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SECTION V
RELIGIONS OF INDIA AND IRAN

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

By T. W. RHYS DAVIDS

I HAVE been asked by the Organizing Committee to give you to-day some account of what has been accomplished during the last two or three years—since the last Congress in fact—in the history of the development of religious belief in Iran and India. I should myself have preferred to choose for discussion in this address some one point in the history of those beliefs. The attempt to deal with the whole subject must of necessity resolve itself more or less into a bibliographical list. And such lists are apt to be of interest mainly to those who hear themselves mentioned in them. To every one else the meagreness of the result it will be possible to lay before you, may seem little more than a confession of failure in a field of work so important and so vast. But obedience to orders is the first duty of one called to such a post as I have the honour, for the time, to fill; and I will do my best.

And first as to Iran. I had applied for assistance on this part of the subject to the American scholar (so welcome at all our Congresses), who is an acknowledged master of it. Unfortunately Professor Williams Jackson is detained in New York. But he has been good enough to send some notes¹ which have arrived just in time, and which I will now read to you. He says:—

‘The field of Iran has continued to be worked by a small but devoted band of scholars, and has yielded a harvest worthy of their activity.

‘First among the books which have been published since the Basel Congress, although bearing the date of that year, may be mentioned a memorial volume of *Avesta, Pahlavi, and Ancient Persian Studies* in honour of the late Parsi High Priest, Dastur Peshotanji Sanjana, of Bombay. In this book are contained sixteen different articles con-

¹ These notes were hastily written and were not destined for publication; but in order to facilitate the early appearance of this volume, Prof. Jackson has kindly sanctioned their inclusion here.

tributed by European savants and illustrating various phases of the religion of ancient Iran. It is to be hoped that the continuation of the work by a second series containing the contributions of Parsi scholars themselves may follow, as originally planned.

'To the year 1905 belongs the sketch of the ancient Persian religion by Lehmann, in Chantepie de la Saussaye's manual of the history of religion; and a useful English translation of Tiele's *Religion of the Iranian Peoples*, by Nariman, in the *Indian Antiquary*; while a popular sketch of *The Teachings of Zoroaster and the Philosophy of the Parsi Religion* was compiled for the Wisdom of the East Series, by Kapadia, himself a Parsi. A convenient summary of the Iranian religion, *Die iranische Religion*, in German, was contributed to Hinneberg's series in 1906 by the distinguished Indologist Hermann Oldenberg.

'During the past three years the veteran scholar, Mills, of Oxford, has continued ever actively to publish in the various journals of Europe, America, and also of India, the results of his Pahlavi studies and his researches in the Zoroastrian Gathas. In addition to these, in a special volume *Zarathushtra, Philo, the Achaemenids, and Israel*, he has emphasized the rôle played by Iran in influencing the faith of other lands; and in another book, entitled *Avesta Eschatology*, he has drawn comparisons between certain Zoroastrian tenets and the ideas in the Biblical books of Daniel and the Revelation.

'Of special interest, and appearing in this present year, is a series of translations from the Avesta by Geldner, under the title *Die zoroastrische Religion*, and forming a part of the religious manuals edited by Bertholet of Basel. Some interesting selections from the Avesta, especially from the Gathas, have been rendered into English verse by the Right Rev. L. C. Casartelli, of Manchester, in his *Flowers from an Eastern Garden* (1907). Among the most sympathetic and even enthusiastic treatments of the Zoroastrian religion is that comprised in a book entitled *Zarathushtra and Zarathushtrianism in the Avesta*, by Rustamji Sanjani, Deputy High Priest of the Parsis, which was published at Leipzig in 1908. Some Zoroastrian material, especially a study of "Zoroaster and Euclid", will be found in the *Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume*, edited, in 1907, by the indefatigable Parsi worker, Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, of Bombay.

'Certain aspects of the religion of Iran, with reference especially to Mithraism, have received attention from Cumont, the well-known authority on that subject, and from Usener in an article on "Sol Invictus" in *Rheinisches Museum*, N.F. 60. iv. 465-91, as well as at

the hands of other students; and there have been a number of valuable articles on Sufism, and on the subject of Babism and Baháism, that religious movement which is assuming ever-increasing importance.

'Of the most signal value and importance, however, have been the additions to our knowledge of Manichaeism made during the past three years by the publication of some of the remarkable discoveries made at Turfan in Chinese Turkestan by Grünwedel, Huth, and Le Coq. These are of inestimable value, as there have been unearthed among the sand-buried ruins large portions of the long-lost Bible of Mani, the Shāpurakān, as well as his Evangelion and Epistles, together with fragments of Manichaean hymns, prayers, and treatises in cosmology; and above all some sections of the New Testament translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sasanian or Middle Persian Empire. The scholarly world is under special obligations to the learned Berlin professor, F. W. K. Müller, who has made a number of these fragments accessible in translation in the Proceedings of the Berlin Academy of Sciences; and Salemann has done some supplementary work in the same line by editing a few similar fragments that are preserved in the University library at St. Petersburg. When all the fragments unearthed by the Berlin expedition have been published, we may look for remarkable additions to the sphere of our knowledge regarding the religious movements following the rise of Manichaeism in the third century of the Christian era.

'In so brief and cursory a sketch as this must be, it is impossible to mention various contributions in the learned journals by such workers as Gray, Reichelt, Freiman, Wilhelm, Meillet, Blochet, Carnoy, and a score of others, including a younger generation of Parsi scholars in India, whose special magazine, *Zartoshti*, is devoted to the publication of articles relating to their faith. But enough has been brought forward above to prove that the activity has been unceasing and that there has been no falling off of the interest in the work which has for its aim the elucidation of the various phases, ancient and modern, of the religion that belongs to the Land of the Lion and the Sun.'

So far Professor Williams Jackson's notes. I would add that that distinguished and prolific scholar has also himself completed, for Geiger and Kuhn's *Grundriss*, his own summary of the Iranian religion; and that there is also much that relates to Zoroaster and to Zoroastrianism, as it exists to-day in Iran, in his *Persia Past and Present*, which appeared two years ago.