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A CHRISTIAN APPROACH  
TO  
THE BHAGAVADGITA

BY  
P. S. MATHAI



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## PREFACE

THIS BOOK is an attempt—however feeble it be—of an Indian Christian to understand and interpret the spiritual aspect of the *Bhagavadgita* from a purely Christian standpoint, and place his views before his countrymen for their impartial judgement.

In trying to understand the *Gita*, I have chiefly followed Dr. Radhakrishnan's *Commentary on the Bhagavadgita*.<sup>1</sup> I have followed this book in preference to those published by other Indian scholars like Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh, Mahatma Gandhi and others, because this represents orthodox Hinduism more decidedly than all the rest. Dr Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the *Gita*, coming as it does, from 'the greatest living exponent of Indian thought' may well be assumed to be the most typical and authoritative pronouncement on the book and the doctrines it sets forth. There is also another reason why I have followed this book in particular. It contains a large number of references to the Bible and to Christianity, evidently made with the express purpose of trying to disprove the divinity of Christ for the sake of establishing the divinity of Krishna in its place. I have therefore made a critical analysis of these references and his comments on them.

Side by side with these, I have attempted to place before the readers a brief outline of the central message of the Bible from an independent and at the same time strictly orthodox point of view. In my view, such an exposition of the Bible, however brief it be, is of the utmost necessity in these days when all spiritual values are being defiantly changed into their opposites; and the general trend of events in the world fills everybody's heart with fear. People fail to see whether existence has any meaning, whether there is divine purpose, design or objective behind the universal turmoil. The brief reference to the central message of the Bible in the last chapter may throw some light on these basic problems, because neither politics nor science, nor rationalistic thinking has any answer to offer to these questions.

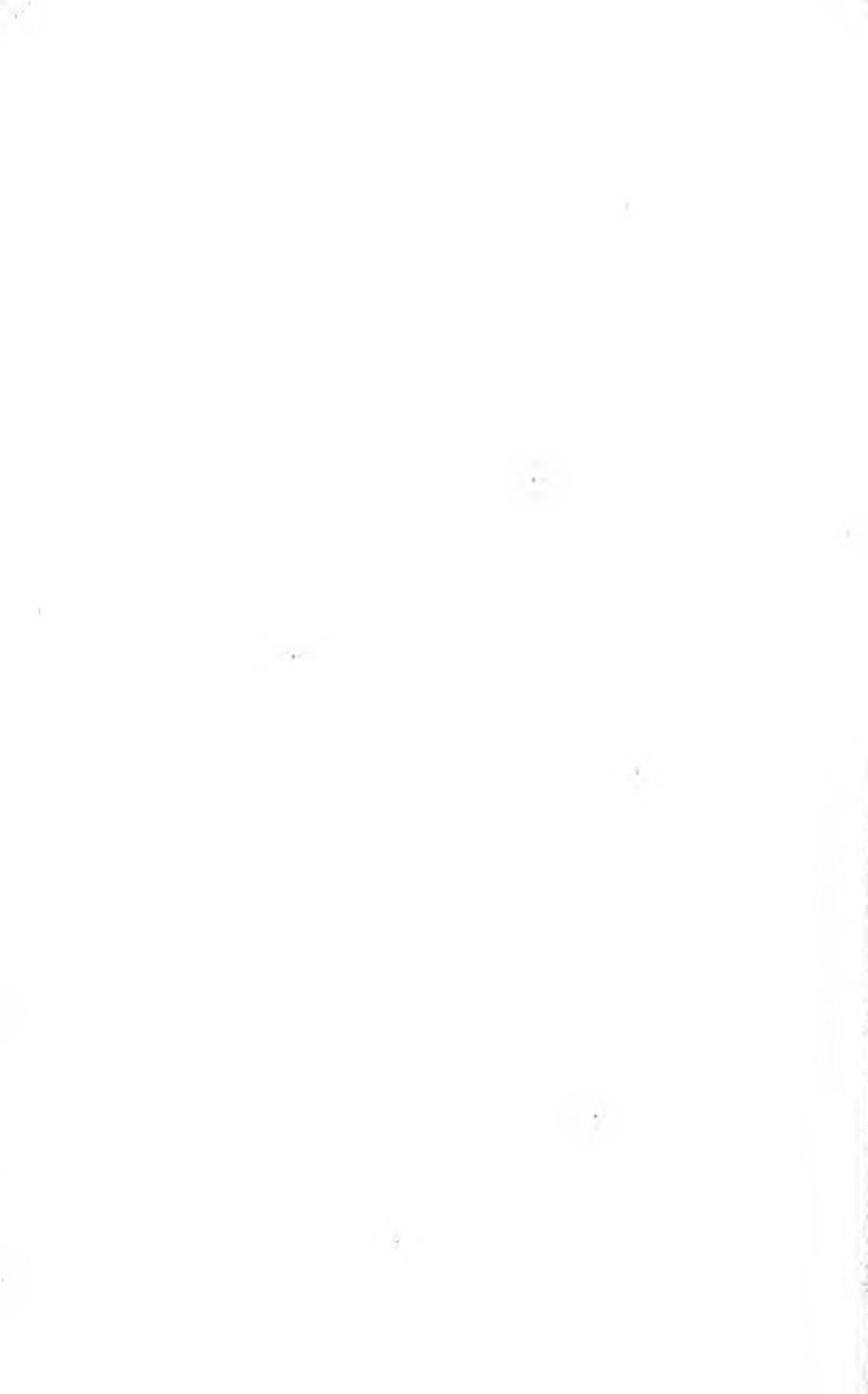
The translation of the *Gita* made use of in this book is that of *The Bhagavadgita* or *The Song Divine*, published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

In closing, I express my grateful thanks to all those who have helped me in different ways in preparing this book. They are too numerous to be mentioned individually, but I hope they will accept this general reference to them as a sincere expression of my gratitude.

Bombay 27-II-1955

P. S. MATHAI

<sup>1</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Commentary on the Bhagavadgita*, Allen and Unwin, London, 19.



## CHAPTER I

### GITARAHASYA

#### The Central Theme of the Gita

THE BHAGAVADGITA is considered to be one of the greatest books that India has produced. All over the world it is recognised as a really great work. It is so popular that, within the last two or three decades, millions of copies have been published, not only in all the important languages of India, but also in several foreign languages. The educated classes of India praise the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. They respect and adore them. But very few take pains to read them. But the *Gita* is loved and read by all. In point of general interest and spiritual influence, the *Gita* is surpassed by no other book in Indian literature.

What is the secret of the great influence of this little book? There are various factors contributing to its greatness. As we approach its sacred pages, the first thing that strikes us is the wonderful background in which the dialogue is set. In the opening verse, we stand face to face with the holy field of *Kurukshetra* with its hoary past which casts a sacred halo round the whole book. The very sense of its antiquity and sacred associations thrills us with a deep feeling of awe and reverence. As we enter in, we see standing in the midst of it and filling the whole place with his glory, the divine figure of a person who is none other than Bhagavan Krishna himself, with Arjuna, the noble epic-hero, prostrate before him in awe-struck adoration. It is this dramatic scene of divine glory that accounts for the greatness and popularity of the book.

Let us now listen to the dialogue between these two persons, Bhagavan Krishna and Arjuna. The reader cannot fail to note that the main aim of the dialogue is the manifestation of the divine glory of Krishna to Arjuna. The gradual unfolding of his godhead slowly and surely succeeds in producing the desired effect upon the mind of Arjuna. At the same time, Arjuna's dullness of understanding, and Krishna's infinite patience to make him understand, are highly interesting. We also see a marvellous summing-up of everything that Hinduism stands for. The book provides the reader with a thorough idea of the essence of Hinduism in a nutshell.

The Gita has a wide appeal. It provides spiritual food to readers of all schools of thought. Are you a philosopher delighting in the various systems of Hindu Philosophy: *Sankhya*, *Yoga* or *Vedanta*? Turn

to the pages of the *Gita*; you will find ample intellectual treat in it. If you are an animist believing in innumerable ghosts, spirits and demons, the *Gita* is there to connive at it without causing you any embarrassment. Pantheism, polytheism, monism and dualism are all of equal interest to the Bhagavan. Do you believe in the great caste system of India with its water-tight compartments? You can be sure that the Bhagavan is the author of caste and that he delights to see you prepared to die in your own caste duties and to be awfully afraid of other peoples' religions. Do you want to become an ascetic? By all means, you may. Only keep in mind that *Karmayoga* is superior to all other *yogas*.

Thus the genius of the author of the *Gita* lies in his wonderful capacity to assemble together all kinds of religious beliefs and adapt them to everybody's taste, just like wares in a store-house, from which you can choose whatever you want.

If you are a man of faith and *Bhakti*, groping for a manifest deity to lead you to the unknown, the *Gita* holds before you a divine person to whom you can cling in faith and adoration. He promises to lead you to eternal bliss. He promises to forgive your sins and grant you his grace—his *prasada*. This is the central fact of the *Bhagavadgita*. It is the pivot on which everything else turns. It is this fact that gives the book all its powerful hold on the people of India—that gives the book all its divine halo and raises it to the status of the New Testament of Hinduism. The author presents Krishna not as one among the many *avatars* of the Hindu pantheon, but as the one and only *avatar* (incarnation) of the supreme God. He is not only the Manifest Deity, but also the Father, the Creator, nay, the father of Brahma<sup>1</sup> Himself.

The human soul craves to get into touch with the Unseen, in order to hear from him endearing and comforting words like these: 'Fix your mind on me; Be devoted to me; Worship me and bow to me; so shall you without doubt reach me. This I truly promise you; for you are dear to me. Giving up all other attempts to gain salvation, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you from all sins; grieve not'.<sup>2</sup> Who can help loving a book which brings such heavenly comfort to the troubled heart of man? It is this great fact that explains the undying influence of the *Gita*. This doctrine of the Manifest Deity is the central theme of the book. It is definitely not *nishkama-karma* (selfless action) or any other philosophy, as is asserted by many people. The greatest attraction of the *Gita* lies in the offer of personal contact with the Unseen through Krishna. This is the greatest secret (*paramam guhyam*) of

<sup>1</sup> The first person in the Hindu Triad, the other two being Vishnu and Siva.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavadgita*, IX-34; XVIII-65, 66.

the *Gita*; and the supreme demand of the book is dedication of life to this person and performance of all actions for his sake. All *Margas* (ways), all philosophies, all *yogas*, even all *Vedas*, are subordinated to and blended into the worship of Krishna. The author's consummate skill consists in piecing together all the doctrines and philosophies of Hinduism, some of them contrary to one another, for achieving his purpose of introducing Krishna to the world as the Manifest Deity, Vishnu in human form. This cardinal point should always be kept before the mind in order to get a full grasp of the *Gita*.

Since the apparent aim of the whole dialogue in the *Gita* is to lift up Arjuna from the dejection of his mind and to infuse courage in him to fight boldly, instead of succumbing to pity or cowardice, many readers of the book are led to believe that it is more a mandate for action than anything else. But it is evident that the real aim of the book is not to goad Arjuna to action. Neither is the book a mere treatise on *Bhakti* or *Yoga*, though these subjects are strongly emphasised in it. The real aim of the book is to present Krishna as the Manifest Deity to whom all actions should be dedicated and on whom all *bhakti* should be concentrated. This dedication of action and devotion is *svadharma* (one's own duty) to die for which is preferable to everything else. 'Even death in the performance of one's duty brings blessedness; while another's duty (or perhaps another's religion) is to be afraid of'. III. 35.

A few more verses may be quoted here in support of the view that the *Gitarahasya* is the doctrine that Krishna is the Saviour of the world.

'Having known Me in reality . . . as the Supreme Lord of all the worlds. . . My devotee attains peace'. V. 29.

'Even among all Yogis, he who devoutly worships Me with his mind focused on Me is considered by Me to be the best Yogi'. VI. 47.

'Know Me as the eternal seed of all beings. . . The worshippers of the gods attain the gods; whereas My devotees in the end attain Me alone'. VII. 10. 23.

'Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus surrendered to Me, you will doubtless come to Me.' VIII. 7.

'Constantly chanting My names and glories . . . worship Me with single-minded devotion.' IX. 14.

'I am the wind . . . I am Rama . . . I am the alligator . . . I am the Ganges. . . I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all creations. . . In those practising fraud, I am gambling; I am the glory

of the glorious; I am the victory of the victorious. I stand holding this entire universe by a spark of My yogic power.' (See X. 31-42.)

It may be observed here that in the 700 verses of the *Bhagavadgita*, there are no fewer than 350 expressions like: 'I am', 'Me', 'My' uttered by Krishna with reference to himself.

'I speedily rescue from the ocean of birth and death . . . those . . . who worship Me . . . with single-minded devotion. Therefore fix your mind on Me and establish your reason in Me alone. . . . Those devotees are extremely dear to Me.' XII. 6, 7, 8, 20.

'I am the abode of imperishable Brahma, of immortality, of everlasting virtue and of unending bliss.' XIV. 27.

'I am known in the world as well as in the Veda as the Supreme Person.' XV. 18.

The final summing up of the whole discourse is contained in XVIII. 57-66. 'Therefore, mentally surrendering all actions to Me and with Myself as your sole object, have your mind constantly fixed on Me. . . . You should get over all difficulties with My grace. But, if out of pride you will not listen to Me, you will be utterly destroyed. . . . The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings. . . . Seek refuge in Him alone with all your being, Arjuna. Through His grace you shall attain supreme peace, and the eternal abode. Thus has knowledge, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me. Having reflected on it further, do as you like. Hear, again, My supreme word, the most secret of all. You are very dear to Me. . . . Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow to Me; so shall you without doubt reach Me. This I truly promise you; for you are dear to Me. Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you from all sins; grieve not.'

Verses 67-71 contain instructions to Arjuna that this gospel of the Manifest Deity should be imparted to all devotees.

Finally, Krishna asks Arjuna whether he has thoroughly understood his teachings and whether all his delusion is destroyed. Arjuna unhesitatingly replies: 'Krishna, my delusion is destroyed and I have gained knowledge through your grace. I stand freed from doubts; I shall therefore carry out your bidding'. 72-73.

In the last five verses, Sanjaya, the most faithful witness to everything that transpired between Krishna and Arjuna, testifies to the truth of it, and leaves on record his eternal gratitude to Bhagavan Krishna for having been able to listen to the marvellous and thrilling conversation. (74-78).

From the above brief quotations from the Gita, it will be plain that the central theme of the book is the exaltation of Krishna as *par excellence*, superior to all gods including Brahma the Creator, all philosophies and all metaphysical doctrines. This is the *Gitarahasya*, the secret of the Gita.

The author's great skill consists in portraying out of his own imagination a figure of such beauty and attractiveness. He sees before his mind's eye the imaginary human form of a mythical person known as Krishna, supposed to have lived and died in some remote past and later on to have been looked upon as God incarnate. On the basis of this ancient belief, the author introduces Krishna to the world as the eternal God who before his birth as Devaki's son was immanent in the universe as the Supreme Spirit. In his visible form as Krishna, he is the manifestation of the Deity and the incarnate saviour of the world. The author is able to stretch his imagination not only to the legendary past and the present which has issued out of it, but also to the future and to all eternity into which Krishna passes as the eternal indwelling spirit. As the Supreme he was immanent in the universe. Then he incarnates as Krishna after which he returns again to his immanent state. But no trace is available anywhere in history of his transition from one stage to another. All that we gather from the *puranas* (ancient legends) is that after living as chief of a clan for sometime he was unintentionally killed by an arrow shot by a hunter.

Though the *Gita* claims that, before his incarnation Krishna was immanent in nature as supreme spirit, all that we could see in him as Krishna are mere physical qualities of no spiritual value or meaning at all. The fables about his killing of numerous demons, his feats of physical strength, his love episodes and various other anecdotes which no moral code of any land would permit in ordinary life, cannot be accounts of qualities projected by God from his immanent existence into His visible form. For the same reason, it is impossible to believe how a person, whose visible existence was devoid of any of the finer attributes of Almighty God who is the Father of us all, can leave behind him all his coarse nature and pass into eternity as a perfectly Divine Being fit to indwell in all men and energise all noble hearts. For these reasons, the claim of immanence and eternal existence of Krishna before his birth and the continuity of the same after his death are absolutely unconvincing.

Most eminent scholars are agreed that the *Gita* was written several centuries after the Krishna of the *puranas* is said to have lived and died. As said before, the author's extraordinary power of imagination enabled him to build up a mighty supernatural figure around that mythical

name. In doing so, he rarely makes use of any of the mythological attributes of Krishna, in his new picture. He creates a Krishna altogether different from the original and suitable to the needs and requirements of the times in which he lived and wrote. He is like a great architect who pulls down an old mud house and erects in its place, on the same site and on the same foundations a beautiful modern mansion which leaves no trace of the old condemned building at all. But however beautiful his mansion is, it is built on the old weak foundation. That is why the author of the Gita has not been able to avoid frequent recurrences of illogical, self-contradictory, and vain utterances proceeding from the mouth of his Manifest Deity. Neither history nor mythology knows of any such Krishna as the Gita depicts.

## CHAPTER II

### KRISHNA AND KURUKSHETRA

WHEN A CHRISTIAN approaches the Gita, he cannot but approach it with a critical mind. He is accustomed to such an attitude with regard to his own religion. The Christian Bible has been subjected to the most merciless criticism of its history, geography, ethics, philosophy, prophecy, miracles, date, authorship—in short, everything about the book from a theoretical as well as a practical point of view. The assault on the Bible has continued unabated. Every engine of destruction that philosophy, science, rationalism, and even brute force could bring to bear against a book, has been brought to bear against the Bible; and yet it stands absolutely unshaken today. There were times when all the wise and great men of the earth stood against it, and only an obscure few for it. Yet it has survived. Hence a Christian feels sure of its trustworthiness from every point of view. About the authenticity and absolute reliability of the Bible, St. Peter wrote long ago: 'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty'. 2 Peter 1:16.

Everything connected with the life and times of Jesus the Messiah is presented to the world in an irrefutable historical setting. It is on the strength of that, that Peter, one of the disciples, and other contemporaries of Jesus asserted that the story of Jesus that they presented to the world was not a cunningly devised fable. To show the historicity of the birth of Christ his biographers have narrated the story in its historical setting in these words:

'And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, into the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child; and so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn'. (Lk. 2:1-7). The beginning of His mission thirty years after His birth was announced to the world by John the Baptist. This event too is recorded in its historical setting in these words: 'Now in the

fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judea, and Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip Tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysannias the Tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias in the wilderness'. (Lk. 3:1, 2.)

Similarly the end of His earthly mission by crucifixion is perpetually commemorated in its historical background, by the church, in its creed in which it repeats: 'He was crucified under Pontius Pilate'. Thus from birth to death His life-story is cast in a historical frame.

Added to this are the wonderful worldwide achievements of His Church, and the personal inner experience of endless millions of His disciples past and present when they testify to their faith in words such as: 'We have seen His majesty'; 'Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life'. 'He loved me and gave himself up for me'. 'Whereas I was blind, now I see'.

Is there any historical background approaching to such things as quoted above, in the case of any one else? Being founded on such unassailable historical foundations, Christianity has been able to withstand every kind of attack from outside as well as inside.

Not only the Bible, but also Jesus Christ of the Gospel was put to the severest test. The things which were done to Christ are known to all the world. They were not done in a corner. His life, his teachings, his miracles and above all His crucifixion and resurrection so much impressed His immediate followers that they unanimously testified that they were eyewitnesses of His majesty. They were quite sure that they were not following a bogus avatar. Most of His followers suffered martyrdom willingly for their belief in Christ and His resurrection. Paul who persecuted the first Christians for believing that the crucified Christ is living, himself became the staunchest disciple of Christ as a result of a mid-day vision of Christ on his way to Damascus, whither he was going armed with police powers to arrest and imprison Christians. After his conversion he testifies: 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me'. (Gal. 2:30.) Hear another testimony of his inner experience: 'For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'. (Rom. 8:28, 29.)

Have we in India subjected the Gita with its Krishna to such

a severe test? Or are we hugging it simply because it is an heirloom handed down to us by our ancestors? Let us by all means love and respect it for its inherent worth. But there is no justification whatever for clinging to things which are not historically true. It is the habit of credulous people everywhere to believe in everything that comes to them in the name of religion without scrutinising its genuineness.

We must be prepared to face questions and withstand every criticism. Most educated people are convinced that the battle of Kurukshetra and the Bhagavadgita do not belong to the same period. Hence it follows as night the day that the Bhagawan of the Gita is purely an imaginary person and the entire dialogue is the creation of the author of the Gita. If the Gita is the invention of the author and not the words really uttered by Krishna, what was the author's object in presenting a legendary hero as the true incarnation of the Almighty? Are there not many educated Hindus who sincerely believe that Krishna of the puranas is not a historical person, and that, even if he were a historical person, his life, as is handed down to us through the puranas, is not at all worthy of imitation? Why then does the author of the Gita ask us to believe that Krishna is almighty God in human form? What could have been his motive in inventing a discourse in the name of Krishna and offering forgiveness of sins and salvation in his name? In the Mahābhārata itself which narrates the heroic deeds and exploits of Krishna, he does not appear as the 'Father of the Brahma' himself come down to earth, to forgive sins and to save sinners. On what grounds, then, does the author of the Gita make him Manifest Deity? The author perhaps wanted to extol Vaishnavism<sup>1</sup> over all other religions of his time. He was perhaps afraid of some other religion which threatened to undermine the Indian caste system. He found it necessary therefore to defend the caste system at all costs. This could not be done without giving divine sanction to it. So he made use of the popular belief in Krishna as a demi-god and presented him as a fullfledged god in human form, and made this imaginary god say: 'The four castes are my creation'. 'It is better to die in one's own religion than even to think of other religions.' Hence it can be safely asserted that the Gita was written with two main purposes in view, viz., to establish KRISHNAISM on the one hand, and on the other to place on record an unassailable though spurious

<sup>1</sup> The worship of Vishnu, the second person as opposed to Saivism, the worship of Siva the third person. Though there is no sect as such worshipping Brahma, the Brahmin highcastes are supposed to be knowers of Brahma the supreme.

divine sanction for the established social order and the institution of caste in India.

People differently interpret the Gita as a treatise on yoga,<sup>1</sup> Bhakti, Nishkāma Karma, and so on. Others there are who say it is an allegory or parable meant to teach lessons on the eternal struggle between good and evil. But these are only partial interpretations. The two most outstanding topics of the Gita are, Krishna and caste. The most popular verses of the Bhagavadgita which everybody knows by heart are those referring to: Dying in one's own religion; and taking refuge in 'ME'. *Swadharmē nidhanam śrēyah Paradharmo bhayāvah; Sarva dharmān parityajya Māmēkam śaranam vriḥ.*

Now let us have a look at the Gita more closely from a chronological point of view. The chronological position of the Gita in Hindu literature can be clearly seen from the following analysis. Most of the students of Hinduism, both western and Indian, have arrived at more or less the same conclusions as regards the date of the Gita. These conclusions as summed up in Dr. Farquahar's *Gita and the Gospel* are not likely to create much controversy. We beg leave to quote the following from it.

"The history of the growth of Hindu literature falls into the following main groups:

- I. Mantra period.
  - (a) Composition of the Vedic Hymns.
  - (b) Compilation of the Vedas.
- II. Brahmana period.
- III. Upanishad period. (Only the early prose Upanishads)
- IV. Sutra period.
  - (a) The Sutras and the Verse Upanishads.
  - (b) The Jain and Buddhist Canons.
- V. Dharmashastra period.
  - (a) Third stage of Mahabharatha.
  - (b) Early Atharvan Upanishads.
- VI. Purana period.

What is the place of the Gita in this long evolution of Hindu literature?

(a) The idea of Krishna as Brahma-incarnate first appears in the Atharvan Upanishads, and in the third stage of the Mahabharata. There, for the first time in Sanskrit literature, the doctrine of Avatars

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III.

(incarnations) appears. Similarly the welding of the Sāṅkhya and Yōga systems taught in the Gīta as Sāṅkhyayoga does not appear earlier than the Atharvan Upanishads.

(b) The Vedas, the Brāhmanas, the Upanishads, the Sūtras and the Dharmashastras are all referred to in the Gīta.

(c) According to Justice Telang, the versification of the Gīta is later than that of the verse Upanishads.

(d) There is a large number of words and phrases common to the Gīta and the Atharvan Upanishads, but not found earlier.

(e) The works of Kalidasa contain the earliest certain reference to the Gīta. No books earlier than these contain a reference to it.'

Thus we reach the conclusion that all available lines of evidence point to the same conclusion that the Gīta was produced somewhere in our fifth period mentioned above. Most writers believe that its date lies between the third century B.C. and third century A.D.

'The district of Kurukshetra lies midway between the Sutlej and Prayag, where the Jumna joins the Ganges. The battle of Kurukshetra took place when the Aryans were dwelling in these regions after the composition of the Rigveda and before the compilation of the black Yajurveda. Thus Kurukshetra was fought in the second division of the first period of the literature, while the Gīta was composed somewhere in the fifth period. We need not attempt to fix a date for either event. To all our readers it will be evident that at least a thousand years lie between the great battle and the composition of the great poem. From these facts we necessarily conclude that the Gīta does not come from Krishna. Being in all points the product of an age many centuries later than the time when he lived, it cannot be an utterance of his'.

A few more quotations from Dr. Farquahar may not be out of place:

1. In the Chandogya Upanishad III. 17.6, Krishna Devaki-putra (son of Devaki) is mentioned as a philosophic student. Here he is a man and only a man.

2. In the earliest parts of the Mahābhārata, we find Krishna represented as a great King and Warrior, but still only a man.

3. In Pānini's Sūtras, Vāsudevā and Arjuna are mentioned together as objects of worship. If Vasudeva is Krishna, he is only on a level with Arjuna, and not the supreme.

4. In the later parts of the Mahābhārata, a number of Atharvan Upanishads, the Gīta and several of the puranas, Krishna is elevated to the dignity of an incarnation of Brahma'. (*Gīta and the Gospel*, pp. 19-23).

If these conclusions are accepted, we cannot but admit that more than a thousand years lie between the Gita and Krishna, and that the unknown divine Krishna of the Gita is different from the known Krishna of history and mythology. Therefore the Bhagavan (the blessed one) of the Gita is not Krishna Devakiputra.

About the date and contents of the Gita, Dr. Radhakrishnan says: 'From its archaic constructions and internal references, its date may be assigned to the 5th century B.C.

'It is argued that the teacher Krishna could not have recited 700 verses to Arjuna on the battlefield. He must have said a few pointed things which were later elaborated by the narrator into an extensive work.

'According to Garbe, the Bhagavadgita was originally a Sankhya-yoga treatise with which the Krishna Vasudeva cult got mixed up, and in the 3rd century B.C., it became adjusted to the vedic tradition by the identification of Krishna with Vishnu. The original work arose about 200 B.C. and it was worked into its present form by some follower of the vedanta in the 2nd century A.D. Garbe's theory is generally rejected.

'Hopkins regards the work as at present a Krishnaite version of an older Vaishnavite poem and this in turn was at first an unsectarian work, perhaps a late Upanishad. [Religions of India (1908), p. 389.]

'Farquhar writes of it as an old verse Upanishad, written rather later than the Svetāsvatara and worked up into the Gita in the interests of Krishnaism by a poet after the Christian era. [Outline of the religious literature of India. (1920) sec. 95.]

'Hofman looks upon the Gita as a Vaishnavite remodelling of a pantheistic poem.

'Keith believes that it was originally an Upanishad of the Svetasvara type, but was later adapted to the cult of Krishna.

'Barnett thinks that different streams of traditions became confused in the mind of the author.

'Rudolf Otto affirms that the original Gita was a splendid epic fragment and did not include any doctrinal literature. Otto believes that the doctrinal treatises are interpolated.

'In this he is in agreement with Jacobi, who also holds that the original nucleus was elaborated by the scholiasts into its present form'.

'These quotations clearly show that all the scholars mentioned are more or less unanimous in their opinion that the Gita in its original form consisted of only a small nucleus made up of an Upanishad or some pantheistic poems which were later worked up into its present

form in the interests of Krishnaism and Krishna's identification with Vishnu. This remodelling of the original fragment was a much later work, possibly after the Christian era. Garbe puts the original poem and its final development between 300 B.C. and 200 A.D.' (Pp. 12-16)

According to this view of Dr. Radhakrishnan we have to infer that the original nucleus of the Gita consisted of some abridged form of the present book with the cult of Krishnaism in it; whereas the western scholars quoted above unanimously affirm that it contained only some Upanishads or pantheistic poems without having anything to do with Krishna or Kurukshetra, and that the cult of Krishna as Manifest Deity was a later interpolation. That this latter view is more reasonable can be seen by a closer look into the central theme of the Gita itself.

(1) During the Kurukshetra period, Krishna was not looked upon as a God by his own contemporaries. In the eleventh chapter of the Gita, Krishna changes himself into a terrible unearthly form before Arjuna. Arjuna, after doing obeisance to his erstwhile charioteer, cries out: 'Ignorant of this greatness of yours, and thinking of you only to be a friend, I have wantonly addressed you in the past, either through heedlessness or through affection, as Krishna, Yadava, Friend and so on. You have been slighted by me in jest, while playing, reposing in bed, sitting or dining, either alone or in the presence of others. I crave forgiveness for all that from you who are Infinite, O Infallible Lord'. XI. 41, 42. Here Arjuna admits that till that moment he was not aware of Krishna's claim to be the supreme. Both were lifelong friends and comrades. Krishna suddenly becomes God before him. This arouses no suspicion in Arjuna's mind. He falls prostrate before this new god. Sanjaya too believes, and blind Dhritrāshtra accepts Sanjaya's testimony.

