

**THE PROMISES OF  
CHRISTIANITY.  
AN ESSAY**

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The Promises of Christianity. An Essay by W. Kay

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**W. KAY**

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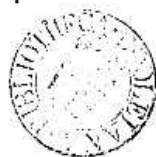
THE  
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AN ESSAY.

BY  
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### ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following Essay appeared originally in the pages of a Calcutta periodical, called *THE MISSIONARY*; (see Parts II. and III. of the volume for 1854). In the present revision a few, very slight, alterations have been made in the text, and one or two additional illustrations supplied in the notes.

It is scarcely necessary to warn the reader not to expect completeness either of theory or of details in a work so produced. The thing aimed at was, not to say everything that could be said, but to furnish a tolerably definite, practical, answer to questions which everywhere press themselves on the attention of the defender or propagator of Christianity, —in India not less than in Europe or America.

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## THE PROMISES OF CHRISTIANITY.

*"Godliness is profitable unto all things; having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.*

*"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation."*

1 Tim. iv. 8, 9.

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### INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. A MISSIONARY who is to discharge his duty effectively at the present day, in a country like India, must have a *comprehensive* mind,—one that can take in at the same time many different points of the intellectual compass. He will find himself under a constant necessity of touching, at one side, upon the progressive science, literature, and learning of Europe; at the other, on the narrow prejudices and opinionated ignorance of the Hindu. He should be capable of appreciating the good that exists in European culture and social refinement, and yet there must be no fastidious shrinking from the encounter with men of gross and sensual habits of thought. His convictions about doctrinal truth should be strong and clear; his religious feelings tender and reverential; yet he must not refuse to go out to meet his opponents on the borders of scepticism, paganism, or atheism. Nothing but a large heart, actuated by unfeigned love to God and man, can enable him steadily to occupy so arduous a position.

§ 2. But there is one difficulty in particular, which calls for all his soundness of judgment and discrimination. He is employed in calling men to the thoughts of another life;

his strength is to be spent in seeking to elevate them above the engrossing solicitations of time and sense to hopes of an eternal and invisible world:—and at the same time he is to tell men to be energetic in their worldly occupations; not to surrender the world to the powers of evil, but to reclaim it; not to run away from society, but to leaven it: that they are to be spiritual without being sentimental; unsecular without being ignorant of the world; self-denying without asceticism; “fervent in spirit,” yet “diligent in business;” bearing the reproach of the cross, and yet anxious to give no unnecessary offence to any who might be won to the truth; ever keeping the *end* in view, yet careful about the *means*.

This has indeed been the great practical difficulty of Christians at all times, to know how to “use this world as not abusing it.” It is felt in long-established Churches, where the transmuting influences of Christianity have been for centuries at work. Probably the greater part of the unbelief and almost-Christianity, which now prevails in Europe, has had its origin in imperfect views of this subject:—the relation of the present world to the next.

§ 3. It is impossible to say at what precise point the tendency to error began. Without going into detail, however, we may see generally that as the Church expanded, it would be brought into larger contact with heathenism and worldliness; and that this would have a double effect on its members. Some would decline in piety; others would be driven to adopt a more decided opposition to whatever savoured of a concession to worldliness. Thus laxness of rule alternated with over-rigidity, until at length piety got to look like a frail exotic, languishing for its native climate, requiring to be nursed in a hot-house, and altogether unsuited to the atmosphere of the open world. But, it was argued, if the author of the providential system of the world and the author of religion be the same, He never can have intended to establish such a contradiction between the manifest duties and business of this life and those of our future state. Men’s ordinary working conscience was thus set at variance with what in many cases they still continued to look upon as genuine Christian teaching.