

PAPERS ON GREAT INDIAN QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.

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THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVAD
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"RING OUT THE FALSE, RING IN THE TRUE"

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA
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Great Indian Questions of the Day. No. 1.

THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TEACHING
OF THE
BHAGAVAD GITA EXAMINED:
AN APPEAL TO EDUCATED HINDUS.

Satyam Jayati. Truth Conquers.

Sanskrit Proverb

"What is not TRUE is not PATRIOTIC."

Sir Madhava Row

"From the unreal lead me to the real,
From darkness lead me to light,
From death lead me to immortality."

Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad.

"O Father, touch the East, with light,
The light that shone when Hope was born."

Tennyson.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Can the Bhagavad Gita be accepted as a safe Religious Guide? is perhaps the question which at present most agitates the minds of thoughtful Hindus. From the false patriotism now so prevalent, there is great danger lest it should be decided with a view to the answer, which is most flattering to national pride?

Two mottoes on the title-page should be stamped upon the memory :

Satyam Jayati. Truth Conquers :

What is not TRUE is not PATRIOTIC.

Let the following pages be read simply with a desire to know the truth. In the end this rule best promotes the welfare of India.

JOHN MURDOCH.

MADRAS, April, 1902.

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THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA EXAMINED.

AN APPEAL TO EDUCATED HINDUS.

INTRODUCTION.

The BHAGAVAD GITA means the Song of Bhagavat, or the Lord. Bhagavat is here to be understood as meaning Krishna. The poem is considered the gem of Hindu religious literature; it represents the loftiest flight of Indian philosophy. For beauty of versification and for its noble sentiments, it stands pre-eminent. It has been well selected as the last and great stronghold of Hinduism.

While, however, it is allowed that the Bhagavad Gita is a great advance upon the opinions held in India two thousand years ago, it has now to be viewed apart from national feeling, and in the light of the Twentieth Century.

False Patriotism.—There is now a false patriotism rampant in some parts of India, which shows itself in the manner described by Sir H S Maine in a Convocation Address, employing the knowledge it has acquired for "irrationally reactionary purposes."

"It is not to be concealed, and I see plainly that educated Natives do not conceal it from themselves, that they have, by the fact of their education, broken for ever with much in their history, much in their customs, much in their creed. Yet I constantly read and sometimes hear, elaborate attempts on their part to persuade themselves and others, that there is a sense in which these rejected portions of Native history, and usage, and belief, are perfectly in harmony with the modern knowledge which the educated class has acquired, and with the modern civilization to which it aspires."

"Whatever the cause, there can be no greater mistake, and under the circumstances of this country, no more destructive mistake."

Such conduct is equally condemned by enlightened Indians.

A National Religion.—One way in which false patriotism shows itself is in the cry for a *National Religion*. It is thought degrading that a great country like India should have any other religion than its own.

There is no *National Science*. Keshub Chunder says :

"Science is one; it is one yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the same in the east and the west; the same in the first and the nineteenth century. There can be but one true science; it recognises neither caste nor colour, nor nationality. It is God's science, the eternal verity of things."

What is true of science applies to religion. As there cannot be national sciences, so there cannot be national religions.

Professor Bose, instead of endeavouring to construct an "Indian science," has wisely adopted western science, and by his brilliant discoveries has commanded the admiration of the world's *savants*.

In religion the grand inquiry should be—not what is *flattering to national pride*,—but what is *true*. The late Sir Madhava Row, one of the most distinguished statesmen of recent times, justly said.

"What is not TRUE is not PATRIOTIC."

Our religion should be founded on *the impregnable rock of Truth*. In the end this prevails, *Satyam jayati*, Truth conquers. There is no religion higher than truth. Whatever is false in any religion must eventually be abandoned.

Progress in Religion.—In India the popular feeling is to "follow the ancients," to "walk according to custom." This has also been the rule in China with its stationary civilization. In Europe, "*Progress is considered the fundamental idea of Civilization*" It presents the idea of a people marching onward. Is India to follow China, or, like Japan, to follow Europe?

Lecky the historian says, "*Invariably an increase of civilization implies a modification of belief*"

Men's conceptions of God are influenced by their civilization. Among savages demons are worshipped. Nations more advanced are polytheists, believers in many gods. The most enlightened nations are monotheists, or acknowledge only one God. The moral standard also rises. Polytheists think that their gods, like despots, are not bound by the laws of morality. With the advance of civilization, it is felt that an immoral god has no existence, but is simply the invention of men with the ideas of their times.

By slow degrees some nations have advanced from polytheism and pantheism to monotheism. India, as a whole, is still in the polytheistic and pantheistic stage, but there is an enlightened minority of monotheists. The duty of such is to endeavour, by every means in their power, to spread their views among their countrymen.

Application of the Laws of Evidence to Religion.—Hindu pandits are noted for their want of common sense and their credulity. They accept the most extraordinary and contradictory statements with implicit belief. The Vedas give thirteen conflicting accounts of their origin, but this does not present any difficulty to a pandit.

The late Sir H. S. Maine, probably the greatest lawyer that ever came to India, says

"Where the Indian intellect had been trained at all before the establishment of the British-Indian Empire, it stood in need, before everything else, of stricter criteria of truth"

India has now trained lawyers, men accustomed to weigh evidence. The knowledge and skill thus acquired should be employed in the investigation of religious truth. The following pages are intended to show how the enquiry may be extended to the Bhagavad Gítá

The statements made should be examined with a simple desire to know the truth. It is a melancholy fact that some educated Hindus, though themselves, regardless of religion, from false patriotism, seek to defend national beliefs which, in their hearts, they condemn. Such men are not India's FRIENDS, but FOES, encouraging hypocrisy and hindering the spread of truth.

English Translations.—There are translations of the Bhagavad Gítá both by Indian and European scholars. As the European knowledge of Sanskrit may be disputed, the quotations are from Telang's translation, in the *Sacred Books of the East*, edited by Max Muller. Kásináth Trimbak Telang was an excellent Sanskrit scholar, and he would have the help of the best pandits. His object was to give a correct rendering—not to support any particular views. The author of the poem sought to please the followers of the Sánkhya, Yoga, and Vedánta systems as well as the advocates of the later doctrine of *Bhakti*. Hence several of his statements are contradictory. The followers of the Advaita, Dwaita, and Visishtadwaita systems all claim the support of the Bhagavad Gítá

In the following pages minute philosophical questions are not considered; but the great doctrines which should regulate our belief and conduct

The Question at issue.—This is not whether the Bhagavad Gítá contains some noble sentiments beautifully expressed: this is admitted. The real point is, Does it also contain some vital errors, showing that it was not inspired, as it claims, by the Deity?

Suppose a person is about to partake of some food. It is not sufficient for him to know that many of the ingredients are wholesome; but does it contain any which are poisonous? One of the latter would cause the whole to be rejected. The point to be

investigated is, Does the Religious and Moral Teaching of the Bhagavad Gítá contain some errors showing that it is a mere human production?

It is allowed that the Bhagavad Gítá contains conflicting statements. The Dwaita may quote a verse containing the opposite of another quoted by an Adwaita. The one, however, does disprove the other. It only shows that the poem contains irreconcilable opinions. An inspired book should not contain any errors.

OCCASION WHEN THE POEM IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN RECITED.

Mr. Telang gives the following account of this :

"The royal family of Hastinapura was divided into two branches; the one called the Kauravas, and the other the Pándavas. The former wished to keep the latter out of the share of the kingdom claimed by them; and so, after many attempts at an amicable arrangement had proved fruitless, it was determined to decide the difference between the two parties by the arbitration of arms. Each party accordingly collected its adherents, and the two hostile armies met on the holy field of Kurukshetra, mentioned in the opening lines of our poem. At this juncture, Krishna Dvaipáyana, *alias* Vyása, a relation of both parties, and endowed with more than human powers, presents himself before Dhritaráshttra, the father of the Kauravas, who is stated to be altogether blind. Vyása asks Dhritaráshttra whether it is his wish to look with his own eyes on the course of the battle; and on Dhritaráshttra expressing his reluctance, Vyása deposes one Sanjaya to relate to Dhritaráshttra all the events of the battle, giving to Sanjaya, by means of his own superhuman powers, all necessary aid to perform the duty. Then the battle begins, and after a ten days' struggle, the first great general of the Kauravas, namely Bhishma, falls. At this point Sanjaya comes up to Dhritaráshttra, and announces to him the sad result, which is of course a great blow to his party. Dhritaráshttra then makes numerous inquiries of Sanjaya regarding the course of the conflict, all of which Sanjaya duly answers. And among the earliest answers is the account of the conversation between Krishna and Arjuna at the commencement of the battle, which constitutes the Bhagavad Gítá."*

SUMMARY OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

The great aim of the book is to harmonize the doctrines of the Yoga, the Sánkhyá, and the Vedánta; to exalt the duties of caste (*dharma*) above all other obligations, including the ties of friendship and affection; but at the same time to show that the practice of these duties is compatible with the self-mortification and concentration of thought enjoined by the Yoga philosophy, as well as the deepest devotion (*bhakti*) to the Supreme Being, with whom Krishna claims to be identified.

* Introduction to Translation, pp. 2, 3.

The whole composition is skilfully thrown into the form of a dialogue, the speakers of which are Krishna and Arjuna. It is divided into three sections, each containing six chapters, the philosophical teaching in each being somewhat distinct. The number of the verses is 700.

The first section dwells chiefly on the benefits of the Yoga system, pointing out, however, that the asceticism and self-mortification of Yoga ought to be joined with action and the performance of caste duties, and winding up with a declaration that the grand aim of all self-suppression is to attain that state which enables a man to annihilate his own individuality and see God in everything and everything in God. Arjuna is exhorted, as a member of the soldier-caste, to dismiss all doubt about the propriety of fighting and killing his relatives, by an argument drawn from the eternal existence of the soul.

In the 2nd and 6th chapters the duty of Yoga, or 'intense concentration of the mind on one subject' (*viz.*, the Supreme Being, here identified with Krishna), is enjoined, till at last the great end of freedom from all thought, perfect calm, and absorption in the Deity is obtained.

In the second division the pantheistic doctrines of the Vedānta are more directly inculcated than in the other sections. Krishna here, in the plainest language, claims adoration as one with the great universal Spirit, pervading and constituting the universe. He reveals himself to Arjuna as possessed of countless faces, countless mouths, countless eyes, and blazing like a thousand suns.

Arjuna, with every hair on his body bristling with awe, bows his head at the vision, and folding his hands in reverence, gives utterance to a passionate outburst of enthusiastic adoration.

The third division of the poem, comprising the six last chapters, aims particularly at interweaving Sāṅkhya doctrines with the Vedānta, though this is done more or less throughout the work. It accepts the doctrine of a supreme presiding Spirit (called *Param Brahma* or *Adhyātman*, xiii. 12, viii. 1), as the first source of the universe, but asserts the eternal existence of Prakriti and Puruṣa—that is, of an original eternal element and soul—both emanating from the Supreme Being (then regarded as *Para Prakriti*, supreme Prakriti). It maintains the individuality and personality of souls, and affirms that the body (*kṣhetra*) and all the world of sense is evolved out of Prakriti by the regular Sāṅkhya process, through Buddhi, Ahankāra, the five subtle elements, the five grosser elements, and the eleven organs, including mind.*

It seems very improbable that such a long philosophic treatise should have been delivered in a single morning on the eve of a great battle.

* Abridged from *Indian Wisdom*, by Sir M. Monier-Williams, pp. 127-140.

THE RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

GOD.

Importance of subject.—There is no more important question for a nation than this, What is the nature of the God it worships? "As is the God, so is the worshipper." Principal Fairbairn says; "*What constitutes a religion is a man's belief in a God or in gods; what differentiates religion is the sort of God the man worships.*"

The teaching of the Bhagavad Gita about God will now be examined

Krishna as described in the Bhagavad Gita.—It is admitted that the Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita, unstained by the vices and passions of the popular deities, is a great advance. The writer has endeavoured to give as grand a conception of him as he is able. He is represented as having the lustre of a thousand suns, "having many celestial ornaments, having many celestial weapons held erect, wearing celestial flowers and vestments, of countless forms, possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes on all sides. Kings and warriors were seen entering his terrible mouths, and some with their heads smashed were seen stuck in the spaces between the teeth."

The representation is only a kind of magnified image of Vishnu. It might seem grand to an uneducated Hindu, but to an enlightened man it appears degrading.

Krishna is described as Supreme and worshipped by all the gods, Yakshas, Demons, and Sidhas, but this is not monotheism, which holds that only one God exists, and denies that there are any other. It will now be shown that the Bhagavad Gita is polytheistic and pantheistic in its teaching.

1 THE TRUTH OF POLYTHEISM AND DEMONOLATRY ACKNOWLEDGED.

At a very early period the undivided Aryans, the ancestors of the Romans, Greeks, English, German, Persians, and Hindus, worshipped the same God, under the name of Heaven-Father. Max Müller says.

"There is a monotheism which precedes the polytheism of the Veda, and even in the invocation of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the mist of an idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds."

As time rolled on, the number of gods was increased. Some Hindus, unacquainted with the Vedas, think that they contain

a pure monotheism. Such is not the case. The religion of the Vedas is polytheistic. The gods are usually spoken of as thrice-eleven, with their wives, as the following quotations will show :

In the third Mandala of the Rig-Veda, Hymn 6, verse 10, Agni is thus addressed :

"Bring, with their wives, the gods, the three-and-thirty, after thy god-like nature, and be joyful."

The following invitation is given to the Asvins —

'Come O Nasatyas, with the thrice-eleven gods, Come, O ye Asvins, to the drinking of the meath.' I. 34. 11

A hymn to the Visvedevas concludes thus :

"O ye eleven gods whose home is heaven, O ye eleven who make earth your dwelling,

Ye who with might, eleven, live in waters, accept this sacrifice, O gods, with pleasure " I. 139. 11.

The popular saying at present is that the divinities number 33 crores.

It will be seen that the gods are reduced in number from 33 crores to 33 with their wives. In Book iv 9. 9. the gods are mentioned as being much more numerous "Three hundred, three thousand, thirty and nine gods have worshipped Agni."

Many Hindus suppose that monotheism is taught in the well-known formula from the Chhândogya Upanishad, *ekam evadvitīyam*, "One only without a second " This is a mistake. The real meaning is, not that there is only one God, but that there is no second anything—a totally different doctrine.

It will now be shown that polytheism is taught in the Bhagavad Gītā

"Please the gods with this, and may those gods please you Please each other, you will attain the highest good." III. 11.

'For pleased with the sacrifices, the gods will give you the enjoyments you desire " III. 12.

"Desiring the success of actions, men in this world worship the divinities, for in this world of mortals, the success produced by action is soon obtained " IV. 12.

"Those who worship the divinities go to the divinities, and my worshippers, too, go to me." VII. 23.

"Those who know the three (branches of) knowledge, who drink the Soma juice, whose sins are washed away, offer sacrifices and pray to me for a passage to heaven ; and reaching the holy world of the lord of gods, they enjoy in the celestial regions the celestial pleasures of the gods ' IX. 20

"And having enjoyed that great heavenly world, they enter the mortal world when (their) merit is exhausted." IX. 21.

Demonolatry means the worship of evil spirits. Hinduism a variety of them, Bhūtas, Pretas, Pisāchās, Rakshāsas.

Krishna acknowledges the existence of Bhútas, and says that those who worship them go to them :

" Those who make vows to the gods go to the gods ; those who make vows to the Manes (Pitrís) go to the Manes ; those who worship the Bhútas go to the Bhútas , and likewise those who worship me go to me." IX. 25

Demon worship was the religion of the wild tribes of India ; but this belief is now rejected by all enlightened persons.

The gods and goddesses have been so multiplied that they are now said to amount to 33 crores. Not content even with these, Hindus have accepted Muhammadan *Pírs*.

It is alleged that all the gods are the same, though worshipped under different names.

Take the three principal gods, Brahmá, Vishnu, and Siva : their residences, wives, and children are all different. Brahmá is said to live in Satya-loka, his wife is Savitrí , Vishnu lives in Vainúthā, his wife is Lakshmi ; Siva lives in Kailāsa, his wife is said to be Párvati. Different dispositions and actions are ascribed to these gods. Several times they are said to have fought with each other.

If the 33 crores of the Hindu gods are all the same, it may as well be said that the 30 crores of people in India, with different houses, wives, children, occupations, are all one. If the gods are one, why are they reckoned as amounting to 33 crores ?

This is only an excuse for the folly of Polytheism put forward by those who are somewhat more intelligent than the masses. Rammohun Roy says : " The Hindus firmly believe in the real existence of innumerable gods and goddesses who possess, in their own departments full and independent powers, and to propitiate them, and not the true God, are temples erected and ceremonies performed."

The Hindus themselves call their religions by the name of the particular deity they worship, as *Siva Bhakti*, *Vishnu Bhakti*, &c. The vast majority would be indignant at the supposition that their own religion and the detested heresy of their opponents, are, after all, the same.

Lyall thus describes the polytheism of India —

" A tangled jungle of disorderly superstitions ; ghosts and demons, demigods and deified saints ; household gods, tribal gods, local gods, universal gods ; with the countless shrines and temples, and the din of their discordant rites , deities who abhor a fly's death, those who delight still in human victims, and those who would not either sacrifice or make offerings."

The Bhagavad Gítá, instead of condemning this lamentable state of things, sanctions it.

Monotheism is now accepted by all enlightened nations of

the world. Educated Hindus are gradually adopting the same belief, and some of them try to read it in the Bhagavad Gítá. The quotations given prove indisputably that the author of the poem was a polytheist. The gods of the Hindu pantheon have no existence. They are mere *names*, not *realities*. A belief in them shows that the Bhagavad Gítá was not inspired by the God of truth

2 PANTHEISM TAUGHT.

Christianity teaches the omnipresence of God. Psalm 139 says .

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there, if I make my bed in the unseen world, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

It also teaches that we are continually dependent upon God for life. "In Him we live and move and have our being." All this, however, is very different from Pantheism.

Pantheism, from *pan*, all, *theos*, God, is the doctrine that God is all that exists. Perhaps no dogma is held more firmly by the Hindus. It pervades all, even the most unintelligent. The acknowledgment is universally made that God is one, while at the same time the countless divinities of the Hindu pantheon are worshipped.

It is admitted that Pantheism is more clearly taught in the Upanishads, as in the following two quotations from the Chhándogya Upanishad —

Ekam evádrútiyam, "One without a second" vii. 2. 1.

Sarvam Kalvulam Brahman, "All this (universe) is Brahma" iii.

In the following quotations Brahma is said to form the universe out of himself

"7. As the spider casts out and draws in (its web), as on the earth the annual herbs are produced, as from living man the hairs of the head and body spring forth, so is produced the universe from indestructible (Brahma)."

"1. This is the truth: As from a blazing fire in thousand ways similar sparks proceed, so, O beloved, are produced living souls of various kinds from the indestructible (Brahma) and they also return to him."

Souls are compared to the web which the spider forms out of its own body, to sparks from a fire

But Pantheism is also found in the Bhagavad Gítá; Krishna says:

"Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, understanding, and egoism (akankara), this is my nature (Prakriti) divided eight-fold VII. 4.

* Mundaia Upanishad, i. 7. † Ibid. II 1.

"But this is a lower (form of my) nature. Know (that there is) another (form of my) nature (*Prakriti*), and higher than this which is animate, and by which this universe is upheld." VII. 5.

"Know that all things have these (for their) sources. I am the producer and the destroyer of the whole universe. VII. 6.

"Know me to be the eternal seed of all beings." VII. 10

Chapter X contains a long description of what Krishna is

"I am the beginning, and the middle and the end also of all beings."

20 "I am Indra among the gods. 22. I am the lord of wealth (*Kuvera*) among *Yakshas* and *Rākshasas*. 23. Among *Nāga* snakes I am *Ananta*. 29.

"I am also that which is the seed of all things. There is nothing movable or immovable which can exist without me." 39.

Krishna is said to have two natures—a lower and a higher. The lower corresponds to the *Prakriti* of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy which is here adopted. All things are formed out of *Prakriti*, Krishna's lower nature

The earliest Vedāntists seem to have held the opinion expressed in the *Mundaka Upanishad*, that *Brahma* made the universe out of himself. They are called *Paranumavādins*. The doctrine of *Māyā*, illusion, was afterwards developed, and those who held it were called *Māyavādins*, Illusionists. *Shankar Achārya*, belonged to the latter. Hence, in his commentary on VII 7. he says, "*My Prakriti*, the *Māyā* belonging to *Ishvara*."*

Bishop Caldwell has the following remarks on the doctrine concerning God in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

"According to the *Gītā*, God is the soul of the world, its material cause as well as its efficient cause. The world is his body, framed by himself out of himself. A consequence of this doctrine, a consequence which is distinctly taught again and again, is that God is all things, as containing all things. Every thing that exists is a portion of God, and every action that is performed is an action of God. The doctrine knows no limitations, and is incapable of being exaggerated. The basest animals that creep on the face of the earth have not merely been created by God for some good purpose, but are divine, inasmuch as they are portions of God's material form, and the most wicked actions which men, vainly fancying themselves free agents, are ever tempted to perform, are not only permitted by God, but are actually perpetrated by him, inasmuch as they are performed by his power and will, working out their ends through the human constitution, which is a part of himself.

"This doctrine differs, it is true, from the *Adwaita* doctrine, to which alone the name of Vedāntism is popularly given, that the Supreme Spirit alone really exists and that the world is unreal; but it may be regarded as questionable whether the unreality of phenomena be not preferable to the doctrine that their reality consist in their inclusion in God as parts of his totality."

* Translation by A. Mahadeva Sāstri, B. A., page 146.

Pantheism strikes at the root of all religious feeling. The essence of religion is to love, honour, and obey God, to pray to Him, to worship Him. If I am God, why should I worship myself?

The pernicious effect of pantheism on Indian polytheism are thus shown by Professor Flint —

"I have said that the ability of pantheism to ally itself with polytheism accounts for its prevalence in certain lands, but I must add that, although a power, this ability is not a merit. It is a power for evil—power which sustains superstition, corrupts the system which possesses it, deludes and degrades the human mind and heart, and arrests social progress. Educated Hindus are often found to represent it as an excellence of Brahminism, that it not only tolerates, but embraces and incorporates the lower phases of religion. They contend that it thereby elevates and purifies polytheism, and helps the mind of men to pass from the lowest stage of religious development gradually up to the highest. The opinion may seem plausible, but neither reason nor experience confirms it. Pantheism can give support to polytheism and receive support from it, but only at the cost of sacrificing all its claims to be a rational system, and of losing such moral virtue as it possesses. If it look upon the popular deities as mere fictions of the popular mind, its association with polytheism can only mean a conscious alliance with falsehood, the deliberate propagation of lies, a persistent career of hypocrisy . . . India alone is surely sufficient proof that the union of pantheism with polytheism does not correct, but stimulate the extravagances of the latter. Pantheism, instead of elevating and purifying Hindu polytheism, has contributed to increase the number, the absurdity, and the foulness of its superstitions."*

3 KRISHNA'S INCARNATIONS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED.

When Krishna said to Arjuna that he had taught the doctrine of Yoga to Vivasvat, the sun, Arjuna objected that the birth of Krishna was later than that of Vivasvat. To this the "Deity" replied:—

"I have passed through many births, and you also. Whensoever piety (dharma) languishes and impiety is in the ascendant, I create myself. I am born age after age for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, and the establishment of piety. IV 5-8.

Krishna claims that whenever a great disorder disturbed the world, he descended to set it right, to restore dharma, and thus preserve creation. Such descents were called his *Avatāras*. (From *ava*, down, and *tri*, pass beyond.)

Ten principal incarnations are described.

One or two of them may be briefly noticed

It is said that a demon, named Hiranyāksha, had dragged the earth to the bottom of the sea. To recover it, Vishnu assumed

* Antitheistic Theories, pp. 390, 391.

the form of a boar, (Varāha), and after a contest of a thousand years, he slew the demon, and raised up the earth. All this is the wild imagination of some poet. The earth floats in the sky like the moon, and there is no ocean in which it could have sunk, and required to be raised.

The best known incarnation is that of Krishna, fully described in the Vishnu and Bhagavata Purānas. What was his character?

As a child, he is represented as mischievous and disobedient. When he grew up, he sported with the Gopīs. He is usually associated with Rādhā, the wife of Ayanagosha. When the two were surprised by the husband, Krishna assumed the form of Kālī, and Rādhā seemed, as if worshipping her. He is said to have had 8 queens and 16,100 wives. The last act of his life was to go to Prabhāsa with his queens, wives and 180,000 sons, accompanied by a great number of prostitutes. His sons got drunk and began fighting with each other. Krishna first tried to separate them, but as this failed, he was enraged, and took up a handful of rushes to destroy them. These rushes became a club of iron, with which he slew the surviving sons so that not one was left.*

Krishna's claim to be a Divine incarnation falls self-refuted to the ground, for the signs of a true incarnation, as stated in the Bhagavad Gītā, are diametrically opposed to the whole tone and tenor of his life. The Krishna of the Bhagavad Gītā should have appeared for the destruction of the Krishna of the Bhagavata Purāna. Bishop Caldwell justly says "The stories related of Krishna's life do more than anything else to destroy the morals, and corrupt the imaginations of Hindu youth."

The Maharājas, scattered over India, claim to be incarnations of Krishna, and are supposed to be privileged to act as he did. Men and women prostrate themselves at their feet, offering them incense, fruits, and flowers, and holding lights before them. It is believed that the best way of propitiating Krishna in heaven is by ministering to the sensual appetites of the Maharājas. Body, soul, and property (*tan, man, dhan*) are to be wholly made over to them. Women are taught to believe that the highest bliss will be secured to themselves and their families by intercourse with the Maharājas. To secure this, large sums are paid.

It is true that the Bhagavata Purāna gives the warning that Krishna's conduct is not to be imitated. Hindus excuse the crimes attributed to their gods on the grounds that, like despots, they are above all law, and can act as they please. On the contrary, God is especially bound to obey His own laws and set a holy example. Krishna says to Arjuna :

"Whatever a great man does, that other men also do. And people follow whatever he receives as authority." III. 21

* See *Vishnu Purana*, Book V., Chap. 37

If God sets man an example in sinning, how can he punish them for their wickedness?

Pandits and the masses accept the stories told of Krishna in the Bhagavata Purāna as literally true. Among intelligent Hindus, the standard of morality is rising as it did in ancient Europe. At the beginning of the Christian era, the temple of Venus at Corinth had more than a thousand "servants of the goddess," who were regular prostitutes. For several centuries this went on unchecked. Well might it be said by Bishop Lightfoot :

"Imagine, if you can, this licensed shamelessness, this consecrated profligacy, carried on under the sanction of religion and in the full blaze of publicity, while statesmen and patriots, philosophers and men of letters, looked on unconcerned, not uttering one word and not raising one finger to put it down."

Christian Missionaries came to Europe, proclaiming a God of infinite purity, and a change took place in public opinion.

For centuries dancing girls were attached to Indian temples without protest. From the higher moral tone now gaining ground, they are beginning to be condemned. The same feeling has led to attempted apologies for Krishna's conduct. Their inadequacy is thus admitted by the author of *Hinduism; Ancient and Modern*.

"No attempt to explain those amorous adventures of the greatest warrior, general and sage of his time esoterically, saying that the milkmaids of Brindavan represent the various *Vīritas* (modifications of the human mind) and Krishna, the Supreme Self, in whom they find their ultimate rest, or that Rādhā represents the human soul, and Krishna the Supreme Soul, or that the clothes-stealing allegory represents the attitude with which the human soul ought to seek the Divine Soul after leaving aside all its worldly trappings, is likely to carry conviction to persons other than those of Krishna's devotees, who require in their hero something more than boyish adventures" pp. 51, 52.

Another apology for Krishna's conduct is offered by a Calcutta M.A., in a little volume, called *The Imitation of Krishna*. The author says :

"To our mind virtue and vice being relative terms can never be applied to one who is regarded as the Supreme Being. The being who is equal in virtue as well as in vice is to us a grander being than the extremely virtuous man. . . . To teach this great lesson practically, Krishna came to the world, and to teach this great lesson *practically*, he treated Vice and Virtue alike."

The eternal distinction between right and wrong is also denied by the *Brahmarādin* :

"The distinctions of right and wrong are mere appearances, which will vanish as soon as the dream state of life is dispelled." June 19th, 1897.

- Of all false teaching that is the worst, which, as in the preceding extract, asserts that "virtue and vice are the same" that "the being who is equal in virtue as well as in vice is to us a grander being than the extremely virtuous man." Well may the prophet's exclamation apply to such teaching: "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness."

The stories of Krishna are the inventions of men with the ideas of their time. They are rejected by the higher moral tone of the present day. Our consciences tell us that any incarnation of God must have been distinguished by purity, truth, and love.

4 THE THREE "GUNAS" PROCEED FROM KRISHNA.

The three Gunas are *Sattva*, 'goodness,' *Rajas*, 'passion,' *Tamas*, 'darkness.' In Chapter VII Krishna says:

"And all entities which are of the quality of goodness, and those which are of the quality of passion and of darkness, know that they are, indeed, all from me; I am not in them, but they are in me." 12.

In Chapter III Arjuna asks

"But by whom is man impelled, even though unwilling and, as it were, constrained by force, to commit sin?" 36.

Krishna replies:

"It is desire, it is wrath, born from the quality of passion, it is very ravenous, very sinful. Know that that is the foe in this world." 37.

Passion and darkness proceed from God as well as goodness. A man is, as it were, by force, compelled to commit sin. The God of the *Gita* is the author of evil, not only in the universe, but in every man. Is this doctrine true?

Our consciences tell us that we are free agents. When the doing of a certain action is proposed to us, we have the power either to do it or to decline doing it. If we are offered a hundred rupees to give false evidence, we can either agree or refuse.

If men are forced to commit sin by passion and darkness coming from God, how can He punish them for it? Can this be attributed to Him who is infinitely just? It shows that the supposition is false.

It may be objected that when we sin we act with the body which God has given us, and therefore He is the author of sin.

It is allowed that it is God who has given us a body, mind, and all the faculties which we possess, but why has He given them? Certainly not that we should use them in sinning, but in doing what is right. Suppose a master gives his servant some rupees to buy articles needed for the family. He goes to the bazaar and spends it in drinking and gambling. When the master finds fault, the servant says, "Master, I am not to blame, for it

was you who gave me the money which I spent in bad practices." Would this excuse be accepted? Would the servant be considered as innocent?

It may be objected why does God not prevent men from sinning?

God has created man a free agent, able to act as he pleases. A man who was obliged by force to do certain acts would not be responsible, he would be like a machine that could neither do right nor wrong.

The Christian Scriptures, on the other hand, declare that "God is light; and in Him is no darkness at all." God is spotlessly pure, and no evil desire can arise in Him or from Him.

5 CASTE IS ALLEGED TO BE A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

Caste is the essence of Hinduism. So long as a man observes its rules, he possesses all the rights of a Hindu, whatever may be his belief or conduct in other respects. Guru Prasad Sen says:—

"Hinduism is not, and has never been, a religious organization. It is a pure social system, insisting in those who are Hindus the observance of certain social forms, and not the profession of particular religious beliefs. A Hindu may be an atheist, a deist, a monotheist, or a polytheist, a believer in the Vedas or Shastras, or a sceptic as regards their authority, and his position as a Hindu cannot be questioned by anybody because of his beliefs or unbeliefs so long as he conforms to social rules."

Krishna claims to be the author of Caste:—

"The four-fold division of castes was created by me, according to the apportionment of qualities and duties. But though I am its author, know me to be inexhaustible, and not the author" IV. 13

The duties of the four castes are as follows.

"The duties of Bráhmanas, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, and Sudras too, are distinguished according to the qualities born of nature.

'Tranquillity, restraint of the senses, penance, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, also knowledge, experience, and belief (in a future world), this is the natural duty of Bráhmanas.

"Valour, glory, courage, dexterity, and not slinking away from battle, gifts, exercise of lordly power, this is the natural duty of Kshatriyas."

"Agriculture, tending cattle, trade, (this) is the natural duty of Vaisyas."

And the natural duty of Sudras, too, consists in service. (Every) man intent on his own respective duties obtains perfection. XVIII. 41-45.

The intermingling of castes is regarded as a dire calamity. Krishna says:

"If I did not perform actions, this world would be destroyed, I should be the cause of caste intermingling; and I should be ruining the people." III. 24.

It is granted that caste has some advantages. It promotes a stationary semi-civilisation. It binds together men of the same class; it promotes cleanliness; and it is a check in certain directions on moral conduct. But these are far more than counterbalanced by its pernicious effects. The opinions of competent witnesses will be given on this point.

The following are the heads of a lecture by Pandit Sivanath Sastri on Caste :

(1) It has produced disunion and discord. (2) It has made honest manual labour contemptible in this country. (3) It has checked internal and external commerce. (4) It has brought on physical degeneracy by confining marriage within narrow circles. (5) It has been a source of conservatism in every thing. (6) It has suppressed the development of individuality and independence of character. (7) It has helped in developing other injurious customs, such as early marriage, the charging of heavy matrimonial fees, &c. (8) It has successfully restrained the growth and development of national worth; whilst allowing opportunity of mental and spiritual culture only to a limited number of privileged people, it has denied these opportunities to the majority of the lower classes, consequently it has made the country negatively a loser. (9) It has made the country fit for foreign slavery by previously enslaving the people by the most abject spiritual tyranny.

Sir H. S. Maine, in *Ancient Law*, characterises caste as "*the most disastrous and blighting of human institutions.*"

Principal Card says: "The system of Caste involves the worst of all wrongs to humanity—that of hallowing evil by the authority and sanction of religion . . . Instead of breaking down artificial barriers, waging war with false separations, softening divisions and undermining class hatreds and antipathies, religion becomes itself the very consecration of them."

"Of all forgeries," says Dr. K. M. Banerjea, "the most flagitious and profane is that which connects the name of the Almighty with an untruth." Yet this is what is done in the Gítá. The author of the poem, a Vaishnava Brahman, put his opinions in the mouth of Krishna.

6 KRISHNA ALIKE TO ALL, WITH ITS CONTRADICTION.

In Chapter ix. the Deity says.

"I am alike to all beings, to me none is hateful, none dear." 29.

On the other hand "demoniac" people are thus threatened :

"These enemies, ferocious, meanest of men, and unholy, I continually hurl down to these worlds, only into demoniac wombs."

"Coming into demoniac wombs, deluded in every birth, they go down to the vilest state without ever coming to me." XVI. 19, 20.

Mr. Telang says in his Introduction: "These persons are

scarcely characterised with accuracy as neither hateful nor dear to Krishna." p. 12.

Other Contradictions of the Bhagavad Gita.—The following, in addition to the foregoing, are mentioned by Mr. Telang:—

"In Book xii. 12, 'Concentration (fixing the mind with effort on the object of contemplation) is esteemed higher than knowledge.' In Book vii. 16-18, four classes of good men are mentioned. It is said, 'All these are noble. But the man possessed of knowledge is deemed by me to be my own self.'

"Take still another instance. At Gītā, Chapter v. 15, it is said 'the Lord receives the sin or merit of none.' Yet at Chapter v. 29, and again at Chapter x. 24, Krishna calls himself 'the Lord and enjoyer' of all sacrifices and penances. How, it may well be asked, can the Supreme Being 'enjoy' that which he does not even 'receive'?" *

The Hindu mind accepts the most contradictory statements. Max Müller says —

"The early Hindu did not find any difficulty in reconciling the most different and sometimes contradictory opinions in their search after truth —and a most extraordinary medley of oracular sayings might be collected from the Upanishads, even from those which are genuine and comparatively ancient, all tending to elucidate the darkest points of philosophy and religion, the creation of the world, the nature of God, the relation of man to God, and similar subjects. That one statement should be contradicted by another seems never to have been felt as any serious difficulty." †

Dr. John Muir, in his *Sanskrit Texts*, gives quotations showing that the Hindu Sacred Books contain at least 13 conflicting accounts of their origin, but all are accepted by the Pandits.

Kapila, however, says in the Sāṅkhya Aphorisms, Book I:

"*There is no acceptance of the inconsistent, unless we come to the level of children, mad men, and the like.*"

Followers of the Dvaita, Advaita, and Viśiṣṭadwaita all claim the Gītā in support of their respective systems.

MAN.

1. THE BODY.

Before noticing what the Gītā says about the soul, some Hindu ideas about the body may be mentioned.

