

tion of truth and necessity is impossible in social life. Justice remains only as a dogma, and fraternity as a great aim. Is there a religion or a philosophy that can give us these two?
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HOW WESTERN SCHOLARSHIP AFFECTS THE EAST.

Many complaints are made by missionaries that Christianity is not acceptable to Orientals. It is too Western to their taste, and converts are both few in number and limited to the lower classes of society. It would be wrong, however, to think that the West does not exercise an enormous influence on the East. Western ideas are like a leaven, and, though the process is slow, the results will unfailingly be a transformation, or better, a reformation of Eastern conditions. One instance of it is modern Japan, but we see similar effects in all Eastern countries, and we will quote as another instance, an event in India, which is a significant straw in the wind, viz., the reformation that is going on at present among the Parsees.

We read in an English paper that a society has been formed in Bombay, the object of which is to study the "Holy Gâthas" of the Zend Avesta, the ancient hymns of Zarathushtra. The Parsees having become better familiar through the writings of Western scholars, especially Prof. Lawrence Mills, with the original meaning of their sacred scriptures, propose to reform their faith on the basis of their own sacred books.

The movement was started under the name of "the Gatha Society," and at the first meeting Mr. J. C. Coyajee delivered a lecture on the "Spirit of the Gâthas." The friendliness with which these Parsee aspirations were greeted by their Christian fellow citizens appears from the fact that the Rev. Dr. D. Mackichan, M. A., D. D., LL. D., Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay, was in the chair as president of the meeting.

The text upon which the lecturer based his studies, and from which he made his quotations, was the translation of the Gâthas made by Prof. Lawrence Mills of Oxford, England.*

The Gâthas are the most sacred and most venerable documents of Parseeism. They are hymns many of which, according to the higher criticism of the Zend Avesta, have been written by Zarathushtra, the great prophet of the Zend Avesta, himself. They reflect a pure monotheism, a belief in Ahaura Mazda, the Lord Omniscient, and show the founder of this noble religion (commonly called "Mazdaism") in his struggles and aspirations sometimes in a state of dejection, sometimes elated by the thought of a final victory; and our interest in the Gâthas will certainly not be lessened by the consideration that Mazdaism has repeatedly influenced our own religion, first under Cyrus, at whose order the Temple of Jerusalem was rebuilt, and then in the form of Mithraism at the beginning of the Christian era.

It is even not impossible that the name of the main orthodox sect of the Jews, Pharisees, means originally "Parsees," being the sect of Persians since they represented the orthodox monotheism established at Jerusalem through

**The Gathas of Zarathushtra* by Lawrence H. Mills, D. D., Hon. M. A., Professor of Zend Philology in the University of Oxford. F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1900, 2d. edition. American edition. The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago.

the favor of Cyrus, the king of Persia, whom Isaiah calls "the anointed one of the Lord" (Isaiah xlv. 1).

JESUS AND PAUL.

To the Editor of The Open Court:—

In my article, "The Gospels of Paul and Jesus," in the January number of *The Open Court*, I declared, "Jesus apparently knows nothing of an inherited taint of evil, or of the essential sinfulness of flesh." Upon this statement you have commented in a footnote, "But in the parable of the sower three hearts out of four are bad."

The parable of the sower does not speak of three hearts out of four, but of four sorts of people, without reference to their respective numbers. It is not implied that the best of these are in a minority. To the contrary, we might gather, if the analogy were carried into this detail, that the hearts that receive the seed of the kingdom and let it fructify in their lives are more numerous than all the others. For the sower does not sow seed on the highway, or on the rocks, or among the thorns, from choice; but he chooses the arable field, and only a little of the seed falls by chance on the infertile ground—not three out of four, but just a stray kernel now and then.

So much for numbers. Further, the parable does not speak of bad hearts, but says that some of the seed did not fructify. And why? Not because it was bad seed, but because it was sown in bad places. This parable, then, does not imply that man inherits a taint of evil. But it is one of many illustrations that Jesus regarded human nature as fundamentally good, and its imperfections as due to outside influences—typified in the birds, the rocks, and the thorns.

The Synoptic Gospels report only one saying of Jesus that seems to imply the essential sinfulness of human nature. "There is nothing from without the man that going into him can defile; but the things that proceed out of the man are those that defile the man." (Mk. vii, 15.) This is obviously directed against the Pharisees, because of their distinctions of food. To them he was bitterly opposed, and he was apt to speak without moderation when they were concerned. The private explanation of the parable to the disciples (Mk. vii, 17-23) we can dismiss as probably apocryphal, especially the latter part of it, which is obviously tacked on. Jesus always appears to teach that sin lies in the thought or motive, rather than in the act; and perhaps it is mainly this that he meant by the saying. So far, however, as it may imply that human motives are apt to be bad rather than good, it may be considered as directed against the Pharisees, and not against human nature in general.

It is, moreover, not safe to base our opinion as to whether Jesus did or did not teach a certain doctrine, on one saying alone, considering how uncertain it is that he is in any particular instance reported correctly. But in nearly all of his sayings, as they are given in the Synoptic Gospels, he seems to imply, as I have said in my article, "that men are at heart good and godlike." He seldom disparages the flesh as weak or corrupt, and never hints that sin is due to heredity, but time and again speaks of it "as the direct work of Satan or of evil spirits."

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