computed that 2,500 victims were annually sacrificed in the town and district of Mexico alone. Bernal Diaz, *Memoirs*, Eng. tr. ch. 208, cited in Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology*, No. II, p. 20, col. 2. Cp. Herrera, as there cited; and J. G. Müller, pp. 637–9.

[3] Bancroft, ii, 334.

[4] Or rather, obsidian, a volcanic mineral.

[5] This was usual in the human sacrifices of the other Central-American peoples.

Apart from the resort to holocausts, the religious principle underlying many, if not all, of the American human sacrifices was that the victim *represented the God;* and on this score slaves or children were as readily sacrificed as captives. Among the Guatemalans, we are told, captives or devoted slaves were regarded as becoming divine beings in the home of the Sun;[1] and the general principle that the victim represented the God involved such a conception.[2] And while this principle probably originates in early rites, such as those so long preserved by the Khonds, which aimed at the annual renewal of vegetation by propitiation and "sympathetic magic," the practice became fixed in the general rituals as a sacred thing in itself.

In connection with one annual festival of Tezcatlipoca, the Creator and "soul of the world," who combined the attributes of perpetual youthful beauty with the function of the God of justice and retribution, as Winter Sun, there was selected for immolation a young male captive of especial beauty, who was treated with great reverence for a whole year before being sacrificed—almost exactly like the doomed captive among the South American Tupinambos above described. He was gorgeously attired; flowers were strewn before him; he went about followed by a retinue of the king's pages; and the people prostrated themselves before him and worshipped him as a God. He was in fact, according to rule, the God's representative, and was described as his image.[3] A month before the fatal day new indulgences were heaped upon him. Four beautiful maidens, bearing the names of the principal Goddesses, were given him as concubines. At length came his death day. His honours and his joys were ended, and his fine

[1] J. G. Müller, p. 476.

[2] As to the customariness of this identification, see Bancroft, iii, 342; J. G. Müller, pp. 477, 493, 501, 570, 599, 600, 604, 606, 636, 640; Gomara, as before cited, p. 444, col. 2; and cp. Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology*, No. II, p. 20, cols. 2 and 3, citing Duran, Herrera, and Sahagun. "Of the human sacrifices of rude peoples, those of the Mexicans are perhaps the most instructive, for in them the theanthropic character of the victim comes out most clearly" (Prof. Robertson Smith, *Religion among the Semites*, p. 347).

[3] Sahagun, p. 97 (B. ii, c. 24). Cp. the old accounts cited by Mr. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, and Herrera, cited by Spencer, *D.S.* ii, 20, col. 3.

raiment taken away. Carried on a royal barge across the lake to a particular temple, about a league from the city, whither all the people thronged, he was led up the pyramid in procession, he taking part in the ritual by throwing away his chaplets of flowers and breaking his guitar. And then at the top, the six black-robed slayers, the sacrificial stone, and the horror of the end. And when all was over the priests piously improved the occasion, preaching that all this had been typical of human destiny,[1] while the aristocracy sacramentally ate the victim's roasted limbs.

Along with the victim for Tezcatlipoca there was one for Huitzilopochtli; and they roamed together all the year. The latter victim was not adored; and he had the privilege of choosing the hour for his sacrifice, though not the day. He was called the "Wise Lord of Heaven," and he was slain, not on the altar, but in the arms of the priests.[2]

The Goddesses, too, had their victims—women victims; and one maiden was regularly prepared for one sacrifice to the Maize-Goddess Centeotl, the Mexican Ceres, somewhat as the representative of Tezcatlipoca was. Centeotl was the Mother-Goddess *par excellence*, being named *Toucoyohua*, "the nourisher of men," and represented, like Dêmêtêr and so many Goddesses of the same type, with a child in her arms.[3] A tradition prevailed, too, that in her cult there were anciently no human sacrifices. But this is doubtful; and the explanation is as before, that anciently single victims were sacrificed, while among the Aztecs they were many. The woman who personated the Goddess was sacrificed with other victims,[4] and the slaying was followed by a ceremonial of an indescribably revolting character, the slayers flaying the victims and donning their skins.[5] This hideous act is in all likelihood one of the oldest devices of religious symbolism; and it is a distinguished theologian who suggests to us that it is lineally connected, through the totemistic or other wearing of animal-skins, with the

[1] Sahagun, as last cited.
[2] Clavigero, vi, § 32 (i, 302–3).
[3] J. G. Müller, p. 493.
[4] *Id.* p. 492.
[5] Cp. Bancroft, iii, 354–7; Sahagun, pp. 134–5 (b. ii, c. 30); Spencer, *D.S.* ii, 21, col. 3; Müller, p. 599.

Biblical conception of "the robe of righteousness."[1] It is certainly akin to the practice of the Babylonian priests, who wore imitation fish-skins as identifying them with the Fish-God,[2] and to that of the Egyptian and other priests who wore the dappled skins of leopards or fawns as symbolising the starry heavens, or robes without seam as symbolising the cosmos.[3] At bottom all ritualism is the same thing, a reduction of righteousness, in all sincerity, to make-believe.

But the special and habitual horror of the Mexican cultus was the act of ritual cannibalism. This was strictly a matter of religion. After a captive had been sacrificially slain in ordinary course, his body was delivered to the warrior who captured him, and was by him made the special dish at a formal and decorous public banquet to his friends. It was part of the prescribed worship of the Gods. That the Mexicans were no longer cannibals by taste is shown by the fact that in the great siege by Cortès they died of starvation by thousands. They never ate fellow citizens:[4] only the sacrificially slain captive. But only a great priesthood could have maintained even that usage. We have seen that such ritual cannibalism has existed at one time in all races; and obviously it must have originated in simple cannibalism, for men would never have begun to offer to the Gods food that was abominable to themselves.[5] On the other hand, however, we know that cannibalism everywhere dies out naturally even among savages, apart from religion, as soon as they reach some degree of peaceful

[1] Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 416–18. Thus Dionysos' robe of fawnskin is "holy." Euripides, *Bacchæ*, 138.

[2] See the illustrations in W. Simpson's *Jonah Legend*, 1899.

[3] *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 414–16.

[4] It would perhaps be more accurate to say that the eating of a slain enemy was originally part of a process of triumphing over him; and that the abstention from the flesh of fellow-citizens meant not distaste for human flesh (which is negatived by the ritual practice), but obedience to a moral veto on domestic cannibalism, such as must have been set up early in all civilisations. Cp. Bancroft, ii, 358.

[5] Réville, p. 87. See above, p. 127, *note*, as to the counter theory that cannibalism originated in the belief that the Gods ate men, and that men should do likewise to commune with them. This theory is of old standing. See it cited from an Italian essayist by Virey, *Hist. Naturelle du genre humain*, 1801, ii, 53.

life, and even sooner. Among the native tribes of Lower California, though they are among the most degraded savages in the world, and given to various disgusting practices, the eating not only of human flesh but of that of monkeys, as resembling men, is held abominable.[1] The Tahitians, who in warfare were murderous to the last degree, and practised hideous barbarities, had yet evolved beyond the stage of public cannibal banquets, even the sacrifice of a man to the God being followed only by the pretended eating of his eye by the chief;[2] and it was the priests who instigated what human sacrifices there were. So among the similarly cruel Tongans, cannibal feasts were rare, occurring only after battles, and being execrated by the women; child sacrifices were also rare and special, and were being superseded by surrogates of amputated fingers.[3] In each of these cases the priesthoods were little organised:[4] hence the upward evolution. Among the Fijians, the Marquesans, and the Maoris, on the contrary, we find highly organised and cannibalistic priesthoods;[5] and there

[1] Bancroft, i, 560. But it is not certain whether this veto applies to enemies. Professor Robertson Smith thinks the horror of human flesh arose in superstition as to its "sacrosanct character," but does not fully explain. *Religion of the Semites*, p. 348.

[2] Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, 2nd ed. i, 309, 357; iv, 150–2; Moerenhout, *Voyage aux Îles du Grand Ocean*, 1837, i, 512.

[3] Mariner, *Account of the Tonga Islands*, ed. 1827, i, 190, 300, ii, 22.

[4] In Tahiti, the sorcerers were as powerful as the priests; and in the case of the great national oracle no one was specially appointed to consult the God. Priests, too, had a precarious prestige. (Ellis, i, 366, 371, 377, 379.) Of the Tongan Islands Mariner relates that "the priests live indiscriminately with the rest of the natives; are not respected on the score of their being priests, unless when actually inspired, and hold no known conferences together as an allied body" (ii, 129).