But when you want to support one inconsistency, you cannot do it without calling to your aid other inconsistencies as well. We have seen that in the said confession of Arjuna, he swears that he was 'ignorant of this greatness of yours'. XI. 41, 42. Read this along with verses 12 and 13 of the previous chapter: 'You are the supreme eternal, the ultimate resort, the greatest purifier; all the seers speak of you as the eternal divine person, the Prime Deity, the unborn and all-pervading. Likewise speak the celestial sage Nārada, the sages Asita and Devla, and the great sage Vyāsa; (It is this Vyāsa who is believed to be the author of the Gita), and so do you yourself proclaim this to me'. X. 12, 13. Whereas XI. 41 says that until that moment when he saw Krishna's form, he had taken him to be mere man: which of these is true? Such glaring contradictions are enough to prove that the poem

is not at all based on facts and that as Barnett says, it contains different streams of thought running together in confusion.

(2) A field of battle is an impossible place for a philosophic dialogue between two parties and for its immediate report at full length by a listener to his master. The Gita comes to us as a verbatim report by the charioteer Sanjaya to Dhritarāshtra his master on the field of battle. Therefore the dialogue and its report are equally incredible.

(3) A brave warrior like Arjuna is the last man in the world to give way to dejection in the field of battle in the presence of the whole army under him, and, throwing away his weapons, to sit down and cry like a child after the challenging conches were blown by himself. If it were a true story his army would have at once removed him from the command of the Pāndava forces. Listen to his lamentation: 'Krishna, at the sight of these kinsmen . . . thus arrayed and longing for battle, my limbs give way, and my mouth is parched; nay, my frame shakes and hair stands on end. My bow Gāndiva drops from my hand and my skin burns all over; my mind is reeling, as it were, and I am not able even to stand. . . . I covet not victory, nor pleasures. . . . Those for whose sake we covet the throne, luxuries and pleasures . . . Gurus, uncles, sons, grand-uncles . . . and other relations are here arrayed . . . . I do not want to kill them though they may kill me. . . . It would be better for me if the sons of Dhritarāshtra armed with weapons killed me in battle while I was unarmed and unresisting' (see ch. I:26-47).

(4) Supposing that such melancholia had taken possession of his friend, the most reasonable thing Krishna the charioteer ought to have done was to drive him home at once for treatment, instead of trying to cure it on the spot by lengthy philosophic indoctrination, in the presence of their enemies, for an endless period.

(5) Several hours, if not days, must have elapsed before the lengthy dialogue was finished. What were the enemies, who were standing close by with drawn weapons, doing all this time? Did they patiently wait till Krishna had finished, or did they go home for meals, to return after the dialogue was over?

(6) Krishna's *Vishvarōopa* (universal form) is said to be a subjective vision in Arjuna's mind, without any visible external object. But in the words of the Gita, Sanjaya the charioteer of blind king Dhritarāshtra of the enemy camp, who appears to have taken down a verbatim report of the whole dialogue for reporting to his master, exclaims at the conclusion of the report: 'Thus have I heard this wonderful dialogue between Vasudeva (Krishna) and the high-souled Arjuna causing my hair to stand up. By the grace of Vyāsa I heard this supreme secret, this yoga taught by Krishna himself, the Lord of Yoga in person. O

King, as I recall again and again this dialogue, wondrous and holy, of Keshava (Krishna) and Arjuna, I thrill with joy again and again. And as often as I recall that most wondrous form of Hari (Krishna), great is my astonishment, O King, and I thrill with joy again and again' XVIII. 74-77. How could the subjective vision granted to Arjuna's mind be shared by Sanjaya of the enemy camp?

About this testimony of Sanjaya, Dr. Radhakrishnan says that Vyāsa granted to Sanjaya the power to see and hear from a distance all that transpired on the battlefield so that he might report the events to the blind king Dhritarāshtra!

Vyāsa is supposed to be the author of the Gita. A hundred and one things are attributed to this Vyāsa. He was a great sage. He was the father of Pandu and Dhritarāshtra, the progenitor of the Pandavas and Kauravas. He arranged the Vedas in their present form. He is said to be the author of the Mahābhāratha, the 18 puranas and the Brahmasutras. The Bhagavadgita also is said to be written by him! He must have worked as an author for several centuries consecutively!

Thus Vyāsa the father of Dhritarāshtra, enabled his son's charioteer Sanjaya by some psychic process, to hear the whole dialogue from a distance and to retain it word for word in his memory, and also to get a perfect mental television of the Form of the Visvaroopta which he in his turn transmits to blind Dhritarāshtra's inner vision. How credible is all this!

(7) After all, what is this *Vishvaroopta*? Has Visva (the universe) any such Form? Is Almighty God the Father of us all so childish or so vain as to assume such a hideously grotesque Form without any sensible idea behind it, just to satisfy the curiosity of an individual and that not once but twice successively on demand? Let us have a glimpse of this Visvaroopta: A Form endowed with numerous arms, bellies, faces and eyes and having infinite forms extended on all sides . . . with a diadem, mace and chakra . . . having the sun and the moon for your eyes and blazing fire for your mouth . . . hosts of gods are entering you . . . Bhishma, Drona and yonder Karna with all the warriors are rushing headlong into your fearful mouths . . . some are seen stuck between your teeth with their heads crushed. (See ch. XI. 13-30). Is this the picture of the God of the universe?

(8) It is well known that *Nishkāmakarma*—desireless action—is one of the main teachings of the Gita attributed to Krishna. But among the various methods employed by Krishna to goad Arjuna to action, we find that Krishna places before him various objects of desire, such as: heaven, reputation, sovereignty, etc. 'A righteous war is

an open door to heaven. II. 31, 32. If you will not wage such a righteous war, you will not only lose your reputation but also incur sin'. 33. 'People will pour undying infamy on you, and infamy brought on a man enjoying popular esteem is worse than death'. 34. 'Slain in battle you will attain heaven, or gaining victory, you will enjoy sovereignty of the earth. Therefore, arise, Arjuna, determined to fight'. 37. Is this sound advice on the part of the Lord of Nishkāmakarma? Is it Nishkāmakarma to fight for sovereignty, or reputation, or even for heaven?

(9) If we are to suppose that immediately after the dialogue, Arjuna's courage revived and he with the help of Krishna annihilated the Kauravas including Dhritarāshtra and his charioteer Sanjaya, when did the latter get the occasion for reporting the dialogue to his master? Is not the whole thing a string of impossibilities?

(10) When *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is accepted by the whole world, in theory at least, as *Paramo Dharma* (Supreme duty or religion) is it in any sense justifiable on the part of a spiritual Guru like Krishna to demolish it altogether from the heart of a good man like Arjuna by persistent indoctrination and convert him into a man of *himsa* (violence) ready to destroy his own race? When Hitler started his campaign of world conquest, Mahatma Gandhi preached *Ahimsa* to the smaller states of Europe and advised them to undergo suffering rather than resist Hitler's violence. In the first and second chapters of the Gita, Arjuna appears to us as a wonderful example of love, sympathy, forbearance and *Ahimsa*. Paradoxically enough, the Gita concludes with the pathetic sight of such a noble soul turned into a man of violence. If Mahatma Gandhi were in Krishna's place, is there any doubt that he would never have advised Arjuna as Krishna is alleged to have done? When Hitler mercilessly persecuted the Jews of Europe, Gandhiji advised them to apply the doctrine of 'non-violence of the strong' against Hitler and added that 'the exhibition of such courage is only possible for those who have a living faith in the God of truth and non-violence'. Is it a sign of such courage and living faith in the God of truth and non-violence that Krishna manifested in siding with one party in a fratricidal war to abet and help its leader to destroy the opposing party?

(11) Let us look into the question from another point of view. In chapter IV. 13 and elsewhere Krishna claims that he is the creator of the four castes. Will almighty God the creator of all things visible and invisible, or any accredited spokesman of His, make such an unreasonable and preposterous claim? Besides, is God the God of India only and not of the whole earth? Why has not Krishna claimed to have

created Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras in countries outside India?

If caste is only a functional grouping, 'a class determined by temperament and vocation' and 'not determined by birth and heredity' as argued by Dr. Radhakrishnan, how is it that the institution of caste with its watertight compartments is found in India only? How is it that strict observance of caste is insisted upon by all Hindu Scriptures? Is it not solely from the Scriptures that caste has derived its religious sanction? There is no evidence whatsoever that caste was at any time looked upon as merely a functional grouping and not an inviolable division of society based on birth and heredity. The modern theory of functional grouping cannot explain the deep-rooted belief in the divine origin of caste.

In all the world outside India there are priests, soldiers, farmers and traders and working classes as in India. But nowhere except in India are children born with the unalterable stamp of caste, determined by their birth and heredity.

The leaders of thought amongst us have taken it for granted that everything that the ancients have written down in the Sanskrit language is sacred and must be defended as divine revelation at all costs. Hence they are compelled to blow hot and cold by bewailing the evils of caste on the one hand and defending its divine origin on the other and by sugar-coating its evils with laboured explanations. All our commentators on the Gita come under this category without any exception. Even Dr. Radhakrishnan defends caste in the same strain. Instead of admitting the truth that the verses in the Gita are calculated to establish Krishnaism and casteism in India, and condemning them as 'cunningly devised' interpolations by interested persons, he also tries to give a philosophic colour to them so as to condone their evil implications. Commenting on the verse:

*Chaturvarnyam Mayasrishtam, Gunakarmavibhagasah* (The four-fold order (caste) is created by Me according to aptitude and function) IV. 13, Dr. Radhakrishnan writes in his Commentary on the Bhagavad-gita: 'A class determined by temperament and vocation is not a caste determined by birth and heredity. According to the Mahābhārata, the whole world was originally of one class, but later it became divided into four divisions on account of the specific duties. Even the distinction between caste and outcaste is artificial and unspiritual. . . . The four-fold order is designed for human evolution. . . . Functional groupings will never be out of date. . . . The present morbid condition of India broken into castes and subcastes is opposed to the unity taught by the Gita'.

If the theory of functional grouping is applicable to the whole world how can we account for this universal 'functional grouping' settling down into the muddy sediment of caste in India alone? If it is answered that other religions have wiped off the 'artificial and unspiritual' class system in countries outside India, it must be admitted that, left to our own resources we have not the spiritual capacity to free ourselves from the chain with which we have bound ourselves. The Caste system has been in existence in India from vedic times; and it has continued till now as vigorously as ever. What a pity, that no one has the moral courage to condemn the religious sanction for caste claimed by the Gita, as a regular fraud! For want of such moral courage on the part of our eminent thinkers, throughout all these centuries, we have not been able to shake off this octopus which is mainly responsible for all our weaknesses of indiscipline, disunion and fissiparous tendencies. How can we look upon a person who is responsible for such a pernicious doctrine, as the saviour of the world? Has not caste made us slaves of custom and heredity? Is not our entire vertebra disjunct on account of this? By continuously defending this indefensible and unspiritual doctrine we are losing our own veracity and scrupulousness, and substituting crooked and unscrupulous thinking in their place. Clear thinking seems to have become an impossibility with many of our religious thinkers. Defenders of caste admit sometimes that a Brahmin and a Pariah are blood-brothers. Yes, God has created them as blood-brothers. But caste has separated them into Brahmin and Pariah the untouchable; and as long as the religious sanction for caste, remains, the blood-brothers will remain separated from one another for ever, and those who are responsible for this wilful separation are answerable to God, for this guilt.

From all that has been said above, it can be safely assumed that God is in no way responsible for casteism or even for any organised 'functional grouping'. It is a libel against God to say so. Hence it follows that the whole dialogue in the Gita is the invention of a shrewd person who wanted to establish Krishnaism and casteism.

The necessity for a certain kind of social and functional grouping according to the fitness and aptitude of individuals as well as groups for certain categories of social and religious duties might permit the drawing of a line of demarcation temporarily between such people. But it is a crime of the blackest colour to wilfully convert these lines of conventional groupings into impregnable Maginot Lines by reinforcing them with religious authority. In India caste is doubly reinforced with the

doctrine of divine origin and the theory of *Karma*, and every one defends this Maginot Line because of his deep faith in these two theories.

Some might say that the religious basis of caste has faded out of the minds of educated people. This is not quite true. The fear of giving up one's caste is still deep rooted in most men's minds. It is true that western influence has removed restrictions on travel, social intercourse, female education and such other social items. But the inner fortress is as intact as ever.

(12) Lastly, let us look into the endless variety of topics contained in the dialogue. The author begins the dialogue with the announcement of an emergency case of the utmost urgency demanding immediate attention. But as he reaches the middle of the second chapter, he forgets all urgency, he forgets Arjuna's sudden attack of melancholia, he forgets even the opposing armies standing ready to charge. Everything around vanishes, leaving Krishna and Arjuna alone. They carry on their discourse in a leisurely manner as between a Guru and a sishya (teacher and pupil) under a shady tree. All kinds of philosophies and all kinds of yoga and asceticism are discussed. The vedas are denounced as third rate. Ahimsa, forgiveness, purity, selfless action are taught. Transmigration, the three Gunas, heaven and hell are discussed. Religious sanction is given to caste. Warnings against other peoples' religions are repeated. Finally the scene closes with an appeal by the Guru to the disciple to preach the gospel of Krishnaism to all the world. 'This most sacred teaching should be imparted to others. Those who do so will attain Me. Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he. . . . And by him who shall study this sacred discourse of ours, shall I be worshipped'. Is all this an emergency talk on the battle-field as claimed in the first chapter of the Gita?

It is amazing how in the face of so many glaring inconsistencies and impossibilities of which the book is full, people can still believe that the Gita is the song of Krishna before Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra in the name of the God of all the earth.

If Krishna and Kurukshetra had nothing to do with the Gita, why then did the author invent such a dialogue? He must have been prompted by sufficient reasons to do so. In his time Krishna must have already been elevated to godhead by a large section of the people. But there were rivals like Saivism, Jainism, and Buddhism. The author was a staunch Krishnaist. He wanted to establish the superiority of his faith over the others. For this purpose he conceived the idea that it would be nice to give it a divine halo by proclaiming his beliefs as emanating from the mouth of Krishna himself. If it could be shown with

Krishna's authority that this cult existed from the beginning, that Krishna's godhead was an ancient belief accepted by the Pandavas at Kurukshetra and that the faith was superior to all other faiths, Vaishnavism could be established on a stronger footing for ever.

To give additional strength to his cult, the author claimed that it was his Krishna that created all the castes, that he was the father of Brahma, that he had power to forgive sins and give eternal bliss to his devotees. He strengthened it further by giving two awfully terrible forms to his deity. On the whole he must have considered it a grand idea to bring in Krishna and ask him to defend his own cause against all rival religions, the end thus justifying the means.

There might have been another object in establishing the doctrine of Krishna as Manifest Deity. But this is only a conjecture. There are no direct proofs to be adduced in support of it. It is possible that Krishna was extolled as god-incarnate, in order to withstand the spread of Christianity in India in the first century of the Christian era. It is believed that in about the middle of the first century, St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew came to India to preach Christ. Bartholomew is believed to have made disciples in western India and St. Thomas in North and South India. The Gita might have been written towards the end of the first century or early in the second century. Those Apostles preached Christ as the Manifest Deity. They must have naturally insisted that in order to follow Christ one must give up caste and the old beliefs that go with it. The author of the Gita found it necessary to prove that Krishna was a Manifest Deity, that caste was a divine institution, that it was far better to die in one's own caste and that all should view the new *Paradharm*a (foreign religion) with fear. Hence the warning: *Svadharme nidhanam sreyaḥ: Paradharmo bhayavah* must have meant in those days: Better die in your own religion; Be afraid of the religion of the foreigner. Even today, the attitude of Hindus towards Christianity continues to be the same.

The warning *Paradharmo bhayavaha* does not refer to any fear of attempting to do other people's duties as the word Dharma is often translated. Duties are generally transferable without any sense of fear. No Brahmin is afraid of becoming a soldier or businessman or Government official. A Kshatriya breaks no religious rules by taking to agriculture. Similarly a Vaisya or Sudra can join the army without any qualms of conscience. Hence the argument that dharma here refers to duty is totally untenable. It refers to religion only and that religion may have been Christianity and none else. If this argument is reasonable, it goes without saying that the Gita was written in the first or second century of the Christian era with the avowed object of presenting Krishna

as the Manifest Deity in place of Christ newly introduced to India by the two apostles mentioned before.

The doctrine of sin and forgiveness is seldom emphasised in Hinduism. Acquiring merits by good actions, like gifts, offerings, yatras and ablutions, is the main teaching. Similarly the numerous avatars of Hinduism are not supposed to proclaim forgiveness of sins to sinners. They appear not to seek and to save the lost, but to destroy them, and save the possessors of merit. But the Gita teaches among other things about a loving personal saviour who is willing to accept a repenting man, as a father accepts the erring child. This is altogether a new gospel. The Gita in all probability preaches this to counteract the teaching of the two apostles and their followers, who taught that Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. But, as said before, this is all pure conjecture. There are no proofs.

The author of the Gita has shown extraordinary skill in handling his subject. He proves beyond doubt that the worship of God through a manifest deity is far more effective than trying to do it direct, since the supreme is unknown and unknowable. He exhibits wonderful tact and skill in proving that Krishna is this Manifest Deity, without giving any offence to other forms of faith and practice, originally prevalent around him.

This is what Dr. Radhakrishna says about the historicity of Krishna in his *Bhagavadgita* pp. 28-32:

### **Krishna's Historicity**

'So far as the teaching of the *Bhagavadgita* is concerned, it is immaterial whether Krishna is a historical individual or not. The material point is the eternal incarnation of the divine, the everlasting bringing forth of the perfect and divine life in the universe and the soul of man.

'There is however ample evidence in favour of the historicity of Krishna. The *Chandogya Upanishad* refers to Krishna Devakiputra, the son of Devaki, and speaks of him as the pupil of Ghora Angirasa, who is a priest of the Sun according to the *Kausitaki Brahmana*. . . There is a great similarity between the teaching of Ghora Angirasa in the *Upanishads* and that of Krishna in the *Gita*.

'In the *Mahābhārata* he is presented as the friend of Arjuna. Panini refers to Vasudeva and Arjuna as objects of worship, Krishna belonged to the ancient Vrshni or Satvata branch of the family of Yadu, whose home was perhaps in the neighbourhood of Mathura, a town with which Krishna's name has been associated in history, tradition and legend. His opposition to the Vedic cult comes out in passages where

Indra, when vanquished, humbled himself before Krishna. . . . By the fourth century before Christ, the cult of Vasudeva was well established. The Gita has reference to those who complain about Krishna's divinity and express their lack of faith in him. III-32; IX-11; XVIII-67.

'Theism, however, makes out that Krishna is an incarnation or descent of the divine in human form. Krishna identifies himself with the Supreme Lord in the Gita. It is the habit of awakened souls in India to declare themselves to be so. In Rig Veda IV-26, Vamadeva says: "I am Manu, I am Surya, I am the learned sage Kaksivan. I have adorned the sage Kutsa, the son of Arjuni. I am the wise Usani; Look at Me". In Kausitaki Upanishad III, Indra says to Pratardana: "I am the vital breath; I am the conscious self, worship me as life, as breath, as immortality". . . . "Indra, when vanquished humbled himself before Krishna".

'Krishna is the human embodiment of Vishnu. He creates himself to lift the world. At midnight in the thickest darkness, the Dweller in every heart revealed himself in the divine Devaki, for the Lord is the self hidden in the heart of all beings. . . . The meaning of the birth of Krishna is the fact of redemption in the dark night. In the hour of calamity and enslavement the saviour of the world is born of Vasudeva and Devaki.

'Krishna the head of the Yadava clan sought to bring about a reconciliation between the cousins. When all attempts failed, a fratricidal war became inevitable. Krishna proposed that he and his vassals would join the two sides and left the choice to the two parties. The vassals were selected by Duryodhana, and Krishna himself joined the Pandavas as Arjuna's charioteer. Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the Lord our God. (P. 80.)

'Krishna is identified with the Supreme Lord, the unity that lies behind the manifold universe, the changeless truth behind all appearances, transcendent over all and immanent in all. He is the Manifest Lord. XII. 1.

'He is not a hero who once trod the earth and has now left it having spoken to his favourite friend and disciple; but is everywhere and in every one of us. He is not a bygone personality, but the indwelling spirit'.

Some of the ideas contained in the passages quoted above demand closer scrutiny.

In the first place is it sound logic to say that it is immaterial whether Krishna is a historical person or not? How can you call him a saviour, a Manifested Deity, if he is not historical? If he is not a historical person what is the meaning of saying that Devaki gave birth to him?

How can it be said of an unhistorical person: The Saviour was born; or, Krishna was the human embodiment of Vishnu?

To have a historical person as one's saviour is entirely different from having an unhistorical person, a mere phantom. The two are as wide apart as the poles and as opposed to each other as light and darkness. A historical saviour can save. An imaginary saviour cannot save. You cannot create an imaginary unhistorical saviour for yourself transcending the model of your own imagination; just as water cannot rise above its own level.

Dr. Radhakrishnan says that the historicity of Krishna is immaterial in view of the fact of the eternal incarnation of the divine, the everlasting bringing forth of the perfect and divine life in the soul of man and in the universe. But this argument is fallacious. The question at issue is not whether the universal Spirit is working in the soul of man or not. Besides, we are not concerned here with the divinity of Krishna, but with his humanity. It does not stand to reason to say that his humanity is immaterial because he is divine. We are questioning the historicity of the human Krishna the son of Devaki, the chief of the Yadava clan, who is said to have been killed by a hunter's arrow. We wish to find out the connection between this Krishna and the Krishna whose supposed dialogue with Arjuna has come down to us as the Bhagavadgita (The Song of the Lord). To say that this question is immaterial is to dodge the issue. What the readers of the Gita want to ascertain is the historical background of the Gita. To tell them that it is not an important question amounts to a confession that Krishna is not a real person.

Secondly, if God is eternally incarnating himself and bringing forth perfect divine life in the universe and in the soul of man without the medium of a Manifest Deity, it follows that no divine incarnation is necessary to lead man to God. And if man is not in need of such a Manifest Deity, the entire Bhagavadgita falls to the ground because as we have already shown, its central teaching is the doctrine of the Manifest Deity.

As a side issue, the question whether it is correct to say that the eternal is everlastingly bringing forth perfect divine life in the universe as well as in the soul of man arises here. It may be admitted that God has his way in the universe—excluding the domain of man. God's will is not done on earth as it is in heaven. No one can deny this.

The Sun, the Moon and the stars strictly obey the Laws which their Maker has assigned to them. The wind and the rain observe God's laws. The sea does not transgress its appointed limits. The flowers bring forth the fulness of divine beauty immanent in them. 'Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor

gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these'. (Matt. 6:26-29.) Inanimate nature does not transgress God's laws. Even so, animals instinctively follow the impulse God has planted in them. Man alone, of all his creatures does not permit God to 'bring forth perfect and divine life in his soul'. 'The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib.' (Is. 1:3.) 'It is only man who does not know or consider'. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork'. (Ps. 19:1.) It is only miserable man that has fallen short of the glory of God. If man had not become the slave of his passions and bereft of the love of God, there would have been no need of a Saviour or Mediator for him. He would have naturally evolved into a fullfledged saint, perfect in divinity. Thus as far as man is concerned, it is not true to say that 'God's will is being carried out universally in every soul.'

Every sincere soul knows by experience that sin is the ruling impulse in the heart of man and that he has not got the spiritual stamina or willpower to rise up to God's expectations. He feels the need of a helping hand, a living Saviour, to lead him towards God. It is this feeling of helplessness and the need of divine succour that has given rise to innumerable claims of incarnations and avatars. When the soul is thus feeling after the true Manifest Deity, it cannot be said that it is immaterial whether an Avatar is historical or not.

At the same time, Dr. Radhakrishnan says: 'At midnight in the thickest darkness, the dweller in every heart revealed himself in the divine Devaki. . . . The meaning of the birth of Krishna is the fact of redemption in the dark night. . . . He is the Manifested Lord. . . . He is not a hero who once trod the earth and has now left it having spoken to his favourite friend and disciple; but is everywhere and in every one of us. He is not a bygone personality, but the indwelling spirit'.

When all this sounds so historical, why should it be said that it is immaterial whether Krishna is historical or not? Is it not because it is impossible to prove that he is historical? In the quotation given above we read of three Krishnas. One, the son of Devaki. He is the Krishna of Hindu mythology. No one is sure whether he is historical or not. Two, The Krishna of the Bhagavadgita. He is the Manifested Deity. This ought to be historical, provided of course there is true history behind it. But this account of Krishna as the Manifested Deity came into existence a thousand years after the mythological Krishna. How can it be asserted that he is historical? Three, the Krishna

metamorphosed into an 'indwelling spirit' and called by the name Vishnu. Does anyone know anything about the time, place and manner of the first Krishna of the puranas becoming the Manifested Deity of the Gita a thousand years afterwards? Or of the Manifested Deity of the Gita later being transformed into an 'indwelling spirit?' There is no evidence for any of these. Hence the only way of escape is to propound the illogical theory that historicity is altogether immaterial and that the material point is the fact that Krishna is the Everlasting Spirit that dwells in every one of us.

Supposing that the first Krishna of mythology transformed himself into the second and the second into the third as a spirit, what manner of spirit will it be? We believe that personality persists beyond the grave. If it is the personality of the Krishna of the puranas that has persisted beyond his grave, are we to believe that it is that spirit that dwells in us all? Are we to believe that God is such a spirit as we read of in the puranas?

From all that has been said so far, it should be quite evident that the Krishna of the Gita is not the Krishna of mythology. Neither is he a second historical Krishna identified as Vishnu. He is only an imaginary person whom the author of the Gita has invented as a representative and spokesman of an imaginary Vishnu. Both are imaginary beings. The author of the Gita, whoever he might be, had certain ideas and conceptions about the second person of the Hindu Triad popularly known as Vishnu the Preserver. In order to serve certain purposes of his own, he rejuvenated the Krishna of the Puranas as a Manifestation of this Vishnu. To this imaginary person Krishna, he ascribed all the qualities and attributes of an unknown and unknowable Vishnu. Hence he unwittingly puts into the mouth of Krishna so many strange and self-contradictory claims on his own behalf, interspersed with some high, noble and edifying doctrines. Being naturally unable to conceive the glory and Majesty of God, the creator and protector of us all, the author is obliged to invent a Vishvarooपा as the supposed form of the universal God, by means of a terrible representation which he thought was the exact likeness of his Vishnu. Likewise, he includes among the divine glories of Vishnu so many strange and unreasonable qualities and characteristics. For example, Vishnu reveals himself as . . . Ananta the serpent God, Lion, Alligator, the Ganges, etc. 'In those practising fraud, I am gambling'; 'I am Airavata', (Indra's elephant). Arjuna exclaims on beholding the Vishvarooपा: 'Lord, I behold in your body all gods and multitudes of different beings, Brahma (the creator) perched on his lotus-seat, Saiva (the destroyer) and all Rishis (perfected ones) and celestial serpents'. Arjuna sees

Brahma the creator and Shiva the destroyer inside the body of Krishna, along with saints, serpents, etc. He also sees innumerable gods, demons and ghosts entering into the Form before him. The Form itself has many faces and eyes, many arms, thighs and feet, many bellies and many teeth. 'The sons of Dhritarāshtra are entering you. Bhishma, Drona and yonder Karna, with the principal warriors on our side as well, are rushing headlong into your fearful mouths set with terrible teeth; some are seen stuck between your teeth with their heads crushed. . . . Warriors of the mortal world are entering your blazing mouths, as rivers flow into the sea'. (Chaps. X and XI.) Like a child playing with her dolls, Arjuna, after seeing this Form of Vishnu and worshipping it most reverently, asks for another show of a smaller form, which request also Krishna gladly grants as if he were an acrobat exhibiting his skill before an audience demanding an encore. Is this a picture of the God of all the universe?

'He is not a hero who once trod the earth and has now left it having spoken to his favourite friend and disciple'. The quotation does not mention the name of the person with whom Krishna is contrasted. But does it not look like a veiled taunt hurled at the face of Jesus Christ with his well-known favourite friend and disciple John? The history of the Christian church and the personal experience of humble believers, apostles and martyrs are enough to convince any sincere seeker that Jesus Christ is a living personality and not one who trod the earth and has now left it. More will be said about this in another chapter.

Let us once again examine from a different stand-point, the credentials presented to the world in proof of the claims of Krishna as the 'Saviour of the World'. Apart from his alleged miraculous birth, other things believed about Krishna are: 1. He was the head of the Yadava clan of Mathura. 2. He was a student of Ghora Angirasa. 3. Indra, the God of rain, when vanquished, humbled himself before Krishna. 4. Krishna subdued some minor kings around him and made them his vassals. 5. In the quarrel between Pandavas and Kauravas, Krishna failed to bring about a reconciliation. 6. Krishna sided with the Pandavas, and his vassals sided with the Kauravas. 7. Krishna and Arjuna, the leader of the Pandavas, were close friends. 8. In later life both were equally respected and venerated. 9. The dialogue in the Gita is believed to be the words of Krishna (though as a matter of fact, the Gita was written several centuries after Krishna). These are the credentials of the person presented to the world as 'the saviour of the world'. Luckily none of his exploits in the Puranas are quoted as credentials.

In addition to the above let us also look at the achievements of Krishna contained in the Gita: 1. The philosophic teachings in the Gita. 2. The self-revelations of Krishna in the Gita. 3. Krishna as the creator of the four castes. 4. Krishna's successful indoctrination of Arjuna to convert him from a peace-loving man to a man of war.

Of the two sets of qualifications given above, the first set is all too commonplace to deserve attention. No. 3 in that set may be dismissed as a mere legend, because no one in the world knows anything about this Indra.

