Opinions touching Gladstone's political career and ecclesiastical views will always differ widely; but we can all now agree that the Prime Minister of England, Lord Salisbury, was right when he called the deceased statesman "a great Christian."

The Disintegrating Influence of Christian Missions.

By Mrs. ASHLEY CARUS-WILSON, B.A.

THE main issue of the conflict between Christendom and heathendom is in danger of being confused in these days when Christian Missions are helped and hindered, not only on account of what they seek to accomplish directly, but on account of what they do indirectly. Some support or oppose them because they approve or dislike their incidental results; not because they wish the Christian Faith to supersede other faiths, or fear it may do so. We note this both at home and abroad. Charles Darwin, for instance, subscribed regularly to the South American Missionary Society, characterizing its work on the philanthropic side in Terra del Fuego as "a grand success"; and more recently the Mikado sent £1,000 as a personal gift to the Young Men's Christian Association in acknowledgment of its useful services to his troops in the war with Russia. In India the educated Hindu, believing in the traditional gods of his people as little as Hadrian or Marcus Aurelius believed in the traditional gods of Rome, is as punctilious as were those Emperors in carrying out appointed religious rites, and as relentlessly hostile to the Gospel, simply because he wishes to maintain at all costs social institutions that have been from time immemorial bound up with those rites. In England the man of the world sympathizes with his solicitude, and asks why a meddlesome dogmatism should force our creed on Asiatics, upsetting picturesque customs, and a social organization which experience has shown to be the right one for them. Why can we not let them alone, since they seem to have very good religions of their own? A demonstration that the heathen are not as black as they have been painted usually follows; and strangely enough there are Christians who fumble in vain for their answer to all this—namely, that they are commanded to preach the Gospel as the one sufficient satisfaction for men's deep spiritual need, and that therefore the case for Christianity does not depend upon making out a case against every other religion. The command binds, even if heathenism were always and everywhere as good as it has ever been anywhere.

If, however, one would meet the educated heathen or the English man of the world on common ground, one must consider whether, from his own point of view, it is reasonable that he should refuse to condemn a Chinese rabble hounding the missionary out with murderous violence as a "foreign demon" or an "ocean pirate"; or a Hindu who would rather see his own son dead than baptized; or a Moslem who regrets that to-day the death-penalty cannot always be meted out to the man who forsakes Mohammed for Christ. The objection in all these cases is not to Christianity in the abstract—of which little is known—but to it as threatening to disintegrate long-established order; the people are up in arms for their social institutions rather than for their gods. Often the antagonism may be inspired by nothing higher than ignorant fanaticism, or the selfish apprehension of a Chinese, or Indian, or Persian Demetrius that his own craft may be set at nought; but sometimes there is genuine concern for the menaced welfare of the State. And the English critic of missions may be animated by a national instinct of fair play revolted by the idea of using political ascendancy amiss to thrust our own creed upon our subjects. He fails to note that in India, at any rate, the missionary has nothing to do with the powers that be; that in relation to a wisely neutral Government a Christian has no advantage, a heathen is under no disability.

The missionary's commission, like that of Jeremiah of old, is to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, as well as to build and to plant; some disintegrating influence of missions is inevitable. Is this an argument for or against them? So complex and unwieldy is the question that we must limit its scope ere we can consider it; looking only at communities as such, and at those communities only which our illustrations have already named. We need not linger over paganism—whose social institutions are quite indefensible—or Buddhism, since Siam is now the only purely Buddhist independent State; and Buddhism, as originally taught, is essentially anti-social, being, first of all, a plan of salvation for the individual, which makes celibacy the holiest condition and mendicancy the highest ideal of life. We confine our attention, then, to Confucianism, Hinduism, and Mohammedanism, each of which welds together a civilization older and more compact than our own. What are the characteristic features in their social systems? Should these systems be disintegrated? To what extent does Christianity threaten to disintegrate them?

Let us begin by recognizing that just as there is truth as well as error in each of these great religions, so there is good as well as evil in the social systems they have moulded.

Two thousand four hundred years ago, Kong Futze set up a fine ideal of filial piety, emphasizing the devotion of son to father, and basing his system on the five fundamental human relations. In the long enduring polity of his ancient people we see the finest historical fulfilment of the promise attached to the Fifth Commandment.

Even earlier than Confucius, Hinduism seems to have set up a fine ideal of conjugal fidelity, and of mutual obligation to serve and protect and stand by each other among members of the same caste, emphasizing the devotion of wife to husband and of comrade to comrade. "Caste," says Bishop Westcott, "was the outward expression of the belief that every detail of life is religious."