[5] Cp. J. White, *The Ancient History of the Maori*, Wellington, 1887, i, 1, 2, 8–16, 17; Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, iii, 317–318; Moerenhout, *Voyage* cited, i, 475; T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, i, 221, 223, 227. "Cannibalism is part of Fijian religion; and the Gods are described as delighting in human flesh" (last cit. p. 231). Mariner says that when Cook visited the Tonga Islands "cannibalism was scarcely thought of among them; but the Fiji people soon taught them this, as well as the art of war; and a famine, which happened some time afterwards, rendered the expedient for a time almost necessary" (ii, 108–9. Cp. 107). Yet, as we have seen, human sacrifice was not making progress. King Finow, howbeit for personal reasons, was strongly against it, though the priests stood for it (Mariner, ii, 178). So, in Fiji, where "at one time Ndengei [the Supreme God] would constantly have human bodies for sacrifices," a disgusted chief stopped them, and ordered that pigs be substituted (T. Williams, p. 231). A similar reform seems to have been made by the king in the island of Manu'a (Turner,

we likewise find cannibalism and human sacrifices alike common. So, among the Khonds, a specially "instructed" priest was essential to the *meriah* sacrifice; and in China, where human scapegoat sacrifices were discredited and abolished between the third and second centuries B.C., we hear of them as being prescribed by priests and put down by wise rulers.[1] And as in Peru we shall see reason to regard the Incas as putting some check on human sacrifice, so in the whole of Central America the only case of any attempt at such reform, apart from the Toltec priesthood of Quetzalcoatl, occurs in the history of the great Acolhuan king of Tezcuco, Netzahualcoyotl, who died in 1472. Of him it is told that he was the best poet of his country, which was the most highly civilised of the New World;[2] and that he worshipped, on a great altar-pyramid of nine stages, an "unknown God" who had no image, and to whom he offered only perfume and incense,[3] resisting the priests who pressed for human sacrifice. But his example seems never to have affected his Aztec allies, who gradually won supremacy over the Tezcucans; and even in his own realm he could never suppress the human sacrifices which had there been revived before his time under Aztec influence, and multiplied under it later.

The Aztec religion, in fine, was working the ruin of the civilisation of Central America, as similar religions may have done for the far older civilisations that have left only ruins behind them. Sacerdotalism, it is clear, tended as an institution to check the progress of humanity, which even among slaughterous savages elsewhere brought anthropophagy into discredit. No amount of passion for war could have kept the civilised Aztecs complacently practising

Samoa a Hundred Years Ago, 1884, p. 202). In Tahiti, again, human sacrifices had either become obsolete, and so forgotten, and been then revived, or else were originated, by a priest (Ellis, i, 106. Cp. J. Williams, *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Seas*, 1837, pp. 550, 553). The high priest in each district was practically the sovereign sacrificer (Moerenhout, i, 477). See above, p. 110, as to the Khonds.

[1] Above, p. 56.

[2] Cp. Prescott, p. 81, sq., and p. 97.

[3] Bancroft, v, 427–9; Clavigero, B. iv, §§ 4, 15; vii, § 42; Prescott, pp. 91–3.

ritual cannibalism if an austere and all-powerful priesthood had not fanatically enforced it.[1] The great sanction for human sacrifice, with the Mexicans as with the Semites, was the doctrine which identified the God with the victim, and as it were sacrificed him to himself. The principle was thus in a peculiar degree priest-made and priest-preserved.[2]

§ 6.—*Mexican Ethics.*

The recital of these facts may lead some to conclude that the Mexican priesthood must have been the most atrocious multitude of miscreants the world ever saw. But that would be a complete misconception: they were as conscientious a priesthood as history bears record of. The strangest thing of all is that their frightful system of sacrifice was bound up not only with a strict and ascetic sexual morality, but with an emphatic humanitarian doctrine. If asceticism be virtue, they cultivated virtue zealously. There was a Mexican Goddess of Love, and there was of course plenty of vice; but nowhere could men win a higher reputation for sanctity by living in celibacy. Their saints were numerous. They had nearly all the formulas of Christian morality, so-called. The priests themselves mostly lived in strict celibacy;[3] and they educated children with the greatest vigilance in their temple schools and higher colleges.[4] They taught the people to be peaceful; to bear injuries with meekness; to rely on God's mercy and not on their own merits: they taught, like Jesus and the Pagans, that adultery could be committed by the eyes and the heart; and above all they exhorted men to feed the poor. The public hospitals were carefully attended to, at a time when some

[1] "Cannibalism in general declined before human sacrifice: in heathenism humanity, where it triumphed, did so often against religion: humanity came into religion, not out of it: religion withstood the benign change." J. G. Müller, p. 632.

[2] Cp. Th. Parker, *Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion*, ed. 1877, pp. 34, 44, 93, *note*.

[3] Clavigero, B. vi, 15, 17, 22; vol. i, 274, 277, 286.

[4] Spencer, *D.S.* ii, 20, col. 1, citing Torquemada.

Christian countries had none. They had the practice of confession and absolution; and in the regular exhortation of the confessor there was this formula: "Clothe the naked and feed the hungry, whatever privations it may cost thee; for remember, their flesh is like thine, and they are men like thee; cherish the sick, for they are the image of God." And in that very same exhortation there was further urged on the penitent the special duty of instantly *procuring a slave for sacrifice to the deity*.[1]

Such phenomena carry far the challenge to conventional sociology. These men, judged by religious standards, compare closely with our European typical priesthood. They doubtless had the same temperamental qualities: a strong irrational sense of duty; a hysterical habit of mind; a certain spirit of self-sacrifice; at times a passion for asceticism; and a feeling that sensuous indulgence was revolting. Devoid of moral *science*, they had plenty of the blind instinct to do right. They devoutly did what their religion told them; even as Catholic priests have devoutly served the Inquisition. That is one of the central sociological lessons of our subject. The religious element in man, being predominantly emotional and traditional, may ally itself with either good or evil; and it is no thanks to religion, properly speaking, that it is ever in any degree identified with good. How comes it that Christianity is not associated with human sacrifice while the Mexican cultus was? Simply by reason of the different civilisations that went before. It is civilisation that determines the tone of religion, and not the other way. Christianity starts with a doctrine of one act of human sacrifice; and Christians are specially invited each year at the sacred season to fasten their minds on the horrors of that act. Their ritual keeps up the mystic pretence of the act of ritual cannibalism which of old went with the human sacrifice: they harp on the very words, "body and blood." They mystically eat the body of the slain God. Now this very act was performed

[1] Sahagun, l, vi, c. 7: French trans. pp. 342–3; Prescott, as cited, p. 33. The overplus of grain belonging to the priests was given to the poor. Clavigero, vi, 13 (i, 270).

by the Mexicans not only literally, as we have seen, but in the symbolic way also; and they connected their sacraments with the symbol of the cross.

Of the Tlascalans it is told that at one festival they fixed a prisoner to a high cross and shot arrows at him; and that at another time they fastened one to a low cross and killed him by bastinado.[1] In the sacrifice of a maiden to the Maize-Goddess Centeotl above mentioned, the priest who wore the slain victim's skin stood with his arms stretched out, cross-wise, before the image of Huitzilopochtli, so representing the Goddess; and the skin (presumably stuffed)[2] was hung up with the arms spread in the same attitude, and facing the street.[3] The Mexicans, finally, had a festival in honour of Xiuhteuctli, the God of Fire,[4] the crowning act of which was the making a dough image of the God (as was also done in the worship of Huitzilopochtli at the festival called "Eating the God") and *raising it on a cross*,[5] the image being then climbed for and thrown down, and the fragments eagerly eaten by the crowd as possessing a sacred efficacy.[6] They felt they were brought into union with the God in that fashion. As has been above noted, there is some evidence that among the first Christians the Eucharist was sometimes a baked dough image of a child:[7] and on any view the irresistible

[1] Clavigero, B. vi, ch. 20 (i, 283); Gomara, as cited, p. 446. col. 1 (end).
[2] Above, Part II, p. 278. [3] Bancroft, iii, 355–9.
[4] See above, Part II, p. 278, as to the details of one sacrifice to this God in which the victim was painted red.
[5] There can be no question as to the pre-Christian antiquity of the symbol of the cross in Mexico as elsewhere. See Müller, pp. 496–500. The cross figured in Mexico as a sacred symbol also in connection with the Rain-God, and was expressly known as the "Tree of our life." Yet Dr. Brinton has confidently decided (*Myths of the New World*, p. 96; *American Hero Myths*, p. 155) that it simply signified, with its four points, the cardinal points and the four winds. This explanation, which is a pure guess, has been dogmatically put forward by several writers, including Dr. Réville (Lectures, p. 38). But why should the cardinal points be represented by an *upright* cross? And why should it be called "Tree of our life" and specially associated with Tlaloc and other Gods of *rain*? Were all four winds alike "rain-bringers"? Quetzalcoatl, as we shall see, was God of one rain-bringing wind, and *his* mantle was marked with crosses (Müller, p. 581. Cp. p. 500). Certainly the number four figured in Tlaloc's worship (Bancroft, iii, 348), but so did the image of the snake. Is not the more plausible hypothesis that in such a connection the primary significance of the cross was phallic?
[6] Sahagun, pp. 128–133 (l, ii, ch. 29); Bancroft, iii, 329–331.
[7] See *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 211–226, and above, pp. 201–2.

presumption is that in all cases alike the symbolical usage grew out of a more ancient practice of ritual cannibalism. Christianity coming among a set of civilised peoples, the symbol became more and more mystical, though the priesthood adhered tenaciously to the doctrine of daily mystical sacrifice. In Mexico, certain cults had similarly substituted symbolism for actual sacrifice; among the modifying practices being the drawing of a little blood from the ears and other parts of the children of the aristocracy.[1] But the thin end of the wedge was in, so to speak, in the survival of actual human sacrifices; and the Aztec priesthood drove the wedge deeper and deeper, in virtue of their collective economic interest as well as of what we may term the master tendency of all religions—the fixation of ideas and usages. The more piety the more priests; the more priests the more sacrifices; and the constant wars of the Aztecs supplied an unfailing stream of captives for immolation.[2] Many wars were made for the sole purpose of obtaining captives:[3] in fact, the Aztec kings made a treaty with the neighbouring republic of Tlascala and its confederates, a treaty which was faithfully kept, to the effect that their armies should fight on a given ground at stated seasons, in order that *both* sides should be able to supply themselves with sacrificial victims. At all other times they were quite friendly; and the Aztec kings avowedly kept up the relation purely in order to have captives for sacrifice.[4] An arrangement like that, once set up, would flourish more and more up to the point of national exhaustion, especially as death in battle was reckoned a sure passport to Paradise; and the priesthood would at the same time grow ever more and more numerous; the only limit being the people's power of endurance. And there can be little doubt that the Aztec empire would ultimately have broken down under its monstrous burden if the Spaniards

[1] Herrera, *General History*, iii, 216, cited in Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology*.