The Katha Upanishad contains the following:—

"16. There are a hundred and one arteries of the heart. one of them (Sushumna,) proceeds to the head. By this (at the time of death) rising upwards (by the door of A'ditya) a person gains immortality, or the other (arteries) are of various courses."

* Introduction to the Bhagavad Gītā, pp. 11, 12.

† Ancient Sanskrit Literature, pp. 320, 321.

A similar statement is made in the Chhândogya Upanishad :

"There are a hundred and one arteries issuing from the heart ; one of them penetrates the crown of the head. The man who departs this life through that artery, secures immortality. The rest of the arteries lead to *various* transitions,—they lead to *various* transitions." VIII. 6, 6.

The Prasna Upanishad gives the following additional details :

"For the (ether of the) heart is verily that soul. There (arise) the hundred and one (principal) arteries ; each of them is a hundred times divided ; 72,000 are the branches of every branch artery ; within them moves the circulating air " III. 6.

The whole number of arteries is therefore 727,200,000 !

The slightest examination of the heart shows that all this is purely imaginary. There are just two branches of a large artery from the heart, containing impure blood, leading to the lungs, and one great artery, which, afterwards, subdivided, conveys pure blood, to the whole body. In like manner, there are two great veins carrying impure blood to the heart from the whole body, and four veins, containing pure blood, leading from the lungs to the heart.

The Prasna Upanishad says that "within the arteries moves the circulating air." *Arteries* mean air-pipes. They were thought to contain only air, because after death they are empty. When a person is alive, blood flows through them. This is proved by the fact that if one of them is cut, blood gushes out. When a person dies, the heart loses its power to send out blood, and the arteries are found empty.

The foregoing is an example of a radical defect of the Hindu mind—to *speculate* instead of *investigating*. It is the same with other departments of science. The Hindu geographer does not travel ; he simply sits in his house, and dreams of a vast central mountain and circular oceans of curds, ghee, wine, &c. Hindu astronomy is equally fanciful.

In like manner the Hindus speculated about the soul. The leading ideas will now be noticed.

2 THE SOUL.

(1) The Soul Eternal.

The Gítá says that the Self or Soul is eternal .

"It is not born nor does it ever die ; nor, having existed, does it exist no more." (II. 20)

"It is everlasting, all-pervading, stable, immovable, and eternal." (II. 24.)

"An eternal portion of me it is, which, becoming an individual soul in the mortal world, draws (to itself) the senses with the mind as the sixth." XV. 7.

According to Hinduism, souls may pass into gods, demons, beasts, birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, into plants, and even into inanimate objects. Who can estimate the number of these eternal *svayambhu* essences !

Dr. K. M. Banerjea thus shows the consequences to which this doctrine leads :

“ If a man denied his earthly parents his conduct would be considered sufficiently heinous. If he denied that God was his Maker and heavenly Father, he would be regarded as impious :

“ If all souls are eternal, they must be uncreated, and if uncreated, and yet in existence, they must be self-existent. To say that they are self-existent as to say they have independent existence, they need not then acknowledge God as their Maker or heavenly Father. If they are independent essences, possessed of absolute existence, they cannot be rightfully called upon to acknowledge a Supreme Being as the Moral Governor of the universe. They are themselves a sort of miniature gods. Nor can any Supreme Being be especially entitled to the epithet of *svayambhu*, or self-existent.”

The Rev. Nehemiah Gorch says .

“ By the word, Creator, Christians as well as theists mean one who gave being to things which had no being before, or according to the phrase used in Christian theology, created things out of nothing. In this sense no sect of religion or school of philosophy among the Hindus believes God to have created anything.”

According to Hinduism, there is no creation in the strict sense of the word. This is the result of that fixed dogma of a Hindu philosopher's belief—*narastuno vastusiddhah*, nothing can be produced out of nothing.

A fundamental error of Hinduism is to judge God by our own standard. A carpenter cannot work without materials, in like manner it is supposed that God must have formed all things from eternally existing matter. The fallacy of this is thus shown by the late Rev. Dr. K. M. Banerjea .

“ That no man can work without materials is denied by none, simply because man is not omnipotent, and has not creative power. But a Creator of infinite power and perfection needs not, like weak and imperfect man, to stop for materials, but can make materials by the mere fiat of His will. To assume the eternity of some gross material, existing side by side with an intelligent and all-perfect God, is not only unnecessary (and therefore unphilosophical,) inasmuch as it assumes two principles, where one is amply sufficient to account for all we see ; but it is inconsistent with the idea of perfection which we must attribute to the Deity. If He had some material to work upon, previously existing independent of Him, then there was nothing peculiar in His agency ; then it was of the same species as that of a human architect ; then He

was our creator in no higher sense than that in which a potter is the maker of a jar." *

"Ye do err, not knowing the power of God," applies to Hindus as well as those to whom the words were addressed by the Great Teacher.

Whether is it more rational to suppose the eternal existence of one Being, infinite in power and wisdom, or to imagine that innumerable unintelligent atoms and spirits existed from all eternity? Besides the latter, an eternal, intelligent Arranger is also required.

(2) The Soul All-pervading.

Hindu speculations about the size of the soul differ widely. In the Upanishads it is generally said to be of the size of a thumb, and to dwell in the heart. Thus the Katha Upanishad says :

"The soul, which, in the measure of a thumb, dwells in the middle of the body (in the ether of the heart)." (IV. 12.)

It is elsewhere said to be both infinitely small and infinitely great. The Svetâswatara Upanishad says

"The embodied soul is to be thought like the hundredth part of the point of a hair, divided into a hundred parts; he is considered to be infinite." (V. 9.)

The Chhândogya Upanishad says :

"Is the soul within me; it is lighter than a corn, or a barley, or a mustard, or a canary seed, or the substance within it. Such a soul is within me, as is greater than this earth, and greater than the sky, and greater than the heaven, and greater than all these regions [put together]." III. 14, 3.

The Gîtâ agrees with the Vaiseshaka school. Krishna says that the soul is "all-pervading." (II. 24.)

Can we believe that the soul of the meanest insect fills heaven and earth?

(3) The Soul does not work, and is not "stained."

Hindu and European ideas of the soul are very different. Crozier says :

"When we Europeans speak of soul and when the Hindus speak of it, we mean two quite different and indeed opposite things. With us soul is a principle of self-conscious intelligence and will; with the Hindus it is a mere vague diffused essence pervading nature, the distinctive quality of which is that it is without thought, emotion, will, self-consciousness, or, indeed, any other quality whatever except that of extension and life." †

* *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*, pp. 134, 135.

† *History of Intellectual Development*, p. 86.



Krishna says :

"He whose mind is deluded by *ahankāra* (self-consciousness) thinks himself the doer of the actions which, in every way, are done by the qualities of *Prakriti*." (Īi. 27.)

"He sees (truly) who sees (all) actions (to be) in every way done by *Prakriti* alone, and likewise the self (to be) not the doer." XIII. 29

"This inexhaustible supreme self, being without beginning and without qualities, does not act, and is not tainted though stationed in the body.

As (by reason of its) subtlety, the all-pervading space (*ākāśa*) is not tainted, so the self-stationed in every body is not tainted." XIII. 31, 32.

Dr. Robson quotes another illustration often used to prove that the soul is not stained :

"I once asked a pundit to state logically his argument that man's spirit was sinless, which he did as follows :

Man's spirit is sinless,

Because it is distinct from the sin which man commits ;

For all things are distinct from that which they contain, as the water of a muddy stream is distinct from the mud which it contains ,

But so is the spirit of man distinct from the sin which it may be said to contain

Therefore it is sinless.

"This was an attempt to put into a logical form the stock argument used by the Hindus—Spirit is free from sin as water is distinct from all the dirt which may be mingled with it."

The above is an example of a defect in Hindu reasoning—to accept *illustration for argument*. One illustration may appear to prove one thing, but another may be adduced leading to an opposite conclusion. It is sometimes said, "As there is only one sun in the sky, so there is only one God." This is a great truth, but the reasoning is no better than the following, "As there are innumerable stars in the sky, so the number of gods is countless."

The foregoing illustrations about the soul being sinless, are equally inconclusive. Hindu speculations about the soul and *prakriti* are as baseless as those about the body.

It is assumed that the soul is a part of the Supreme Spirit, and, like him, is without qualities, does not act, and is not bound by actions. Of this there is no proof. It has been shown that it is far more probable that the soul was created by God.

It is true that the soul is united with the body, but the soul is the ruler ; it can control the body and is responsible for its actions. It is the soul that loves or hates, that entertains evil or good desires.

It is, however, possible for a man who gives way to evil passions to become at last as it were their slave.

3. TRANSMIGRATION.

Transmigration denotes the passing of the soul into another body. This universal belief among the Hindus is taught in the *Gita*. Thus Krishna says to Arjuna :

"As a man, casting off old clothes, puts on others and new ones, so the embodied (self) casting off old bodies, goes to others and new ones." ii. 22.

"I have passed through many births, and you also. I know them all, but you do not know them." iv. 5.

"He who is fallen from devotion attains the world of those who perform meritorious acts, dwells (there) for many a year, and is afterwards born into a family of holy and illustrious men. Or he is even born into a family of talented devotees; for such a birth as that in this world is more difficult to obtain." VI 41, 42.

"These enemies, ferocious, meanest of men, and unholy, I continually hurl down to these worlds, only in demoniac wombs. Coming into demoniac wombs, deluded in every birth, they go down to the vilest state, without ever coming to me." xvi. 19, 20.

The doctrine of transmigration seems, to the Hindu, to explain the unequal distribution of happiness and misery in this world. If an infant agonize, it is supposed to arise from a great sin committed in a former birth. On the other hand, if a wicked man prospers, it is thought to be plainly the reward of meritorious actions in a previous state of existence.

The universe is, in Sanskrit, sometimes called *samsāra*, denoting motion. It is supposed to consist of innumerable souls and innumerable bodies. The bodies are of all kinds, mineral, vegetable, animal, human, divine, demoniac. Souls are supposed to be constantly leaving their bodies, and seeking other bodies, some rising, some falling, other stationary according to their *Karma*.

Transmigration is not found in the Vedas, except a trace of it in one of the latest hymns. The early Aryans looked forward at death to living in happiness with the *pitris*. The doctrine arose at a later time, when gloomy views of life began to prevail.

It is admitted that there are certain truths underlying this strange belief. It witnesses to the continued existence of the soul in a future life. It also bears testimony to the great truth that sin is inevitably followed by suffering, although it may be long delayed.

Christianity also teaches "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Galatians, VI. 17); but it differs from the Hindu doctrine in teaching that we shall reap only what we sow in the *present* life.

There is no doubt that the unequal distribution of happiness in this world is a problem which has exercised the minds of thinking men from the dawn of philosophy. On investigation, however, it will be seen that the doctrine of transmigration is attended with insuperable difficulties.

1. **It is contrary to our Experience.**—By transmigration is meant that the same soul in the course of time takes up its residence in different bodies. Only the *body is changed, the mind is the same mind*. The mind therefore being the same possesses the same faculties in its present and in its former births. A traveller who journeys through the earth from city to city carries with him the remembrance of his native place, the persons that he met, and other events that occurred. The soul ought to carry with it a complete remembrance of its past history; but no man has experienced anything of the kind. Any claims to its possession are just as false as those with regard to magical powers.

It is objected that we cannot recall the events of our former births, because we are under the power of *māyā*, or illusion. How is it that *māyā* extends only to alleged former births and not to the present? The fact is that one false theory is attempted to be supported by another. We cannot recollect events in alleged former births, because they had no existence. We remember the present life, *māyā* notwithstanding, because we have really existed.

2. **It is contrary to Science.**—Science teaches that human beings, the lower animals, and plants reproduce exactly their kind. An animal never gives birth to a plant, nor a plant to an animal. The plant or mineral shows any sign that it possesses a soul. Nor do the lower animals show in any way that they have a *suffering* soul, undergoing penalty.

3. **It is Unjust.**—Should a son be hanged because his father committed murder? According to transmigration, people suffer, not on account of their own deeds, but for those of their ancestors of which they know nothing.

If a man is so changed at each birth as to forget all his previous history, he becomes virtually a new being. What he suffers now he suffers on account of sins committed by another; and these sufferings he has no choice but to endure. Even the very sins a man now commits are punishments of previous sins, and he cannot but commit them. Their punishment, again, he cannot bear in this life if he would; they must be borne by him in another birth, when the loss of all consciousness of the present has made him, in fact, another person. His present happiness is the reward of a previous person's good deeds, his present good deeds will be rewarded to some future person. In all this there is an absence of justice. *

* Abridged from Robson's *Hinduism and Christianity*. 2nd Ed., pp. 191, 192.

4. **It denies Divine Mercy.**—The Rev. Dr. Hooper has the following remarks on this point :—

"The system of Transmigration leaves absolutely no room for divine mercy. Four of the six philosophical systems do, indeed, acknowledge an 'Iswara', but what for? His one work is to arrange that each soul shall enjoy or suffer precisely the fruit of his doings, shall enter the body which exactly suits his deserts. In other words, Iswara's one work is to carry out strict, unswerving justice. He has *nothing whatever to do with mercy*. There is no possible room for it in the system. The very slightest exercise of mercy would be, so far, a derogation from the completeness of the system of Transmigration, a blot on its fair name. What then? Do not Hindus believe in divine mercy? Indeed they do; and that in two ways, but both are entirely irrespective of, indeed they ignore, Transmigration. The statement, 'Iswara dayālu hai' (God is merciful) is one which very few Hindus indeed would not subscribe to. So far have foreign influences permeated the modern Hindu mind, that very few indeed perceive, what however is obvious to any one who thinks, that the above statement is a flat contradiction, so far as it extends, of the Doctrine of Transmigration." *

Dr. Hooper further shows that "Man's own natural tendency to mercy has been thwarted and stunted" by the doctrine of transmigration —

"Let me give two familiar instances of this. Why are lepers, and those subject to similar diseases, so peculiarly shunned and loathed in India? Why are they commonly regarded with an abhorrence which overcomes the pity, which such objects naturally stir up? Physical causes no doubt co-operate, as they do elsewhere, but Hindus themselves explain it by the belief, that such sufferers are in an unusual degree sinners, *i.e.*, are suffering the just consequences of extraordinarily heinous crimes. Is not this as much as to say, that a belief in Transmigration is answerable for all the unkindness shown to lepers in this country, which is over and above that displayed in other countries? Again, take the case of young widows. Can there, in the whole of humanity, be conceived a case deserving of more profound compassion and tender pity than that of a young woman commonly is, who has just lost her husband? And yet, in this country, are not the widow's sorrows vastly aggravated, as a rule, by the unkind treatment to which she is subject? But *why* do Hindus thus quench their natural instincts of pity? Let any Hindu answer the question himself. It is because he believes that the woman's sins, in some previous life, have caused that *their* son or brother has died. In other words, the belief in Transmigration is directly answerable for the miseries of the 20 millions of widows in India, which are over and above what widows suffer among others. I know well that, in many cases, natural instinct prevails, and widows are well treated; but this is not because, but in spite, of the Doctrine of Transmigration."

* Transmigration, 19 pp., 1 An.

Christianity, on the other hand, shows how Divine Justice and Mercy are reconciled through Jesus Christ.

5. **Its Effects are Pernicious.**—We bring most evils upon ourselves by our own misconduct. The chief sufferings of men are caused by poverty and sickness. Poverty is often occasioned by laziness or want of thrift. One great reason why the people of India are poor is their extravagant expenditure on marriages. Most sickness is caused by bad water, filth, and unwholesome food. When people believe that their misfortunes arise from sins in a former birth, they rest contented, and make no efforts to remove them. The constant excuse for almost everything that ought not to be is, "What can we do? It is all the fruit of former births." Even murderers comfort themselves with such an excuse.

It has also been shown above that the cruel treatment of lepers and widows in India partly arises from the doctrine of transmigration.

This superstitious belief is one great cause of the sufferings of the people of India, a great obstacle to their health and happiness.

There are other objections to the doctrine of transmigration.

(1) *Inequalities of happiness are less than is supposed.*—There are many poor men far happier than the rich. There is a proverb: "The fruit of austerities, a kingdom; the fruit of a kingdom, hell." Great men are tempted to vices from which the poor are free. Wealth and power are, not unfrequently, a curse rather than a blessing.

(2) *It promotes worldliness.*—This is thus shown by Dr. Hooper. According to transmigration.

"Virtue is rewarded by bodily health, by numerous and healthy children, by wealth, lands, and comfort, by pomp and magnificence, by rule and authority over others, and so on—all *outward* enjoyments; and that sin is similarly recompensed by external sufferings. Now, what can the tendency of this belief be, but worldly-mindedness? If the reward of good conduct is believed to be pleasures which are purely external,—if Indra's station is at the same time believed to be the one of completest sensuous enjoyment, and the reward of the highest virtue, —must not such enjoyment be considered superior to virtue, as the end is superior to the means?"

(3) *We can look forward as well as backward.*—This world is a state of preparation for the next. A child at school is placed under the discipline of a teacher to train him for the purposes of life. Notwithstanding all the pain and sorrow there is in the world, people are too much attached to it. Much more would this be the case if all went well with us. Sickness, as it were, says to us, "Arise, this is not your rest."

(4) *The Effects of Affliction may be most Beneficial.*—A holy man of old said : “It is good from that I have been afflicted. Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word.” Millions upon millions have had the same experience. Good men who suffer affliction rightly, come out of it purified, like gold which has been tried by fire. Many parents have been led by the sickness and death of their children to think of a world where there is no more pain or death, and where they shall meet again their loved ones, never more to be separated.

A dying Hindu, if thoughtful, must leave the world in despair, as he cannot tell what may next befall him. To expiate a sin committed thousands of years ago, he may require to pass into some dreadful hell.

Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that we did not exist before this present life, and we have to account only for actions during it. It shows also how our sins may be forgiven through Jesus Christ, our souls purified by God's Holy Spirit, and it holds out the prospect of eternal conscious happiness in heaven. Which belief commends itself to our sense of justice? Which conduces most to happiness?

THE MORAL TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

Good Features.—It is cheerfully allowed that the Bhagavad Gita contains some excellent moral teaching. Thus Book XVI begins as follows

“Freedom from fear, purity of heart, perseverance in (pursuit of) knowledge and abstraction of mind, gifts, self-restraint and sacrifice, study of the Vedas, penance, straightforwardness, harmlessness, truth, freedom from anger, renunciation, tranquillity, freedom from the habit of backbiting, compassion for (all) beings, freedom from avarice, gentleness, modesty, absence of vain activity, noble-mindedness, forgiveness, courage, purity, freedom from a desire to injure others, absence of vanity, (these) are his, who is born to god-like endowments.”

Such virtues are taught by all the great religions of the world. The question is, Has the Bhagavad Gita any *distinctive* moral rule?

1. THE OBSERVANCE OF CASTE DUTIES, THE GRAND MORAL LAW OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

Arjuna having asked Krishna to station his chariot between the two armies, thus spoke :—

“Seeing these kinsmen, desirous to engage in battle, my limbs droop down; my mouth is quite dried up; a tremor comes on my body...I do not wish for victory, nor sovereignty, nor pleasure...Preceptors,

fathers, sons as well as grand-fathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law as also (other) relatives. These I do not wish to kill, though they kill me ; even for the sake of sovereignty over the three worlds, how much less than for this earth (alone) How shall we be happy after killing our own relatives ?”

“Having spoken thus, Arjuna sat down in his chariot with a mind agitated by grief.” (I. 28-46, abridged.)

Krishna's reply :

“How (comes it that) this delusion, O Arjuna, which is discarded by the good, which excludes from heaven, and occasions infamy, has overtaken you in this (place of) peril ? Be not effeminate ; it is not worthy of you, cast off his base weakness of heart, and arise O terror of (your) foes !” II 2, 3.

Krishna does not seem the least sorry that Arjuna should have grieved at slaying his dearest relatives and friends, and calls the feeling “base weakness of heart.”

What did Krishna say was Arjuna's duty ?

“Having regard to your own duty also, you ought not to falter, for there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than a righteous battle. Happy those Kshatriyas who can find such a battle (to fight)—come of itself—an open door to heaven. But if you will not fight this righteous battle, then you will have abandoned your own duty and your fame, and you will incur sin ” II. 31, 33

The duties of the castes as described in Book XVIII have already been quoted (see page 15). The following promises are made .

“(Every) man intent on his own respective duties obtains perfection. Listen now, how one intent on one's own duty obtains perfection. Worshipping, by (the performance of) his own duty, him from whom all things proceed and by whom all this is permeated, a man obtains perfection. One's duty, though defective, is better than another's duty well performed. Performing the duty prescribed by nature, one does not incur sin. One should not abandon a natural duty though tainted with evil ; for all actions are enveloped by evil, as fire by smoke.” XVIII. 45-48.

Some moral duties are expected from Brahmans as belonging to their caste. A Kshatriya has no duty superior to fighting. If fighting and slaying are regarded as lawful simply because they are caste employment, the immutability of moral obligations is ignored. Krishna's teaching elevates caste above the essential distinctions between right and wrong.

According to Krishna, a Kshatriya who died fighting was certain of heaven, whatever might be his moral character. “If thou art slain thou wilt obtain heaven.” (II. 37.) In like manner Muhammad, to encourage his followers to fight for his religion, promised that all who died thus fighting would enter paradise.

Our moral judgment must condemn such promises, and regard them as the invention of men who wished to gain their own ends. To secure admission to heaven, moral character, and not mere fighting, must be the standard.

Vaisyas have no higher duties than to cultivate and tend cattle ; all that is required from Sudras is to serve the other castes.

All this is a very imperfect conception of our duties to God and our duties to each other

Krishna's reasoning with Arjuna.—When Arjuna humanely expressed his unwillingness to kill spiritual teachers and near relatives, Krishna did not plead the justice of the war, but took the ground that those against whom Arjuna fought would not really be killed :

“ These bodies appertaining to the embodied (self) which is eternal, indestructible, and indefinable, are said to be perishable ; therefore do engage in battle.

“ He who thinks it to be the killer, and he who thinks it to be killed, both know nothing. It is not born, nor does it ever die, nor, having existed, does it exist no more. Unborn, everlasting, unchangeable, and primeval, it is not killed when the body is killed. . . . As a man casting off old clothes, puts on others and new ones, so the embodied (self) casting off old bodies, goes to others and new ones.” II. 18—22.

Bishop Caldwell shows the fallacy of this reasoning by supposing it acted upon in common life

“ A man accused of murder neither denies his guilt, nor pleads that he committed the act in self-defence, but addresses the Court in the language of Krishna. ‘ It is needless,’ he says, ‘ to trouble yourselves about the inquiry any further, for it is impossible that any murder can have taken place. The soul can neither kill, nor be killed. It is eternal and indestructible. When driven from one body it passes into another. Death is inevitable, and another birth is equally inevitable. It is not the part therefore of wise men, like the judges of this Court, to trouble themselves about such things.’ Would the judges regard this defence as conclusive ? Certainly not. Nor would it be regarded as a conclusive defence by the friends of the murdered person, or by the world at large. The criminal might borrow from the Gîtâ as many sounding nothings as he liked, but the moral sense of the community would continue to regard his murder as a crime.”

2. ACTIONS PERFORMED WITHOUT ATTACHMENT (SANGA) DO NOT “DEFILE.”*

This is another important moral principle of the Bhagavad Gîtâ. As already mentioned, Hindu philosophy looks upon life as a curse, and its great aim is to cut short the chain of births.

According to the doctrine of *Karma*, the fruit of every action must be eaten. Actions are compared to golden or iron chains,

* *Krishna and the Bhagavad Gîtâ*, pp. 22, 23

good actions requiring happiness to be enjoyed in heaven, and evil actions to be expiated in hell, preventing the attainment of *mukti*.

According to Hinduism, the law of *Karma* is unalterable. Sankarāchārya says, even God cannot alter it any more than He can produce rice out of wheat seed.

The author of the poem saw the necessity of action. Men are impelled to action even against their wills; without it everybody would starve.

"For nobody ever remains even for one instant without performing some action, since the qualities of nature constrain everybody, not having free-will (in the matter) to some action." III. 5.

"Do you perform prescribed action, for action is better than inaction, and the support of your body, too, cannot be accomplished with inaction." III. 8

The professed great discovery of the *Gītā* is to show how actions may be performed without being attended by their results. The problem is thus solved.

All work must be done without "attachment", it must be done as a duty, without any feeling, and especially without any desire for reward (*phala*, fruit). Even religious acts in the hope of gaining heaven, bound the soul to successive births. Absorption might be gained by works, but such must be done apart from all selfish hope of gain. If done in this spirit, they were even praiseworthy, especially caste duties. Arjuna, as a Kshatriya, ought therefore to fight. Renunciation of works (*sannyāsa*) is reconciled with devotion by work (*Karmayoga*) by renouncing all the "fruit" of works. - This kind of renunciation is called *tyāga* (forsaking)

Krishna says :—

"Actions defile me not. I have no attachment to the fruit of actions. He who knows me thus is not tied down by actions " IV. 14.

"Forsaking all attachment to the fruit of action, always contented, dependent on none, he does nothing at all, though he engages in action." IV. 20.

"Satisfied with earnings coming spontaneously, rising above the pair of opposites, free from all animosity, and equable in success or ill-success, he is not fettered down, even though he performs (actions)." IV. 22.

"He who, casting off (all) attachment, performs actions dedicating them to Brahman, is not tainted by sin, as the lotus-leaf (is not tainted) by water." V. 10.

One object of this teaching is to persuade Arjuna that he might kill all his relations without harm to himself

Krishna says :

"He who has no feeling of egoism (that he is the doer of the

actions) and whose mind is not tainted, even though he kills (all) those people, kills not, is not fettered (by the action). XVIII. 17.

The Rev. J. Lazarus, B.A., has the following remarks on this doctrine of the Bhagavad Gítá :

"To act without attachment is to act without motive or purpose, to experience in the act itself neither pain nor pleasure, and to think nothing whatever of its future fruit or result. Action, then, without the three concomitants of motive, feeling, and effect, is action without attachment. Men are to be mere animals or living automata, acting as they are moved by instinct. The moment that any one of these attachments is formed the action becomes sinful. For a rational being, such as man is, it is utterly impossible to act without attachment so called, unless he becomes mad or delirious. The moral element, not to speak of the physical, would be utterly wanting in it; no such action would be possible. How was Arjuna as a human being and a kinsman to dismiss all feelings of pity and mercy for the foes against whom he was aiming his deadly darts? Action without attachment is a convenient loop-hole for the commission of any crime, however horrible or foul. The murderer of Mr. Rand walked up to the gallows with the Gítá in his hand. I am afraid this is the most poisonous doctrine in the book. It lays the axe at the root of the tree of morality. The unaided human intellect invented the moral fiction of 'actions without attachment, and for ever destroyed the eternal distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice. One Calcutta M.A. has once for all explained this peculiar doctrine of the Gítá. 'Conceive a man,' says he, 'who is trying his utmost to fly from vice to its opposite pole, virtue; imagine also a being to whom heat and cold, virtue and vice are the same, and you will find that the latter is *infinitely* superior to the former.'"

3. INDIFFERENCE THE IDEAL OF THE BHAGAVAD GÍTÁ.

An *ideal* is a standard of perfection, the highest form of attainment. It influences the whole of a man's life. *Indifference* is a state in which the mind is not inclined to one side more than the other. While the Bhagavad Gítá acknowledges the necessity of action, indifference is its ideal as shown by the following quotations:

"The devotee whose self is contented with knowledge and experience, who is unmoved, who has restrained his senses, and to whom a sod, a stone, and gold are alike, is said to be devoted.

And he is esteemed highest who thinks alike about well-wishers, friends, and enemies, and those who are indifferent and those who take part with both sides, and those who are objects of hatred, and relatives, as well as about the good and the sinful." VI. 8, 9.

"That devotee is deemed to be the best, who looks alike on pleasure or pain, whatever it may be, in all (creature), comparing all with his own (pleasure or pain)." VI. 32.

"He who is full of devotion to me, who feels no joy and no aversion, who does not grieve and does not desire, who abandons (both

* Lecture on the Bhagavad Gítá, pp. 11, 12.

what is) agreeable and (what is) disagreeable, he is dear to me." XII. 17.

The ideal of indifference is the *Nirguna* Brahma, immersed in dreamless sleep; and caring nothing for any other beings. Hindu devotees resemble him, when, instead of seeking to benefit their countrymen, they retire to the jungle and spend their time in aimless thought.

The effect of this teaching upon India and the very different ideal prescribed by Christianity, will afterwards be described.

THE PATHS TO SALVATION (MUKTI) OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

As already stated, how to cut short the chains of births, is the great inquiry of Hindu philosophy.

Three Paths are pointed out in the Bhagavad Gita: *JNANA MARGA*, the Path of Knowledge; *KARMA MARGA*, the Path of Works, and *BHAKTI MARGA*, the Path of Devotion.

Each will be noticed in turn.

JNANA MARGA.

The following points will first be considered

1 THE CLAIMED SUPERIORITY OF KNOWLEDGE

In proof of this the following quotations may be made.

"Even if you were the most sinful of all sinful men, you will cross over all trespasses by means of the boat of knowledge alone.

"As a fire well-kindled reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge reduces all actions to ashes.

"For there is in this world no means of sanctification like knowledge." IV. 36—38.

After mentioning four classes, it is said

"All these are noble. But the man possessed of knowledge is deemed by me to be my own self. For he with (his) self devoted to abstraction, has taken me as the goal, than which there is nothing higher." VII. 15.

2. THE NATURE OF THIS KNOWLEDGE

This seems to be set forth in the following quotations.

"He sees (truly) who sees the supreme lord abiding alike in all entities, and not destroyed though they are destroyed.

"For he who sees the lord abiding everywhere alike, does not destroy himself by himself, and then reaches the highest goal.

"He sees (truly) who sees (all) actions (to be) in every way done by prakriti alone, and likewise the self (to be) not the doer.

"When a man sees all the varieties of entities as existing in one, and (all as) emanating from that, then he becomes (one with) the Brahman." XIII. 27—30.

This knowledge is the identification of one's self with the Brahman. It is briefly expressed in the two "great sentences" of the Upanishads

TAT TWAM ASI, 'That thou art'
BRAHMASMI, 'I am Brahma.'

The assertion is that Brahma and the Soul are identical.

The *Brahmaavidin* (October 12, 1895 of 30) says

"Man is not the mere creature of God; he is God himself. He has not simply the image impressed upon him of his Creator. He is Himself the Creator."

3 THE MEANS OF ATTAINING THIS KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge leading to *Mukti* is supposed to be best attainable by the ascetic exercises prescribed in the Yoga Sastra

The Yoga, founded by Patanjali, is often styled the Theistic Sāṅkhya. It agrees in its general principles with the Sāṅkhya proper, but claims greater orthodoxy by directly acknowledging the existence of God.

The word *Yoga* means union. The great end of the Yoga is to obtain union with the Supreme Being. Patanjali defines Yoga as "the suppression of the functions of the thinking principle." The following are the exercises to be employed.—

1. *Yama*, restraint 2. *Niyama*, religious observances. 3. *Āsana*, postures 4. *Prāṇāyāma*, regulation of the breath. 5. *Pratyāhāra*, restraint of the senses. 6. *Dharaṇa*, fixed attention. 7. *Dhyāna*, contemplation 8. *Samādhi*, profound meditation.

All wandering thoughts are to be called in, and attention fixed on some one object. Any object will answer if it is thought of alone; other thoughts must be suppressed. At last there is profound meditation without any object.

Great importance is attached to *āsana*, or postures. At an early period they were fixed as 84, but of this number ten are specially recommended. The following directions are given regarding some of them:

The Lotus Posture.—The right foot should be placed on the left thigh, and the left foot on the right thigh; the hands should be crossed, and the two great toes should be firmly held thereby, the chin should be bent down to the chest; and in this posture the eyes should be directed to the tip of the nose.

Gomukha or Cow's Mouth Posture.—Put the right ankle on the left side of the chest, and similarly the left ankle on the right side.

Fowl Posture.—Having established the lotus posture, if the hand be passed between the thigh and the knees, and placed on the earth so as to lift the body aloft, it will produce the fowl seat.

Bow Posture.—Hold the great toes with the hands and draw them to the ears as in drawing a bowstring.

The regulation of the breath, *prānāyāma*, is likewise of great importance. "The usual mode is after assuming the posture prescribed, to place the ring finger of the right hand on the left nostril, pressing it so as to close it, and to expire with the right, then to press the right nostril with the thumb, and to inspire through the left nostril, and then to close the two nostrils with the ring finger and the thumb, and to stop all breathing. The order is reversed in the next operation, and in the third act the first form is required."*

Marvellous powers are attributed to the man fully initiated in the Yoga. The past and present are unveiled to his gaze. He sees things invisible to others. He hears the sounds that are in distant worlds. He becomes stronger than the elephant, bolder than the lion, swifter than the wind. He mounts at pleasure into the air or dives into the depths of the earth and the ocean. He acquires mastery over all things, whether animate or inanimate.

The Gītā acknowledges the need of action, otherwise the human race would come to an end. On the whole, however, the teaching is that "work is far inferior to the devotion of the mind." (ii. 49).

In the following extracts, directions are given about Yoga, and its advantages are pointed out

"Some offer up the upward life-breath with the downward life-breath, and the downward life-breath with the upper life-breath, and stopping up the motions of the upward and downward life-breaths, devote themselves to the restraint of the life-breaths" IV. 29.

"The sage who excludes (from his mind) external objects, (concentrates) the visual power between the brows, and making the upward and downward life-breaths even, confines their movements within the nose, who restrains senses, mind, and understanding, whose highest goal is final emancipation, from whom desire, fear, and wrath have departed, is indeed, for ever released (from birth and death)." V. 27, 28.

"Fixing his seat firmly in a clean place, not too high nor too low, and covered over with a sheet of cloth, a deer-skin and (blades of kusa (grass)).

"And then seated on (that) seat, fixing his mind exclusively on one point, with the workings of the mind and senses restrained, he should practise devotion for purity of self.

"Holding his body, head and neck even and unmoved, (remaining) steady, looking at the tip of his own nose, and not looking about in (all) directions.

* Quoted by Mr. R. C. Bose from the translation of the Yoga Shāstra by Dr. Rajendralāla Mitra. *Hindu Philosophy*, pp. 177, 178, 180

"With a tranquil self, devoid of fear, and adhering to the rules of Bramacháris, he shall restrain his mind, and (concentrate it) on me, and sit down engaged in devotion, regarding me as his final goal.

"Thus constantly devoting his self to abstraction, a devotee whose mind is restrained, attains that tranquillity which culminates in final emancipation, (*mrvína*) and assimilation with me." VI. 10-15.

The whole belief is a delusion. The brain is the organ of the mind. To enable it to act properly, it must have a good supply of pure blood. The blood is purified by fresh air entering into the lungs by breathing. From want of sufficient food and suppression of the breath, the blood of the Yogí is small in quantity and impure. The brain does not act properly. He may be in a dreamy hypnotic condition or almost unconscious. Instead of union with God, he is simply losing his senses. Barth, a French writer, a distinguished Sanskrit scholar, says of the Yoga exercises: "Conscientiously observed, they can only issue in folly and idiocy."

REVIEW

In examining the Jnána Marga the following points will be considered.

1. THE KNOWLEDGE SOUGHT TO BE GAINED IS NOT TRUE.

As already pointed out, this means a knowledge of the identity of the soul with Brahma, *Tat twam Asi, Brahmasmi*.

After comparing the attributes of *Tat* and *Twam*, let it be decided whether they are the same.

<i>Tat</i> , God	<i>Twam</i> , Man
The Creator	A Creature
Eternal	Began to be.
Omnipresent	Confined to a small space.
Omniscient	Parviscient
Omnipotent	Parvipotent.
Unchangeable	Subject to change
Infinitely Holy	Sinful.
Infinitely Happy	Subject to misery.

If two beings with attributes so different are the same, so are light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, virtue and vice.

Rámánuja thus shows the distinction between *tat* and *twam*.

