

# **PATHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF RELIGIONS**

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Pathological aspects of religions by Josiah Moses

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**JOSIAH MOSES**

**PATHOLOGICAL  
ASPECTS OF  
RELIGIONS**



# **PATHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF RELIGIONS**

BY

**JOSIAH MOSES, PH. D.**

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Clark University,  
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"Take for God's truth that which harmonizes with all the best you know and helps and strengthens you in nobility of life."

TENNYSON.

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"Error and evil are located in deficiency or excess. Even excess in virtue is evil, an excess of humility being abjectness; of courage, rashness; of prudence, cowardice; of patience, indifference; of economy, parsimony; of generosity, waste; of deference, obsequiousness. And so also an excess of learning is pedantry; of ease, indolence; of comfort, self-indulgence; of zeal, fanaticism. Right and justice are found in moderation, in the golden mean—in the true balance—between overdoing and underdoing, going too fast and too slow."

GERLANDO J. SMITH,

*Balance The Fundamental Virtue*, p. 25.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

With this memoir Clark University begins the publication of monograph supplements to its most recently established Journal.

This thesis of Dr. Moses marks one of the very earliest attempts to treat of the abnormal side of religious life. While it is generally admitted that religious experience may become pathological, no one has attempted before to trace perversions, excesses and aberrations over so wide a field. Hence, this treatise merits special leniency on the part of the reader, which pioneer work can always justly claim. It is often hard to draw a clear line of demarcation between the normal and the abnormal, and in doing this no doubt individual judgments would differ. None of the topics are treated exhaustively, but the effort throughout has been to do suggestive work with the conviction that this domain is almost sure to be far more cultivated later. The writer has spent much time for three years upon his theme, has written and rewritten nearly every page and believes that were he to continue his work for a decade or two his conclusions would continue to undergo transformation.

It is a very important lesson for our times and one that should impress itself upon every one interested in the phenomena of religious life that it is not exempt from disease any more than is every tissue and organ of the body. It hardly need be added that what is herein contained involves no disparagement of true religion and ought to be heartily welcomed by every one who desires to see it kept pure and undefiled.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that wide as is the field here covered, there are many other topics that might very properly be included under its title that are not here touched upon.

G. STANLEY HALL.

Clark University,  
September, 1906.