

tach itself; and that the true centre of an efficient *Christianity* is, as the name ought of itself to indicate, "the Word made Flesh." Around this central sun of the Christian system,—appreciated, however, not as a *doctrine* which is a mere abstraction, but as a Divine Person,—so truly man, that the affections of the human heart can lay hold upon Him, and so truly God, that the mind, through faith, can at all times and in all places be brought into direct contact with Him,—all that is truly religious takes its place in a subsidiary and subordinate relation. I say subsidiary and subordinate. The Divine Man is the great attractive centre,—the sole gravitating point of a system which owes to Him all the coherency, and which would be but a chaos were He away. It seems to be the existence of the human nature in this central and paramount object that imparts to Christianity, in its subjective character, its peculiar power of influencing and controlling the human mind. There may be men who, through a peculiar idiosyncrasy of constitution, are capable of loving, after a sort, a mere abstract God, unseen and inconceivable; though, as shown by the air of sickly sentimentality borne by almost all that has been said and written on the subject, the feeling, in its true form, must be a very rare and exceptional one. In all my experience of men, I never knew a genuine instance of it. The love of an abstract God seems to be as little natural to the ordinary human constitution as the love of an abstract sun or planet. And so it will be found, that in all the religions that have taken strong hold of the mind of man, the element of a vigorous humanity has mingled, in the character of its gods, with the theistic element. The gods of the classic mythology were simply powerful men let loose from the tyranny of the physical laws; and, in their purely human character, as warm friends and deadly enemies, they were both feared and loved. And so the belief which bowed at their shrines ruled the old civilized world for many centuries. In the great ancient mythologies of the East,—Buddhism and Brāhmanism,—both very influential forms of belief,