In the second set, the philosophic teachings of the Gita are all contained in the Upanishads and some less important Hindu scriptures. So, that qualification does not carry much weight. There is nothing new in it. As to the self-revelations of Krishna by expressions like I AM, etc., Dr. Radhakrishnan says it is the habit of awakened souls in India to declare themselves to be so. He quotes the examples of Vamadeva and Indra in proof of it. So Krishna's self-revelations do not raise him above Vamadeva or Indra who are not known as the saviours of the world. All awakened souls used to make such claims. The remaining points, viz., the origin of caste and the conversion of Arjuna have been already dealt with. It has been shown there that these are interpolations by people who wanted to establish their hereditary right to priesthood and make it perpetual. Neither Almighty God nor any incarnation of His had anything to do with it. Religious sanction had to be improvised in order to maintain the perpetual superiority of the priestly class. The popular god Krishna was made to declare that he was the creator of the four castes and that it was a crime on the part of any one to think of exchanging his functional grouping with that of any other. *Para Dharmo bhayavah*—Be afraid of another's function. Thus among the evidences adduced in proof of Krishna's claims to be the Saviour of the world, there is none that is worthy of acceptance.

## SOME RELIGIOUS TERMS EXPLAINED

IT HAS already been shown that the main aim of the *Gita* is not to propound any new philosophy but to preach the doctrine of Krishna as the Manifest Deity. The author, however, touches upon some of the most important systems of philosophy already well known, in order to show forth their comparative merits in relation to the doctrine of Krishnaism. He takes *sankhyayoga* and *karmayoga* for his analysis and establishes the superiority of *karmayoga* over the other two. After establishing its superiority, he relates it to *nishkamakarma* by pointing out that *nishkamakarma* is best possible to the *karmayogi* who is united in perfect devotion to the Manifest Deity.

A brief explanation of these and other philosophic terms may be helpful.

(1) The word *yoga* means union or concentration of the mind. It is also used to signify one of the systems of Indian philosophy. The chief aim of *yoga* philosophy is to teach the means by which the human soul may be completely united with the supreme spirit and thus secure perfect bliss. Deep abstract meditation is laid down as the chief means of securing this end. There are elaborate rules for the proper practice of such *yoga* or concentration of mind. One who practises *yoga* is a *yogi*.<sup>1</sup>

*Sankhyayoga* is another form of ascetic philosophy. It takes its name from *sankhya*, number, because it enumerates 25 *tatvas* or true principles for the final emancipation of the soul, the 25th principle, from the bonds of this worldly existence. It is said to be atheistic in outlook because it regards the whole universe to be a development of an inanimate principle called *prakriti* (nature or primordial matter) while the *purusha* (the embodied soul) is altogether passive and simply a looker on. It does not admit God as the creator and controller of the universe.

*Jnanayoga* signifies union through knowledge, that is, sacred knowledge derived from meditation on how to understand one's own nature and how one may be reunited to the supreme soul.

<sup>1</sup> The practice of yoga as a self-hypnotising process for the absorption of the soul in the Supreme Spirit, until the soul loses its individual existence, is becoming less and less popular in these days. The most popular practice of yoga nowadays consists of muscular control of breath through intricate breathing exercises and various systems of bodily postures, with a view to developing the muscles and to bringing both mind and body under control.

*Karmayoga* means union (with the supreme spirit) through action. It is opposed to *Jnanayoga* because its emphasis is on performance of religious rites as opposed to speculation on the knowledge of Brahman.

The *Bhagavadgita* considers *karmayoga* as superior to all other systems of philosophy, because they all depend upon speculation on abstract ideas; while *karmayoga* emphasises performance of religious rites. The author of the *Gita* develops this idea further by teaching that all religious rites, duties, and actions should be dedicated to Krishna as the Manifest Deity. By dedicating everything to him, not only emancipation from sin, but also performance of selfless actions, for the advancement of righteousness, becomes possible. Chap. XVIII. verse 65 explicitly says: 'Be of my mind, become my devotee, worship Me, and bow to Me. You will undoubtedly reach Me. Verily, I say unto you, you are dear to Me'. This, by the way, is one of the most gracious verses of the *Bhagavadgita*. It is only a Christian who has a real, living, historical Person as his Saviour before his mind's eye, that can fully understand the charm of verses like these. For persons who dodge the issue of historicity and try to 'rid the mind of all ideas, images, and operations of every kind', such words can have no meaning or charm. *Karmayoga* is union with the Manifest Deity by a life dedicated to Him for carrying out His will in the world. *Karmayoga* means union through action, or union with the Manifest Deity for the purpose of acting on His behalf. This is opposed to *Jnanayoga* which emphasises speculation and contemplation on abstract ideas for the realisation of the Brahman, the attributeless God. In the *Bhagavadgita*, Krishna teaches that *karmayoga* is superior to all other systems of philosophy and a *karmayogi* is the devotee dearest to Krishna. He insists again and again that the best form of service acceptable to him is rendered by that man who takes refuge in him, becomes one with him and consecrates life entirely to him.

This doctrine is in many respects similar to the teaching of Christ in St. John's gospel. Christ invites His devotees to abide in Him as branches abide in the vine, in order to bear fruit for Him. 'Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me'. (John XV. 4.) *Karmayoga* is the doctrine of abiding in the manifest deity for doing good and selfless actions called *nishkamakarma* in the *Gita*.

Like the idea of looking to God for forgiveness as to a father, this idea of becoming of one mind with Krishna, is also quite new and foreign to Hinduism. Terms of endearment like: 'Be of my mind, be my devotee, dedicate yourself to me, worship me, I shall save you from your sins'. . . . 'Take refuge in me and act' are quite foreign to

pantheistic ideas of Hinduism. The author of the *Gita* who presents to the reader such a Manifest Deity with such personal affection for the disciple whom he invites to abide in him for carrying on *nishkamakarma* in his name, looks like one who was conversant with the teachings of Christ contained in St. John's gospel. Among all the *avatars* familiar to Hinduism, no other name including the names of Rama and Buddha, is held up as high as that of the Krishna of the *Gita*. No other name among the *avatars* is considered worthy to invite the devotee to be personally attached to the *Guru* for the *yoga* of action or *nishkamakarma*. No other *avatar* forgives sins, nor offers himself as an Indwelling Spirit. All these unique claims and privileges go exclusively to Krishna, the eighth *avatar* of mythology. The author of the *Gita* shows his most consummate skill in crowning his portrait of a Manifest Deity with the most central idea of the doctrine of personal fellowship with Him for bearing fruit for Him. This is the idea underlying *karmayoga* and *nishkamakarma* of the *Gita*. How different this is from all the other *yogas* taught throughout the *Gita*? This, together with other passages where Krishna invites Arjuna to accept forgiveness of sins from him, looks like an altogether new doctrine which gives additional support to our view that the *Gita* was written by someone who was acquainted with the teaching of the Apostles of Christ in India about a personal Saviour and forgiveness of sins through Him.

Other *yogas* aim at being 'united in identity with the all-pervading infinite consciousness'. This kind of union results in eternal bliss of oneness with Brahma. VI. 28, 29. The steps prescribed are: seclusion; sitting in a clean spot on a seat made of *kusa* grass, a deer skin and cloth; the eyes concentrated on the tip of the nose; shutting out the thoughts of external sense-enjoyments; equalising the *prana* and *apana* breaths (outward and inward breaths) flowing within the nostrils. 'He who has brought his senses, mind and reason under control, such a contemplative soul intent on liberation and free from desire, fear and anger is ever liberated'. VI. 11; V. 27, 28. 'Other yogis offer the *prana* into the *apana*; even so others, the *apana* into the *prana*. There are still others given to the practice of *pranayama* (breath control) who having regulated their diet and controlled the course of both the *prana* and *apana* breaths, pour their life breaths into life-breaths. All these have their sins destroyed by sacrifice, being knowers of sacrifice'.

Such yogic exercises can certainly develop will-power. The body can be made the slave of the will. You may be able to bring your *prana* and *apana* completely under control by your will-power. You may be able to remain buried under the earth for hours together, so much so that ignorant people will be tempted to look upon you as god and

worship you. But the fact remains that this will-power of yours does not bring your heart closer to God at all any more than proficiency in boxing or wrestling does.

True *yoga*, (union between souls) is not a material oneness like the union of water with water or ether with ether. It is a personal relationship as between father and son, husband and wife, friend and friend. These earthly relationships are ordained by God as types to help the human soul to know how to think of God and approach Him. God is to be approached not as 'Something' but as 'Someone'. The *Gita* contains a very good example to illustrate the truth of this statement.

In the eleventh chapter Krishna manifests his divine form to Arjuna. Arjuna confesses that he never thought of Krishna, his charioteer, as anything more than a friend and companion. He asks his forgiveness for all his lapses in the past. 'I crave forgiveness for all that from you, who are infinite, O infallible Lord. . . . Therefore Lord, laying my body at your feet and bowing low, I seek to propitiate you, the ruler of all and worthy of all praise. It behoves you to condone my fault even as a father condones the fault of his son, a friend that of his friend, and a loving husband, that of his beloved consort'. XI. 44. This sounds like the prayer of the prodigal son to his father. It is a wonder how the author could think of God as Father, Husband and Friend. Such a beautiful prayer addressed to a personal God occurs nowhere else in the *Gita* which looks upon God only as the highest Self, the supreme Self and so on. These latter expressions mean that God is nothing more than our own self magnified, an impersonal 'something', like, say, ether, or air, and not 'somebody like father, husband and friend'. It is only in this place that Arjuna thinks of God as Father. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are ideas foreign to the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*.

In the whole realm of religion there can be no nobler sentiment, no truer philosophy than what is contained in these words: Father, Husband, Friend. When conviction of sin overburdens the heart, when sorrow and distress overwhelm the soul, when need of forgiveness is sincerely felt, the human soul cannot but think of God as a Person. To think of Him as 'It' will not help. At such times of deeply felt personal need for help from the Unseen, it is not any repetition of *Om tat sat*, (that thou art) or *Aham Brahmosmi* (I am Brahman) that the soul thinks of, but a personal approach as to a father or friend or husband. This is true practical religion, true *Bhakti*. A Manifest Deity, whom personal experience and historical evidence have proved to be worthy to be the Saviour of the world, with authority to forgive

sins and bring the proud to judgement; and having grace enough to enable the obedient soul to live in fellowship—true *yoga*—with God, as a loving son, faithful friend, and devoted wife, is our supreme need. Such a person alone can lead us to the Unseen Father. Philosophies of our own invention cannot do this.

When an erring soul returns to God with sincere repentance as is illustrated in the case of Arjuna here, will it be ever satisfied with philosophic abstractions? Will it not sound like abracadabra to his ears if he is bombarded with words like: 'The Infinite'; 'The eternal consciousness'; '*Om tat sat*'; '*Tat tvam asi*'; 'The Supreme imposing into the abysmal void'; 'The Real is the Supra-cosmic, eternal, spaceless, timeless Brahman'; and so on? To the thirsty soul, all this verbosity is absolutely meaningless. It is like pointing out the Sahara desert to a man dying of thirst, instead of offering him a glass of cold water. Whereas in the prayer of Arjuna the *Gita* recognises that the joy of peace and forgiveness of sins of which we have been speaking cannot be obtained through the *yoga* of knowledge or the *yoga* of karma—good actions—but only through the *yoga* of *bhakti*—repentance, faith and surrender to a personal God. Dry abstractions are like clouds without rain; broken cisterns which can hold no water.

### Animism and Polytheism

The author of the *Gita* believes that there are two sets of gods: One set presiding over fire, light, day-time, the bright fortnight and the six months of the *uttarayana* (the northward course of the sun). The other set of gods preside over smoke, night, the dark fortnight and the six months of the *dakshinayana* (the southward course of the sun). Those led by the first set of gods finally reach Brahma; and those led by the dark set of gods attain the lustre of the moon and return to this mortal world VII. 23-25. 'Cherished and nourished by sacrifice, the gods will bestow on you unasked all the desired enjoyments' III. 11, 12. The worshippers of gods attain the gods; whereas my devotees in the end attain Me alone. VII. 23. 'Therefore knowing the secret of these two paths, O Arjuna, at all times be established in *yoga*' (in me) VIII. 27. The author of the *Gita* wants to lift his Krishna above all gods. But he does not seem to be willing to call a spade a spade by denouncing inferior gods and saying that faith in the Manifest Deity is the only way to salvation, though he implies it in all his teachings. If he had a historical person in view when he advocated the superiority of worshipping the Unknown through a Manifest Deity, he would certainly have had the courage to exhort India to give up all inferior forms of worship of idols and demons and ghosts and accept the Manifest

God as the only name given under heaven whereby we might be saved. He was lacking in that courage of conviction because the Manifest Deity he preached was one of his own imagination conceived out of puranic legends. Hence all that he could do was to act like a shop-keeper selling different kinds of articles which serve the same purpose. He has no practical faith in the superiority of one ware over another.

### Karma and Rebirth

Next to Pantheism, the biggest error with which many people have deluded themselves is the doctrine of *karma* and rebirth. It is not known by whom or when and on what authority this was first taught. Somehow or other it has become the religion of a large number of people. Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Theosophists, all believe in it. It is a dark cloud with which men have covered themselves. The *Gita* points out no sure way of escape from this pernicious teaching—a way of escape from this inevitable non-stop wheel of *karma* or fate. The *Gita* in one place says that the soul of man is neither born nor dies. For 'it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval. It is imperishable and free from birth and decay'. II. 20, 21. If this theory is accepted it would mean that the soul has no responsibility whatever and it is not contaminated by actions. There can be no sin or hell, as the sixteenth chapter teaches. If the soul incurs no sin, who is it that undergoes rebirth? Is it only the body? In verse 39 Krishna says that it will be possible for Arjuna to shake off the shackles of *Karma* through *karma-yoga*. In chapter IV. 5 Krishna says: 'Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births'. This is quite contrary to II. 20, 21, quoted above. 'By knowing the truth you shall be free from the bondage of karma' IV. 32. 'The karmayogi who fixes his mind on God, reaches Brahma in no time. There is no return from there, where there is eternal bliss'. V. 6, 17, 20, 21. Krishna's *yogamaya* brings him into birth again and again. But if Arjuna keeps his mind fixed on Krishna, he reaches Brahma in no time. There is no return from there for Arjuna; while Krishna the 'father of Brahma' is born again and again. This makes confusion worse confounded.

Those who travel by the dark path return to the mortal world and become subject to birth and death once more. VIII. 26. Thus the *samsara chakra*, the wheel of existence, goes on revolving endlessly. Those of *tamasic* nature descend into the wombs of insects, birds and beasts or into the infernal regions. XIV. 18. Cast into demoniacal wombs birth after birth, these fools attaining not to Me, sink into still lower depths XVI. 20. Behind this dark cloud there is a silver lining.

Krishna offers freedom from the bonds of karma. IX. 28. Seek that supreme state from which there is no return. Take refuge in Me. . . I shall release you. IX. 34. Giving up all actions take refuge in Me. XVIII. 62. Thus personal devotion to a manifest deity is the only way to get release from the wheel of *karma* and rebirth.

The Bible teaches that man's disobedience and proud refusal to humble himself before God has brought all his woe and misery on him. 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ'. Rom. 6:23.

'But now, once and for all, at the close of the age, He has appeared, in order to abolish sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And, as it is ordained for men to die but once, and after that to be judged, so Christ after being once sacrificed to bear the sins of many, will appear again to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him'. Heb. 9:26-28.

An endless vicious circle of births and deaths is the most hopeless doctrine imaginable.

### Self-realisation

This is an expression frequently appearing in the *Gita*. The original idea underlying this expression is that the soul or *jeevatma* should realise that it is one in substance and nature with the supreme soul, *paramatma*. The air in a bottle remains separate from the air outside as long as it is closed by a cork. Remove the stopper and the tiny entity of air in the bottle becomes one with the whole atmosphere, just as a drop of water unites and becomes one with the ocean. The soul becomes one with the *paramatma* (supreme spirit) by removing all obstacles caused by its being shut up in this material body. This is achieved by a hypnotic process of yogic self-realisation, which is supposed to remove all obstacles and merge your soul into the Supreme Atman. Discard the world; seek loneliness; repeat to yourself: 'I am Brahman'. You will realise that the Brahman and you are one. This is self-realisation.

The utter darkness into which man has fallen can be seen in this theory of self-realisation. If it is true that man has fallen by reason of his pride, the height of his pride consists in his attempt—futile attempt—to become God by self-hypnotism, by repeating to himself—'I am Brahman, I am Brahman, and telling others '*Tat tvam asi*' (That thou art). Before this vedantic doctrine was introduced into India, our ancestors knew what constituted true self-realisation, when they cried: '*pāpōham, pāpa karmōham, pāpātma, pāpa sambhava, trahi mam kripaya deva*': I am sin, I am of sinful actions, I am of a sinful soul, I am born in sin, save me by grace, O God. Discarding such true self-

realisation, Vedantists delude ignorant people by telling them they are gods. This is not self-realisation but self-glorification, and self-delusion. It is *ahamkāra*—rank egoism—the very opposite of humility. Pride is the first and foremost evil spirit imbibed by man in his fall. Satan told Eve: Disobey God; you will be independent; your eyes will be opened; you will be like God.

Every man, as a matter of fact, knows that his eyes are not opened; on the contrary he admits that he has fallen into *ajñānāndhakāra* the darkness of ignorance. Every man likewise knows that instead of becoming like God, he has actually become like the devil; he has fallen into the strong grip of *shadvairis*, the six enemies of the soul: lust, anger, greed, infatuation, passion, rivalry. And yet instead of trying to realise these fundamental truths about the soul, we are still deceiving ourselves and others by the ambition to be equal with God.

True self-realisation consists in realising and acknowledging that we are sinners, that our heart is desperately wicked, that we have departed from the living God, that we are blindly groping in the darkness, that our proud hearts are trying to build our own high towers with a view to reach heaven by our own goodness, and by our self-hypnotism, in order to bring God down from there to us. When true self-realisation comes, the soul is sure to cry out: 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin?' Satan, the prince of this world, has blinded the eyes of the children of disobedience, that they may not see the hastening doom of this world of sin. He has lulled us into sleep and made us like people sleeping comfortably in the green valleys of a dormant volcano that is ready to erupt at any moment. If we realise the bankruptcy of our hearts, we shall cry to God for mercy and forgiveness and he will clothe us with righteousness. This is how the Bible describes self-realisation—as though Christ was speaking to the soul: 'Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see'. Rev. 3:17-19. This is the way to true self-realisation from a correct spiritual point of view.

Jesus Christ narrated the following parable to his hearers with a view to give them an idea of man's fall, sin, self-realisation, and the society of the forgiven, which is the kingdom of God. In a sense, Jesus Christ became Manifest Deity to announce to the world the only way available to man to return to God. That only way is the way of self-realisation, explained in this parable.

### The Parable of the Lost Son

'And he said: A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto him his living.

#### *Fall, departure and misery*

'And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in the land and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him to his fields to feed his swine.

#### *Self-realisation*

'And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger.

'I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants.

#### *God-realisation*

'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.

'And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

#### *The rejoicing*

'But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry.

'Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' Luke 15:10-24.

A brief explanation of this parable is given below:

Sin consists in man's attempt to reign without God. It ends in utter failure and frustration. It tramples down the soul and enthrones flesh in its place. All traces of *sattva guna* are effaced and *rajasic* and

*tamasic gunas* preponderate. Misery, want, sorrow, fear, blindness, wickedness, and discontent are among the fruits of sin. By enthroning flesh, sinful man thinks only about flesh and its pleasures. He lives to serve his flesh. Every unregenerate man lives for the sake of feeding the 'pig', which is nothing but a symbol of his own flesh, whatever his position in life is. The bran or husk which fattens the flesh will not feed the soul. Dying of soul-hunger is the inevitable consequence. Neither self-hypnotism nor good actions nor religious observances can save the soul from this death, as long as a person goes on idolising his or her own flesh.

Of course Satan has ingrained in the minds of such people the utterly false doctrine that death will enable the soul to transmigrate into some other body. Christ has unequivocally declared that judgement awaits everyone after death. For trampling underfoot the divine spirit with which we are endowed and through which we are expected to hold communion with God, judgement must inevitably follow. But Christ appeared not to preach judgement. He came to call sinners to repentance. True repentance alone can bring change of heart. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God'. Repentance is true self-realisation. When the prodigal son came to himself he said, 'I will arise; I will go to my father; I will say, Father, I have sinned; I am not worthy'. This is self-realisation. What a glorious day it would be for the world if the leaders of thought everywhere were blessed with such self-realisation!

When self-realisation comes, God-realisation follows. God will run with open arms to the repentant sinner to embrace him and kiss him. By way of telling him: 'Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more'; by way of covering all his shameful past, the best robe of divine righteousness is given to him. He is wedded into the household of God. He is re-adopted as a son by the symbol of a ring, which seals him with the sanctifying Spirit of God again, and with all the divine promises of heirship. The father orders new shoes for his feet. No more running about in the service of the pig. In his new shoes he is to walk about in the service of his newly contacted Father. This is true God-realisation. This is true *karmayoga*. The Kingdom of God is not for the proud intellectual who prides himself in his erudition. It is for the humble, the poor in spirit. Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor. But the intellectuals like the elder brother of the prodigal son, not only stand aloof refusing to enter in and share the joy of the repentant family of God, but also try to throw obstacles in their way. But to prevent the light of Christ from entering into the hearts of the poor and down-trodden, is a crime of the highest

magnitude. Can any one stand surety for the soul of another before God?

### Nishkamakarma

*Nishkamakarma* means action without desire for fruits. The expression 'without desire for fruit' means, according to the *Gita*, that actions should be performed without any motive or desire or attachment whatever. 'Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, get ready for the fight, then; fighting thus you will not incur sin'. (II. 38.) Is not such an attitude practically impossible? How can good desire and singleness of purpose be condemned as attachment? Did not Mahatma Gandhi desire independence as the fruit of his actions? How could he have led the non-co-operation movement without any kind of desire in his mind? If desire is interpreted to mean selfish motives, it can be understood. But if one desires good things, is it a selfish motive? Is it possible to treat victory and defeat alike, as in the above verse and numerous other verses of a similar nature? But look into the same chapter verses 22-37. Arjuna is advised by Krishna 'to fight for heaven, fame, reputation, and enjoyment of sovereignty on earth'. Though this is a clear contradiction, it shows that legitimate desires are not banned. So *nishkamakarma* ought to mean only actions without base and selfish motives; though it is doubtful whether desire for fame and enjoyment of earthly sovereignty can be classed among high and noble motives as Krishna told Arjuna.

*Karmayoga* is another allied expression. It ought to mean action in fellowship with God. The true philanthropists who have gone out into every part of the world seeking to relieve human suffering everywhere have illustrated by their self-less lives what *karmayoga* and *nishkamakarma* really mean. Guided by heavenly light they took up *nishkamakarma* of various kinds. Abolition of slavery, establishing social freedom, caring for the wounded in battle, starting asylums for lepers, homes for the deaf, dumb and blind, hospitals, schools, orphanages, widows' homes. Many lived and worked among savages and cannibals.

Is there any other person in human history, except Jesus Christ, under whose banner, such vast multitudes of men and women are so joyfully going out into all the four corners of the earth with absolutely self-less motives to heal the wounds of fallen humanity; to preach the gospel to the poor; to restore the broken-hearted; to bid the prisoners go free, and the blind have sight; to set the oppressed at liberty; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord? Is there any other name under heaven which inspires men and women to a life of total dedication for service in the spirit of the Good Samaritan?

It must be sadly admitted that a great many nominal Christians do not live up to the high ideal of self-less service enjoined by Christ whom they profess to follow; and indeed there are amongst so called Christian people practices which are opposed to all religious principles. But we must not forget the fact that in the midst of all this gross materialism, there are still millions of servants of Christ in the world who continue to give all they have without asking anything in return. 'They rely on the Holy Spirit, on unaffected love, on the truth of their message, and on the power of God. They are armed with innocence, now honoured, now slighted, now traduced, now flattered; called deceivers, but telling the truth; unknown, but fully acknowledged; dying men, yet living; punished, but not doomed; sad men rejoicing continuously; beggars that bring riches to many; disinherited but possessing everything'. (2 Cor. 6:4-10).

This army of true *karmayogis* led by the living, risen Christ will continue until Christ returns. Because, His command to His servants is 'Occupy till I come'. Luke 19:13. (Be engaged in *karmayoga*—consecrated good actions—till I come).

With all our spirituality and past glory, we have done nothing in the past for uplifting the unhappy millions around us. Have we, the intellectuals, ever thought it our duty to tell the outcastes of our land, that God is love, that He is our Father and we are all brethren? Do we realise that we have condemned them to their fate without caring to do anything for them? How many of our upper classes can claim to have done anything to uplift the ragged population around us, to a life of cleanliness, godliness and brotherhood? The best corrective for our claim to spirituality is to take a full look at the dirt, squalor, raggedness, starvation, ignorance and degradation that we find every where in our midst.

No social work is effective unless it is done in the spirit of Him who 'came to seek and to save that which was lost'. Temporary economic and social adjustments carried out for political and materialistic ends out of fear for rival ideologies, will have no permanent value. Complete dedication to Jesus as the True Manifest Deity alone will do the wonderful work of transforming us into true *karmayogis*.

### Manifest Deity

The *Bhagavadgita* teaches the doctrine of a Manifest Deity on the principle that the supreme spirit is attributeless and cannot be known. He is *nirguna* Brahma and can be known only through a manifestation possessing certain attributes and presenting himself to man as a *saguna* Brahma, God with attributes. The *Gita* presents Krishna as this

Manifest Deity. But it is a historical fact that the Krishna of the *puranas* never made this claim for himself during his lifetime. It is also evident that Bhagavan Krishna of the *Gita* is a purely imaginary person. The author felt the need of a Manifest Deity to save mankind. Krishna had been already raised by some classes of people to the status of a popular *avatar*. To withstand Buddhism or Jainism, or in all probability to check the rise of Christianity in India, he decked this *avatar* with all possible divine glories as far as his own imagination could do it. He moulded his own huge image of a divine personality. But as water cannot rise above its own level, he could not portray a figure above his own pre-conceived notions. He conceived a Bhagavan who created the four castes, who believed in *karma* and idol worship, worship of spirits, ghosts and heroes, who believed in all the Vedic gods, in the six systems of advaita philosophy, in dualism, in an attributeless god, in a Bhagavan who believed that it is better to die in one's own *dharma* rather than even think of another's *dharma*. This imaginary Bhagavan was the creator of heaven and earth, and also the progenitor of Brahma, the chief person of the Hindu trinity. The author of the *Gita* believed in Pantheism, in *Maya*, in heaven and hell, in the theory of *purusha* and *prakriti*, and divine and satanic attributes. He believed that there were numerous ways of reaching the Unseen God, but the best way was to worship his Bhagavan and take refuge in him. The superhuman qualities that he attributed to his Manifest Deity were external superhuman forms like a 'stature reaching from earth to heaven, several hands, several faces, terrible teeth and eyes, open mouth licking up all living things' and so on. At the same time it must be conceded that his Bhagavan expected some very fine qualities of heart from his devotees. 'Freedom from malice, and egoism, forgiving by nature, craving for nothing, internally and externally pure, clever and impartial, alike to friend and foe, to honour and to ignominy, to heat and cold, pleasure, and pain, praise and reproach'—these were some of the noble qualities the Bhagavan demanded of his devotees.

But the question is whether an imaginary deity, however nobly conceived, can be of any real help to the true seeker after God? The soul cannot get true satisfaction unless its saviour is a historical Person who can say, 'Come and see', 'taste and see', 'put your fingers into my nailprints and believe'. That is the only assurance that can satisfy a seeking soul. He must be one who can assure the sinful soul that to as many as receive him, to them he gives the power to become the sons of God. His life, death and resurrection must give us the guarantee that he was manifest to take away our sins, and to reclothe us with our lost divine image; that he can lead us from death to immortality, from

darkness to light, and from unreality to reality; and that his living presence is available to us sinners here and now. Only the humble can recognise and accept the Christ who is the true Manifest Deity. They shall know the truth and the truth shall make them free.

The value of any teaching should be judged in the light of eternal values of far greater importance. When you live on the summit of a volcano, the walls around your house will give you sufficient protection as long as the volcano remains dormant. But when it erupts, these tiny walls will be found to be of no use. Science and reason, as well as religion and philosophy, are all unanimously of opinion that perilous times over which we have no control, are ahead of us. All politicians and militarists predict that wholesale destruction of life is going to be our lot. In the face of such fearful forebodings, what comfort and consolation does our religion give us? Our religion is in vain if it does not give us enough hope and courage to say: 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me'. 'Though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, we will not fear'. If there is a day of reckoning, who will save us from the wrath to come? Will the theory of a never-stopping wheel of *karma*, or the blind complacency that all is *maya*, or the self-deceptive belief that 'I am Brahman' provide sufficient refuge for us? Can these petty theories and unreliable reasonings shield us from divine justice? In view of the feverish preparation for wholesale destruction of life, on the one hand, and the incessant running about of the Big Ones talking 'peace', on the other, how literally true is the warning given by St. Paul two thousand years ago: 'When they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them;' 1 Thes. 5:3. St. Paul did not give this warning to terrify his hearers, but to remind them of the danger of either sleeping complacently, without thinking of these serious facts, or proudly refusing to give heed, like a drunken man. He strongly advises them to cling more closely to Christ as the only place of refuge in trouble, the only source of faith, hope and love.

How long shall we refuse to have anything to do with Jesus Christ, though He is knocking at our doors? He wants India to place all its qualities of head and heart at His feet to be used by Him for opening the eyes of the West which is steeped in materialism. What a glorious day it would be for India when it surrenders to Christ to be inspired by the Spirit of God to lead the world to the feet of Christ.

DR. RADHAKRISHNAN'S GITA AND THE BIBLE

IN HIS commentary on the *Bhagavadgita*, published in England, Dr. Radhakrishnan quotes a number of verses from the Bible in support of some of his views, and gives his own interpretations to them. It is interesting to read the way in which these verses, dealing with the most vital truths of Christianity, are interpreted. He interprets them in such a novel way that they are shorn of all their original meaning and importance and made to appear quite commonplace. Apparently the aim of handling Bible verses like this, is to establish that Jesus Christ is a mere man like any of us, who, by struggling upwards, reached a stage of perfection. His birth, his mission, his crucifixion and resurrection are all explained away as ordinary events with no special significance whatever.

