most confidential posts in the sovereign's counsels, was interested in the immense variety of Indian life, its people, its products, its climate, its languages, and, above all, its philosophies and its religions. In the *Ain-i-Akbari* (the "Mode of Akbar's Government"), which is really the third volume of the *Akbar-nāma*, he surveys the methods of the imperial administration, the military organisation, the revenue, the household expenditure, and, noting that there were 360 systems of philosophy and conduct (iii. p. 125), he concludes with a well-informed account of the six orthodox *darçanas*, the Jains, the Buddhists, and the Sceptics (*nâstikas*). He watched his royal master closely, and with his brother Faizī, the poet, aided him along that search for truth which led Akbar to abandon the profession and practice of Islām. To these influences the pious Badāonī was vehemently opposed. He could, indeed, himself temporise upon occasion, and subordinate his views to his own interest. Early in life he had been indebted to Faizī for personal kindness and help, but after the poet's death he wrote of him with bitterness. He felt some explanation to be necessary: "The truth of religion and the maintenance of one's faith are paramount to all other obligations." It was an interesting indication of the learning and culture of the time that the poet left a library of 4600 volumes. They were distributed into three groups: (1) Poetry, Medicine, Astrology, and Music; (2) Philosophy, Sufiism, Astronomy, Geometry; (3) Commentaries, Traditions, Theology, and Law.[1] Yet with how much smaller equipment did the poets and scholars of Queen Elizabeth's court illuminate the world!

The imagination of the time, of course, called for wonders connected with the prince's birth, and Abul Fazl does not disdain to tell of his father's prophetic dream, of portents and prognostics preceding his advent, and (on the authority of the nurse, long withheld) of his announcement, "Messiah-like," at seven months old, that the celestial light of the Khalīfate would shine forth in him.[2] Abul Fazl has a pious explanation for everything. When Humāyūn sent for celebrated teachers to

[1] Eliot and Dowson, *History of India*, v. p. 548.

[2] *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), i. p. 384 f. It was believed that Jesus Christ had spoken in his cradle.

instruct him, the boy preferred to go out to play. It was a part of "the divine design that this special pupil of God should not be implicated in human learning, and it should become apparent that his knowledge was of the nature of a gift, not an acquirement."[1] He grew up, therefore, unable to read or write, but he had great native abilities, and a prodigious memory. His love of animals led him to familiarity with the camel, from which he learned "*darvish*-like endurance and patience." In coursing with dogs he was initiating his companions in methods of government. He mastered the Arab horse "with the polo-stick of Divine help"; and Abul Fazl, whose turgid panegyric is unrestrained by any sense of humour, even adds that he "opened the wings of his genius in the spacious atmosphere of meditation on God, and brought his contemplative mind to study the sport of pigeon-flying."[2]

Akbar was, in truth, a singular compound of many aptitudes and varied tastes. Called to the throne at the age of fourteen, it was his first task to regain his father's lost dominions, and re-establish himself in Delhi as sovereign of Hindostan. For some years he was inevitably under the guidance of older advisers, counsellors and commanders on the one hand, the queen-mother and the chief nurse with the court ladies on the other, in an atmosphere of incessant quarrels and intrigues. Not till he was twenty did he really begin to exercise independent power. Of immense physical strength and dauntless personal courage, he could kill a tiger with a single stroke of the sword, or with one blow of his fist lay an assassin senseless on the ground. In battles and sieges he often exposed himself unsparingly, to the great anxiety of his officers. With untiring energy he devoted the intervals of fighting or State affairs to elephant combats, hunting with cheetahs, cock-fights, polo, and similar diversions; he would make long pilgrimages on foot; then, able to do with little sleep, he would listen for hours to reading in poetry, history, philosophy, and theology, or to music and

[1] *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), i. p. 519.

[2] *Ibid.*, i. p. 589. On a visit to the shrine of Shaikh Farīd Shakarganj at Pattan in the Punjab, he was immensely amused in the intervals of devotion by watching fishermen dive in the river and catch fish in their mouths. *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), ii. p. 526.

singing. The Jesuit father Montserrate, who accompanied his expedition to Kabûl in 1581, was impressed by his geniality and versatile accomplishments. His wide open forehead, his eyes gleaming like the sea as it quivered in the sunshine, implied a vivid interest in all that went on around him, and an acute judgment on problems of many kinds. He loved the arts, promoted sumptuous architecture, and called sculpture and painting to its aid. He was even practically acquainted with various crafts, and near his favourite palace at Fathpūr-Sīkrī he erected buildings where he could take part with painters and goldsmiths, weavers and armourers. Patron of letters—the royal library is said to have contained 24,000 volumes—he knew the value of learning: and Montserrate on his return to Goa testified that though he could not read or write he was yet *doctissimus eruditissimusque*.[1]

But behind this incessant physical and mental activity lay many searchings of heart. The Jesuit father discovered that Akbar was *melancholicus*. The burden of empire was heavy; only by incessant vigilance could order be maintained and outbreaks of disaffection suppressed over the immense area which extended from Afghanistan and Sind to Orissa, from the Himâlaya to the smaller kingdoms of the Deccan. In 1580 the Jesuit fathers found twenty vassal kings waiting upon him. But beneath the splendour of the court lay a harassed anxious mind. From early youth he had shown an unusual interest in religion. Roaming about among the people, he had sought intercourse with fakīrs and yogins, and from time to time strange impulses of devotion came upon him. A curious story related by Abul Fazl in a glamour of supernaturalism opens an early glimpse into these moods. During the siege of Mānkōt in 1557,[2] when he was but fifteen, he suddenly broke away from the military operations and the elephant fights by which they were diversified, and rode off alone upon a horse of unusual

[1] *Mongolicæ Legationis Commentarius*, by Father Anthony Montserrate, S.J., edited by Rev. H. Hosten, S.J., in *Memoirs of the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal*, iii. No. 9 (Calcutta, 1914), p. 643. Cp. Father Jerome Xavier, in 1598, *JASB* (1888), p. 37.

[2] Mānkōt was "a fort in the lower hills, now included in the Jamū territory of the Kashmīr State," V. A. Smith, *Akbar*, p. 40.

speed and vicious temper. Dismounting, he assumed the posture of communion with God, and the horse naturally galloped away. "When his holy heart was again disposed to mount," no horse was at hand. But suddenly he saw it coming swiftly towards him, and when it stood quietly waiting for him, he mounted and returned to the camp. When the full responsibility of empire fell upon him, he passed through a grave religious crisis. "On the completion of my twentieth year I experienced an internal bitterness, and from the lack of spiritual provision for my last journey my soul was seized with exceeding sorrow."[1] The sayings collected by Abul Fazl are the recollections of many years, and are rarely fitted with a date. Weariness prompts the declaration—"If I could but find anyone capable of governing the kingdom, I would at once place this burden upon his shoulders and withdraw therefrom." His constant prayer was that when his thoughts and actions no longer pleased the Supreme Giver, God would take his life. But he found "the solution of all difficulties in the assistance of God, and the evidence of the latter is the meeting with a discreet spiritual director."[2] Such a guide he believed himself to have found in Abul Fazl. "He was the man," said Badāōnī angrily, "that set the world in flames."[3]

Among the modes of Mohammedan devotion pilgrimages held a high place. At one time Akbar was earnestly desirous of going to Mekka, but his officers of state opposed the plan so strongly that his design was abandoned.[4] Visits to the tombs of local saints could be more easily arranged. One night on a hunting expedition he heard a group of Indian minstrels in a village near Agra singing hymns in praise of Muīnu-d-dīn, a famous saint of Ajmēr, who had been buried there in 1236.[5] Thither in January 1562 Akbar went on foot, and on his way he found a bride.[6] It was the first of many yearly visits,

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, iii. (Jarrett), p. 386. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 387.

[3] *Tawārīkh*, ii. (Lowe), p. 200.

[4] *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), iii. p. 269.

[5] *Ain-i-Akbari*, iii. (Jarrett), p. 362. Ajmēr (in Rājputāna) is 275 miles S. of Delhi, and 228 W. of Agra. The saint's tomb is still visited by about 25,000 pilgrims annually. *Imp. Gaz.* (1908), v. p. 170.