[2] The priests actually went into battle to help in securing captives, and were conspicuous for their fury. Prescott, p. 39.

[3] Müller, p. 638.

[4] *Id. ib.*

had not destroyed it; for the taxation necessary to support the military and aristocratic system alongside of the allocation of enormous untaxed domains[1] to the ever-multiplying myriads of priests was becoming more insupportable year by year, so that the deep disaffection of the common people was one of the chief supports to the campaign of Cortès.[2] It may well be that some of the previous civilisations had succumbed in the same way, literally destroyed by religion, to the extent, that is, of inviting conquest by less "civilised" tribes.

Strangely enough, there was current among the Aztecs themselves a belief that their State was doomed to be overthrown.[3] Here, doubtless, we have a clue to the existence of civilising forces, and of a spirit of hostility to the religion of bloodshed which however felt driven to express itself in terms of despair. To this spirit of betterment, then, we turn with the doubled interest of sympathy.

§ 7.—*The Mexican White Christ.*

Two sets of phenomena tell of the presence among the Aztecs of that instinct of humanity or spirit of reason which elsewhere gradually delivered men from the demoralisation of human sacrifice. One was the practice, already noted, of substituting a symbol for the sacrificed victim; the other was the cultus of the relatively benign deity Quetzalcoatl, a God of the Toltecs whom the Aztecs had subdued. There is no more striking figure in American mythology.

The name appears to have meant "the feathered [or coloured] serpent," and this was one of his symbols; but he was normally represented by the red-billed sparrow-head, which in Mexican hieroglyphics stands for the air; and his third symbol, the Fire-stone, had the same significance.[4] As God of the Air, accordingly, he ranks in the pantheon.[5] But his mythus has a uniquely ethical stamp,

[1] Prescott, B. i, c. 3.
[2] *Id.* B. ii, c. 6.
[3] J. G. Müller, p. 657.
[4] *Id.* pp. 583–4.
[5] Clavigero, B. vi, § 4 (p. 248).

and a certain wistful pathos.[1] It tells that he was once high-priest at Tula, in Anahuac, where, ever clothed in white, he founded a cultus, and gave beneficent laws to men, teaching them also the arts of agriculture, metal-work, stone-cutting, and civil government; the while a king named Huemac held with him the secular rule, and framed the law book of the nation. But the God Tezcatlipoca came to earth in the guise of a young merchant, who deceived the king's daughter, and again in the guise of an old man, who persuaded Quetzalcoatl to drink a mystic drink, whereupon he was seized with an irresistible impulse to wander away. And so he went south-eastwards, setting up his institutions in place after place, but always going further, till at length he disappeared in the east, with a promise to return. And for that return his worshippers ever looked longingly, and the Aztec kings with fear, till when Cortès came all thought that he was the God, and at Cholula the people sacrificed a man to him, and daubed him with the blood in the regulation way.[2]

But in the myth of Quetzalcoatl it is told that at Tula he had preached against human sacrifices, telling men to offer to the Gods only fruits and flowers; and that he could not endure the thought of war, closing his ears when men spoke of it. The explanation is found to be, as might have been suspected, that this humane legend is a late product of Toltec feeling, representing at once the aspiration for a better religion and the memory of the Toltec people, whose polity had been step by step driven to the south-east by the stronger power of the Aztecs.[3] It may have been some of the Toltec priests who remained under Aztec rule that framed the gentle mythus,[4] and so dreamed for themselves a Messiah, as so many conquered races had done before. On analysis, it appears that Huemac was

[1] See Dr. Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, 1865 pp. 151–4, for the various forms of the myth.

[2] Prescott, B. ii, c. 6; B. iv, c. 5.

[3] Müller, p. 581.

[4] Had they been sacrificers before, they would be partly deprived of victims by the conquest. For another case of a God who refused human sacrifices, see T. Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, i, 231. He is supposed to have been shrined or incarnated in a man, which for his priests made human flesh taboo.

really the old Toltec name of the God, and that he took that of Quetzalcoatl in one of his more southerly resting-places, when he became symbolised as the serpent.[1] Of old he had had human sacrifices like other Gods; and in the Aztec lands he had them still.[2] But some of his white-robed priests, left victimless till they recoiled from the bloody rites of their conquerors, felt that their God must have a different nature from that of the Gods of the black-robed priests of Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli, and so framed for his cult a new gospel.[3]

Recognising this, Dr. Müller and Dr. Brinton and Dr. Réville agree that Quetzalcoatl is properly the God of the beneficent rain-bringing east-wind, identified with the vanquished Toltec people, so that like them he is driven away by the enmity of other deities, but, like the vanishing or slain Sun-God of all mythologies, he is to return again in power and great glory. By such a myth Christians are set vaguely surmising a debt to their own legend; but there is no such thing in the case. As Mr. Bancroft observes, following Dr. Müller,[4] the process is one which has occurred in many mythologies:—"It is everywhere the case among savages, with their national God, that the latter is a nature-deity, who becomes gradually transformed into a national God, then into a national King, high-priest, founder of a religion, and at last ends in being considered a human being. The older and purer the civilisation of a people is, the easier it is to recognise the original essence of its national God, in spite of all transformations and disguises. So it is here. Behind the human form of the God glimmers the nature-shape, and the national God is known by, perhaps, all his worshippers as also a nature-deity. From his powerful influence upon nature, he might also be held as creator. The pure human form of this God [Quetzalcoatl] as it appears in the fable, as well as in the

[1] Müller, p. 587. [2] *Id.* pp. 589–90.

[3] It was one of his priests, bearing hi name, who shot the arrow into the dough image of Huitzilopochtli—the humanest sacrificial rite in that God's worship. Bancroft, iii, 299–300.

[4] *Id.* pp. 329, 337, 583.

image, is not the original, but the youngest. His oldest concrete forms are taken from nature, to which he originally belongs, and have maintained themselves in many attributes. All these symbolise him as the God of fertility, chiefly..... by means of the beneficial influence of the air."[1]

What is specially interesting is that, despite the inner hostility of the Quetzalcoatl cult to those of the Mexican Gods, his stood in high honour;[2] and while some of his devotees sacrificed and ate his representative once a year in the usual manner, some of his priests, of whom the chief also bore his name as representing him,[3] did as little sacrificing as they could, evidently finding some support in that course.[4] We are moved to ask, then, whether there was here a culture-force that could have countervailed the host of the priests of slaughter had the Aztecs been left to work out their own salvation. The more the problem is pondered, however, the less probable will it seem that the humaner teaching could have so triumphed. Conquest by some other American people might have served to restrain the religion of blood; but there is no sign that the humaner cult was as such making serious headway. The Aztec priesthood like every other had an economic basis; its higher offices were the perquisites of certain aristocratic families; and the habit of perpetual bloodshed had atrophied the feelings of the priestly army on that side. Beyond a certain point, priesthoods are incapable of intellectual regeneration from within, even if reformative ideas be present.

[1] *Native Races*, iii, 279. Dr. Tylor once wrote: "I am inclined to consider Quetzalcoatl a real personage, and not a mythical one" (*Anahuac*, p. 278), and Mr. A. H. Buckland (*Anthropological Studies*, p. 90) takes the same view; but neither argues the point; and in his *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865, pp. 151–4), Dr. Tylor treats the matter as pure myth. It was this deity who was long ago identified with St. Thomas (Clavigero, B. vi, § 4, p. 250). For the myth see Dr. Brinton, *American Hero Myths*, pp. 73–142. In the ritual of the confessional he is called the "father and mother" of the penitent (Sahagun, p. 341; l. vi, c. 7). He, too, is born of a virgin mother (Brinton, p. 90).

[2] His temple at Cholula was the greatest in New Spain. Gomara as before cited, p. 448, col. 2.

[3] Bancroft, iii, 267.

[4] Müller, p. 582.

§ 8.—*The Fatality of the Priesthood.*

The main hope of the humaner thinkers would probably lie in the substitution of a symbolic for an anthropophagous sacrament: if baked effigies could be eaten, effigies might be sacrificed. But in some even of the symbolic sacraments blood was a constituent. Thus for the cult of Huitzilopochtli, the baked image made of seeds for the winter festival of the solstice—Christmas—the blood of slain children was the cementing moisture.[1] Here again we have the primitive "sympathetic magic": the image, which was transfixed with an arrow before being eaten, represented the potentialities of new vegetable life at the time of year when vegetation was dead, and the blood of children was the deadly symbol of the moisture that was the life of all things, besides being a means of as it were vitalising the image.[2] Such a cult was indeed far from reducing anthropophagy to a mere symbol.