"The word *tat* (it) stands for the ocean of immortality, full of supreme felicity. The word *twam* (thou) stands for a miserable person, distracted through fear of the world. The two cannot therefore be one. They are substantially different. He is to be worshipped by the whole world. Thou art but His slave."*

Gaudapurnānda thus examines *Brahmasmi* :

"Thou art verily rified, O thou animal soul, of thy understanding, by this dark theory of Māya, because like a maniac, thou constantly ravest, 'I am Brahma.' Where is thy divinity, thy sovereignty, thy omniscience? Oh thou animal soul! thou art as different from Brahma as is a mustard seed from Mount Meru. Thou art a finite soul, He is infinite. Thou canst occupy but one space at a time, He is always everywhere. Thou art momentarily happy or miserable, He is happy at all times. How canst thou say 'I am He?' Hast thou no shame?"*

Taking the words in their plain meaning, the climax of Hindu philosophy is a blasphemous falsehood, too horrible almost to mention—for a puny, ignorant, proud, sinful mortal to say "I am God!" Such assertions can be compared only to the ravings of a madman in a lunatic asylum who fancies himself a king. Yet, according to Hindu philosophy, he is the only wise man!

2 THE BELIEF OF WHAT IS NOT TRUE CANNOT SECURE THE PARDON OF SIN.

Suppose a man believes that he can cross a deep and rapid river in a stone boat, will his belief take him across safely? A false belief is worthless.

A man by claiming that he is God and that all his actions are done by God, instead of obtaining pardon of sin, only increases it by his pride.

When a child has misbehaved towards his father, what is his duty? He should be sorry for his conduct, confess his fault, ask forgiveness, and try to be an obedient loving child in future.

On the other hand if the child said to his father, "You and I are one, you did what I did," could he expect forgiveness?

To obtain the pardon of sin we should act in the same way towards God our heavenly Father

The TRUE KNOWLEDGE is, not that we are God, but that we have been disobedient, rebellious children, and that it is our duty, with deep sorrow, to confess our sinfulness, to ask pardon, to seek to avoid sin in future, and try to love and obey our heavenly Father

Calm consideration and the use of your own judgment will show the reader the reasonableness and superiority of this course to that of the Bhagavad Gita.

3. INSTEAD OF YOGA EXERCISES, WE SHOULD TRY TO PRESERVE OUR BODY IN VIGOROUS HEALTH.

It has already been explained that the body is nourished by the blood, and that the blood is purified by the air we breathe. The less air we take in, the less it is purified.

Instead of restraining the breath, it is very beneficial every

day to take some long breaths that the lungs may be fully expanded and drink in as much fresh air as possible.

Strength of body and good health are to be sought that we may be able to help others. This is much nobler than selfishly to consult only our own supposed interest by Yoga exercises.

KARMA MARGA.

The 'Path of Works' is considered much inferior to the Path of Knowledge. "Action is far inferior to the devotion of the mind" (II. 49). It is recommended only to those unable to follow the latter.

The promise is, "For pleased with the sacrifices, the gods will give you the enjoyments you desire" (III 12). The reward, however is only transient :

"Those who know the three (branches of) knowledge (the Vedas), who drink the soma juice, whose sins are washed away, offer sacrifices and pray to me for a passage into heaven, and reaching the holy world of the lord of gods, they enjoy in the celestial regions, the celestial pleasures of the gods. And having enjoyed that great heavenly world, they enter the mortal world when (their) merit is exhausted." IX. -20, 21.

All this assumes that the gods actually exist. It has been shown that polytheism is now abandoned by all enlightened men. It is the belief of only a low state of civilization. Indra, Vishnu, and Siva, are only imaginary beings, the inventions of poets. Their worship, therefore, cannot profit.

BHAKTI MARGA.

The doctrine of salvation by love and devotion (*Bhakti*) is only dimly shadowed in portions of the Vedas. It is fully propounded in the Bhagavad Gítá and the Bhagavata Purána, and largely insisted upon by Sándilya, the author of the Bhakti-Sútra.

It is frequently urged in the Bhagavad Gítá Book XVIII. says :

"On me (place) your mind, become my devotee, sacrifice to me, reverence me, you will certainly come to me. I declare to you truly, you are dear to me. Forsaking all duties (*dharma*s), come to me as (your) sole religion. I will relieve you from all sins. Be not grieved." 65, 66.

Book IX. contains the following promise :

"(Place your) mind on me, become my devotee, my worshipper ; reverence me, and thus making me your highest goal, and devoting yourself to abstraction, you will certainly come to me." 34.

The value of promises depends upon the person who makes them.—If the King of England makes a promise, we may be

certain that it will be fulfilled. Suppose, however, that a poet invents an imaginary king, who makes great promises, can we trust to them?

During the world's long history, countless gods have been worshipped, who are now forgotten. They had no existence, and were merely the imaginary creation of their worshippers. Careful examination will show that the Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita is a similar invention.

MUKTI, MOKSHA, NIRVANA.

Some remarks may be offered on the promised reward. About this there has been much controversy.

Mukti or *Moksha*, means setting free, freedom, emancipation. As a reward, it denotes freedom for future births; the re-absorption of the Jivâtma with the Paramâtma, the Supreme Sôul of the Universe.

Two views are taken of this. Some regard it as the loss of all personality, and separate identity by absorption into the only really existing Being—mere life, with nothing to live for, mere joy with nothing to rejoice about, and mere thought with nothing upon which thought is to be exercised. Râmanuja, on the other hand, holds that it means a conscious separate existence.

Nirvâna means blown out, like the flame of a lamp which no longer exists. Buddhism is strongly pessimistic; its great aim is to get rid of the curse of existence. Strictly speaking, *Nirvâna* denotes the *extinction of being*, but as this seemed a deplorable end of life, it is held by some to mean the *extinction of desire*.

PROOFS THAT THE KRISHNA OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA IS AN INVENTION OF THE POET.

There *may* have been a great warrior of the name of Krishna; but the Krishna here considered is the Krishna who claims to be the Supreme Deity. If so, he must have possessed true knowledge and been free from the superstitions of the times. Let him be tried by this test.

The chief points already noticed may be recapitulated.

TEACHING ABOUT GOD

1. **Krishna acknowledges the truth of Polytheism and Demonolatry.**—He claims to be *Adhi-daiva*, the chief of the gods; but Indra and others are also allowed to exist, as shown by quotations. No enlightened man now entertains such beliefs.

2. **Pantheism is taught.**—As the spider weaves its web from its own body, so the universe is produced from *Prakriti*, Krishna's lower nature. The universe is Krishna's body, framed by himself.

out of himself. Every thing that exists is a portion of God, and every action that is performed is an action of God. A murderer excuses his crime on the plea that it was done by God.

3. Krishna's Incarnations are acknowledged.—Krishna claims to have passed through many incarnations. Ten principal incarnations are described in the Sacred Books of the Hindus.

Two of the supposed incarnations have been noticed. In the Boar incarnation it is said that Krishna, after a contest of a thousand years with a demon, raised the earth which had been sunk to the bottom of the sea. Any one acquainted with geography knows that all this is impossible.

The object of this paper is to examine the supposed Krishna incarnation.

4. Degrading Ideas are given of God.—*Rajas* and *Tamas* are attributed to God, as well as *Sattva*. The Christian doctrine is that "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

5. Caste is alleged to be a Divine Institution.—Krishna claims to be the author of caste. The injustice and evils of caste have been shown. It has its origin in a falsehood put in the mouth of the Deity; it is nourished by selfishness, it is an enemy to freedom, progress, and brotherliness. This alone is sufficient to prove that the Bhagavad Gita had a Brahman for its author.

6. The contradictions of the Bhagavad Gita show that it is not inspired.—God would not forget what He said, and contradict Himself. The author of the poem tried to please all parties, and hence made incompatible statements.

TEACHING ABOUT MAN

1. The Soul is claimed to be eternal and all-pervading.—It is said that we are as eternal as Brahma himself, and that the soul of the meanest insect is all-pervading. What intelligent man can credit such assertions, destitute of proof?

2. A Belief in Transmigration is taught.—It is shown that this is contrary to our experience, opposed to science, unjust, denies God's mercy, and is pernicious in its effects.

THE MORAL TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

1. The observance of Caste Duties is the grand Moral Law of the Bhagavad Gita.—Some moral duties, it is true, are expected from Brahmins; but Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras have simply to follow the rules of their caste. This teaching elevates an unjust system above the essential distinction between right and wrong.

2. Actions performed without attachment do not "defile."—Like the foregoing, this also destroys the eternal distinction

between right and wrong. It likewise reduces man to a machine. He cannot act without a motive or purpose.

3. **Indifference is the Ideal of the Bhagavad Gita.**—Instead of regarding those around us with indifference, and selfishly seeking merely our own happiness, we should feel deeply interested in the sufferings of our fellow-creatures, and make earnest efforts for their alleviation.

India shows the fruit of indifference.

THE PATHS TO MUKTI.

JNANA MARGA.

The knowledge sought to be obtained is belief in our identity with Krishna or Brahma. Yoga exercises are said to be the best means for its attainment

It is shown that the knowledge sought to be gained is not true knowledge, that belief in what is not true cannot obtain the pardon of sin, and that, instead of weakening the body by Yoga exercises, we should seek to preserve it in vigorous health that we may benefit others

KARMA MARGA

This consists in worshipping the gods by sacrifices and offerings. It has been shown that belief in polytheism has been abandoned by all intelligent men; that the gods now worshipped in India, have no existence, and consequently cannot benefit those who worship them.

BHAKTI MARGA.

Salvation is promised to all who take refuge in Krishna. The value of a promise depends upon the person who makes it. It has been shown that the Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita is not God, but the imagination of a poet. Taking refuge in an imaginary being, cannot procure salvation.

DYING IN THE LIGHT AND DARK FORTNIGHT.

The promise is made that he who departs from this world remembering Krishna secures absorption.

"And he who leaves this body and departs (from this world) remembering me in (his) last moments, comes into my essence. There is no doubt of that." VIII. 5.

There is, however, another requisite mentioned in the same chapter. Krishna says:

"I will state the times at which devotees departing (from this world) go, never to return, or to return. 23

"The fire, the flame, the day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern solstice, departing (from the world) in those, these who know the Brahman go to the Brahman. 24.

"Smoke, the dark fortnight, the six months of the southern solstice (dying) in these, the devotee goes to the lunar light and returns. 25.

"These two paths, bright and dark, are deemed to be eternal in this world. By the one (a man) goes never to return, by the other he comes back." 26.

In the Mahābhārata, Bhīshma, believing in this, when mortally wounded in the southern solstice, desired to live till the sun entered the northern solstice.

Can any intelligent man believe that his attainment of *Mukti* depends upon his dying in the light fortnight? This assertion alone disproves the Bhagavad Gītā, showing that it was not inspired by the Deity.

REAL AUTHORSHIP.

Skilful lawyers can often tell by internal evidence whether a document is really what it professes to be. From the Bhagavad Gītā claiming a divine origin for caste, it was evidently written by a Brahman. His exaltation of Krishna as the Supreme Being, proves that he was a Vaishnava. From the acknowledgment of polytheism, demonolatry, and pantheism, the writer had the superstitious ideas of the time. He sought to uphold caste and the privileges of his order, while he endeavoured to harmonise some doctrines of Hindu philosophy, and give prominence to Krishna *bhakti*. A blasphemous claim is made that "the Deity" spoke the words which he wrote, and the book was forced into the Mahābhārata to gain the support of its authority.

No intelligent man now believes in polytheism or demonolatry; caste is condemned as an iniquitous system; our salvation does not depend upon our dying in the light or dark fortnight. Much less can we believe that the Supreme Deity held such opinions. The legitimate inference is that the Krishna of the Bhagavad Gītā is a creation of the poet, and has no real existence. The worship of an imaginary being cannot benefit its worshippers.

The Hindu Sacred Books abound with creations of their authors; as Mount Meru, the seven seas, the demons Rāhu and Ketu causing eclipses, &c. Educated men admit that these are imaginary; so are the stories of the gods.

There should be earnest inquiry whether there is any other teaching upon which we can rely. The following remarks are intended to show that there is such a Divine Teacher.

THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST.

It is admitted that the Hindu ideas with regard to incarnations, though defective in many respects, recognise, says Hardwick, the idea of God descending to the level of the fallen creature and becoming man to lighten the burden of pain and misery under which the universe is groaning.

"No thoughtful student of the past records of man," says Trench, "can refuse to acknowledge that through all its history there has run the hope of a redemption from the evil which oppresses it; and as little can deny that this hope has continually attached itself to some single man. The help that is coming to the world, it has seen incorporated in a person. The generations of men, weak and helpless in themselves, have evermore been looking after ONE in whom they may find all they look for vainly in themselves and in those around them."

Teaching by example is far more effective than mere precept. Humanity also yearns for one who can sympathise with it in its troubles. All these requirements are met in JESUS CHRIST, the *Nishkalank*, or spotless, *Avatára*.

Jesus Christ was born about 19 centuries ago in Palestine, about midway between India and England. His first recorded discourse was at Nazareth, where He read the following passage from the prophet Esaias, or Isaiah, explaining His object in coming to the world:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." "To-day," He said, "is this scripture fulfilled."

Moore gives the following account of the career of Jesus Christ, "Apart from miracles and apart from prophecies, and limiting our views exclusively to the accepted facts of His earthly life":

"In the reign of Augustus Cæsar, a man is born into the world, in an obscure province of the Roman Empire. His parents are poor,—his reputed father being an ordinary mechanic. Nothing noticeable occurs either in his infancy or childhood, if we except the visit to Jerusalem, at twelve years of age. His deportment on this occasion is remarkable, no doubt, exhibiting a ripeness and strength of thought above his years, and in advance of the moral intelligence of the times. But still no condition of humanity is transcended, and the light which had flashed forth for a moment, as far as the world at large is concerned, goes out again in darkness. Another long interval elapses, and manhood is reached; yet all passes without mark, without observable

preparation, without a single inch of ground being cleared away for the creation of that mighty platform,—soon to be the scene of transactions which should convulse the world. Suddenly that platform is raised. It comes up, as it were in a night,—like the gourd over the prophet's head, but not to perish or pass away. Nations flock to the shadow of it. Unbidden and unknown, Jesus comes forth. Without patronage from the rich, without countenance from the learned, without sympathy from the men of His own nation, He emerges from the deep seclusion of Nazareth,—a friendless artisan Prophet, to bear His resistless testimony against superstition, against hypocrisy, against a corrupt priesthood, against all falsehood, and against all sin. He gathers a little band around Him,—obscure in station like Himself, and after having travelled with this handful of disciples over the cities and villages of Palestine, and having, in the course of His journeys, given to them a body of teaching unsurpassed for the purity of its precepts, the sublimity of its doctrines, and the augustness of its disclosures,—after a ministry of three short years, and under a ban of infamy and disgrace; He dies.”

“Does the history of philosophy, of legislation, of any achieved success of the human mind furnish any parallel to this? Is it possible, upon ordinary human conditions, to explain how an obscure, unbefriended mechanic, beginning his teaching labours at thirty years of age, and dying at thirty-three, could, in that brief interval, secure the establishment of a system, which should effect an entire revolution of human thought, and sweep the most hoary superstitions from the face of the earth?”*

Menzies gives the following general account of the teaching of Christ

“The title by which Jesus described the intimate relationship of man and God which He announced, sufficiently shows its character. God is the Father in heaven, men are His children, and all that men have to do is to realise that this is so, to enter the circle and begin to live with God on such terms. The great God seeks to have everyone living with Him as His child; and religion is no more, no less, than this communion. Father and child dwell together in perfect love and confidence; no outward regulations are needed for their intercourse, no bargains, no traditions, no ritual, no pilgrimage, no sacrifice. The intercourse can be carried on by any one, anywhere. It is not a matter of apparatus, but a purely moral affair, an affair of love. The Father knows all about the child, is able to give him all he needs, even before he asks it; is willing to forgive his sins when he repents of them; is anxious always to reinforce his efforts after goodness. The child knows that the Father is always near him, carries every need and wish to Him in prayer, even though he knows that He is aware of them beforehand, regards all that happens, either good or ill, as sent by Him for the best

* Moore's *Age and the Gospel*, pp. 72, 74

ends, and seeks in every case to know His will, and to submit to it sweetly, and execute it faithfully."*

Menzies thus describes the work of Jesus as the Messiah.

"He appears as the Messiah, not such a Messiah as his countrymen looked for, but as the true Messiah in whom all human wants are met, and all human hopes fulfilled. The cure which he announces for all ills consists in devotion to the will of the Father in heaven. To give oneself unreservedly to the labour of realising the purposes of the heavenly Father in one's own heart and in the world, is to rise above all cares and sorrows, enthusiasm in the Father's service is the sovereign remedy. To one who believes in the Father, and seeks to live as His child, no despair is possible. To be engaged in His business is at all times the highest happiness, and His kingdom is assuredly coming, though man has still the privilege of working for it,—the kingdom in which all darkness and evil will be put away."†

The Teaching of Jesus Christ—A full account of Jesus Christ is given in the books of the New Testament, called *Gospels* (good news), which should be carefully read. Attention is also invited to a little volume, compiled for the people of India, by the Earl of Northbrook, some time Viceroy of India, entitled *The Teaching of Jesus Christ in His own Words*. ‡

CHRISTIAN TEACHING ABOUT GOD.

Some of the differences between the doctrines of the Bhagavad Gita and Christianity about God will be pointed out.

The Bhagavad Gita, while it advocates the worship of Krishna, says that "those who worship the gods go to the gods, and those who worship the Bhútas, go to the Bhútas."

Christianity, on the other hand, is strictly monotheistic. The gods and bhútas worshipped in India have no existence; they are the mere inventions of poets.

The one true God has existed from all eternity. He never had a beginning, and He will never cease to exist. From everlasting to everlasting He is God; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Christianity has no doctrine of *prakriti* as eternal as Brahma himself. It teaches that the universe did not exist till it was called into being by God. Man cannot create, or call into existence out of nothing; he can only form an object out of existing materials. Judging God by themselves Hindus have denied to God the power of creation, and hence have imagined an eternal *prakriti*.

Christianity teaches the omnipresence of God. On the other hand, Pantheism is denied. God and His creation are distinct. The chief point of difference between God as represented by Christianity and the gods worshipped in India is His spotless holiness.

* *History of Religion*, pp. 411, 412.

† *Ibid.*, p. 417.

‡ Price 1 anna. Sold by Mr. A. T. Scott, Tract Depot, Madras.

Instead of *rajas* and *tamas* proceeding from Him as well as *sattva*, it is said "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Instead of looking with equal eye upon virtue and vice, "sin is that abominable thing which he hates." "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts." He is "glorious in holiness."

God's most lovely attribute is His goodness. Brahma is represented as in a state of dreamless sleep; of God it is said, "Thou art good, and doest good." This attribute is summed up in one word, God is LOVE. His state is one of ceaseless activity for the benefit of His creatures.

CHRISTIAN TEACHING ABOUT MAN.

It has been shown that, according to the Bhagavad Gítá, our souls are eternal *svyambu* essences, without beginning or end, continually in the process of *samsára*, transmigration. The objections to this account have been stated. On the other hand, Christianity teaches that we did not exist before we came into this world, and that we derived our being from God.

To a child the word *father* represents love, authority, and wisdom. A mother has the same tender affection, but the other qualities are not so clearly shown. Hence, when we seek for a name for God which expresses love and awe, we call Him our "Father in Heaven."

Jesus Christ taught the FATHERHOOD OF GOD. His disciples were to say in prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven." They were to be perfect even as their Father in heaven is perfect. Their Father in heaven knew what they needed before they asked Him.

Two reasons may be given showing why God may be called our Father.

1. **He gave us being.**—What particularly distinguishes an earthly father is that, under God, he is the author of the child's existence. This can be said of no other person. However much another may love the child and be kind to him, he has no claim to the name of father. As their Creator, God is the Father of all men. They did not exist until He called them into being.

Christianity teaches that God is our Creator. Educated Hindus now generally admit the Fatherhood of God, and regard Him as their Creator, but such is not the teaching of Hinduism. It was learned from Christianity. In the Sastras, father may be one of the numerous names given to God, but He is not a father as the source of our existence. It is a fixed dogma of Hindu philosophy, *navastuno vastusiddih*, nothing can be produced out of nothing. By the word Creator Christians means one who gave being to things which had no being before. In this sense no Hindu sect believes God to have created anything.

2. **God may be called our Father in heaven because He supplies all our wants.**—A father provides his children with food, clothing, and every thing they need. He does not do so on account of any service they have rendered to him, but from pure love. What has our Father in heaven done for us? He not only gave us life, but keeps us in life. We are dependent upon Him for every breath we draw; we live up His earth; it is His sun that shines upon us, every thing we have is His gift. This is the teaching of Christianity, and Christians, therefore, praise and thank God for His goodness.

In the above respect Hinduism does not acknowledge the Fatherhood of God. According to it, every thing that happens to a person is determined by his *karma*. Every thing that God does to souls He does with reference to their good and evil deeds only, in order that they may receive reward for good deeds, and suffer for evil deeds. The blessings we receive have their source, not in God's benevolence, but in our own good deeds in a previous birth. Why should we be grateful to Him? True religion is thus destroyed.

TWO GREAT CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

These include our DUTY TO GOD and our DUTY TO MAN, which will be noticed in turn.

OUR DUTY TO GOD

Jesus Christ summed this up in one word, LOVE. He said "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."

The watchword of Muhammed is *Islam*, resignation. Our relation to God is that of master and servant. The watchword of Jesus Christ is *Love*. Our relation to God is that of father and son. At the same time Christians are taught to say, "Thy will be done": but love—not fear—is the motive.

Some of the ways in which our love to God will be shown may be mentioned.

1. *A desire to live as in God's presence*.—An affectionate child delights in his father's society. If obliged to leave him, he laments the separation, and wishes to return. So should we feel towards God. It is true that He is always with us, but very often we do not realise His presence. We should live as continually in His sight. We should strive to "walk with God."

2. *A love of Prayer*.—We delight to converse with those we love. Can we conceive of a son, living in his father's house and constantly in his sight, yet never speaking to him, or saying only a few heartless words at distant intervals? Such conduct would

show that he was entirely destitute of filial affection. God is ever near us. We speak to Him in prayer. If we love Him, it will be a pleasure to tell Him all our sorrows, to seek His guidance, and to thank Him for His goodness.

3. *A wish to do God's will.*—If we are attached to a friend, we try to avoid whatever will grieve him, and seek to do what will give him pleasure. Thus it will be with us if we love God. Before doing anything, we shall think how God will regard it, and act accordingly. His laws will be our guide. Obedience is a great test of love. Jesus Christ says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

4. *A desire to be like God*—Children frequently resemble their parents in outward looks; they catch the tone of their voice; they often copy them in their conduct. Even the best earthly parents have their faults, but we are safe in following the example of our heavenly Father. Plato makes "likeness to God" the final aim of man.

The Hindu idea of "absorption" into the Deity is a great error, but it is our highest duty and privilege to become "partakers of the Divine nature," to be like God, to have our will swallowed up in His. Thus we shall, in some faint measure, share in the Divine happiness.

Such are some of the feelings we should cherish.

Strength for Duty.—Jesus Christ set the highest ideal before His followers, "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect" In our attempts to do this, we need divine help. Jesus Christ says, "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" He taught His disciples to pray, and gave them the following model:

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Besides this form of prayer, applicable to all, we should make known to God our special needs. Prayer is the desire of the heart. The mere repetition of words is worthless

Our duties as sinful will be noticed under another head.

OUR DUTY TO MAN.

Sons of the same father are called "brothers" The "Brotherhood of Man" follows from the "Fatherhood of God."

The Christian doctrine is thus expressed by an English poet :

" Children we are all
Of one great Father, in whatever clime
His providence hath cast the seed of life ;
All tongues, all colours."

Some Hindu books make the same acknowledgment. In the Santi Parva of the Mahābhārata Bhāradvaja says :

" Desire, anger, fear, cupidity, grief, apprehension, hunger, fatigue prevail over us all ; by what then is caste discriminated ? "

The Panchatantra says :

" Small souls inquire, ' Belongs this man
To our own race, or class or clan ? '
But larger-hearted men embrace,
As brothers, all the human race."

Caste is diametrically opposed to the Brotherhood of Man. The arguments against it have already been explained.

Jesus Christ applies the law of LOVE to our fellow-men as well as to God. The second command is like the first, " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is explained in the rule, " All things whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them "

More than that, Jesus Christ teaches that we should return good for evil

" Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven ; for He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

CHRISTIAN TEACHING ABOUT SALVATION.

Man sinful.—This is allowed both by the Bhagavad Gita and Christianity. As it is very important some explanatory remarks may be offered

Most persons think that all is well if they do no positive harm to any one, and are kind to the poor. They consider themselves safe, because they think that they are no worse than others. They may admit that they are not in all things what they ought to be ; but God is merciful, and they need be under no alarm about their future state. Our own good opinion does not prove that our conduct is right or our condition safe. We may be saying to ourselves, " Peace, peace ; when there is no peace "

God thus complains of our conduct, contrasting the gratitude of the very beasts with the regardlessness of man : " Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. I have nourished and brought

up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but my people doth not know, doth not consider."

But while most men pass through life satisfied with themselves and unaware of their real character, there have been some, in all ages of the world, who have felt the corruption of their nature, and sighed after holiness. There is a remarkable confession of sin which Brahmans ought to repeat daily.

Pāpō'ham pāpakarmāham pāpātmā pāpasambhavaḥ

The meaning is "I am sin; I commit sin, my soul is sinful; I am conceived in sin." This is very similar to the account of man's state given in the Bible. David says "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." It is also written, "There is none righteous, no, not one", the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?"

The two great sins chargeable against every human being are *ungodliness* and *selfishness*.

The verdict pronounced upon Belshazzar, king of Babylon, was: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." When conscience awakes, we see nothing in the past but a career of guilt—the grand purpose of our lives neglected, the great God treated with indifference, His holy law trampled under foot.

If a child has been ungrateful and disobedient, it is his bounden duty to confess his fault with deep sorrow, and ask forgiveness. It is the same with our heavenly Father.

It sometimes happens that an ungrateful wicked son leaves his father's house, and lives among companions like himself, never thinking of his father, and caring nothing about him. Although men have thus acted towards their heavenly Father, His heart still yearns over them, and He would welcome their return. This is vividly shown in a parable spoken by the Great Teacher, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." The father then divided all he had between his two sons. A few days after, his younger son went away to a far country, where he soon spent all his property among bad companions. He was now so poor that he went into the fields to feed swine, and he was so hungry, that he would gladly have taken some of the food that the swine did eat.

Afterwards, the younger son thought that, while he was starving, his father's servants had more than they could eat. Then he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." As soon as his father saw

him coming, he ran, fell on his neck, and kissed him. He told the servants to bring the best robe, and make ready the finest food. Full of joy, he said, "This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

When we have done wrong, we should, with heart-felt sorrow, confess our sins to God and ask forgiveness.

But Christianity teaches that this is not enough. Man is so deeply plunged in sin and his guilt is so great, that a Divine incarnation was necessary for his deliverance. The first promise of this was given by God Himself thousands of years ago. The Son of God, pitying the human race, came down from heaven for our salvation. By His death on the cross He bore the punishment due to our sins; by His obedience to the law of God He wrought out a perfect righteousness, which, like a spotless robe, is given to His followers.

Christians do not hope to merit heaven by their own good works. Their feeling is, "In my hand no price I bring." Trusting in Jesus Christ, they look to Him alone for salvation.

It is not sufficient for a disobedient son to feel sorry for his conduct and to ask forgiveness. He must show that his sorrow is sincere by being obedient and affectionate in future.

Sad experience will teach us that we need Divine help to resist temptation and overcome sin. Here the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is felt to be adapted to our needs. Although Christians firmly hold God's unity, yet in some mysterious way there is a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who all unite for man's redemption. The peculiar office of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify, to enable us to overcome sin, and to be adorned with all the beauties of holiness. His help is given in answer to prayer. The promise is, "If ye 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?"

Besides prayer for the Holy Spirit, there must be watchfulness against sin, avoidance of temptation, study of the scriptures and other good books, observance of the Lord's day, attendance at public worship, association with good men, etc.

The Promises of Christianity.—Penitent children who have accepted salvation in the manner described, have a father's eye to watch over them. Wherever they are, by day or by night, they can never be out of His sight. They have the ear of a father to listen to their requests. An earthly parent cannot always give his child what he needs, but God has all power. They have a father's hand to guide and protect them. Earthly parents, even though wise, may err; they may be too weak to deliver from danger. Not so with God. They will have a father's home to receive them at last. All God's reconciled children will be received into

His heavenly palace, there to dwell with Him for ever in conscious happiness.

DUTIES OF RELIGIOUS INQUIRERS.

While the reader, if a Hindu, should carefully study his own religion, Christianity, the religion of the most enlightened nations of the world, also deserves special attention. It is to be regretted that many educated Hindus are entirely ignorant of Christianity, or have only false conceptions of it derived from its enemies

Liddon justly says, "Not to be interested in the life of Jesus Christ, is to be, I do not say irreligious, but unintelligent. It is to be insensible to the nature and claims of the most powerful force that has moulded the thought and swayed the destinies of civilised men"

In the study of Christianity the New Testament should receive special attention. The following works will be useful at the commencement

The Teaching of Jesus Christ in His own Words 12mo 112 pp 1 An.

Jesus Christ His Life and Times. 8vo. 176 pp. 3 As.

The Founder of Christianity an Introduction to the New Testament 12mo 250 pp. cloth 6 As

Notes on the Gospel of Luke. 8vo. 173 pp. 3 As

Notes on the Acts of the Apostles. 8vo 164 pp. 3 As

Other works are noticed in the Appendix

With earnest prayer for the Divine guidance, and acting up to one's convictions of his duty, the reader will eventually be led to say, "Lord, to whom can we go" Thou hast the word of eternal life." They will also find the promise fulfilled, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"

THE TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND CHRISTIANITY COMPARED: A SUMMARY.

The excellence of the Bhagavad Gítá, in some respects, may again be acknowledged The Krishna of the Bhagavad Gítá is a great advance upon the Krishna of the Bhágavata Purána. Still, we are now living in the twentieth century, and what may have been in advance of the times two thousand years ago, may now be as far behind them. Hindus of the present day will be tried by a different standard from those who lived when the Bhagavad Gítá was composed

Quotations have been given, showing that the doctrines mentioned below are contained in the Bhagavad Gítá; they will not therefore be repeated.

The Bhagavad Gítá acknowledges polytheism, demonolatry, and pantheism, thus encouraging all the superstitions now current in India. Christianity is strictly monotheistic, and condemns the worship of any other than the one true God.

The Bhagavad Gítá asserts that the three *gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* proceed from God. Christianity teaches that God is light, that in Him is no darkness at all, that He loves righteousness and hates iniquity.

The Bhagavad Gítá claims that Krishna is the author of the iniquitous system of caste. Christianity teaches the Brotherhood of man, that God "has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell in all the face of the earth."

The Bhagavad Gítá teaches that the soul of man is eternal and all-pervading. Christianity teaches the Fatherhood of God, and that we did not exist before our birth in this world.

The observance of caste rules is the great moral law of the Bhagavad Gítá. The two great duties of Christianity are Love to God and Love to man.

According to the Bhagavad Gítá, sin is reduced to ashes when we acknowledge our identity with Brahma. Christianity characterises such a claim as blasphemous, and teaches that repentance and taking refuge in Jesus Christ are necessary.

The Bhagavad Gítá acknowledges also the *Karma Marga* and *Bhakti Marga*. Christianity teaches that the gods of the Hindu pantheon, including Krishna, have no existence, and their worship, therefore, is vain. But it also points out One in whom faith is not vain.

The Bhagavad Gítá makes dying in the light fortnight necessary to *mukti*. Christianity makes no distinction of time.

As already mentioned, internal evidence shows that the Bhagavad Gítá is the composition of a Vaishnava Brahmin, with the ideas of his time. To secure the acceptance of his teaching, it was put in the mouth of an imaginary Krishna.

THE IDEALS OF HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY CONTRASTED.

The gods of a people are their highest ideals, and, as already stated, do much to mould their character.

Indra.—The oldest ideal of the Hindus is found in the Rig Veda, composed when the Aryans, who had come from a cold country, were engaged in the conquest of India. The chief object of adoration at that time was Indra.

In the Vedas, Indra is characterised by his fondness for war and the intoxicating soma juice.

Even as an infant, Indra is said to have manifested his warlike

tendencies. "As soon as he was born, the slayer of Vritra grasped his arrow, and asked his mother, Who are they that are renowned as fierce warriors?" His love of the soma juice was shown as early "On the day that thou wast born, thou didst, from love of it, drink the mountain-grown juice of the soma plant."

A frequent epithet of Indra is *somapî*, soma-drinker. In the hymns he is invited by his worshippers to drink like "a thirsty stag" or like a "bull roaming in a waterless waste", to fill his belly by copious potations. His inebriety is said to be "most intense." Thus exhilarated, he goes forth to war.

So long as the Aryans were engaged in fierce contests with the aborigines, in which it was thought Indra might assist them, he was the most popular deity.

When the Aryans had conquered India, then conceptions of Indra changed. Mr R. C. Dutt says

"Indra is no longer the soma-drinking martial God who recovers the celestial cows from the fort of Pani, and helps Aryans in their wars against the aborigines. Times have changed, and ideas change with times and circumstances. Paganic India is a gorgeous king of a luxurious and somewhat voluptuous celestial court, where dance and music occupy most of his time."

Brahma.—The early Aryans took a cheerful view of life. Instead of looking upon it as a curse, a common benediction was, "May you live a hundred winters!" They enjoyed themselves on earth, and after death they looked for happiness with the Pitris.

The early Aryans, coming from a cold country, were of active habits like the English. After they had been settled in India for some time, they began to feel the influence of the hot, enervating climate. Labour was a burden, undisturbed repose seemed the highest bliss. A belief in transmigration also began to prevail. Life was looked upon as a weary endless chain of births. This feeling was intensified by Buddha, whose first Noble Truth was that existence is suffering.

Instead of an active Indra, a Brahma or Brahman was conceived, sunk in dreamless sleep. There is no self-consciousness, the only happiness is freedom from the misery of transmigration.

"Unencumbered by the cares of empire," says Dr. Duff, "or the functions of a superintending providence, he effectuates no good, inflicts no evil, suffers no pain. He exists in a state of undisturbed repose—a sleep so deep as never to be disturbed by a dream—even without any consciousness of his own existence."

This was a new ideal. The highest attainment was to become like him. This was supposed to be best effected by the Yoga exercises described.

The Yogi is to care only for himself. He is not to give the young the benefit of his experience, he is not to feed the hungry, instruct the ignorant, visit the sick, comfort the sorrowing, extend a helping hand to those struggling in the ocean of life; he is to care only for himself. It must be confessed that in this he is simply imitating Brahma, in whom the doctrine reaches its full development. The more a man resembles Brahma, the more selfish and useless he becomes.

Krishna.--The author of the Bhagavad Gítá felt that the human race would soon come to an end if all turned Yogis. Without action life is an impossibility. "Nobody ever remains even for an instant without performing some action." (III 5) To avoid being compelled to enjoy in future births the fruit of action, the writer invented the theory that "action without attachment" (*vanga*) does not "defile." Although this is taught, Yoga exercises are also recommended. In addition there is to be a feeling of indifference.

Any Indian who loves his country feels that the benefit of its people requires all his energies. His vigour would be sapped by the limitations of the Bhagavad Gítá, and his efforts would be comparatively cold and lifeless.

The Christian Conception of God. Let this be contrasted with the foregoing:

He is the self-existent, the unchanging God, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He called the universe into being, and His government extends over all creation. He is never unconscious. He never slumbers nor sleeps. "The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, nor is weary." He knows everything that takes place throughout His vast dominions. Every thought of our heart is known to Him. His ear is ever open to the cry of His children. His character is expressed in the words, "Thou art good and doest good", "God is love." Still, it is not the feeling which looks upon good and evil with equal eye. If a king allowed crime to go unpunished, his kingdom would become like a hell.

In Jesus Christ, the Divine Incarnation, Christianity presents a model for our imitation, and one who can sympathize with all our sorrows.

The proverb has been quoted 'As is the god, so is the worshipper.' Belief in a supposed Brahma has a tendency to discountenance philanthropic effort. On the other hand, every encouragement has been given to it by the Christian conception of God. It is admitted that sad evils prevail among nations nominally Christian, but among them and them alone are there systematic agencies to combat them. There are Peace Societies to discourage war, there are Red Cross Societies to look after the

wounded in battle ; there are Societies for the Poor, the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, the Aged, the Orphan, the Widow, for almost every benevolent object

Which Ideal does India most need ?

