

**ON TRUE RELIGION: HOW
IT IS TO BE SOUGHT, AND
HOW IT IS TO BE SECURED**

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On true religion: how it is to be sought, and how it is to be secured by Edgar Eldred

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EDGAR ELDRED

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BY

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ON
TRUE RELIGION.

I. OF TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP.

IN all periods of the world's history since the fall of Adam, man has worshipped some object or being as a deity. Zoroaster and his priests bent the knee before fire, as an all-powerful, all-consuming power; while the Chinese, probably, had partly preceded them in their form of adoration, and partly in rendering worship to the sun, moon, and stars.

The Egyptians followed closely in their footsteps, but with an increased knowledge of Nature and her works of necessity, found that the worship of the celestial bodies, when accompanied by an acquaintance with the laws by which they are apparently governed, requires the acknowledgment of a supreme and directing mind. Instead of seeking the required source of vital direction in a spiritual form, the Egyptians strangely seemed to prefer

creating forms, that to themselves doubtlessly realised their ideas of a superior mind; and we well-informed, highly-blessed ones of modern days, can scarcely look upon those huge effigies of gods once worshipped by a mighty race, without feeling that they do possess a somewhat immaculate aspect. The stern, stolid expression of the features, with the calm, impenetrable brow, speaks, it seems, of infinity,—past infinity to come.

Still they turn away; they are but the work of human hands—they are but blocks of stone—perishable, like all other things in this perishable world; and these mighty forms of solemn aspect give rise alone to thoughts of the deepest commiseration.

Unhappily there are those still upon this globe who worship carved images of what they believe to be the god to whom they feel they should render adoration. But yet withal, is it not an indirect proof of the existence of a God that these nations should feel an obligation to worship some being?

Again, too, can we not see that slowly, but surely, one religion, and one religion only, although divided by what will eventually be seen to be the weak ineffectual strivings of man, is being preached throughout the whole world?—it may seem slowly, but how surely.*

And we Christians in England assist as instru-

* Matt. xxiv. 14.

ments in the Supreme Being's hand, in carrying out the Divine intentions to one end, while so many among us are endeavouring to overreach each other with cunningly-devised schemes!

Each sect is striving for itself against others, not only at home, but also by missionaries abroad, and how few think that with this very animosity, God is carrying out the propagation of True Religion; and that although the differences in each sect are great to us, they may possibly in the sight of the Superior Being be very small.*

The God worshipped by all Christians in every land—the God of the Presbyterian, of the Roman Catholic, of the Episcopalian, of the Congregationalist, of the Baptist,—is, or should be the same.†

Surely all know of one and the same creating, all-sustaining Spirit. All Christians believe in the omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of God. All who *feel* religion must *feel* that the Being they worship is the creator of all around them, and not alone that, but also that there is still evidence of His presence in all things. That the air we breathe, which brings life with every respiration, is but an evidence of the omnipresent all-sustaining power of God. That the wind which passes over the face of the earth to refresh and reinvigorate us, comes leaving with it evidence of the presence of God. That the animals and birds

* 1 Cor. xii. 11, 13.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

around us are indeed sustained in life by some unseen, all-powerful Being. That the beetle which creeps across our path has in it a portion (I speak with deep reverence) of this all-pervading Spirit. That the mist which slowly rolls from the mountain-top is but a part giving evidence of that creating and sustaining nature evident in all the universe.

How differently would most of us act, how differently think and feel, were we mentally assured that all around us was pervaded by perfect goodness! What emotions any of us possess to what we otherwise should do, when we once attain to acknowledge that we are ever surrounded and sustained, in our every thought, word and action by an all-powerful Spirit; who is indeed present in ourselves and in all things around us! And that we must render all our thoughts, words, and actions, to His service.

How kind it should make us to all around us! How constantly would we have the Creator of ourselves and all things before us! How much more frequently should we think of the sustaining Spirit that pervades all nature, and how deeply should we feel gratitude for the evidences of love evinced towards us in everything! A portion of God's creative sustaining Spirit is present in all things; God is indeed a Spirit, living and breathing with us, not afar off, as we would far too willingly think,