Such views proceeding from an eminent scholar like Dr. Radhakrishnan who is looked upon as the greatest living exponent of Indian thought, are likely to produce a wrong impression about Christianity in the minds of his admirers both in India and abroad. Moreover, there might be many others in India who share the same views. Hence it is necessary to place before the readers, the ordinary orthodox Christian interpretation of such verses, and to point out, wherever possible, the errors in Dr. Radhakrishnan's interpretations. A few such quotations from the Bible are given below, with their correct meanings, for the sake of those who might care to know:

I. 'Krishna the head of the Yadava clan sought to bring about a reconciliation between the cousins. When all attempts failed, a fratricidal war became inevitable. Krishna proposed that he and his vassals would join the two sides, and left the choice to the two parties. The vassals were selected by Duryodhana; and Krishna himself joined the Pandavas as Arjuna's charioteer! Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the Lord our God'. P. 80.

In the first place, the story itself is quite incredible. A powerful ally with any sense of decency will never think of taking sides with both the rival parties as Krishna is alleged to have done. Of course, credulity can give a philosophic coating to every incredible thing. But it will not help to remove the incredibility and impossibility of the story.

The quotation from the Bible is meant to represent Krishna as 'the Lord our God' and his vassals as 'chariots and horses'. No

justification is given for such arbitrary division between a king and his vassals. It is an absurd comparison.

Both Krishna and his vassals must have alike helped in the war, not with any divine miracles, but with chariots and horses as ordinary men do, without any distinction. What justification is there to call one helper God, and the others horses and chariots? Was not Krishna himself a charioteer?

If Krishna as God wanted to punish the disobedient Kauravas, how could he reasonably ask his vassals to go and help his enemy? It does not stand to reason. When two neighbours fight between themselves, will the stronger of the two ever ask his own servant to go and help his opponent? The story with such an irrelevant quotation in support of it, is a hopelessly feeble argument in support of Krishna's divinity. Besides, it is impossible to see any justification whatever for bringing in this Biblical quotation in this context.

II. A number of quotations about Jesus Christ are collected together in a bunch in one place on p. 31 by way of explaining Gita IV. 10: 'Delivered from passion, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, many, purified by the austerity of wisdom, have attained to My state of being'. He says:

- (a) Jesus spent his life in solitary prayer, meditation and service, was tempted like any of us, had spiritual experiences like the great mystics, and in a moment of spiritual anguish, when he lost the sense of the presence of God, cried out, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mk. 15:34.
- (b) Throughout he felt his dependence on God. 'The Father is greater than I'. John 14:28.
- (c) 'Why callest thou me good? None is good, Save One, even God'. Luke 18:19.
- (d) 'But of that day and that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven; neither the son, but the father'. Mk. 13:32.
- (e) 'Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit'. Luke 23:46.  
 'Though conscious of his imperfections, Jesus recognised the grace and love of God, and willingly submitted himself entirely to Him. Thus delivered from all imperfections and taking refuge in Him, he attained to a divine status.'
- (f) 'I and my father are one'. John 10:30.

The above quotations from the Bible are selected by Dr. Radhakrishnan in support of Krishna's claim in Gita IV. 10 quoted above.

Those who are not conversant with the Bible will take the above quotations from the Bible as innocent facts arranged in their chronological sequence. But the arrangement is wrong, misleading and entirely unjustifiable from every point of view. If Christ's agony on the cross and His committing His spirit into the hands of God are taken as signs of weakness and imperfection, it follows that He died as an imperfect man. Dr. Radhakrishnan does not want to say that. So he concedes that in the end Christ attained perfection. But when was it? From the order in which the verses are quoted, it is clear that a wrong impression is likely to be created in the minds of the readers, that Christ's last utterance was 'I and my father are one' and that it was then that He attained perfection. But the fact is, that this verse, claiming equality with God, occurs in the Bible long before the verses referring to his agony and death on the cross. His last utterance was: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit'. If these words indicate weakness and imperfection on the part of Jesus, as Dr. Radhakrishnan asserts, when and how did He attain perfection after His last dying words? When was He 'delivered from passion, fear and anger?'

Is it not very strange that among the 'many thus purified, delivered and raised to divinity', in the entire realm of 'mystics' of all ages, there was only one solitary name to be selected as an example—that of Jesus Christ alone? The name of Christ is dragged in and crushed beyond recognition, as children crush flowers in their hands and deprive them of their colour, shape and beauty.

'Delivered from passion, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, many, purified by the austerity of wisdom, have attained to my state of being'.

'Though conscious of his imperfections, Jesus recognised the grace and love of God, and willingly submitted himself to Him. Thus delivered from all imperfections and taking refuge in Him he attained to a divine status'.

These quotations assume that (1) Jesus was, like any of us, imperfect, full of passion, fear and anger. (2) He was conscious of these imperfections. (3) He struggled like any of us for deliverance. (4) At last God in the form of Krishna delivered him. Here a serious question arises: When did Krishna deliver Jesus Christ from His imperfections?

Dr. Radhakrishnan has said in his introduction to the Gita, that the Gita was written 500 years before Christ. How could the words of Krishna supposed to be spoken to Arjuna, 500 years before Christ, refer to Christ at all? How could Krishna, either as man or as God

purify a person 500 years before his birth? If eminent thinkers indulge in such loose thinking and unsound arguments, how can we expect the masses to follow sound reasoning?

As to the alleged imperfections of Jesus, which the Bible is said to support, it can only be said in reply, that such impressions will vanish with a better understanding of Christ and the Bible. Moreover, if you select one set of verses from the Bible in proof of your pet theory, you must offer adequate explanations for other sets of verses which go against your theory. Almost side by side with the few verses quoted above, there are hundreds of verses which disprove all the conclusions based on the former. Take for example a few verses selected at random:

In His twelfth year, Christ asked his mother, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' Later on He challenged His enemies by asking them: 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' Do these words support the view that He was 'conscious of sin and imperfection?' Will any honest man if he is conscious of his imperfection think of inviting his hearers to 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden; and I will give you rest?' When the last two thousand years of Christian experience unquestionably justifies the belief that Jesus can and does give rest to troubled souls, how can any one say that He was imperfect like any of us? He says: 'I am from above; ye are from below; unless ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins. I am the light of the world. He that believeth in Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life. I am the good Shepherd. The good shepherd layeth down his life, for the sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me'. Are words like these, words of an imperfect man? Is it an imperfect man, in need of being delivered from passion, fear and anger, that prays from the cross for his malefactors: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?' Can an imperfect man ever pray like this?

When speaking of imperfection, in a person or thing, we ought to make a distinction between natural or acquired defect, and imperfection inherent in growth and development. A seed or seedling is imperfect compared with a full-grown tree. But it is not a defect. It is perfect in itself as a seed or seedling. An infant is imperfect as compared with an adult. But its imperfection is not a defect. As an infant it is perfect in itself. A child's steady growth is not an indication of defect or weakness or imperfection. It is natural development. A sick man struggles against disease which has already conquered him; while a healthy man struggles by exercises to develop his body further and to see that disease from outside does not overcome him. The prayers and so-called 'struggles' of Jesus were directed not

against any sin in himself but against the gross darkness of sin around Him and all the wiles of the Evil One and his agents, calculated to submerge Him and thwart His plans.

When Christ came to the earth, He emptied Himself of His divine glory. As an infant he had to grow in stature. He had to learn many things. He had to resist the wiles of the Evil One and his agents. He had to learn to obey, and also to suffer. Though from the dawn of His consciousness He was aware of His oneness with the Father, as a Man he had to follow His guidance and thus learn obedience.

It is without regard to these facts that the Bible is quoted to prove Krishna's supposed claims, in which Dr. Radhakrishnan sees Jesus Christ being delivered from passion, fear and anger, by Krishna.

Of the six verses from the Bible quoted by Dr. Radhakrishnan, the first four are evidently taken to prove that Jesus was 'conscious of his imperfections'. The fifth is quoted to show that Jesus 'recognised the grace and love of God and willingly submitted himself entirely to Him'. The last quotation, 'I and my Father are One' is intended to prove that 'thus delivered from all imperfections and taking refuge in Him, he attained to a divine status'.

Now let us have a look into the quoted verses and see how far these verses are indications of the 'imperfection' of Jesus Christ. Of course Christ does not stand in need of any vindication of his claims at the hands of any man. His claims have long ago been vindicated by Himself, by His Cross and Resurrection, and by the marvellous achievements effected by His people in history in His name and on His behalf ever afterwards. But still a few words are necessary in order to remove the possibility of the words of Christ being misunderstood by readers of Dr. Radhakrishnan's book. Let us look into these quotations one by one.

(a) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

No man can penetrate into the spiritual and emotional experience through which the Prince of Glory passed, during those dark hours on the cross. A simple illustration will help unbiassed persons from jumping to the conclusion that the cry of Christ on the cross meant imperfection on His part. Pain must have reaction on any living organism. Otherwise pain is no pain. Even a plant must react to pain. Take the case of a man who voluntarily and whole-heartedly surrenders himself to a surgeon for an operation on some part of his body. However willingly and gladly his conscious self submits to it, however unshakable his faith and confidence in the surgeon be, it is impossible for flesh and blood to desist from uttering a cry of agony and from struggling to

release himself from the surgeon's hands at the moment when his cruel knife inflicts unbearable pain on his body. The physical side of the patient must produce a reaction proportionate to the pain inflicted. If the patient shows no sign of reaction to pain, it is a sure sign that he is dead or that the surgeon's knife gives him no pain at all.

It was not mere physical pain that afflicted Jesus, the Lamb of God, sacrificed on Calvary. His soul had to pass through unutterably deep spiritual pangs. It was when that pain reached bursting point that He uttered the memorable words. The thick darkness of man's sin and vicious cruelty clouded His vision of God, making it impossible for Him to see the loving hand of God through it. His agony was the natural reaction to the loss of His vital contact with God, when 'The Bulls of Bashan', 'The Assembly of the Wicked', compassed him about with all the weapons of hell.

As soon as the dark cloud cleared, He uttered His last words from the cross. With what unruffled faith and unwavering trustfulness and affection He entrusts His departing soul into the hands of His loving Father, and with what serene self-confidence, He closes the last scene of His divine drama on earth! In the face of such perfect expression of absolute faith in the love of God, it is sheer ignorance to talk of imperfection or weakness on the part of Christ.

Metaphysics and spiritual understanding do not always go hand in hand. Spiritual things are to be spiritually understood. It is presumptuous on the part of men not earnest about spiritual understanding, to assume that Jesus Christ can be held within the philosophic hollow of their hands. Christians look upon these words of Jesus as too mysterious to be understood fully by man, because no man is able to rise to the same plane of inner experience from which those words were uttered. From whatever standpoint we look at it, we cannot grasp its meaning fully from every point of view.

Jesus once admonished his critics by remarking—'For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children'. (Matt. 11: 18, 19.) This admonition applies in the present case also.

If Jesus had not audibly uttered these words of agony on the cross, His critics would have at once jumped to the conclusion that He went through all His sufferings on the cross like a magician. Being a divine person, they might say that the tortures gave Him no pain at all and hence He cannot be said to have suffered for us all or that 'the chastisement of our iniquity fell on Him'.

Because he uttered such words, that spot has become the holiest spot on earth and His words too deep and too high for words.

No man has been able to pierce the veil of those mysterious words of Christ. The whole scene presents an overwhelmingly moving picture. With perfect reverence, the gospel writers lead us into the Holy of Holies of Christ's last hours. In their simple unadorned words, all Christendom has found for the last two thousand years 'thoughts that lie too deep for tears'.

It is not Dr. Radhakrishnan alone to whom Christ's agony means imperfection. There are the intellectual and priestly classes of the Jewish nation who were of the same opinion. "The chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself he cannot save. If He be the king of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have him; for he said, I am the son of God'. Those who passed by 'reviled' Him. The two thieves also mocked Him.

Now let us have a look at the opposite side. The Roman Centurion who supervised and witnessed the whole process of crucifixion, carried out by his soldiers, after watching everything to the end, exclaimed: 'Truly, this was the Son of God'. One of the thieves who, along with his companion, began mocking Christ, changed his attitude entirely on seeing the solemn suffering of Jesus. He rebuked his companion saying, 'Dost not thou fear God? . . . We receive the due reward of our deed; but this man has done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus; 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom'. 'And Jesus said unto him: Verily, verily I say unto you, today shalt thou be with me in paradise!'

The words of his agony, the solemn silence, together with all the other awe-inspiring circumstances, brought grace to this condemned thief to realise that it was the Prince of life whom he was mocking all this time. Suddenly he changes his tone and cries: 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom'. Since then, throughout Christendom, penitent believers find no words deeper than these to give expression to their own repentance and faith. Like the thief they see not 'imperfection' but the Lord from heaven, mighty to save to the uttermost them that believe. Thousands of such believing souls throughout Christendom consider it the greatest privilege of their lives to be able to visit Calvary the holiest spot on the face of the earth, walk along '*Via dolorosa*', kneel at the very spot from which the Prince of Glory cried, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?', and

pour out from the depth of their hearts the penitent thief's prayer, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom'.

(b) The Father is greater than I. John 14:28.

Christ emptied himself willingly of his equality with God and took upon Himself our flesh to become the ideal Man for us men and for our salvation. In that capacity as the Son of Man, 'My father is greater than I'. If He were a bogus incarnation put up by man, He would have blurted out, 'I am the Ganges, the Alligator, the lion' and such other high-sounding words. Christ the meek and lowly of heart said: 'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls'.

(c) Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, even God, Luke 18:19.

Christianity is based on the fundamental doctrine that man is fallen from the grace and fellowship of God, and that therefore 'There is none righteous, no, not one'. Rom. 3:10. 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God'. In the light of this doctrine, only God is good. So no man is worthy to be called 'good master' because no man is good. You can address Christ as 'good master' only if you are willing to acknowledge that He is from above and that He is goodness absolute. Thus the words of Christ are not meant to be taken as an avowal of his imperfection, but as a challenge to man's faith in Him. 'If you accept me as God Incarnate, you may very well address me as "good master", and not otherwise'. Except ye believe that I am He—come from above—ye shall die in your sins. John. 8:24.

(d) But of that day and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not even the angels in heaven, neither the son, but the father. Mark 13:32.

Jesus humbled himself as a servant of Jehovah by relinquishing his omniscience and omnipotence. He was content to live as a faithful Son in the household of God. He received His inspiration for His words and actions step by step and moment by moment from His Father. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work'. John 5:17. In the days of His flesh He lived and worked under the principle: 'And thine ears shall hear a word from behind thee saying, this is the way; walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left'. Isaiah 30:21. He never meddled with unrevealed programmes of His Father out of curiosity. Is this imperfection or is it an example to believers in absolute trust and loving obedience? Are perfect love and absolute trust signs of imperfection?

(e) Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Luke 23: 46.

It is man's sonship of God that he lost by reason of his fall. Christ came to teach us what true sonship means. He offered to teach man how to approach God as Father. He taught that there was only one way to realise God as Father, and that was Christ's way; 'No man cometh unto the Father, but by me'. He kept up a close relationship with God as a dear Son serving His Father faithfully. At the end of His short career, He was fully aware that His time to go back to God was near. To make His disciples understand this close relationship, He gathered them together and prayed aloud in their midst to God saying, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was'. John 17: 4, 5. His mission was to call men to repentance and to teach them how to dedicate life in the service of the Father as He himself did. By His own example he taught them how to commit their souls into the hands of that loving Father at the close of life. Hence He himself prayed aloud on the cross His last words, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit'. Is there a greater blessedness for mortal man than to be able to end his days by commending his spirit into the hands of his loving heavenly Father? Was not Christ bringing down for us divine hope and divine grace for a peaceful and happy end?

What will unbelievers choose in place of this way? When He who gave them breath calls them back, into whose hands will they commend their spirit? Is it into the hands of their own philosophy, or any of the fabled *avatars*, or the bodies of men or beasts or insects for migration, or some planets under whose guidance they lived so far? Or will they vanish into nothingness?

Philosophising in negative terms about God and trying to find out *what* He is, and not *who* He is and what he has done for us sinners, will lead us into utter frustration, without anything at all to hold on to at the last moment.

If your soul has no hold on reality you will be jumping from idea to idea without any rest for the soul, like a rolling stone. At one flight of imagination you will say: 'The negative process of bringing all thoughts to a standstill has for its positive side, *concentration on the self*. Empty the mind and soul of every specific operation. Rid it of every image, of every particular representation of every distinct operation of the mind. You will achieve the beatific vision'. (Dr. Radhakrishnan's comments on Gita VI. 18). Contrast this with his comment on IX. 34. 'The way to rise out of our ego-centred consciousness to the divine plane is through the *focusing of all our energies, intellectual, emotional, and*

*volitional on God.* Then our whole being is transformed and lifted up' . . . (The God on whom we have to focus our energies is the 'Supracosmic, Eternal, Speechless, Timeless Brahman imposing himself into the eternal void'!). Contrast this again with what Dr. Radhakrishnan says in comment on XII. 1. '*Worship of the Personal Lord is better than meditation of the Absolute*'.

There can be no better illustration of the utter folly of substituting metaphysics for true religion. Such people jump from one notion to another, one phantom to another. How long will men take their stand on shifting sand like this? Of the three objects of concentration prescribed above, which shall we choose for 'focusing our energies, intellectual, emotional and volitional? Self, the Absolute, or Personal Lord?

(f) I and my father are one. John 10:30.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan this verse proves that Christ attained perfection after wading through various imperfect stages, which he reads into the previous verses we have dealt with.

Do the above words of Christ at all sound like heaving a sigh of relief after tediously climbing up a difficult hill? There is nothing in them to indicate any attainment. They only express a positive fact of being and not attaining. It is difficult to understand how they could be interpreted as attaining. Dr. Radhakrishnan must have changed 'are' into 'have become' in his own mind and built up an utterly wrong theory on it. The verse says, not, 'I and my father have become one', but, 'I and my father are one'.

I and my father 'are one' in will, substance, purpose, and plan regarding the past, present and future of existence. There is absolute oneness between the Father and the Son in the scheme of redemption of fallen humanity. The Son strictly follows the directions of the Father, and the Father vindicates the Son at every point. The final vindication of the Son by the Father was by raising Him from the dead. God thereby set his seal to the claim of Christ, 'I and my Father are one. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'. John 14:9. Herein lies the oneness.

III. 'The presence of pain and imperfection is traced not to man's rebellious will, but to a disharmony between the creative purpose of God and the actual world. . . . The idea of one unique revelation is hardly consistent with our present views of the Universe. If suffering is traced to the fall of man, we cannot account for the imperfections of innocent nature, for the corruption that infests all life, for the economy of disease etc.' P. 34.

Dr. Radhakrishnan thinks that the word disharmony explains the 'presence of pain, imperfection, corruption and disease' around us.

He thinks that the words 'fall and rebellion' fail to explain the presence of evil. But he does not say how his word 'disharmony' explains it better. Does he object to these words, simply because they occur in the language of Christian Theology?

Let us assume that the word 'disharmony' explains everything. It certainly goes a long way to help us to understand the alienation, the estrangement between man and God; and man and man, and the consequent evils. But it cannot go the whole way unless you take that word as synonymous with fall or rebellion.

Let us consider a few cases of disharmony in actual life. When the desire for independent and autonomous life by living apart from his father enters into the heart of an immature son, disharmony sets in between his mind and the mind of his parent, and harmonious life becomes impossible. If all the fault lies on the part of the boy, this disharmony is the result of his 'rebellious' spirit, and it is a real 'fall' for him.

Take the example of a husband and wife. Suppose, through some misunderstanding, disharmony arises between them. Not only the parties, but also the innocent children suffer the consequence. The whole family 'falls' from normal happy life into a life of misery and suffering.

Take the case of a state. Disharmony between leaders is enough to start an agitation for independence and separation from the centre. Though such a rebellious spirit arises in the hearts of the few malcontent leaders only, the consequence falls on the state as a whole. The leaders drag the whole population along with them. Consequently, innocent men, women and children suffer along with the guilty. Not only human beings, but also the whole land with the animal and vegetable life in it suffers as a result of any police action taken by the centre against the rebellious state. Thus it is evident that the three words to a great extent express the same idea.

Hence it is difficult to understand why the word fall, or rebellion, is not satisfactory. Christians, however, prefer the words 'fall' and 'rebellion' to disharmony. These words explain everything, far better than disharmony. Man's fall has affected the whole creation. He has dragged down his whole environment into the pit of ruin along with him. Man and the whole visible creation stand or fall together. Think of the terrible sufferings inflicted on dumb animals and vegetation during a war in addition to the vast number of innocent human lives destroyed. The word fall accounts for the suffering, imperfection, and corruption that infest all life, far more sensibly than disharmony does.

The word 'disharmony' does not indicate a climax as 'fall' does. Fall has acceleration of velocity, increase of momentum and the final

crash; while 'disharmony' does not necessarily include these things. The *Gita* believes in God incarnating himself from age to age in some cyclic order to establish righteousness and to destroy the wicked, like a piano tuner who visits his clients periodically to tune their pianos which remain permanently in the house. That is why people like the word disharmony. But the fact is God has revealed his plan of abolishing sin and misery, once for all, and not in cyclic order, from this world of His. Moreover we actually see the momentum of man's fall accelerated day by day. Human wickedness is undoubtedly increasing. Mutual tension between nation and nation is daily and hourly mounting. Godlessness, indiscipline, disunion, and disintegration of society—are all on the increase. Everything that civilization has built up is crumbling. The impending final crash is almost visible to everybody. The present preparation for wholesale destruction of life unmistakably portends a cataclysmic end to everything, in spite of all the efforts of all men of goodwill to avert it. The world and its affairs seem to have gone out of man's grip. All leaders of Governments are good men individually. But when they join together to bear the burden of Government, they inevitably change into demons of wholesale destruction of life. Surely Satan has the upper hand with humanity. The crash must come, because the misery of humanity cannot go on for ever in cyclic order. The whole creation, dragged into frustration and ruin by fallen man, cannot go on groaning for ever for deliverance from the curse of human tyranny. A day must come for the wicked to cease from the earth, and the children of God to be manifested.

The Bible affirms that 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God'. 'For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God'. (See Rom. 8 : 19-22.) It envisages a future—a glorious future, when all disobedience and the rebellious spirit in man will finally pass under the stern judgement of God, revealed through cataclysmic events, and perfect oneness between God, His children and dumb nature will be re-established for ever, and Christ the Saviour will wipe all tears away from all eyes. The consummation of the final redemptive plan of God through Jesus Christ, is made known to all the world by St. Paul in the following words: (He hath) 'made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him'. (Eph. 1 : 9, 10.)

God, man and nature are one, though sin has created all this disharmony. When sin is removed once for all from God's good earth, God, man and nature will again be one. It is this hope that Christ gave His disciples when He taught them to pray: 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' It was not meant to be a magic formula to be repeated in season and out of season. It is not a dreamy utopia that Christ has promised but something very definite and absolutely trustworthy, His own blood shed on Calvary being the surest guarantee for it.

All these explanations in defence of the words Fall and Rebellion are superfluous in view of the fact that Dr. Radhakrishnan himself, while commenting on the wickedness inherent in the human heart, in the sixteenth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, forgetful of his own distaste for the word Fall, uses stronger expressions like 'diabolical fall and damnable indifference', in preference to the word disharmony!

Jesus Christ came to announce that there is only one way for removing this disharmony and establishing proper harmony. When there is disharmony between two persons, father and son, friend and friend, husband and wife, ruler and the ruled, the only way to remove it and bring about harmony is for the offending party to sincerely apologise to the offended party. This is quite essential to start a reconciled, reunited, relationship. Willingness to return with repentance is the only thing required. That is exactly what Christ meant when he said 'I came to call sinners to repentance'. Repentance is the first step in salvation. He has announced his redemptive purpose for the world. That purpose is to abolish sin and misery from the world and establish God's kingdom of righteousness. Refusing to repent and be reunited with God and man in love, refusing to accept God's offer of forgiveness on God's own terms, and stubbornly resisting God's call to fall in line with His plan of redemption for the world, is what constitutes sin. This refusal is rebellion. This rebellion at its origin is called fall. Christ, who came to offer pardon to the rebellious, has also announced a day of judgement for the disobedient.

IV. Resurrection. Dr. Radhakrishnan has a very curious way of interpreting the Christian doctrine of resurrection in general and the resurrection of Christ in particular. It is not at all clear how he arrives at these conclusions of his. He says: 'Krishna is said to be born of Vasudeva and Devaki. When our sattva nature is purified, when the mirror of understanding is cleansed of the dust of desire, the light of pure consciousness is reflected in it. When all seems lost, light from heaven breaks, enriching our human life more than words can tell'.

Commenting on the word 'purified' in the above quotation, Dr. Radhakrishnan adds in a footnote: 'This, to my mind, is the meaning of the Christian doctrine of resurrection. The physical resurrection of Jesus is not the important thing, but the resurrection of the Divine. The rebirth of man as an event that happens within his soul, resulting in a deeper understanding of reality and greater love for God and man, is the true resurrection'. P. 36.

In the passage quoted above, Jesus Christ is again forcibly and irrelevantly dragged into the story of Vasudeva and Devaki without any logical connection whatever. What has the resurrection of Christ to do with the birth of Krishna? The relation between the statement that 'Krishna is said to be born of Vasudeva and Devaki' and the succeeding statements is not at all clear.

The main points raised here are: (1) Krishna is born of Vasudeva and Devaki. (2) Our *sattva* nature is purified, the mirror of understanding is cleansed, light of pure consciousness is reflected in it. (3) When all seem lost, light from heaven breaks, enriching our life. (4) The resurrection of Jesus is not the important thing; the rebirth of man or the resurrection of the Divine in him is the important thing.

One fails to see anything but utter confusion of ideas here. Probably Krishna's birth is mentioned to show that he was born of Devaki as a perfect saviour to purify man. But what is it that he purifies? It is not our *rajasic* and *tamasic* nature but our *sattva* nature, which is defined by Dr. Radhakrishnan as 'perfect purity and luminosity'. What is the need for purification of perfect purity and luminosity? Again, how can all seem lost after *sattva* has been purified by Krishna? Supposing such a contingency is possible by reason of which 'all may seem lost'; what have all these to do with the resurrection of Christ?

The only possible explanation for the introduction of the resurrection of Christ in a context like this seems to be to show that Krishna is enough to purify the heart and that in case he fails, light from heaven will break into the heart direct and therefore a risen Christ is of no necessity for mankind!

After all, is the resurrection of Christ of no importance? Is there a greater fact in history than the fact of Christ, His birth, His message, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and the growth of His kingdom? Will the resurrection become unimportant by someone saying so? Will the sun disappear from the sky if one shuts his eyes and says there is no sun in the sky?

Everything in Christianity, and everything that is good in man's civilisation hangs on the fact of the resurrection of Christ. Christianity is built on it. If Christ is not risen, our faith is in vain. The importance

of the resurrection of Christ is always brought before the believer's heart when he repeats in the Christian creed, that Jesus Christ who was crucified, dead and buried, rose again from the dead on the third day, sits at the right hand of God the Father, and will come again to judge the quick and the dead. The true believer knows that he lives because his risen Lord lives. His hope of resurrection to life everlasting is based on the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, which Dr. Radhakrishnan brushes aside as a thing of no importance. Believers have been assured of the resurrection of the dead in the following words of Christ: 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone that seeth the son and believeth in him, may have everlasting life; And I will raise him up at the last day'. John 5: 28, 29; 6: 39, 40. In the face of such facts, how can any one speak off-hand about eternal verities, as if he is quite sure about his opinions? It looks like rushing into realms where angels fear to tread. It is tantamount to telling Christians that they are all a deluded people, as far as their faith in Jesus Christ goes.

The Christian is not following a chimera. He knows whom he has believed and what he is believing. He has unmistakable personal knowledge and experience of Christ. He knows fully well how important and vital to him and to the world, is the resurrection of Christ. The importance of resurrection can be understood by studying the following great facts about it. The resurrection of Christ assures us of eternal truths like these which no one can reasonably refute or deny:

1. Eternal hope in the continuity of personality beyond the grave.
2. Continuity of the claims of Christ as Shepherd, King and Judge. He is not a dead-and-gone hero.
3. Continuity of His mission through His disciples who share the work with Him by continuing His work of caring for the oppressed and neglected, the sick and the sinful.
4. The assurance that this risen Lord will come again to judge the world and establish His promised kingdom.
5. And above all, the confidence that fallen man who is willing to repent has the risen Christ as a sure anchor of hope for his soul in this dark world, in the midst of all forebodings of a cataclysmic end. His sheep hear his voice. None will be lost. He will gather His jewels from the four corners of the earth, at His coming. Every repentant sinner is a jewel to Him. What other name is there under heaven to give a similar confidence to the troubled soul of man?

And yet people presume they can make short work of Christ and His resurrection by explaining everything away.

Consider again the following facts: As soon as Christ was

arrested, condemned, killed and buried, his apostles lost all the hope which He had kindled in them, with regard to the future; they lost all hope about their own selves. When they all forsook him and fled, it was not so much the fear of their enemies as the certainty that His mission had failed, that afflicted them. They must have felt ashamed of following such a leader. They were sure that their fate would be worse than that of Jesus. They did not know what to do or where to go. If their lives were spared, they could go back to take up their old profession as fishermen. But would the enemies spare them? They hid themselves for fear of the enemies of their master. It was then that the news came to them that the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. What amazing transformation this news, followed by his appearances to them, brought about in the minds of these poor Galilean fishermen is a matter of history. Let any one who cares, read the record of it in the Bible. Suffice it to say that the incredible news of the resurrection of Christ was strong enough to re-gather the scattered disciples, restore confidence to their terror-stricken hearts, and weld them together as the nucleus of the Christian Church with the risen Christ as its head. It was this band of fishermen who became the leaders of thought in the world. Their undoubted contact with the Risen Leader was so convincing that they were ready to lay down their lives for their faith. It is they who have turned the world upside down, in the teeth of all the satanic forces working against them. Even to this day it is this risen Christ that leads the believers in all their appointed enterprises on His behalf.