[6] V. A. Smith, p. 57. Badāōnī's date is 1561.

maintained till 1579. After the marriage anxiety for a son was at length partly soothed by the prediction of a living saint, the Shaikh Salīm of the village of Sīkrī, twenty-three miles west of Agra. Salīm boldly announced that the prayers offered by Akbar at Ajmēr, Delhi, and elsewhere, would be answered by the birth of an heir. The expectant mother was sent to reside in the Shaikh's house to secure his blessing, and there in 1569 Prince Salīm, named after the saint, was born. With grandiose plans Akbar converted the village into his capital, and gave it the name of Fathpūr. Palaces and mosques, schools, baths, gardens, quickly added dignity to the imperial choice. The pilgrimages to Ajmēr were continued, and in 1573 directions were given for building a palace at every stage between Agra and the tomb of Muīnu-d-dīn. The intervals of devotion were diversified by nightly intercourse with "holy, learned, and sincere men"; ample donations were distributed among the poor; there were religious dances, and studies in Sufi lore. In early life, Badāōnī tells us, Akbar had been brought under the influence of a Persian teacher, Mīr Abdul Latīf, who came to India in 1556, and indoctrinated him in the mystic language of the Dīwān of Hafīz (†1388).[1] In this literature he retained his interest, and Abul Fazl noted that "in the midst of society he never abandoned spiritual contemplation, and ever kept up communion with God." He often listened to Mīr Sharīf, who was distinguished for his beautiful voice, reading some book about spiritual love, and would emerge from his seclusion with his eyes wet with tears.[2] He went to see the learned lady Mirābāi, wife of the Rānā of Udayapur, a devout Vaishnavite. He visited the third Sīkh Guru, Amar Dās (†1574), making him costly gifts and eating of his simple food. This interest in religious inquiry led to the erection at Fathpūr in 1575 of the "House of Worship" for Akbar's religious assemblies. Opponents in the field had been vanquished, it remained to search for the truth. There

[1] *Tawārīkh*, ii. (Lowe), p. 24.

[2] *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), iii. p. 125. Mīr Sharīf was unfortunately killed by collision with his own brother in a game of polo in which Akbar took part, to the emperor's great distress, p. 242; Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 235.

on Thursday evenings the Emperor gathered men of various ranks and religions.[1] It was the eve of the Mohammedan sabbath. The discussions were prolonged through the night, and were sometimes continued till noon of the next day. The building was constructed round the cell of a former disciple of Shaikh Salīm (who had died in 1571), and contained four halls or verandahs in which different groups, such as the court officers and grandees, the *Ulamā* or religious lawyers, the Shaikhs or ascetics, and the Sayyids or distinguished descendants of the Prophet, could be separately seated.[2]

Into these meetings Abul Fazl and Badāōnī were soon introduced. They might seem to have been both "baked in one kiln,"[3] but Badāōnī soon recognised that their taste was very different. Abul Fazl had a far wider acquaintance with heretical literature. He tells in his flowery style, with complacent self-display, how he had at one time been drawn to the sages of Cathay, and then had inclined to the ascetics of the Lebanon; he had longed for conversation with the Lāmas of Tibet; sympathy with the Padres of Portugal had pulled his skirt; the secrets of the Zend Avesta had sometimes robbed him of repose.[4] Here was a man ready to promote Akbar's passion for discussion. "Discourses on philosophy have such a charm for me," said the Emperor, "that they distract me from all else, and I forcibly restrain myself from listening to them, lest the necessary duties of the hour should be neglected."[5] He was rationalist and mystic by turns. "One night my heart was weary with the burden of life, when suddenly between sleeping and waking a strange vision appeared to me, and my spirit was somewhat comforted."[6] Even Badāōnī recognised that he passed whole nights in thoughts of God, and his heart was full of reverence for the true Giver; in thankfulness for his

[1] Abul Fazl expressly says that the imperial proclamation invited inquirers of every sect, *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), iii. p. 159; but Badāōnī's account of the seating arrangements implies a limitation to Mohammedans. Probably this restriction was afterwards relaxed.

[2] This distribution was the result, according to Badāōnī, of quarrels about precedence. Cp. Lowe, ii. p. 204 ff.

[3] Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 209.

[4] *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), iii p. 116.

[5] *Ain-i-Akbari*, iii. (Jarrett), p. 386.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 388.

past successes "he would sit many a morning alone in prayer and melancholy, on a large flat stone of an old building near the palace in a lonely spot with his head bent over his chest, and gathering the bliss of early hours."[1] The mood might come upon him in the midst of the chase. In April 1578, when a four days' hunt had been arranged and an army of beaters was driving the game of all sorts over a wide expanse, Akbar was suddenly seized with "a strong frenzy," and the whole concourse was arrested at his order. What happened could not be told. "God alone knoweth secrets," says Badāōnī, piously.[2] "A sublime joy took possession of his bodily frame, according to Abul Fazl, "the attraction of the cognition of God cast its ray. The description of it cannot be comprehended by the feeble intellect of commonplace people."[3] The incident was followed by a distribution of gold to fakīrs and other poor men; a building was founded and a garden laid out to preserve the remembrance of a hallowed spot.

Akbar, in truth, was passing through much mental tribulation. The doctrines of the Qorān were becoming more and more distasteful to him, as the rationalist tendencies of his temperament were fostered under the influence of Abul Fazl and his brother, the poet Faizī. Among the phases of Moḥammedan theology Faizī celebrated the transcendence of the Absolute beyond all human thought, in union with the mystery of the divine Love, in such verses as these:—

O Thou who existest from eternity and abidest for ever,
Sight cannot bear thy light, praise cannot express thy perfection.

Thy light melts the understanding, and thy glory baffles wisdom;
To think of thee destroys reason, thy essence confounds thought.

Human knowledge and thought combined
Can only spell the first letter of the alphabet of thy love.

Each brain is full of the thought of grasping thee,
The brow of Plato even burned with the fever heat of this hopeless thought."[4]

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[1] Badāōnī, quoted by Blochmann, in *Ain-i-Akbari*, i. p. 171.
[2] Lowe, ii. p. 261.
[3] *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), iii. p. 245.
[4] *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochmann), i. p. 550.

Akbar never lost the conviction that "there exists a bond between the Creator and the creature which is not expressible in language."[1] But the crudenesses of the Qorān began to affront him. He resented the claims made for its authority; the doctrines of its inspiration, the resurrection of the body, the miracles, the judgment, became incredible. The Hindu princesses who had been brought into his household talked to him of transmigration. The military successes which had brought him unexampled wealth and power suggested thoughts of spiritual authority as well. As early as 1573 Shaikh Mubārak is said to have adroitly hinted to him that he might assume a religious primacy.[2] When the House of Worship was established he proposed (1575–76) to have the words *Allāhu Akbar* engraved on the imperial seal, and stamped upon his coins. Hājī Ibrahim bravely objected, for the phrase might be rendered "Akbar is God" as readily as "God is great." The emperor was displeased, and coldly remarked that no creature in the depths of his impotence could ever advance any claim to divinity.[3] But the bold remonstrance was not without effect; the ambiguous words were dropped.

A little later the Thursday night assemblies were still more thronged. Abul Fazl's enumeration sounds somewhat like a rhetorical flourish—the court was the "home of the seven climes" and "the assemblage of the wise of every religion and sect," the Sufi seer, the philosopher, the orator and the jurist, Sunnī and Shīah, Brāhman, Jain, Charvāka, Nazarene and Jew, Sabīan and Zoroastrian.[4] The Parsees were becoming especially influential through the teaching of Dastūr Meherjee Rānā, of Nausārī, in Gujarāt, the chief Parsee establishment in India. Akbar had made his acquaintance in 1573, and the Dastūr was persuaded afterwards to come to court, and before his departure in 1579 he had produced such an impression on Akbar that it was already rumoured that the Emperor had become a convert. From early days, in compliment to his wives, he had burned the

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, iii. (Jarrett), p. 380. [2] V. A. Smith, p. 178.

[3] Eliot and Dowson, v. p. 523.

[4] *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), iii. p. 365. In his annals it is set down under 1578, but the reference to Christians shows that it must be as late as 1580.

Hom in the female apartments,[1] and the arguments of the Brāhman Bir Bar, who had come to court soon after Akbar's accession, were directed powerfully in favour of worship of the sun as the primary origin of everything.[2] From the outset the discussions in the House of Worship had often aroused bitterness through the pride and conceit of the doctors of the law; and Badāōnī, in his account of Akbar's growing alienation from Islam, lays stress on the dispute about the legitimate number of his wives. The traditions varied, and Akbar finally appointed a judge who would decide in his favour. The result was that in 1579 Akbar took all religious matters in Islam into his own hands, and a declaration was extracted from the principal *Ulamā* declaring him "a most just, most wise, and most God-fearing king," and empowering him to issue decrees binding on the whole people, "provided always that such order be not only in accordance with some verse of the Qorān, but also of real benefit to the nation."[3] The document handed to the Emperor was in the handwriting of Shaikh Mubārak. In the same year he appeared for the first time in the pulpit, following the example of Khalīfas and other distinguished sovereigns, and recited some lines composed for him by the poet Faizī. They ended with the ambiguous declaration *Allāhu Akbar*.[4]

The way was thus opened for that estrangement from Islam—even at the moment when he was enthroning himself as its spiritual leader within it—which Badāōnī so deeply lamented. In a famous passage he described the result:—

"From his earliest childhood to his manhood, and from his manhood to old age, His Majesty has passed through the most various phases, and through all sorts of religious practices and sectarian beliefs, and has collected everything which people can find in books, with a talent of selection peculiar to him, and a spirit of inquiry opposed to every [Islamitic] principle. Thus a faith based on some elementary principle traced itself on the mirror of his heart, and as the result of all the influences which were brought to

[1] The branch of a tree offered by Parsees as a substitute for *soma*. Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 268 f.