Thirteen hundred years ago Islam, with its Prophet King and his successors, heads at once of Church and of State, set up its ideal of patriotic loyalty based on religion, emphasizing the devotion of subject to sovereign.

By supplanting these religions, therefore, Christianity would seem to threaten in China the family order; in India, the social order; in Moslem lands, the political order. The Chinese Christian who absents himself from the six yearly feasts for family worship calls down on his head the anathemas of all his living kith and kin, and of the spirits of all the ancestors whom he thus consigns to perpetual beggary. The Hindu Christian who is going to disgrace his family once for all by breaking caste through baptism must be quietly poisoned by his nearest relatives to avert such a catastrophe. The Turkish Christian is (or was till 1879) judicially sentenced to death as a deserter, since only believers in Islam can serve in the Turkish army.

In all three cases a true thought underlay the established social order, but through the influence of a degenerating religion it has been distorted into a falsehood.

China presents us with bewildering contradictions. Its sacred books teem with exhortations to benevolence, yet no land witnesses more cold-hearted cruelty; not only torture of prisoners, condemned and uncondemned, but torture through foot-binding of tender baby girls, whose one offence is that they have been born into families of good condition. The Chinese are educated, sensible, practical, and industrious to an extraordinary degree; yet they are enthralled by abject superstition that keeps them ever gazing downwards, not upwards; looking ever backwards, not forwards. So their culture and civilization have stagnated for centuries. The explanation is that Kong Futze came, saying: "I can tell you nothing, for I know nothing, about the Power Above or the Life Beyond; but I give you for religion a scheme of pure ethics." And those for whom a stone, however well cut and polished, could not take the place of bread, quickly blended with this scheme a primitive ancestor-worship which debased filial honour for living parents and reverence of the heirs of all the ages for past generations into craven propitiation of deceased forbears, whom it pictured as wandering spirits lying in wait to bring calamity upon neglectful descendants. So the living became enslaved to the dead.

Caste has been termed "the express badge of Hinduism"; its "body and soul," its one essential and changeless feature. It is unknown to the Vedas; the early fourfold caste system was based on a myth suggested by a comparatively late text in the Rig-Veda, representing men as *not* "of one blood." This gave place to far more complex subdivisions, which have split society into water-tight compartments according to accident of birth; binding men in chains that from age to age become more galling, fostering selfish arrogance among the higher, and despairing acquiescence in servility among the lower castes. The littérateur at home defends caste by remarking airily that we can parallel everything in it except its good things. Sir Lepel Griffin declares that a wise Government will encourage and not stifle it, because it is of value to the authorities in depriving the people of all ambition; but a sober authority like Sir Henry Maine characterizes it as "the most disastrous and blighting of human institutions"; and Keshab Chander Sen, representing the enlightened high-caste man, stigmatizes it as "the monster that has for centuries eaten into the vitals of India."

The social order of Islam rests upon polygamy and slavery, which does not merely mean that many Moslems have more than one wife, and that servants in Moslem households are bought and sold like cattle, but that these two institutions are for ever bound up with the religion and polity established by Mohammed—stereotyped abuses that moved Sir William Muir to declare that "the sword of Islam and the Koran are the most stubborn enemies of civilization, liberty, and truth, which the world has yet known." The deepening decrepitude of all Moslem lands to-day is the most striking example history affords of the principle that no State can flourish in which the home is degraded because the wife and mother are regarded with suspicion and contempt; in which labour is degraded because its humbler or alien representatives are hopelessly enslaved.

The history of all non-Christian societies is indeed a history of decline, for, as Martensen says in his "Christian Ethics," "contempt of man is a ground feature of heathenism, going side by side with the deification of men." For centuries the Samurai of Japan, brought up on Confucian ethics, have done nothing to raise the Ainu; for centuries the Pandits of India, brought up on the transcendental philosophy of the Vedanta, have left their non-Brahman compatriots the most illiterate of civilized peoples; for centuries the Moslems, brought up on Koran texts about the "All Merciful Creator," have regarded all non-Moslems as predestined to be the prey and the serfs of the faithful. Only among Christians can we find anywhere a superior race labouring disinterestedly for the uplifting of an inferior one.