Think again of the miraculous transformation made in the life of St. Paul by the risen Christ. He was at first known as Saul. Unable to put up with the news that the dead Christ was risen and was continuing his work through His former disciples, he did his very best to stop this dangerous doctrine, by severe persecution. One day, armed with police powers, he was going to Damascus to massacre the faithful there. On the way the very risen Christ appeared to him in a vision, asking him: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' This brought about the marvellous change in him. He became the greatest of the apostles to preach the risen Christ to Asia and Europe. He died as a martyr to his faith in the risen Christ (Acts. 9:1-22).

Dr. Radhakrishnan thinks that the Christian doctrine of resurrection means nothing more than purification of the heart by inner rebirth. It is true that to those who are dead in sin, spiritual rebirth is indeed a resurrection from that death. But how can that lead anyone to jump to the conclusion that the resurrection of Christ is not important?

Every Christian believer lives in Christ and for Christ. He looks for His re-appearance, in the fulness of faith and hope. To the faithful it is all-important. To the unbelievers too it should be all-important, because the risen Christ is ordained of God to judge the world.

V. Speaking of *Avatars* in general, and the *Avatar* of Krishna in particular, Dr. Radhakrishnan makes the following observations:

'When the Lord is said to manifest himself at a particular time on a particular occasion, it only means that it takes place with reference to a finite being . . . When any finite individual develops spiritual qualities and shows large insight and charity, he sits in judgement on the world, and starts a spiritual and social upheaval, and we say that God is born for the protection of the good and destruction of the evil and the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness.

'The *Avatara* is the demonstration of man's spiritual resources and latent divinity. It is not so much the contraction of divine majesty into the limits of the human frame, as the exaltation of human nature to the level of godhead by its union with the divine.

'Theism, however, makes out that Krishna is an incarnation or descent of the Divine into human frame. He is the supreme who appears to the world as though born and embodied. He is the human embodiment of Vishnu'.

In order to grasp the implications involved in the above quotation, we must make a careful note of some of the points common to incarnations in general, as mentioned by Dr. Radhakrishnan, in contrast with the special points connected with the incarnation of Krishna. These are some of the characteristics common to ordinary *avatars*:

1. When finite individuals develop high spirituality, they are looked upon as *avatars* or incarnations.
2. *Avatara* is not the contraction of the divine majesty into the limits of human frame.
3. It is only the exaltation of human nature to the level of godhead by its union with the Divine.

The conclusion is that such persons are finite and all such finite incarnations are to be treated as a class with characteristics common to finite persons.

But these remarks, Dr. Radhakrishnan would have us believe, do not apply to Krishna. He belongs to a different category. He is unique. He is not a case of a finite individual developing high spirituality or of the exaltation of human nature to the level of godhead by its union with the divine. In his particular case, we are told, it is a descent

of the Divine, a contraction of Divine majesty into the limits of human frame. He is the infinite God manifesting Himself in finite existence. He is the Supreme who appears to the world as though born and embodied. He is the Saviour of the world.

In contrasting Krishna with other *Avatars*, who are these persons that Dr. Radhakrishnan has in mind? There is no reason to believe that he wants to contrast sages like Buddha or Zoroaster; Rama or Lakshmana, with Krishna. They are all friends one to another. Whom then has he chiefly in mind? Let us look at the characteristics of the *Avatars* mentioned in the quotation and find out whether Dr. Radhakrishnan has any particular person in view. We can clearly see that most of the characteristics mentioned apply only to Jesus Christ. For example: 1. He shows large insight and charity. 2. He starts a spiritual and social upheaval. 3. He sits in judgement on the world. 4. He wants to establish the kingdom of righteousness.

These characteristics described in the particular phraseology employed, apply to Jesus Christ, better than to any one else.

What great pains are taken to disqualify Jesus Christ and substitute Krishna in His place! Dr. Radhakrishnan seems to be telling his readers that Krishna of Kurukshetra is the true saviour of the world and that they need not take seriously the claims of Jesus Christ that He came from above, that He had deep insight into all spiritual realities, that He was the embodiment of charity, that it is His plan to establish the kingdom of righteousness on the earth, and that He is going to appear again as the King of righteousness to execute judgement upon all.

How boldly India is asked to sit in judgement over Jesus Christ who is the coming judge ordained by God 'to execute judgement upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him'. Jude. 15. The main cause for the condemnation of the world lies in its refusal to walk in the light of Christ. 'This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil'. John 3:19.

#### VI. Here are some more charges against Christianity:

1. 'The Gita points out that there is a divine creator who imposes his forms on the abysmal void. *Prakriti* (nature) is the raw material, the chaos out of which order is to be evolved, a night which is to be illuminated. In the struggle between the two, whenever a deadlock is created, there is divine interference to release the deadlock'.  
P. 34.

There is a divine creator. His duty is to bring order out of chaos. He imposes his forms on the abysmal void. He illumines the darkness of the chaotic world.

The next argument is: Struggle ensues between the creator and chaos, between light and darkness. Deadlock is the result. 'Divine interference is needed to release the deadlock'. Now what is this abysmal void? Where is it? Who inhabits it? Who is this divine person that goes to the 'abysmal void' to settle the dispute between the creator and it? Who has witnessed the release of the deadlock? We think that this kind of speculation itself, is the abysmal void, the chaotic world. The best instance of metaphysics mistaking phantom for reality is contained in the passage quoted above.

The following quotation from the *Modern Review of Calcutta*, July 1912, corroborates the same fact. 'Metaphysics has been the curse of India. It has blighted her history and compassed her ruin. It has converted her great men into miserable quibblers, and led them into useless channels of enquiry and effort. . . . It has elevated sophistry to the rank of an art, and substituted vain fancies for knowledge. It has condemned India's intellect to run in the same old groove for hundreds of years. It has blinded her seers and led them to mistake phantoms for realities. . . . The Upanishads claim to expound "that, by knowing which everything is known". This mediaeval quest for the Absolute is the basis of all the spurious metaphysics of India. The treatises are full of absurd conceits, quaint fancies, and chaotic speculations. And we have not learned that they are worthless. We keep moving in the old rut. . . .'

Such speculations about the struggle between the Divine Creator and the abysmal void, between Purusha and Prakriti, between darkness and light, to bring order out of chaos, are entirely left out of their purview by serious thinkers. The things that are really necessary to be known about the physical universe are being studied in observatories like those at Mount Wilson and Mount Palomar by astronomers, who are gifted by God to study such truths for themselves, as well as for others. Neither Christian thinkers nor true astronomers think it worth while to waste their time and energy on fruitless speculations on what is going on in the dark imaginary underworlds existing in philosophic imaginations only. They rather prefer to concentrate their attention to know something about 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty' Ex. 34:6, 7. They endeavour to know Him 'whose name is Holy' and who yearns 'to dwell with him

who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones'. Is. 57:15.

2. 'The idea of one unique revelation is hardly consistent with our present views of the universe'. P. 34.

The 'one unique revelation', it goes without saying, refers to Christianity. Assuming that 'our present view of the universe' is quite different from what it was formerly, what has this new knowledge of the physical world to do with divine revelation to the soul? What new knowledge of the philosophers' 'abysmal void' has altered God's demand to man to repent and be humble? In the remote pre-Christian era when the earth was considered to be flat, and the sun rose in the east and set in the west, when only one of the hemispheres was known to man, and that too in part, when the vast space with its innumerable starry regions remained altogether beyond human ken, Moses taught: 'Shema Yisroel Adonoi Elohenu Adonoi Echod.' 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord, is one'. 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might'. Deut. 6:4; 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Lev. 19:18. This revelation of the oneness of God and God's demand of love from man had nothing to do with the knowledge of the extent of the universe. Likewise, Isaiah the prophet asked his people to understand how desperately wicked the human heart was. He lamented the condition of society in general: 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment'. Isa. 2:5, 6. Isaiah with his very limited knowledge of the universe, thought it necessary to worry not about the underworld of some unknown abysmal void, but about the known underworld of wickedness in the human heart. He invited everybody to repent before the awful day of judgement came upon the world. To the idolatrous Jewish nation he preached: 'Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon'.

These quotations from the Bible amply prove that the growth of knowledge of the physical world has very little to do with revelation. In what way does the 'present knowledge of the universe' stand in the way of the claim of the uniqueness of Christ? What has the knowledge of the physical world to do with spiritual understanding? Which branch of knowledge is it that has changed the position now? Within the last 200 years humanity has progressed beyond recognition. The

people of 200 years ago travelled on foot or in bullock carts. Today we have motor cars, trains, steamships, and aeroplanes some of which travel at supersonic speed. In place of bows and arrows with which our forefathers of 200 years ago fought their battles, we have machine guns, grenades, and bombs of every description including atom bombs and hydrogen bombs. Farmers of old ploughed with ploughs drawn by bullocks and horses. Today they use tractors. If it took two years for a person to travel from South India to Benares two hundred years ago, today we can circle round the globe in two days. Distance has been totally annihilated by telegraph, telephone, radio and television. Wonderful progress has been made in arts, industry, science and literature. Powerful telescopes have brought the heavenly bodies within measurable distance. In short our present knowledge of the universe is marvellous. It is too vast to be described or imagined. Hence we repeat the question: which branch of our present knowledge of the universe is it that makes it hardly consistent with our belief in the uniqueness of Christ?

In what way does our 'present knowledge of the universe' come in the way of God's revelation of His love to man, between God's demand and man's response, between sin and its consequence? It is not a knowledge of the extent of the universe that matters. What matters is to know the extent of God's love and learn how to respond to it.

3. 'The tribal God gradually became God of the earth, and the God of the earth has now become the God of the universe, perhaps only one of many universes. It is inconceivable that the Supreme is concerned only with one part of one of the smallest planets.' P. 34.

The tribal God; Dr. Radhakrishnan is evidently alluding to the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel, the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of history.

It is amazing that while he finds it inconceivable that the Supreme is concerned with this planet of ours which is only one of the smallest planets, he finds no difficulty whatever in believing the teaching of the Gita that the Supreme is concerned with only the creation of the four castes of India, viz., the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras; and that He knows nothing of the outcastes of India and the vast number of people living in every part of the globe outside India! Dr. Radhakrishnan not only finds it easy to believe in this Supreme, whose whole universe consists of India alone, but also considers it his solemn duty to defend this 'Supreme' and the castes of his creation, by interpreting caste as only a functional grouping with divine sanction behind it!

How can we see clearly enough to remove the mote in the eyes of others as long as we refuse to remove the beam in our own eyes?

The God of the Bible is not a tribal God. The first verse of the first book of the Bible is: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. Is this a tribal God? If there were some people in Israel who thought that God was their special God, as small as a tribal God, why should God be blamed for it? There are many nominal Christians today who openly dishonour Christ. Does Christ lose His value thereby?

It is unnecessary to go any further into the question here. This question of a tribal god will be dealt with more elaborately in the concluding chapter.

VII. 'A strong consciousness of one's own possession of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, added to a condescending anxiety for the condition of those who are in the outer darkness, produces a state of mind which is not remote from that of an inquisitor'. P. 155.

Every one has the right to preach and propagate his religion. The concluding verses of the Gita deal with the solemn charge Krishna gave to Arjuna, 'To impart this most secret teaching of mine to my devotees'. . . 'Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he; nor shall anyone be dearer to Me than he on this earth'. 18:68, 69. Inquisition for the sake of religious propaganda is highly reprehensible, whether it be the historic inquisition by the mediæval churches or the modern mild type complained of by Dr. Radhakrishnan. 'If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His'. The brutal inquisitions of the past are the most shameful and un-Christian acts among all the black records of the churches. Likewise, it is unjustifiable on the part of preachers and propounders of religion to carry religious propaganda to an inquisitorial extent. But pure zeal arising out of true love is sometimes mistaken for a spirit of inquisition. St. Paul said: 'The love of Christ constraineth me. Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel . . . knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men'. When St. Paul was once preaching before King Agrippa, the latter exclaimed: 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian'. And Paul said: 'I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me today were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds'. Acts 26:28, 29. The same is the sincere wish of every true Christian who preaches Christ to India. Unfortunately, Christians have not lived up to their high calling in Christ. Many are content with the observance of external formalities, rather than the essentials of Christianity. Many others, unfortunately, waste their

energy in internecine quarrels, rather than minding the interests of Jesus Christ.

But, whatever the failure of Christianity everywhere, true Christians cannot hold their tongues. They believe that they are commissioned by Christ, their master, to preach Him to all alike, 'to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me (Christ)'. Acts 26:18. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him'. 2 Cor. 5:19-21.

A Christian comes to you not as an inquisitor, but as a true friend. He wants to share with you his experience and belief that Jesus Christ is the TRUTH, the whole TRUTH and nothing but the TRUTH. To know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge is something worth possessing. It is the Pearl of Great Price, which deserves to be bought at any price. He who brings it to your doors is not an inquisitor.

VIII. 'It is difficult to have adequate English equivalents for the three words, sattva, rajas and tamas. Sattva is perfect purity and luminosity; while rajas is impurity which leads to activity, and tamas is darkness and inertia. The Gita uses goodness for sattva, passion for rajas, and dullness for tamas'.

'The cosmic trinity reflects the dominance of one of the three modes, sattva in Vishnu, the Preserver; rajas in Brahma the Creator; and tamas in Siva the Destroyer. Sattva contributes to the stability of the universe, rajas to its creative movement, and tamas represents the tendency of things to decay and die. They are responsible for the maintenance, origin and the dissolution of the world. The application of the gunas to the three aspects of the Personal Lord shows that the latter belongs to the objective or the manifested world. God is struggling in humanity to redeem it, and the godlike souls co-operate with him in this work of redemption'.

A footnote on the last sentence is appended by Dr. Radhakrishnan. It is a quotation from the famous fifty-third chapter of Isaiah:— Cp. Isaiah who speaks of the Messaiah in these words: 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed' LIII. 4, 5.

The quotation given above is from Dr. Radhakrishnan's *Bhagavad-gita* p. 317. It comprises his views on the three *gunas* or natural impulses taught by Krishna to Arjuna in the fourteenth chapter of the *Gita*, entitled, 'The classification of the three *gunas*'. The three *gunas*, according to the *Gita*, are three nature-born qualities which tie the imperishable soul to the body. They are the natural impulses of human nature. They exist in a three-fold form. Of these three attributes, 'Sattva being pure causes illumination, health, happiness, wisdom and dispassion'. But, 'it too binds the body to happiness'. It too of course binds the soul to the body. 'Tamas born of ignorance is the deluder of all embodied beings. It develops negligence, error, indolence and sleep. It binds more than the other two'. These three impulses struggle for supremacy in the soul. If a person dies when *sattva* is supreme, his soul attains the highest heaven. Dying when *rajas* prevails, it is born again among those attached to action. Likewise, dying during the predominance of *tamas*, it is born in the wombs of stupid creatures or into the infernal regions.

Krishna assures Arjuna: 'When the seer perceives no agent other than the three *gunas*, and knows Me who stands beyond these *gunas*, he enters into My being and having transcended the three *gunas* and freed from birth, death, old age and sorrow, he enjoys immortality'. XIV. 19, 20. 'He who serves Me with exclusive devotion of love rises above the three *gunas*, he too is fit for becoming Brahman. For I am the abode of Brahman, the Immortal and the Imperishable'. 26, 27.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's views on the *thrigunas* are quite unconvincing and confusing. In his *Bhagavadgita*, the XIV chapter of the *Gita* is entitled 'The mystical father of all beings'. It goes without saying that he is referring to Krishna who is represented as carrying on the dialogue with Arjuna. In verses 19 and 20, Krishna claims that he alone stands above the three *gunas*, that he alone can save men from the binding nature of the three *gunas*, and that he alone can free them from birth, death, old age and sorrow, and grant them immortality. Dr. Radhakrishnan says that the cosmic trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, are influenced by the three *gunas*, and are not above them, while Krishna is above the *gunas*, and is called the Father of all beings.

Dr. Radhakrishnan continues: 'The cosmic trinity reflects the dominance of one of the three modes (*gunas*); *sattva* in Vishnu, 'the Preserver, *rajas* in Brahma, the Creator; and *tamas* in Siva, the destroyer' and adds that these three attributes are essential for the three persons of the cosmic trinity for carrying on their respective duties.'

There are many incomprehensible things in these arguments:

1. Krishna is called 'The mystical father of all beings'. Granting

that Krishna is the embodiment of Vishnu the Preserver, what justification is there to call him the Father of all, when Brahma who is the creator in the cosmic trinity alone deserves the title? Is it not the height of rebellion against the Creator on the part of man to rob Him of His designation and status, and give them to the second person? If the second person himself usurps the place of the first person, chaos will be the result in heaven and what will be the fate of us mortals?

2. In distributing the three gunas among the three persons, Dr. Radhakrishnan seems to be very partial. He assigns sattva (purity) to Vishnu, while Brahma gets rajas and Siva gets tamas. In a previous page Dr. Radhakrishnan writes that our sattva is something which has to be purified. Whereas, here when he assigns sattva to Vishnu he says it is perfect purity and luminosity!

3. The Gita says that sattva is imperfect, because it binds the possessor to earthly desires. Though Krishna possesses sattva it not only does not bind him but also raises him above the three gunas. He becomes *thrigunathitha*. Then why assign sattva to him at all?

4. 'Rajas is the nature of passion born of cupidity, greed and attachment. Tamas born of ignorance is the deluder of all embodied beings. It develops negligence, error, indolence and sleep'. He who possesses sattva reaches the highest heaven. If rajas prevails in a person he is born again among those attached to action, i.e., lower order of men. If tamas predominates, the soul is reborn in the wombs of stupid creatures into infernal regions.

Vishnu is lucky in every way. The worst that his sattva can do is to see him reborn in the highest heaven. But being able to rise above his three attributes, he has not to fear even a rebirth into heaven. On the contrary how unlucky are Brahma and Siva with their respective attributes of rajas and tamas! Gods cannot claim, like Caesar's wife, any exemption from the rigours of law. It is binding alike upon man and God. Brahma must return to earth as a low born person while Siva must consent to be reborn in the wombs of stupid creatures or into infernal regions!

5. Who distributed the three gunas among these three gods in this manner? Did they have to fight among themselves for these gunas and did Krishna win? Dr. Radhakrishnan says that these gunas are necessary for them to carry out their divine functions effectively. Brahma the creator of all, the Ruler of the universe, is condemned to equip himself with 'passion, born of cupidity, greed and attachment' to enable him to rule the world! Siva fortifies himself with 'ignorance' the deluder of all embodied beings and he is said to be the judge of all the earth!

6. Again, when Brahma is the Creator, Vishnu is the Preserver, and Siva is the Destroyer, in what sense does the Gita say that Krishna is the Creator, and that he is the father of Brahma, as well as the father of all beings? Do not the three persons of the cosmic trinity and Krishna, the father of Brahma, make four persons? In XIV: 19, 20 Krishna claims that he stands beyond the three gunas, and those who take refuge in him transcend the three gunas, and are freed from birth, death, sorrow, etc. Thus Krishna stands above the gunas; while the other three persons of the cosmic trinity are dominated by them. They require these evil passions to carry on their duties.

Krishna says 'For I am the abode of Brahman, the Immortal and the imperishable, of eternal law and absolute bliss' XIV: 27. Dr. Radhakrishnan adds: 'Here the Personal Lord is said to be the foundation of the Absolute Brahman... Krishna identifies himself with the absolute, unconditioned Brahman'.

Look at the height of the pedestal on which Krishna is seated:— He is (1) the abode of Brahma the first person of the cosmic trinity. (2) The father of Brahma the creator. (3) The foundation of the absolute Brahman. (4) He is himself the absolute unconditioned Brahma.

At the same time, Brahma is believed to be (1) the absolute (2) the supra-personal absolute. (3) The supra cosmic eternal (4) the speechless, timeless Brahman.

This Brahma the super-personal has a 'personal Lord' as his father, foundation and abode. This personal Lord is none other than Krishna, the son of Devaki. He is the foundation and father of the Great Creator!

So then, besides the cosmic trinity comprising Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, there is a fourth person who claims to be the Father of Brahma himself; altogether making four persons. One fails to see anything but utter confusion and absurdity in these self-contradictory statements. Let us look at the three gunas from another point of view.

The struggle between the three gunas mentioned in the Gita (XIV. 10) is in some respects similar to the struggle between Good and Evil within the soul, described in the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans in the New Testament. A modern translation of a few verses may be given here:

'Of this I am certain, that no principle of good dwells in me, that is in my natural self; praiseworthy intentions are always ready to hand; but I cannot find my way to the performance of them; it is not the Good my will prefers, but the Evil my will disapproves, that I find myself doing. . . . Inwardly I applaud God's disposition, but I observe another disposition in my lower self which raises war against the disposition

of my conscience and I am handed over as a captive to that disposition towards sin which my lower self contains. Pitiabile creature that I am! Who is to set me free from a nature thus doomed to death? Nothing else than the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. . . . If I am left to myself, my conscience prefers God's disposition, but my natural powers are at the disposition of sin.' Romans 7: 18-25. (Knox).

Likewise the *daivi and asuri sampat* (the divine and demoniacal properties) described in chapter XVI of the Gita, in many respects answer to the divine disposition and sinful disposition quoted above from the New Testament.

Fallen man with his corrupt nature may be compared to a dilapidated building which was once a glorious edifice. In its fallen condition, it still possesses signs of its past glories; a beautiful door here, an exquisite carving there, a few rooms still undamaged, some coloured glasses not totally smashed. These good remnants of past glory may be compared to the *Daivi Sampat*, the *Sattva Guna*, the Divine Disposition in us.

But being a part of the fallen structure, they are themselves insufficient to repair the damage and renew the building. This is exactly why man left to his own resources cannot save himself. That is why St. Paul says:—'If I am left to myself, my conscience prefers God's disposition, but my natural powers are at the disposition of sin.' Hence he asks:—'Who is to set me free from a nature thus doomed to death?'

Let us take another illustration. Suppose a boy brought up in a good home falls into the hands of, say, bandits. They train him in their evil ways. The child assimilates all their wicked ways and habits. But however much he may be permeated with *rajas* and *tamas* by such assimilation and training, his inner self will be groaning with unutterable desire to get out of their clutches and go back to his father's home. This struggle is due to the pressure of some remnants of his original good nature in him. That is his *sattva guna*. As long as he continues with the bandits, his *sattva*, his good desires and intentions alone cannot save him. Some rescuer must help him to escape to his true homelife. Otherwise the evil genius of *rajas* and *tamas* will have complete mastery over his *sattva* and he will be lost for ever.

Jesus Christ told the parable of a man who fell into the hands of thieves. They beat him, they branded him, they stripped him, they robbed him and left him half-dead. This is the condition of every one in whom *rajas* and *tamas* like robbers have their mastery. These robbers have rendered our *sattva* powerless. The Good Samaritan rescues the traveller who fell into the hands of these thieves. He bends over him in compassion, washes his wounds, anoints them with ointment, clothes him, and takes him to a rest house, on his own animal.

Beyond wishing, intending and aspiring, our sattva alone cannot rescue us from our fallen condition. Sattva is the remnant of the goodness that we had inherited from God when He made us in His own image. By reason of our fall into the hands of evil, our sattva the original divine disposition is left half-dead, and the dark passions of rajas and tamas are ruling over us as masters. 'Praiseworthy intentions are always ready to hand, but I cannot find my way to the performance of them. It is not the good my will prefers, but the evil my will disapproves, that I find myself doing. . . . Pitiabie creature I am!'

The life of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man or the ideal representative of humanity, testifies to the truth of what has been said so far. Since all men are the children of God, all could have lived a perfect life of love like Jesus Christ, had not rajas and tamas robbed our sattva of its original 'perfect luminosity'. Christ came not only to convince us of the havoc played in us by the powers of darkness which have reduced us to our present state of utter helplessness and misery, but also to rescue us from the hands of these enemies the *shadvairies*, and reclothe us with his own divine sattva. It was this message of hope that He gave to the world during the short period of three and a half years of His earthly mission. His miracles of healing during that period were not performed as boastful feats of magic to attract popular attention, but compassionate acts of love performed with a view to convince mankind that He was also willing and able, in a similar way, to bind and heal the wounds of hearts bruised and broken by the powers of darkness. Self-righteous hypocrites, usurers, thieves, and prostitutes who came to Him in repentance were warmly welcomed and healed of their physical and spiritual maladies and changed into saints, some of whose names are revered and commemorated to this day. After He had withdrawn His limited bodily presence from the earthly scene, His Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, took charge of His mission and is here to impart to penitent hearts all the spiritual disposition manifested in the Person of Jesus Christ. The Spirit is here also to convince the world of (1) the sin of persistently continuing under the grip of rajas and tamas without accepting the free offer of deliverance; (2) the glory of regaining our lost sattva by possessing a righteous state of heart as a gift and (3) the inevitable punishment of the disobedient.

The greatest of all virtues which sin has deprived us of, is Love. Having been deprived of Love, the heart of man has lost its inner Joy. Joy being extinguished, the heart does not know what real PEACE is. The loss of these three major *daivi* (divine) attributes has resulted in the loss of all other divine attributes necessary for right relationship between man and man, culminating in the loss of our own personal self-control.

God be thanked that these are the very virtues which the Holy Spirit is ever ready to impart to every soul that is willing and ready to obey Him. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians describes these virtues in the following words:—'The fruit of the Spirit is: Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Self-control'. (Gal. 5:22, 23.) Contrast these with the asuri (satanic) attributes which flesh is heir to:—'sexual vice, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, magic, quarrels, dissention, jealousy, temper, rivalry, factions, party-spirit, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelry and the like'. (See Gal. 5: 19-24).

So then, the greatest need of the human heart is the gift of the Holy Spirit of God. Christ exemplified in His own ideal human personality, how to live a life of the Spirit, in order that penitent souls may imitate Him. He has also promised to impart to us the same Spirit, if we only ask, so that our weak nature may be endued with power from above to overcome our rajasic and tamasic nature. This is what Jesus Christ has promised:—

'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Luke 11: 11-13.

IX. Here is another example of making use of quotations from the Bible irrelevantly in contexts where the quotations have no place whatever. Commenting further on the presence of the three gunas in the cosmic trinity, Dr. Radhakrishnan says:—'God is struggling in humanity to redeem it and the godlike souls co-operate with Him in this work of redemption'. He then quotes from the book of Isaiah the following prophecy about the sufferings of the Messiah:—

'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we were healed'. Is. 53:4, 5.

What have the cosmic trinity with their three gunas to do with the sufferings of the Messiah? What relation is there between the Trinity of the Bible and the cosmic trinity of philosophy who according to the Gita run the world with dark and evil passions of the three gunas which are the 'sources of all insatiable, wicked and deluding passions and desires?' iii. 36, 37. How can Jesus Christ who came to the world to declare that 'God is light and in him is no darkness at all', be connected with such ideas?

This is evidently intended to disprove the claim of the uniqueness of Christ, by showing that God is struggling in humanity to redeem it,

that godlike souls are co-operating with Him in this work of redemption, that Jesus also co-operated with God in this work, and that therefore He is only one among the godlike souls, and hence He is not unique.

### Is God struggling in humanity?

It is doubtful whether 'struggling' is the proper word to describe the redemptive act of God for reclaiming perishing humanity. Why should God 'struggle' as if the odds are against him? 'Struggling in humanity' is an exceedingly vague term arising out of hazy notions and confused ideas about God and redemption. The expression produces the suggestion that some vague, intangible, abstract something called redemption is going on somewhere without having anything to do with individuals in the conscious side of their existence. Such a 'something called redemption' can exist only in the imagination of visionary thinkers. What is the use of an imaginary redemption which does not affect man consciously as an individual and re-awaken him to a conscious life of fellowship with God? The quest of the soul is: Where shall we go to find out the existence of a practical and universal redemptive process? Is there any revealed record of it anywhere in history or does it exist only as a vague notion?

Again, where are these 'godlike souls' who co-operate with God to be found? Since they all are co-operating with God in the common cause of redemption they must be a visible army of workers, with a common goal and a common purpose and it should not be difficult to trace them in human history. Similarly, since, as Dr. Radhakrishnan says, man is 'diabolically fallen' and 'damnable indifferent' to eternal truths, anything that goes by the name of redemption, should be such as can awaken him to a deep sense of his fall and can regenerate him to a newness of life. It must bring him back to God the Father and teach him to call God, Abba Father, and to look upon his fellowmen as brothers. Political leaders, however good or bad, do not come under this category. Their work is confined only to mundane existence. They have very little to do with the problem of sin and redemption from sin. Hence, such political liberators and founders of nations, whose work is temporal and transitory, are not to be directly reckoned among the spiritual redeemers about whom we are concerned here. Who then are the Godlike souls co-operating with God?