[2] Badāōnī, quoted by Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, i. p. 183, cp. 404.

[3] *Ibid.*, i. p. 186.

[4] Cp. the account of Nizāmānd-dīn Ahmad, Eliot and Dowson, v. p. 412, with Badāōnī's contemptuous description, Lowe, ii. p. 276 f.

bear on His Majesty, there grew, gradually as the outline on a stone, the conviction in his heart that there were sensible men in all religions, and abstemious thinkers, and men endowed with miraculous powers, among all nations. If some true knowledge was thus everywhere to be found, why should truth be confined to one religion, or to a creed like the Islām, which was comparatively new, and scarce a thousand years old; why should one sect assert what another denies, and why should one claim a preference without having superiority conferred on itself?"[1]

The domestic influence of the Hindu ladies was reinforced by distinguished Samanas and Brāhmans, whose training in the physical sciences, morals, and the stages of spiritual progress, Badāōnī recognised. One after another was drawn up in a blanket to a balcony in the palace where the Emperor made his bed-chamber, and in these nightly interviews he was instructed in the secrets of Hinduism, and converted to belief in transmigration.[2] The Mohammedan doctrine of eternal punishment had long been a stumbling-block. It did not, however, prevent him from displaying great interest in Christianity. His attention had been roused by an incident at Satgaon, the mercantile capital of Bengal, where a Jesuit mission had been established. The Christian merchants there had defrauded the imperial treasury both of anchorage dues and of annual taxes. The Fathers insisted on restitution, and a large sum was refunded. Akbar was greatly impressed. He sent for the Portuguese Vicar-General of Satgaon and received him cordially. But Father Giles was "possessed of more virtue than letters"; he could not hold his own against the Mohammedan Mullahs, and begged Akbar to invite more learned champions, mentioning the Fathers of Goa.[3] Accordingly, in 1579, the year of the so-called "Infallibility" decree, an envoy was despatched to Goa with an invitation to the court. The opportunity was accepted joyfully, and Father Rudolf Acquaviva, son of the Neapolitan Duke of Atri, Father Anthony Montserrate, and a former Mohammedan convert who spoke Persian, were appointed to the mission, and reached Fathpur Sīkrī on February 28, 1580.[4]

[1] Blochmann, *Ain-i-Akbari*, i. p. 179. [2] Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 264 f.

[3] Goldie, *The First Christian Mission to the Great Mogul* (Dublin, 1897), p. 55.

[4] Cp. Maclagan, "Jesuit Missions to the Emperor Akbar," *JASB* (1896), p. 38.

They came with high hopes of winning an Emperor to the Church of Christ. Upon the journey they had met the imperial couriers with the news that the use of the name Mohammed in the public prayers had been forbidden. They were received with gracious cordiality, and were permitted to establish a chapel in the palace. When the Fathers presented a sumptuously bound copy of a polyglot Bible in seven volumes, printed for Philip II., Akbar took off his turban, placed each volume on his head, and kissed it respectfully. To a picture of the Madonna he made a triple salutation, with the profound reverence of a Mohammedan, the Christian's bent knee, and the prostration of a Hindu. He set Abul Fazl to translate a Gospel, and ordered Prince Murad to "take a few lessons in Christianity." Father Acquaviva had been diligently studying Persian on the journey, and soon took his place in the Thursday night discussions. Akbar was obliged to send a message to the visitors to refrain from acrimonious attacks on Mohammed's life and teachings, though he might himself privately denounce him as an impostor.[1] But he found the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Virgin birth of the Son and his death upon the cross, a stumbling-block. Why did not Christ come down from the cross, and how could he afterwards sit at the right hand of God who had no body?[2] Nevertheless he was apparently impressed by the missionaries, who refused his costly gifts, lived with the utmost self-denial, and only asked that he should establish hospitals for the sick and poor.[3] He appeared in public with his arm round Acquaviva's neck, and gave orders for their immediate access to apartments reserved only to the principal officers of state.[4] He attended mass, but the only result was that he complained at the end, "You ate and drank, but you never invited me."[5] Yet he was certainly attracted to the new faith. In moods of weariness he used language which led the

[1] Montserrate, *Commentarius*, p. 560. He abandoned the five daily prayers, and ceased to keep the fast of Ramadan, p. 575.

[2] Cp. Montserrate, *Commentarius*, p. 600, on the way to Kabul.

[3] This was done, Abul Fazl, *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge), iii. p. 381 ; Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 334 ; one for Mohammedans, one for Hindus, and a third for Yogins.

[4] *Commentarius*, p. 575.

[5] Goldie, *First Christian Mission*, p. 73.

Fathers to believe that he might risk all and even resign the throne. "If there were no way of becoming a Christian without creating a disturbance, he would go to Goa on pretence of making a pilgrimage to Mekka";[1] "if God called him to the Catholic faith, he would leave all and flee to Goa."[2]

But many other appeals were made to him at the same time. Mr Vincent Smith has called attention to the presence of three eminent Jain teachers among the learned men enumerated by Abul Fazl.[3] They so far affected Akbar's practice that he curtailed his food and drink, and, perhaps with the help of Yogins who promised him long life like the Lāmas of Tibet, induced him finally to abstain from meat altogether.[4] Restrictions on the slaughter of animals for food were gradually extended, and even Acquaviva complained when no flesh might be sold or eaten from Saturday evening to Sunday.[5] Much more important was the Zoroastrian competition. In March 1580, immediately after the arrival of the Fathers from Goa, Akbar began to prostrate himself before the sun and before fire, and on New Year's day of the twenty-fifth year of his reign he publicly opened the new cult. With his love of practical craftsmanship he condescended to invent a special candlestick of complex construction which required candles of three yards in length and upwards, and Abul Fazl waxed eloquent on the praise and prayer which accompanied the lighting after sunset.[6] The missionaries noted with anxiety the revival of the old Persian festival of Merjan; and Persian names for months and days were introduced.[7] From the Hindu side Bir Bar (whom Badāonī detested) urged that "the ripening of the grain on the fields, of fruits and vegetables, the illumination of the universe, and the lives of men, depended upon the sun. Hence it was but proper to worship and reverence this luminary."[8] A year or two later the cult was formally established. The sun was to be worshipped four times daily, morning and evening, noon and

[1] Montserrate, *Commentarius*, p. 568.
[2] Goldie, p. 73.
[3] *Akbar*, p. 166.
[4] Badāonī (Lowe), ii. p. 335.
[5] Goldie, p. 99.
[6] *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochmann), i. p. 49.
[7] Acquaviva, in Goldie, p. 99; Badāonī (Lowe), ii. p. 316.
[8] Badāonī (Blochmann), in *Ain-i-Akbari*, i. 183.

night, but no one was to be interfered with on account of religion. The debates in the House of Worship came to an end, and out of all these various influences new purposes arose in Akbar's mind. Oriental adulation exalted him into the loftiest religious rank.[1] Even Ulamā were found to declare him without sin. The deity of the king was emphatically proclaimed in the laws of Manu;[2] and Brāhmans who collected 1001 names of the Sun saluted him as an Avatār like Rāma or Krishna. Nosairīs hailed him as the "Witness of God." Prophecies of the "Lord of the Age," who should remove all differences between the seventy-two sects of Islām and the Hindus, were freely applied to him.[3] "All this," says Badāōnī, "made the Emperor the more inclined to claim the dignity of a prophet; perhaps I should say the dignity of something else." Moreover, a great age was running out. The thousandth year of the Mohammedan era was not far off,[4] and just as in Europe under similar conditions men's minds were agitated with expectation of change. Under such circumstances, when Akbar returned from Kabul in 1582 he summoned a council and proposed the foundation of a new religion.

This was the *Tauhīd-i-Ilāhī* or "Divine Monotheism." His fundamental conviction was perhaps expressed with sufficient accuracy by the Persian author of the *Dabistan*, a generation later, in reporting the discussions in the House of Worship:—

> As reason renders it evident that the world has a Creator, Almighty and All-wise, who has diffused upon the field of events, among the servants, subject to vicissitudes, numerous and various benefits which are worthy of praise and thanksgiving, therefore according to the lights of our reason let us investigate the mysteries of creation, and according to our knowledge pour out the praises of his benefits [5]

On the one side was Islām, tied to the Qorān, with its prophecies and miracles, its doctrines of bodily resurrection and

[1] Cp. Macauliffe, iv. p. 369.

[2] "Even an infant king is a great deity in human form," vii. 8, cp. 3-7, *SBE.* xxv. p. 217.