So with the cult of Xiuhteuctli, the Fire-God. Alongside, apparently, of the remarkable symbolic sacrament above mentioned there were anthropophagous sacraments to the same God. He was one of the most widely honoured of all, the first drink at every meal in every household being taken in his name—a correlation which again suggests derivation from an Asiatic fire-cult such as is seen blended in that of Agni in the Vedas. In his name, too, every child was passed through the fire at birth—another notable parallel to ancient Asiatic usages;[3] and from his six hundred temples burned as many perpetual fires. Every four years a great feast was held in his honour at Quauhtitlan, not far from the city of Mexico: the first act being to plant six high trees before the temple on the day previous, and

[1] Bancroft, iii, 297–300.
[2] Müller, pp. 605–6. See above p. 135.
[3] Dr. Müller remarks (p. 569) in this connection that the entire Aztec religion has many resemblances to the fire-worship of Siva. But the primary fire-worship traced among the Sumer-Akkadians is to be looked to as the possible source of that and the later Semitic as well as of the American forms.

to sacrifice two slaves, who were flayed. On the feast day, two priests appeared clad in those victims' skins, hailed with the cry, "See, there come our Gods;" and all day they danced to wild music, the while many thousands of quails were sacrificed to the God. Finally the priests took six prisoners and bound or hanged them to the tops of the six trees, where they were shot through with arrows. When dead they were taken down and their hearts cut out in the usual way, the priests and nobility finally eating the flesh of both the men and the quails as a sacrament.[1]

It is not clear at what place and period the symbolical sacrifice in this cult arose; but the essential problem is, whether it could have ousted the other. And the answer must be that inasmuch as the human sacrifice was specially associated with the power of the priests, and was obviously to the tastes of the mass of the people of all grades, nothing short of an overthrow of the existing polity by another could have effected the transformation, there being no native culture in the surrounding States that could give the requisite moral lead on a large scale. Such violent subversion, it will be remembered, was a common condition of religious evolution in the Old World in antiquity; and the history of the great priestly systems of Egypt, India, and Babylon points to the conclusion that not otherwise than by the fiat of powerful autocrats, or forcible overthrow at the hands of neighbouring and kindred races, in the absence of peaceful culture-contacts of a higher kind, could such systems be made to loosen their grasp on social and intellectual life.

It will be observed that in the cult under notice the priest represents the God even as does the victim. The same phenomenon occurs, sometimes, though not always, with the same procedure of donning the victim's skin, in many of the American sacrificial cults, Aztec and other.[2] A recent hierologist has argued, in view of the various instances in which priest-kings and sacrificial priests have

[1] Müller, pp. 568–9; Clavigero, B. vi, § 21 (i, 283–4); Humboldt, *Monuments*, 186, 206, 213.

[2] Müller, pp. 77, 493, 570, 577, 581, 591, 599, 600, 604, 606, 635, 640.

been themselves annually sacrificed, that "it was as the shedder of divine [victim's] blood that the king-priest's blood was shed," and that he was originally distinguished from his fellow-worshippers "only by his greater readiness to sacrifice himself for their religious needs."[1] We need not dwell here on the fallacy of thus imputing a calculated and reasoned self-devotion in the case of an act which, among savage men, would stand just as much for lack of imagination or forethought. Assuming the theory to be true, however, we must recognise that in the case of the historic Mexican priesthood any ancient liability of the kind had long disappeared. According to Herrera, the private chaplains of the nobles were slain at the death of their masters; but this was as slaves or attendants, not as public priests, and not as sacrifices.[2] In not a single case do we learn that the victim was furnished by the priestly class.[3] That class indeed practised in some measure, as we have seen, the asceticisms common to most ancient priesthoods, but it had long made an end of any serious penalties attaching to its profession.[4] The priests, in short, were the dominant force in the Mexican society; and under them it was on the one hand being economically ruined in the manner of most ancient empires, and on the other being anchylosed in its moral and intellectual life. To say this is of course not to select the priests for blame as being the sole or primary causes of the fatal development: their order was but the organised expression of the general religious tendency. But they dramatically exhibit, once for all, the capacity of "religion" in general to darken life and blight civilisation.

[1] Jevons, *Introd. to the Hist. of Religion*, pp. 294, 296.

[2] Herrera, *General History*, Eng. tr. 1725–6, iii, 220, cited in Spencer's *Descriptive Sociology*, No. II, p. 20, col. 1.

[3] Thus Mr. Jevons's remark (p. 283) that "in Mexico *the* priest was allowed to evade the violent death which attached to his office on condition that he found a substitute (a war captive)," is apt to mislead; though it may be the true explanation of the origin of the priestly habit of joining in the fighting.

[4] We even find that among the redskins boys *spared* from sacrifice were made priests, being thus safe. Waitz, iii, 207, citing Strachey, *Hist. of Travaile into Virginia*, ed. 1849, p. 93.

The mere number of the priests was so great as to constitute a force of fixation such as has never been countervailed in modern European countries, where forces relatively much less powerful have only slowly been undermined by culture influences from more advanced neighbouring communities. When we note that the temple of the Mexican Wine-God alone had four hundred priests,[1] we realise that we are in presence of social conditions which mere humanism could not avail to transform, even if it found a hearing among the priesthoods. *A fortiori*, no philosophic developments on the sacerdotal side could have availed. The growth of a pantheistic philosophy among the priesthoods of ancient India and Babylonia and Egypt, and the growth of a monotheistic doctrine among those of Jewry, were equally without effect on the sacerdotal practices as a whole, these remaining in all cases alike primitively sacrificial, though, for extra-sacerdotal reasons already noted, they ceased to include human sacrifice. And in Mexico, of course, the philosophic developments were slight at best. The figuring of Tezcatlipoca as "the soul of the world"[2] does not appear to have stood for any methodically pantheistic thought, being apparently an expression of henotheism common in solar worships. The entire Mexican civilisation, in short, was being arrested at a stage far below that attained in the Mesopotamian empires long before the Christian era.

[1] Müller, p. 570.

[2] It is remarkable that the doctrine of the Logos is here adumbrated in connection with the Winter Sun, who would presumably be born at the winter solstice (when the reign of Huitzilopochtli ended) and pass away at the vernal equinox. As God of Drought, however, he was further God of Death, of the Underworld, and of Judgment (Müller, pp. 614, 618–9, 621)—a combination out of the common line of evolution, the God of Souls and of Wisdom being usually one of the Beloved Gods. The special evolution seems to be due to the fact that he was originally the God of the Thallotlaks, turned by the Aztecs to special account. Tezcatlipoca was nominally the "greatest God" (Clavigero, B. vi, c. 2, p. 244), though Huitzilopochtli got more attention. "Tezcatlipoca was the most sublime figure in the Aztec Pantheon" (Dr. Brinton, *American Hero Myths*, 1882, p. 69). See his titles (*Id.* p. 70). He was the Night God (p. 71); and Clavigero notes that his statue was of black stone.

§ 9.—*The Religion of Peru.*

While in Mexico we see a society being ruined by religion, in Peru we find one suffering economically a similar ruin from the principle of empire. In Peru, the religious tendencies are seen at work in a much modified degree. There the rapid multiplication of the priesthood was hindered by the peculiar standing of the king and his family. In Mexico the king was elected by the nobles: in Peru he reigned by divine right of the strongest description; the doctrine being that the original Inca was the Sun-God, who married his sister; and that all succeeding Incas did the same, thus keeping the succession strictly divine. As they extended their dominions by conquest, they astutely provided that the religions of the conquered peoples should subsist, but in a state of recognised subjection to the Inca, the divine high-priest, as the priesthood generally ranked below the sacred caste of the Inca nobles; so that the old cults had not the chance of growing as those of Mexico did, though they remained popular and venerable. The two leading deities were Pachacamac and Viracocha, who in virtue of similarity were often identified. Each figured in myth as a Creator, and they were doubtless originally the Gods of different peoples or tribes, though their cults tended to unity under the politic despotism of the Incas. Pachacamac signifies "life-giver of the earth,"[1] and Viracocha "foam of the sea"; and they seem accordingly to have been respectively associated, to some extent, with the principles of heat and moisture; but, as so many other ancient systems show, these principles readily lend themselves to combination. Both belonged to the pre-Incarial civilisation, but were adopted and blended by the Incas, though their status as creators of all things, including the sun, was inconsistent with the Incarial religion, in which the sun was the Creator.[2] The omission to build new temples, however,[3] was probably undermining this cult;

[1] Müller, p. 318.
[2] *Id.* pp. 314–319.
[3] See Mr. Kirk's note in his ed. of Prescott, p. 44.

and the popular religion was becoming more and more one of worship of the minor deities, with the Inca figuring as the representative of the chief natural God, the Sun. The Thunder and Lightning were worshipped as the Sun's ministers; the Rainbow as his symbol or emanation; and the Moon and Stars, and in particular the planet Venus, as separate divinities; and Creator, Thunder, and Sun were sacrificed to as if very much on a level in dignity.[1] From such developments we may infer that the Peruvian popular culture was nearly stationary or decaying; and it becomes easy to understand how, after the Conquest, the Christian deities took the place of the old without any difficulty; these being so many religious conventions, while the real beliefs of the people remained attached, as they are now, to the genii or sprites of their own lore. For an unprogressing and unlettered people—as many of those in Europe have been at different times—religion is mostly a matter of festivals and hand-to-mouth superstitions; and the Peruvian common people are, under Christianity, what they were under their Incas. European life gives abundant evidence of how the usages of an ancient creed may survive the creed itself. In Peru, as in Mexico, there was a solemn religious ceremony of renewing at stated periods, by special generation, the fire used in the temples, and even in the households. In Mexico it was done over a human sacrifice, by means of the friction of two sticks, at the end of each cycle of fifty-two years.[2] In Peru it was done yearly by means of a concave mirror.[3] So did men do in ancient Rome, and similarly have northern European peasants done in Germany, in Scotland, in Ireland, at intervals till our own time, regarding the "need fire" or "forced fire" as a means of averting evil.[4] It is one of the oldest rites of the human race, and it has survived under all religions alike down to the other day, when perhaps it received its death-

[1] *Rites and Laws of the Yncas*, trans. by C. R. Markham, Hakluyt Society, 1873, p. 27.