COMPARATIVE INFLUENCE UPON INDIA OF THE TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND CHRISTIANITY.

RELIGIOUS REFORM

What has the Bhagavad Gítá done for religious reform in India during the last two thousand years ?

By its acknowledgment of polytheism, demonolatry, and pantheism, it is, so far, responsible for the present religious condition of the masses. Lyall's description of their gods may again be quoted.

"A tangled jungle of disorderly superstitions, ghosts and demons, demigods and deified saints, household gods, tribal gods, local gods, universal gods, with the countless shines and temples, and the din of their discordant rites, deities who abhor a fly's death, those who delight still in human victims, and those who would not either sacrifice or make offerings." *

So long as India worships such gods, she must be regarded as belonging to the nations of the earth low in the scale of civilization

Christianity condemns the worship of such gods, and teaches monotheism. Some progress has been made. The Brahma Samaj movement originated in Christianity. The Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man are beginning to be acknowledged by educated Hindus. Higher moral ideas of God have been diffused. Actions recorded of the Hindu gods, formerly accepted as literally true, are now either rejected or an attempt is made to give them a spiritual meaning.

SOCIAL REFORM

The Bhagavad Gítá made no effort to secure the following reforms effected by a Christian government

1. The burning or burial alive of widows has been forbidden.

For thousands of years Hindus considered it a work of great merit to burn their mothers alive with the dead bodies of their husbands. It was the Serampore missionaries who first denounced

* *Asiatic Studies*, Vol. I, p. 2

the custom, though the movement was afterwards taken up by Rammohun Roy. When it was to be abolished by Lord Bentinck, an appeal was made to the Privy Council for its retention. Certain castes buried their widows alive.

2 The Murder of Children has been prohibited.

Female infants were often destroyed among the Rajputs on account of the foolish expenses incurred at marriages. No punishment followed.

3. Human Sacrifices have been stopped.

Mothers sometimes offered their children to the Ganges at Sagar to be devoured by crocodiles. Christian missionaries brought the custom to the notice of Lord Wellesley, who stationed sepoys at Sagar to put a stop to it. Human sacrifices were offered to Kâli. The Khonds thought that their lands would not yield crops unless human sacrifices were offered to the earth-goddess.

4 Suicide has been forbidden.

Hindus have considered it meritorious to destroy themselves in certain ways. Some drowned themselves at Allahabad, others cast themselves from precipices.

5 Barbarous practices have been abolished.

Criminals are no longer impaled or torn limb by limb by elephants, cutting off the hands of thieves or the noses of women, the extraction of evidence by torture, trial by ordeal, hookswinging, falling on knives, and thigh piercing have been stopped.

6. Freedom has been granted to Slaves.

Human beings can no longer be bought or sold like cattle. Cases may still occur, but it is a crime.

7. Caste distinctions are not recognized.

Low castes are allowed to give evidence in courts like any others, high castes are not exempted from appearing.

8 The age of Consent has been raised.

Brutal mutilation and murders occurred through men having intercourse with their child wives. The age of consent was raised by Lord Lansdowne, although still too low.

9. Widow Marriage has been legalized.

It is true that Lord Canning's law has remained nearly a dead letter, but this is the fault of Hinduism.

There is a growing feeling against nautch women, especially their employment in temples. Hindus, in having dancing girls who are prostitutes, are only copying the example set in the heaven of Indra. They are the counterparts of the Apsaras, whose origin the Vishnu Purâna and the Râmâyana attribute to the churning of the Ocean.

The movement in favour of female education is due to Christianity.

POLITICAL EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Mr R. L. Chandra, in a Letter to the Delegates to the National Congress, thus contrasts the political effects of Hinduism and Christianity

"Lord Dufferin said in Calcutta .

"The problem is, how can the several distinct nationalities which constitute the population of India, with their infinitely diverse rites, discordant and hostile prejudices, and conflicting social usages, be fused into one Nation?"

A great authority has said that, 'Religion is the strongest and most important of all the elements which go to constitute nationality.'

"But is there a religion, it may be fairly asked, which can weld the various peoples and races of India, into one united nation? What is the religion that can knit the Hindu and the Moslem, the Aryan and the Aboriginal, in the bonds of one great Brotherhood? What is the religion that can harmonize into one nationality the Sikhs and the Parsis, the Rohillas and the Pathans, the Beluchis and the Assamese? What, in a word, is the religion that can make the Brahman and the Chandal one? How shall this vision of unity become an historical reality?"

"Hinduism cannot achieve this unity. With its inexorable caste rules it can separate and divide, but can never unite and harmonize. Some people think that the Government, with official representatives, is the greatest enemy of the Congress. If these would consider the matter without prejudice, they would say that the greatest enemy of the Congress and the country, are the HINDU REVIVALISTS. The revival of Hinduism means wider separation, further disunion, deeper antagonism between race and race, it means rending asunder, not union. Educated Indians, therefore, who truly love their country and long for the 'fusion into one national whole of all the different elements that constitute the population of India,' should beware of Hindu Revivalists.

"But that which from its very nature Hinduism is unfitted to do it is one of the chief missions of Christianity to accomplish. Christianity came to proclaim to the world the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man in a sense in which they never were proclaimed before. Christianity knows no caste. It knows no distinction of race or country.

"Since the Roman society and polity began to decay, men enthusiastically imbued with the spirit of Christianity, have ever been foremost in the task of building up that fabric of European civilization which now dominates over the world. Whether in the wilds of Scandinavia or among idolatrous Teuton hordes, in the cloister, in the camp, in the parliament, or in the guilds of mediæval Europe—or, in later ages, asserting by speech, by pen, or by the sword, the rights and obligations of mankind—the strongest and most successful organizers and constructors, social as well as political, have ever been men of the strongest, deepest, most earnest religious Christian convictions, all deriving then inspiration from one common source."

"Gentlemen of the Congress! What Christianity has done for the most powerful nations of Europe, what it has done for the United

States of America, it can and will do for India. Political rights, large powers of administration, the representative and constitutional form of Government, equality, fraternity, unity, all these things, the very privileges which we seek for, have followed as a matter of course, wherever Christianity has been accepted and loyally followed. Christianity therefore has a peculiar claim upon your attention."

For three thousand years the governments of India were pure despotisms. Bholanath Chunder says of the Oriental mind: "It has never known, nor attempted to know any other form of government but despotism." *

For years the English Government has had representative institutions in view, and been seeking to prepare the people for them by education.

On a review of India, Religiously, Socially, and Politically, the great superiority of the effects of Christianity over the system of the Bhagavad Gītā, will be clearly seen. They are thus contrasted by Bishop Caldwell.

The soundness or unsoundness of this philosophy and the probability or otherwise of its divine origin and authority, may be estimated, like the characteristics of a tree, by its fruits. What are the visible, tangible fruits of this philosophy? What has it done for India, the land of its birth?

"Has it promoted popular education, civilization, and good government? Has it educated the people in generous emotions? Has it abolished caste or even mitigated its evils? Has it obtained for widows the liberty of remarriage? Has it driven away dancing girls from the temples? Has it abolished polygamy? Has it repressed vice and encouraged virtue? Was it this philosophy which abolished female infanticide, the meriah sacrifice and the burning of widows? Is it this which is covering the country with a network of railways and telegraphs? Is it this which has kindled amongst the Native inhabitants of India the spirit of improvement and enterprise which is now apparent? Need I ask the question? All this time the philosophy of quietism has been sound asleep, or 'with its eyes fixed on the point of its nose,' according to the directions of the Gītā, it has been thinking itself out of its wits. This philosophy has substantially been the creed of the majority of the people for upwards of two thousand years, and if it had emanated from God, the proofs of its divine origin ought long ere this to have been apparent, but it has all this time been too much absorbed in 'contemplating self by means of self' to have had any time or thought left for endeavouring to improve the world. What could be expected of the philosophy of apathy, but that it should leave things to take their course? There is much real work now being done in India in the way of teaching truth, putting down evil, and promoting the public welfare; but that work is being done, not by Vedāntists or quietists of any school, but by Christians from Europe, whose highest

* *Travels of a Hindu*, Vol. II., p. 408

philosophy is to do good, and by those Natives of India who have been stimulated by the teaching and example of Europeans to choose a similar philosophy."

MAX MULLER ON OUR HEAVEN-FATHER

Considering the high esteem with which the late departed scholar is regarded by educated Hindus, special attention should be called to the following words of his, which may be looked upon as his last message from the unseen world

"Thousands of years have passed away since the Aryan nations separated to travel to the North and South, the West and East: they have each formed their languages, they have each founded empires and philosophies, they have each built temples and razed them to the ground, they have all grown older, and it may be wiser and better; but when they search for a name for that which is most exalted and yet most dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and love, the infinite and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far and as near as near can be, they can but combine the self-same words and utter once more the primal Aryan prayer, Heaven-Father, in that form which will endure for ever, 'Our Father,' which art in heaven."

The most illiterate women can understand the word 'Father'. What a glorious change it would be if the mothers of India, instead of training their children to worship idols and frightening them with stories of demons, taught them that the one true God is their loving Father in heaven!

The two great duties of *Love to God* and *Love to Man* are also intelligible and ennobling

"FROM THE UNREAL, LEAD ME TO THE REAL."

This prayer, from the Brihad Aranya Upanishad, is one which should be most earnestly offered. It may best be explained as, "Lead me from the False to the True."

Educated Hindus know that the **Geography** of their Sacred Books is "**Unreal**." There is no Mount Meru in the centre of the earth, 84,000 yojanas in height, there are no oceans of ghee, sugar-cane juice, &c.

The **Astronomy** of the Hindu Sacred Books is equally '**Unreal**.' The sun does not move round the earth; eclipses are not caused by the demons Ráhu and Kétu.

The **History** of the Hindu Sacred Books is likewise '**Unreal**.' Kings are said to reign over countries which have no existence, in describing battles the wildest exaggerations are used

* Krishna and the Bhagavad Gítá, pp 27 28

The **Gods** of the Hindu Sacred Books are "**Unreal**." They have no existence, and are the imaginary creations of poets with the ideas of their times. It has been shown how the conceptions of Indra, Brahma, and Krishna varied with the circumstances of the people. The gods were thought to be like the people themselves, with the same wants. Just as they provided wives for their sons, so their gods were similarly supplied. To an intelligent man this is sufficient to prove their non-existence. The gods of Hinduism are not alone in this respect. The pages of history are strewn with the names of gods equally imaginary and no longer worshipped. Thus will it be in India.

The "**REAL**" is the great Creator of heaven and earth, our Father in heaven. Let Him alone be worshipped. The means prescribed in the Bhagavad Gita for the **Pardon of Sin** are "**Unreal**." It has been shown that it cannot be obtained by a belief in what is false or by *bhakti* in an imaginary being. On the other hand, the mode of obtaining it, explained by Christianity, must commend itself to our judgment.

A change from the "**Unreal**" to the "**Real**" would also be a change from "**Darkness**" to "**Light**."

Will the reader make an imaginary being or the eternal God his refuge?

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

May this century be distinguished by the changes thus indicated by Tennyson

**"Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring out the false, ring in the true."**

India has wisely adopted the Arts of the West, as the printing press, the railway, the electric telegraph, &c.

Although pundits may adhere to the Geography and Science of the Purānas, they have been abandoned by educated Hindus, and Professor Bose, by his brilliant discoveries, has commanded the admiration of European scientists.

Are educated Hindus, following the example of the pandits, to adhere, from false patriotism, to a religion which is as '*unreal*' as the science of the Purānas? *Rationality*, what agrees with reason, should not be sacrificed for *Nationality*, what is national. Pope calls pride the "never-failing vice of fools," and declares that it is one of the chief causes of wrong judgment.

**"Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's eternal judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,—
Is pride, the never failing vice of fools"**

Let the words be remembered :

"What is not TRUE is not PATRIOTIC."

Let educated men seek to deliver the masses of their countrymen from the degrading superstitions by which they are enslaved, and the so-called learned few from the speculations which they have spun out of their own heads, which are as unsubstantial as those of the spider.

It would be far grander for the whole human race to join in the worship of our Father in heaven than to have a number of national religions. This unity will surely come.

"The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens."

A distinguished French Orientalist says that "As India has already adopted the science and arts of Christian nations, so she will one day spontaneously embrace their faith."

Let all join in the prayer,

'O Father, touch the East, with light,
The light that shone when Hope was born.'

FATHER, LEAD ON !

My Father God, lead on !
Calmly I follow where Thy guiding hand
Directs my steps. I would not trembling stand,
Though all before the way
Is dark as night. I stay
My soul on Thee, and say :
Father, I trust Thy love ; lead on.

Just as Thou wilt : lead on !
For I am as a child, and know not how
To tread the starless path whose windings now
Lie hid from mortal ken.
Although I know not when
Sweet day will dawn again,
Father, I wait Thy will, lead on.

I ask not why : lead on !
Mislead Thou canst not. Though through days of grief
And nights of anguish, pangs without relief,
Or fears that would o'erthrow
My faith, Thou bidst me go,
Thy changeless love, I know.
Father, my soul will keep : lead on.

With Thee is light : lead on !
When dark and chill at eve the night-mists fall,
O'erhanging all things like a dismal pall,
The gloom, with dawn, hath fled ;
So, though 'mid shades I tread,
The dayspring o'er my head,
Father, from Thee shall break : lead on.

Thy way is peace: lead on !
Made heir of all things, I were yet unblest
Didst Thou not dwell with me and make me rest
 Beneath the brooding wing
 That Thou dost o'er me fling,
 Till Thou Thyself shalt bring,
Father, my spirit home . lead on.

Thou givest strength . lead on !
I cannot sink while Thy right hand upholds,
Nor comfort lack while Thy kind arm enfolds,
 Through all my soul I feel
 A healing influence steal,
 While at Thy feet I kneel,
Father, in lowly trust : lead on.

'Twill soon be o'er : lead on !
Left all behind, earth's heart-aches then shall seem
E'en as the memories of a vanished dream ;
 And when of griefs and tears
 The golden fruit appears,
 Amid the eternal years,
Father, all thanks be Thine ! Lead on !

RAY PALMER.

APPENDIX.

Publications for Indian Readers.

The Religions of the World. An Illustrated Sketch of their History
8vo. 208 pp. 6 As.

The Great Religions of the World are described and contrasted. India is urged to prosecute vigorously the course of reform on which she has entered. Illustrative woodcuts.

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K. S. MACDONALD, M.A., D.D., Author of *The Vedic Religion*
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The Bhagavad Gita. 8vo. 108 pp. 3 As. Post-free, 5 As.

This work, supposed to represent the loftiest flight of Hindu philosophy, consists of a supposed dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. It seeks to harmonise the Vedānta, Yoga, and Sāṅkhya doctrines, combining with them faith (*bhakti*) in Krishna, and stern devotion to caste duties. Numerous explanatory notes are added.

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VEDIC HINDUISM

AND

THE ARYA SAMAJ.

AN APPEAL TO EDUCATED HINDUS.

Satyam Jayati Truth Conquers.

Sanskrit Proverb.

"What is not TRUE is not PATRIOTIC."

Sir Madhava Rau.

"From the unreal lead me to the real,
From darkness lead me to light,
From death lead me to immortality."

Brihad Aranya Upanishad

"O Father, touch the East, with light,
The light that shone when Hope was born."

Tennyson.

FIRST EDITION, 2,000 COPIES.

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA
LONDON AND MADRAS.

1902.



PREFATORY NOTE.

The object of the following pages is to give educated Hindus a clear idea of the Vedas, the most ancient and sacred books of their religion. There are explanatory remarks from some of the best oriental scholars, and twenty-nine of the most important hymns are translated in whole or in part. It will be found, on careful examination, that while the hymns contain some noble sentiments, their religious ideas are not suited to the present day.

There is, however, a section of Hindus in North India who seek to make the Vedas the basis of a National Religion. The movement originated with the late Dayānand Saraswati. He was a man of considerable ability, but had not received an English education. He rejected the Purānas and advocated several reforms. He claimed that the Vedas are eternal; that their teaching is monotheistic, and that they contain the germs of some great modern inventions. His followers are called Arya Samajists. Some remarks are made about his system.

J. MURDOCH.

MADRAS, April 30th, 1902.

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VEDIC HINDUISM

INTRODUCTION.

India the "Land of the Veda."—The Vedas occupy such a prominent place in India, that the country has been designated the "Land of the Veda." Frazer thus shows the estimation in which the Vedas were held, and the care taken to preserve their being known to any except the twice-born castes :

"To all orthodox Hindus they are held as having been breathed forth as a divine revelation from before all time. The reducing of them to writing, and even the hearing of their recitation by foreigners, or by any but the twice-born castes, is still looked upon as sacrilege and profanation by those who claim the sole right to hear their sacred sound.

Gautama, the first of a long line of priestly legislators who strove to reduce all the laws and customs of the people of India to ideals founded on priestly ordinances, declared that a Sudra, or one of non-Aryan blood, who dared to listen to the recitation of the Vedic Hymns, should have his ears filled with molten lead or lac, should the Sudra repeat the words he had heard, his tongue should be cut out; should he remember the sound, his body should be split in twain."[†]

The Hymns of the Vedas are deeply interesting as containing some of the earliest recorded religious aspirations of our race. Hindus should seek to gain a clear knowledge of the foundation of their religion

Meaning of Term.—VEDA is from the Sanskrit *vid*, 'know,' kindred with the Latin *vid*, and the English *to wit*. In its general sense it is sometimes applied by the Brahmans to the whole body of their most ancient sacred literature. More strictly, it denotes four collections of hymns, which are respectively known by the names of Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. They are supposed to contain the science, as teaching that knowledge which, of all others, is best worth acquiring.

"The general form of the Vedas is that of lyric poetry. They contain the songs in which the first ancestors of the Hindu people, at the very dawn of their existence as a separate nation, while they were still only on the threshold of the great country which they were afterwards to fill with their civilization, praised the gods, extolled heroic deeds, and sung of other matters which kindled their poetical fervour."[‡]

* Gautama, Chap. xii. 4--6.

† Literary History of India, p. 3.

‡ Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, Vol. I. p. 6

The Vedas the highest Hindu Authorities—The Hindu sacred books are divided into two great classes, called *Śruti* and *Smṛiti*. *Śruti*, which means hearing, denotes direct revelation; *Smṛiti*, recollection, includes the sacred books which are admitted to have been composed by human authors.

Professor Max Müller thus shows the estimation in which the Vedas are held.

"According to the orthodox views of Indian theologians, not a single line of the Veda was the work of human authors. The whole Veda is in some way or other the work of the Deity, and even those who received the revelation, or, as they express it, those who saw it, were not supposed to be ordinary mortals, but beings raised above the level of common humanity, and less liable therefore to error in the reception of revealed truth. . . The human element, called *Pauruṣheyatva* in Sanskrit, is drawn out of every corner or hiding-place, and as the Veda is held to have existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time, every allusion to historical events, of which there are not a few, is explained away with a zeal and ingenuity worthy of a better cause."

"The laws of Manu, according to the Brahmanic theology, are not revelation, they are not *Śruti*, but only *Smṛiti*. If these laws or any other work of authority can be proved on any point to be at variance with a single passage of the Veda, their authority is at once overruled."*

The inspiration of the Veda, says Monier Williams, is regarded as so self-convincing, "as to require no proof, and to be entirely beyond the province of reason or argument."

Hindu Ignorance of the Vedas.—Although the Vedas are held in the highest estimation by the Hindus, their real character is almost entirely unknown to them. Very few copies of them existed until they were printed in Europe.

The later books were studied by the learned in India instead of the Vedas themselves. "When Rammohun Roy was in London," says Max Müller, "he saw at the British Museum a young German scholar, Friedrich Rosen, busily engaged in copying MSS. of the Rig-Veda. The Rajah was surprised, but he told Rosen that he ought not to waste his time on the Hymns, but that he should study the text of the Upanishads."[†]

Publication of the Vedas.—For a long time it was very difficult for European scholars to gain a knowledge of the Vedas. "All other Sanskrit MSS. were freely communicated to Englishmen resident in India, but not the MSS of the Veda. And even in cases where such MSS. had fallen into their hands, the Pandits declined to translate them for them. Colebrooke alone seems to have overcome all these difficulties, and his *Essays 'On the Vedas, or the Sacred Writings of the Hindus,'* though published in 1805, are still extremely valuable."

* *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I. † Max Müller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 89.

Rosen published a specimen of the Hymns of the Rig-Veda in 1830. He died soon after, and only the first book of the Rig-Veda, translated into Latin, was finished by him, and published after his death in 1838.

In 1845 Max Müller was in Paris, copying the text of the Rig-Veda, with the commentary of Sáyana Achárya. Sáyana was brother of Madhaváchárya, the prime minister of the Raja of Vijayanagara, in the 14th century. His commentary was, no doubt, prepared with the assistance of the most learned Brahmans of the time. Max Müller was authorised by the East India Company to bring out an edition of both at its expense. The first volume appeared in 1849. The editing occupied about 20 years. The price of the 6 quarto volumes is £15.

A new edition, in 4 volumes, at the expense of the Maharaja of Vizianagram, was published a few years ago. The price is 2 guineas per volume.

The text of the Rig-Veda, in Roman character, was printed in Berlin in 1861.

An English translation of the Rig-Veda, based on the commentary of Sáyana, was prepared by the late Professor Wilson. Part of it was published after his death. It is expensive, the price of the 6 volumes being £6-19s.

There is a new English translation by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, formerly Principal of the Sanskrit College, Benares. A popular commentary is also given, explaining, as far as possible, difficult passages. The opinions of Sáyana, Max Müller, Muir, and other oriental scholars are quoted, where they throw light on the subject, in addition to valuable original notes. The translator has had the advantage of the labours of his predecessors, and of a long residence at Benares in close connection with some of the best Pandits in India. He is also a poet, and has sought, as far as possible, to imitate the rhythm of the original. Second Edition in two volumes, Rs. 14; postage 12 As.

All students who can afford it should possess copies of this recent and accurate translation of the Vedas. It should be accessible in all Public and Mission Libraries in India.

A translation by Max Muller, entitled *Vedic Hymns*, is in course of publication in *The Sacred Books of the East*.

Some of the Hymns have been translated by Professor Peterson of Bombay. Bengali translations of the Rig-Veda have been published. Before his death Dayánand Saraswati had completed a translation into Hindi of one-half of the Vedas.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE VEDAS.

This is given below before entering into details

THE RIG-VEDA.

RIG-VEDA.—The name means the Veda of hymns of praise. *Rich*, which before the initial soft letter of Veda, is changed into *Rig*, is derived from a root which in Sanskrit means to celebrate. When standing by itself, *rich* becomes *rik*.

The hymns are called *Mantras* or *Suktas* (praises). The entire number form the *Sanhita* (or *Samhita*) collection. They are arranged in two methods. One divides them amongst eight *Khandas* (portions), or *Astakas* (eighths), each of which is again subdivided into eight *Adhyayas*, lectures. The other plan classes the *Suktas* under ten *Mandalas*, circles, subdivided into rather more than a hundred *Anuvakas*, or sub-sections. A further subdivision of the *Suktas* into *Vargas*, or paragraphs of about five stanzas each, is common to both classifications.*

At an early period systematic indexes to various portions of Vedic literature were prepared. They are known as *Anukramanis*, from *anu*, along, and *kram*, to step. The most perfect is that of Katvayana on the Rig-Veda. It gives the first words of each hymn, the number of verses, the names and family of the poets, the names of the deities, and the metres of every verse. As early as about 600 B.C. every verse, every word, every syllable had been carefully counted. The number of verses varies from 10,402 to 10,622, that of the *padas* or words, is 156,826, that of the syllables, 432,000.

The ten books form separate collections, each belonging to one of the ancient families of India. The first seven books resemble each other in character and arrangement. They begin with hymns addressed to Agni, and these hymns, with the exception of the tenth *Mandala*, are invariably followed by hymns addressed to Indra. After the hymns addressed to these two deities, we generally meet with hymns addressed to the *Visva Devas*, or 'all the gods'. This shows that the *Mandalas* do not represent collections made independently by different families; but collections carried out simultaneously in different localities, under the supervision of one central authority.

The eighth *Mandala* contains 92 hymns, assigned to a great number of different authors; hymns of the same author do not always stand together, and of any internal arrangement according

* Professor Wilson's Introduction, p. xiv.

to divinities there is no trace. The ninth Mandala contains 114 hymns addressed to the Soma, the intoxicating drink prepared from the Soma plant. The tenth Mandala wears the appearance of being a later appendage to the collection. The first half is arranged upon no apparent system; the second commences with the longer hymns and diminishes their length regularly to the close. Many of the hymns do not differ from the mass of those found in the earlier books, but others are evidently of a later date and conceived in another spirit.

The Rig-Veda is an historical collection intended to preserve from further corruption those ancient songs which the Aryans had brought with them, as their most precious possession from the earliest seats of the race.

In the eyes of historical students the Rig-Veda is the Veda *par excellence*. The other Vedas contain chiefly extracts from the Rig-Veda, together with sacrificial formulas, charms, and incantations. The Rig-Veda contains all that had been saved of the ancient, sacred, and popular poetry, a collection made for its own sake, and not for the sake of any sacrificial performances.

The priests who specially recited the verses of the Rig-Veda were called Hotris.

YAJUR-VEDA

The name comes from *Yaj*, sacrifice. It contains the formulas and verses to be muttered by the priests and their assistants who had chiefly to prepare the sacrificial ground, to dress the altar, slay the victims, and pour out the libations. The first sentences in one of the two divisions were to be uttered by the priest as he cut from a particular tree a switch with which to drive away the calves from the cows whose milk was to furnish the material of the offering.

Composed at a later period than the Rig-Veda, the Aryans had gone more to the eastward the Indus is no longer mentioned. The country of the Kurus, in the middle of Northern India, called Kuruksheṭra, is specifically the holy land of the Yajur Veda.

There are two principal texts of the Yajur-Veda; called respectively the White and the Black, or the *Vájasaneyi* and *Taittirīya Saṁhitās*. The Vishnu Purāṇa gives the following explanation of their names: Vaisampāyana, a pupil of the great Vyāsa, was the original teacher of the Black Yajur-Veda. Yajñavalkya, one of his disciples, having displeased him, was called upon by his master to part with the knowledge which he had acquired from him. He forthwith vomited the Yajur-Veda. The other disciples of Vaisampāyana, assuming the form of partridges (*tittiri*), picked up from the ground its several dirtied texts. From this circumstance it received the name of *Taittirīya*.

Krushna Yajur-Veda A more rational explanation is that Vaisampayana taught it to Yaska, who taught it to Pittiri, who also became a teacher. Yajnavalkya afterwards, by the performance of severe penances, induced the Sun to impart to him those Yajur texts which his master had not possessed. The Sun then assumed the form of a horse (Vájin), and communicated to him the desired texts. Hence the Sanhita was called Vájasaneyi, and also White (or bright) because it was revealed by the Sun.

Another explanation of the names is that the Vájasaneyins called their collection the White on account of its clear arrangement, while they applied the term Black, for the opposite reason, to the texts of the older school.

The Black and White Yajus differ in their arrangement. In the former the sacrificial formulas are for the most part immediately followed by their explanation, in the latter they are entirely separated from one another.

A large portion of the materials of the Yajur-Veda is derived from the Rig-Veda, to about the half of which it is equal in both forms united. But it contains prose passages which are new.

As the manual of the priesthood, it became the great subject of study, and it has a great number of different Sukhas or Schools. The priests who used it were called *Adhvaryus*, offerers.

The text of both divisions has been printed either in India or in the West.

The Texts of the White Yajur Veda have been translated, with a popular commentary, by Mr R T H. Griffith, published by Messrs Lazarus and Co, Benares. Price Rs 3½.

SAMA-VEDA.

This is wholly metrical. It contains 1517 verses, only 78 of which have not been traced to the Rig-Veda. It consists of verses meant to be chanted at the ceremonies of the soma sacrifices. Removed from the Rig-Veda, they are strung together without internal connection, their significance depending solely on their relation to particular rites. The verses differ from those in the Rig-Veda only in the way of marking the accent. The Sâma-Veda is the book of words employed by the Udgâtri priests at the soma sacrifice. The verses assume their proper character of musical *sîmans* or chants, only in the various song books, called *gânas*, which indicate the prolongation, the repetition, and other modifications prescribed. The priests who recited the Sâma-Veda were called Udgâtris, Chanters.

The Sâma-Veda is divided into two books. The verses of the first twelve decades are addressed to Agni, those of the last eleven to Soma, while those of the intermediate thirty-six are chiefly invocations of Indra, the great soma-drinker.

The text has been printed, and there is an English translation by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, published by Lazarus & Co., Benares. Price Rs. 4 cloth; Rs. 3½ paper cover.

ATHARVA-VEDA.

This Veda is of later origin than the others. It attained its position as the fourth Veda only after a long struggle. Manu speaks of only the Three Vedas.

So far as subject matter is concerned, there may be said to be only two Vedas—the Rig and the Atharva-Veda. The other two consist almost entirely of selections from the Rig-Veda, differently arranged for sacrificial purposes.

This Veda derives its name from a priest named Atharva, who is spoken of in the Rig-Veda as the first priest 'who rubbed Agni forth', or produced fire by attrition. Its form is similar to the Rig-Veda, consisting for the most part of metrical hymns, many of which are taken from the last book of the older collection. In spirit, however, it is not only entirely different from the Rig-Veda, but represents a much more primitive stage of thought. While the Rig-Veda deals almost exclusively with the higher gods as conceived by a comparatively advanced and refined sacerdotal class: the Atharva-Veda is, in the main, a book of spells and incantations, appealing to the demon world, and teems with notions about witchcraft current among the lower grade of the population, and derived from an immemorial antiquity.

Taken as a whole, it is a heterogenous collection of spells. Its most salient teaching is sorcery, for it is mainly directed against hostile agencies, such as diseases, noxious animals, demons, wizards, foes, oppressors of Brahmans. But it also contains many spells of an auspicious character, such as charms to secure harmony in family and village life, reconciliation of enemies, long life, health and prosperity, besides prayers for protection in journeys, and for luck in gambling. Thus it has a double aspect, being meant to appease and bless as well as to curse.*

The text has been printed, and there is an English translation by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith published by Lazarus and Co., Benares. In 2 Vols. each Rs. 6 cloth, Rs. 5½ paper covers.

METRES AND LANGUAGE OF THE VEDAS.

Metres.—Great importance is attached to the Metres used. They were supposed to have a magical influence, depending upon their length. Dr. Haug says.

"The Gáyatri metre, which consists of three times eight syllables, is the most sacred, and is the proper metre for Agni, the god of fire, and

* Macdonell's *Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 30, 135.

chaplain of the gods. It expresses the idea of *Brahma*: therefore the sacrificer must use it when he wishes anything closely connected with *Brahma*, such as acquirement of sacred knowledge, and the thorough understanding of all problems of theology. The *Trishtubh*, which consists of four times eleven syllables, expresses the idea of strength and royal power, thence it is the proper metre by which *Indra*, the king of the gods, is to be invoked. Any one wishing to obtain strength and royal power, principally a *Kshatriya*, must use it. A variety of it, the *Ushnih* metre of 28 syllables, is to be employed by a sacrificer who aspires for longevity, for 28 is the symbol of life. The *Jagati*, a metre of 48 syllables, expresses the idea of cattle. Any one who wishes for wealth in cattle, must use it. The same idea (or that of the sacrifice) is expressed by the *Pañkti* metre (five times eight syllables). The *Brihati*, which consists of 36 syllables, is to be used when a sacrificer is aspiring to fame and renown, for this metre is the exponent of those ideas. The *Anushtubh* metre, of 32 syllables, is the symbol of the celestial world, thence a candidate for a place in heaven has to use it. The *Viraj* of 30 syllables, is food and satisfaction, thence one who wishes for plenty of food, must employ it.

"The metres," says Max Müller, "were originally connected with dancing and music. The names for metre in general confirm this. *Chāndas*, metre, denotes stepping, *vṛtta*, metre from *vrit*, to turn, meant originally the last three or four steps of a dancing movement, to turn, the *versus* which determined the whole character of a dance and of a metre. *Trishtubh*, the name of a common metre in the *Veda*, meant three steps, because its turn, its *vṛtta*, or *versus*, consisted of three steps, one short and two long.

"The laws regulating the succession of long and short syllables within the limits of the hemistich are in general anything but strict, all that is aimed at seems to be to give the whole a kind of rhythmical flow, or general metrical movement, on which the four last syllables shall stamp the peculiar character, their quantity is much more definitely established, yet even among them exceptional irregularities are by no means rare."

Metres

The Gāyatrī—This is a common metre. Nearly one-fourth of all the stanzas in the *Rig-Veda* are composed in it. It is so called because the *Gāyatrī*, the most sacred text in the *Vedas*, is composed in it. It contains three times eight syllables. The first hymn is in this metre. The following is the first verse

Agnim īḥ puróhitam
Yajnáśya devám ritvijam
Hótaram ratnadhá tamam.

I praise Agni, domestic priest,
God, minister of sacrifice,
Herald, most prodigal of wealth.*

Trishtubh.—This is the commonest metre. It consists of four lines eleven syllables. The name means three steps, one short and two long.

Anushtubh.—This contains 32 syllables. A candidate for a place in heaven has to use it.

Jagati.—This metre of 48 syllables is said to "express the idea of cattle. Any one who wishes for wealth in cattle must use it."

Max Muller gives a list, according to Saunaka, of the metres employed in the Rig-Veda. The number of verses in which the principal occur are as follows: *Trishtubh*, 4,253, *Gâyatri*, 2,451; *Jagati*, 1,348, *Anushtubh*, 855, *Ushnih*, 341. *Pankti*, 312, various, 849; total, 10,409 †

No intelligent man of the present day believes that metres have, of themselves, any influence.

Language—The language of the Vedas is an older dialect, varying very considerably, both in its grammatical and lexical character, from the classical Sanskrit. Its grammatical peculiarities run through all departments. It is untrammelled by the rules by which Sanskrit after it passed into oblivion as a vernacular dialect was forced, as it were, into a mould of regularity by long grammatical treatment, and received a development which is in some respects foreign and unnatural. The dissimilarity between the two in respect of the stock of words of which each is made up is not less marked. Not single words alone, but whole classes of derivatives and roots, which the Veda exhibits in familiar use, are wholly wanting, or have left but faint traces in the classical dialect.‡

All living languages change in course of time. The following is a specimen of English from Chaucer, considered the "Father of English poetry," written about 500 years ago

"A Clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,
That unto logike hadde long ygo.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat I undertake,
But looked holwe, and thereto soberly "

The hymns of the Rig-Veda were undoubtedly composed in the language of the time. As the people of Italy, who once spoke Latin, now speak Italian, derived from Latin, so in India,

* Macdonell's *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 56.

† *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 222.

‡ Abridged from Whitney.

Sanskrit merged into what are called the Prakrits. In the time of Buddha, about 500 B.C., Sanskrit had ceased to be a *spoken* language. But it became a *written* language, polished by grammarians, and during the last 2,000 years it has remained substantially the same

THE TIME WHEN THE VEDAS WERE COMPOSED.

The Cambridge Professor of Sanskrit says, "The very word history has no corresponding Indian expression. From the very earliest ages down to the present time, the Hindu mind seems never to have conceived such an idea as an authentic record of past facts based on evidence "

Hindu writers framed their chronology, like their geography and astronomy, out of their own heads. It was as easy to write a crore of years as a century, and the former was the more marvellous.

There is no date in India known with certainty till the time of Chandragupta, about 300 B.C. which was ascertained through the Greeks. The precise time when the Vedas were written cannot, therefore, be known with certainty. Indeed, their composition probably extended over several centuries. Max Müller estimates that they were composed, such as we now have them, about 1500 B.C.* In his *Hibbert Lectures* (p. 340), he expresses the opinion that the Samhita (collection) was closed about 1000 B.C.

THE VEDAS AT FIRST HANDED DOWN BY TRADITION.

The oldest inscriptions in India are those of Asoka, the Buddhist king, who reigned from 259 to 222 B.C. Nearchus, the admiral of Alexander the Great, who sailed down the Indus (325 B.C.), mentions that the Indians wrote letters on cotton that had been well beaten together, "but that their laws were not written." Writing was used by merchants and others, but not for literary purposes.

In a volume of the Berlin Encyclopædia, Dr. Bühler gives an interesting account of the origin of Indian writing. It seems to date farther back than is supposed by some.

Max Muller says, "There is not one single allusion in these hymns (of the Rig-Veda) to any thing connected with writing."

