

religions a unique position, especially as it has been shown, with more or less success, that what, for instance, were considered at one time to be doctrines and precepts peculiar to Christianity have — perhaps without exception — existed outside and before the era of the Christian dispensation in other Oriental or European religions. It does not come within the province of philosophical thought, which deals only with matters of principle, to settle these purely historical problems on which a final opinion does not, and perhaps never will, exist. In this connection it is only important to notice that, if on the one side historical research has made it more difficult to define the unique character of any one religious system, it has, on the other side, especially under the influence of the theory of evolution, also suggested an answer to the problem it has created. According to this view the spiritual element or principle shows an analogy with the phenomena of Life. I have had occasion, in the earlier part of this History,<sup>1</sup> to point out that, although modern thought has not arrived at any satisfactory definition of Life, three distinct features have been established: Life is a unique, a continuous, and a ubiquitous phenomenon. We are now approaching an analogous view so far as the spiritual principle is concerned; we are taught to look upon it as a unique, a continuous, and a ubiquitous historical phenomenon in the development of man and mankind.

As little, however, as the various forms of Life ex-

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, vol. ii., chap. x., pp. 462 *sqq.*