[2] Prescott, *Mexico*, c. iv, end; J. G. Müller, p. 520.

[3] Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, Kirk's ed. in 1 vol., c. iii, p. 51. "In cloudy weather they had recourse to the means of friction." Réville, p. 196.

[4] Max Müller, *Physical Religion*, pp. 286–9.

blow from the lucifer match. Equally universal is that ceremony of annually driving out the evil spirits,[1] which was undertaken in Peru by the Incas in person, and which is supposed to have survived in Scotland to this day in the burghal ceremony of "riding the marches." Customary usages and minor superstitions outlast faiths and philosophies; and in Peru they defy the Church. Sun-worship is gone; but the ideas of the Incarial times remain. And, indeed, there existed in some districts seventy years ago, and probably survives even to-day, a devout celebration of the memory of the ancient theocracy, in the shape of an annual dramatic representation, which the rulers vainly sought to suppress, of the death of the last Inca at the hands of the Spaniards.[2]

It was about as ill-founded devotion as any ever shown to a royal line in our own hemisphere; for under the Incas the people were heavily oppressed by minutely tyrannous laws and by taxes, they alone bearing all burdens, and the priests and nobles going free.[3] But were it not for the mistake of the last Inca before Pizarro in recognising one of his sons by a foreign queen, and dividing the empire between him and the heir apparent, the Inca empire, despite the disaffection of some of its subjects by conquest, might have subsisted long. As its priesthood was necessarily less powerful, so its sacrificial system was less burdensome and less terrible. Human sacrifices also were much less general than in Mexico; but they existed;[4] and there is reason to reject the claim of Garcilasso, who was biassed by his Incarial descent, that the Incas had wholly abolished them. Peoples at that culture-stage could not readily be forced to give up their ancient rites. It is in fact on record that

[1] On this usage, see Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, vol. iii, c. iii, §§ 14–15.
[2] Stevenson, *Twenty Years' Residence in South America*, i, 401; ii, 70–3.
[3] Prescott, *Peru*, B. i, c. 2, citing Garcilasso.
[4] See Kirk's note to Prescott, p. 51, in reply to the claim of Mr. Markham on behalf of the Incas. Cp. Müller, pp. 377–8. Mr. Markham's case is stated by him in Winsor's *Narrative History*, as above cited, i, 238–9. He does not appear to recognise the bearing of his own assertion that the Incas made a law prohibiting human sacrifice. Such a law is evidence of the practice. The conflict of Spanish authorities is at once solved by allowing that the survivals were local, not general.

when an Inca was dangerously ill, one of his sons was sacrificed for him to the Sun-God in the immemorial fashion ;[1] and it was in keeping with such a usage that at least one tribe in Quito should regularly sacrifice its first-born.[2] And if it be a sheer fable that at the accession of a new Inca there were sacrificed some hundreds of children,[3] no trust can be put in any of the Spanish testimonies. It is however established by the "Fables and Rites of the Yncas"[4] that the great festival of Capacocha or Ccachalmaca, instituted by one Inca at the beginning of his reign, was celebrated with sacrifices of boys and girls, one from each tribe or lineage, both at Cuzco and at the chief town of each province. Further, after every victory certain captives were sent to the capital to be sacrificed to the sun. It is thus only too likely that among some of the coast peoples children were sacrificed to the Gods every month.[5] What seems to be certain is that, save perhaps among some of the more savage tribes, the Peruvians under the later Incas had abolished cannibal sacraments—a proof of the natural movement of humanity in that direction where the direct interest of a powerful priesthood did not too potently conserve religious savagery.

For the rest, they sacrificed their llamas, small birds, rabbits, sheep, and dogs ; and while they alone of the American races had burnt-offerings of animals,[6] they ate their unburnt sacrifices raw,[7] here again showing the tendency of religion to preserve, wherever possible, the most ancient usages of all. They had, indeed, the custom of Suttee, like the Hindus ; good widows, especially those of the Incas, being at one time expected to bury themselves alive when their husbands died,[8] so as to be wives to them in the spirit

[1] Müller, p. 378, citing Montesimos.
[2] *Id*. p. 377, citing Velasco.
[3] *Id*. p. 378, citing five authorities.
[4] Translated from the MS. of Molina by Mr. Markham, who had denied the occurrence of human sacrifices in Incarial Peru.
[5] Müller, pp. 378–9, citing Xeres and Rottencamp.
[6] Prescott, p. 44, citing McCulloch.
[7] Réville, p. 220. Mr. Markham's assertion, that the Peruvian sacrifices were with one exception thank-offerings and not expiations, omits to define the sacramental species.
[8] In this usage we probably have the origin of the practice of burying alive the unfaithful "Virgins of the Sun" in Peru, and Vestals in Rome. Dr.

world; but this custom was dying out, being replaced by the symbolism of placing statuettes in a man's tomb to represent his wives and servants.[1] In the same way, human sacrifice was being replaced by the surrogate of blood-letting.[2] Above all, the blood sacrament had become conventionalised in a quasi-Christian form. The Peruvians had the institution of a Holy Communion, in which they ate of a sacred bread, *sancu*, sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed sheep, the priest pronouncing this formula:—"Take heed how ye eat this *sancu*; for he who eats it in sin, and with a double will and heart, is seen by our Father, the Sun, who will punish him with grievous troubles. But he who, with a single heart, partakes of it, to him the Sun and the Thunderer will show favour, and will grant children and happy years, and abundance of all that he requires." All then made a solemn vow of piety and loyalty before eating.[3] To say, as some do, that there was nothing essentially "moral" in such rites, because they had in view temporal well-being,[4] is merely to set up one more one-sided discrimination between Christianity and Paganism; for it is certain that the early Christians regarded their eucharist as possessing miraculous medicinal virtues. Equally unjudicial is the comment on the rites of infant baptism and confession of sins (which the Peruvians also practised) that "even where the Peruvian religion seems to undertake the elevation and protection of morals, it does so rather with a utilitarian and selfish view than with any real purpose of sanctifying the heart and will."[5] It is hardly necessary to reply that the Mexicans and Peruvians had just the same kind of moral feeling in any given stage of civilisation as Christians

Réville explains the practice in both cases by the idea of devoting to darkness the unfaithful spouse of the Sun (Lectures cited, p. 207). But the Roman Vestal was dedicated to the Goddess Vesta, who is identified with the *earth*, as hearth-fire and as female principle. To the same ancient practice of burying wives alive may be ascribed the long-retained practice of putting some female criminals to death in that fashion. Michelet (*Guerres de religion*, 1856, p. 88) gives the absurd explanation that burying alive was resorted to as being more decent than burning alive, because in the latter case the flames soon left the victim naked.

[1] Still, it survived the Conquest. Prescott, p. 43, *n.* citing Ondegardo.
[2] Müller, p. 379.
[3] *Rites and Laws of the Yncas*, p. 27.
[4] Réville, pp. 227, 233–5.
[5] *Ib.* p. 233.

have had in a similar culture stage, and that the desire for future salvation, appealed to in all Christian evangelical teaching, is only utilitarianism and selfishness *sub specie æternitatis*. The Spaniards themselves recognised that the Mexicans ate the mystical body of the God with every sign of devotion and contrition;[1] and they were so far from depreciating the Peruvian communion that they supposed St. Bartholomew had established it.[2] The Mexican wise-woman who prayed the Merciful Goddess to cleanse the babe from the sin of its parents will compare fairly well with the practisers of infant baptism among ourselves; and it cannot be shown that the Mexican and Peruvian confessors stood as a rule any lower morally than those of Christendom at the same culture-stage. The casting of horoscopes for infants was practised in Europe just as in Mexico at the time of the Conquest. The Mexican priests gave indulgences; but they never went to the lengths of the Renaissance Papacy in that direction.

§ 10.—*Conclusion.*

On the other hand, the promotion of material well-being is precisely what is oftenest claimed for Christianity; and the argument is presumably changed in the case of Peru and Mexico only because there it would break down. For the great fact about these heathen civilisations is that they did attain material well-being, as apart from humane feeling, in a considerable degree; though, as we have seen, they were suffering much from sacerdotalism and autocracy. If we do not say with Dr. Draper that the Spaniards destroyed a higher civilisation than their own, we may at least say that it was in many ways superior to that which they have put in its place. What they have done is completely to destroy the civilisations they found, without replacing them at all in large measure. In the matters of road-making, agriculture, and the administration of law, the new civilisation is not to be compared with the old,

[1] Prescott, *Mexico*, app. p. 641.