"Pure Brahmans never speak of their *granthas* or books. They speak of their *Veda*, which means 'knowledge.' They speak of their *Śruti*, which means what they have heard with their ears. They speak of *Smṛti*, which means what their fathers have declared unto them.

* *India, What can it teach us?* p. 53.

We meet with *Brahmanas*, i.e., the sayings of Brahmans; with *Sūtras*, i.e., the strings of rules; with *Vedāngas*, i.e., the members of the Veda; with *Pravachanas*, i.e., preachings; with *Sastras*, i.e., teachings; with *Darśanas*, i.e., demonstrations; but we never meet with a book, or a volume, or a page.*

The Vedas, for many centuries, were handed down entirely by memory. The Guru recited a portion, and his pupils repeated it after him. There is a reference to this in the hymn about the frogs, "the one repeats the sounds of the other, as a pupil the words of his teacher."

The following account of the method of instruction is abridged from Max Müller :

"How then was the Veda learnt? It was learnt by every Brahman during 12 years of his studentship or *Brahmachārya*. This, according to Gautama, was the shortest period, sanctioned only for men who wanted to marry and to become *Grihasthas*. Brahmans who did not wish to marry were allowed to spend 48 years as students. The *Prātisākhya* gives us a glimpse into the lecture-rooms of the Brahmanic Colleges. 'The Guru,' it is said, 'who has himself formerly been a student, should make his pupils read. He himself takes his seat either to the east, or the north, or the north-east. If he has no more than one or two pupils, they sit at his right hand. If he has more, they place themselves according as there is room. They then embrace their master and say, 'Sir, read!' The master gravely says, 'Om,' i.e., 'Yes.' He then begins to say a *prashna* (a question), which consists of 3 verses. In order that no word may escape the attention of his pupils, he pronounces all with the high accent, and repeats certain words twice, or he says 'so' (*iti*) after these words.'

"It does not seem as if several pupils were allowed to recite together, for it is stated distinctly that the Guru first tells the verses to his pupil on the right, and that every pupil, after his task is finished, turns to the right, and walks round the tutor. This must occupy a long time every day, considering that a lecture consists of 60 or more *prashnas*, or of about 180 verses. The pupils are not dismissed till the lecture is finished. At the end of the lecture, the tutor, after the last half-verse is finished says, 'Sir, the pupil replies "Yes, sir." He then repeats the proper verses and formulas, which have to be repeated at the end of every reading, embraces his tutor, and is allowed to withdraw."†

Years were spent in learning the books by rote. Some selected certain books; others different ones; so that, in this way, hymns were preserved from generation to generation.

"A Brahman," says Max Müller, "is not only commanded to pass his apprenticeship in the house of his Guru, and to learn from his mouth all that a Brahman is bound to know, but the

* *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 197, 512.

† *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 503, 506.

fiercest imprecations are uttered against all who would presume to acquire their knowledge from written sources. In the *Mahābhārata* we read, 'Those who sell the Vedas, and even those who write them, those also who defile them, they shall go to hell.' Kumarila says, 'That knowledge of the truth is worthless which has been acquired from the Veda, if the Veda has not been rightly comprehended, if it has been learnt from writing, or been received from a Sudra.'"^{*}

The Brahmins persuaded the people to regard the Vedas with such superstitious awe, that a mere error of pronunciation was supposed to mar their miraculous power.

Professor Whitney thus explains why it was forbidden to write the Vedas

"It is not very difficult to conjecture a reason why the Brahmins may, while acquainted with letters, have rigorously ignored them, and interdicted their confessed use in connection with the sacred literature. The Brahmin priesthood was originally a class only, which grew into a close hereditary caste on the strength, mainly, of their special possession of ancient hymns, and then knowledge of how these were to be employed with due effect in the various offices of religion. The hymns had unquestionably long been handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, in the custody of certain families or branches of the caste, each family having chiefly in charge the lyrics which its own ancestors had first sung. These were then most treasured possession, the source of their influence and authority. It might, then, naturally be feared that, if committed to the charge of written documents, when writing came to be known and practised among the more cultivated of the people—a class which could not be entirely restricted to the Brahmanic caste—and if suffered to be openly copied and circulated, passed from hand to hand, examined by profaned eyes, the sacred texts would become the property of the nation at large, and the Brahmanic monopoly of them would be broken down. If, on the contrary, the old method of oral instruction alone in sacred things were rigidly kept up, if all open and general use of written texts were strictly forbidden, it is clear that the schools of Brahmanic theology would flourish, and remain the sole medium of transmission of the sacred knowledge, and that the doctrines and rites of religion would be kept under the control of the caste."†

The Druids, the ancient British priests, acted exactly in the same way. Caesar says that some of them spent twenty years in learning a large number of verses by heart, and that they considered it wrong to commit them to writing.

The Vedas were first printed by European Scholars. Some of the editions have already been noticed

^{*} *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 502.

† *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, pp. 86, 87.

SOCIAL LIFE IN VEDIC TIMES.

The original seat of the Aryans is disputed. Until a few years ago it was generally supposed to be in Central Asia. Some scholars now contend that it was in Eastern Europe. Max Müller still adheres to "Somewhere in Asia." It was colder than India, for they counted their years by winters. In the Vedic prayers for long life, the worshipper asks for a hundred winters (*himas*). Like the northern tribes, they laid great stress upon the *ashvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice. Compared with their neighbours, they had a white or fair complexion.

When the Aryans increased in number so that their original home was unable to support them, they emigrated in bands. Some went westward towards the setting sun, and peopled Europe. Others turned their faces eastwards, and advanced towards the valley of the Indus. They marched in a large body, with their families, their servants, their cattle. India was probably entered by the mountain passes near Peshawar. Rivers were forded at conveniently shallow places, or, if deep, they were crossed in boats.

The greater part of India was then covered with forest, with scattered villages and towns belonging to the aboriginal tribes, who were of a dark complexion, and spoke a strange language. The Aryas had the pride of race in an extravagant degree, showing great contempt and hatred of the other nations with whom they came in contact. They called the aborigines the "black-skin," and as their noses were not so large as theirs, they were described as "goat-nosed" or "noseless." The aborigines were also called *Dasyus*, a word supposed to mean *enemies*. So many of them were enslaved, that the word *dāsa* was afterwards applied to a servant.

Some of the *Dasyus* were like the Bhils or other wild tribes of India at present, others had a partial civilization. In several of the Vedic hymns the wealth of the *Dasyus* is mentioned, e.g. : "Subdue the might of the *Dāsa* : may we through Indra divide his collected wealth." They had forts and cities. "Indra and Agni, by one effort together ye have shattered 90 forts belonging to the *Dasyus*." "O Indra, impetuous, thou didst shatter by thy bolt 99 cities for *Puru*."

The Aryans, as they advanced, gradually established themselves in the forests, fields, and villages of the aborigines. The latter contended as bravely as they could against their invaders. Their black complexion, barbarous habits, rude speech, and savage yells during their night attacks, made the Aryas speak of them as demons.

The Aryans were the more powerful. The *Dasyus* were either driven before them or were reduced to slavery. The first great distinction in India was between the white and dark races,

the conquerors and the conquered, the freeman and the slave. One of the earliest aboriginal tribes brought under subjection was called Sudras, and the name was extended to the whole race.

The war invasion lasted for centuries, nor were the aborigines, as a whole, subjugated at any period.

The Indus is the great river of the Vedas. The name *Indus* was derived from *Sindhu*, the frontier river. The *Ganges*, literally the *Go, Go*, is only twice named in the Vedas. Several smaller rivers are mentioned. By degrees the Aryas spread eastward till they reached the *Sarasvati*, which was the boundary in Vedic times.

The state of society among the Aryans, as indicated by the hymns, will now be described.

Villages and Towns.—The invaders gradually settled in the Panjab. Villages were placed near watercourses, in positions favourable for pasturage and agriculture. The villages in some cases grew into towns, and these into cities. The houses in general, as at present, were built of mud. Some were of so frail a construction that they trembled as the *Maruts* passed, that is, when the fierce winds blew. In tracts bordering on the hills, where stone was abundant, that material was sometimes used. *Indra* is said to have demolished a hundred cities of stone. Iron cities or fortifications are mentioned.

Rajas and Headmen. The country occupied by the Aryas was peopled by various tribes, and divided unto numerous principalities. Many names of kings occur in the *Rig-Veda*. Their meetings, whether friendly or hostile, are mentioned. *Indra* is represented as living in the society of his wives like a king. When *Mitra* is said to occupy a great palace with a thousand pillars and a thousand gates, we may suppose that this is but an exaggerated description of a royal residence such as the poet had seen. The kings or chiefs did not acknowledge one superior. Hence sometimes an Aryan leader fought with an Aryan leader.

Mention is made of *purpati*, lords of cities, and *gramani*, heads of villages.

Domestic Relations. In Vedic times the marriage of one wife seems to have been the rule. In some cases, from the *Swayamvara* ceremony, the bride could choose her husband. This shows that early marriage did not prevail. There was also more or less polygamy. A *Rishi* is said to have married in one day ten damsels. Two gods, the *Ashvins*, together took one wife. "Thus," says Dr. Rajendralala Mitra, "you have in the *Rig-Veda*, self-choice, polygamy, and polyandry." Widows were permitted to marry.

The general opinion of the female sex seems to have been that put into the mouth of *Indra*. "Indra himself hath said, The mind of woman brooks not discipline. Her intellect hath little weight." R. V. viii. 17.

Dress.—References are made to 'well-dressed females and to well-made garments. From these passages and others relating to jewels, it may be gathered that considerable attention was already paid to personal decoration. The materials of the clothing were probably cotton and wool. The form of the garments was much the same as among the modern Hindus. A turban is mentioned. References to the needle and sewing suggest that made dresses were not unknown.

Food.—Foremost came the products of the cow. Butter and curds were essential at every meal. Fried grain, mixed with milk, was particularly relished. Barley and wheat were ground and baked into cakes. But *flesh* was considered the *best food*. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa says, *Etad u ha vai paramam annādyam yan māmsam*,* 'Indeed, the best food is flesh.'

One of the most remarkable changes in Hindu customs since Vedic times is that with regard to the use of certain kinds of animal food. The late Dr. Rajendralala Mitra occupies the highest rank among Indian scholars, and he investigated the subject simply to give the real facts of the case. In his *Indo-Aryana*, he has a chapter headed, "Beef in Ancient India." It begins as follows;

"The title of this paper will, doubtless, prove highly offensive to most of my countrymen, but the interest attached to the enquiry in connexion with the early social history of the Aryan race on this side of the Himalaya, will, I trust, plead my excuse. The idea of beef—the flesh of the earthly representative of the divine Bhagavat!—as an article of food is so shocking to the Hindus, that thousands over thousands of the more orthodox among them never repeat the counterpart of the word in their vernaculars, and many and dire have been the sanguinary conflicts which the shedding of the blood of cows has caused in this country. And yet it would seem that there was a time when not only no compunctious visitings of conscience had a place in the mind of the people in slaughtering cattle—when not only the meat of that animal was actually esteemed a valuable aliment—when not only was it a mark of generous hospitality, as among the ancient Jews, to slaughter the 'fatted calf' in honor of respected guests,—but when a supply of beef was deemed an absolute necessity by pious Hindus in their journey from this to another world, and a cow was invariably killed to be burnt with the dead. To Englishmen, who are familiar with the present temper of the people on the subject, and to a great many of the natives themselves, this remark may appear startling; but the authorities on which it is founded are so authentic and incontrovertible that they cannot, for a moment, be gainsaid."

Dr. R. Mitra quotes Colebrooke as follows: "It seems to have been anciently the custom to slay a cow on that occasion (the reception of a guest) and a guest was therefore called a *goghna*, or 'cow killer.'" In the "*Uttara-Rāma charitra* the venerable old

* Quoted by Rev. F. Kittel on Sacrifice, p. 48.

poet and hermit Valmiki, when preparing to receive his brother sage Vasishtha, the author of one of the original law books (*Smritis*) which regulates the religious life of the people, and a prominent character even in the Vedas, slaughtered a lot of calves expressly for the entertainment of his guests. Vasishtha, in his turn, likewise slaughtered the 'fatted calf' when entertaining Visvamitra, Janaka, Satyananda, Jamadagnya, and other sages and friends." *

In the Rig-Veda, 1st Ashtaka, 4th Adhyaya, 29th Varga, the following prayer is addressed to Indra: "Hurl thy thunderbolt against this Vritra and sever his joints, as (butchers cut up) a cow that the rains may issue from him."

The late Mr. Kunte, B.A., of Poona, author of the *Suddarshana Chintanika*, says in his Prize Essay on *The Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization in India*: "Hospitality was the rule of life, and guests were received with great ceremony: cows were specially killed for them." (p. 196).

The sacrifice of oxen and cows, *gomedha*, will be noticed under another head.

Intoxicating liquors are mentioned in the hymns. Nearly a whole Mandala of the Rig-Veda is devoted to the praise of the Soma juice, Wine or spirit, *sura*, was also in use. "The earliest Brahman settlers," says Dr R. Mitra, "were a spirit-drinking race, and indulged largely both in Soma beer and strong spirits. To their gods the most acceptable and grateful offering was Soma beer, and wine or spirit was publicly sold in shops for the use of the community. In the Rig-Veda Samhita a hymn occurs which shows that wine was kept in leather bottles and freely sold to all comers. The *sura* of the *Sauntramani* and the *Vajapaya* was no other than arrack, manufactured from rice meal. In the *Ramayana* the great sage Visvamitra is said to have been entertained with *mairaya* and *sura* by his host Vasishtha. In the *Mahabharata*, the Yadavas are represented as extremely addicted to drinking.

Buddhism must have contributed much to check the spread of drunkenness in India, as it did in putting down the consumption of flesh meat, but it was never equal to the task of suppressing it.†

Grades of Society.—The two great divisions of the people in Vedic times were the Aryans and the aborigines, afterwards called Sudras. The chief occupations of the Aryans were fighting and cultivating the soil. Those who fought gradually acquired influence and rank, and their leaders appear as Rajas. Those who did

* *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I. pp 356-358.

† Abridged from the *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I. pp. 389-390

not share in the fighting, were called Vis, Vaisyas, or householders.

At first any one might preside at a sacrifice. In the Vedas there are kings who composed their own hymns to the gods, Rajarishis, who united in their person the power, both of king and priest. Visvamitra, the author of the Gâyatri, was a Kshatriya. The Brahman was at first simply an assistant at sacrifices; afterwards he became a *purohita*, or family priest, and thus acquired influence.

Fighting and cultivation were sometimes united. Mr. Kunte says. "The patriarch and his sons' and perhaps grandsons quietly cultivated their land, but, when necessary, they mounted their horses, and, sword in hand, marched against their enemies. As yet the Brahmana was not afraid of wielding a sword, nor was the Kshatriya ashamed of tilling the land."*

Max Muller says. "The system of castes, in the ordinary sense of the word, did not exist during the Vedic age. What we may call caste in the Veda is very different even from what we find in the laws of Manu, still more from what exists at the present day."†

Professions and Trades.—Dr. Wilson, in his *India Three Thousand Years Ago*, gives the following sketch of the Social Life of the Aryas:

"The Aryas, in the times of the Vedas, were principally pastoral, though to a certain extent an agricultural, people. Their flocks and herds and their sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, camels, and teams of oxen, with the hump on their shoulders, are frequently mentioned, and made the subjects of supplication and thanksgiving both to gods and men. A daughter among them in the earliest times was designated *dahatṛi*, or milkmaid (the English word *daughter* has the same origin), and a *Gopa* and *Gopal*, or keeper of cattle, among them came to mean a protector in general, no doubt from the owners or keepers of cows having great importance in the community."

"*Gotra*, cow-house, was applied to the fences erected to protect the herd from violence or prevent the cattle from straying. The Brahman boasting of his sacred blood and divine generation speaks of the particular *gotra*, to which he belongs, little dreaming that the word is itself a testimony that the fathers of his race were herdsmen."

"That the Aryans were not, however, merely a nomadic people is very evident. As well as their enemies, they had their villages and towns as well as cattle-pens; and many of the appliances, conveniences, luxuries, and vices, found in congregated masses of the human family. They knew the processes of spinning and weaving, on which they were doubtless principally dependent for their clothing. They were not strangers to the use of iron and to the crafts of the blacksmith, copper-

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* *Vistasitudes of Aryan Civilization*, p. 191. † *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 342.
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smith, carpenter, and other artisans. They used hatchets in felling the trees of their forests, and they had planes for polishing the wood of their chariots. They constructed rims of iron to surround the wheels of their carts. They fabricated coats of mail, clubs, bows, arrows, javelins, swords or cleavers, and discs to carry on their warfare, to which they were sometimes called by the sound of the conch shell. They made cups, pitchers, and long and short ladles, for use, in their domestic economy and the worship of the gods. They employed professional barbers to cut off their hair. They knew how to turn the precious metals and stones to account, for they had their golden earrings, golden bowls, and jewel necklaces. They had chariots of war from which they fought, and ordinary conveyances drawn by horses and bullocks; they had rider-bearing steeds and grooms to attend them. They had eunuchs in their community. The daughters of vice were seen in their towns, and that, it would appear, with but a small accompaniment of shame; venders of spirits were also tolerated by them. They constructed skiffs, boats, rafts and ships; they engaged in traffic and merchandise in parts somewhat remote from their usual dwellings. Occasional mention is made in their hymns of the ocean which they had probably reached by following the course of the Indus. Parties among them covetous of gain are represented as crowding the ocean in vessels on a voyage. A naval expedition to a foreign country is alluded to as frustrated by a shipwreck." pp. 29—33, (abridged).

The caste prohibition against crossing the "black water," is not found in the Vedas, but was a later invention of the Brahmins to keep the Hindus better under their control. While the Aryas were so far civilised, writing seems to have been unknown. They had no books and newspapers like their descendants at present.

Amusements.—Gambling was very common among the early Indians, and numerous illustrations are derived from the practice. In one of the hymns a gambler apparently describes his own experience:

1. The tumbling, air-born (products) of the great Vibhīdaka tree (i.e., the dice) delight me as they continue to roll on the dice board. The exciting dice seem to me like a draught of the soma-plant growing on mount Pūṣyat.

7. Hooking, piercing, deceitful, vexatious, delighting to torment, the dice dispense transient gifts, and again ruin the winner; they appear to the gambler covered with honey.

13. Never play with dice, practise husbandry; rejoice in thy property, esteeming it sufficient. x. 34.

"At a sacrifice," says Mr. Kunte, the "Kshatriya especially played at dice with his wife or wives and sons."

Dancers or actors afforded entertainment to the Aryans. Ushas is said to display herself like a dancer who decks herself with ornaments. Allusion is made to the living going forth to dance and laugh after a funeral. Drums are mentioned, and a hymn in the Atharva-Veda is addressed to that musical instrument.

Crime.—Thieves or robbers are mentioned in some passages as infesting the highways or stealing secretly. The following occurs in a hymn to Púshan: "Drive away from our path the waylayer, the thief, the robber." Another hymn says: "Men cry after him in battle as after a thief stealing clothes." Cattle were often stolen. "The aborigines found it easy to revenge themselves on the invading Aryas by driving away their cows. But the Aryas were also prepared against the annoyance. As soon as the herd of cows disappeared, hue and cry was raised, and sharp men who traced the track of a thief by observing foot-prints, set to work. The thief was detected. With shouts of thanks to Indra, the herd was recovered and driven home."

Wars.—In the Rig-Veda, wars are frequently mentioned. Cows and horses were often the cause. Indra is thus addressed. "O mighty Indra, we call upon thee as we go fighting for cows and horses." Max Müller says, "Fighting among or for cows (*Gosuyudh*) is used in the Veda as a name for a warrior in general (I. 112, 122), and one of the most frequent words for battle is *garisti*, literally 'striving for cows.'"

Mr. Kunte thus describes the mode of warfare:

"Different bands of the Aryas marched under their leaders, each having a banner of his own, singing of the prowess of their ancestors, and of the aid which Indra or Brihaspati granted them, and blowing conches. The leader drove in a war-chariot covered with cowhides; some used the bow and arrows, others had darts. The army was divided into infantry and cavalry. Often did the leader of bands attack a town, and putting every inhabitant to the sword, occupied it. Sometimes they were content with large booty. Thus simultaneously, many Aryan leaders, independently of each other, waged war against the Dasas and Dasyus who were often able to make an impression upon the invaders."

Disposal of the Dead.—While the Parsis and the ancestors of the Indian Aryans lived together in Central Asia, both probably exposed their dead to be devoured by vultures. After the Aryans came to India, burial was adopted. Dr R Mitra says "This continued probably from their advent in India to about the 14th or 13th century B. C." Then came incremation with a subsequent burial of the ashes. This lasted from the 14th or 13th century B.C. to the early part of the Christian era, when the burial was altogether dispensed with, or substituted by consignment of the ashes to a river."

* *Vicissitudes*, pp 118, 119.

† *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. II., p 120.

THE GODS OF THE VEDAS.

The Religious Childhood of India.—Max Müller says:

In the hymns of the Veda we see man left to himself to solve the riddle of this world. We see him crawling on like a creature of the earth with all the desires and weakness of his animal nature. Food, wealth, and power, a large family and a long life, are the theme of his daily prayers. But he begins to lift up his eyes. He stares at the tent of heaven, and asks who supports it? He opens his eyes to the winds, and asks them whence and whither. He is awakened from darkness and slumber by the light of the sun, and him whom his eyes cannot behold, and who seems to grant him the daily pittance of his existence, he calls 'his life, his breath, his brilliant Lord and Protector'."

"The great majority of Vedic hymns consists in simple invocations of the fire, the water, the sky, the sun, and the stones, often under the same names which afterwards became the proper names of Hindu deities, but as yet nearly free from all that can be called irrational or mythological."

Mr. Macdonell says

"Special interest attaches to this mythology, because it represents an earlier stage of thought than is to be found in any other literature. It is sufficiently primitive to enable us to see clearly the process of personification by which natural phenomena developed into gods. Never observing, in his ordinary life, action or movement not caused by an acting or moving person, the Vedic Indian, like man in a much less advanced state, still refers such occurrences in Nature to personal agents, which to him are inherent in the phenomena."

"The higher gods of the *Rig-Veda* are almost entirely personifications of Natural phenomena, such as Sun, Dawn, Fire, Wind."

Origin and Immortality.—In the Vedas the gods are spoken of as immortal, but they are not regarded in general as self-existent beings. In fact, their parentage, in most cases, is mentioned.

Very different accounts are given of the origin of the gods. In many passages the gods are described as being the offspring of Heaven and Earth. Ushas, the dawn, is characterised as the mother of the gods; Brahmanaspati is called their father. Soma is said to be the generator of Heaven, Earth, Agni, Sūrya, Indra, and Vishnu. Some of the gods are spoken of as being fathers and others as being sons. The most extraordinary feat is ascribed to Indra: 'Thou hast indeed begotten thy father and mother together from thy own body.'

"The same god is sometimes represented as supreme, sometimes as equal, sometimes as inferior to others. There are as yet no

* *Chaps.* Vol. I. 2nd Ed. p. 69.

+ *India: What can it teach us?* pp. 108, 109.

† *Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 67, 69.



genealogies, no settled marriages between gods and goddesses. The father is sometimes the son, the brother is the husband, and she who in one hymn is the mother, is in another the wife."

In some places Savitri and Agni are said to have conferred immortality on the gods; elsewhere it is said that the gods drink soma to obtain the same gift; but it is generally taught that they obtained their divine rank through austerities. The gods originally were all alike in power; but three of them desired to be superior to the rest, viz. Agni, Indra, and Sūrya. They continued to offer sacrifices for this purpose until it was obtained.

The immortality of the gods is only relative. They are supposed to be subject to the same law of dissolution as other beings. "Many thousands of Indras and of other gods have, through time, passed away in every mundane age." The gods both desire and are capable of *mukti*, liberation from future births.

Some of the principal gods will now be described.

DYAUS AND PRITHIVI

Dyaus, says Max Muller, is one of the oldest gods, not only of the Vedic Aryans, but of the whole Aryan race. He was worshipped before a word of Sanskrit was spoken in India, or a word of Greek in Greece. He adds

"If I were asked what I consider the most important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should answer by the following short line

"Sanskrit DYAUSH-PITAR = Greek ΖΕΤΣΗΑΤΗΡ (ZEUS (PATER)) = Latin JUPITER—Old Norse TYR

"Think what this equation implies! It implies not only that our own ancestors and the ancestors of Homer and Cicero (the Greeks and Romans) spoke the same language as the people of India—this is a discovery which, however incredible it sounded at first, has long ceased to cause any surprise—but it implies and proves that they all had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme Deity under exactly the same name—a name which meant Heaven-Father."†

"If we want a name for the invisible, the infinite, that surrounds us on every side, the unknown, the true Self of the world, and the true self of ourselves—we, too, feeling once more like children, kneeling in a small dark room, can hardly find a better name than 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'"[‡]

There are clear traces in some of the hymns of the Rig-Veda that at one time Dyaus, the sky, was the supreme deity.

* *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 276, 288.

† *Nineteenth Century* (Oct. 1885)

‡ *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 216, 217.

At an early period, however, the earth, under the name of Prithivi, was associated with Dyaus. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa mentions their marriage. "The gods then brought the two (Heaven and Earth) together, and when they came together, they performed a wedding of the gods."

The ancient Greeks had the same ideas. The earth is addressed as, "Mother of gods, the wife of the starry Heaven." Their marriage, too, is described.

Heaven and Earth were called the father and mother of the gods.

In the hymns there are various speculations about the origin of Dyaus and Prithivi. A perplexed poet enquires, "Which of these two was the first, and which the last? How have they been produced? Sages, who knows?"

In the Veda Dyaus is chiefly invoked in connection with the Earth. "He is invoked by himself also, but he is a vanishing god, and his place is taken in most of the Vedic poems by the younger and more active god, Indra."⁴

VARUNA.

Varuna, like Dyaus, is another representative of the highest heaven, as encompassing all things. The name is derived from *var*, to cover, and is probably identical with the Greek *Ouranos*, heaven.

"Varuna," says the Rig-Veda, "stemmed asunder the wide firmaments; he lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven, he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth." In the Atharva-Veda, unlimited knowledge is ascribed to him.

"Varuna, the great lord of these worlds, sees as if he were near. If a man stands or walks or hides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper to each other, King Varuna knows it, he is there as the third. This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the King, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varuna's loins, he is also curtained in this small drop of water. He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna, the King. His spies proceed from heaven towards this world, with thousand eyes they overlook this earth. King Varuna sees all this, what is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of the eyes of men. As a player throws down the dice, he settles all things." ix 16

"Varuna, says Max Müller, "is one of the most interesting creations of the Hindu mind, because though we can still perceive the physical background from which he rises, the vast, starry, brilliant expanse above, his features more than those of any of the Vedic gods have been completely transfigured; and he stands before us as a god who watches over the world, punishes the evil

doer, and even forgives the sins of those who implore his pardon."*

Varuna is "the only Vedic deity to whom a high moral character is attributed." Whitney says

"While in hymns to the other divinities long life, wealth, power are the objects commonly prayed for, of the Adityas is craved purity, forgiveness of sin, freedom from its further commission. To them are offered humble confessions of guilt and repentance. It is a sore grief to the poets to know that man daily transgresses Varuna's commands, they acknowledge that without his aid they are not masters of a single moment; they fly to him for refuge from evil, expressing at the same time all confidence that their prayers will be heard and granted."†

Mitra is generally associated with Varuna. He is a form of the sun, representing day, while Varuna denotes night. They together uphold and rule the earth and sky, guard the world, encourage religion, and with their nooses seize the guilty.

Macdonell says

"With the growth of the conception of the creator, Prajapati, as a supreme deity, the characteristics of Varuna as a sovereign god naturally faded away, and the dominion of waters, only a part of his original sphere, alone remained. In post vedic mythology he is only an Indian Neptune, god of the sea."‡

INDRA.

INDRA was the favourite and national god of the Vedic Indian. His importance is sufficiently indicated by the fact that more than one-fourth of the Rig-Veda is devoted to his praise.§

"In Sanskrit," says Max Müller, "the drops of rain are called *ind-u*, masculine themselves, he who sends them is called *Ind-ra*, the rainer, the irrigator, and in the Veda the name of the principal deity worshipped by the Aryan settlers in India. The name of Indra is peculiar to India, and must have been formed after the separation of the great Aryan family had taken place, for we find it neither in Greek, nor in Latin, nor in German."¶

The gods of the Hindus are somewhat like kings who reign for a time, and then give place to successors. The first struggle for supremacy in the Hindu pantheon is between Heaven and Earth and Indra. Max Müller says

"When we see those two giant spectres of Heaven and Earth on the background of the Vedic religion, exerting their influence for a time and then vanishing before the light of younger and more active gods, we learn a lesson which it is well to learn, and which we can hardly

* *India: What can it Teach us?* p. 195.

† *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1st Ser. p. 43.

‡ *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 77.

§ *Ibid* p. 84.

¶ *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 212.

* *India: What can it Teach us?* p. 182.

learn anywhere else—the lesson *how gods were made and unmade*,—how the Beyond or the Infinite was named by different names in order to bring it near to the mind of man, to make it for a time comprehensible, until, when name after name had proved of no avail, a nameless God was felt to answer best the restless cravings of the human heart.”*

Dyaus and Varuna, representing the bright blue sky or the starry heavens, were the highest deities of the Aryans in their original home. In India they came to a country where for months together the earth is exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, sometimes without a single shower, so that it is impossible for the fields to be ploughed or the seed to be sown. It is not surprising, therefore, that a god in whose hands are the thunder and lightning, at whose command the refreshing showers fall to render the earth fruitful, should most frequently be appealed to and that the most laudatory songs should be addressed to him. Indra is the most popular deity of the Vedas.

“In the burning months of the hot season,” says Dr. Mullens, “the ancient Aryans turn to Indra. It is Vritra (Drought) his enemy and theirs, that withholds the refreshing showers for which all eyes long. And when at length along the western horizon the vapours thicken, and the desired storm bursts in grandeur—when they see the blinding dust whirling in lofty columns on its mighty march, and the swift sand flows along the ground—when they see the blue flashes which pierce the clouds, and hear the crashing peals of the awful thunder, it is Indra and his Maruts who are fighting the celestial battle on their behalf. And when the driving rain pours from the heavy clouds, and the earth drinks it in, all nature renews its life, fresh verdure clothes the fields, and the birds carol their joyous songs, it is to the mighty Indra, the conqueror, that their thanks are paid, and from him that fresh blessings are humbly craved.”†

Sometimes the clouds are represented under the figure of herds of cows stolen by the demons, and hidden in the hollows of the mountains. Indra finds them, splits the caverns with his bolt, and they are again set at liberty, and then teats shower down rain.

Different accounts are given of his parentage. In one hymn Ekashtaka is said to be his mother, in another he is said to have sprung from the mouth of Purusha, while a third makes him to have been generated by Soma. According to the Mahābhārata, Indra is one of the sons of Kasyapa.

Indra is exalted above Dyaus, “The divine Dyaus bowed before Indra, before Indra the great Earth bowed with her wide spaces.” “At the birth of thy splendour, Dyaus trembled, the Earth trembled for fear of thy anger.”

* *India What can it Teach us* ' p. 163. † *Hindu Philosophy*, pp. 19, 20

Indra drives a golden chariot drawn by two yellow horses; the thunderbolt is his weapon, the rainbow is his bow; the Maruts, or storm-winds, are his companions. Like other Hindu gods, he is provided with a wife, called Indrani.

In the Vedas, Indra is characterised by his fondness for war and the intoxicating soma juice.

Even as an infant, Indra is said to have manifested his warlike tendencies. "As soon as he was born, the slayer of Vritra grasped his arrow, and asked his mother, Who are they that are renowned as fierce warriors?" His love of the soma juice was shown as early. "On the day that thou wast born, thou didst, from love of it, drink the mountain-grown juice of the soma plant."

A frequent epithet of Indra is *soma-pā*, soma-drinker. In the hymns he is invited by his worshippers to drink like "a thirsty stag" or like a "bull roaming in a waterless waste"; to fill his belly by copious potations. His inebriety is said to be "most intense." The sensations of the god after drinking the soma are described: "The draughts which I have drunk impel me like violent blasts. The five tribes of men appear to me not even as a mote. I have quaffed the soma. The two worlds do not equal one-half of me. I have quaffed the soma. One-half of me is in the sky, and I have drawn the other down. I have quaffed the soma." Rig-Veda, x. 119.

Thus exhilarated, Indra goes forth to war. Some of his feats are thus described in the Rig-Veda, I. 53 :

"6. These draughts inspired thee, O lord of the brave, these were vigour, these libations, in battles, when for the sake of the poet, the sacrificer, thou struckest down irresistibly ten thousands of enemies.

"7. From battle to battle thou advancest bravely, from town to town thou destroyest all this with might, when thou, Indra, with Nami as thy friend, struckest down from afar the deceiver Namuchi."

While the Aryans were engaged in fierce contests with the aborigines, Indra held the highest rank. When the latter had been reduced to subjection, Indra gave place to other deities. In the Purāṇas he reigns over Swarga, but is often in fear lest he should be dethroned. Many instances are recorded of his adultery. The Rāmāyana says that he was defeated in battle and carried captive to Lanka, by Rāvana's son, who was hence called Indrajit.

AGNI.

Agni is the god of fire, the Latin *ignis*, fire. Macdonell says

"Next to Indra he is the most prominent of the Vedic gods, being celebrated in more than 200 hymns. It is only natural that the personification of the sacrificial fire, the centre around which the ritual

poetry of the Rig-Veda moves, should engross so much of the attention of the Rishis!"*

Fire is very necessary for human existence. It enables food to be cooked it; gives the power of carrying on work at night; in cold climates it preserves people from being frozen to death. In early times, when lucifer matches were unknown, fire was looked upon with somewhat like religious awe. The production of fire by the friction of wood or its sudden descent from the sky in the form of lightning, seemed as marvellous as the birth of a child. In the hymns of the Vedas fire is praised and worshipped as the best and kindest of the gods, the only god who had come down from heaven to live on earth, the friend of man, the messenger of the gods, the mediator between gods and men, the immortal among mortals. He, it is said, protects the settlements of the Aryans, and frightens away the "black-skinned enemies."

Soon, however, fire was conceived by the Vedic poets under the more general character of light and warmth, and then the presence of Agni was perceived, not only on the hearth and the altar, but in the Dawn, in the Sun, and in the world beyond the Sun, while at the same time its power was recognised as ripening, or as they called it, as cooking, the fruits of the earth, and as supporting also the warmth and the life of the human body. From that point of view Agni, like other powers, rose to the rank of a Supreme God. He is said to have stretched out heaven and earth—naturally, because without his light heaven and earth would have been invisible and undistinguishable. The next poet says that Agni held heaven aloft by his light, that he kept the two worlds asunder; and in the end Agni is said to be the progenitor and father of heaven and earth, and the maker of all that flies, or walks, or stands, or moves on earth.

Various accounts are given of the origin of Agni. He is said to be a son of Dyaus and Prithivi, he is called the eldest son of Brahmā, and is then named Abhumani, he is reckoned amongst the children of Kasyapa and Aditi, and hence one of the Ādityas. In the later writings he is described as a son of Angiras, king of the Pitris. He is occasionally identified with other gods and goddesses, as Indra, Vishnu, Varuna, Rudra, Sarasvatī, &c. "All gods," it is said, "are comprehended in him."

Agni was worshipped in the fire kindled in the morning. The whole family gathered around it, regarding it with love and awe, as at once a friend and a priest. It was a visible god conveying the oblation of mortals to all gods. His nobleness was extolled, as though a god he deigned to sit in the very dwellings of men. At sunset, Agni is the only divinity left on earth to protect mortals.

* *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 24.

till the following dawn; his beams then shine abroad, and dispel the demons of darkness.

Agni's proper offering is ghee. When this is sprinkled into the flame, it mounts higher and glows more fiercely; the god has devoured the gift, and thus testifies his satisfaction and pleasure. Several of his epithets describe his fondness for butter: He is butter-fed, butter-formed, butter-haired, butter-backed, &c. He himself exclaims, "butter is my eye." The poor man who cannot offer ghee, brings a few pieces of wood to feed the fire.