[3] Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 295. The *Sahib-i-Zamān* was the title given by the Shiahs to the Imām Mahdi; Hughes, *Dict. of Islam.*

[4] It did not actually arrive till Oct. 1591–Sept. 1592.

[5] Tr. Shea and Troyer, iii. p. 74 f.

eternal damnation, its observances and its traditions. On the other was Hinduism, from which he had learned much. But it was inextricably entangled in a mythology that was often puerile, and it was degraded by idolatrous practices that no mind of Mohammedan training could endure. No synthesis of the two was practicable: any reform must aim at transcending both. Was this attempt merely an act of overweening presumption, the folly of inflated personal vanity? Akbar established no priesthood, he imposed no orthodoxy. He had learned an important lesson. "Formerly I persecuted men into conformity with my faith and deemed it Islām. As I grew in knowledge, I was overwhelmed with shame. Not being a Muslīm myself, it was unmeet to force others to become such. What constancy is to be expected from proselytes on compulsion?"[1] Policy might still lead him to minimise upon occasion his estrangement from his earlier faith; but from his adherents he demanded uncompromising devotion, "the fourfold rule of sincerity, readiness to sacrifice wealth and life, honour and religion."[2] Many social and moral reforms accompanied this new movement. There were regulations affecting the practice of *sati*, permitting widow-remarriage, prohibiting child-marriage, limiting the sale of drink, enforcing chastity.[3] The Jesuit Fathers found that their mission was fruitless, and returned in 1583 to Goa. A second mission in 1591–2 had no greater success. Universal toleration was readily conceded, and "if any of the infidels chose to build a church or synagogue or idol-temple or fire-temple, no one was to hinder him."[4] A third mission arrived in 1595 and remained in frequent intercourse with Akbar till his death in 1605. Further, Jerome Xavier prepared a life of Christ in Persian with an account of his miracles and teaching which Akbar often had read to him, and he asked for a similar work about the lives of the Apostles.[5]

[1] *Ain-i-Akbari*, iii. (Jarrett), p. 384.

[2] See one of the "letters of damnation" (Badāōnī) which the courtiers signed, renouncing "the false and pretended religion of Islam," Eliot and Dowson, v. p. 536. Cp. the test of Man Singh on his appointment to a high command, Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 375.

[3] Cp. *Dabistan*, iii. p. 83, for the conduct demanded by Akbar.

[4] Badāōnī (Lowe), ii. p. 406, under date 1593–4.

[5] Maclagan, *JASB* (1896), p. 87.

But he was not to be won for the Catholic Church, even if he did have a golden crucifix made, and wore a gold cross round his neck. The dying Emperor was bidden by his attendants to think of Mohammed. "He gave no sign save that he repeated often the name of God."[1] He maintained the "Divine Monotheism" to the last. But it died with him.

V

Akbar stands out, like his predecessor Asoka two thousand years before, as a great ruler who sought to establish freedom for religious belief and practice under conditions more complex and difficult than those of the elder day. With an explosive personal temper—he could strike a rude official violently in the face, fell at a blow a wrestler who played an unfair trick on his opponent, or order an unhappy servant who displeased him to instant execution—he had nevertheless the thinker's appreciation of intellectual liberty and the statesman's love of order and demand for peace. Over the conflicts of his time the throne seemed to give him sovereign rights. To the creed of his early years he may have been sometimes harsh, but his ideals were in advance of an age in which an Alva could in three lines sentence as many millions of people to death for their resistance to the claims of Rome. His own attempt to promote a religion more rational than either Islām or Hinduism failed. Not even royal example or authority can institute a new faith. But meanwhile Hinduism was giving its loftiest poetic expression to the older modes of individual piety and the love of God.

The worship of Krishna was promoted by the followers of Vallabhâchārya and his son in the land of Braj during the sixteenth century. Among them was a group of poets known as the "Eight Seals," who all wrote in the local Braj dialect.[2] Most famous of these was Sūr Dās, who was still alive when Abul Fazl finished his *Ain-i-Akbari* (1596–7). His six brothers were killed in battle with the Musalmans; "I alone," he said sadly, "blind and worthless, remained alive." From his father

[1] "Narrative of the Provincial," Maclagan, *JASB* (1896), p. 107.

[2] In the Mathurā district, around Vrindāvana and Gokula. Cp. *ante*, p. 433.

at Agra he received instruction in singing, Persian, and the vernacular; and on his father's death he wrote hymns in praise of Krishna which won him many disciples; a collection of them, said to contain as many as 60,000 verses, has been repeatedly printed in India. He rendered the Bhāgavata Purāna into verse in the Braj dialect; and while other poets may have excelled him in some particular qualities, he is said to have combined the best qualities of all.[1]

Of incomparably greater influence was another poet of Akbar's reign, Tulsī Dās, author of a new epic on the tale of Rāma, to whom many good critics assign the palm for Indian song. Some, indeed, give him no higher place than that of the foremost Hindī poet; others, again, who find him the inspirer and exponent of the faith of some ninety millions of people in the North and West, account him one of the three or four great writers of the whole continent of Asia. Brāhman by caste, he was born in the reign of Humāyūn, according to tradition, in 1532, ten years before Akbar, in the Bāndā district south of the Jumna. An early biography by a personal follower has unfortunately disappeared. The contemporary author of the *Bhakta-Mālā*,[2] who had himself met him, was content to record that "for the redemption of mankind in this perverse Kali age Vālmīki has been born again as Tulsī."[3] Legend tells that he was abandoned by his parents, and was adopted by an itinerant ascetic, under whose care he wandered through one kingdom after another, visiting many holy places, and storing up those impressions of scenery, of forest lore and city culture, the splendour of courts and the peacefulness of hermitages, which supply the vivid background to his great poem. In due time he married and had a son, who died young. His wife, devoted to the worship of Rāma, returned to her father's house, and gave herself to religion. Tulsī Dās, after vainly endeavouring to persuade her to rejoin him, assumed the ascetic's dress and travelled on pilgrimage to distant parts of India, preaching deliverance from the world's bondage through faith in Rāma.

[1] Cp. Grierson, *The Modern Vernacular of Hindustan* (Calcutta, 1889), p. 25; Sir C. J. Lyall, *Enc. Brit.*,[11] xii. p. 486*c*.

[2] Cp. *ante*, p. 423[4].

[3] Growse, *The Rāmāyana of Tulsi Dās* (Allahabad, 1883), p. v.

In Rāma's city of Audh (Ayōdhyā)[1] he began in 1574 the composition of the *Rāma-charita-mānasa*, "the Lake of the Deeds of Rāma." He himself claimed the inspiration of the Deity. As a child at Sōrōn in the United Provinces[2] he had first heard the story from his master, and in his maturity, moved by Hari himself, he wrote it in the vulgar tongue, that by the knowledge of Rāma's glorious acts "the world's sin might be effaced."[3] Legend expressed this by a dream in which Rāma condescended to appear to him, and bade him set down the tale for the common people. Years afterwards it was finished at Benares, where (according to one account) he became the head of the Vaishnavite settlement, and was reckoned as seventh in succession from its founder Rāmānanda. There at the age of ninety-one he died in 1623, when Akbar's son, Jahāngīr, was on the throne.)

The epic of "the Lake of Rāma's Deeds" was not the only work of Tulsī Dās, and the significance of its teaching may be illustrated from a pathetic legend concerning the composition of the *Vinaya Pattrikā* or "Book of Petitions," a series of hymns and prayers (279 in all) addressed to the lower gods of Rāma's court (43 in number) and to the Deity himself (236).[4] A homicide on a pilgrimage of remorse came to Benares with the pitiful cry, "For the love of the Lord Rāma give alms to me a homicide." Tulsī Dās took him to his house, gave him some of the sacred food that had been offered to the Deity, declared him purified, and sang Rāma's praise. The scandalised Brāhmans held a meeting and summoned the poet to explain. "Read your Scriptures," he replied: "their truth hath not yet entered your hearts." "He is a murderer," they answered; "what salvation can there be for him?" At length they agreed upon a test. Would Çiva's sacred bull eat from the homicide's hand? They repaired to the temple, and the bull took the proffered

[1] Cp. *ante*, p. 423.

[2] On the Būrhīgangā, an old bed of the Ganges, in the Etah district. It has been a place of pilgrimage for many centuries, and still contains 50 or 60 temples and 30 large rest-houses for pilgrims. Cp. *Imp. Gaz.*, xxiii. p. 88.

[3] i. *dohās* (couplets) 34–38, with intervening stanzas (*chaupāis*), Growse, p. 20.

[4] The story is told by Sir G. A. Grierson, *JRAS* (1903), p. 454.

food. Thousands of conversions followed. The angry Kali-yuga, god of the present æon, appeared to the poet and threatened to devour him, unless he stopped the spread of piety. The poet consulted one of Rāma's warriors, the monkey-chief Hanumat, who appeared to him in a dream, and advised him to write a Petition of Complaint. "Look upon me," ran the poet's supplication, "I can do nothing of myself. Oft have I turned my face from thee, and grasped the things of this world; but thou art the fountain of mercy, turn not thy face from me. First look upon thyself, and remember thy mercy and thy might, then cast thine eyes on me and claim me as thy slave, thy very own. For the name of the Lord is a sure refuge, and he who taketh it is saved."