Granting, then, that Christianity ought to disintegrate some social usages that blight the lives of both individuals and communities, we ask, to what extent does it actually disintegrate Eastern society? Does it threaten the good or the evil in it? The globe-trotter, seeing but the surface of things, regrets that "the unchanging East" is rapidly becoming an obsolete phrase. The Chinese urchin looks much nicer in a Chinese cap than he does when his mother proudly arrays him in her careful imitation of an imported tam-o'-shanter, whereon she has, with her diligent needle, more or less successfully reproduced the mystic words, "French hat." The Hindu woman does not gain in appearance when her shapely brown foot and ankle are disguised in slippers down at heel, or stockings full of holes. The waistcoat and watch-chain, by which the Munshi differentiates himself from the illiterate members of an Indian household, do not blend as happily with his turban as a burnouse would do. Trivial things these, but the attempt to be Western in externals points to discontent with things in Eastern life that are not externals.

The missionary's own willingness to adopt native dress, where it will be a help and not a hindrance to his work, ought to have saved him from some uninformed sneers. His desire is for a new type of Oriental Christian, not for a caricature of an Occidental Christian. Imbued with St. Paul's spirit, he looks beyond and below the letter of his injunctions in circumstances wholly diverse from those at Corinth; he suffers the worshipper to remove his shoes instead of his turban on entering church in some parts of India; he permits the Baganda women to shave their heads as they have always done; and does not insist that in church the Japanese lady for the first time in her life shall cover her abundant, neatly dressed hair with a hat, and so attract the idle gaze St. Paul wished the Christian woman to avoid. But he would insist on the letter of the Apostle's ruling if an Indian Christian girl went abroad without her chuddah.

In short, though missionaries cannot always restrain their converts' own ambition to Anglicize themselves, they rarely advocate any Western usage because it is Western, or deprecate any Eastern one because it is Eastern. The one question for them is, Does the Law of God permit or forbid this? Christianity must combat to the death some things that stand or fall with other faiths. The Chinaman's ancestral rites, as the conscience of the native Chinese Church plainly perceives, involve propitiating dead men instead of adoring the Living God. The disastrous results to the permanence of their work, which came of compromise with caste in earlier Indian missions, have compelled the native Indian Church to-day to disregard caste altogether. Nor could Christians tolerate such features of Islam as the harem or slavery.

There are other customs, again, less integral to non-Christian religions, but connected with them, that must be opposed; and many Western influences, only indirectly Christian, are the active allies of the missionary in opposing them to-day. In China, foot-binding is a good illustration of these. In India, the missionary's protest against child marriage, perpetual widowhood, and dedication of little girls to infamous temple service, is echoed by the Brahmo-Samaj and Arya-Samaj, both by-products of missions, though one stands aloof from them, and the other is hostile to them. Turning to Moslem lands, we see that polygamy, though still prevalent in Persia and Baluchistan, is on the wane elsewhere. In Egypt, Turkey, and Syria, many educated men have only one wife; in South India and Tunis it is rare for them to have more than two; and in consequence of the unobtrusive educational work of women missionaries for several generations it is coming to pass that there is a growing demand for girls' schools and educated wives. We have all been startled by the recent action of the Chinese Government in establishing girls' schools; we all know that there are many women graduates of Indian universities to-day, a large proportion of them Christian. A fact comes from Syria even more significant of the social amelioration that follows in the missionary's wake. Of a long-established mission school there, largely attended by girls afterwards married to Moslems, it is reported that no former pupil has ever been divorced, or obliged to receive a second wife into her home.

Other customs, comparatively harmless, but inexpedient because of the ideas they express, will become obsolete without being attacked. The wife will sit at table with her husband, and will no longer walk either before him, being suspected—as in Malaysia—or behind him, being despised—as in Egypt and Persia. There are yet other customs in that whole fabric of institutions that make up social life which may ultimately pass away when Christianity dominates public opinion, but which for the present are more expedient than our differing ones. The missionary chooses a wife for his catechist out of the girls' school, with the help of its mistress, to the entire satisfaction of the two parties mainly concerned; and we are told that for a long time to come a modified purdah will be the right thing for Indian women.

Lastly, we pass from usages that ought to be abolished at once, and usages that may as well be abolished, and usages that will eventually pass away, to usages that ought to be preserved.

"Is our law of filial piety to be made of none effect?" asks the good Chinaman apprehensively. "It is true that Western people offer no sacrifices at the tombs of their ancestors; but they plant flowers on their graves, and they put photographs of their parents and kinsfolk in their rooms." Such is the pathetic reassurance given to his countrymen by the enlightened and patriotic Viceroy of Hupeh and Hunan, Chang Chih Tung, in his remarkable treatise on modern influences in China; and it suggests much to us as to the results of contact between East and West. There are influences wholly disintegrating and destructive at work in the East to-day that must extend yet farther. And the only constructive influence that can counteract them is Christianity. Long ago it entered the Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Teutonic social systems, not to crush them, but to transform them by purifying, sweetening, and preserving all that was fit to survive. When it was said that the doctrine of Christ was adverse to the interests of State, and insufficient for the needs of society, Augustine boldly replied: "Let those who profess that the Christian religion is hostile to the Republic give us military men, provincials, husbands, parents, sons, masters, servants, kings, judges, and administrators equal to those that Christianity has formed."