Probably fire was first worshipped because it was supposed to drive away evil spirits. As destroyer of the Rākshasas, Agni receives the title of *Rakshohan*. In this form he is represented as hideous as the beings he is invoked to devour. He sharpens his two iron tusks, puts his enemies into his mouth, and swallows them. He heats the edges of his shafts and sends them into the hearts of the Rākshasas.

The first hymn of the Rig-Veda is addressed to Agni, and all the other books, except two, begin with hymns to him.

SOLAR DEITIES.

There are in the Rig-Veda five solar deities, representing various aspects of the activity of the sun.

Max Müller thus shows how the sun was gradually developed into a supreme being:

"The first step leads us from the mere light of the sun to that light which in the morning wakes man from sleep, and seems to give new life not only to man, but to the whole of nature. He who wakes us in the morning, who recalls the whole of nature to new life, is soon called 'the giver of daily life'."

"Secondly, by another and bolder step the giver of daily light and life becomes the giver of light and life in general. He who brings light and life to-day, is the same who brought life and light in the first of days. As light is the beginning of the day, so light was the beginning of creation, and the sun, from being a mere light-bringer or life-giver, becomes a creator, then soon also a ruler of the world."

"Thirdly, as driving away the dreaded darkness of the night, and likewise as fertilizing the earth, the sun is conceived as a defender and kind protector of all living things."

"Fourthly as the sun sees everything and knows everything, he is asked to forget and forgive what he alone knows."*

* *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 265, 266.

MITRA.

In the Vedas Mitra, the "Friend," is generally associated with Varuna: he is seldom mentioned alone. Sáyana says, "Mitra is the god who presides over the day, and Varuna is the God who rules over the night." Mitra is the same as the Persian Mithra. He must have been worshipped before the Persian and Indian branches of the Aryans separated. He is a form of the sun. Mitra and Varuna have the same attributes. In hymn iii. 59, Mitra is addressed alone. The following are a few quotations: "Mitra uttering his voice calls men to activity. Mitra sustains the earth and the sky. Mitra with unwinking eye beholds (all) creatures. He who is protected by thee is neither slain nor conquered."

SURYA

Súrya, the sun god, is in one hymn styled the son of Dyauṣ; in another he is called the son of Aditi. Ushas is in one place said to be his wife, while in another she is described as his mother. He moves in a car which is sometimes said to be drawn by one and sometimes by seven fleet and ruddy horses. Púshan goes as his messenger with his golden ships, which sail in the aerial ocean. Súrya is the preserver and soul of all things stationary and moving; enlivened by him men perform their work; he is far-seeing, all-seeing, beholds all creatures, and the good and bad deeds of mortals. By his greatness he is the divine leader of the gods. The epithets architect of the universe and possessed of all divine attributes, are applied to him.

In the Rámáyana, Sanjna, the daughter of Visvakarma, is the wife of Súrya. As his brightness was too great for his wife, Visvakarma cut part of him away. The fragments fell blazing to the earth, and from them Visvakarma formed the discus of Vishnu, the trident of Siva, and the weapons of the other gods.

SAVITRI.

Savitri is sometimes distinguished from Súrya, sometimes identified with him. The two names are sometimes employed indiscriminately to denote the same deity. Sáyana says that the sun before his rising is called Savitri, and Súrya from his rising to his setting. The name is supposed to mean *Generator*, representing the quickening activity of the sun. Savitri and Súrya have each eleven hymns addressed to them.

Savitri is pre-eminently the golden deity, being golden-eyed, golden-handed, golden-tongued, the yellow-haired. Luminous in his aspect, he ascends a golden car, drawn by radiant, brown,

white-footed horses, and beholding all creatures, he pursues an ascending and descending path. He is lord of all desirable things and sends blessings from the sky, from the atmosphere, and the earth.*

The worship of Savitri has continued to the present time. It is to him that the Gâyatri is addressed at his rising by every devout Brahman. This short verse is supposed to exert magical powers. It is as follows :

Tat Savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimohi |
dhiyo yo nah prachodayât | iii. 62, 10.

It has been variously translated Griffith renders it thus :

" May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god :
So may he stimulate our prayers "

Wilson says that it was " in its original use, a simple invocation of the sun to shed a benignant influence upon the customary offices of worship." The Skanda Purâna thus extols it :

" Nothing in the Vedas is superior to the Gâyatri. No invocation is equal to the Gâyatri, as no city is equal to Kâsi. The Gâyatri is the mother of the Vedas and of Brahmans. By repeating it a man is saved. What is there indeed that cannot be effected by the Gâyatri ? For the Gâyatri is Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva and the three Vedas."

VISHNU

Vishnu is the only one of the great gods of the Hindu triad who makes his appearance under the same name in the Veda. In the Veda, however, he is not in the first rank of gods. He is the sun in his three stations of rise, zenith, and setting. This the Vedic poets conceive of as striding through heaven at three steps. This is Vishnu's great deed, which in all his hymns is sung to his praise. It constitutes the only peculiar trait belonging to him. Concerning these steps it is said that two of them are near the habitations of men. The third none can attain, not even the bird in its flight. He took them for the benefit of mortals, that all might live safe and happy under them. The middle station, the zenith, is called Vishnu's place †

In Manu the name Vishnu is mentioned, but not as that of a great deity. In the Mahâbhârata and Purânas, he becomes the second member of the triad, the preserving power, the all-pervading spirit

PUSHAN.

The word Pûshan comes from the root *push*, the primary idea is that of nourisher. He is the protector and nourisher of

* Abridged from Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V. pp 162-170.

† Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1st Ser. pp 41, 42.

oattle (*pashupa*). He was originally the sun as viewed by shepherds. As a cowherd he carries an ox goad, and he is drawn by goats. He is a guide on roads and journeys. He is called the lover of his sister Sūrya, conceived as a female deity. Eight hymns are addressed to him.

In later books he is represented as toothless. He feeds upon a kind of congee, and the offerings made to him are of ground materials. The cause of his being toothless is variously explained. One account is that at the Dakṣha sacrifice Rudra knocked out his teeth while he was eating the pūrodasa offering.

USHAS.

Ushas, goddess of dawn, is almost the only female deity to whom entire hymns are addressed and the only one invoked with any frequency. She is celebrated in about twenty hymns. The name, means the 'Shining One.' She corresponds to the Eos of the Greeks and Aurora of the Romans.

Ushas is represented as the daughter of heaven and loved by the Sun, but vanishing before him at the very moment when he tries to embrace her with his golden rays. Agni and the gods generally are described as waking from sleep with Ushas.

The worship of the Aryan commenced at day-break, Ushas was the earliest object of his morning songs.

SOMA

Judged by the standard of frequency of mention, Soma comes third in order of importance among the Vedic gods. The whole of the 114 hymns of the ninth book with an exception in addition to a few scattered hymns elsewhere, are devoted to his praise. This arose from the Soma sacrifice forming a main feature in the ritual of the Rig-Veda.

Hindus, at present, differ in their habits in two remarkable respects from their forefathers in Vedic times. The ancient Aryans delighted in eating beef, which is an utter abomination to their descendants. The ancient Aryans rejoiced in drinking, respectable Hindus now wisely abstain from what inebriates.

The juice of the Soma plant, pressed out between stones and allowed to ferment, becomes intoxicating. The exhilarating effect of Soma led to its being regarded as a divine drink; the process of preparing it was a holy sacrifice. The hymns addressed to Soma were intended to be sung while the juice was being pressed out and strained through wool.

Not only were the people themselves fond of drinking the Soma juice, but the gods were represented as eager to partake of the beverage. Soma, the god in the juice, is said to clothe the naked and heal the sick, through him the blind see, and the lame

walk. Many divine attributes are ascribed to him. He is addressed as a god in the highest strains of veneration. All powers belong to him; all blessings are besought of him as his to bestow. He is said to be divine, immortal, and also to confer immortality on gods and men. Future happiness is asked from him. "Place me, O Pavamāna, in that everlasting and imperishable world where there is eternal light and glory", IX. 113. 7.

In later times Soma was a name given to the moon. When the Vishnu Purāna was written, intoxicants were strictly forbidden, hence Soma, as the god of the soma juice, was no longer known and praised.

RUDRA.

Rudra is celebrated in only three or four hymns. The name means 'howler' or 'roarer'. In the Vedas he has many attributes and names. He is the howling terrible god, the god of storms, the father of the Rudras or Maruts. He is described as armed with a strong bow and fleet arrows. He is called the slayer of men. His anger, ill-will, and destructive shafts are deprecated. He is the cause of health and prosperity to man and beast. He is frequently characterised as the possessor of healing remedies. This may have its explanation in tempests clearing the air, and making it healthier.

Rudra's chief interest arises from his being supposed to represent Siva, of the later mythology, but the precise relation between them has not yet been satisfactorily traced out. Siva means "propitious," an example of a pleasing term being used to express what is disagreeable.

YAMA

Yama is the chief of the blessed dead. Three hymns are addressed to him. He is said to have first discovered the way to the other world. He is represented as having two dogs, with four eyes, which guard the road to his abode. In later mythology he is the god of death.

GODS LESS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED.

Only about twenty gods in the Rig-Veda are important enough to have at least three or four hymns addressed to them. The names of the following can only be briefly given.

PARJANYA was an older Aryan god than Indra. In later times the name is applied to Indra.

VAYU, 'the Blower,' was the wind god. The second hymn of the Rig-Veda is addressed to him.

The MARUTS, literally 'the Smashers,' were the Storm gods.

TVASHTRI, the Vulcan of the Romans, was the artificer of the gods.

VISHVAKARMA was represented as the architect of the universe. Two hymns are addressed to him. In later books he is identified with **Tvashti**.

PRAJAPATI, "Lord of Creatures," is in one hymn (x. 12) celebrated as the creator of the universe, the first of all the gods. He is also called **Hiranyagarbha**, the golden egg.

BRIHASPATI, or **BRAHMANASPATI**, is represented as the purohita of the gods. In the *Rig-Veda* he is described as the father of the gods; to have blown forth the births of the gods like a blacksmith (x. 72.)

VACH, 'speech,' is the personification of speech.

VISVA DEVAS, the all gods, denote the gods in their collective capacity.

SACRIFICIAL IMPLEMENTS Divine powers are ascribed to the sacrificial post, the arrow, the ladle, the mortar.

THE GODS NOT MENTIONED IN THE VEDAS.

Many of the principal gods now worshipped by the Hindus, says Professor Wilson, are either wholly unnamed in the *Veda*, or are noticed in an inferior and different capacity. The names of **SIVA**, of **MAHADEVA**, of **DURGA**, of **KALI**, of **RAMA**, of **KRISHNA**, never occur, as far as we are yet aware; we have a **RUDRA**, who, in after times, is identified with **SIVA**, but who, even in the *Purāṇas*, is of very doubtful origin and identification, whilst in the *Veda* he is described as the father of the winds, and is evidently a form of either **AGNI** or **INDRA**. There is not the slightest allusion to the form in which for the last ten centuries at least, he (**Siva**) seems to have been almost exclusively worshipped in India—that of the *Linga*. neither is there the slightest hint of another important feature of later Hinduism, the *Trimurthi*, or Tri-une combination of **BRAHMA**, **VISHNU**, and **SIVA** as typified by the mystical syllable *Om*.

The gods now chiefly worshipped by the Hindus were the inventions of later times.

THE OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES. OF THE VEDAS.

Importance of Sacrifice in Vedic times.—Mr. Kunté says

"It is impossible to understand and appreciate the spirit of a civilization of the ancient Aryas as it is revealed in the collection of the *Rik-Sanhita*, without studying their sacrificial system, the basis of their civilization. No matter what hymn is read, it directly or

indirectly cannot but refer to a sacrifice. Either the musical modes of the Udgata singer are mentioned, or the name of a sacrifice such as *Yajna* or *Makha*, or some prayer asking a god to partake of their sacrificial portion (*Yajniya Bhaga*) occurs. The main ground of the picture of society drawn in the Rik Sanhita is a sacrifice."

Dr. Haug has the following remarks on the supposed influence attached to sacrifice :

"The sacrifice is regarded as the means for obtaining power over this and the other world, over visible as well as invisible beings, animate as well as inanimate creatures. Who knows its proper application, and has it duly performed, is in fact looked upon as real master of the world ; for any desire he may entertain, if it be even the most ambitious, can be gratified, any object in view can be obtained by means of it. The *Yajna* (sacrifice) taken as a whole is conceived to be a kind of machinery, in which every piece must tally with the other, or a sort of large chain in which no link is allowed to be wanting, or a staircase, by which one may ascend to heaven, or as a personage endowed with all the characteristics of a human body. It exists from eternity, and proceeded from the Supreme Being (*Prajapati* or *Brahmá*) along with the *Travidyá*, i. e., the threefold sacred science (the Rig verses, the *Sámanas* or chants, and the *Yajus* or sacrificial formulas.) The creation of the world itself was even regarded as the fruit of a sacrifice performed by the Supreme Being."†

In the Rig-Veda the idea is often expressed that the might and valour of the gods is produced by hymns, sacrifices, and especially offerings of soma. In return the gods were expected to benefit their worshippers. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gítá*, "Pleased with the sacrifices, the gods will give you the enjoyments you desire" (iii. 12).

In the later times of the Yajur-Veda the words themselves were supposed to have a magical influence, compelling the gods to grant what was asked.

Kinds of Offerings and Sacrifices.—The products of the cow were offered—milk, curds, and butter. Grain was offered in different forms—fried, boiled, or as flour-balls (*pinda*). Sacrifices included goats, sheep, cows, buffaloes, horses, men—the last two being considered of the greatest value. Somayajna was the most frequent kind of offering. Incense was burnt, but tufts of wool and horse-dung were also used.

Times of Offering, &c.—The central part of a house was dedicated to the gods. When a new house was entered upon, the fire was kindled for the first time by rubbing together pieces of wood, after which it was not allowed to go out. Morning and evening devout *Aryas* assembled around the sacred fire. The

* *Picturistics of Aryan Civilization*, pp. 21, 22.

† *Introduction to Aitareya Brahmana* pp. 73, 74.

master of the house, as *agnihotri*, made offerings to it of wood and ghee, hymns were chanted, the children joining in the chorus, and the words *svak* and *vasat* were reiterated till the roof resounded.

The new and full moons were seasons of sacrifice. The house was decorated; grass was tied over the door and about its sides.

Every four months, at the beginning of spring, the rainy season, and autumn, sacrifices were offered.

The first ripe fruits were offered, generally twice a year.

A he-goat was sacrificed once a year at the beginning of the rainy season in the house of the sacrificer.

In addition, offerings and sacrifices were made on many other occasions, some of which will be mentioned hereafter.

Sacrificial Implements.—Among these were the following: *Yûpa* a post to which the animal to be sacrificed was tied; pots of various kinds for holding water, for boiling milk and flesh; a wooden tub in which to keep the filtered soma juice; a knife to cut up the body of the slain animal, an axe to divide the bones; a spit to roast parts of the flesh; several kinds of wooden spoons; a cup for drinking and offering soma, &c. The *sphya* was a piece of wood, shaped like a wooden sword, with which lines were drawn round the sacrificial ground. One of the priests had to hold it up high so long as the chief ceremonies lasted, to keep off *rākshasas*, evil spirits.

Sacrificers and Priests.—In early times any one might preside at a sacrifice. The Brahman was at first simply an assistant. King Janaka asserted his right of performing sacrifices without the intervention of priests.

As great importance was attached to the hymns sung at sacrifices, Brahmans who committed them to memory acquired more and more power. As time advanced also, the ceremonies became more and more complicated, till at some sacrifices 16 priests were required, each performing his own peculiar office.

One priest watched over the whole in a sitting posture. The duties of the different classes of priests are thus described by Max Müller:

“The *Adhvaryus* were the priests who were intrusted with the material performance of the sacrifice. They had to measure the ground, to build the altar (*Vedi*), to prepare the sacrificial vessels, to fetch wood and water, to light the fire, to bring the animal and immolate it. They formed, as it would seem, the lowest class of priests. Some of the offices which would naturally fall to the lot of the *Adhvaryus*, were considered so degrading, that other persons besides the priests were frequently employed in them. The numbers of hymns and invocations which they had to use at the sacrifices were smaller than that of the other priests. These, however, they had to learn by heart. But as the chief difficulty consisted in the exact recitation of

hymns and in the close observance of all the euphonic rules, as taught in the *Pratisakhya*s, the *Adhvaryu*s were allowed to mutter their hymns, so that no one at a distance could either hear or understand them.

The hymns collected by themselves form what is called their *Yajur-Veda-Saṁhita*, or the prayer-book of the *Adhvaryu*s priests.

"There were some parts of the sacrifice, which, according to ancient custom, had to be accompanied by songs; hence another class of priests arose whose particular office it was to act as the chorus.

The words of their songs were collected in the order of the sacrifice, and this is what we possess under the name of *Sāma-Veda-Saṁhita*, or the prayer book of the *Udgatṛi* priests.

"Distinct from these two classes we have a third class of priests, the *Hotṛis*, whose duty it was to recite certain hymns during the sacrifice in praise of the Deities to whom any particular act of the sacrifice was addressed. Their recitation was loud and distinct, and required the most accurate knowledge of the rules of euphony or *Siksha*.

The *Hotṛis* were supposed to be so well versed in the ancient sacred poetry, as contained in the ten *Mandalas* of the *Rig-Veda*, that no separate prayer-book or *Saṁhita* was ever arranged for their special benefit.

"The most ancient name for a priest by profession was *Purohita*, which only means one placed before. The original occupation of the *Purohita* may simply have been to perform the usual sacrifices; but, with the ambitious policy of the *Brahmans*, it soon became a stepping-stone to political power."

A few of the principal offerings and sacrifices will now be described.

SOMA.

Soma juice was an essential part of every offering of importance. Dr. Rajendralala Mitra says that it was made with the expressed juice of a creeper, diluted with water, mixed with barley meal, clarified butter, and the meal of wild paddy, and fermented in a jar for nine days.

The Aryans were fond of the soma themselves.

"We have drunk soma and become immortal; we have attained the light the gods discovered. Now what may foeman's malice do to harm us?" viii. 48, 3.

All the gods are supposed to delight in soma; but Indra was especially noted for his love of the beverage.

"Impetuous god, when thou hast drunk the soma, enraptured send us cattle in abundance. With kine and horses satisfy this longing." (III. 50, 3, 4).

The soma juice offered to the gods was apparently poured on the bundles of kusa grass provided for them as seats. "These

dripping soma juices are offered upon the sacred grass: drink them, Indra, (to recruit thy) vigour."

ANIMAL SACRIFICES.

The animals chiefly sacrificed were goats, sheep, cows, bullocks, buffaloes, deer, and occasionally horses. Large numbers were sometimes sacrificed. Three hundred buffaloes are mentioned as having been offered to Indra.

Modern Hindus, who now worship the cow, can scarcely believe that their Aryan forefathers sacrificed her and ate her flesh. But times without number the Vedas refer to ceremonies, called *gomedha*, in which the cow was sacrificed. Minute directions are given as to the character of the animal to be chosen. The Taittiriya Bráhmāna of the Yajur-Veda gives the following rules:

"A thick-legged cow to Indra, a barren cow to Vishnu and Vajuna, a black cow to Pushan, a cow that has brought forth only once to Vayu, a cow having two colours to Mitra and Varuna; a red cow to Rudra, a white barren cow to Súrva, &c."

One great sacrifice, called the *Panchasaradiya sava*, was celebrated every five years. At this seventeen young cows were immolated. "Whoever wishes to be great," says the Taittiriya Bráhmāna, "let him worship through the Panchasaradiya. Thereby, verily, he will be great."

"In the Asvalayana Súra," says Dr. Mitra, "mention is made of several sacrifices of which the slaughter of cattle formed a part. One of them, in the Grihya Súra, is worthy of special notice. It is called *Sulagava*, or 'spitted cow,' i.e., Roast Beef."*

Oxen were sacrificed as well as cows. The Taittiriya Bráhmāna prescribes "A dwarf ox to Vishnu; a drooping horned bull to Indra; a piebald ox to Savitri; a white ox to Mitra, &c."

Ignorant Hindus now allege that the animals were not really killed, but that after the form of sacrificing had been performed, they were allowed to go free. Such was not the case in the times of the Rig-Veda. "Nothing," says Dr. Clark, "is more conclusive than the evidence on this point that the animal sacrificed was really killed and subsequently eaten."

"That the animal slaughtered was intended for food," says Dr. R. Mitra, "is evident from the directions given in the Asvalayana Súra to eat of the remains of the offering. The Taittiriya Bráhmāna describes in detail the mode of cutting up the victim; the animal would not be divided if there was no necessity for distribution."

* *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I. p. 363.

Ashvamedha.—Two hymns of the Rig-Veda (I. 162, 163) show that horse sacrifice was practised in the earliest age of Indian antiquity.

The first animal sacrificed was a goat to Púshan. That the horse was killed and cooked is evident from the Rig-Veda. Hymn i. 162.

The horse, however, was comforted by the thought that it was going to the gods.

In the Rig-Veda the object of the *Ashvamedha* is no more than as usual with other rites, the acquiring of wealth and posterity.

22. "May this good steed bring us all-sustaining riches, wealth in good kine, good horses, manly offspring.

Freedom from sin may Aditi vouchsafe us the steed with our oblations gain us lordship."

In the *Rámáyana* the horse sacrifice is employed by the childless Dasaratha as the means of obtaining sons. Kausalya acquired so much merit by killing the horse and embracing it all night, that she bore Ráma. Any person of intelligence can judge of the truth of this.

A later idea was that the *Ashvamedha* was celebrated by a monarch desirous of universal dominion. Another fiction was that a hundred celebrations deposed Indra from the throne of *Swarga*, and elevated the sacrificer to his place.

PURUSHAMEDHA, HUMAN SACRIFICES.

Human sacrifices, though now regarded with horror, were practised in ancient times by nearly all nations. The first book of the Rig-Veda contains seven hymns supposed to have been recited by one *Sunahsepa* when he was bound to a stake preparatory to being immolated. The story is given in the *Aitareya Bráhmaṇa* of the Rig-Veda.

Harischandra had made a vow to sacrifice his first-born to *Varuna*, if that deity would bless him with children. A child was born, named *Rohita*, and *Varuna* claimed it, but the father evaded fulfilling his promise under various pretexts until *Rohita*, grown up to man's estate, ran away from home, when *Varuna* afflicted the father with dropsy. At last *Rohita* purchased one *Sunahsepa* from his father *Ajigarta* for a hundred cows. When *Sunahsepa* had been prepared, they found nobody to bind him to the sacrificial post. Then *Ajigarta* said, "Give me another hundred, and I shall bind him." They gave him another hundred cows, and he bound him. When *Sunahsepa* had been prepared and bound, when the *Apri* hymns had been sung, and he had been led round the fire, they found nobody to kill him. Next *Ajigarta*

said, "Give me another hundred, and I shall kill him." They gave him another hundred cows, and he came whetting the knife. Sunahsepa then recited the hymns praising Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and other gods. He says :—

13: "Bound to three pillars captured Sunahsepa thus to the Aditya made his supplication.

Him may the sovran Varuna deliver, wise, ne'er deceived,
loosen the bonds that bind him." l. 24.

Varuna, pleased with the hymns of Sunahsepa, set him free. Disgusted with his father, he forsook him, and became the adopted son of Visvamitra, his maternal uncle.

This story shows that human sacrifices were really offered. If Harischandra had simply to tie his son to a post and after repeating a few mantras over him, let him off perfectly sound, he could easily have done so.

This view is supported by Max Muller. He says that the story in the *Attareya Bráhmāna* "shows that, at that early time, the Brahmanas were familiar with the idea of human sacrifices, and that men who were supposed to belong to the caste of the Brahmanas were ready to sell their sons for that purpose."

The *Purushamedha* was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings. Its performance was limited to Brahmanas and Kshatriyas.

While the *Purushamedha* of the Vedas was afterwards forbidden, human sacrifice, *narabali*, to the goddess Chámundá, came into vogue. It was described as *atibali* (highest sacrifice), and for a long time it was common all over India.

REACTION AGAINST SACRIFICES.

There have been many changes in the religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus. They have changed their gods again and again, as has been already shown, Dyaus, Varuna, Agni, Indra, now being superseded by Vishnu, Siva, Rama, and Krishna.

Their practices have also changed. When the Aryans entered the Punjab, they were largely a pastoral people, their flocks and herds affording a large proportion of their food. It has been shown that the Aryans in Vedic times ate beef and drank freely the intoxicating soma beer. Much of their time was spent in fighting with the aborigines, whose fields and cattle they sought to take. Indra, supposed to be strong in battle, was therefore the principal god.

By degrees the Aryans were settled in peaceful possession of the country, the aborigines having either retired to the mountains or been reduced to slavery. The Aryans became milder than their forefathers. Instead of considering beef the best of food

and delighting in soma beer, they began to think that no life should be taken, and that no intoxicating liquors should be tasted.

The chief leader in the movement against sacrifices and the use of soma beer, was Gautama Buddha, the son of an Indian Raja, who lived about 2,400 years ago. His first command was, "Thou shalt not take any life."

Another command of Buddha was, "Thou shalt not taste any intoxicating drink." The evils of drunkenness began to be felt, and though the Rig-Veda has 114 hymns in praise of the soma beer, its use was given up the great body of the Hindus, though some tribes have retained their drinking habits.

The reaction can be gradually traced. Some of the leading doctrines of Buddha were adopted by the Brahmins, and the slaying of animals, even in sacrifice, became revolting to them. When Manu's Code was compiled, things were partly in a transition stage, and it is inconsistent. It says:

"22. The prescribed beasts and birds are to be slain by Brahmins for the sacrifice; and also for the support of dependents, for Agastya did (so) formerly.

"23. There were, indeed, offerings of eatable beasts and birds in the ancient sacrifices and in the oblations of Brahmins and Kshatriyas." Bk. V.

On the other hand it says:

"46. He who desires not to cause confinement, death, and pain to living beings (but is) desirous of the good of all, gets endless happiness." V.

The superiority of not eating flesh to sacrifices is thus shown.—

"53. He who for a hundred years sacrifices every year with a horse-sacrifice, and he who eats not flesh, the fruit of the virtue of both is equal." V.

Animal sacrifices are declared to have passed away, and others are substituted:

Vaishnava worship has had a considerable influence in putting a stop to animal sacrifices.

Goats and buffaloes are still offered to Káli, but the image of a man, after the ceremony of *pránpratishta*, is substituted for a human being.

SELECT HYMNS FROM THE 'VEDAS.

The great majority of the hymns consist simply of prayers for cattle, for rain, children, the destruction of enemies, long life, &c. The same requests are repeated over and over again. In the following selection the more interesting have been chosen, in which petitions are presented for the pardon of sin or there are speculations about the origin of the universe. Hymns addressed to the same God are classed together, although they are scattered in the original

HYMNS FROM THE RIG-VEDA.

TO AGNI.

The Rig-Veda begins with a hymn to Agni. It is given below in full in Nagri, Roman, and in the English translation by Griffith.

॥ ओम् ॥

1. अग्निमीले पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् ।
Agnimile purohitam yajñasya devamṛtvijam ।
होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥
Hotaram ratnadhatomam ॥
2. अग्निः पूर्वेभि र्षिभिरोद्ध्यो नूतनैरुत ।
Agnih pūrvēbhi ṛṣibhirōdhyō nūtanairuta ।
स देवा एह वक्षति ॥
Sa devān ēha vakṣati ।
3. अग्निना रयिमश्रवत्पोषमेव दिवेदिवे ।
Agninā rayimaśnavatposameva divedive—
यशसं वीरवत्तमम् ॥
Yaśasam vīravattamam ।
4. अग्ने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि ।
Agnē yaṁ yajñamadhvaram viśvataḥ paribhūrasi ।
स इदेवेषु गच्छति ॥
Sa iddēvēsu gacchati ॥

- ५ अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चितश्रवस्तमः ।
 Agnihōta kavikratuḥ satyaścitra śravastamah ।
 देवो देवेभिरागमत ॥
 Dēvō dēvēbhi rāgamāt
- ६ यदङ्ग दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि ।
 Yadanga dāśuṣe tvamagnē bhadraṁ kariṣyasi ।
 तवेत्तत्सत्यमङ्गिरः ।
 Tavēttatsatyamaṅgiraḥ
- ७ उपत्वाग्ने दिवेदिवे दोषावरतर्धिया वयम् ।
 Upatvāgnē divē divē dōṣāvastardhiyā vayam ।
 नमो भरन्त एमसि ॥
 Namō bharanta ēmasi
- ८ राजन्तमध्वराणा गोपामृतस्य दीर्दिवम् ।
 Rājantamadhvarāṇām gōpamṛtasya dīdivim ।
 वर्धमानं स्वे दमे ॥
 Vardhamanāṁ svē damē
- ९ स नः पितेव सूनवेऽग्ने सूपायनो भव ।
 Sa naḥ pitēva sūnavē'gne sūpāyanō bhava ।
 स च स्वानः स्वस्तये ॥
 Sa ca svānaḥ svastayē

1. I laud Agni, the great high priest, god, minister of sacrifice,
 The herald, lavishest of wealth.
2. Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as by ancient seers
 He shall bring hitherward the gods.
3. Through Agni man obtaineth wealth, yea, plenty waxing day
 by day,
 Most rich in heroes, glorious.
4. Agni, the flawless sacrifice, which thou encompasssest about
 Verily goeth to the gods.
5. May Agni, sapient-minded priest, truthful, most gloriously great,
 The god, come hither with the gods.
6. Whatever blessing, Agni, thou wilt grant unto thy worshipper,
 That, Angiras, is thy true gift.
7. To thee, dispeller of the night, O Agni, day by day with prayer,
 Bringing thee reverence, we come;

8. ~~Ruler of sacrifices, guard of Law eternal, radiant one,~~
Increasing in thine own abode.
8. ~~Be to us easy of approach, even as a father to his son~~
Agni, be with us for our weal.

TO AGNI, II. 6.

- 1 Agni, accept these logs of wood, this waiting with my prayer
on thee.
Hear graciously these songs of praise.
- 2 With this hymn let us honour thee, seeker of horses, son of
strength,
With this fair hymn, thou nobly born.
- 3 As such, lover of song, with songs, wealth-lover, giver of our
wealth!
With reverence let us worship thee
- 4 Be thou for us a liberal prince, giver and lord of precious things,
Drive those who hate us far away.
- 5 Such as thou art, give rain from heaven, give strength which
no man may resist
Give food exceeding plentiful.
6. To him who lauds thee, craving help, most youthful envoy
through our song,
Most holy herald! come thou nigh.
7. Between both races, Agni, sage, well-skilled, thou passest to
and fro,
As envoy friendly to mankind.
8. Befriend us thou as knowing all. Sage, duly worship thou the
gods,
And seat thee on this sacred grass.

TO AGNI, IV. 12

[This is one of the few hymns addressed to Agni in which sin is prominently mentioned. But the invariable reference to wealth is also introduced.]

- 1 Whoso enkindles thee, with lifted ladle, and thrice this day
offers thee food, O Agni,
May he excel, triumphant, through thy splendours, wise through
thy mental power, O Jatavedas.
2. Whoso, with toil and trouble, brings thee fuel, serving the
majesty of mighty Agni,
He kindling thee at evening and at morning, prospers, and
comes to wealth, and slays his foemen.
- 3 Agni is master of sublime dominion, Agni is lord of strength
and lofty riches.
Straightway the self-reliant god, most youthful, gives treasures
to the mortal who adores him.

4. Most youthful god, whatever sin, through folly, here in the world of men we have committed;
Before great Aditi make thou us sinless: remit entirely, Agni, our offences.
5. Even in the presence of great sin, O Agni, free us from prison of the gods or mortals.
Never may we who are thy friends be injured: grant health and wealth unto our seed and offspring.
6. Even as ye here, gods excellent and holy, have loosed the cow that by the foot was tethered,
So also set us free from this affliction long let our life, O Agni, be extended.

TO AGNI, V. 26.

[Agni is specially addressed as the inviter of the gods to sacrifice.]

1. O Agni, holy and divine, with splendour and thy pleasant tongue,
Bring hither and adore the gods.
2. We pray thee, thou who droppest oil, bright-rayed! who lookest on the Sun,
Bring the gods hither to the feast.
3. We have enkindled thee, O sage, bright caller of the gods to feast,
O Agni, great in sacrifice.
4. O Agni, come with all the gods, come to our sacrificial gift:
We choose thee as invoking priest.
5. Bring, Agni, to the worshipper who pours the juice heroic strength:
Sit with the gods upon the grass.
6. Victor of thousands, Agni, thou, enkindled, cherishest the laws,
Laud-worthy, envoy of the gods.
7. Sit Agni Jatavedas down, the bearer of our sacred gifts,
Most youthful god and minister.
8. Duly proceed our sacrifice, comprising all the gods, to-day:
Strew holy grass to be their seat.
9. So may the Maruts sit thereon, the Asvins, Mitra, Varuna.
The gods with all their company.

TO AGNI, X 87.

[This hymn is addressed to Agni Rakshobá, the slayer of the Rákshasas. The aborigines are often compared to them. Only some verses are quoted.]

1. I balm with oil the mighty Rakshas-slayer to the most famous friend I come for shelter,
Enkindled, sharpened by our rites, may Agni protect us in the day and night from evil

* An epithet of Agni.

- 2 O Jatavedas with the teeth of iron, enkindled with thy flame attack the demons.
Seize with thy tongue 'the foolish gods' adorers': 'tend, put within thy mouth the raw-flesh eaters.
3. Apply thy teeth, the upper and the lower, thou who hast both, enkindled and destroying.
Roam also in the air, O king, around us, 'and with thy jaws assail the wicked spirits
14. With fervent heat exterminate the demons; destroy the fiends with burning flame, O Agni
Destroy with fire the foolish gods' adorers; blaze and destroy the insatiable monsters.
15. May gods destroy this day the evil-doer may each hot curse of his return and blast him
Let arrows pierce the liar in his vitals, and Visva's net enclose the Yatudhana
16. The fiend who smears himself with flesh of cattle, with flesh of horses and of human bodies,
Who steals the milch-cow's milk away, O Agni,—tear off the heads of such with fiery fury.
20. Guard us, O Agni, from above and under, protect us from behind us and before us,
And may thy flames, most fierce and never wasting, glowing with fervent heat, consume the sinner.

TO AGNI, X. 191.

[This is the last hymn of the Rig-Veda. The subject is agreement in an assembly.]

- 1 Thou, mighty Agni, gatherest all that is precious for thy friend
Bring us all treasures as thou art enkindled in libation's place
- 2 Assemble, speak together let your minds be all of one accord,
As ancient gods unanimous sit down to their appointed share
- 3 The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind
so be then thought united
A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with your general oblation
4. One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one accord.
United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree.

HYMNS TO INDRA.

As already mentioned, more hymns are addressed to Indra in the Rig-Veda than to any other god. Only a few can be quoted.

TO INDRA, L. 103

(Indra is praised for striking down the demons of drought and for conquering the Dasyus, or aborigines.)

1. That highest Indra-power of thine is distant ; that which is here
sages possessed aforetime
This one is on the earth, in heaven the other, and both unite as
flag and flag in battle
2. He spread the wide earth out and firmly fixed it, smote with his
thunderbolt and loosed the waters.
Maghavan with his puissance struck down Ahi, rent Rauhina
to death, and slaughtered Vyansa
3. Armed with his bolt and trusting in this prowess, he wandered
shattering the Dásas' cities
Cast thy dart, knowing, thunderer, at the Dasyu, increase the
Arya's might and glory, Indra.
4. For him who thus hath taught these human races, Maghavan,
bearing a fame-worthy title,
Thunderer, drawing nigh to slay the Dasyus, hath given him-
self the name of sun for glory
5. See this abundant wealth that he possesses, and put your
trust in Indra's hero vigour
He found the cattle, and he found the horses, he found the
plants, the forests, and the waters.
6. To him the truly strong, whose deeds are many, to him the
strong bull let us pour the Soma.
The hero watching like a thief in ambush goes parting the
possessions of the godless.
7. Well didst thou do that hero deed, O Indra, in walking with
thy bolt the slumbering Ahi
In thee, delighted dames divine rejoiced them, the flying
Maruts and all gods were joyful
8. As thou hast smitten Sushna, Pipru, Vrida and Kuyava,
and Sambara's torts, O Indra.
This prayer of ours may Varuna grant, and Mitra, and Aditi
and Sindhu, Earth and Heaven.

TO INDRA, III 48.

(Indra's love of Soma is here mentioned.)