Hanumat played a great part in the rescue of Sītā from the demon-city in Ceylon, and in heaven's court became Rāma's personal attendant. A later legend imbued with the spirit of Tulsī Dās told how a wretched scavenger, in the grip of loathsome disease, lay in foul filth crying "Ah! Rāma, Rāma." Hanumat, flying by, angrily kicked the sufferer on the breast. That night, as he shampooed the God's body, he was horrified to find a dreadful wound in the same place. How had it happened? "You kicked a poor man on the breast," explained Rāma, "as he called upon my name, and what you did to the vilest of my children, you did to me."[1]

Such was the union between the Godhead and his worshippers, and to set it forth as the way of deliverance for the whole range of beings from Brahmā himself and the heavenly host to the humblest animal or the most malignant demon was the great purpose of the retold tale. The outlines of the story of Vālmīki were preserved.[2] But some episodes were omitted, new scenes were introduced, and the whole was bathed in a fresh atmosphere of impassioned devotion. The fundamental conceptions of Hindu theology are of course all there. Scripture and Philosophy are the two great sources of truth.[3] The vicissitudes of life, the cycles of the universe itself, are regulated by the Law of the Deed. The ritual of sacrifice must be duly performed; Tulsī Dās enters no protest against sacerdotalism;

[1] Grierson, *ibid.*, p. 458.
[2] Cp. *ante*, p. 425 ff.
[3] Growse, i. 125, p. 61.

the claims of Brāhmans are recognised to the utmost. The Brāhman race is "the very root of the tree of piety, the full moon of the sea of intelligence, the sun of the lotus of asceticism, the destroyer of sin, the healer of distress."[1] A Brāhman may curse, beat, and abuse you, but he is still an object of reverence. Devoid of every virtue and merit, he must yet be honoured, "but a Çūdra never, though distinguished for all virtue and learning." So great is their power that Rāma even announces, "They who without guile in thought, word, and deed, do service to the gods of earth, subdue unto themselves Brahmā, Çiva, myself, and every other divinity."[2] There are sacred rivers for pious bathing; voices from on high proclaim the heavenly will; the marvels achieved by the saints' self-mortification pass all bounds. More definitely, however, than in any previous literature is the whole world of the gods involved in the net of sensuous desire. Brahmā and Çiva both in turn appeal to Rāma for deliverance, and Indra behind the scenes plays the strange part of the villain of the piece. The Western student must not allow himself to be affronted by the incongruities of mythology, or the extravagances of combat. In the heroic character of Rāma and his obedience to his father's will, in Sītā's gentleness and wifely devotion, in Bharata's loyal affection for his brother, and Hanumat's fidelity in service, in the lofty strain of personal purity, and the summons to the love of God and man as the true way of salvation, hundreds of millions of people through three centuries have found the best nurture for their religious life.

"There is one God," sang Tulsī Dās, "the Uncreated, the Universal Soul, the Supreme Spirit, the All-pervading, who has become incarnate and done many things for the love that he bears to his faithful people, All-gracious and compassionate to the humble, All-good, All-powerful."[3] This is his mighty creed, and on this contrast the whole presentation of the tale is built. Tulsī Dās starts from the fundamental conception of philosophical theology, the eternal Brahman, passionless,

[1] iii. opening invocation, p. 333.

[2] iii. 28 (Chaup.), p. 357. The holy form of a Brāhman is a rank which it is difficult even for a god to attain, vii. 106 (Chaup.), p. 553.

[3] i. 17 (Chaup.), p. 9.

formless, without attributes (*nirguna*), and yet possessing the fundamental quality of goodness (*sattva*);[1] nay, in still bolder speech, at once the sum and the negation of all qualities,[2] self-same in all time, past, present, and to come. Immeasurable, sinless, he is the theme of the Veda and Vedânta, supreme in wisdom and bliss, annihilator of duality. This transcendent being, unbegotten, source of light and life, the sovereign of the universe, preceptor of the gods, has deigned to become manifest for the world's delight, to bestow the peace of final deliverance, and serve as the bridge for erring mortals over the ocean of existence.[3] On the physical side he is the abiding source of all power, in the fine phrase of the translator, "the Omnipresent Centre of the universe"; ethically he is the "shield of righteousness," "disperser of the impurity of the iron age"; the tamer of pride, lust, lying, and selfishness; the salvation of the saints; and spiritually, "the unbodied ruler of the soul, who ever dwelleth in the hearts of all."[4] Thus he is Absolute Intelligence, Perfect Goodness, and Universal Love.[5] And of this God the four Vedas, in the guise of venerable bards, sang their hymn of praise as he sat enthroned after all his trials in the city of his birth:—

"We adore the Uncreated Tree whose root is the primordial germ, . . . with innumerable leaves and abundant flowers, whose fruits are of two kinds, bitter and sweet; with a single creeper [Māyā] ever clinging to it; full of buds and blossoms and fruit, the everlasting tree of creation. Let them preach in their wisdom who contemplate thee as the Supreme Spirit, the Uncreate, inseparable from the universe, recognisable only by inference and beyond the understanding; but we, O Lord, will ever hymn the glories of thy incarnation. O merciful Lord God, this is the boon we ask, that in thought, word, and deed, without any variableness, we may maintain devotion to thy feet."[6]

The relation of this Deity to the existing scene is presented now in connection with the popular mythology, and now in

[1] i. 26 (Chaup.), p 16. [2] i. 345 (Chaup.), p. 167.

[3] ii. 85, p. 221; i. 150 (Chaup.), p. 73; v. invocation, p. 387.

[4] iii. 1 (Chhand. i.), p. 335; iii. 7 (Chaup.), p. 341; vi. 70, p. 459; vi. 107 (Chaup.), p. 485.

[5] vii. 77 (Chaup.), p. 535; 90, p. 542; 85 (Chaup.), p. 539.

[6] vii. 13 (Chhand. 5), p. 504.

terms of the Vedântic philosophy.[1] The holy Triad, Brahmâ, Vishnu (Hari), and Çiva (Hara), cannot be ignored. They are, however, completely subordinated to Râma's commands;[2] they have been produced from him, and are simply the agents of his administration, the puppets through which he plays the great drama of life.[3] There is an unexpected confusion of the persons here, for it is Hari (Vishnu) who has condescended to become man in Râma. At Râma's wedding Brahmâ and Çiva lead the other gods, and the divine pair similarly attend his final enthronement; Vishnu, indeed, is there too, but incarnate in the bridegroom and the monarch. Brahmâ, once inconstant in purpose, may confess that a curse lies on the life the gods enjoy, and pray for the blessing of steadfast devotion to Râma's lotus feet.[4] Çiva, likewise, cries "Save me, . . . and dwell for ever in my heart."[5] Yet Çiva is (like Râma) a "tree of Paradise," he rewards the saints with everlasting bliss, and punishes the guilty; and his consort Bhâvanî is addressed by Sîtâ as the "great Mother of the world, cause of the birth, continuance, and ultimate destruction of all being."[6] To the spouse of such a power Râma might well pay homage at the sanctuary of Prayâga, where the waters of the Ganges and the Jumna met, or raise a *linga* at the building of the bridge across the waters to Lankâ and make obeisance to it on his return from Râvana's overthrow.[7] So strong was the remembrance of their equal greatness that Hari and Hara could be bracketed in glory.[8]

To the incarnate Râma the world was no less real than Brahmâ and Çiva. The poet, however, cannot forget his school-philosophy, and when Râma's younger brother Lakshmana asks for an explanation of Mâyâ, as they sit at ease in the forest amid the birds and deer, the exiled prince discourses to him on the illusion of egoism and the distinction between "mine and

[1] The scheme of Sâṅkhyan evolution is in view, vi. 16, p. 429, cp. p. 504[1].
[2] ii. 243 (Chaup.), p. 296.
[3] i. 148 (Chaup.), p. 72; ii. 121 (2nd Chaup.), p. 237.
[4] vi. 107 (Chaup.), p. 485.
[5] vi. 111 (Chhand. 39), p. 487.
[6] i. 246 (Chaup.), p. 116.
[7] ii. 102 (Chaup.), p. 229; vi. 2 (Chaup.), p. 422; 116, p. 490.
[8] ii. 300, p. 323.

