

**THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST OF  
ASIA; STUDIES AND PERSONAL  
OBSERVATIONS OF ORIENTAL  
RELIGIONS. BEING THE MORSE  
LECTURES OF 1898**

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**JOHN HENRY BARROWS**

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# THE CHRISTIAN CONQUEST OF ASIA

STUDIES AND PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS OF  
ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

Being the Morse Lectures of 1898

BY

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To

REV. K. S. MACDONALD, D.D.

OF CALCUTTA

THE EXPERIENCED MISSIONARY, TRUSTED COUNSELLOR

BROAD-MINDED CHRISTIAN AND FAITHFUL FRIEND

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME WITH HAPPY

AND GRATEFUL MEMORIES

OF INDIA

## PREFACE

THE Christian Conquest of Asia began with the coming of Jesus Christ and the first proclamation of His Gospel, but the great continent has not been the chief arena for the working of the Christian forces which the world's Saviour set in motion. Christianity, which made such rapid conquests in Asia Minor, became stereotyped dogmatically and ecclesiastically; its missionary energies were dried up, and after a few centuries it came into conflict with the more aggressive monotheism of Islâm. The last hundred years have witnessed the efforts of the purer and more life-giving Christianity of Europe and America to re-enter the wide Asiatic world. India, China and Japan had, at various times, been fields for missionary activities, but those efforts were sporadic, were often unspiritual, and sometimes were almost completely stamped out. Since the fourth, and possibly an earlier century, there has been a Christian church in India, but it never possessed the elements needed to grapple with the various strong and ancient systems of non-Christian faith.

Until Protestant missionary work, with its schools, its hospitals, its purer ideals and its aggressive energy, made its way into Western Asia, and into the lands of the East and Far East, the Asiatic world may almost be said to have missed any accurate knowledge of that apostolic type of the Christian religion which is pure

and vigorous enough to command the world's future. The results already achieved, not only in the making of converts, but particularly in the improvement of social conditions, the lifting up of new ideals, the removal of gross abominations, and the purifying and energizing of the non-Christian systems, have been such that no Christian, widely and accurately acquainted with these early victories, is justified in a pessimistic outlook into the Christian future of Asia.

The Christian literature which vindicates Christian optimism in regard to Asia is encyclopedic, and should enter into the minds of millions in Europe and America who are now ignorant and indifferent. Asiatic Christians themselves are recognizing their opportunity and responsibility, and are coming, through the agency of daring Western enterprise like that represented by the Students' Volunteer Movement, into a spiritual federation. What are yet to become national churches, perhaps not in the European sense, but in a deeper and truer sense, are beginning to emerge in India and Japan.

The following lectures will make it plain that I do not cherish any expectations of the swift evangelization of countries where such proud and tough-fibred religions as Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism have long held sway; but there are many evidences that the East is being penetrated by Western thought, is coming into fellowship with the Western Christian spirit of brotherhood, and, when Christendom is more thoroughly unified and Christianized, and pursues its aggressive missionary work with more wisdom and sympathy, I have no doubt that the acceptance of the Christian Gospel will be far more wide and rapid.