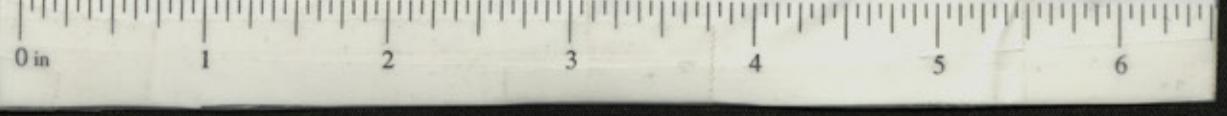


Christianity among Indian Tribes.

No 7 No 6

Adams at
Cornell NY May 82



Delivered at Cornwall
West Sommerset May 1882

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Christianity among Indian Tribes.

There exists to-day a remarkable theory with regard to the civilization of uncivilized peoples. This theory comprises so much of modern philosophy that it would be difficult to find a name for it which would give any adequate idea of what it embraces. We may as well call it the "gradual ^{narr.} development theory." It prevails among certain literary and scientific men who are fond of discarding all divinity from the pages of the Bible; it is also cherished by a large class of religious teachers and writers who claim for numerous other religious leaders co-divinity with Christ.

These delight ^{invariably} in discovering common features of belief in the ^{various} sacred writings of different nations; they hold with tenacity to parts of the scriptures, and reject others. Of course they always reject ^{as men of all nations are apt to do,} what does not fit in with their own pre-conceived opinions.

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As an illustration of the philosophy which discredits the entire Holy Writ I will refer to a man who a few years ago visited the Indian tribes of Alaska. He was a so called scientist and a ^{most} voluminous writer. After his Alaska visit he published an immense volume which contained the results of his observations and discoveries. One remark ^{in his book} noticed was to the effect that no Alaska Indian ^{truly} had primarily any idea of a Supreme Being. (6) (8) v. & v.
~~You follow on to see what more he will say.~~ His theory appears to be that greater lengths of time, even hundreds of thousands of years, have elapsed since man's appearance on the earth. He asserts that his origin still lies in mystery, - that is, it is still an unsolved problem. Yet from the lowest conceivable condition man has been a subject of progressive development. Little by little the ignorance, the superstition, the savagery have been dissipated by the light of knowledge; and humanity with more or less regularity has mounted from grade to

grade to higher planes of living and acting.
Thus a band of savages becomes less savage
till it finally emerges into the broad
openings of cultured life.

The Bible man does not dissent al-
together from these human theories. He
rejoices in the results which are claimed
but plainly perceives that the rejectors and
neglectors of Bible history have in their
dizzy flights of theorizing evidently lost
sight of the true steps of ascent by which
these results have been obtained and have
never discovered the broad flights which
have ever marked the downward tendencies,
plungings and fallings of poor human
beings. When he finds, as in Arizona,
Nevada or Alaska, an Indian tribe
very degraded indeed, as some are, as
yet in the dimmest twilight of knowledge,
full of maddening passions and unclean
habits; he never sees, if he looks with carefulness,
such a tribe growing better by its own motion.

On the contrary the tendency is quite the
other way, — the tribe grows worse; like

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every object in the world of matter, left to itself, it gravitates downward.

Under their own evil and vicious leading the Apaches became worse and worse from decade to decade, and as they were steeped more and more in the pools of vice and crime, their numbers grew ever less till they became a broken, scattered and helpless set of fragments, a sort of rejected scoria of humanity. — This tribe stands as a type of hundreds of others which the pages of history will recall to our minds.

Once they were great and powerful, now a plaintive wail comes to us from some lonely spot where a few sad relicts of fallen greatness lament the past and hopelessly point to the future.

But is there no relief from these saddening pictures?

Let us take another line of thought, the Bible method, which is indeed the true historic method.

The first man is a full man, made like his God and communicating with his Maker.

Since the coming of this first man, the main stem of the race has been ever high in the

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scale of intelligence and right doing.
There has been a falling off on the right
and on the left all the way long and a
wandering far into outer darkness. And
all the risings up and restorings to the
plane of a genuine civilization have been from
the missionary efforts of the higher and purer
~~poore~~ peoples interjected into the lower.
The leaven put into the meal has never been
wholly in vain.

God, the father of us all, has never left him-
self at any time without witnesses. His
people who have toiled long, keeping as
near as they could get to the right way,
always have had and always will have
a zeal more or less pronounced for the
spread of His knowledge.

It is a noticeable truth in history, as in
that of Greece, Rome, and for a time in that
of Spain and France, that a departure
from God, which is in essence a departure
from right doing, very rapidly disintegrates
and degrades a people, though that people
have already attained and for some time



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held a high degree of intellectual development.

The downward tendencies among such peoples has been arrested and the nations saved from perpetual savagery by the salt of good men left among them. There are often multitude of quiet, unobtrusive people who have not bowed and will never bow the knee to any Baal.

Now, can our Indian tribes lift themselves? There is a simplicity in the natural and eloquent speeches of an Indian chief.

He seems to have much native good in him. If the bad conduct of all our bad men who deal with the Indians, both directly and indirectly, were with its mill-stone of hindrance lifted from their necks, would not these savages embrace the opportunities that we now offer them, and escape from the thraldom of their ignorance and superstition?

My answer is — No.

It will never be done; the lifting will never come about, except through the means of patient and persistent external help.

As the natural man likes his natural ways so the savage-born likes the wild

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ways of his people; these ways are peculiar, they are familiar to him, like the lispings of his mother-tongue—they have grown to be a part of himself. He is wedded to them by all the force of prejudice and by all the leopard coloring of superstitious beliefs.

He alone, like a child attempting with a rope under his feet to raise himself, would only follow an upward impulse spasmodically to finally topple over and fall back discouraged and beaten. Depend upon it no savage unaided, no heathen people, will when left to itself ever work itself up into the light of a pure, Christian civilization.

Teachers are needed and teachers must be sent. Two and two from age to age they have gone forth from Jerusalem, from Rome, from Paris, from London, from New York and from other world-centres on both sides of the Atlantic. They have gone commissioned and consecrated to the Master's service; they have sown much seed, watched many tender plants and gathered abundant harvests. After the harvests the seeds and the seed

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sowing have been multiplied again and again and new fields have become white with new harvests. And this process so true, so evident, so historic—is a Divine process.—It is Christ's own. This Christ who was and is the All in All did not make mistakes either in his theory or in his methods. He said and His Gospel continues to say: "Go! go into all the world!" He demanded that those who had been with Him all the life of His manhood and had learned from Him rich lessons of hope, of joy and of heaven should not only go but should teach as they went; should tell the glad tidings and tell them everywhere to all peoples and tribes of the earth.

Now, can not the savage tribes among us be lifted up by the same Divine process?

In illustration of my opinion which is affirmative with emphasis I will submit a few items of my own observation.

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- 1st The Pimas of Arizona -
Rev. Mr. Cook.
- 2^d The Fort Simpson Indians -
Rev. Mr. Crosby.
- 3^d The Metlacatlah -
Mr. Duncan.
- 4th The Yakamas -
Rev. Mr. Wilbur.
- 5th Nez Perces -
Rev. Mr. Spalding.
- 6th Spokanes -
Rev. Mr. Gells.

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