The word redemption is more or less foreign to the Gita. The famous verse in the Gita which speaks of Krishna incarnating himself again and again in some cyclic order to save the righteous and to destroy the wicked does not refer to redemption at all. If it means anything at all, it is only a periodic 'Purge' and nothing else. The word redemp-

tion which is a purely Biblical expression, means deliverance of mankind from sin and misery by Jesus Christ. The verse quoted by Dr. Radhakrishnan and claimed by him to be of universal application, undoubtedly refers only to Christ and His work of redemption. It describes, on the one hand, the great price paid by Christ for the redemption of humanity; and on the other, the believers' declaration of faith in the unique sacrifice of the Suffering Messiah.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, undergone willingly and consciously for the whole of humanity, surpasses all the other sacrifices known to man. It is unique. He willingly carried His cross like a criminal in the midst of criminals. The path by which He was marched along for execution is looked upon as the holiest path in all the world. The cursed cross on which He was done to death has become the most honourable of all ornaments of wear, and the most holy symbol of adoration among the pious. Is it not in every sense unique? Countless millions look upon Christ as One 'who loved me and gave himself up for me'. Which other godlike soul is there to receive such universal adoration? Is He not unique? Christendom has any number of saints, prophets and martyrs. But no Christian looks upon 'godlike souls' like Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Peter, Paul, John or any one else as his Redeemer. Even St. Mary, the mother of Jesus, whom idolatrous Christians enthrone as the Goddess and the Queen of heaven, like the Roman Diana of old, is not the Redeemer of mankind. The words of Isaiah quoted above are in no way applicable to any of these. Indeed, if they are not applicable to any godlike soul who has co-operated with Jesus in His work of redemption how can we apply them to mythological heroes at all? For the same reason, to which of the well-known historical founders of religion in the world can we honestly apply words like these?

It is only Jesus Christ who has openly acknowledged that these words refer to Him alone. It is only He who has said, 'I lay down my life for the sheep; No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down myself'. John 10:15, 18.

'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we were healed'. To the godlike souls throughout the world who make this declaration of faith, Jesus is their unique Redeemer and they are all sinful souls struggling to become like Him. Instead of trying to drag Christ down to their level, they strive to rise to His level. One wonders who the 'godlike souls' are whom Dr. Radhakrishnan has in mind when he quotes the verse in question!

X. Before concluding this chapter, a few words are necessary in order to correct the usual misinterpretations given to one or two other

verses of the Bible which are often misquoted by non-Christians as well as a certain type of Christians who refuse to believe in the uniqueness of Christ. They take shelter behind these verses to convince themselves that Jesus will not come again. There are also people who quote these verses in support of their theory that 'Every human individual is an incarnation of the divine'. The Bible verses most commonly quoted in support of this theory are:

- (1) Jesus has proclaimed that,  
 'The kingdom of God is within you'. (2) St Paul has said:  
 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Living God?'

Let us first consider the claim that 'Every human individual is an incarnation of the Divine'. This theory is identical with the vedantic theory of '*tat tvam asi*' (that thou art; i.e., you are yourself the Supreme). If this doctrine is true, it follows that all men are uncorrupted divine beings, and the claim of the Gita that Krishna incarnates himself from age to age to save the righteous and to destroy the wicked, cannot be true. For there can be no place for sin and misery in the world. There can be no 'asuri sampat' or evil dispositions called rajas and tamas. For the same reason Dr. Radhakrishnan's assertion that 'we have today some who are divinely good, some who are diabolically fallen, and the damnably indifferent', (P. 334) cannot be consistent with his own theory that every human individual is an incarnation of the divine. When we come face to face with the problem of sin in us and around us, we must be honest enough to boldly discard all self-contradictory theories, and meekly admit the plain truth that we are fallen from grace and have defaced the divine image originally implanted in us.

Let us now try to understand the Biblical meaning of the two verses quoted above.

What is the Biblical meaning of the words of Jesus: 'The Kingdom of God is within you?' These words were spoken by Jesus to a group of Pharisees. The Pharisees were the intellectuals, the doctors of theology, the highest class among the Jewish people of the time of Jesus. They refused to accept the claims of Jesus. They not only refused to enter into the Kingdom of God, but also tried to prevent others from listening to Christ's message of the Kingdom. Considering themselves to be a holy class, they separated themselves from ordinary folk. Christ denounced them in very strong words for their hypocrisy, foolishness and blindness. He called them blind guides. He censured them most severely in words like these:—'Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men;

for ye neither go in yourselves nor suffer ye them that are entering to go in'. Matt. 23: 13. It was to Pharisees of this type that Christ said: 'The Kingdom of God is within you'. That those words are therefore to be taken as a reproof, rather than as a complimentary affirmation, may be easily understood.

A good Pharisee named Nicodemus, wanting to know more about Jesus, came to Him at night for fear of criticism from others. He had a very high opinion of Jesus. He told Jesus: 'Master, we know that thou hast come from God to teach us'. Jesus answered him: 'Believe me when I tell thee this: a man cannot even see the kingdom of God without being born anew.' Merely a high opinion about Jesus is of no avail.

It is clear from this that the words: 'The kingdom of God is within you', is not applicable even to such a good Pharisee as Nicodemus. He must be born again before he could claim the kingdom of God in him.

The words in question are taken from St Luke XVII. 'And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! Lo there!; for behold the kingdom of God is within you".'

A group of evil-minded Pharisees taunted Jesus by demanding when he was going to usher in His kingdom on earth. They wanted to see only the temporal side of His kingdom from a worldly point of view. His reply was a reproof to them, meaning that unless and until they silently and inwardly yielded to the first process of the establishment of the kingdom within their own hearts, it was none of their business to question about the visible coming of the kingdom. The establishment of the kingdom is to take place in your hearts first, for which you must be born again. This is the meaning of the words: The Kingdom of God is within you.

'How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming;  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still  
The dear Christ enters in.'

Lest His own disciples misunderstand His words as many do today, and say that Christ's teaching of the kingdom has no element of futurity in it, He at once reassured them of the visible coming of the kingdom,

saying:—'For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under the heaven; so shall also the son of man be in his day'. His visible coming is to gather together those who permit Him to establish his kingdom in them now.

So then, the words of Jesus, 'the kingdom of God is within you' are not meant to be made use of by people as a cloak to cover their 'damnable indifference', towards Christ. Christ came to reclothe us in *Daivi sampat*—the divine nature which we lost by our 'diabolic fall'. An unconditional surrender to Christ alone will entitle a person to claim that the kingdom of God is in him. Till then he is complacently deceiving himself. Christians as well as non-Christians would do well to remind themselves of the solemn words of Christ—'I know my sheep and am known of mine'. To those who refuse to enter into this vital heart-to-heart relationship with Christ, as between sinner and Saviour, Christ's words at his coming will be, 'I know you not'. Matt. 25: 12.

'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and the spirit of God dwelleth in you?' These words of St. Paul are also quoted by Dr. Radhakrishnan to prove the same thing, viz., it is all well with every body's soul; and there is nothing to worry about. All that has been said above is equally applicable to these verses also. It would have been quite right with us all had it not been for 'the diabolical fall and damnable indifference' of man. Even our *sattva guna*, the bright side of our nature, requires to be consecrated and sanctified by the Spirit of God. The *rajasic* and *tamasic* natures have to be killed or crucified with Christ. The devilish qualities called *asuri sampat* must be replaced by *Daivi sampat*, the Spirit of Christ. In short, a total change, a true rebirth, must take place in the heart. All refuges of lies must be willingly discarded. He, whose divine breath we lost, will breathe into us His Spirit anew. Repentance and faith are the two essential requisites to enable God to make our hearts His temple. Here again, surrender to Christ the Redeemer, is the condition. How can God dwell in a diabolically fallen heart, unless we allow Him to rebuild it? How can we expect to be revitalised with the Spirit of God, unless Christ has His way with us? Till then, it is self-deception to claim that we are the temple of God, or that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us.

The soul must climb down from its spiritual pride. It must give up all intellectual and metaphysical speculations about the Godhead. It must drop, once for all, all attempts to name God by incomprehensible and meaningless expressions like, 'the Cosmic Trinity, the Supracosmic Absolute, the Suprapersonal Eternal'. Let the soul approach the Father of us all meekly saying, 'I will arise and go to my Father, and say, Father, I have sinned; I am not worthy'. The repentant soul will

know what it is to become the temple of the living God. The Spirit of God will undertake to guide the soul into all truth. Christ's sole mission is to bring us to the Father and to fill us with His Spirit. He will lead us from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, and from death to Immortality.

To think of God in metaphysical terms is of no practical value to the thirsty soul. To try to analyse God by a sort of chemical process is futile. You will always arrive at the same negative result: *neti, neti*; not this, not this. To try to realise Almighty God by describing him in negative terms, as spaceless, timeless, attributeless, etc., is of no use whatever. Instead, concentrate all *Bhakti* (devotion), *Jnana* (knowledge) and *Karma* (action) on Christ, the true Historical Manifest Deity; and you will realise the Truth, the Life and the Way. You will become a true *yogi* by entering into union with him. The *yoga* (union) of repentance is the first step. *Karmayoga*, union with Christ for good actions, will make you a true *nishkamakarmi*, a selfless worker. United with Christ in *jnanayoga*, you will be made a truly wise *jnanayogi*. You will day by day enter into closer union with Him. Day by day you will be led into deeper consecration for doing good actions for His sake. You will grow in knowledge. This is eternal life:—'To know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent'. As you grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord, you will abound in the work of the Lord; and you will learn to love your neighbour as yourself.

This is the true *Bhaktimarga*, the way of devotion, the true *Karmamarga*, the way of action, and the true *Jnanamarga*, the way of true knowledge, all in one. When your dedication is complete, you will become a true *Vedantin*, a true *Advaiti*, enjoying real oneness with God. Like Paul you will be able to say 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'.

## CHAPTER V

### SANATANA DHARMA

WHAT IS religion? Though it is impossible to find a faultless definition of this word, everyone will admit that religion, in a practical sense, is the struggle of the human soul to get beyond the veil that separates him from the Unknown. It is his attempt to break through the barrier of ignorance which separates him from God. It is the cry of the soul to God for readmission to His fellowship which is the paradise he lost through disobedience.

Various ways and means are employed for achieving this end. Though the aim of religion is generally forgotten, men tenaciously cling to the ways and means handed down to them by tradition. Though the goal is lost sight of, men stick to their efforts ceaselessly, because they cannot do without some form of religious observance. Even an atheist must go on struggling to fortify his atheistic beliefs, just as the theist struggles to get nearer to God. Religion is so natural to the soul that man cannot live without some theory, or some philosophy, or some visible object to feed his imagination and quench his spiritual thirst.

How do we account for this eternal quest? If the *jeevatma*, the individual soul, and *paramatma*, the supreme soul, were one in substance, quality and nature, where is the need for any special efforts to realise this oneness? Unless something has happened to disturb the relationship between man and God, why should man alone struggle like this to establish contact with God? Of all the created beings on the earth why should man alone be a prey to worry, unhappiness and misery. The lower animals and other visible things around us which live and move and have their being in the universal Spirit, show no signs of struggle to get into touch with the Supreme? They all remain 'soaked in the Spirit' instinctively. Why is man alone condemned to this endless struggle and miserable existence? No philosophy of any kind offers a satisfactory answer to this question. The only answer that holds good is the answer offered by the Bible.

According to the Bible, man is fallen from fellowship with God. He is going farther and farther away from God, with his back towards God, without realising that his end is destruction. As the momentum of man's fall increases, the gulf of the alienation of his heart from God widens, and his devilish characteristics multiply proportionately. That is the only explanation why men utilise all their ingenuity and

talents to discover in secrecy, death-dealing weapons effective enough to annihilate their own species. The logical climax to which man's sin has carried him, has now been reached with the invention of the Hydrogen bomb and gasolene jelly to rain 'fire from heaven' upon innocent citizens. The abysmal depth to which man's unconfessed fall has reached may be gauged from his feverish preparation for mutual destruction with such diabolic weapons. How shamelessly he declares that there is no other means of establishing peace and goodwill on the earth! Like blind Samson of old, man in his rage has no eyes to see that he is preparing to bring down the whole edifice of civilization which he himself has built up.

The phenomena of religion with its varied experiences and modes of expression are best understood only when we study it from the point of view of man's original fall from the high heavenly state in which he was made, and the consequent loss of contact with the heavenly Father. We often hear of people telling us that the realisation of the Fatherhood of God is the most essential thing in religion. Why should it be so unless we were once made as God's children, and have then fallen from that high estate? Why should we talk of democracy, and equality, and the brotherhood of man unless we were once created as brethren, and the spirit of hatred, rivalry and murder entered later into our system like a disease germ? How is this explained unless there has been a fall? It is foolish to offer natural selection as the answer.

So then, an acknowledgement of sin, or the fall of man, is the starting point from which we can correctly probe into the mystery of all our spiritual and religious aspirations and struggles. It is from this point of view that what is known as *Sanatana Dharma* can best be understood. If there is nothing like sin in the world, religion is a meaningless vexation of spirit. If men were at least just as good as the beasts of the jungle, or the birds of the air, or the fishes of the water, our natural instincts would have been quite enough to keep us better behaved than at present. There would have been no need of anything which goes by the name of religion. Unlike man, animals have no greedy hoarding habit. They have no inborn hatred towards their own species, or even for species differing from them. They all get on together on the principle of live and let live. The white monkey does not want to exterminate the black monkey or *vice versa*. It is man, who considers himself superior to animals, that seeks for domination over his fellow-man. From where did he inherit this dominating, exploiting and exterminating habit? Wild animals are not coldblooded murderers like human beings. They do not take pleasure in killing other animals. They only kill just enough for their food and no more, just as meat-eaters

kill animals for food. But man takes a sadistic pleasure in killing and exterminating his own race. It is man who is 'red in tooth and claw' and not beasts. Similarly it is man alone, of all living beings, who has become a slave to perverted sex relationships to an extent injurious to himself and to society.

If man had not fallen from his high estate and imbibed demoniacal wickedness, there would have been no urge for wars, no need of armies, weapons, or even a police force. There would have been no place for politics and politicians. Peace and happiness would have reigned everywhere.

It is from the above standpoint that we can get the best view of *Sanatana Dharma*. That is the simplest and most logical point of view. *Sanatana Dharma* means religion practised by man everywhere, spontaneously, from the beginning, i.e., from time immemorial, from the day he found himself cut off from the presence of God through some obstacle that separated him from God. It is the universal attempt of man to re-establish lost contact with God. It is not peculiar to one country or one race. It is universal. Even aborigines living like cannibals are said to have some religious worship of their own. Aborigines as well as highly civilised races have their respective forms of religious worship. Thus religious practices have existed from the beginning of man's history. Hence they have come to be known as *Sanatana* or eternal Dharma.

In his attempt to re-establish his lost communion with God, all kinds of practices imaginable are resorted to by man. With this object in view, he has brought into service, renunciation, penance, self-torture, yogic exercises, control of the senses, control of the incoming and outgoing breaths, scientific and rationalistic theories, philosophic speculations, myths and legends, ritualistic practices, worship of hand-made representations of gods of one's own imagination; in short, everything that man imagines to be good enough to produce the desired effect of oneness with God and peace of mind.

We need not go very far to get a bird's-eye-view of *Sanatana Dharma*. It has been shown that it is a universal phenomenon. We have got the best and finest form of this natural religion here in India. Hinduism has in its vast field, types of almost every form of natural religion from the crudest to the noblest. There are few other religions in the world which can claim as much antiquity and diversity as Hinduism. Its antiquity, its high spiritual ideals, beautiful rituals, the noble array of its saintly writers, thinkers and seers, the vast mass of religious literature it has produced, its schools of philosophy—these stand unrivalled by any other natural religion in the world. Hinduism may be

compared to a vast forest naturally filled with gigantic trees, medicinal plants of different kinds, thorny shrubs, beautiful streams, stagnant pools, dense foliage and barren wilderness, noble animals and ugly, venomous reptiles; in short, every thing of every sort.

When did these natural religions start? What was it that led the earliest religions to resort to such forms of worship? What was it that impelled them? The Hebrew Bible says that the first parents originally enjoyed a heavenly atmosphere of bliss in close fellowship with God. By switching off man's connections with God through pride and disobedience, darkness enveloped him and he lost sight of God's presence. He forfeited his fellowship with God. Heavenly bliss became a thing of the past for him. The aim of existence was forgotten. Peace was lost. Fear and anxiety took its place. His mind became alienated from God and God began to be a distant Person for him. This distance grew day by day and from generation to generation. Many became altogether Godless by discarding all thoughts about God. Many began to harbour thoughts of hatred and enmity towards God. All human misery was attributed to God's anger, and not regarded as the real and natural consequence of living in darkness without the light of God. The pious ones began to call upon God by some name handed down from their ancestors. They needed so many earthly blessings of protection from powers of nature, wild animals, sickness, mutual enmity and so on. Some must have sincerely called upon God for restoration to the original state of bliss. But it was all a downward course. In course of time the ungodly flourished and the godly dwindled. Violence and wickedness of the grossest sort predominated. As the *Gita* says, God intervened to destroy the wicked and save the righteous. The Great Deluge destroyed the wicked and saved the righteous few. Those that survived grew into a new race . . . . The Bible traces the origin of all the races of the world from the progeny of Noah who survived the Flood. In course of time they too began to forget God and His mercies. They scattered throughout the earth as different peoples speaking different languages. Having gone far from God, each class was obliged to start autonomous states for the sake of peace and self-protection. Such measures became all-important because the darkness of ignorance into which man had fallen made it impossible for him to live in close fellowship with God, and with one another, without any fear or care as the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.

Fear of man compelled him to seek self-protection through political methods. Fear of the Unknown compelled him to resort to religious methods calculated to appease an angry God.

Hymns and incantations to the far-off Unknown spontaneously

came out of the hearts of pious men of a contemplative nature. When they failed to get in touch with the Unseen by such means, especially at times when the powers of nature seemed to be hostile or unfavourable, these ancient people directed their attention towards the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies and powers of nature. They directed all their attention to such powers, and offered praises and prayers to them as if they were real gods. In course of time, when people began to settle in plains and fertile valleys, where life was easy and comfortable, the need for praying to heavenly bodies and powers of nature, not being felt as before, the custom of praying to them was gradually dropped. What form was the future worship to take? The younger generation must have begun to doubt whether there was a God at all, and if there was one, they asked their elders where he was and what he was like. Thus from the Vedic period we come to the Upanishad period. The *gurus* of that time had to satisfy their enquirers somehow or other. Some argued that the soul in us and the Supreme Spirit are one. How can we realise this fact? Close your eyes and say to yourself: 'I am the Supreme Spirit myself'; 'I and the *Paramatma* are one'. 'All is one without a second? What are the attributes of this Supreme Spirit? He is without attributes. He is *Nirguna Brahma*. But all men have not got the same mental capacity to meditate and concentrate like this. What are such people to do? Let them keep some idol and worship it. Or let them worship the heroes and saints in the community. What is the explanation for all the sufferings which man is heir to? Even good men suffer. Why? In some former birth unknown to us we must have done wicked deeds. Our present sufferings are due to that. What is the remedy for it? No immediate remedy. You will have to undergo innumerable births and deaths. Earn as much merit as possible in each birth. The wheel of *karma* will stop revolving in your case if enough merit is stored by that time. In this manner numerous teachings came into existence.

Instead of getting nearer and nearer to God, natural religions pulled man farther and farther away from God. Countless cults under different leaders and with different names sprang up everywhere in the world. Any leader of outstanding merit could easily become the founder of a new cult. That founder soon becomes the demi-god or god of that cult. These conditions were the same throughout the world.

In India the development of natural religion took the final shape of Brahmanism with its strict caste rules, its Vedic prayers and sacrifices and its idol worship as ways of salvation. Men like Mahavira, Buddha, Kabir, Nanak and others arose as Reformers of Brahmanism. They desired to abolish caste, idol worship and other evils. But Brahmanism

refused to yield. All these reformers taught excellent moral principles for the attainment of *Nirvana*. They preached righteousness, benevolence, *ahimsa* and similar lofty ideals. But it must be said that none of these Reformers and Founders of religions had anything new to teach about God and His love to man. The same is true of Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism. In the case of Zoroaster it must be admitted that he had something definite to teach about God, Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, the Good Spirit that created man. But that religion too has settled down into fire worship. Taoism in China has degenerated into idol worship; Confucianism has settled down into Ancestor Worship; and Shintoism into Mikado Worship. Though Buddha denounced idol worship and preached the Eight-fold Path, Buddhism has now definitely degenerated into an idolatrous religion. Today they worship not only his own image, but also relics like his tooth, his hair, his sandals and many other things. These religions taught love to man and even love to animals. But none taught anything about love to God, because they had no faith in a Personal God. They had not realised the great truth that disobedient man must first be reconciled to God before harmony is established in his soul. They did not know that union with God in penitent, loving obedience alone can cause waters of grace to break out in the wilderness of the human soul, like streams in the desert.

Natural religions are all branches of the same tree, *Sanatana Dharma*. The Phoenicians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, all had their natural religions in their days. They had their own ancient culture, their own philosophy and their own gods, as we in India still have. We have no reason to claim that our philosophy and culture are something unique and very peculiar to India. All natural religions have more or less the same traits in common everywhere.

Some very interesting facts about the growth and development of *Sanatana Dharma* can be gathered from a study of the religion of Sumeria in Mesopotamia which is generally believed to be the cradle of the human race. The ancient city of Eridu now lying in utter ruins along with the rest of Babylonia, is supposed to be the original site of the Biblical Garden of Eden. Babylon the home of nationalism and the mother of all nationalisms was the proud capital of Sumeria and the most famous of all the cities of antiquity. Ur, known as Ur of the Chaldees, is another important city of Sumeria, famous as the birthplace of Abraham, the father of the Jewish race. The civilization of Sumeria is the earliest civilization known to man. It flourished from prehistoric times to 2000 B.C. It enjoyed its golden age under its most famous ruler and law-giver Hammurabi. It rose no more after the fall of the third dynasty of Ur in 1939 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See 'Myths of Babylonia and Assyria' by Donald A. Mackenzie.

A look at the development of religion in this ancient land of Babylonia cannot fail to convince us that the pattern of *Sanatana Dharma* throughout the world is more or less the same, and that the growth and development of beliefs and practices are homogeneous in all places. The religious instinct, the quest after the Unknown, and the methods employed for satisfying the quest are all of a uniform pattern. A comparison of the religion of Babylonia with Egyptian, Greek, Teutonic, and the Indian mythologies, beliefs and practices, must convince us, as said before, that man's religious instinct and the process of its development follow more or less the same pattern everywhere. Every god and goddess of Sumeria has exact counterparts in every other land of ancient culture. Fear of the Unknown and the quest after relief from fear seem to be the main ingredients of all natural religions. The similarity between the religions of all ancient lands is a clear proof that all beliefs, and the myths based upon them, belong to a common stock of inheritance from some long-forgotten cultural centre of remote antiquity. It may be further argued that homogeneity of religious culture is an evidence of homogeneity of race also. Modern archaeological research has established beyond doubt that there is close resemblance between the civilizations of the Sumerians of Babylonia, the ancient Egyptians, the Neo-lithic inhabitants of Europe, the people of Southern Persia and the Aryans of India.

In Sumeria, as everywhere else in the world, all the gods appear to have evolved alike from various kinds of spirits. Stones, trees, mountains and deserts, rivers and oceans, the air, the sky, the stars, the sun and the moon, in short, everything in nature was believed to be inhabited by spirits. Spirits were responsible for bringing light and darkness, thunder and lightning, good luck and bad luck, diseases and deaths. Fear haunted everybody's mind. The unseen God from whom guilty conscience separated man began to be identified with revengeful evil spirits. These spirits gradually evolved into demons, fairies, semi-human beings and deified heroes. As knowledge increased, gods with greater powers and more benign qualities were evolved.

From worship of spirits, the mind naturally drifted into the worship of the powers of nature, like the sun, moon and stars.

The sacredness of rivers and their power to wash away sins became common beliefs. Single gods developed into couples of gods and goddesses like Tammus and Ishtar in Sumeria, Osiris and Isis in ancient Egypt, Adonis and Aphrodite in Greece, Siva and Parvati in India.

The custom of promoting a favourite goddess to the rank of Queen of Heaven, the Great Mother, has prevailed alike in all parts of the world. Is not the modern cult of Mariolatry a survival of the

ancient Sumerian worship of Ishtar as the Queen of heaven, kept alive in the world under different names like: Diana, Ashtoreth, Artemis, etc.?

Epic heroes like Gilgamesh, Hercules, Rama, Krishna and so on, are idolised with divine honours everywhere.

The Fish, Bear, Bull, Serpent, Bird and other animals are deified as objects of worship. Dedication of virgins for service in temples where immoral gods and goddesses are set up for worship, is a practice common to most ancient religions. Identical legends about the Creation and the Deluge are commonly found, with only local variations, in the mythologies of all lands.

The commonest of all the traits of *Sanatana Dharma* is its inability to carry on without some kind of idol for worship.

The greatest weakness of *Sanatana Dharma* lies in the fact that, instead of contacting the 'One True God' which is the object of its quest, it inevitably degenerates into the habit of worshipping a multiplicity of gods, represented by a multiplicity of images. This downward tendency, instead of uniting, disunites and disintegrates. Hence *Sanatana Dharma* has no message of hope for seekers after truth.

From what has been said so far it is clear that Hinduism too has many things in common with all religions of the ancient world. At the same time Hinduism has certain teachings peculiar to itself. *Advaita*, the doctrine of the oneness of the soul with the Supreme Spirit is the most important of all. This doctrine must have originated out of the soul's genuine desire to get into spiritual fellowship with God. But in the absence of a divine revelation from above as to the real nature of the Holy Spirit of God, and the ways and means of being filled with that Spirit, the doctrine lapsed into the blasphemous heresy of pantheistic *Advaita* which leads the soul into the blind alley of nothingness. Beyond desiring to be energised by the Spirit of God, the protagonists of Vedantism do not know the way leading to it. Hence they are compelled to follow various other trial methods to escape out of the blind alley.

Vedantism\* holds that through certain metaphysical processes it is possible to realise the oneness of the soul with the Supreme Spirit and be 'soaked in that Spirit'. Such a state is the first and highest state to be aspired after by every devotee. This is *uttama sahaja avastha*. But it is impracticable. For those who are incapable of rising to this state, the second step prescribed is meditation and concentration. *Dvaitiya*

\* See Dr. Radhakrishnan's article on, Sri Sharada Devi in the *Vedanta Kesori*, February, 1954 (Madras).

is *dhyana* and *dharana*. In case the mind finds nothing to concentrate upon for meditation, there is the third step. Have an image before you and meditate upon it. *Thritiya pratima puja*. But, if a person is incapable of meditating on an idol, he is advised to follow the fourth step, viz. offerings and pilgrimages; *homayatra chaturthika*.

But even these methods are found to be insufficient to meet the inborn thirst of the soul to know the nature of the unseen God and get into touch with Him on personal lines. Their insufficiency has given rise to the quest after a Manifest Deity. The doctrine of the Manifest Deity of the *Bhagavadgita* is an example to the point. The numerous stories of *Avatars* current in all lands also belong to the same category.

The question whether God is personal or impersonal, and if He is personal, whether He takes any interest in Man has been asked times out of number by all seekers after truth. Here in India, the answer to this question is in the negative. God is impersonal and attributeless. He is *Nirguna Brahma*. He does not know or take interest. He is timeless, spaceless 'Something'. In short, He is a big Zero, a mere blank, as far as man is concerned. The natural consequence of this theory is that man is left with the sole alternative of providing for himself his own *Saguna Brahmas*—gods with attributes, that is gods about whom he can think in personal terms.

In the midst of this habit of trying to discover the unknown God through a multiplicity of *saguna brahmas* created out of human imaginations, there is a tendency towards Monotheism visible everywhere. Although the masses are not seriously affected by such a tendency, scholars and thinkers in many lands have risen above pantheism as well as crude polytheism, and tried to concentrate on the One True God. The name of Socrates is worthy of special mention in this connection. His intuition led him to conclude that there must be a God who loves justice, and righteousness. His reasoning was so perfect and convincing that he was prepared to die for his convictions. His purity of motive, purity of vision, and purity of logic gave him such wonderful moral courage too. If, on the other hand he had allowed his philosophy to be tainted by inferior motives of defending all Greek mythologies, Greek social customs, and everything that went by the name of religion in Greece, it is certain that he would not have arrived at such glorious conclusions about God.

Plato followed in his master's footsteps with equal clearness of vision, and he saw truth just as his master did. He even went a step further. He has handed down to posterity the immortal picture of goodness incarnate being always crucified by evil which masquerades as an angel of light. In his famous 'Just Man', he has given expression to his deep

insight into the problem of sin and righteousness. His intuition which rises to the level of divine inspiration, enables him to see that sin is so powerful and so diabolically entrenched in the heart of man, that even if God were to appear in human form as the embodiment of righteousness, He will be subjected to every kind of persecution, culminating in crucifixion. He says, 'The just man will be scourged, racked, fettered, will have his eyes burnt out, and at last, after suffering every kind of torture will be crucified'.

Plato's picture of justice and injustice is true to life. When the whole world is lying in the Wicked One, it is not strange that wickedness masquerades as goodness and goodness is crucified. True to his forecast, injustice put on the garb of the angel of light, gathered round the Just Man, treated Him shamefully, scourged Him and crucified Him. Darkness tried to put out Light for ever. Untruth wanted to conquer Truth. But Truth conquered and Truth will conquer.

Like Plato, Virgil was one who desired to see a new age of justice and peace ushered in by some Ideal Person, when fear, strife and crime would be abolished for ever.

On the whole, *Sanatana Dharma* is man's search after God. It is man's attempt to contact the unknown God. It is a groping after Him to know His mind and His will concerning man. It is man's attempt to get rid of the evil passions of fear, lust and anger, and enter into an atmosphere of love, hope and peace. In their search for light, many thinkers and seers have reached great heights of spiritual insight and intuition. But, though man can rise to very great heights in the spiritual realm and discover great and noble truths about God and His ways, a full discovery of God's will, and the nature of God's demands from man, will be impossible unless God Himself condescends to reveal them. No amount of one-sided human guesses can gauge the depth of God's mysterious mind and His plans for His world. Sin has darkened man's spiritual vision, blinded his understanding and alienated his mind from God to such an extent that it is impossible for him to know the will of God concerning him without the aid of divine revelation.