1. Soon as the young Bull (Indra) sprang into existence he longed
to taste the pressed-out Soma's liquor
Drink thou thy fill, according to thy longing, first, of the noble
mixture blent with Soma.
2. That day when thou wast born thou, fain to taste it, drankst
the plant's milk which the mountains nourish
That milk thy mother* first, the dame who bare thee poured
for thee in thy mighty father's† dwelling.

* Aditi.

† Kasyapa or Tvashtar.

3. Desiring food he came unto his mother, and on her breast beheld the pungent Soma.
Wise, he moved on, keeping aloof the others, and wrought great exploits in his varied aspects
1. Fierce, quickly conquering, of surpassing vigour, he framed his body even as he listed.
E'en from his birth-time Indra conquered Twashtar, bore off the Soma and in beakers drank it
5. Call we on Maghavan, auspicious Indra, best here in the fight where spoil is gathered;
The strong, who listens, who gives aid in battles, who slays the Vitras, wins and gathers riches.

INDRA AND OTHERS, III. 62

[The tenth verse of this hymn is the Gâyatri]

- 1 Your well-known prompt activities aforetime needed no impulse from your faithful servant.
Where, Indra, Varuna, is now that glory wherewith ye brought support to those who loved you?
2. This man, most diligent, seeking after riches, incessantly invokes you for your favour.
Accordant, Indra, Varuna, with the Maruts, with Heaven and Earth, hear ye mine invocation.
- 3 O Indra, Varuna, ours be this treasure, ours be wealth, Maruts, with full store of heroes.
May the Varitris with their shelter aid us, and Bhāratī and Hotā with the Mornings
1. Be pleased with our oblations, thou loved of all gods, Brihaspati †
Give wealth to him who brings thee gifts
5. At sacrifices, with your hymns worship the pure Brihaspati -
I pray for power which none may bend—
6. The Bull of men, whom none deceive, the wearer of each shape at will,
Brihaspati most excellent.
7. Divine, resplendent Pūshan, this our newest hymn of eulogy
By us is chanted forth to thee.
8. Accept with favour this my song, be gracious to the earnest thought,
Even as a bridegroom to his bride.
- 9 May he who sees all living things, see's them together at a glance,—
May he, may Pūshan be our help.
- 10 May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god.
So may he stimulate our prayers.
- 11 With understanding, earnestly, of Savitar the god we crave,
Our portion of prosperity.

* Wives of the gods.

† Lord of prayer.

12. Men, singers worship Savitar the god with hymn and holy rites,
 Urged by the impulse of their thoughts.
13. Soma who gives success goes forth, goes to the gathering-place
 of gods.
 To seat him at the seat of law.
14. To us and to our cattle may Soma give salutary food,
 To biped and to quadruped.
15. May Soma, strengthening our power of life, and conquering
 our foes,
 In our assembly take his seat
16. May Mitra, Varuna, supient pair, bedew our pasturage with oil,
 With meath the regions of the air
17. Far-ruling, joyful when adored, ve reign through majesty of
 might,
 With pure laws everlastingly
18. Lauded by Jamadagni's song sit in the place of holy Law
 Drink Soma, ye who strengthen Law

TO INDRA-SOMA, VII 104.

[The hymn consists chiefly of imprecations directed against demons and evil spirits, Rākshasas and Yātudhānas, a kind of goblins. The demon foes are supposed to go about at night, disturbing sacrifices and pious men, ensnaring and even devouring human beings, and generally hostile to the human race.—Griffith. The hymn is too long to be quoted in full.]

1. Indra and Soma, burn, destroy the demon foe, send downward,
 O ye Bulls, those who add gloom to gloom
 Annihilate the fools, slay them and burn them up, chase them
 away from us, pierce the voracious ones
2. Indra and Soma, let sin round the wicked boil like as a
 caldron set amid the flames of fire
 Against the foe of prayer, devourer of raw flesh, the vile fiend,
 fierce of eye, keep ye perpetual hate.
3. Indra and Soma, plunge the wicked in the depth, yea, cast them
 into darkness that hath no support,
 So that not one of them may ever thence return, so may your
 wrathful might prevail and conquer them
4. Indra and Soma, hurl your deadly crushing bolt down on the
 wicked fiend from heaven and from the hearth
 Yea, forge out of the mountains your celestial dart wherewith
 ye burn to death the waxing demon race
5. Indra and Soma, cast ye downward out of heaven your deadly
 darts of stone burning with fiery flame,
 Eternal, scorching darts, plunge the voracious ones within the
 depth, and let them sink without a sound
24. Indra destroy the demon, male and female, joying and trium-
 phing in arts of magic.
 Let the fool's gods with bent necks fall and perish, and see no
 more the sun when he arises

* The place where sacrifice ordained by eternal Law is performed.

25. Look each one hither, look around: Indra and Soma, watch ye well.
 Cast forth your weapon at the fiends; against the scrooerers hurl your bolt.

TO INDRA, VIII. 69.

[This hymn is for success in a coming chariot race]

1. O Satakratu, truly I have made none else my comforter.
 Indra, be gracious unto us.
2. Thou who hast ever aided us kindly of old to win the spoil,
 As such, O Indra, favour us.
3. What now! As prompter of the poor thou helpst him who
 sheds the juice
 Wilt thou not, Indra, strengthen us?
4. O Indra, help our chariot on, yea, thunderer, though it lag
 behind
 Give this my car the foremost place
5. Go there 'why sittest thou at ease?' Make thou my chariot to
 be first.
 And bring the fame of victory near
6. Assist our car that seeks the prize. What can be easier for thee?
 So make thou us victorious

VARUNA

This is the only god of the Rig-Veda who has a moral character.
 'To him nearly all the prayers for the pardon of sin are addressed'

VARUNA, I 25

[This is one of the hymns addressed by Sunahsepa to Varuna, when bound to the sacrificial post (See page 37)]

1. Whatever law of thine, O god, O Varuna, as we are men,
 Day after day we violate
2. Give us not as a prey to death, to be destroyed by thee in wrath,
 To thy fierce anger when displeased
3. To gain thy mercy, Varuna, with hymns we bind thy heart,
 as binds
 The charioteer his tethered horse.
4. They flee from me dispirited, bent only on obtaining wealth,
 As to their nests the birds of air.
5. When shall we bring, to be appeased, the hero, lord of warrior
 might,
 Him, the far-seeing Varuna?
6. This, this with joy, they both accept in common
 fail
 The ever-faithful worshipper.

7. He knows the path of birds that fly through heaven, and, sovran
of the sea,
He knows the ships that are thereon.
8. True to his holy law, he knows the twelve moons with their
progeny
He knows the moon of later birth.
9. He knows the pathway of the wind, the spreading, high, and
mighty wind :
He knows the gods who dwell above,
10. Varuna, true to holy law, sits down among his people ; he,
Most wise, sits there to govern all.
11. From thence perceiving he beholds all wondrous things, both
what hath been,
And what hereafter will be done.
12. May that Aditya, very wise, make fair paths for us all our days :
May he prolong our lives for us.
13. Varuna, wearing golden mail, hath clad him in a shining robe .
His spies are seated round about
14. The god whom enemies threaten not, nor those who tyrannise
o'er men,
Nor those whose minds are bent on wrong
15. He who gives glory to mankind, not glory that is incomplete,
To our own bodies giving it.
16. Yearning for the wide-seeing one, my thoughts move onward
unto him.
As kine unto their pastures move
17. Once more together let us speak, because my meath[†] is brought .
priest-like,
Thou catest what is dear to thee
18. Now saw I him whom all may see, I saw his ear above the earth
He hath accepted these my songs.
19. Varuna, hear this call of mine : be gracious unto us this day .
Longing for help I cried to thee
20. Thou, O wise god, art lord of all, thou art the king of earth and
heaven
Hear, as thou goest on thy way
21. Release us from the upper bond, untie the bond between and
loose,
The bonds below, that I may live

VARUNA, V. 85

(Pardon is asked for sins committed in gambling)

1. Sing forth a hymn sublime and solemn, grateful to glorious
Varuna, imperial ruler,
Who hath struck out, like one who slays the victim, earth as a
skin to spread in front of Sûrya.

*The Days.

† Usually *mead*, a sweet liquor

2. In the tree-tops the air he hath extended, put milk in kine and vigorous speed in horses,
Set intellect in hearts, fire in the waters, Sûrya in heaven, and Soma on the mountain.
3. Varuna lets the big cask, opening down ward, flow through the heaven and earth and air's mid-region.
Therewith the universe's sovran waters earth as the shower of rain bedews the barley.
4. When Varuna is tain for milk he moistens the sky, the land, and earth to her foundation
Then straight the mountains clothe them in the rain-cloud. the heroes, putting forth their vigour, loose them
- 5 I will declare this mighty deed of magic, of glorious Varuna, the lord immortal;
Who standing in the firmament hath meted the earth out with the sun as with a measure.
6. None, verily, hath ever let or hindered this the most wise god's mighty deed of magic,
Whereby, with all their flood, the lucid rivers fill not one sea wherein they pour their water.
- 7 If we have sinned against the man who loves us, have ever wronged a brother, friend, or comrade,
The neighbour ever with us, or a stranger, O Varuna, remove from us the trespass.
- 8 If we, as gamesters cheat at play, have cheated done wrong unwittingly or sinned of purpose,
Cast all these sins away like loosened fetters, and Varuna, let us be thine own beloved.

VARUNA, VII. 86.

(Pardon of sin is asked and excuses made for it).

1. The tribes of men have wisdom through his greatness who stayed even spacious heaven and earth asunder,
Who urged the high and mighty sky to motion, and stars of old, and spread the earth before him.
2. With mine own heart I commune on the question how Varuna and I may be united.
What gift of mine will he accept unangered? When may I calmly look and find him gracious?
3. Fain to know this my sin I question others: I seek the wise, O Varuna, and ask them.
This one same answer even the sages gave me, Surely this Varuna is angry with thee
4. What, Varuna, hath been my chief transgression, that thou shouldst slay the friend who sings thy praises?
Tell me, unconquerable lord, and quickly sinless will I approach thee with mine homage.

5. Loose us from sins committed by our fathers, from those wherein we have ourselves offended.
O king, loose, like a thief who feeds the cattle, as from the cord a calf, set free Vasishta
6. Not our own will betrayed us, but seduction, thoughtlessness, Varuna! wine, dice, or anger.
The old is near to lead astray the younger; even slumber leadeth men to evil-doing.
7. Slavelike may I do service to the bounteous, serve, free from sin, the god inclined to anger.
This gentle lord gives wisdom to the simple, the wiser god leads on the wise to riches
8. O lord, O Varuna, may this laudation come close to thee, and he within thy spirit.
May it be well with us in rest and labour. Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

SOMA.

[The Ninth Mandala contains 114 hymns to Soma. He is addressed as Pavamāna, representing the juice as it flows through the wool which is used as a strainer, and thus undergoing purification. The hymns were intended to be sung while this process was going on. The Book contains endless repetitions]

I. SOMA PAVAMANA, IX. 1

1. In sweetest and most gladdening stream flow pure, O Soma,
on thy way,
Pressed out for Indra, for his drink.
2. Fiend-queller, friend of all men, he hath with the plank
attained unto
His place, his iron-fashioned home.
3. Be thou best Vritra-slayer, best granter of bliss, most liberal
Promote our wealthy princes' gifts.
4. Flow onward with thy juice unto the banquet of the mighty
gods:
Flow hither for our strength and fame.
5. O Indu,[†] we draw nigh to thee, with this one object day by
day To thee alone our prayers are said.
6. The daughter of the Sun by means of this eternal fleece makes
pure
Thy Soma that is gushing forth.
7. Ten sister maids[‡] of slender form seize him amid the press and
hold
Him firmly on the final day.
8. The virgins send him forth they blow the skin musician-like,
and fuse
The triple foe-repelling meath

* "O dropping (Soma)."

† The priest's fingers.

9. The inviolable mitch-kne round about him blend, for Indra's drink,
The fresh young Soma with their milk.
10. In the wild raptures of this draught, Indra slays all the
Vritras : he,
The hero pours his wealth on us.

SOMA PAVAMANA, IX. 113.

[In this hymn, where the joys of heaven are more fervently implored than in other parts of the Rig-Veda, Soma is addressed as the god from whom the gift of future happiness is expected]

7. O Pavamāna, place me in that deathless, undecaying world
Wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre
shines. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
8. Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the king, Vivas-
van's son,
Where is the secret shrine of heaven, where are those waters
young and fresh. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake
9. Make me immortal in that realm where they move even as
they list,
In the third sphere of inmost heaven where lucid worlds are
full of light. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake
10. Make me immortal in that realm of eager wish and strong desire,
The region of the golden Sun, where food and full delight are
found. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake
11. Make me immortal in that land where happiness and trans-
ports, where
Joys and felicities combine, and longing wishes are fulfilled.
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake

Far fewer hymns are addressed to the other gods. One to each of the principal will be quoted.

VAYU, I. 2.

(The second hymn of the Rig-Veda is addressed to the god of winds)

1. Beautiful Vāyu come, for thee these Soma-drops have been
prepared :
Drink of them, hearken to our call.
2. Knowing the days, with Soma-juice poured forth, the singers
call to thee,
O Vāyu, with their hymns of praise.
3. Vayu, thy penetrating voice goes forth unto the worshipper,
Far-spreading for the Soma draught.
4. Here, Indra-Vāyu, is the juice, come for our offered dainties'
sake.
The drops are yearning for you both.

* * Yama, son of Vivasvan.

5. Vāyu and Indra, well ye know libations, rich in sacred rites !
So come ye hither rapidly.
6. Vāyu and Indra, come to what the Soma-presser hath prepared :
Soon, heroes, even with resolve.
7. Mitra, of holy strength, I call, and foe-destroying Varuna,
Who make the oil-fed rite complete.
8. Mitra and Varuna, through Law, lovers and cherishers of Law,
Have ye obtained your mighty power.
9. Our sages, Mitra-Varuna, of wide dominion, strong by birth,
Vouchsafe us strength that worketh well

PUSHAN, I 42.

(Protection in travelling and other blessings are asked)

1. Shorten our ways, O Pūshan, move aside obstruction in the path
Go close before us, cloud-born god.
2. Drive, Pūshan, from our road the wolf, the wicked inauspicious
wolf,
Who lies in wait to injure us.
3. Who lurks about the path we take, the robber with a guileful
heart
Far from the road chase him away.
4. Tread with thy foot and trample out the firebrand of the wicked
one,
The double-tongued, whose'er he be
5. Wise Pūshan, wonder-worker, we claim of thee now the aid
wherewith
Thou furtheredst our sires of old.
6. So, lord of all prosperity, best wielder of the golden sword,
Make riches easy to be won
7. Past all pursuers lead us, make pleasant our path and fair to
tread O Pūshan, find thou power for this.
8. Lead us to meadows rich in grass send on our way no early
heat. O Pūshan, find thou power for this,
9. Be gracious to us, fill us full, give, feed us, and invigorate
O Pūshan, find thou power for this
10. No blame have we for Pūshan, him we magnify with songs
of praise
We seek the mighty one for wealth

USHAS, VII 77.

(About twenty hymns are addressed to Ushas, the goddess of the dawn).

1. She hath shone brightly like a youthful woman stirring to
motion every living creature
Agni hath come to feed on mortals' fuel She hath made light
and chased away the darkness
2. Turned to this All, far-spreading, she hath risen and shone in
brightness with white robes about her.
She hath beamed forth lovely with golden colours, mother of
kine, guide of the days she bringeth.

- 3 Bearing the gods' own eye, auspicious lady, leading her course
white and fair to look on,
Distinguished by her beams Dawn shines apparent, come forth
to all the world with wondrous treasure.
4. Draw nigh with wealth and dawn away the foeman : prepare for
us wide pasture free from danger.
Drive away those who hate us, bring us riches pour bounty,
opulent lady, on the singer.
5. Send thy most excellent beams to shine and light us, giving
us lengthened days, O Dawn, O goddess.
Granting us food, thou who hast all things precious, and bounty
rich in chariots, kine, and horses
- 6 O Ushas, nobly-born, daughter of Heaven, whom the Vasishthas
with their hymns make mighty,
Bestow thou on us vast and glorious riches Preserve us ever
more, ye gods, with blessings.

VISHNU. I. 156.

(In the Rig-Veda Vishnu occupies a very subordinate place).

1. Far shining, widely named, going thy wonted way, fed with the
oil, be helpful, Mitra-like, to us.
So, Vishnu, e'en the wise must swell thy song of praise, and he
who hath oblations pay thee solemn rites.
- 2 He who brings gifts to him the ancient and the last, to Vishnu
who ordains, together with his spouse,
Who tells the lofty birth of him the lofty one, shall verily
surpass in glory e'en his peer.
- 3 Him have ye satisfied, singers, as well ye know, primeval germ
of Order even from his birth
Ye, knowing e'en his name have told it forth, may we, Vishnu
enjoy the grace of thee the mighty one.
- 4 The sovran Varuna and both the Asvins wait on this the will
of him who guides the Marut host.
Vishnu hath power supreme and might that finds the day, and
with his friend unbars the stable of the kine.
5. Even he the heavenly one who came for fellowship, Vishnu to
Indra, godly to the godlier,
Who, maker, throned in three worlds, helps the Aryan man, and
gives the worshipper his share of holy law

RUDRA, VII. 46.

(Rudra is supposed by some to be the original of Siva).

- 1 To Rudra bring these songs, whose bow is firm and strong, the
god of heavenly nature, with swift-flying shafts,
Disposer, conqueror whom none may overcome, armed with
sharp-pointed weapons : may he hear our call.

2. He through his lordship thinks on beings of the earth, on heavenly beings through his high imperial sway.
Come willingly to our doors that gladly welcome thee and heal all sickness, Rudra, in our families.
3. May thy bright arrow which, shot down by thee from heaven, fieth upon the earth, pass us uninjured by.
Thou, very gracious god, hast thousand medicines : inflict no evil on our sons or progeny.
4. Slay us not, nor abandon us, O Rudra let not thy noose, when thou art angry, seize us.
Give us trimmed grass and rule over the living. Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

VISVEDESAS, VIII. 30

(The gods are here addressed collectively.)

1. Not one of you, ye gods, is small, none of you is a feeble child : All of you, verily, are great.
2. Thus be ye lauded, ye destroyers of the foe, ye three and thirty deities,
The gods of man, the holy ones
3. As such defend and succour us, with benedictions speak to us .
Lead us not from our fathers' and from Manu's path into the distance far away.
4. Ye deities who stay with us, and all ye gods of all mankind,
Give us your wide protection, give shelter for cattle and for steed

GODDESSES, I. 22.

[This hymn is addressed to the Asvins and others. The verses referring to the goddesses are quoted.]

9. O Agni, hither bring to us the willing spouses of the gods,
And Tvashtar, to the Soma-draught
10. Most youthful Agni, hither bring their spouses, Hotrá, Bháratí,
Varútrí, Dhishana, for aid
11. Spouses of heroes, goddesses, with whole wings may they
come to us,
With great protection and with aid.
12. Indráni, Varunáni, and Agnáyí hither I invite,
For weal to drink the Soma-juice.

YAMA, X. 14.

[The Hymn is a funeral address, partly to Yama, the god of the dead, and partly to the soul of the departed whose body is being consumed on the pile. Yama was originally the first man who died and so showed the souls of his successors the way to the home of the departed —Griffith. Only part is quoted.]

1. Honour the king with thine oblations, Yama, Vivasván's sons
who gathers men together,
Who travelled to the lofty heights, above us, who searches out
and shows the path to many.

2. Yama first found for us the road to travel : this pasture never
can be taken from us.
Men born on earth tread their own paths that lead them
whither our ancient Fathers have departed.

[The following verses are addressed to the spirit of the dead man whose funeral rites are being celebrated.]

7. Go forth, go forth upon the ancient pathways whereon our
sires of old have gone before us.
There shalt thou look on both the kings enjoying their sacred
food, god Varuna and Yama
8. Meet Yama, meet the Fathers (Pitris), meet the merit of free
or ordered acts in highest heaven.
Leave sin and evil, seek anew thy dwelling, and bright with
glory wear another body
9. Go hence, depart ye, fly in all directions : this place for him
the Fathers have provided
Yama bestows on him a place to rest in adorned with days and
beams of light and waters.
10. Run and outspeed the two dogs, Sarama's offspring, brindled,
four-eyed, upon thy happy pathway
Draw nigh, then to the gracious-minded Fathers where they
rejoice in company with Yama

HYMN SANCTIONING WIDOW MARRIAGE. X. 18

[This hymn is claimed to be written by a son of Yama. The barbarous practice of widow burning was based upon a mistranslation of verse 7. The word *Agne* was altered into *Agne*.] Mrityu, the god of death, is distinct from Yama. Only some verses are quoted.]

1. Go hence, O Death, pursue thy special pathway apart from
that which gods are wont to travel.
To thee I say it who hast eyes and hearest touch not our
offspring, injure not our heroes.

[Verse 2 is addressed to the kinsman of the deceased. *Effacing Mrityu's footstep* means avoiding a path of death.]

2. As ye have come effacing Mrityu's footstep, to farther times
prolonging your existence,
May ye be rich in children and possessions, cleansed, purified,
and meet for sacrificing.
7. Let these unwidowed dames with noble husbands adorn them-
selves with fragrant balm and unguent.
Decked with fair jewels, tearless, free from sorrow, first let the
matrons pass unto their houses.

* The verse is addressed to the evil spirits that haunt the place of cremation.

[Verse 8 is spoken by the husband's brother, etc., to the wife of the dead man, who makes her leave her husband's body.]

8. Rise, come unto the world of life, O woman. come he is lifeless by whose side thou liest.
Wifhood with this thy husband was thy portion, who took thy hand and wooed thee as a lover.

[Verse 10 is addressed to the body. The urn containing the ashes was buried. The earth is asked not to press heavily upon it.]

10. Betake thee to the lap of earth the mother, of earth far-spread-
ing, very kind and gracious.
Young dame, wool-soft, unto the guerdon-giver, may she pre-
serve thee from Destruction's bosom
11. Heave thyself, Earth, nor press thee downward heavily, afford
him easy access, gently tending him
Earth, as a mother wraps her skirt about her child, so cover
him.

ORIGIN OF THE GODS, X. 72.

The poet attempts to describe the origin of the gods and the universe

1. Let us with tuneful skill proclaim these generations of the gods,
That one may see them when these hymns are chanted in a
future age.
2. These Brahmanaspati produced with blast and smelting, like
a smith.
Existence, in an earlier age of gods, from non-existence sprang.
3. Existence in the earliest age of gods, from non-existence, sprang.
Thereafter were the regions' born. This sprang from the
Productive Power
4. Earth sprang from the Productive Power, the regions from the
earth were born.
Daksha was born of Aditi, and Aditi was Daksha's child
5. For Aditi, O Daksha, she who is thy daughter, was brought
forth.
After her were the blessed gods born of immortal parentage.
6. When ye, O gods, in yonder deep close-clasping one another
stood,
Thence, as of dancers, from your feet a thickening cloud of dust
arose.
7. When, O ye gods, like Yatis,† ye caused all existing things to
grow,
Then ye brought Súrya forward who was lying hidden in the
sea.
8. Eight are the sons of Aditi who from her body sprang to life.
With seven she went to meet the gods. she cast Mártanda ‡ far
away.

Regions, the quarters of the horizon.

† Devotees.

‡ Súrya.

9. So with her seven sons Aditi went forth to meet the earlier age
She brought Mārtānda thitherward to spring to life and die again

CREATION, X. 81.

[Visvakarman is represented as the Creator of all things and architect of the world.]

- 1 He who sate down as Hotar-priest the Rishi, our father, offering
up all things existing,—
He, seeking through his wish a great possession, came among
men on earth as archetypal
2. What was the place whereon he took his station? What was it
that supported him? How was it?
Whence Visvakarman, seeing all, producing the earth, with
mighty power disclosed the heavens.
- 3 He who hath eyes on all sides round about him, a mouth on all
sides, arms and feet on all sides.
He, the sole god, producing earth and heaven, weldeth them with
his arms as wings, together.
- 4 What was the tree, what wood in sooth produced it, from which
they fashioned out the earth and heaven?
Ye thoughtful men inquire within your spirit whereon he stood
when he established all things.
5. Thine highest, lowest, sacrificial natures, and these thy mid-
most here, O Visvakarman,
Teach thou thy friends at sacrifice, O blessed, and come thyself,
exalted, to our worship.
6. Bring thou thyself, exalted with oblation, O Visvakarman,
Earth and Heaven to worship,
Let other men around us live in folly. here let us have a rich
and liberal patron.
7. Let us invoke to-day, to aid our labour, the lord of speech, the
thought-swift Visvakarman.
May he hear kindly all our invocations who gives all bliss for
aid whose works are righteous.

PURUSHA,* X. 90.

["This pantheistic hymn, which is generally called the *Purusha-sukta*, is of comparatively recent origin, and appears to be an attempt to harmonize the two ideas of sacrifice and creation. It contains the only passage in the Rig-Veda which enumerates the four castes"—Griffith. In the Rig-Veda the castes issuing from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet is probably only an allegory. In *Manu* and the *Purāṇas* it is represented as a literal statement of fact.]

- 1 A thousand heads had Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet
On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.†

* Purusha represents Man personified and regarded as the soul and original source of the universe, the personal and life giving principle in all animated things.—Griffith.

† The region of the heart of man

2. This Purusha is all that yet hath been and all that is to be ;
The lord of immortality which waxes greater still by food.
3. So mighty is his greatness, yea, greater than this is Purusha.
All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths eternal life
in heaven.
4. With three-fourths Purusha went up: one-fourth of him again
was here.
Thence he strode out to every side over what eats not and what
eats
5. From him Viráj was born, again Purusha from Viráj was born.
As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward o'er
the earth.
6. When gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusha as their offering,
Its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn, summer was the
wood.
7. They balméd as victim on the grass Purusha born in earliest
time.
With him the deities and all Sádhyas† and Rishis sacrificed.
8. From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat‡ was gathered
up.
He formed the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and
tame.
9. From that great general sacrifice Richas and Sáma-hymns were
born
Therefrom the metres were produced, the Yajus had its birth
from it.
10. From it were horses born, from it all creatures with two rows
of teeth
From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were
born
11. When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make ?
What do they call his mouth, his arms ? What do they call
his thighs and feet ?
12. The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rájanya
made.
His thighs became the Vaisya, from his feet the Sudra was
produced.
13. The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the
Sun had birth.
Indra and Angi from his mouth were born, and Váyn from his
breath.
14. Forth from his navel came mid-air ; the sky was fashioned from
his head,
Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions. Thus they
formed the worlds

* Viráj is said to have come, in the form of the mundane egg from Adī-Purusha,
as primeval Purusha. Or Viráj may be the female counterpart of Purusha.—Griffith.

† A class of celestial beings, probably ancient divine sacrificers.

‡ The mixture of curds and butter.

15. Seven fencing-logs^{*} had he, thrice seven layers of fuel were prepared,
When the gods, offering sacrifice, bound, as then victim
Purusha
16. Gods, sacrificing, sacrificed the victim these were the earliest
holy ordinances,
The mighty ones attained the height of heaven, there were the
Sādhyas, gods of old, are dwelling.

THE SAMA VEDA.

As already mentioned, this consists almost entirely of extracts from the Rig-Veda. Hymns, portions of hymns, and detached verses are transposed and re-arranged without reference to their original order, and there are frequent variations from the text of the Rig-Veda. The first hymn is considered a later addition. The second hymn, as translated by Griffith, is given to afford some idea of the composition of the book.

1. O Agni, God, the people sing reverent praise to thee for strength.
With terrors trouble thou the foe! viii. 64, 10.
2. I seek with song your messenger, oblation-bearer, lord of wealth,
Immortal, best at sacrifice. iv. 8, 1.
3. Still turning to their aim in thee the sacrificer's sister hymns
Have come to thee before the wind viii. 91, 93.
4. To thee illumines of night, O Agni, day by day, with prayer,
Bringing thee reverence, we come. i. 1, 7.
5. Help, thou who knowest lauds, this work, a lovely hymn in
Rudra's praise,
Adorable in every house. i. 27, 10
6. To this fair sacrifice to drink the milky draught art thou called
forth;
O Agni, with the Maruts come! i. 19, 1.
7. With homage will I reverence thee, Agni, like a long-tailed
steed,
Imperial lord of holy rites. i. 27, 1
8. As Auvik and as Brigu called, as Apnavāna called, I call.
The radiant Agni robed with sea viii. 91, 4.
9. When he enkindles Agni, man should with his heart attend
the song:
I kindle Agni till he glows. viii. 91, 22
10. Then, verily, they see the light refulgent of primeval seed,
Kindled on yonder side of heaven. viii. 6, 30.

* Pieces of wood laid round a sacrificial fire to keep it together.

YAJUR VEDA.

As already mentioned, this Veda contains the verses to be muttered by the Adhvaryu priests in sacrifices.

Directions are given about the New and Full Moon sacrifices, the Horse sacrifice, the Purushamedha or human sacrifices, &c. The Hymns are too long to be quoted.

In the account of the Horse sacrifice, the priests and queens are represented as abusing each other in the most filthy language.

ATHARVA VEDA

Next to the Rig-Veda, this is the most important of the Vedas. A general account of it has been given. A few of its spells are quoted below. Many more will be found in the *Atharva Veda*, 8vo 76 pp. 2} Annas.

A Charm to cure Fever. VII 116.

A frog, which has two strings of different colours tied round it, is supposed to relieve the patient of his disease.

- 1 Homage to him the burning one, shaker, exciter, violent !
Homage to him the cold who acts according to his ancient will !
- 2 May he, the lawless one, who comes alternate or two following days, pass over and possess the frog.

A Charm to Cure Leprosy I 23

- 1 O Plant, thou sprangest up at night, dusky, dark-coloured, black in hue !
So, Rajani, re-colour thou these ashy spots, this leprosy
- 2 Expel the leprosy, remove from him the spots and ashy hue .
Let thine own colour come to thee . drive far away the specks of white
- 3 Dark is the place of thy repose, dark is the place thou dwellest in ,
Dusky and dark, O Plant, art thou , remove from him each speck and spot
- 4 I with my spell have chased away the pallid sign of leprosy
Caused by infection, on the skin, sprung from the body, from the bones.

A Charm to obtain Invisibility.—In Hymn 27, Book I the cast skins of serpents are employed as an amulet to make travellers invisible to robbers—

1. There on the bank those Vipers lie, thrice-seven, having cast their skins .
Now we with their discarded sloughs bind close and cover up the eyes of the malicious highway thief

Charm against Evil Dreams and Demons. VII 23

The fearful dream, and indigence, the monster, the malignant
hags,

All female fiends of evil name and wicked tongue we drive
afar.

A Charm to protect corn from Lightning and Drought VII. 11.

That far-spread thunder, sent from thee, which cometh on all
this world, a high celestial signal—

Strike not, O God, our growing corn with lightning, nor kill it
with the burning rays of Sūrya.

Charm for the Destruction of Enemies VII 57

Like a tree struck by lightning may the man be withered from
the root,

Who curseth us who curse him not, or, when we curse him,
curseth us

Release from Debt incurred without intantion of Payment VI. 119

- 1 The debt which I incur, not gaming, Agni¹ and, not intending
to repay, acknowledge,
That may Vaisvānara, the best, our sovran, carry away into the
world of virtue

A Charm for success in Gambling. IV 38

- 1 Either I call the Apsaras victorious, who plays with skill,
Her who comes freely forth to view, who wins the stakes in
games of dice
- 2 Dancing around us with the dice, winning the wager by her play,
May she obtain the stake for us and gain the victory with skill
May she approach us full of strength, let them not win this
wealth of ours

REVIEW

Some general remarks may now be made based on the
preceding pages

THE GODS OF THE VEDAS.

THE RELIGION OF THE VEDAS POLYTHEISTIC.

Classification of the Gods. "It is difficult," says Max Müller,
"to treat of the so-called gods celebrated in the Vedas according to
any system, for the simple reason that the concepts of these gods
and the hymns addressed to them sprang up spontaneously and
without any pre-established plan. Many functions are shared

* The Apsaras, the wives of the Gandharvas, were supposed to be fond
of gambling and able to influence the gambler's luck

in common by various gods, no attempt having yet been made at organising the whole body of the gods, sharply separating one from the other, and subordinating all of them to several, or, in the end, to one supreme head."*

Number. The gods are generally spoken of as being "thrice-eleven" in number. "Ye gods, who are eleven in the sky, who are eleven on earth, and who in your glory are eleven dwellers in the (atmospheric) waters, do ye welcome this our offering." I. 139. II "Agni, bring hither according to thy wont, and gladden the three and thirty gods with their wives." III. 6. 10.

The 33 gods did not include them all. Hymn viii. 35, 3 makes the following additions

With all the deities, three times eleven, here in close alliance
with the Maruts, Bhṛigus, Floods,
Accordant, of one mind with Sūrya and with dawn
O Asvins, drink the Soma-juice.

In Book iv. 9, 9 the gods are mentioned as being much more numerous. "Three hundred, three thousand, thirty and nine gods have worshipped Agni."

Monotheism is a belief in the existence of one God only, *polytheism* is a belief in a plurality of gods. Max Muller says, "If we must employ technical terms, the religion of the Veda is polytheism, not monotheism." The 27th hymn of the first Mandala of the Rig-Veda concludes as follows

"Glory to gods, the mighty and the lesser, glory to gods the
younger and the elder."

Let us, if we have power, pay the gods worship, no better
prayer than that, ye gods, acknowledge."

As already mentioned, the gods are repeatedly said to "be thrice-eleven in number." Whitney says: "The great mass of Vedic hymns are absorbed in the praise and worship of the multitudinous deities of the proper Vedic pantheon, and ignore all conception of a unity of which these are to be accounted the varying manifestations."

There are different kinds of polytheism. The ancient Greeks and Romans had a more or less organised system of gods, different in power and rank, and all subordinate to a supreme God, a Zeus or Jupiter. In the Veda, the gods worshipped as supreme by each sect stand still side by side, no one is always first, no one is always last. Even gods of a decidedly inferior and limited character assume occasionally in the eyes of a devoted poet a supreme place above all other gods

* *India What can it Teach us?* pp. 148, 149.

"It would be easy to find," says Max Müller, "in the numerous hymns of the Veda, passages in which almost every single god is represented as supreme and absolute. In the first hymn of the second Mandala, Agni is called the ruler of the universe, the lord of men, the wise king, the father, the brother, the son, and friend of men, nay, all the powers and names of the others are distinctly ascribed to Agni. Indra is celebrated as the strongest god in the hymns as well as in the Bráhmaṇas, and the burden of one of the songs of the tenth book is, *Viśvasmad Indra uttarah*. "Indra is greater than all." Of Soma it is said that he was born great, and that he conquers every one. He is called the king of the world, he has the power to prolong the life of men, and in one sense he is called the maker of heaven and earth, of Agni, of Sūrya, of Indra and Vishnu

"If we read the next hymn, which is addressed to Varuna, we perceive that the god here invoked is, to the mind of the poet, supreme and all-mighty."*

Max Müller coined a word, *henotheism*,† to express what he seems to regard as a "peculiar character of the ancient Vedic religion." It denotes that each of several divinities is regarded as supreme, and worshipped without reference to the rest. The same applies largely to modern Hinduism. Each person may have his special god, *ishta devata*, but whom he may change for another if required. At the same time he may believe in many others. Henotheism is simply a form of polytheism.

Only one being can be supreme, but a Hindu does not find any difficulty in accepting the most contradictory statements. As well may it be said that all the boys in a class are first.

The hymns of the Rig-Veda were composed by many authors, extending over a period of several centuries. Hence the theology is often inconsistent. The polytheism of some hymns is very marked and distinct. In others it is hazy. Some hymns, in the absence of all others, might be regarded as monotheistic.

Some suppose that the Indo-Aryan worship in *pre*-Vedic times was monotheistic. Max Müller says

"There is a monotheism which precedes the polytheism of the Veda and even in the invocation of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the midst of an idolatrous phraseology, like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds."

The great Heaven-Father, Dyaus Pitar, may at a remote period have been the only object of worship. In Vedic times, however, polytheism prevailed.

Deities sprung from the same source had a tendency, after a very short career of their own, to run together. Dyaus was the

* *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 533, 534.