[2] Prescott, *Peru*, p. 52.

which, indeed, was on these points ahead of anything in Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire.[1] The Aztecs had clean streets, and lighted streets, when Europe had not. Dr. Réville, indeed, lays undue stress on the lighting of the streets, which was not done by lamps, but by fires ;[2] but even that was an improvement on the European state of things of two hundred years ago. Peru to-day is a desolation compared with what it was under the Incas; and under the new religion the native races seem to be positively lower than under the old. By the testimony of Catholic priests, the conquerors nearly exterminated the Aztec races, the numbers destroyed by their cruelties being reckoned at twelve millions. And on the side of morality and humanity, who shall say what the gain was in Mexico when the Christian conquerors, after execrating the practice of human sacrifice, set up their own Holy Inquisition to claim its victims for the propitiation of the three new Gods, harrying still further the people they had already decimated by atrocious tyranny and cruelty?

It is little to the purpose to urge, as was done by Joseph de Maistre,[3] that "the immense charity of the Catholic priesthood" sought to protect the natives in every way from the cruelty and avarice of the conquerors. It is in the nature of all priesthoods in close connection with the people to seek or wish its good in some way:[4] the Mexican priests, as we have seen, enjoined beneficence, and they treated their own vassals well.[5] But when the Christian apologist declares that he has "no knowledge of a single act of violence laid to the charge of the priests," save in the one case of Valverde in Peru,[6] he goes far indeed beyond

[1] As to the excellence of the Peruvian architectures, see Markham, in Winsor, i, 246–7, and Squier, as there cited; and as to their admirable system of irrigation see pp. 252–3.

[2] Robertson, *History of America*, B. vii. (Works, ed. 1821, ix. 22).

[3] *Soirées de Saint Pétersbourg*, ed. 1821, i, 109.

[4] Cp. Müller, p. 144, on the efforts of missionaries in general to burke the facts as to cannibalism among the aborigines.

[5] Prescott, p. 34.

[6] Even this he seeks to cast doubt upon. But even Valverde might intelligibly have sought to protect the Indians, as he is said to have done, after helping to massacre them in the conquest. They had become his tithe-payers.

his brief. There were certainly humane priests, as Las Casas and Sahagun; but what but "acts of violence" were the whole efforts of the priesthood to destroy the ancient monuments and records, to say nothing of the operations of the Inquisition? It is not, however, in mere "acts of violence" that the fatality of Christian junction with non-Christian civilisation lies: it belongs to the nature of the case; and religious principle, which encouraged the original act of conquest, is worse than powerless to avert the consequences. If the more forward races will not leave the more backward alone, and cannot blend with them in a common stock, they must do one of three things: exercise a mere supervision, good or bad, as Englishmen do in India, where they cannot breed; or crowd the weaker out, as is being done in North America and Australia; or strangle the lower civilisation without developing the higher, as has been done in Mexico and Peru by Christians, and in Egypt by Saracens. Whether a race fusion can take place in Mexico, Peru, and Brazil remains to be seen. If it be attained, those countries will have solved a problem which in the United States, in a worse form, grows blacker every day.

In that case, a relative success may finally be claimed for the Catholic as against the Protestant evolution. But it will be due to other causes than religion. It may, indeed, be charged against the Catholic Church that its unchangeable hostility to the spread of knowledge has been the means of paralysing progress in countries where, as in Mexico and Peru, it has been able to attain absolute dominion over minds and bodies. "It seems hard," says Dr. Tylor,[1] "to be always attacking the Catholic clergy; but of one thing we cannot remain in doubt—that their influence has had more to do than anything else with the doleful ignorance which reigns supreme in Mexico." But it is not Catholicism that is the explanation. "The only difference," avows Dr. Brinton,[2] "in the

[1] *Anahuac*, p. 126. Since Dr. Tylor wrote, there has been much progress in Mexico, due to the rationalistic ideas which are there as elsewhere confronting the Church.

[2] *American Hero Myths*, p. 206.

results of the two great divisions of the Christian world," in the matter of conquests, "seems to be that on Catholic missions has followed the debasement, on Protestant missions the destruction of the race." It may be added that in Protestant Natal to-day there is a general determination among the white population to keep the natives uneducated, lest knowledge should give them power. In fine, the claim that there is an inherent civilising virtue in Christianity is here, as elsewhere, turned to confusion. "Christianity," as the same writer declares,[1] "has shown itself incapable of controlling its inevitable adjuncts; and it would have been better, morally and socially, for the American race never to have known Christianity at all than to have received it on the only terms on which it has been possible to offer it."

What Christendom could best have done for the American civilisations, after putting down human sacrifice, was to leave them to grow, like those of China and Japan, under the influence of superior example at certain points. Progress might then conceivably have come about.[2] There is little use in speculating over the might-have-been; but at least we should not overlook the fact that in Peru there are distinct records of rationalism among the theocratic

[1] *Id.* p. 207.

[2] The Mexican language, in particular, shows great capabilities. "Of all the languages spoken on the American continent, the Aztec is the most perfect and finished, approaching in this respect the tongues of Europe and Asia, and actually surpassing many of them by its elegance and expression. Although wanting the six consonants, *b*, *d*, *f*, *r*, *g*, *s*, it may still be called full and rich. Of its copiousness, the *Natural History* of Dr. Hermandez gives evidence, in which are described twelve hundred different species of Mexican plants, two hundred or more species of birds, and a large number of quadrupeds, reptiles, insects, and metals, each of which is given its proper name in the Mexican language. Mendieta says that it is not excelled in beauty by the Latin, displaying even more art in its construction, and abounding in tropes and metaphors. Camargo calls it the richest of the whole land, and the purest, being mixed with no foreign barbaric element; Gomara says it is the best, most copious, and most extended in all New Spain; Davila Padilla, that it is very elegant and graceful, although it contains many metaphors which make it difficult; Loreozana, that it is very elegant, sweet, and complete; Clavigero, that it is copious, polite, and expressive; Brasseur de Bourbourg, that from the most sublime heights it descends to common things with a sonorousness and richness of expression peculiar to itself. The missionaries found it ample for their purpose, as in it, and without the aid of foreign words, they could express all the shades of their dogmas" (Bancroft, iii, 727-8).

Incas themselves. Several of these remarkable rulers[1] are recorded to have expressed the conviction that the Sun, for ever moving in his allotted course, could not be the Supreme Deity he was said to be—that there must be another Deity who ruled him.[2] This reminds us that in all ages and under all religions there have been Freethinkers; men who knew that the Gods were myths while the Vedic hymns were being made; Sadducees among the Jews; Mu'tazilites among the Mohammedans. For the history of mental evolution has not been that of a simple process from delusion to rationalism, but of a constant war between the two tendencies in the human mind; and what has happened hitherto is just that inasmuch as the majority have thought little they have been credulous. To measure the position of any nation in this regard, we have for the most part simply to consider the status and expansive power of its priesthood. And for us to-day there is one special lesson to be drawn from the case of the unbelieving Incas, who never modified their theocratic practice as regarded the multitude, whatever they might deem among themselves. Their principle evidently was that the masses must be deluded. Well, we know that when the royal line fell, those masses were wholly unable to act for themselves, and fell abjectly under the sway of a mere handful of conquerors. Unless the masses also rationalise, they will never attain a worthy humanity. So that, unless the Freethinkers are *more* righteous than the Scribes and Pharisees—the doctrine is somewhat musty.

It is the more necessary to insist on this, the final lesson of all comparative hierology, because in the face of all the facts some students contrive, with the best intentions, to invert it. Because supernaturalism has always been associated with ethics in religious history, it is fallaciously inferred that there can be no ethic without supernaturalism; and in order to shield from rational criticism the prevailing

[1] According to Prescott, the crania of the Incas show great superiority to those of the people, which may well be believed; but the data are called in question. See Kirk's ed. p. 18.

[2] Réville, pp. 162–5; Markham, in Winsor's *History*, i, 233.

creed, emphasis is laid on every point at which in its evolution it has chanced to be associated with the principle of betterment. This was the point of view of one of the first scientific investigators on the comparative principle, Benjamin Constant, whose treatise *De la Religion, considerée dans sa source, ses formes, ses développements*, published in 1824–34, is still worth attention. Developing the principles of Fontenelle and Des Brosses, he set forth, clearly and insistently, two generations before Mr. Lang, the presence of savage survivals in the religions of civilised antiquity ;[1] and while accepting Hume's demonstration of the priority of polytheism[2] he anticipated Mr. Lang's theorem about the good Supreme Being who "could not be squared,"[3] even as he framed a number of the theses employed by Mr. Jevons for the vindication of religious intuitionism, such as the utility of taboo and the opposition between religion and magic.[4] Long before it was fashionable to do so, he adopted and developed Lessing's thesis of the progressive development of all religion ;[5] Comte's law of the three stages he anticipated by one of four stages, which is perhaps better grounded ;[6] and some of his solutions are both ingenious and just, more just than some of those of his successors who follow similar lines. Yet by reason of his desire to glorify "the religious sentiment" in the abstract and in the present time, apart from all the "forms" of religion, he repeatedly lapses into crude sophistry. After insisting that the religious sentiment is "universal" he speaks of "irreligious peoples";[7] and wherever he has to admit that religion has wrought tyranny and evil he alleges that just there the religious sentiment has left it, that it has become merely interest, egoism, calculation.[8] On this very principle, religion is beneficent