A clear distinction must be drawn here between divine revelation and divine benevolence. God is good to all that cry to Him. His mercy is for all. He feeds the crying raven. He clothes the grass of the field. The afflicted and the needy receive mercy and succour from Him. He makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall alike on the just and on the unjust. He is no respecter of persons. Everyone that cries to Him in truth can hope for His mercy.

But divine revelation is something different from divine benevo-

lence. An earthly king may be very good to his subjects. He may grant free access to his presence to all his subjects with their petitions. But he makes his own selection of individuals whenever he wants to announce his will and his wishes to his subjects. It is the duty of all his subjects to listen to the announcements and act in accordance with them. The liberty of personal access to the king does not entitle any subject to disobey the king's proclamation. The Bible, in like manner, claims that it contains God's proclamations to the world, through a number of individuals of His own choice. It contains the record of such proclamations or revelations made from time to time through chosen men of different lands at different periods of human history. It professes to convey God's will concerning His world till the end of the ages. Any one who makes an unbiased scrutiny of these revelations cannot fail to be convinced of the truth of this claim. One such proclamation, in the words of St. Paul, containing an appeal to *Sanatana Dharma* and a statement of God's plans concerning the future of the world is quoted below:

'God's anger is being revealed from heaven; his anger against the impiety and wrong doing of the men whose wrong doing denies his truth full scope. The knowledge of God is clear to their minds; God himself has made it clear to them; from the foundation of the world men have caught sight of his invisible nature, his eternal power and his divineness, as they are known through his creatures. Thus there is no excuse for them; although they had the knowledge of God, they did not honour him or give thanks to him as God; they became fantastic in their notions, and their senseless hearts grew benighted; they who claimed to be so wise, turned fools, and exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for representations of perishable man, of bird and beast and reptile. That is why God abandoned their lustful hearts to filthy practices of dishonouring their own bodies among themselves. They had exchanged God's truth for a lie, reverencing and worshipping the creature in preference to the Creator . . . . And as they scorned to keep God in their view, so God has abandoned them to a frame of mind worthy of all scorn that prompts them to disgraceful acts.' (Romans 1:18-32. Mgr. Knox)

The above description of natural religion by St. Paul was written in the first century of the Christian era. He had in view the religions of the world around him at the time, particularly as they were practised in the great cities of Europe: Corinth, Athens, Rome, etc. After closely

studying the *Sanatana Dharma* of his time, in all the countries he visited, he once for all, delivered his great message to paganism in an impressive speech made at Athens, the seat of philosophy and learning. His speech deserves to be quoted here in full:

'So Paul stood up in full view of the Areopagus, and said, Wherever I look, I find you scrupulously religious. Why, in examining your shrines as I passed them, I found among others an altar with the inscription, "To the Unknown God". And it is this unknown object of your devotion that I am revealing to you. The God who made the world and all that is in it, that God who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples that our hands have built; no human handicraft can do him service, as if he stood in need of anything, he, who gives to all of us life and breath and all we have. It is he who has made, of one single stock, all the nations that were to dwell over the face of the earth. And he has given to each the cycles it was to pass through and the fixed limits of its habitation, leaving them to search for God; would they somehow grope their way towards him? And yet, after all, he is not far from any one of us; it is in him that we live, and move and have our being; thus some of your own poets have told us:—"For, indeed, we are his children". If we are the children of God, we must not imagine that the divine nature can be represented in gold or silver or stone, carved by man's art and thought. God has shut his eyes to these passing follies of ours; now, he calls upon all men everywhere, to repent, because he has fixed a day when he will pronounce just judgement on the whole world. And the man whom he has appointed for that end, he has accredited to all of us, by raising him up from the dead'.  
(Acts 17:22-31: Knox)

This speech of St. Paul to all philosophers of the world, was definitely a call to everybody to return to the God of truth in repentance and faith. He preached Christ not as the founder of a new sect among the Babel of sects in the world; but as the true way of life. He preached that life without Christ is condemnation and death. In Christ is life and salvation, because Jesus Christ who came to call erring humanity back to repentance and faith is soon to return to judge the unrepentant.

It was Moses the ancient leader of Israel, who taught the world for the first time, that God is One, that he is to be looked upon as a Living Person, and that the most fundamental thing in religion is Love to this Personal God. Christianity which sprung up from Judaism went a

step further and taught that this God, He in whom we live and move and have our being, in order to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, is to be approached not on pantheistic lines, but, as 'our Father in heaven'.

It must be further stated that it is only Judaism and Christianity, that have definitely announced to the world that this Living Father of us all has clearly made known to the world that He has a definite plan with regard to His world and its future, and that He expects every man everywhere to repent and fall in line with this revealed plan of His.

Before we close, a few words must be said about Islam which is also an important world religion, claiming to be revealed by an angel of God. We shall be content with making only a few casual remarks. Mohamed the Prophet began his work in A.D. 610. He preached bitterly against idolatry. He taught that there was only one God, and that he was himself the prophet of God. The Koran is believed to be directly revealed, word by word, by the angel Gabriel. When his opponents accused him of forgery, he asked them how it could be a forgery, when he himself was unlearned and ignorant. A large percentage of the contents of the Koran consists of stories from the Old Testament. It also contains brief accounts of the life, work and crucifixion of Christ, besides various references to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ. The creation story, the fall of man, the loss of paradise, the flood and Noah's Ark, stories about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt under the Pharaohs, their flight from Egypt to Palestine under the leadership of Moses, the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, the stories of David, Solomon, Jonah and many other things contained in the Bible are extensively narrated in the Koran. A few incidents connected with John the Baptist and his father Zachariah are also mentioned. According to the Koran these Biblical stories are not taken from the Bible; they are all direct revelations. The Koran ridicules the Christian custom of using the expression, 'Son of God' with reference to Christ. It has also its own version of the crucifixion of Christ. Jesus, the Prophet says, was not crucified. By some miraculous impersonation, Jesus escaped from the cross. But 'God raised him up unto himself'. (IV. 155-157). He further adds that the mission of Jesus culminated with this event. Christ's promise to be with his Church till the end of the world is discredited by the Koran. Moreover, belief in the promise of the Holy Spirit to teach and to guide believers till the end, is claimed by the Prophet to be based on a wrong interpretation of the word used by Christ at the time. Correctly interpreted, that word actually refers to Mohamed the Prophet. (LXI. 6) Paradoxical as it may seem, the prophet at the same time assured his hearers in the most unmistakable terms that Jesus will appear at the end of the ages to judge mankind and

set up a new sinless age. 'And Jesus shall be a sign for the coming of the hour of judgement'. (XLIII. 61. M. Ali's Trans.) About the last day the Koran says, 'Then, behold, the eyes of unbelievers will fixedly stare in horror. Ah, we were heedless of this. Woe to us. The great terror. . . . The day that we roll up the heavens like a scroll. Before this we wrote in the psalms after the message given to Moses: 'My servants the righteous shall inherit the earth'. (XXI. 95- 108). 'The hour is coming; there is no doubt thereon because God raises up those who are in the tombs'. (XXII. 7). 'And the day that the trumpet will be sounded—then will be smitten with terror those who are in the heavens and those who are in the earth'. (XXVII. 87).

This digression into the Koran is meant to show the testimony it gives, despite its other anti-Christian points of view, in support of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. Mohammedanism which is semitic in origin and structure aims at the reform of *Sanatana Dharma* by abolishing idolatry and establishing the worship of the one true God, the God of Abraham and Ishmael. But what the human heart stands really in need of is not a muscular power to break the hand-made idols of human worship, but a spiritual power to break the more deep-seated idols of the heart. It needs a power from above, from the Spirit of God, to break the hard hearts of men. You may break the heads of all the idols in the land by sheer force, but the inner idols of pride, greed and lust cannot be broken by force. Only Love come down from above can break these idols of the heart. Touched by that Loving Hand, all idols will automatically break into pieces. The human spirit will revive. Chords that were broken will vibrate once more. Harmony will be established.

We shall conclude this chapter with a closer look at some of the natural religions of the world:

We have already seen that the highest goal of Hinduism is 'to be soaked in the spirit'. It is not clear what exactly is meant by the expression 'soaked in the spirit'. If it means being indwelt by the Spirit of God to rekindle Life, Light and Love in our evil hearts, it is to be sought for as a free gift of God, submitting to the divinely appointed conditions, and not as a reward for efforts like penance, concentration, obeisance to idols, pilgrimages, self-torture, yogic practices of breath control, etc. To direct a sincere inquirer to go and try idol-worship or offerings and pilgrimages is to betray utter spiritual bankruptcy on the part of the *guru*. It is like the blind leading the blind. It is misleading the soul from the Real to the unreal, from Light to darkness, from Immortality to death. Unfortunately, such a downward course is inevitable as long as Hinduism continues to think of God as an attri-

buteless, impersonal something. Neither dry abstractions nor polytheistic belief in a multiplicity of gods can help the soul to know the Only True God. The way to contact God does not lie along such rationalistic thinking. Metaphysical speculations on topics like *Prusha* and *Prakriti* (cosmic Force and primordial Nature), Mind and Matter, Brahman and *Atman* (the Supreme Spirit and the individual Soul), Monism, Pantheism, Dualism and so on, will not be of any positive help to bring us back to God. To continue to walk obstinately along these dark paths is to allow ourselves to be sunk in idolatry and superstition for ever.

\*The aspiration towards harmony with nature led Confucius to evolve his ethical formula known as the Five Relationships: between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, older friend and younger friend. He believed, and that rightly, that peace and harmony could be established in the world if everybody observed these rules of right relationships. He hoped to build up a perfect social order based on these ethics. But he left God altogether out of his calculations. He warned his hearers that 'Absorption in the study of the Supernatural is most harmful', and, 'To devote oneself earnestly to one's duty to humanity . . . may be called wisdom'. But he failed to realise that any social structure built on volatile maxims like Love, Duty, Truth, Non-violence, etc., without giving God the place due to Him is doomed to failure in the long run, because mere abstract ideas alone, however lofty they be, cannot sustain society for long. Though Confucius taught the famous Golden Rule: 'What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others', he had no hold on the Living God. About his last days, it is recorded that 'In the summer of 497 B.C., he fell ill and went to his bedchamber, muttering, 'The great mountain must fall. The strong timber is broken. The wise man fades as does the plant'. A week later he died and confucianism descended into worship of spirits and ancestors. Altruistic principles, however good they be are like writings on water. They disappear along with the hand that writes them, because they are not linked with God.

Like Confucianism, Buddhism also, with all its fine teachings about Ahimsa (non-violence) and kindness to man and animals built its ethics on a merely human foundation without any reference to God. Buddha preached his Eight-fold Path for the attainment of Nirvana (bliss). The light that he sought after and for which he sacrificed his all was on the problem of suffering. After years of meditation and penance he

\* For the quotations in these pages on Confucius and Lao Tze, the author is indebted to the articles on World Religions in the Life Magazines.

was rewarded with the intellectual illumination that all suffering was the result of the evil desires in man, and that a state of perfect bliss is available to every one who is able to remove all evil desires from his heart. With this object in view he evolved his Eight-fold Path. But, as in the case of all natural religions, Buddhism too had nothing to teach about God. Buddhism started with the laudable purpose of driving out casteism and idolatry from India. But casteism and idolatry succeeded in driving Buddhism out of India, because it was founded not on the solid rock of faith in a living and loving God, but on the shifting sand of man-made philosophy. Not long after Buddha's death, his religion degenerated into idol-worship. It was Buddhism that introduced the practice of idol-making in China.

Taoism the mystic philosophy of Lao Tze (written also Lao Tzu) has derived its name from his concept of Tao which is interpreted to mean Cosmic Law, The Eternal Way, The Supreme Governing Force behind the universe. Lao Tze taught that the source of harmony in nature and the origin of all the order in the world is Tao. Tao is the ultimate source of all things. It is impossible to define Tao. No word or name can define nature's deepest mystery—the mystery of Creation and Life. Through Tao all things have been given life and form. It existed before heaven and earth. It stands alone and unchanging. It permeates all.

It must be plain to the reader that Lao Tze's concept of Tao given above is in many respects, analogous to the doctrine of the Logos in St. John's Gospel. The collection of Lao Tze's mystic teachings is contained in the book *Tao Te Ching* attributed to him. It develops the thesis that knowledge of Tao is the secret of life and the aim of human existence is to attain harmony with Tao. Heaven, earth and man constitute a single indivisible unity governed by Tao. If man would conform to natural law (Tao), society can enjoy tranquillity and peace. When he transgresses, both heaven and nature are disturbed, the intricate machinery of the cosmos breaks down and calamities ensue. Concord between heaven and earth is achieved only when Tao is allowed to take its natural course. Unhappily, man disarranges the cosmic order by his headstrong purposes. It is this wilful waywardness of man that is responsible for all the ills of society.

Though Lao Tze's doctrine of the virtue of mystical union with the Ultimate (Tao) sounds very much like St. John's doctrine of the Logos, there is a wide gulf between the two. Lao Tze's Tao was an impersonal something called Cosmic Law. Whereas St. John's Logos, borrowed from Greek philosophy, where it was a mere philosophic concept without any reference to God, is the Divine Will of God

conceived as a Person who is behind all cosmic laws. St. John makes use of the term Logos to express the Creative as well as the Redemptive Will of God. John's inspired vision enabled him to discover that this Divine Will, this Logos became flesh in the Person whom he knew as Jesus Christ. Three and a half years' close contact with this Person convinced him beyond doubt that all human aspirations to see God's Will expressed in tangible form as the Audible Divine Word, have found their perfect fulfilment in the Person of Jesus Christ. Hence he could proclaim to all the world:

'That which was from the beginning,  
which we have heard,  
which we have seen with our eyes,  
which we have looked upon,  
and our hands have handled,  
of the Word of Life;

For the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us'. (I John 1: 1, 2.)

Again:

'In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him;

and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was Life; and the Life was the Light of men'.

(John 1: 1-4).

Thus, while philosophic speculations were giving out mere guesses and vague opinions about the Unknown God, like the proverbial blind men who gave their impressions about the elephant they could not see, St. John found the grace to discover Jesus Christ as the Logos of all philosophic aspirations, The Word of The Living God become flesh. He discovered that Jesus Christ was the most potent factor of existence that can throw all the necessary light on the riddle of the universe. No amount of rationalistic thinking can unravel the mysteries of creation and life. Rebellious mankind is not permitted to ascend into heaven to pry into the mysteries of God. The gates of paradise are closely guarded against all the curiosities of intruders. Unless the Redemptive Will of the Creator—the Logos—opens the gates of heaven for the repentant, there is no other way of hope for sinful man.

Taoism, like all other natural religions of the world, has lapsed into sorcery, fortune-telling, charm-selling, and alchemy. It became a dying religion long before the end of the 19th century. Similarly, all faiths built on vague speculations on unfathomable verities are doomed to die a natural death, because they cannot help to bring the soul in touch with Reality. The same is the case with the so-called scientific conjectures about First Cause, First Protoplasm, and the concomitant theories about natural selection, struggle for existence, survival of the fittest, and so on. Humanity shudders at the thought of what is going to happen to the world when the protagonists of the theory of the Survival of the Fittest let loose all their diabolic weapons against one another.

The Bible counsels every man to give up all vain speculations and to look to Christ for life, light and love. He is able to take charge of our blinded souls in order to lead us into all truth and to remould us into His own divine image by His Holy Spirit. The Risen Saviour will become our Living Master. His pierced hands are sure guarantee that we are in safe and reliable hands. Our highest wisdom consists in surrendering ourselves to Him. Therein lies our highest glory. 'Christ in you is the hope of glory'. Christ is 'the power of God and the wisdom of God'.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DIVINE PLAN OF SALVATION

FROM THE brief survey of *Sanatana Dharma* in the previous chapter, we have seen how humanity is struggling to get into touch with God, and how different people prescribe different ways to achieve this end, and how people in their frustration console themselves with the belief that all religions lead to the same goal. In the midst of all the conflicting views and clashes of interests in the world, many have lost their faith in religion altogether, because they do not know where to turn for real truth. They do not see any ground for assurance that truth will triumph at last. Consequently, the youth of today have become sceptic about religion and eternal truths. At the same time fear and forebodings about the future dominate every heart. Various questions as to what the final fate of humanity is going to be, arise in the minds of everybody.

Is the world to continue for ever in this state of mutual conflict? How long will anger, passion and hatred continue to rule this miserable world of ours? Has God forsaken the world? Is it total annihilation that is awaiting us? Is life going to be clean wiped off? Or, is there any hope for humanity? Will truth win? Is there any guarantee that it will? Will sin and misery be abolished once for all and righteousness established? The following pages maintain that there are hopeful answers to these questions.

The Bible has a Message of Hope, Good News for all the world. It announces the startling News that while mankind has almost given up its hope of contacting the unknown by mere self-effort, God has actually condescended to contact man on His own merciful initiative, long, long ago. He has spoken to man, and communicated to him the message of His goodwill towards all men. This incredibly startling news can be seen in the Jewish Bible which Christians too have adopted as part of their own. They call it the Old Testament. Christians had no hand whatever in writing it. It was written centuries before Christianity came into existence. In this Old Testament, they discovered that the God whom Jesus Christ revealed to the world as His Father, is the same God who is described there as having contacted man through a person named Abraham.

There are people who cannot bring themselves to believe that God personally interferes in human affairs. They think that God is too big for insignificant man, who is but of yesterday, to know Him

or to contact Him. God is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. He is unknowable because He is suprapersonal and supracosmic. It is absurd, they say, for worm-like man to claim that such a God condescends to speak to him. It must be admitted that there is a good deal of truth in this contention. King Solomon, in his prayer of dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem, asks:—'Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?' and, we may add, How much less this tiny human frame of ours? Knowing this suprapersonal and supracosmic transcendence of the Great God, Solomon at the same time prays to the same God to condescend in a personal manner to listen to the penitent prayers of his people offered from the same temple or from wherever they may happen to be. Old Testament saints who had learned to approach God on personal and spiritual terms, have recorded their personal experience of God in the following words: 'For thus sayeth the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones'. Isaiah LVII, 15. The supracosmic and suprapersonal eternal condescends to dwell in the heart of the humble and the contrite.

One or two simple illustrations will help to make this point clearer. Let us compare God, for argument's sake, to a multi-millionaire industrialist who is the master of various high-power factories, established on several square miles of land and worked by thousands of factory hands. Suppose this industrial magnate has his own cottage in a corner of the factory land where he lives with his wife and an infant-in-arms. Will the burden of running his huge concern affect his unique love and affection towards his darling offspring, sleeping in the cradle? Will his attitude towards his child and towards his factory be the same? Let something happen to the dear babe made in his own image, and we can notice the difference at once. What unique love, what affection, what endearment!

It is true that we are too finite to understand the Infinite who is supracosmic and suprapersonal. It is true that we cannot know all about God through our tiny minds. But though we cannot comprehend the greatness of God, we can comprehend His tenderness and His love towards us, because we are made in His image. All that we are in need of knowing is His love and His goodwill towards us and not His other unknowable attributes with which He runs His world. The infant of yesterday in his mother's arms is not capable of comprehending the greatness or the wisdom of his mother. He cannot under-

stand the height, weight or strength of his mother. He cannot comprehend the vastness of the house over which she rules as mistress. But he can understand the sweetness of his mother's milk, the loving arms which caress him, the affectionate look in her eyes and the endearing kisses with which she often covers him.

What we mean by personal relationship between God and man, must be plain from what has been said above. It is not the transcendent greatness of Almighty God but His fatherly love that the soul needs to know. It was such a relationship that God sought with mankind down He contacted Abraham some 4000 years ago. The first book of the Jewish Bible is known as the Book of Genesis, the book of Origins. In this first book we read of the origin of the sin of rebellion against God and the origin of natural religions. Side by side with these are described the story of God's contact with man and the announcement of His plans to reconcile rebellious man to Him.

In the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis, we can trace fallen man's autonomous efforts to establish peace, prosperity and happiness in the world without acknowledging God in his schemes and efforts. Divine life, light and love being cut off at their source on account of man's disobedience, he does not realise the truth that he is following dark and diabolic ways in search of happiness. Within the small compass of these first eleven chapters of the Old Testament we can see, in an embryonic form all types of human wickedness beginning to take root. Man begins his self-centred life with a guilty conscience. He feels he is under some divine curse. Fear, hatred and mutual distrust automatically follow. The first murder takes place. Corrupt ways, wickedness and violence become the ruling principles of life. The imagination of man becomes perpetually corrupt without any place for God in the heart. The spirit is subdued and the flesh is enthroned. Animal hunting for pleasure develops into exploitation and enslavement of man. Townships and small states begin to take shape. These form the nucleus of the earliest empires known to history.

The slogan of those ancient builders of states was: 'Come on; Let us unite; Let us make a name for ourselves'. It continues to be the slogan of all builders of states to the present day. The echo of this call for union for the purpose of building world-wide states in order 'to make a name for ourselves' can be heard throughout the world. Two such calls constantly dinning into our ears at the present day may be noted: The most outstanding one is the famous call by Karl Marx: 'Workers of the world, unite'. 'Let us build the City of Man free from all interferences on the part of God. Let us throw a challenge to God by making it as high as heaven and thus make a name for ourselves.'

The other call that we are daily hearing is from the two rival camps of the war-mad world: 'Ye nations of the world, Come over to our camp; we will give you peace and plenty'.

If the first eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis depict the dark picture of man's foolish attempts at godless autonomy, the twelfth chapter begins with an altogether other-worldly statement of how God comes down to arrest man's perilous downward course, by a loving counter-move on His own part. This message of hope is conveyed to a man named Abraham, the resident of a grossly idolatrous city of Mesopotamia. Through him and through his progeny God prepares the soil for planting his tender Vine of Love in a hostile world. Two thousand years later, Jesus announces:—'I am the True Vine, and My Father is the husbandman'. John 15: 1. The repeated failure of even the best among Abraham's descendants to rise up to God's expectations is a clear proof of the utterly depraved condition of mankind out of which God had to choose a race which would faithfully respond to His call and rise up to it. The Old Testament is full of the failures of these chosen people just as the history of those who call themselves Christians in these New Testament days is full of black records of their own. The miracle lies in God's grace which is surely and certainly perfecting a society for Himself out of such hopeless material, in spite of all failures.

Abraham's contemplative nature, besides his other great qualities of head and heart, made him fit for receiving this message of hope. His heart was open for divine contact. God began to communicate to him his message through visions, dreams and voices. The drastic changes brought about in the life of Abraham must convince anybody that he was following a heavenly vision and not a chimera. At every turn he had the sure conviction that the unseen God of all the earth had called him for a specific purpose and was leading him towards that goal. His was a unique experience, the like of which cannot be found anywhere else in human history. It was direct divine inspiration that kindled in him such wonderful faith to obey the call of the unseen and unknown God, to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house to go forth to an unknown place, promised as an inheritance by the same unknown God. His faith was extraordinary. Heavenly vision guided him ever since. His faith became so strong that later on he was ready to sacrifice his only son because he believed that God was able to raise him up to life even if he were sacrificed. This wonderful faith of Abraham the father of Israel, deservedly gave him the name of the 'Father of the faithful'. Despite all their failures his descendants tried to walk in this line of faith in the unseen God and His plans for the redemption of mankind.

We could have treated all this account of God descending to talk to a man in Mesopotamia, named Abraham, thousands of years ago, as utterly incredible nonsense, and as an unscientific absurdity written by some unscrupulous Jew for the self-glorification of his own race. We could have readily treated the whole story just as we treat other myths and fables of the world. We could have boldly said that we have nothing to do with such old-world legends. But how can we do so when we know with absolute certainty that the entire development of human history ever since is directly based on what is alleged to have transpired between the unknown God and this man Abraham at that time? If the rise and fall of nations have direct connection with the tiny race descended from Abraham, how can we treat the story as false? How can we maintain an attitude of 'indifference' towards this when the question keeps ringing in our ears: 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?' Lam. 1: 12.

Let us look more closely at this alleged contact between God and man. In the first place, we see that God issues a two-fold command to Abraham:

'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee'. Gen. 12: 1.

'I am almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect'. Gen. 17: 1.

In the second place, we see three promises of a concrete nature given to Abraham. These comprise a Land; a Progeny to inherit that land; and a Person born as a special Seed in Abraham's race as a blessing to all the families of the earth.

1. A Land: 'All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.' Gen. 8: 15. This refers to the land of Canaan, now known as Palestine. Today, 4000 years after this promise, we see Palestine being gradually reoccupied by the descendents of Abraham, the children of Israel.

2. A Progeny: 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly'. Gen. 16: 10. There are only two races in the world today which can trace their origin from a historical person like Abraham who lived nearly 4000 years ago, the Jews and the Arabs, who are still antagonistic to each other.

3. A special Seed to be a blessing to the whole world. It is an undisputed fact of history that this refers to Jesus Christ. 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'. Gen. 22: 18; Gal. 3: 16.

It is not Greek history, or Roman history but the story of God's contact with Abraham four thousand and odd years ago, that has shaped

the destiny of the world ever since. Whatever has taken place in the world in the past has taken place in pursuance of and in fulfilment of these three promises made to Abraham. God was chalking out to Abraham the outlines of His programme for saving humanity from total ruin. The whole Bible is the unfolding of this programme of God to arrest the downward course of man. Political histories of nations have nothing of permanent value in them. They contain nothing more than a display of the mad, godless, greedy and selfish activities of man goaded by shortsighted whims of mass psychology. They are like the 'raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame' (Jude 18). 'The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it'. This is how Isaiah describes political society that does not fall in line with God's eternal plans.

The selecting of Israel, Abraham's progeny, for divine discipline and training, with the object of carrying out God's purposes in the world through them, should not be thought of as any partiality on the part of God. God was only selecting the most suitable vessel best fitted for his purposes. Similarly, the selection of Palestine with its holy capital, Zion, as the centre for diffusing light to all the world does not mean any partisanship or favouritism on the part of God. In the same manner, if God who spoke through His prophets in former days, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son according to the promise made to Abraham, what is there to prevent us from believing in the continuation of the chain of revelations from God? How can we say it is not unique? How can we say that all roads lead to God in the face of such a revelation?

In pursuance of the plan revealed to Abraham, God trained and disciplined him in perfect obedience to the unseen God and perfect faith in his future plans. It was only then that a son was given to him, and Canaan the promised land was assured as his possession for ever. 'Walk before me and be thou perfect', the command he received from God meant unconditional submission to divine discipline. All his descendants had to be disciplined like-wise. To this day Israel is undergoing such discipline in obedience to the command given to Abraham so long ago.

Before we proceed further, a digression may be permitted here to say a few words about the merciless destruction of several Canaanite races, such as, the Hittites, the Canaanites, the Amorites and others by Moses and his successor Joshua at the command of Jehovah. This has been a stumbling block to many. It has led some people to think that this Jehovah must be only a tribal god and not the God of all the earth. Others have concluded that He was not as perfect in love as the

God whom Jesus Christ represented. Still others have thought that Jehovah was only one among the numerous heathen gods of war, thunder and lightning, pestilence, etc., full of anger, revenge and passion. Otherwise, what justification can there be, they ask, on the part of Jehovah who is said to be merciful, compassionate and gracious, to order the ruthless slaughter of all these races for the purpose of making room for Israel, His favourite people? How could a compassionate God command Moses to exterminate these people from their own land without sparing even women and children? Is not such a God really cruel, revengeful and partial, and unworthy of our respect?

We must look into the Bible itself to find a proper answer to this question. In the very place in the Bible where God is said to have revealed himself to Israel as merciful and compassionate, we find God revealing that He also possesses a certain other attribute, which, of course, is not very pleasing to any of us. He says that He is also very stern and uncompromising. If He is merciful He is also very just. He is a consuming fire. This is what God proclaimed to Israel and to all the world about His nature: 'The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. . . .' Exodus 5: 6, 7. He will not acquit the guilty. He will not tell the guilty person that he is not guilty. He will mete out just punishment on all who refuse to obey Him. Unrepented guilt will meet with divine justice. God is no respecter of persons. That the wages of sin is death, is God's unchangeable law. God is merciful to all who cry to Him for mercy and forgiveness. But, He says He will not acquit the rebellious. When the cup of iniquity is full, when the heart's rebellion against the dictates of conscience reaches its climax, divine justice must descend upon all. When God's merciful pleadings through His Spirit have no more room in the heart, condemnation must follow. This is a most terrible truth according to the Bible.

It is recorded in the Bible that in the Great Deluge, only eight souls were saved and all the rest were destroyed. The reasons given for such wholesale destruction of His own creatures by God are: 'And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth was also corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence'. Gen. 6: 5, 11. The emphasis here seems to be on the words, 'Every', 'Only', and 'Continually'. Every thought—Only evil—Continually evil. They describe the last stage, the climax of man's guilt in the eyes of God. When man's mind is never bent

on anything but evil, (Moffatt) there will be no more room for mercy. This state of the human heart may be compared to a very good fruit which, having become totally rotten inside, without an inch of edible part in it, is good for nothing except to be thrown out. The wickedness of the pre-deluvian people had reached such a hopeless state in God's eyes. 'Will not the God of all the earth do justly!?' When all the plants in a plantation, however valuable they be, are hopelessly infected by some contagious disease, the planter has no other go but to cut them down and burn them to ashes, before he tries a new variety of plants on that land.

In the case of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah also, the reason given in the Bible is: 'Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous'. Gen. 18: 20. Here also we see that the cup of their iniquity was full. The grievousness of the sin of Sodom which led to its total destruction by fire may be gauged from the behaviour of the two girls snatched from the burning city. The sacred writer has left us the record of the utter depravity of these two girls who were supposed to be the best among the entire population of Sodom.