thine." God and the soul are really one.[1] But the principle of Non-Duality is quickly set aside; *yoga* and knowledge are replaced by *bhakti*, the adoring love which insists on the reality of both the beings linked in mutual affection, and refuses to resolve one into the other. God's mercy and compassion are inevitably real; whoso experiences them is well aware that Deity is not projecting them illusorily on phantoms of himself. Yet the proprieties must be observed, and Lakshmana can talk the jargon of the schools as well as another. When Guha, a wild dweller in the woods, sadly contemplates Rāma and Sītā asleep on the bare ground, Lakshmana bids him understand that birth and death, prosperity and adversity, home, fortune, even heaven and hell, are all delusive and unreal. Existence is but a dream of the night, they only escape error who are devoted to Rāma in thought, word, and deed.[2] It is a moral, not a metaphysical awaking. Wealth, power, beauty, these are Māyā's instruments; Love and the Passions are the generals of her army; Fraud, Deceit, and Heresy are her champions. The greatest gods and sages are blinded by her wiles, so that Çiva and Brahmā stand in awe of her.[3] In one aspect Māyā and her troupe, like actors on the stage, are set dancing by the Lord's eyebrows. He is the "Fate of fate itself," and all the infinite variety of life is but the product of the Law of the Deed, incorporated in an All-righteous Will. That is the moral sphere of character. But on the physical side Sītā, as the consort of Rāma, the Lord of the universe, is the mother of the world, Lakshmī the source of all prosperity. And as such she is Māyā, "the very power of delusion," but withal the "Primal Energy, Queen of beauty, . . . by the play of whose eyebrows a world flashes into existence."[4] This is no veil of ignorance, hiding the mystery of the ultimate Reality, but the radiant embodiment of creative might; the fashion of philosophy has changed in the poet's vision; and the splendour of nature is the glory of God.

So metaphysic must give way to the heart's yearning. After

[1] iii. 10–12, p. 343 f. [2] ii. 89–91, p. 223.
[3] vii. 70, p. 531 f.
[4] i. 152 (Chaup.), p. 74; vi. 105 (Chhand.), p. 483; ii. 241 (2nd Chaup.), p. 295.

the victory over the demon hosts of Rāvana, the gods assemble to chant Rāma's praises and implore the gift of faith. "Let others," cries Indra, "adore the unembodied Supreme, the primary Existence, whom the Vedas hymn. My desire is the King of Kosala, the divine Rāma, visible and material."[1] The wise crow Bhusundi relates how, once a Brāhman, he went to the great saints living in the woods to hear the tale of Hari's goodness. But every sage whom he questioned only answered, "The Lord is present in all his creatures." The religion of the Impersonal did not satisfy him, "I felt an overpowering devotion towards the incarnation of the Supreme." When he went to the Seer Lomas upon Mount Mēru, the Sage discoursed of the Unbegotten Brahm, immutable, approachable only by analogy, beyond the reach of thought, with whom Bhusundi was as absolutely one as a wave and its water. "The worship of the Impersonal," said Bhusundi, "laid no hold upon my heart." "Tell me," he cried, "how to worship the Incarnate." The Seer grew full of wrath as Bhusundi inquired how a soul dull and circumscribed and subject to delusion could be identified with Deity, and retorted on his arguments against Non-duality with a curse, which Bhusundi meekly accepted as he found himself turned into a crow. It was not the Sage's fault. They who saw their Lord present in everything could quarrel with none. Rāma had stirred his soul to make trial of Bhusundi's love. The Seer's equanimity was divinely restored He granted the crow the blessing of unfailing faith, and a voice from heaven confirmed the privilege.[2]

"If Rāma is the invisible and immortal God, without parts and passions, whose temple is in the heart, why," inquired Çiva's consort Umā of her spouse, "why did he take the form of man?"[3] The Indian answer to the question *Cur Deus Homo?* was simpler than that of medieval Christianity, but instead of a single act it implied an endless series.[4] Whenever virtue decays and evil spirits work iniquity "to the confusion of Brāhmans, cows, gods, and Earth itself," the Lord of mercy must relieve the distress of the faithful, destroy the powers of evil, reinstate the gods, maintain the way of salvation, and spread the

[1] vi. 109 (Chhand. 37), p. 486.
[2] vii. 107–110, pp. 553–556.
[3] i. 126 (Chaup.), p. 62 f.
[4] i. 146, p. 70

brightness of his glory through the world. The special occasion which brought Hari to birth as Rāma was the increase of Rāvana's power, which enabled him to exercise dominion over the whole world. The terrified Earth, seeing all faith perverted, took the form of a cow and went to the assembly of the gods, but Brahmā himself was powerless to help, and could only say "Remember Hari." "Where can we find the Lord?" they asked. In the Vaikuntha heaven, said one; in the ocean, said another. Nay, said a third, "Hari is omnipresent everywhere alike, but is revealed by love." And a voice came from heaven proclaiming that the Deity would descend with his eternal spouse, and be born in the city of Kosala as the son of King Daçaratha and his queen.[1]

Poetical tradition apparently required Tulsī Dās to follow the ancient tale of the fourfold incarnation of the Godhead in the sons of the three queens.[2] It is, however, discreetly veiled, so as to concentrate the whole Deity in Rāma.[3] Wonders attended his birth; but the greatest marvel of all was that the Omnipresent God who is from everlasting, lay as a babe in his mother's arms.[4] Once he revealed to her his marvellous form. Each hair upon his body gleamed with a myriad worlds. There were Brahmās and Çivas without number; Time, Fate, merit and demerit, and all the nameless powers of existence, were made manifest. "She saw both the life which Māyā sets in motion and the faith that sets it free." It was a solemn and terrifying vision, and she fell prostrate at the feet of God. To no one else could such a privilege be vouchsafed; and as the Deity resumed his infant shape, he strictly charged her that she should tell no one. In these contrasts the poet positively revels. The holy God, "the bridge over the ocean of existence, acts like an ordinary man."[5] On his way into exile in the forest he arrives at the Ganges with Sītā and his brother Lakshmana, and is ashamed that he has nothing to pay the

[1] i. 198 (Chaup.), p. 94. The introduction of Lakshmī as a joint personality in the incarnation is interesting theologically; later in the story she is identified with Rāma's consort, Sītā. Rāma vows to rid the earth of demons, iii. 6, cp. 18 (Chaup.), pp. 339, 350.

[2] Cp. *ante*, p. 425.

[3] i. 201–204.

[4] i. 210.

[5] ii. 85, p. 221.

ferryman across the river; the ferryman refuses Sītā's ring, and "the All-merciful dismissed him with the gift of unclouded faith, best of all boons."[1] Though all-pervading and dwelling in the hearts of all, he roams the woods; lord of creation and cognisant of all secrets, after Sītā's abduction he exhibits the distress of a lover; he weeps for his wounded brother Lakshmana, but the poet carefully explains that Rāma is unchangeable, and it was only in compassion to his worshippers that he exhibited the manners of a man; he even condescended in all the majesty of sovereignty at Kosala to wash the feet of the sage Vasishtha and drink of the water.[2] Such was the incarnate Deity, "playing the part of a man" in desperate combat with the demon powers for the deliverance of the world.[3]

The poem is, in truth, a prolonged allegory of the beauty and the conquering might of religion. In his forest-exile kingly Wisdom, suppliant at Rāma's feet, holds undisputed sway; Continence and Faithfulness are his champions; Peace and Goodwill his lovely queens;[4] the hare and the elephant, the tiger and the boar, forgot their antipathies and grazed together. When Rāma entered the great fight it was observed that he had no chariot, nor even shoes. His war-car, said the All-merciful, was of a different kind. Manliness and courage were his wheels; unflinching truthfulness and morality his banners; strength, discretion, self-control and benevolence his horses, with grace, mercy and equanimity for their harness; prayer to Mahādeva, his charioteer; reverence to Brāhmans and his Preceptor, his coat of mail. "There is no equipment for victory that can be compared to this, nor is there any enemy who can conquer the man who takes his stand on the Chariot of Religion."[5][6] The overthrow of Rāvana's power leads to Rāma's return to Kosala. His restoration inaugurates a kind of Messianic reign when all sorrow is ended, and the three spheres are full of joy. Nature was one big harmony of plenty and peace; the darkness of doubt was scattered; the four

[1] ii. 98 f., p. 227.

[2] iii. 7 (Chaup.), p. 341; iii. 33 (Chaup.), p. 360; vi. 58 (Chaup.), p. 453; vii. 48 (Chaup.), p. 521.

[3] vi. 62 (Chaup.), p. 455.

[4] ii. 225 (Chaup.), p. 287.