So to-day Christianity comes to China, re-affirming the sacred obligations of family life, and insisting not only on the child's duty to the parent, but on the parent's duty to the child, because the home is the Divine institution of Him of whom every fatherhood is named. It comes to India, re-affirming that we are members of one another, but waging war against consecrated class hatreds, because of the brotherhood of all men in Christ. "To believe in the Fatherhood of God is to believe in the brotherhood of man," said Keshab Chander Sen; "caste would vanish in such a state of society; you would not require to say a word against it." It comes to Moslem lands, reaffirming that the powers that be are ordained of God, but uplifting the housewife and the household in the name of Him who was born of a woman, and in whom there is neither bond nor free. The command to honour all men, since all are created in the image of God, forbids not only personal and family selfishness, but national prejudices and hatreds also. There is a plucking up and breaking down of customs due to a corrupting religion; but there is also a building and planting anew of all that was true in principle, and of all that was good in practical working. Men are released, as the Lord Himself released them, by appeal from a later and imperfect law to a primeval and eternal one—"From the beginning it hath not been so," and a gradual movement upwards of the community as a community follows.

This aspect of missionary work has on the whole been very little studied; we think of missions too exclusively as an agency for the conversion of individual heathen; we measure its results by the statistics of baptisms; and bemoan failure when these are insignificant, or when native churches appear to include many who profess and call themselves Christians without being led into the way of truth. St. Luke tells us that shortly after the birth of the Church the number of the Christians came to be about 5,000. We look in vain for any later statistics of the Apostolic Church; if we had them, they would probably show only a limited number of obscure people on the baptism register, many of them but nominal and unsatisfactory Christians after all. What we know for certain is that this early Church gradually created a Christian atmosphere in which, to their great gain, the children of its members, real or nominal, were reared; that still more gradually it set up for the world outside a Christian standard of right and wrong which eventually transformed Europe. Even for those still reckoned heathen the old classical paganism was insensibly discredited and disintegrated, till at last, just four centuries after the Council at Jerusalem which determined the conditions on which Gentiles were to be admitted into the Church, it fell, to rise no more.

A similar process goes on to-day. We must take account, not only of many true Christians gathered into many native churches; not only of many more won to a merely intellectual assent to Christianity; but of the growing dissatisfaction with various social conditions created by their hereditary creeds in others who are nevertheless jealous of revolutionary change. Meanwhile, as the leaven of the Gospel acts, we see the Chinaman, freed from paralyzing fear of the unseen, more patient, industrious, law-abiding, and dutiful, than ever;

the Hindu, freed from the depressing weight of social disabilities, more gentle, religious, subtle of brain and deft of finger, and more faithful to the obligations of his family and his clan; the Moslem, freed from the debased and debasing theories that made him a coward and a tyrant at home, more valiant and loyal abroad than ever. Not to subvert, but to restore, and to build anew on immovable foundations of Christian principle the ideals which are truly ideals in every nation, the Gospel works, having indeed the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

The Apocalypse: Authorship, Date, Purpose.

By the Rev. MARCUS JOHNSON, A.K.C.

THE writer of the Apocalypse thrice names himself "John" (i. 4, 9; xxii. 8). Early Christian tradition regarded this John as the Apostle. This is the testimony of Justin Martyr, himself an Ephesian citizen before he went to Rome; of Hippolytus and Tertullian; possibly of Irenæus, who calls the writer of the Apocalypse ὁ μαθητῆς κυρίου (which may include ἀπόστολος); and of Origen, who attributes both Gospel and Apocalypse to the son of Zebedee. The first to question the authorship of the latter book appears to have been Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 247–265). This he does on the ground of alleged differences in the characters of the authors of Gospel and Apocalypse, and also in their language, thought, and style. Both he and Papias think it likely that the Revelation was written by John the Presbyter, who divides with John, the son of Zebedee, the reputation of having lived at Ephesus and been exiled to Patmos. Certainly, if the De Boor fragment and Papias in his lost second book (*circa* A.D. 100) are right as to "John the Divine and James his brother" both being "killed by the Jews," then, even accepting the early date of the Apocalypse, and supposing John the Apostle to have lived to A.D. 69, the year