All that has been said above is equally applicable in the case of the Canaanites also. Why God was going to destroy the Canaanites was communicated to Israel beforehand in the following words: 'Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, 'For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee . . .' (see Deut. 9: 4, 5.) It is quite clear from these words that God permitted the destruction of the Canaanites because of their extreme wickedness. The process of weeding out corrupt society is a thing which goes on for ever throughout the world. We must remember that 'The judgement is the Lord's'. History tells us that the Assyrians were destroyed by the Babylonians, the latter by the Persians who in their turn were overcome by Greece. Similarly the mighty Roman Empire was destroyed by barbarian hordes. Certainly all these historical events took place with God's knowledge. If some sacred writer had thought of recording these events in the Bible he would certainly have traced them all as events happening according to God's command. When Assyria destroyed Israel, and when later on Babylon carried away Judah into seventy years' captivity, Biblical writers have written down that it was God who gave them up for such

chastisements. Similarly we read in the New Testament that on the last day of His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ stood in the sacred Jewish Temple of Jerusalem and pronounced a most terrible judgement upon Israel because they 'would not' accept His merciful call. Was it justifiable on the part of Jesus Christ to have pronounced such a heavy sentence on His own race? Think of the horror of these words: 'Your habitation is left unto you desolate'. 'The days will come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another'. 'Ye shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'. How could 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild', pronounce such a merciless judgement upon His own people? The sentence comprised the famous inhuman siege of Jerusalem by Caesar Titus and two thousand years of Israel's exile, during which they were hunted from city to city as everybody's enemy; culminating in the horrors of the Belsen Chamber, where sixty lakhs of Jews were brutally done away with. The mere sight of the mountainous heap of the shoes of the children massacred by Hitler shockingly reminds every visitor of the ruthlessness of the wholesale slaughter. The victims of the great deluge, or the Canaanites destroyed by Israel cannot be as big in number as in this holocaust. Though Israel has served the sentence of two thousand years' exile, their judgement is still to cover a further period until they repent and 'look upon Him whom they pierced' and welcome Him into their midst saying: 'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah'. Is this Jehovah a tribal god? Is He a heathen god like Odin or Thor? Is He cruel, revengeful and partial? Or is He the Judge of all the earth? Throughout the history of Israel, we see them subjected to most rigorous disciplinary measures. Israel had to be melted and purified, like gold in the fiery furnace of affliction to be moulded into a fit vessel for God's use.

After suffering bitter hardships at the hands of the Pharaohs of Egypt for about four hundred years, God raises up a man named Moses to lead Israel to the Promised land of Canaan. On the way, Moses taught them many things about God. The most fundamental of these were: 1. 'Hear, O Israel, The Lord thy God is One'. 2. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind'; and 3. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'.

The most vital truths forgotten by fallen man are contained in the above words revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai and transmitted by him to the world through Israel. God is One; and loving Him

whole-heartedly is the first duty of man. It is from Love that mankind has fallen. By disconnecting ourselves from Infinite Love we are fallen into the horrible pit of blind hatred and impure passions. Hence, in continuation of the self-revelations of God, made to Abraham, God unfolds Himself further through Moses on Mount Sinai. God reveals that the only condition for reunion with Him in true Yoga is to return to Him in whole-hearted penitent Love. Such an apparently impossible commandment to love God and man, was intended to convince man of the depth of godlessness into which he has fallen, and his eternal separation from the source of Love. It was also meant to convince him of his utter inability to rise to the level of Divine Love. Every man knows that the law of love is good. But how to perform it no one knows. Then why did God give such an impossible command? It sounds like the voice of a father standing at the top of a deep and dangerous ditch, calling out to his own son who is fallen into it and is lying there in a semi-conscious condition, bruised and broken, to climb up to the top. The father's call will certainly awaken in the sons' mind a sense of the great depth into which he is fallen, and at the same time the utter impossibility of getting to the top, himself. Such despair can only make him feel doubly dead, unless the father goes down to his rescue. For, though his spirit is willing, his flesh is awfully weak.

Thank God, His self-revelation through the law of Moses did not end there. According to the promise made to Abraham: 'In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed', Jesus Christ came as the incarnation of that love to enable obedient souls to practise love. He came to make us what He teaches we should be. The redemption means that Jesus Christ can put into willing and obedient hearts the disposition of love that ruled His own life.

His love did not allow Him to remain at the top of the ditch asking His children to come up by their own efforts. Infinite Love has compelled Him to descend into the very ditch to lift up the fallen one, and bring him up on His own shoulders. In the process He Himself had to endure agonising pain. Thus we see that divine revelation started with Abraham and unfolded by Moses, finds its climax in Christ, who appeared before the world offering to revitalise every willing soul.

Infinite Love alone can generate divine love in human hearts. When such Heavenly Love touches the heart, it will awaken in the soul New Life, New Light and New Love. It must be noted here, before passing, that the natural religions of the world teach next to nothing about a Personal God and His Infinite Love. Most of them stop with human love; and in some cases they extend to love of animals. This,

they think is the whole of religion. But though a person bestows all his goods to feed the poor, or give his body to be burned, and have no love to God first, and then to man, he is nothing in the eyes of God.

Let us now direct our attention to certain prophetic sayings of Moses. After forty years of wandering through the wilderness, Israel reached the borders of Palestine. Moses had by now become very old. He knew his time for departing was near. He felt very much concerned for the future of the people of Israel. He called them all together and imparted to them his final parting message. A perusal of his message cannot fail to convince even a casual reader, of the deep prophetic insight of Moses into the course of world events reaching to our own days. All history may be seen summed up in his prophetic words, which no amount of prejudice can explain away. His closing words were:

'When ye shall have remained long in the land, and ye shall corrupt yourselves and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke Him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it. Ye shall not prolong your days upon it, ye shall be utterly destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations from one end of the earth even unto the other. . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart and failing of eyes and sorrow of mind; And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance, of thy life. . . . And when thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice . . . the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity and have compassion upon thee and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God had scattered thee'. Deut. 30.

It must be clearly borne in mind that the words quoted above were uttered by Moses about 4000 years ago. It is the God who spoke to Abraham nearly 600 years before, that is now inspiring Moses to utter these prophetic words of such far-reaching significance. The last four thousand years of world history in general and Jewish history in particular are compressed into a nutshell in this tremendous utterance. Several nations have risen and fallen since then. A few have helped, and others have hindered the progress of Israel. The ancient world-empires in the midst of which Israel grew up: Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome have all gone their way. Among

the modern nations that desired to annihilate Israel altogether from the face of the earth was, as we all know, Hitler's Germany. What Hitler did to the Jews and what disastrous consequences he met with, is very recent history.

Though Israel forgot God and corrupted their ways in the pre-Christian era just as Moses had foretold, there was a small remnant in their midst to carry on the torch of faith and usher in the Messiah promised to Abraham. When the Messiah came, all but a very small minority refused to accept Him. The minority which believed in Jesus became the nucleus of the early Christian Church. The majority which rejected Christ was driven into exile for further melting and remoulding.

It is a well-known fact of history that this desolation, in all its terrible detail as foretold by Christ, took place soon afterwards under the Roman emperor Titus in A.D. 70. For the last 2000 years Israel has been wandering throughout the four quarters of the earth as unwanted aliens without any rest or peace, just as Moses had warned them 4000 years ago.

The last two world-wars miraculously changed the history of Israel in two unexpected ways. The first war opened up Palestine as their national home after being trodden under foot by gentiles for two thousand years. The second world-war, in which Hitler directed all his fury upon these stateless wanderers and destroyed, in cold blood, not less than six million people, served in the mysterious plan of the God of Abraham, to revive in the hearts of the Jews scattered all over the world, a new spirit and a new zeal to return to and rebuild the land from which they were driven out two thousand years ago. Though God allowed them to pass through fire and water all these centuries, He has not allowed the fire to consume them altogether or the water to submerge them totally.

It is said that the great Emperor Charlemagne asked his courtier for two simple proofs for the existence of God, in as brief words as possible. The courtier unhesitatingly replied: 'Israel and Christ.' Are there any two better proofs in human history than 'Israel and Christ' to prove that there is a God who moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform? Israel's origin, development and progress as a people, the cruel treatment meted out to them by the surrounding nations during the last 4000 and odd years, their miraculous preservation from total obliteration, their gift of the Bible and Jesus Christ to the world, and now, the ingathering of the Exiles to their own land in these last days exactly as Moses prophesied 4000 years ago, are all infallible proofs of the existence of the God of history and His unmistakable presence with Israel to carry out His purposes in the world through them.

From all that has been said above, it is evident that the spiritual history of the world, guided and controlled by God with a definite plan and purpose is the true history of the world, and not its ever-changing political history, however all important it may appear in our eyes. Remove Israel and Jesus Christ, and the Bible which tells us about both, from human history and there will remain only the dark and meaningless picture of the madness of nations struggling for power and supremacy through hopelessly devastating wars. There will be nothing but the evolutionist's struggle for existence left. The only historical source of hope and consolation for man is the revelation of God's goodwill towards man, first revealed to Abraham and later on explained by Moses and the prophets and finally fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who made His appearance in due time to carry out the work of redemption promised to Abraham. But for these two solid facts of history, there is not a gleam of hope for this dark world of ours. Harakiri will then be the only course left for mankind, there being no solid ground whatever for believing that truth will conquer at last. Looking back into world history, we can definitely see the hand of God working towards the fulfilment of the three promises of such far-reaching significance made to Abraham. The great drama of human history is the history of the fulfilment of these three promises. The redemption of fallen man is the central theme of this divine drama, and Palestine is the central stage of the world on which the great drama is being enacted for all to see. The nations of the world have inseparable connection with this universal drama.

All the nations which rubbed shoulders with Israel have disappeared from the stage; while tiny Israel is still enacting on the central stage. If they have been a blessing to the world in the past, how can we doubt that they will be a blessing in the future also? If the darkest period of their history—their dispersion for the last two thousand years—served in God's providence, the establishment of the Church of Christ, how glorious will their return be? St. Paul asks: 'For, if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?' Rom. 11: 15. If so far the drama has been a blessing to all, how glorious will the winding up of it be! To those who accept these facts, the hope expressed in the time-honoured words: 'Satyameva jayate' (Truth will conquer) is full of meaning, while they can have no meaning whatever to those who build their hope either on metaphysical surmises or on 'cunningly devised fables'. We cannot make our own Gods or even rely upon our own speculations about God. Unless God lightens the darkness of our hearts, all our guesses about Him are sure to go wrong. Such guesses cannot satisfy the thirst for

knowledge of God. What the soul stands in need of is not theoretical guesses about God, but a spiritual contact with a historical Saviour, an Immanuel, a loving Presence condescending to dwell in our sinful hearts as a Holy sanctifying Influence.

There is of course no harm in saying that God is one and the same by whatever name you call Him, provided you are sure that you are thinking of the same God of history who spoke to the fathers and to the prophets and lastly through Jesus Christ. Does the world know of any other revelation which communicates to the world His plan of salvation?

That this is not a blind sectarian claim made by anybody will be plain to all who would make an impartial study of the past and present world events. Let us just consider a single event—the return of Israel to Palestine at the present moment. It is said that Indians formerly went and colonised the islands of the East Indies and other islands in the great oceans of the world. Have they preserved their identity intact? Do they now want to return to their Motherland? Do the Aryans desire to go back to their original home in central Asia? or the Parsis to Persia; or the Anglosaxons to central Europe? What is it that has preserved the individuality of the Jews all these five thousand years? Is not their preservation in the midst of a hostile world all these centuries, a pure miracle? What is it that now attracts them to the barren rocky soil of Palestine surrounded by implacable enemies? Who has turned their faces now to that land to which they are flying like birds which fly to their shelter at evening? What is it that impels the cleverest money-makers of the world to go and dig the barren deserts of Israel? Were they not more or less comfortably settled in different parts of the world for the last two thousand years? What is this Zionism that now compels them to give up everything that they had possessed for themselves in their respective places? What is the driving force behind all their voluntary co-operative efforts to rebuild Palestine now? Certainly it cannot be mere politics or mere lust for land and power that we see behind this movement. If we look with unbiassed eyes, we can see the thread of divine revelation which started with Abraham, and which has historically run across the ages in the past, in an unbroken line, continuing its unbroken course up to the present, through the heart of this movement now called Zionism. Those who see any truth in this statement cannot fail to see the marvel of the Book which records it so convincingly, and the greater revelation of the marvel of the Divine Hand which runs through the whole to fulfil the prophesies. This thread of unity of divine purpose is the only Star of Hope for humanity in this dark world of ours. Is there such a Star visible in any other literature of the world?

We do not mean that the vast treasure of our Sanskrit literature is to be belittled by us. Far from that. Let us treasure it for what it really stands for. Let us by all means revere it and preserve it as a lasting memorial to the intellectual giants and spiritual geniuses who have produced it.

Let us at the same time reserve a soft corner in our hearts for the Bible, because it contains the great revelation of God's plans for this world. From what it has so far unfolded we can trace the unmistakable Hand of God in all the past history of mankind. This is the greatest evidence for the existence of the God of history as far as the past is concerned; and the surest means of Hope for the future.

God was kindling the Light of Hope in fallen humanity when He awakened Abraham out of his despondency, and imparted to him the message of hope for all the world. Like the announcement by the Angel of God to the shepherds of Bethlehem, God was bringing good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Abraham passed on this torch of light and hope to his progeny. The Light continued to be imparted from seer to seer, from prophet to prophet, till Christ the embodiment of that very Light, appeared, announcing to all the world: I am the Light of the World. The prophets of Israel were raised up by God to keep this Light shining without being put out by neglect, unbelief, and lack of vision. Sometimes the light shone brightly, sometimes dimly, and very often it was like a smoking flax, which God in His mercy did not allow to be blown out for ever. These prophets were gifted with such heavenly vision to see clearly the Hand of God working out His plans in the world through Israel. They could see God's hand in all the past history of Israel and of the world. They were able to project their vision into the future and make accurate and infallible conclusions as to how God would act in the future in particular cases. They were inspired to look far ahead into world history. It was such infallible vision and inspiration that enabled Moses to foretell in the very dawn of Israel's history, how they would behave later on in their prosperity, and what evil consequences would follow as a result of it. He could even project his vision marvellously so far ahead into this Messianic age of ours and prophesy about the re-gathering of Israel into their own Promised Land, as we are actually witnessing today. The later prophets of Israel too, who lived between 800 B.C. to 400 B.C., by the same process of other-worldly self-identification with God and His will, have left us various prophecies about various things in not less than sixteen books of the Old Testament. They were gifted with a closer and more definite vision of things to come. From this distance we can look back and see for ourselves that all their

prophesies have been literally fulfilled as far as they were concerned with things that are now past. Hence we can confidently believe that all what they have prophesied about things that are yet to happen in the world, will undoubtedly be fulfilled. If what Isaiah prophesied about eight hundred years before Christ about the mother of Christ, His birth in Bethlehem, His life in Nazareth, His mission, His miracles, the poor reception to His message, His ignominious death and His Resurrection, the growth and development of His Church, the rejection and regathering of Israel from Dispersion—if all these have come to pass, what doubt can there be that the rest of his prophesies concerning things that are yet to come will also be fulfilled in due time? Likewise, prophets like Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others have recorded their prophesies for our sake.

Space does not permit any lengthy quotations from these prophets. We shall confine ourselves to only a few outstanding words of theirs, selected at random. Here are some of the prophesies of Isaiah regarding the future of Israel, the Church and the nations of the world:

'For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody' LI. 3. 'For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. . . . The gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all the kings thy glory. . . . Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate' (LXII. 1-4). 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper'. LIV. 7.

The prophet Joel says: 'In those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshapat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land'. III. 2. This last world war foreseen by Prophet Joel is described in great detail by Prophet Ezekiel in the 38th chapter of his book. This and the 39th chapter will be very interesting to those who care to go through them. That true repentance will come to Israel in the last days is clearly described by prophet Zechariah:

'And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall

look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn'. Zech. 12: 10.

Like Joel he also says:

'I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle'. XIV. 2. As if he foresaw the days of the hydrogen bomb he adds:

'And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. . . . And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents'. XIV. 12-15. The prophet Daniel foresaw the inevitable doom of godless nationalism. (See Dan. 11: 31-44). He foresees all the political changes endlessly going on in the world from benign despotism to totalitarian despotism and popular democratic governments. He compares the ultimate forms of governments in the world to iron mixed with clay. Just as iron cannot mix with clay, authority and the will of the people cannot cleave one to another. It is most unstable. In Daniel's prophecy this is the last stage in political development, beyond which it cannot go. It is the sign of the final downfall of nationalism. In the present day universal awakening and clamour for self-rule, he foresaw the disunion, indiscipline, defiance of authority, the disruption and disintegration of governments, as they are daily being enacted before our eyes. This state of things cannot continue for ever. He says that such unsettled conditions will be a sure sign of the coming of Christ. Isaiah prophesies about a day when the God of Israel:—'Shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more'. Is. 11:4. Are these the ravings of lunatics and drug addicts as cynics would allege?

The world does not know that the civilization which man is building up without reference to God's plans, will crash by reason of the inevitable defects inherent in the mechanism itself. That is what Christ meant when He said:

'He that gathereth not with me scattereth'. Lk. 11: 23. Listen to another warning of His:

'Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house on a rock; the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And

every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall thereof'. Matt. 7: 24-27.

Milton says that when the Almighty hurled Satan and his companions headlong into the infernal abyss, they tried to make themselves as happy as possible by making the best of the situation in which they found themselves, by digging for gold and precious stones. This characteristic of Satan seems to have been fully inherited by man. He too is trying to make himself as happy as possible before his inevitable doom descends on him. He tries to forget his misery and his inner bankruptcy by being absorbed in money-making, love-making and war-making. But in the midst of all these self-indulgences it would be wise to keep before our minds the terrible warning that St. Paul has given to the world:

'When they shall say: Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape'. 1 Thes. 5: 3. Similarly St. Peter says:

'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . Nevertheless we, according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot, and blameless'. 2 Peter 3: 9-14.

All signs of the times unmistakably point out that the last days are upon us. Jesus Christ Himself has given several indications of the signs of the last days. A few of them may be mentioned:

1. 'And he spoke to them a parable. Behold the fig tree and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So, likewise ye when ye see these things come to pass know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand'. Lk. 21: 29-31.

The fig tree is a symbol of Israel. It was cut off from its place 2000 years ago. It is now shooting forth as a tender sprout in the very place from where it was cut off. No one can deny that this is an infallible sign of the truth of Christ's words. Since enough has been already said about this topic in the previous pages, more need not be said about it here.

In the above words of Christ, we see that side by side with the fig tree, *All trees* will shoot forth. Just as the fig tree refers to Israel,

'all trees' must refer to all nations of the world. There is an unprecedented political awakening among all the peoples of the world. Every one is clamouring for independence. Authority and stable governments are thrown overboard under one excuse or other. There is no corner of the globe unaffected by such upheavals. Even savages, headhunters, hill tribes, black people, yellow people, Asiatics, Africans, Islanders of the far off seas, all are shooting forth. And Christ has added, 'When ye see these things now come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand'.

2. 'Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.' No one can deny that iniquity is abounding by leaps and bounds. Crimes of every sort are rapidly multiplying. All cloaks of fear, shame, and restraint are now removed. Indiscipline and insubordination have come to be looked upon as virtues. Respect for parents and elders is becoming conspicuous by its absence. Dacoity, murder, robbery and sexual vices have thrown off all former restraints. Magazines can thrive only by excelling in obscenity. Novels and pictures are insipid unless they lay bare before youthful readers adulterous acts in shining colours. Everywhere flesh is enthroned and spirit is trampled under foot. Because iniquity is masquerading throughout the world as an angel of light, innocent souls are beguiled into believing that existence has no aim except money-making, love-making and war-making. Consequently the love of many is waxing cold.

3. 'There shall arise false Christs. . . if possible, to deceive the very elect'. Christ is the 'anointed' Saviour of the world. Many false persons with false ideologies will come forward as saviours offering to change the world into a paradise. They are deceiving spirits risen up to lead mankind away from Christ. They offer to change the world into a practical kingdom of God, and many a weak soul believes them in preference to Christ and His kingdom.

4. There shall be wars and rumours of wars; nation rising against nation; kingdom against kingdom. If we look back and survey the happenings in the world, say, within the last fifty years, we cannot fail to be surprised at the incredible speed with which the face of the world has been changed by wars and political upheavals. More amazing is the speed with which it is hurrying forward. Not a day passes without wars and rumours of wars, without some country at war with another. A final crash must follow.

5. Many false prophets shall come. While false Christs preach about themselves and their ideologies, false prophets beguile people by preaching false theories about the world, the soul, etc., and false doctrines about God and Jesus Christ. They preach that the world will

go on endlessly from cycle to cycle; that all religions are equally good; that man is not a fallen creature; that he is evolved out of a drifting protoplasm; that God is too good to punish the sinners; that there is nothing special in Jesus Christ to accept Him as the unique Saviour of the world; that to eat, drink and make merry is the *summum bonum* of life; that the second coming of Christ is a myth, etc. Such false prophets have succeeded in blinding men's eyes so that they may not see that they are hastily drifting towards a perilous abyss.

6. Severe persecution of the faithful. 'They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you . . . for my name's sake'. Lk. 21: 12. This is already apparent in many lands. Eternity alone will reveal the number already swallowed up by anti-Christian nations. In India, is there not a veiled attempt to starve, if not to strangle, to death, Indian Christianity?

7. 'Men's hearts will fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth'. Luke 21: 26. It requires no proof to show that everybody's heart is filled with fear in these days. Such fear was unknown in the past. There are many factors which contribute to it. There is the fear that godless Communism will swallow up the whole world and wipe off religion from the face of the earth. Secondly, the sight of ungodly indiscipline and disruption surging forward like a flood, is filling the hearts of many with fear. Thirdly, the invention of the diabolic Atom Bomb is the most potent cause of fear. Fourthly this fear is aggravated by the frantic efforts on the part of nations to organise themselves into rival camps and then to consolidate these hostile camps through cold wars. Every one feels that the world is heading for a crisis. Men's hearts are failing them for fear and bewilderment at the sight of such things.

8. Another sign pointed out by Christ to His disciples is 'And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come'. Matt. 24: 14. In an unprecedented measure, the Gospel is being proclaimed from housetops, as it were. Radios from every quarter of the globe, are daily and hourly broadcasting Christ's invitation to all the earth to repent and take refuge in Him before it is too late. Bibles and allied literature, which are the best-sellers of the world today, are being circulated throughout the world, including countries inside the Iron Curtain. This is all being done 'for a witness'.

9. The prophet Daniel has recorded a rather strange sign of the last days: 'Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased'. Dan. 12: 4. At no time in the history of the world has there been so much running about by men as we see today. Students, tourists,

diplomats, cultural missions, peace missions, Ambassadors, Ministers and Prime Ministers of the world are hurriedly flying about from country to country in quest of peace, prosperity and happiness. There is an incessant flow of people to and fro in connection with UNO, UNESCO, NATO, SEATO, Colombo Conference, Commonwealth Conference, Afro-Asian Conference, Summit Conference and Mid-way Conferences. For what purpose are people restlessly running about like this, wasting so much time, money and energy? What is the outcome of all these? Are they more fruitful than the mountain whose proverbial travail succeeded in producing only a rat? Each group emerges triumphantly from these conferences with the glad tidings of: 'Peace and Safety' on their lips. But the Bible sarcastically says: 'When they shall say, "Peace and Safety", then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape'.

10. St. Paul says that in the last days there will be a general falling away from the faith. As love to Christ gets cold in the heart by the influence of seducing spirits, to which we have already referred, new gods and goddesses are being enthroned. People satisfy themselves with rituals, and vain repetition of other people's prayers. Having lost touch with the living Heavenly Father, they pray to departed saints and present offerings to their images.

There is a general falling away among nations also. While capitalist nations are foolishly trying to serve two masters, God and Mammon, at the same time, Communist nations have discovered that the easiest and most straightforward course is to do away with one and hold on to the other alone. In deciding whom they should serve, God or Mammon, Communism voted for Mammon and discarded the Living God. This is the first time in all history that a nation has officially decided to do away with God altogether and to carry on vigorous propaganda to spread this open rebellion against God throughout the world.

With lightning speed it has succeeded in canvassing the votes of nearly half the human race within the very short period of three decades. Seated on a white horse labelled 'Peace', and with a hammer and sickle in the hand, it is marching forwards conquering and to conquer, uttering the same old slogan: 'Come on; Let us unite; Let us build', as its war-cry.

It is such odds that true believers are to face in these days. But Jesus Christ has assured His people:

'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom'.

It is the belief of the Little Flock, the believing Church of Christ

and the little people regathering to rebuild Zion, that the kingdom, the power and the glory are the Lord's. These then are the two ideologies that are to come to grips in the coming cataclysm which is called in the Bible, Armageddon. Like Goliath of old, godless nationalism is marching forward to its final goal—and to its final doom. Its eyes are against the Place where God has established His name for ever; against the People through whom God is carrying out His plans in the world; and, more than all, against the Person, Jesus Christ, who is the Captain of the People of God. But the Word of God is plain in forecasting that tribulation and anguish of soul will be the lot of all the enemies of God. Even inanimate nature, it is said, will give expression to its displeasure towards man's godlessness, by means of terrific disturbances in the heavenly bodies, adding to the fear and anguish of the wicked. 'Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the heavens and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn'. In the midst of all these catastrophic events, Christ has promised His peace to all who look upon Him. To all the meek people of the earth who are willing to be on His side and hold on to Him till the last, He has given His solemn seal to all what He has said, by the awful assurance: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away'. Those who are mercifully blessed with the grace to be faithful to Him to the last and to abide in Him, will never be ashamed. 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty'. Ps. 91:1.

Now, to conclude. If the revelation given to Abraham in the dawn of history, in which God gave him an outline of the divine plan of salvation, through the promise of a Place, a Progeny, and a Person, is the most historical reality facing humanity today, are we not standing face to face with eternal realities of the most potent nature? Are we not in touch with Reality itself? If the original revelation is a reality, is not Jesus Christ who is the fulfilment and culmination of that revelation a unique reality? Does not the height of wisdom consist in falling at His feet and surrendering our lives to Him before it is too late? The admonition which the Bible gives in the following words is worth listening to:

'Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you, seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgement; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger'. Zeph. 2: 2-3.

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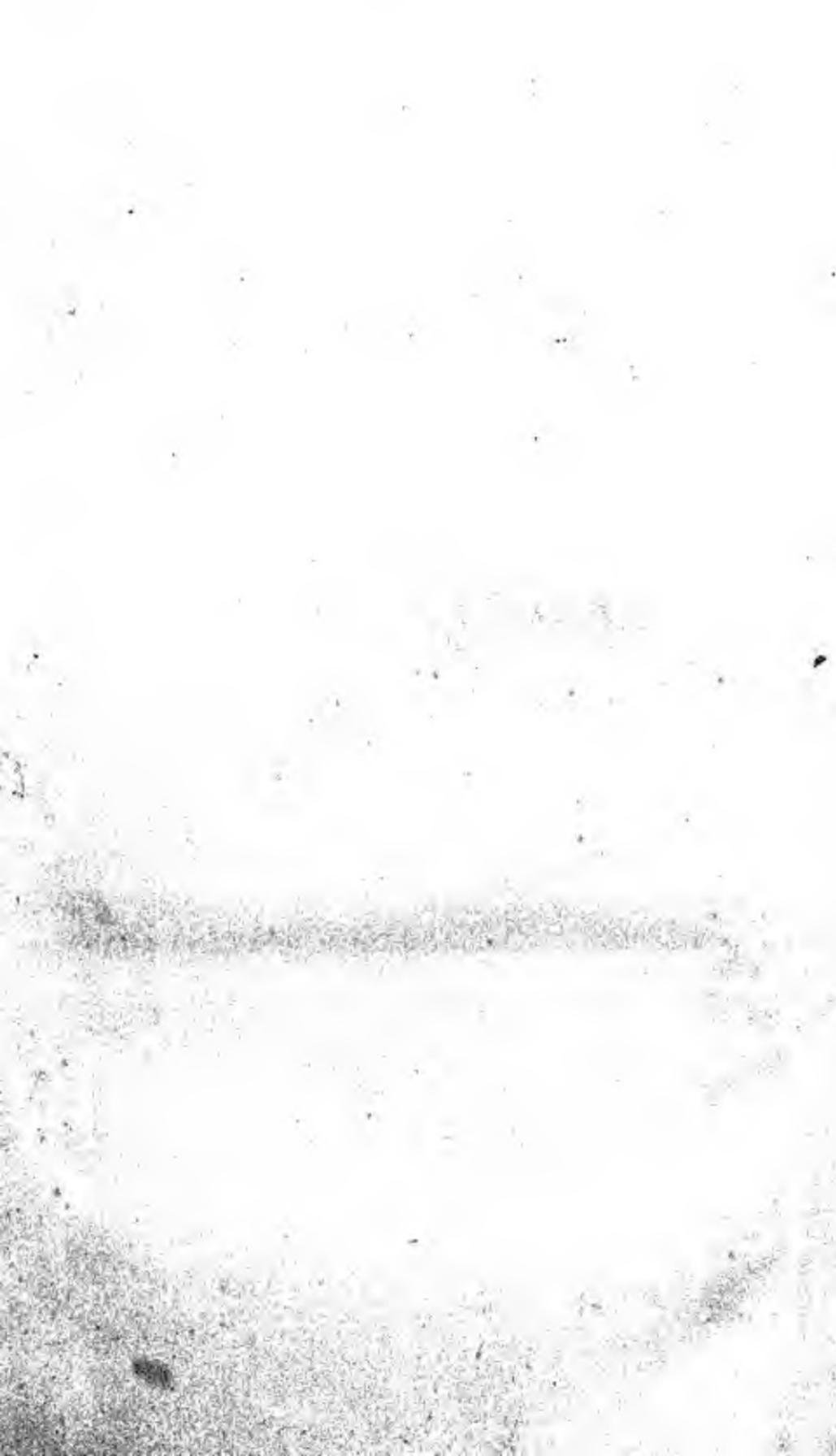
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