[5] vi. 76 (Chaup.), p. 463.

pillars of religion, truth, purity, mercy and charity, were established throughout the world; day and night men uttered their prayer to God for fervent devotion to Rāma's holy feet. At the head of the four sons of Brahmā Sanat-Kumāra, the "Ever-Youthful," makes his obeisance, and they sing "Glory to the Lord God, the Everlasting, the Sinless, the All-merciful! Abide with us, dwell in our heart; Ark of Salvation, bestow on us the boon of constant love." So were earth and heaven bound together in one fellowship of spirit by a common faith.[1]

Of this faith, an adoring trust and humble love (*bhakti*), the whole poem is the praise and the exemplification. It is the sole bond of kinship which Rāma recognises, surpassing lineage and wealth, power and virtue, and the exercises of ceremonial religion. On its divine side it is constantly represented as a gift from God himself. Even to Brahmā and Çiva it only comes as an answer to prayer.[2] But the gift is not without conditions. Ninefold are the modes of conduct and temper through which it finds its way into the heart—such as association with holy men, love for the tale of Rāma's labours for the world, devotion to the Preceptor, hymns of praise and prayer, self-governance, kindness, contentment, with no thought of spying out fault in others. The disciple must see the whole world full of God, and without exaltation or dejection put his trust in him.[3] The burden of sin is grievous: neither works nor knowledge, neither meditation nor asceticism, can avail against it. Only by the water of faith and love is the interior stain effaced: "Grant me," runs the prayer, "a vehement faith, and cleanse my heart of lust and every other sin."[4] A strenuous personal purity was demanded by Tulsī Dās; "Consider thy body as worthy of honour, for the Lord himself once took

[1] vii. 21 ff., p. 508.

[2] The relation of Çiva (Hara) to Rāma (Hari) is, however, much closer than that of Brahmā. Those who think to serve Rama by dishonouring Çiva will go to the deepest hell till the end of the world, while to all guileless worshippers of Rāma Çiva will grant the boon of faith, vi. 3, p. 423. Çiva is actually worshipped with Rāma, vii. invocation, p. 496.

[3] iii. 29 f., p. 358, a different enumeration from the usual list. Cp. *ante*, p. 420, and the poem of the Marātha saint, Ekanāth (1548–99), in Macnicol's *Psalms of Marāthā Saints* (1912), p. 52.

[4] iii. 3 (Sorathā 5), p. 338; vii. 49 (Chaup.), p. 522; v. invocation, p. 387.

the human form."[1] The incarnation was thus the proof of Rāma's love for all creation, and the standard towards which the believer must for ever aspire. "Show love to all creatures," runs the precept,[2] "and thou shalt be happy, for when thou lovest all things, thou lovest the Lord, for he is all in all." Love was the only thing that Rāma loved; not sacrifice and ritual, not abstraction of thought or *yoga*-concentration, not fasting or prayer, almsgiving or self-mortification, moved his compassion so much as simple love.[3] And of this he was the great exemplar when he clasped a poor wild man of the woods to his bosom, and deigned to take Rāvana's demon-brother in his arms.[4]

So above the formal paths of Vedic ceremonial philosophic discipline, and ascetic practice, rises the way of faith. Over his worshippers Rāma watches like a mother over her child.[5] The great Name, more wondrous than either the uncreated Brahm or the incarnate Rāma, for it included both, had ever power to save. It availed for the lowest outcast or the most hardened criminal.[6] Even one who has been the curse of the whole world, if he abjures his pride and sensuality and seeks Rāma's protection, shall be made a saint.[7] When the long fight with Rāvana was at length concluded, and the demon's body, from which the heads and arms had been hewn off, fell dead upon the ground, making the whole earth reel, the demon's soul entered the Lord's mouth![8] It was a solemn act of divine adoption: well might his weeping consort Mandodarī celebrate Rāma's grace, who had thus purged him of his guilt and raised him to his own abode. Brahmā and Çiva, and all the great seers who had preached the way of salvation, gazed upon Rāma with eyes full of tears, as Mandodarī bowed before the blameless God. The marvel was completed when Rāma's image was impressed on all the demons' souls, and final deliverance was

[1] *Sat Sai* or "Seven Centuries," Grierson, *Indian Antiq.*, xxii. p. 229.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 232.
[3] Growse, ii. 131 (Chaup.), p. 242; vi. 114, p. 489.
[4] vi. 117 (Chhand. 40), p. 491; v. 45 (Chaup.), p. 410.
[5] iii. 37 (Chaup.), p. 362.
[6] ii. 187, p. 268; even the murderer of a million Brāhmans, v. 43 (Chaup.), p. 409; vii. 126 (Chhand. 12), p. 568.
[7] v. 47 (Chaup.), p. 410. [8] Cp. *Mbh.*, xii. 200, 25 f., *ante*, p. 180.

granted to all the host.[1] Thus was the ruler of the world's evil, when his power was overthrown, converted into a saint, and his multitudinous servants were freed from the world's bonds. Yet this was no lasting victory. The incarnation in Daçaratha's son took place in the second or Silver age in a world-cycle, and for a while it seemed that the Golden age itself had reappeared.[2] The sequel of the world's degeneration is not traced, but it is not arrested. Hari's delusive power in time renews the great decline. On those who love Rāma's sacred feet[3] the ignorance and enmity of the Iron Age are without effect. Out of the welter of impiety and ill-will they may be caught away into security, but the perishing world—just when it most needs rescue—is faced with dissolution, and the great cosmic rhythm must begin anew.

Such was, in brief, the teaching of the last attempt to use the Epic as a vehicle of religious truth. Tulsī Dās remained within the Vaishnava fold. He gathered no special disciples: he created no school; his work was fulfilled by his poems. By employing a vernacular, the Eastern Hindī of Oudh, a language between East and West, he made his thoughts intelligible to both. For all practical purposes the "Lake of Rāma's Deeds" became "the Bible of the Hindus who live between Bengal and the Punjab, and between the Himâlaya and the Vindhyas."[4] There have been sweet singers since like the Marātha poet Tukārām (1608–49),[5] or the Bengali Rāma Prasāda Sen (1718–75).[6] But no commanding personality arose to give a fresh direction to Hindu thought and practice till Ram Mohun Roy (1772–1833) inaugurated a new movement in which the influence of the West was potent. The historian of Bengali literature declares that "he combined in himself the best elements of European and Asiatic ideals. In spirituality he was a Vedântist, and in morality he was a follower of Christ."[7] After the foundation of the Brāhma Samāj in 1828, his departure for

[1] Growse, vi. 99-110, pp. 479–487.

[2] vii. 23 (Chaup.), p. 510. The Four Ages are now named after gold silver, bronze, and iron, as in the original form of the Hesiodic myth.

[3] vii. 100 f., p. 548 f.

[4] Grierson, *JRAS* (1903), p. 456.

[5] Cp. N. Macnicol, *Psalms of Marāthā Saints* (1919), pp. 18 ff., 56.

[6] Sen, *Hist. of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 712–19.

[7] Sen, p. 947.

England in 1830 and his lamented death in this country three years later prevented him from following its development. The contact with Christianity on the one hand, and with European philosophical, scientific, and political ideas upon the other, has profoundly stirred the higher Indian thought. All kinds of movements have arisen, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in harmony, with the ideals of the past. The revered Mahārshi Debendranath Tagore, the Sannyāsin Rāmakrishna, Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayânanda Sarasvati, the founder of the Ārya Samāj, the Svāmin Vivekânanda, represent so many different attitudes to the ancient religious tradition, and the divers influences of modern thought.[1] There are earnest pleas for the emancipation of Hinduism from the cramping effects of caste and the degradation of idolatry, and its entry into the company of the great educative influences of the human spirit. There is an enthusiastic revival of the Vedic culture adapted as far as possible to current nationalist sentiment. New educational and social efforts are entering the field for the improvement of the depressed classes. The future of these different tendencies will depend on many circumstances which it is impossible to foresee, on the emergence of capable leaders, the development of advanced political claims, the rate at which the educational level rises, and the incongruity between the beliefs of the past and the knowledge of the present becomes too acute. In the meantime Hindu scholars are actively at work. They are studying their historic monuments, editing their texts, reinterpreting their philosophies, tracing the evolution and significance of their art. It is for us as fellow-citizens of the same Empire, charged with grave responsibilities for the welfare of so vast and varied a population, to strive to understand the modes of religious thought and the types of personal and social righteousness which India has cherished for three thousand years. They are enshrined in her literature and planted deep in the common heart. Only in genuine respect and sympathy for them, and in mutual comprehension between East and West, can the ideals of liberty which we are pledged to realise be securely and adequately fulfilled.

[1] See *Modern Religious Movements in India*, by Dr J. N. Farquhar (1915); and of the same date *The Arya Samāj*, by Lajpat Rai.

NOTE ON CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

THIS large historic theme might have well occupied a lecture. As it has been impossible to deal with it at length, and the writer remains unconvinced that the higher religious thought of medieval India owed anything to Christian influence, it has seemed better to be content with pointing out the chief facts, and leave the student to pursue the discussion for himself.