[1] Vol. i, préf. p. ii.
[2] Vol. i, pt. ii, ch. v.
[3] *Ib.* pp. 15, 78–79, *note*.
[4] Compare the citations from Mr. Jevons, above, pp. 6, 20–24, etc., with Constant, vol. i, pt. i, 13 ; pt. ii, 48–50,71, 83.
[5] Vol. i, pt. i, 104.
[6] *Id.* 107–8.
[7] Cp. i, pt. i, 2–6, 20 ; pt. ii, 45.
[8] Cp. v, 157, where it is insisted that the spirit of dogma is directly opposed to the sentiment of religion. Elsewhere (i, pt. i, p. 99) he admits that religion has bad "tendencies."

only momentarily, when it is taking shape as a reform of old religion by innovators; each innovation in turn becoming a matter of form, interest, egoism, calculation; so that "the religious sentiment," so far from being universal, turns out to be the sentiment only of innovators, freethinkers, enemies of traditionalism. After being represented as "sweet and consoling" for the mass of men, "the spirit of religion" turns out to be precisely what the mass of men never at any one moment entertain. All the while, it is pretended on à priori grounds that rationalism must always lend itself to fatalistic submission, as if religious reform were not relative rationalism; and the colossal historical facts of religious fatalism, religious tyranny, religious cruelty, religious licence, are glosed as phenomena of irreligion.

From this long-drawn contradiction there is only one way of escape—the recognition that the sole rational test of any religious credence or usage at any moment is its *truth*, relatively to the intelligence of the moment. Mechanically repeating that religion is a fundamental "sentiment," men lose sight and hold of the truth that veracity is also a sentiment, with inalienable rights. The men who, in terms of religious credences, have reformed religion in the past, have done so in the conviction that the credences they discarded were *not true*. To argue that, because their credences were associated for a time with moral or material improvement, we must cherish those credences even when we know them to be untrue, is to be false not only to their ideal but to the very principle of development. Such an acceptance is in itself corruption, the negation of betterment; and to turn the historic fact of the relativity of religious beliefs into a general vindication of religion is to read the law of evolution backwards. Bad or mistaken morals are relatively "fit," even as is false belief. It has been argued that cannibalism once saved the human race; and the proposition may be perfectly true; but so far from being an argument for reversion to cannibalism, it does not even cancel the fact that cannibalism has again and again gone far to destroy low civilisations.

Religious belief has been historically associated with both the progress and the paralysis of civilisation; and the just inference is that, so far from its being *the* principle of betterment, it is simply a form of fallacious mental activity, which may either be countervailed by truer forms or may countervail them. And the beliefs which have the worst concomitants are precisely those certified by the special-pleaders as "truly" religious. The belief in immortality, so often extolled as a great source of consolation, has been the motive for the slaughter of unnumbered millions of human beings, religiously doomed to accompany others to "another world"; the conception of sacrificial salvation, another source of "blessed comfort," has incited to the slaughter of uncounted millions more, with every circumstance of heart-searing atrocity; the doctrine of sacramental communion with deity, as we have seen, has been the means of conserving and sanctifying systematic cannibalism at the hands of priesthoods, where without priesthoods it must have died out; and in every age and stage of human growth the religious sentiment, of which the most essential and constant characteristic is to cling to "forms," is seen on the intellectual side damning new thought, strangling science, sanctifying injustice, and haloing war, as well as endorsing what measure of moral principle had been evolved in a lower stage of thought. There is never the slightest security that the spirit of justice and reason and sympathy will coincide with "the spirit of religion"; and there is no known religious system which is not habitually turned to the frustration of some of the best of the precepts it professes to inculcate. There is thus no reason to doubt that in savage as in civilised times the forces of organised religion have been arrayed against the forces of betterment, social as well as intellectual, with but a dubious record on the side of moralisation.

Certain hierologists on religious grounds make much of the fact that some of the "lowest" races appear to have the "highest" notions of a Supreme Being, as if that were not a specially plain proof of the futility of theistic notions as civilising forces. "Fijian religion," we are told, draws "an

impassable line between ghosts and eternal gods."[1] And the apparent effect of that discrimination was to keep the Fijians the most revolting set of cannibals on the face of the earth,[2] habitually eating their own species because the Eternal Gods preferred so to feed; while in the mysteries of their Supreme Being there occur scenes of "almost incredible indecency." Precisely where men drew the least clear distinction between ghosts and Eternal Gods, that is to say among the Tongans, cannibalism was abandoned till Fijian influence revived it; and the position of women was immensely better.[3] And all the while, the more brutal the religion, the more complacent were the worshippers. The unconscious testimony of a missionary may help to make the point clearer :—

> "The religious system of the Samoans differs essentially from that which obtained at the Tahitian, Society, and other islands with which we are acquainted. They have neither maraes nor temples nor offerings; and, *consequently*, none of the barbarian and sanguinary rites observed at the other groups. In consequence of this, the Samoans were considered an impious race, and their impiety became proverbial with the people of Raratonga [one of the Hervey Islands]; for when upbraiding a person who neglected the worship of the gods, they would call him 'a godless Samoan.' But .....this people had 'lords many and gods many';"[4]

and the belief in these, by the missionary's account, was associated with vice and absurdity.

As between the Samoan and the Fijian, our sole test is the critical reason. It is by the same test that we pronounce given religious doctrines incredible or inconsistent, apart from any question of their effects. Let that criticism be honestly met on its own ground, instead of by

[1] Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 218, following T. Williams, *Fiji*, p. 218. Cp. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i, 333-4, as to the distinction throughout Polynesia generally.

[2] T. Williams, as cited pp. 204–214.

[3] Cp. Mariner, i, 107–108; ii, 103–4; Seemann, *Fiji and its Inhabitants*, in Galton's *Vacation Tourists*, 1862, p. 280.

[4] J. Williams, *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, ed. 1837, pp. 540–1.

way of paralogisms concerning the utility of false beliefs in the past, and hierology will be freed from an element of disturbance and distortion, becoming as nearly as possible a department of pure history. It is the tactic of the special pleader for religion that has introduced that element: it lies with him to let it vanish. Doubtless it will reappear in sociology; but there it will be for the time a quickening force, giving vitality to a science that is slow to be vivified by actual interests.

APPENDIX.

DRAMATIC AND RITUAL SURVIVALS.

While this volume has been passing through the press, there has reached me a cutting from an American newspaper, describing the survival or revival of a quasi-sacrificial Passion Play among the Christianised descendants of the Aztecs. As an illustration of the psychology of human sacrifice, it is worth reprinting without note or comment:—

NEW MEXICO'S PASSION PLAY.

The Penitentes and their Self-Inflicted Tortures.

Santa Fé, N. M. March 27).—Among the Americans who flock once in ten years to see the Passion play at Oberammergau, there are few who know of the more realistic performance given yearly by the Penitentes of New Mexico. This performance was first adequately described by Adolphe Bandelier in a report issued by the Smithsonian Institution about ten years ago.

The full title of the Penitentes is Los Hermanos Penitentes, meaning The Penitent Brothers. The order was established in New Mexico at the time of the Spanish conquest under Coronado, about 1540. The purpose of the priests who accompanied the Spaniards was to form a society for religious zeal among the natives. They taught the natives that sin might be expiated by flagellation and other personal suffering. As time passed, the Indian and half-breed zealots sought to improve their enthusiasm by fiercer self-imposed ordeals of suffering. The idea of enacting the travail of the Master on Calvary was evolved. Hence the Passion Play of the Penitentes on each Good Friday.

Mr. Bandelier learned from the Spanish archives that as early as 1594, a crucifixion, in which twenty-seven men were actually nailed to crosses for a half-hour, took place on Good Friday, " after several weeks

of pious mortification of the flesh with knives and cactus thorns." The Penitentes numbered some 6,000 at the time of the American-Mexican War in 1848. The Catholic Church has long laboured to abolish their practices. So have the civil authorities. Fifty years ago there were branches of the Penitentes in seventeen localities in the territory, and crucifixions took place in each of the branches. The organisation has since gradually died away. Nowadays the sole remnant of the order is in the valley of San Mateo, seventy-five miles north-east from Santa Fé. There is no railroad nearer than sixty miles.

Some 300 Mexicans still cling to the doctrine that one's misdeeds are to be squared by physical pain during forty days of each year, finally closing with a crucifixion. Most of the Penitentes live at Taos, a very old adobe pueblo. They are sheep and cattle herders. Not one in a dozen of them can read and write in Spanish, and they have as little knowledge of English as if they lived in the heart of Mexico. The Penitentes keep their membership a secret nowadays. They meet in their primitive adobe council chambers (*moradas*) at night, and they conduct their flagellations and crucifixions as secretly as possible. Charles F. Lummis, of Los Angeles, Cal., was nearly shot to death by an assassin for photographing a Penitente crucifixion a few years ago. The Penitentes have several night meetings during the year, but it is only in Lent that they are active. They have a head, the Hermano Mayor, whose mandates are strictly followed on pain of death. Adolphe Bandelier has written that up to a half century ago there were instances of disobedient and treacherous brother Penitentes having been buried alive.

