

**AN INTERPRETATION
OF INDIA'S
RELIGIOUS HISTORY**

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An interpretation of India's religious history by Robert A. Hume

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By
ROBERT A. HUME, D.D.



WITH INTRODUCTION BY
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To

MY INDIAN BROTHERS,

CHRISTIAN

AND NON-CHRISTIAN,

WITH LOVE AND HOPE

INTRODUCTION

IT seems almost an impertinence for one without an experience in India like Dr. Hume's to attempt even a brief introduction to these illuminating lectures on the religious history of India. Dr. Hume needs no outsider's commendation or correction; for he writes out of the treasures of long residence and devoted service in India, of painstaking study of its life and thought, and of sympathetic and reverent appreciation of its religious development.

But one may well express his gratitude for the precise nature of the aim and spirit of these lectures, and for the detailed illustrations in which aim and spirit are indicated. For the distinguishing characteristic of the lectures is, that they are in earnest with Christ's conception of God as Father of all men, and strive to look at the complex religious phenomena of India in that light. Dr. Hume sees clearly, that, for the Christian man, who really believes that God is Father, the great difficulty to-day is not to

account for the good in the non-Christian religions; but as he says, "the more perplexing problem is how to account for arrest and degeneracy in religion and society." In the light of God's Fatherhood, the Christian does not grant reluctantly any evidences of the working of the Spirit of God among all peoples, but rejoices in them; he needs such evidences to keep his faith in Christ's conception of God. And, he needs also to understand just how degeneracy crept in; and he will see this most clearly in comparisons with religious phenomena with which he is more familiar. Such a Christian, therefore, will be grateful for the detailed way in which Dr. Hume helps him to see the parallels between the religious development of India and that of the West, both in its advances, and in its losses. There is no attempt to disguise the facts on either side; there is clear criticism, as well as warm appreciation, but in both cases the insight is the insight of faith and love—of faith in the Fatherhood of God, and love for his Indian "brothers," as he truly feels them to be.

Dr. Hume naturally assumes that we may not take it for granted that Western inter-