

6 CHRISTIANITY

1. The most profound and noble ideals of Christianity were never understood in Europe because the ideas and images used by the writers of the Bible were foreign to it... Through all the myths and mythologies by which it is surrounded it is no wonder that the people get very little of the beautiful religion of Jesus, and no wonder that they have made of it a modern shopkeeping religion.
2. "Watch and pray, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," which means, purify your mind and be ready! And that spirit never dies. You recollect that the Christians are, even in the darkest days, even in the most superstitious Christian countries, always trying to prepare themselves, for the coming of the Lord by trying to help others, building hospitals, and so on. So long as the Christians keep to that ideal, their religion lives.
3. One of the chief distinctions between the Hindu and the Christian religion is that the Christian religion teaches that each human soul had its beginning, at its birth into this world, whereas the Hindu religion asserts that the Spirit of man is an emanation of the Eternal Being, and had no more a beginning than God Himself. Innumerable have been and will be its manifestations in its passage from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual evolution, until it reaches perfection, when there is no more change.
4. So we find that in almost every religion these are the three primary things which we have in the worship of God-forms or symbols, names, God-men. All religions have these, but you find that they want to fight with each other. One says, "My name is the only name; my form is the only form; and my God-men are the only God-men in the world; yours are simply myths." In modern times, Christian clergymen have become a little kinder, and they allow that in the older religions, the different forms of worship were foreshadowings of Christianity, which of course, they consider, is the only true form. God tested Himself in older times, tested His powers by getting these things into shape which culminated in Christianity. This, at least, is a great advance. Fifty years ago they would not have said even that; nothing was true except their own religion. This idea is not limited to any religion, nation, or class of persons; people are always thinking that the only right thing to be done by others is what they themselves are doing. And it is here that the study of different religions helps us. It shows us that the same thoughts that we have been calling ours, and ours alone, were present hundreds of years ago, in others, and sometimes even in better form of expression than our own.
5. All religions are, at bottom, alike. This is so, although the Christian Church, like the Pharisee in the parable, thanks God that it alone is right and thinks that all other religions are wrong and in need of Christian light. Christianity must become tolerant before the world will be willing to unite with the Christian Church in a common charity. God has not left Himself without a witness in any heart, and men, especially men who follow Jesus Christ, should be willing to admit this. In fact, Jesus Christ was willing to admit every good man to the family of God. It is not the man who believes a certain something, but the man who does the will of the Father in heaven, who is right. On this basis- being right and doing right-the whole world can unite.