In Lent the Penitentes have night meetings several times a week at the *morada*. One day they will whip one another, on another day they go to El Calvario (the Calvary), a little hill away from the town, where they coat their bodies with ashes, and all the time call in lamentations for a witness to their sense of sinfulness. For several days at a time they go without food, and they spend whole nights in tearful prayer. When Holy Week comes the intensity of the fanaticism increases. They have been seen to thrust cactus

spines into one another's naked backs until the flesh swelled owing to the torture caused by thousands of nettles under the skin. They have been known to crawl on all fours like lizards over hill and vale for miles at a time to prove their humility. Self-lashing with short whips similar to cats-o'-nine-tails is common, and young men have died from exhaustion and loss of blood during too zealous flagellations.

On Good Friday the Hermano Mayor names the ones who have been chosen to be the *Jesus Christ*, the *Peter*, the *Pontius Pilate*, *Mary*, the *Martha*, and so on, for the play. Notwithstanding the torture involved in the impersonation, many Penitentes are annually most desirous of being the *Christ*. The play is given on El Calvario. While the *pipero* blows a sharp air on a flute the man who is acting the part of the Saviour comes forth. His only garment is a quantity of cotton sheeting or muslin that hangs flowing from his shoulders and waist. About his forehead is bound a wreath of cactus thorns. The thorns have been pressed deep into the flesh, from which tiny streams of blood trickle down his bronzed face and over his black beard. In a moment a cross of huge timbers that would break the back of many men is laid upon his shoulders. He grapples it tight, and, bending low under the crushing weight, starts on.

On the way a path of broken stones has been made, and the most devout Penitentes walk over these with bare feet and never flinch. The counterfeit Christ is spit upon by the spectators. Little boys and girls run ahead of the chief actor that they may spit in his face and throw stones upon his bending form. When El Calvario is reached, the great clumsy cross is laid upon the ground. The actor of Christ is seized and thrown upon it. The assemblage joins in a chorus of song, while several Penitentes lash the man's hands, arms, and legs to the timbers with cords of cowhide. The bonds are made as tight as the big muscular vaqueros can draw them. The ligaments sink into the flesh and even cut so that the blood runs out. The arms and legs become blue and then black under the binding, but not so much as a sigh escapes the lips

of the actor. He repeats in a mixed dialect of Spanish and Indian the words uttered by Christ at the true Calvary, and bids his brothers spare him not. When all is ready a dozen men erect the cross. The women weep and the children look on dumbfounded. Some of the men mock and jeer the man on the cross; others throw clods of sunbaked earth at him, and still others, feeling that they must have some part in the physical agony of the afternoon, call upon the multitude to lash and beat them.

In several localities in Colorado and New Mexico it was once the practice literally to nail the hands of the acting Christ to the timbers of the cross, but the Catholic priest of this generation put a stop to that. There is no doubt that people have died from the tortures of the Passion Play. Only two years ago the Government Indian agent in the San Rita Mountains reported several deaths among the Penitentes, because of poisoning by the cactus thorns and the lashing the men had endured. The Penitentes believe that no death is so desirable as that caused by participation in the acting of the travail of the Lord.

After the first half hour of noise and flagellation about the cross at El Calvario the excitement dies away. The crucified man, whose arms and legs are now black under the bonds, must be suffering indescribable pain, but he only exclaims occasionally in Spanish, "Peace, peace, peace," while the Penitentes who have had no part in the punishment prostrate themselves silently about the cross. As the sun slowly descends behind the mountain peaks the *pipero* rises to his feet, and, blowing a long, harsh air upon his flute, leads a procession of the people back to the village. Some of the leading Penitentes remain behind and lower the man from the cross. Then, following the narrative of the scenes on Calvary, his body is wrapped about with a mass of white fabric, and is carried to a dug-out cave in the hillside near at hand. In the cave the bleeding and tortured body of the chief actor is nursed to strength. If the man is of great endurance and rugged physical strength he will probably be ready to go home to his family in the evening, conscious of having made ample atonement for long

years of sin, and having earned a reputation that many men in Taos have coveted.

Until a score of years ago women joined in the balancing of the Penitentes' accounts with Heaven by self-imposed bodily suffering. No longer ago than when Gen. Wallace was Governor of the territory hundreds of women scourged themselves until their backs and shoulders were raw.

The following extract from a New York journal, referring to an incident at Easter of the present year, is not without interest in the same connection :—

THE CRUCIFIXION IN DRAMA.

LAMBS CLUB ACTORS PERFORM A PASSION PLAY ON SUNDAY.

The Lambs Club is composed to a considerable extent of actors. Its house backs up against the Garrick Theatre, and its monthly Sunday "gambols" have of late been given on that stage. These affairs have consisted of farces and burlesques, and the audiences have been composed of members and their invited guests. But last night merriment gave place to decorum. A "passion play" was performed in all seriousness. No tickets were on sale, and so there was no chance of interference by the police, either on the ground that the Sunday law was broken or that the subject of the piece was illegal.

This drama of the Crucifixion was the work of Clay M. Greene, the playwright and formerly "shepherd" of the Lambs. He had written it for the Jesuit College at Santa Clara, Cal., of which he is a graduate, and it was acted there last year by priests and students under his direction. In the Lambs cast Judas Iscariot was impersonated by Joseph Grismer, Pontius Pilate by Al. Lipman, Peter by R. A. Roberts, John by Ernest Hastings, and Matthew by Henry Woodruff. Other *rôles* were taken by Nathaniel Hartwig, Enos Welles, Fritz Williams, De Wolf Hopper, and Sam Reed. A stageful of Lambs represented the assemblages. The mounting was the same that had been used in

California, and was excellent. The acting was careful, dignified, and, in the main, impressive.

Mr. Green's play begins on the plains of Bethlehem with the quest of Christ's birthplace by the wise men of the East and Herod's emissaries, and passes quickly to Herod's palace, when the news of the new-born King of the Jews incites him to order the massacre of the infants. Then a lapse of years carries us to the representation of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, His arraignment before the Council, the betrayal of Judas, the trial before Pilate, the delivery by Herod to the Jews, the march to Calvary, and the convulsions of nature following the Crucifixion.

Christ is not a visible character, but his presence is indicated in three scenes. In the trial a bright light is thrown from the side, as though he were there, and to that point Pilate addresses his exhortation to the Master to refute the accusations of his enemies. On the way to Calvary the top of a cross moves across the background, as though carried by Christ, who is hidden by the multitude, and an effulgence marks his movement. Nor is he actually exhibited on the cross, but shadows thrown on a transparent curtain make a picture of the Crucifixion.

This performance of "Nazareth" is preliminary to its possible use in a regular theatrical way. William A. Brady has acquired the rights in it and stands ready to produce it publicly. It is understood that he will request Archbishop Corrigan to sanction the enterprise, and that representatives of his reverence saw the play last evening. In the meanwhile, Oscar Hammerstein has an option on "The Passion Play," a version of the Christian tragedy now current in Montreal, with the tacit approval of the Roman Catholic clergy of that city, and with no obstructive action by the Protestants. Mr. Hammerstein says he will introduce it at the opening of the big theatre which he is going to build in West Thirty-fourth Street, if the acquiescence of church and municipal authorities can be secured. Christ is a visible and audible personage in the Montreal performance, which is in French, but here an English translation would be used.

It is inevitable that, in case either of these "passion plays" becomes a feasible venture, the famous Oberam-

mergau representation will be imported. It is said that it would be located in Madison Square Garden, and could be placed there early next autumn if a certainty of non-interference were attainable. It is nearly twenty years since Salmi Morse brought his "passion play" to New York from San Francisco. This was a fine production, directed by David Belasco, and costing $40,000. James O'Neill impersonated Christ, and in the cast were Lewis Morrison, James A. Herne, and others since conspicuous. During three weeks large audiences were drawn, but the leading actors were arrested every day and fined $50 each. At last the Governor of California took prohibitive action.

Mr. Morse was almost a monomaniac about his play; and Mr. O'Neill, who had been educated for the priesthood, seemed sincerely religious in his personification of Christ. Henry E. Abbey brought the company and the outfit to this city, intending to place them at Booth's; but the Mayor threatened to cancel the theatre's license. The next move by Mr. Morse was to lease an old church on the site of the present Proctor Theatre in West Twenty-third street, and put in a stage, on which a single performance was given to an invited audience. Mr. O'Neill had withdrawn, and the late Henry C. De Mille, as the Christ, headed a cast of generally inefficient amateurs. So the venture ended in a fiasco. The present attitude of city and church authorities is not yet ascertainable.

It may be added that, in the Old World, on the soil of the old faiths, the primitive sacrifice of the sacred passover lamb still takes place, or very recently did, on the testimony of a Christian anthropologist:—

"To this day, as I can testify from personal observation, the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim (where alone in all the world the passover-blood is now shed, year by year) bring to mind the blood covenant aspect of this rite, by their uses of that sacred blood. The spurting life-blood of the consecrated lambs is caught in basins, as it flows from their cut throats: and not only are all the tents promptly marked with the blood

as a covenant-token, but every child of the covenant receives also a blood-mark on his forehead, between his eyes, in evidence of his relation to God in the covenant of blood friendship."—H. Clay Trumbull, D.D., *The Blood Covenant: A Primitive Rite and its Bearings on Scripture.* London: Redway, 1887.

On the theory of the Blood Covenant, the lamb is the blood-brother of those who drink the blood. Even so, of old time, was the slain child or man for whom the lamb was substituted.

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