A broad general view will be found in the chapter on "Christianity in India," in *The Indian Empire*[2] (1886), ix., by Sir W. W. Hunter. Details may be studied in the following:—

G. M. Rae, *The Syrian Church in India*, 1892.
Sir Henry Yule, *Marco Polo*,[3] 1903.
Phillips, *Indian Antiquary*, xxxii. (1903), pp. 1 ff., and 145 ff.
Bishop Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas*, 1905.
Sir G. Grierson, "Modern Hinduism and its Debt to the Nestorians," *JRAS* (1907), p. 311 ff.
Mr J. Kennedy in reply, *ibid.*, p. 477 ff.
Kennedy, "The Child Krishna, Christianity, and the Gujars," *ibid.*, p. 951 ff.
Garbe, *Indien und das Christenthum*, 1914 (a comprehensive and critical survey of the possibilities of reciprocal influence).

Two lines of geographical entry must be carefully kept apart, (1) by land, from the countries bordering India on the North-West, and (2) by sea, from the Persian Gulf or the Red Sea. By the latter route there was an active trade from the Mediterranean through Alexandria during the first two centuries of our era.

The earliest historian of Christianity (after the Book of Acts), Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, in describing the labours of the Apostles (*Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 1), mentions that Thomas "according to tradition" had Parthia allotted to him as his field of labour. The term Parthia was not strictly defined, and may have designated territory from the Tigris and the Persian Gulf as far as the Indus, just as from another point of view the same coast-lands might be reckoned to India. In the late Apocryphal Acts of Thomas (placed by Harnack in the third century) the apostle is said to have undertaken to build a palace for King Gondophares in India, and coins bearing the name of such a king have been found in Kabul, Kandahar, and the Punjab. The question is whether, on the strength of this evidence, the activity of Thomas in N.W. India can be regarded as historical. Phillips concedes it; Garbe, after a long critical discussion of the Acts, rejects it. No further definite trace of Christianity can be discovered in that region; but it is possible that just as the influences of Hellenistic art came through the border countries into Gandhāra, and were

carried further and further east, some echoes of Christian story may have found their way into the Ganges valley.

Catholic tradition, however, continued to connect Thomas with India, and in the sixth century Gregory (Bishop of Tours, 573–593), after reporting the translation of the apostle's relics to Edessa (in 394), adds, "In that part of India where they first rested, stand a monastery and a church of striking dimensions, elaborately adorned and designed. . . . This, Theodore, who had been to the place, narrated to us" (Medlycott, p. 71). Where was this church? The first identification of it only comes from the end of the thirteenth century, when Marco Polo (about 1293) visited a "certain little town in Maabar," identified with Mailapūr (or in modern spelling Mylapore), a suburb on the south of Madras. There, it was believed, the apostle was buried; in 1522 search was made for the body; bones were found which were accepted as the saint's, and were afterwards transported to the Portuguese settlement at Goa.

Of the origin of the Mylapore church, and its supposed connection with Thomas, nothing is known. But on the south side of the river Adiar, which runs into the sea with Mylapore on its left or north bank, are two hills, a greater and a lesser, connected with the Thomas legend. In 1547, as the foundations for a chapel or hermitage were being dug up on the higher, a slab of dark granite adorned with a cross in bas-relief was found with an inscription. A similar inscription has been discovered in a church at Cottayam in Travancore, at the extreme south-west of the peninsula; and the same church contained a third cross with part of the same inscription. The language was the peculiar Persian tongue known as Pehlevi, and the characters were assigned by Dr Burnell on palæographic grounds to the seventh or eighth century (*Indian Antiquary*, iii. pp. 308–316). This had been a settlement of Persian Christians, presumably of the Nestorian type.

Such settlements had been made still earlier on the Western coast. Whether Pantænus, who was reported (Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 10) to have gone from Alexandria to India (about A.D. 180), actually reached the peninsula cannot be determined. If, as Eusebius states, he found Christians using a Gospel according to Matthew in Hebrew, left by Bartholomew, they must have been converts from Judaism. No trace survived in later days. But the Alexandrian merchant Cosmas, travelling on business in the Indian seas in 522, found a church at Kaliana on the coast of Malabar, and another in Ceylon. At Kaliana was a bishop appointed from Persia; in Ceylon the Persian Christians had a Persian presbyter (cp. M'Crindle, *Ancient India* (1901), pp. 160, 165). These foundations were Nestorian. Kaliana is identified with the modern Quilon in Cochin on the South-west. There, apparently, the communities were (at any rate chiefly) composed of Persian settlers. But two grants to the Malabar Christians, dated respectively in 774 and 824, show that they had then gathered native converts. They

cannot, however, have been very numerous. The Dominican Friar Jordanus, writing of his experiences on the West coast between 1321 and 1330, found only "a scattered people one here and another there, who call themselves Christians, but are not so, nor have they baptism, nor do they know anything else about the faith. Nay, they believe St Thomas the Great to be Christ" (quoted by Rae, p. 191). The most influential centre seems to have been at Kaliana, and it has been already noted that traces of Christian story may be found in the early narrative of Madhva's career (*ante*, pp. 409, 411).

In Northern India there are no such points of personal contact. Sir G. Grierson has relinquished the view, once ardently pressed, that the Bhagavad Gītā shows the influence of Johannine teaching. But he adduces two passages from the Mahābhārata, quoted by Prof. E. W. Hopkins (*India, Old and New*, 1901, p. 159; Hastings' *ERE*, ii. p. 549*a*), to prove the probable introduction of Christian ideas into the legend of Krishna. The first (in Hopkins' version, cited from xii. 350, 4, 5, 51) runs thus: "The unborn (that is, the eternal) and ancient one, the only son of God, born of a virgin, very part (*aṃça*) of God." In the first place this refers to the future birth of Vyāsa, the traditional compiler of the Veda, and not to Krishna (Hopkins oddly finds in the name a certain similarity with *iēsos*). In the next place, as the verse-citations show, the passage is a conflation, and it ignores the significant fact that the child who is to incarnate a portion of Narâyana ("God") will be born by the agency of his father, the Rishi Paraçara, the native translators, Roy and Dutt, actually using the words "congress" and "sexual union." The suggestion of "virgin-birth" is entirely misplaced. The second citation runs (of Krishna): "He, the guardian of his flock, the sinless God, the Lord of the world, consented to the death of (himself and) his race that he might fulfil the word of the seers," where, adds Hopkins, "if we had shepherds and prophets, the comparison would be very striking." The reference, *Mbh.*, xvi. 6, 15–16, is unfortunately erroneous, only the title "Lord of the world" coming from ver. 15. The "guardian of the flock, the sinless God" is "the sinless Govinda" or "cow-getter" (ver. 13). The reference to Krishna's death occurs in 4, 20 in fulfilment of a curse pronounced not by a "seer" or Rishi but by a certain Atri's son. These passages are quite inadequate to sustain a theory of Christian influence.

Nārâyana was the deity of a strange episode describing the visit of the sage Nārada to a mysterious White Island, where the Pāñcharātra doctrine was imparted to him by the God. The way lay 32,000 *yojanas* (commonly rendered "leagues") north of Mount Mēru, on the north shore of the Ocean of Milk (*Mbh.*, xii. 336 and 334, Dutt). The inhabitants were always engaged in religious adoration of the great God. From Lassen to Grierson and Kennedy various interpreters have supposed that the picture of their worship

showed Christian traits, and Weber pleaded for an acquaintance with Alexandria and the cultus of the Church. Even Garbe thinks of Nestorian settlements on Lake Balchash which he proposes to identify with the Sea of Milk. But the characters seem as mythical as the locality. They are shorn of the ordinary five senses; they live without food, yet they have sixty-eight teeth and several tongues; they cannot wink; their heads are like umbrellas, and their bodies are perfectly hard. The meaning of this fantastic picture is obscure, but it seems strange that it should be identified with any historical reality.

That the Krishna-cult was not unaffected by Christian legend has been generally conceded ever since Weber's famous essay on the ritual of the festival of his birth (*Ueber Krishṇa's Geburtsfest*, Berlin, 1868), though several of his particular conclusions have been modified. But there is no clear evidence of the channel through which the suggestions—probably in the form of folk-tale—came; still less of any real apprehension of the teaching or spirit of Christianity. Sir G. Grierson supposes that the *bhakti*-religion of Rāmânuja and of his later disciple Rāmânanda was stimulated by the presence of Christians at Mylapore. We have no contemporary evidence of the condition of the Mylapore community, but the reports of later visitors do not imply any great religious activity. The shrine on the Greater Mount was visited by Hindus and Mohammedans as well as by the Christians themselves. Thirty years after Marco Polo had been told the story of St Thomas, Odoric found some fifteen houses of Nestorians beside the church, but the church itself was filled with idols. A century later Conti could reckon a thousand Nestorians in the city. Yet early in the sixteenth century Barbosa found the church half in ruins, with a Mohammedan fakīr charged to keep a lamp burning in it (Yule, ii. p. 358). The data are scanty, but they do not imply a settlement with sufficient energy to stimulate a great religious movement. It must not be forgotten that all through South India for centuries before Rāmânanda's day the Tamil saints and poets had been preaching in impassioned language the doctrine and the practice of the love of God (cp. Lect. VI., p. 353 ff.).

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