† *Henos*, one *theos*, god.

sky as the ever-present light. Varuna was the sky as the all-embracing. Mitra was the sky as lighted up by the morning. Sūrya was the sun as shining in the sky. Savitri was the sun as bringing light and life. Vishnu was the sun as striding with three steps across the sky; Indra appeared in the sky as the giver of rain, Rudra and the Maruts passed along the sky in thunderstorms; Vata and Vāyu were the winds of the air, Agni was fire and light.

Hence it happened constantly that what was told of one deity could be told of another likewise; the same epithets are shared by many, the same stories are told of different gods.

Some of the old poets go so far as to declare that one god is identical with others. In the Atharva Veda (XIII.3, 13) we read "In the evening Agni becomes Varuna, he becomes Mitra when rising in the morning; having become Savitri he passes through the sky, having become Indra he warms the heaven in the middle." Sūrya, the sun, is identified with Indra and Agni, Savitri with Mitra and Pūshan, Indra with Varuna Dyaus, the sky, with Parjanya, the rain-god. One poet says (Rig-Veda I 164, 46) "That which is one, sages name it in various ways—they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan." Another poet says "The wise poets represent by their words Him who is one with beautiful wings in many ways."

"The formation of dual deities," says Max Müller, "seems quite peculiar to the Veda. The names of two gods who shared certain functions in common were formed into a compound with a dual termination, and this compound became the name of a new deity. Thus we have hymns not only to Mitra and Varuna, but to Mitṛavarunau as one, nay, sometimes they are called the two Mitras and the two Varunas."*

Sometimes all the gods were comprehended by one common name, *Visve Devas*, the All-gods, and prayers were addressed to them in their collective capacity.

Dr. John Muir, who has given special attention to the subject, says that the hymns, "are the productions of simple men, who, under the influence of the most impressive phenomena of nature, saw everywhere the presence and agency of divine powers, who imagined that each of the great provinces of the universe was directed and animated by its own separate deity, and who had not yet risen to a clear idea of one supreme creator and governor of all things. This is shown not only by the special functions assigned to particular gods, but in many cases by the very names which they bear, corresponding to those of some of the elements or of the celestial luminaries."

Pantheism Developed—The tendency towards unity shown by some of the Vedic poets, did not end in *monotheism*, but in

* Hibbert Lectures, p. 291.

† Studies, p. 142

pantheism, that the universe, as a whole, is God. Both the hymns and the Bráhmaṇas teach a polytheistic religion. They form the *Karmakāṇḍa*, 'the department of works.' The Upanishads, philosophical treatises at the end of some of the Bráhmaṇas, form the *Jñānakāṇḍa* 'the department of knowledge.' According to the Upanishads there is only one real Being in the universe, who also constitutes the universe. This pantheistic doctrine is everywhere traceable in some of the more ancient Upanishads, although often wrapped up in mysticism and allegory. It is clearly expressed in the well-known formula of three words from the Chhândogya Upanishad, *ekam evāḍ-vītiyam*, 'one only without a second.'

Rammohun Roy, as already mentioned, despised the hymns of the Vedas, he spoke of the Upanishads as the Vedas, and thought that they taught monotheism. The Chhândogya formula was also adopted by Keshab Chunder Sen. But it does not mean that there is no second God, but that there is no second any thing—a totally different doctrine.

Later Development of Polytheism—While the Vedic poets were generally satisfied with "thrice-eleven" or thirty-three deities, in the Purāṇas they were converted into 33 crores,—a number greater than every man, woman and child in the country. But along with this pantheistic views are also held.

The Religion of the Vedas Polytheistic—The Rev Nehemiah Goreh thus states the case:

"The most ignorant idolaters will tell you, if you will ask them, that there is only one God, that is, the Supreme Being, and they will never say that there is more than one God. But if any one would say that the Hindus of the present time worship many gods also though they may acknowledge that there is only one God, and that they worship idols, and therefore they cannot be monotheists, then I would ask, Was not the same the case with the authors of those ancient hymns of the Rig-Veda? They may have spoken sometimes here and there of God, but the chief objects of their devotion were Agni, Vāyu, Indra, and many other real or imaginary beings. And does the worship of a god in an idol appear to any one worse than the worship of fire and wind? Why so? Because idols seem to be very mean things, but fire and wind are grander and finer elements? Then such a one ought not to find much fault with any that worships gods in images made of gold and silver.

"We, then, all believed that there was only one God and called Him Omnipotent, Omniscient and so on, and learned writers of our most modern philosophical and religious books propound elaborate arguments to prove the existence of such a God, and yet we, and they worshipped, at the same time, a multitude of gods also. It is then really incomprehensible to me why any one should say that there is monotheism in the Rig-Veda, because in some rare passages of it God seems to be spoken of, and why he should not think that there is

monotheism in all, even the most modern, books of Hinduism, and why he should not call every Hindu a monotheist.”

CHARACTER OF THE VEDIC GODS.

More than 2,000 years ago, Aristotle, a famous Greek philosopher, said, “Men create the gods after their own image, not only with regard to their form, but also with regard to their manner of life.” The gods of the Hindus are typical of themselves at different periods in their history. In Vedic times Indra is the soma-drinking, martial god who recovers the celestial cows from the fort of Pani, and helps the Aryans in their wars against the aborigines. In the Purānas, “Indra is a gorgeous king of a luxurious and somewhat voluptuous court, where dance and music occupy most of his time. Indra is said to have attained his proud position by his austere penances, and is in constant fear lest any mortals on earth attain the same rank by the same means.”†

The Vedic gods were like the early Aryans, especially Indra, the highest of them. Like themselves, he is represented as intensely fond of the soma juice, and as delighting in war. He was a polygamist, for Hymn x. 145 is the exaltation of Indrāni over her rival wives. In Hymn viii. 85, 4, Indra is, nevertheless, styled the “holiest of the holy.” The Rev. Nehemiah Goreh says

• “The Shadvinsha Brāhmaṇa of the Sāma Veda prescribes a ceremony in which the god Indra is to be invoked in these words, ‘O adulterous lover of Ahalyā!’ | Now, that the Veda should prescribe the worship of a god who is believed to be an adulterer itself indicates a terrible corruption of the moral sense, but what is still more terrible is the fact that this god is to be invoked by those words as by an endearing appellation, and so this act of his adultery is supposed to be a matter of glory to him! Men whose moral sense was corrupted in such a manner could not have had proper notions of holiness.”

Max Muller says, “Some of the poets of the Veda ascribe to the gods sentiments and passions unworthy of the deity, such as anger, revenge, delight in material sacrifices.” As already mentioned, Varuna is the only Vedic deity who is described as possessing high moral attributes. Even he gradually disappears, and his character is changed. There is not a hymn addressed to him in the Tenth Book. The Mahābhārat describes him as having carried off Bhadrā, the wife of Utathya.

* *The Supposed and Real Doctrines of Hinduism*, pp. 14, 15.

† Dutt's *Ancient India*, Vol. III p. 278.

‡ अहल्यायै नमः ।

§ *The Supposed and Real Doctrines of Hinduism*, p. 29.

Still, though the moral standard of the Vedic gods, with the exception mentioned, is low, they are, on the whole, far superior to the later creations of Hindu mythology.

THE RELATION OF THE WORSHIPPERS TO THE GODS.

Varuna, from his majesty and purity, was regarded with awe by the early Aryans; but he was dethroned by Indra, who was looked upon both as a mighty god and as one who would join with them in drinking the soma juice.

The Rev. K. S. Macdonald has the following remarks on the light in which the gods were generally regarded: "In one word the relation was very familiar. There is little or no sense of love or fear, no sense of the holy or the pure or the spiritual. They treat the gods as of themselves, only more powerful, subject to the same weaknesses, the same desires, the same appetites. The Soma the clarified butter, the horses, etc., in which the worshippers delighted were supposed to be sources of still greater pleasure to their gods. The strength, the stimulus which they themselves experienced, or imagined they experienced, from their drinking of the Soma juice, they supposed their gods to receive in still greater measure. . . The worshipper offers even to Varuna sweet things which the god is sure to like, and then appeals to him 'Once more together let us speak, because my meath is brought, priest-like, thou eatest what is dear to thee.' I. 25, 17. In another hymn Vasishtha addresses Indra 'Vasishtha hath poured forth his prayers, desiring to milk thee like a cow in goodly pasture,' VII. 18. 4.

Barth says, "The idea that it is from the offerings the gods derive their strength, recurs at every step in the Hymns."

Worship a Bargain There is little love or gratitude expressed in the hymns. The gods and the worshippers are like traders in a bargain. "I give thee this for that." Indra is thus addressed. "Be thou no trafficker with us, (I 33-3) do not give sparingly, nor demand too much."

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says. "Canon Rawlinson points out the relation as almost the very opposite to what one would expect—the worshipper being the lord and master, the worshipped being the servant, if not the slave: 'The offerings of praise and sacrifice, and especially the offering of the Soma juice, were considered not merely to please the god who was the object of them, but to lay him under a binding obligation, and almost to compel him to grant the request of the worshippers.' " *

* *The Vedic Religion*, p. 137.

In later times this idea was still more strongly developed. The performance of austerities for a continued period was supposed to constrain the gods to grant the desired boon, although fraught with peril and even destruction to themselves.

THE PRAYERS OF THE VEDAS.

Prayer is an essential part of religion. Belief in God leads a man to ask Him for such blessings as he thinks himself to need.

Prayer is an index both to a man's own character and to the supposed nature of the deity he worships. Most people are worldly, and their prayers are only for temporal blessings, for wealth, for sons, recovery from sickness, deliverance from earthly enemies, &c. Only a few are spiritually minded, and seek for pardon of sin, holiness, and communion with God.

The Vedic Aryans had a firm belief in the virtue of prayer. The Vedas are largely a collection of prayers.

The hymns usually begin by praising the gods for their supposed excellencies, their great deeds, sometimes even for their personal beauty.

BLESSINGS ASKED

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says

"One thing is very clear to every reader of the Veda, that the desires of the hymnists were ever towards cows, horses, offspring (sons), long life on earth, victory over their earthly enemies, etc.; that the requests for spiritual blessings, or an inheritance in heaven, or immortality, were very few in number, and not very clearly expressed. The visible and sensible, as far as their hopes and wishes were concerned, occupied their thoughts, almost to the complete exclusion of the invisible and the spiritual" *

Wealth.—This, in one form or another, is the subject of nearly every prayer, or forms one of the petitions, "Bring us the wealth for which we long" (VIII 45, 42) is the conclusion in many hymns.

A hymn to Varuna, in which deliverance from sin is sought, ends with, "King, may I never lack well-ordered riches." II. 2. 8, 11.

Rain.—This is frequently asked. Indra is chiefly adored because he slays with his bolts the demon who withholds the rain.

Sons.—These are added to the petition for wealth. "May the wealth-giver (Agni) grant us wealth with heroes (sons)."

* *The Vedic Religion*, pp. 48-49.

Long Life.—The Aryans, coming from a cold country, first reckoned their years by “winters.” In later hymns “autumns” are substituted.

“Grant unto us to see a hundred autumns, ours be the happy lives of our forefathers.” II. 27, 10.

Preservation from Danger.—Amidst constant wars with the aborigines, this request frequently occurs in the hymns. But safety is also sought from other dangers, as snake-bites.

Destruction of Enemies.—Next to wealth, this is one of the most frequent petitions. Some prayers include all who are unfriendly; others single out individuals.

Quotations have been given from Hymn 87 Book X. addressed to Agni, the Slayer of Rākshasas.

Pardon of Sin.—Prayers of this nature chiefly occur in the hymns to Varuna, the principal of which have been quoted. A few other extracts may be given.

“Aditi, Mitra, Varuna, forgive us however we have erred and sinned against you.” II. 27. 14.

“Prolong our days of life (ye Asvins), wipe out our trespasses.” I. 157. 4.

“Save us (Visvedevas) from uncommitted and committed sin, preserve us from all sin to-day for happiness” X. 63. 8.

Future World.—The references to this are few, and chiefly found in the Ninth and Tenth Books. The great desire of the Aryans was to enjoy the present life.

The hymns of the Rig-Veda, says Muir, “contain, as far as I am aware, no permanent mention of the future punishment of the wicked. Nevertheless Yama is to some extent an object of terror.”*

SUPPOSED WISDOM OF ANCIENTS.

An error has prevailed in all countries and in all ages to regard persons who lived long ago as the ancients—very old and very wise,—while people now living are looked upon as children. The very opposite is the case. *We are the ancients*, those who lived long ago are the children. The world is thousands of years older now than it was then.

In Vedic times there were no books, and printing was unknown. All the valuable knowledge which has been gained in any quarter of the globe during the last twenty-five centuries is now at command. During these many years, lakhs of learned men have been adding to our stores. Every fresh discovery is

* *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V. 302.

now flashed by the electric telegraph, and by means of newspapers is at once made known to the whole civilised world.

The late distinguished Indian statesman, Sir Madhava Row, says in a Convocation Address.

"Avoid the mischievous error of supposing that our ancient forefathers were wiser than men of the present times. It cannot be true. Every year of an individual's life he acquires additional knowledge. Knowledge thus goes on accumulating year by year. Similarly every generation adds to the knowledge of the previous generation. Under such a process the accumulation of knowledge in a century is very large. To assert therefore that men possessed more knowledge scores of centuries ago than at the present day is manifestly absurd.

"Calmly and carefully reflect and you are certain to agree with me. Hesitate not therefore to prefer modern knowledge to ancient knowledge. A blind belief in the omniscience of our forefathers is mischievous, because it perpetuates errors and tends to stagnation."

An adult deserves no credit for being wiser than when a young child. The present generation should be,

"The heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time."

The Vedas represent the comparative *Childhood of the World*.

ADMITTED EXCELLENCIES OF THE VEDAS.

As already mentioned, the Vedas are of great interest as expressing the aspirations of the Aryans three thousand years ago. The hymns are what might be expected from a people, mainly pastoral, engaged in fierce warfare with the aborigines. It is acknowledged that they also contain some excellent points.

1. **Some Great Truths are acknowledged.**—The following may be mentioned.

1. *Prayer.*—The Aryans were, in their way, a religious people. They daily acknowledged their dependence upon the gods, and sought every blessing from them. In this they set us an example.

2. *Praise.*—The gods are praised for what they are, and for what they have done for man. This feeling of thankfulness is highly to be commended.

3. *An acknowledgment of God's Omniscience.*—Scoffers have said, "How doth God know?" and is there knowledge in the Most High?" On the contrary, in the Vedas, even the winkings of men are said to be known to Varuna.

4. *A confession of Sinfulness.*—It is true that these are not very numerous, but they occur, especially in hymns to Varuna.

In some later Hindu writings the feeling is more strongly expressed. The following daily confession is made by some Brahmans :

Pápo'ham pápakarmáham pápátma pápasambhavah |

"I am sin, I commit sin ; my soul is sinful ; I am conceived in sin." This acknowledgment is true, and deserves to be made daily by every man. Our sins in thought, word, and deed, are numberless. How to be released from them should be the earnest desire of every one.

5. *Mediation*.—There are few doctrines in the Christian religion to which Hindus more object than to mediation, but it is distinctly found in the Vedas. Max Muller calls Agni "the messenger and mediator between God and men." Agni, it is said "goes wisely between these two creations (heaven and earth, gods and men) like a friendly messenger between two hamlets." He announces to the gods the hymns, and conveys to them the oblations of their worshippers.

But mediation is not found merely in the Vedas. In everyday life it is universally acted upon. When any one has offended another, it is a common thing to seek reconciliation through a friend, a favour, such as an office, is often sought through the intervention of a person known to both.

In one sense, however, mediation is not necessary. We can offer our prayers direct to God without the intervention of a priest on earth.

6. *Sacrifice*.—One of the chief doctrines of Christianity is that the Son of God, for man's redemption, became incarnate and suffered death upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin. A mantra of the Rig-Veda says, "Do thou lead us safely through all sins by way of sacrifice." The Tandyá Maha Bráhmāna says of sacrifice, "Thou art the annulment of sin—of sin."

2. *Points of Superiority to later Hinduism*

1. *There is no Idolatry*.—There is no allusion to idols in the Vedas. They were introduced at a later period.

2. *The modern Caste System did not exist in Vedic Times*.—Caste is noticed only in a single verse of a comparatively modern hymn.

Max Muller says

"There is no authority whatever in the hymns of the Veda for the complicated system of castes. There is no law to prohibit the different classes of the people from living together, from eating and drinking together, no law to prohibit the marriage of people belonging to different castes, no law to brand the offspring of such marriages with an indelible stigma. There is no law to sanction the blasphemous pretensions of a priesthood to divine honours, or the degradation of any human being to a state below the animal." *Chips* Vol II

At present the question of sea-voyages is greatly agitated among the Hindus. The old Aryans had no such scruples.

3 *Women occupied a higher position than at present.*—There were no infant marriages. Women, in some cases at least, were allowed to choose their husbands. Widows were permitted to re-marry. Women were not secluded. The wife took part in sacrifices. So far from women being prohibited from religious teaching, some of the hymns of the Rig-Veda were written by female Rishis, e.g., X. 39, 40 by Ghoshā, VIII. 80 by Apalā, &c.

Although these excellencies are acknowledged, other features have also to be taken into account

REASONS WHY THE VEDAS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AS A DIVINE REVELATION.

The common belief in India is that the Vedas are eternal. They existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time. At the commencement of each Kalpa, Brahma reveals them to Brahmā, and they issue from his four mouths. They are taught by Brahmā to the Rishis whose names they bear.

The following are some of the reasons for rejecting this belief:

1. **The Conflicting Accounts of the origin of the Vedas given in the Hindu Sacred books.**—The writings of Dr. John Muir furnish a storehouse of information on this subject. He gives the passages both in Sanskrit and in English translations. The Third Volume of his *Sanskrit Texts* treats of "The Vedas, Opinions of their Authors, and of later Indian writers of their Origin, Inspiration, and Authority." Dr. Muir quotes the Sanskrit, but space does not permit this*. Only a brief statement of the English can be given.

1. *The Vedas sprung from the mystical sacrifice of Purusha* Rig-Veda, x. 90.
2. *The Vedas were cut or scraped off from Skambha as being his hair and his mouth* Atharva-Veda, x. 7. 20.
3. *The Vedas sprung from Indra, and he sprung from them.* Atharva-Veda, xiii. 4, 38.
4. *The Vedas sprung from Time* Atharva-Veda, xix. 54, 3.
5. *The Vedas sprung from the leavings of Sacrifice.*—Atharva-Veda, (xi. 7, 24.)
6. *The Vedas were produced from Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya.* Chhândogya Upanishad.

* The Sanskrit quotations will be found in *An Account of the Vedas*, No. 166 op. 4; As. pp. 13-18

7. *The Vedas are the breathings of the Great Being.* Sata-patha Brāhmana, (xiv. 5, 4, 10) :

8. *The Vedas were dug by the gods out of the Mind-Ocean* Satapatha Brāhmana (vii. 5, 2, 52).

9. *The Vedas are the hair of Prajāpati's beard.* Taittiriya Brāhmana, (iii. 39, 1).

10. *Vach (speech) is the mother of the Vedas.* Taittiriya Brāhmana, (ii. 8, 85).

11. *The Vedas issued from the mouth of Brahmā* The Bhāgavata Purāna, (iii. 12, 34, and 37) says

12. *The Vedas were produced from the Gayātri.* Harivamśa, verse 11,516

13. *Sarasvatī was the mother of the Vedas* Mahābhārata Santi-parva. verse 12,920

14. *The Vedas are Vishnu*

Vishnu Purāna, iii. 3, 19.

Here are fourteen conflicting accounts of the origin of the Vedas, yet all are accepted as true by the pandits. What would be thought of a judge who acted similarly?

2 The Hymns themselves generally claim to have had Human Authors.

The names of the authors of the hymns are preserved in the *Anukramani*, or explanatory table of contents, which has been handed down with the Veda itself, and of which the authority is unquestioned. The names of the father of the writers are often given as well as their own.

In later times when the Vedas were claimed to be eternal, it was pretended that these writers were only the Rishis by whom the hymns "were seen," or to whom they were communicated by Brahmā. Of this there is not the slightest proof.

The Rishis claim to have written the hymns themselves, just as a carpenter makes a car, &c

In some hymns they express no consciousness whatever of deriving assistance from any supernatural source.

Dr. Muir gives 87 extracts illustrative of this.

Some hymns ask for or acknowledge divine assistance just as poets of all nations often do.

Instead of the hymns being eternal, or of infinite age, many of them are spoken of as *new*, while others are of *ancient* date. The Rishis entertained the idea that the gods would be more highly gratified if their praises were celebrated in *new*, and perhaps more elaborate and beautiful compositions, than if older and possibly ruder, prayers had been repeated.

Dr. Muir gives 52 quotations under this head.

One argument for the eternity of the Vedas is that sound is eternal. To any person of common sense the simple statement of

this proof, is its refutation. The same argument would prove every book to be eternal.

3 Internal Evidence shows the Authorship of the Vedas.—When a deed is produced in court which is affirmed to have been written many hundred years ago, there are often means of judging from the document itself as to its age. Suppose, for example, it contained the names of Warren Hastings or Hyder Ali, it could at once be known that it could not be older than last century. If it were asserted that these referred to other persons of the same name who lived long before or that they were prophecies, the conclusion would be that it was an attempt to support one falsehood by another. If the Vedas are eternal, why are the names of so many persons mentioned in them who lived in comparatively recent times?

Dr. Muir says

“The hymns of the Rig-Veda themselves supply us with numerous data by which we can judge of the circumstances to which they owed their origin, and of the manner in which they were created. They afford us very distinct indications of the locality in which they were composed. The Indus is the great river the Ganges is only twice mentioned, the Sarasvati was the eastern boundary

“The hymns show us the Aryan tribes living in a state of warfare with surrounding enemies (some of them, probably, alien in race and language), and gradually, as we may infer, forcing their way onward to the east and south. They supply us with numerous specimens of the particular sorts of prayers, *viz.*, for protection and victory, which men so circumstanced would naturally address to the gods whom they worshipped as well as of the more common supplications which men in general offer up for the various blessings which constitute the sum of human welfare.”*

Conclusion as to the Authorship of the Vedas.

Quotations have been given from Hindu sacred books containing fourteen different opinions as to the origin of the Vedas. In opposition to these, the authorship of many of the hymns is distinctly claimed by persons whose names are given. The hymns themselves show that they were written when the Aryans were entering India, when they had not advanced much beyond the border, and were engaged in constant wars with the aborigines.

The legitimate conclusion is that the Vedic hymns were written by the authors whose names they bear, and that they are not eternal.

Muhammadans similarly claim that the Koran is eternal and uncreated, written from everlasting, on a vast tablet by God's throne, and only revealed to Muhammad at different times by the angel Gabriel.

The claim, in both cases, arises, from pride and ignorance.

2. The low conceptions given of God show that the writers were not inspired.

The Vedas unquestionably teach polytheism; but as every intelligent man is now a monotheist, attempts are made to show that the "thrice eleven" deities mean only one God.

The inconsistent accounts of the gods show that they are mere inventions according to the fancies of the poet. As already quoted "The father is sometimes the son, the brother is the husband, and she who in one hymn is the mother, is in another the wife."

The Aryans framed their gods after themselves. They bargained with their gods just as they did with one another; they flattered them: they offered them sweet things and told them to be good. They themselves were fond of Soma-beer, so they thought it was so with Indra. Just as the smell of liquor attracts the drunkard, so as soon as Indra knew of some one preparing Soma-beer, he mounted his chariot and drove to the place. Grant that Indra was fond of Soma-beer, is it to be supposed that the king of heaven could not get it except by coming to some Aryan peasant's home. One hymn says that (the worshipper) brings Indra to drink the Soma by a rapid seizure, like a loaded horse (by a halter). A Soma-drinking god is clearly the invention of a soma-drinking people, in a low state of civilization.

The gods are supposed to have wives like the Hindus, and the disputes of rival wives in modern times are reproduced in the heaven of Indra.

3 Superstitious Beliefs, now exploded, are accepted as True—There is the firm faith in magical arts which still prevails among uncivilised nations. To prevent others from learning the hymns, the Brahmans taught that the mispronunciation of a word would bring down the anger of the gods. The influence ascribed to the different metres in which a hymn is composed has been quoted (see pp 3, 4). The repetition of certain words is supposed to have a magical effect. The same power is ascribed to certain plants. The Hindu belief that eclipses are caused by an Asura seizing the sun and moon, is held, and the sun expresses gratitude to the Rishi Atri for deliverance through his prayer (V. 40. 5-9).

A few charms are found even in the Rig-Veda. The Atharva-Veda is largely a collection of them. Stones, bones, shells, herbs and other so-called fetishes, like those of African negroes, appear in it. In the Yajur Veda, the queen of a childless king, in order to have a son, is to lie all night embracing a dead horse. No sensible man can now believe any such things.

4. The Worldly Character of the hymns shows their origin—Bishop Caldwell justly says. "If any person reads the hymns of the Vedas for the first time, he will be struck with surprise at

the utterly worldly, unethical, unspiritual tone by which they are generally pervaded."

The Rishis, from whom better things might have been expected, were as worldly as the common people. Instead of wishing to live ascetic lives, "give us the wealth for which we yearn," is the grand theme of their hymns.

Besides praying directly for wealth, the Rishis sought to gain it by invoking blessings on those who bestowed gifts, and by cursing those who offered no oblations. There is a whole class of hymns called *dānastutis* or praises of gifts.

5. **The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man are not acknowledged** - The truth of these great doctrines is now generally admitted by intelligent Hindus. Neither is found in the Vedas. It is true that the gods are asked to give like a father, but this is very different from the acknowledgment that we derived our being from God, and of that endearing relationship expressed by the title "Our Father in heaven." The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says

"There was a recognition of a common relationship between all the Aryans as such, as descended from one common father Mann. The rest of the human race seems to have been regarded as altogether outside the pale of mercy or the ordinary demands of humanity."

"The horizon of the Rishi, is confined almost invariably to himself. He prays for the happiness of neither wife nor child, nor for the good of his village or his clan, nor yet for his nation or people. His eye is shut to the sufferings of his fellows. He manifests no common joys, any more than common sorrows."

But there is much that is worse than this negative side. The Aryans not only did not regard the non-Aryan races, and even some Aryans, as brothers, they simply wished their destruction and to obtain their wealth.

"Slay ye our Aryan foes, O lord of heroes, slay our Dasa foes. Bestow on us what wealth he hath, this even the worshipper awaits." I. 176. 4.

Numerous other passages of similar import might be quoted.

6. **The Vedas do not contain any satisfactory statement as to the way of Salvation or Human Duty.**

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says. "No Rishi, so far as I am aware, has ever claimed to be commissioned by God or by the gods, or by any of the gods, to enlighten men in regard to his will concerning men, or men's duties to God, or to one another. No one claimed to have any authoritative announcement to make as to whence man came, or whether he is going, what is his chief end here or hereafter."

Libations of the Soma juice and the offering of sacrifices are the chief means prescribed for the attainment of blessings: No intelligent man of the present time will be satisfied with such recommendations.

Nothing is said about labours of love, or acts of charity towards the poor, the widow, or the orphan

ESTIMATES OF THE VEDAS.

Two classes of persons entertain the most exalted notions of the Vedas. First those who *know nothing of them*. This includes the great mass of the people of India, educated and uneducated. According to the Latin proverb, "Everything of which we are ignorant is taken for something magnificent." The other class consists of these who *know nothing else*. Such are the pandits, frogs in a well.

Professor Max Müller has spent many years, in editing the Rig-Veda, with the commentary of Sáyana. He is not likely to undervalue it—rather the reverse. In his Lecture on the Vedas he expresses the following opinion of the hymns —

"The historical importance of the Veda can hardly be exaggerated, but its intrinsic merit, and particularly the beauty or elevation of its sentiments, have by many been rated far too high. Large numbers of the Vedic hymns are childish in the extreme tedious, low, common-place. The gods are constantly invoked to protect their worshippers, to grant them food, large flocks, large families, and a long life, for all which benefits they are to be rewarded by the praises and sacrifices offered day after day, or at certain seasons of the year. But hidden in this rubbish there are precious stones."

"I remind you again that the Veda contains a great deal of what is childish and foolish, though very little of what is bad and objectionable. Some of its poets ascribe to the gods sentiments and passions unworthy of the deity, such as anger, revenge, delight in material sacrifices, they likewise represent human nature on a low level of selfishness and worldliness. Many hymns are utterly unmeaning and insipid, and we must search patiently before we meet, here and there, with sentiments that come from the depth of the soul, and with prayers in which we could join ourselves."

The hymns which have been quoted in full are some of the most interesting, and scarcely give a fair general idea of the contents.

The repetitions are endless, the same epithets and images are applied first to one and then to another of the gods. *Give us wealth* is the request that runs through nearly the whole of them.

A RETURN TO VEDIC HINDUISM IMPOSSIBLE.

An appeal to Educated Hindus.

Thoughtful Hindus, dissatisfied with their religion as exhibited in the Epic poems and Purāṇas, may have hoped to find in the Vedas a pure system which might meet the wants of their souls. Such an idea can be entertained only by those who are unacquainted with the Vedas or who give the hymns a meaning directly the opposite to the sense in which they were understood by their authors. Among the latter are the Ārya Samajists, noticed in the Appendix.

In some respects, it is true, the Vedas may be followed. As already mentioned, caste, characterised by Sir H. S. Maine in his *Ancient Law* as "the most blighting and disastrous of human institutions," is not found in them. Women enjoyed more liberty and took a higher position. In both respects a return to the Vedic system may be made with advantage.

But it is different with regard to still more important questions. Into the lips of one of the old Rishis the words of Tennyson might well be put,

"What am I?"

An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

The Vedas represent the childhood of religion, and cannot now be our guide.

1 *You cannot go back to the GODS of the Vedas.*—You cannot believe in "thrice eleven" deities. Heaven and earth, sun and moon, the clouds, the dawn, can never be endowed in your minds with intelligence, with wrath or mercy. No imagination can make them anything else to you than what they are.—varied, beautiful forms of matter, but matter still. You feel that you should adore the great Creator Himself, and not the objects He has made.

A hymn found in the Bible, sung by a Rājārishi nearly three thousand years ago, expresses the feelings we ought to entertain

"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which Thou hast ordained,—what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"

No enlightened man can accept the polytheism of the Vedas.

2 *You cannot offer the PRAYERS of the Vedas.*—You need something more than cows and horses, health and wealth, the

destruction of public and domestic enemies. It is true that there are petitions for the pardon of sin, addressed especially to Varuna, but these are few and far between.

3. *You cannot make the offerings of the Vedas.*—You cannot invite Indra to drink the Soma juice “like a thirsty stag;” you cannot sacrifice buffaloes, bullocks, cows and sheep; you cannot perform the *ashvamedha*. These were but shadows of the true sacrifice, dimly set forth in what is said of Prajapati.

It must be acknowledged by every thoughtful, intelligent Hindu, that the religion of the Vedas ~~does~~ not meet the spiritual wants of man

A NATIONAL RELIGION.

India is the land of caste and exclusiveness, all beyond the pale of Aryavarta are impure Mlechhas. This caste feeling, under the guise of patriotism, has, especially in Bengal, prompted the cry for a *National Religion*. It is considered degrading for India to have any other religion than its own.

It may first be remarked that there is no national science. Keshub Chunder Sen justly says “Is there an astronomy for the East and another for the West? Is there an Asiatic optics as distinguished from European optics? Science is one. It is one yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the same in the East and the West, it recognises neither caste, nor colour, nor nationality. It is God’s science, the eternal verity of things.”

It is the same with *religion*. If each country had its own god there might be different religions; but all enlightened men are now agreed that there is only one God, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the Universe. The Brotherhood of Man is similarly acknowledged:

“Children, we are all
Of one great Father, in whatever clime,
His providence hath cast the seed of life,
All tongues, all colours.”

Since God is one and all men are alike His children, it is reasonable to suppose that he has given only one religion.

The most enlightened countries in Europe and America accepted a religion first made known to them by Asiatics, and did not reject it from a false patriotism, saying, “We must have national religions.” An Indian poet says “The disease that is born with us kills us, the medicine which is found on some far-off mountain cures our natal disease.”

The cry for a National Religion originates in ignorance and pride. It will pass away. An educated Hindu does not contend for the Geography of his fathers, with its seas of sugar-cane juice, milk, and ghee. He has accepted "foreign" science. The Indian would be considered an idiot who urged his countrymen to stick to the national conveyances—palanquins and bullock carts, and refuse to travel by the "foreign" inventions of railways. A distinguished French Orientalist says that as India has already adopted the science and art of Christian nations, so she will one day spontaneously embrace their faith.

Of all false patriotism that is the worst which seeks by sophistry to defend erroneous religious beliefs because they are national. It promotes hypocrisy and disregard of truth among its advocates, while it is a grievous wrong to their ignorant countrymen, tending to perpetuate the reign of superstition.

The late Su Madhava Row justly said, "*What is not True is not Patriotic*." There is an Indian proverb "Truth conquers." Any belief, any practice, not founded on truth, must eventually fall.

Instead of national religions, it is a far grander idea for the whole human race to fall down together as children at the feet of the true Dyauṣ-Pitar.

Max Müller says

"Thousands of years have passed since the Aryan nations separated to travel to the North and the South, the West and the East they have each formed their languages, they have each founded empires and philosophies, they have each built temples and razed them to the ground, they have all grown older, and it may be wiser and better, but when they search for a name for what is most exalted and yet most dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and love, the infinite, and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far and as near as near can be; they can but combine the self-same words, and utter once more the primeval Aryan prayer, Heaven-father in that form which will endure for ever, 'Our Father which art in heaven'."

THE RELIGION WHICH INDIA NEEDS.

The songs of the early Aryans while they were engaged in the conquest of India are interesting, but the productions of men who could not read and had no books, cannot be regarded as suited to the wants of the present day. The belief, originating in ignorance and pride, that they existed from all eternity, has been shown to be baseless. Lecky says that "*Invariably an increase of civilization implies a modification of belief.*" As there

has been an advance in civilization during the last three thousand years, it may be inferred that the ancient religious belief of India requires to be modified.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY TO ATTENTION.

Christianity is the religion of the richest, the most civilised, the best educated, and most progressive nations of the earth. The great inventions which have done so much to promote human well-being, as the steam-engine, railways, the electric telegraph, originated among Christian nations. Hindu, Buddhist and Muhammadan Governments are despotic, their rulers stand above law, their kingdoms are regarded as their private property; without trial they can take away the lives of their subjects. But Christian nations, as a rule, have representative Governments, and law stands above kings and rulers.

The idea of *progress* is derived from Christianity. Among Hindus, the rule is to *follow the ancients*. Instead of things becoming better, this is regarded as the Kali Yug, when they are to grow worse and worse. China has had a stationary semi-civilization for 2,000 years. Mohammedans are governed by the the Koran, deviation from which is regarded as impiety. The English, before they embraced Christianity, were little better than savages, without a written language. What a difference now!

Christian nations are the only ones which are making persistent and systematic efforts to relieve the human race from the evils under which it has groaned for thousands of years,—from war, slavery, crime, disease, and ignorance. War has not ceased among them, but its ferocity has been softened, and a desire for peace is spreading. Arbitration is now resorted to in many cases. Efforts will be continued,

“Till the war drum throbbed no longer, and the battle flags were furled
In the Parliament of men, the Federation of the world.”

Slavery is sought to be abolished everywhere. Reformatory schools have been established for young criminals; trades are taught in jails to enable prisoners to earn an honest livelihood. Dispensaries and hospitals have been opened; societies, like Lady Dufferin's, have been formed to afford medical relief to women. Education is considered the birthright of every human being; all the States which profess Christianity are seeking, more or less, to humanize, reform, and elevate mankind.

It is true that in countries nominally Christian misery and crime are found more or less; but these do not arise from Christianity, but from the breach of its laws. Nowhere also are such efforts put forth for their removal. In some of the worst parts of London, Students' Settlements have been formed

Students from Oxford and Cambridge come to live there for a time to benefit the people.

Gladstone, the most distinguished English statesman of recent times, says :

" I see that for the last fifteen hundred years Christianity has always marched in the van of all human improvement and civilisation, and it has harnessed to its car all that is great and glorious in the human race."

" Christianity continues to be that which it has been heretofore, the great medicine for the diseases of human nature, the great consolation for its sorrows, the great stay to its weakness, the main and only sufficient guide in the wilderness of the world "

SOME OF THE DOCTRINES AND DUTIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. **The Deity of Christianity.**—God, in the Bible, is revealed under two aspects. He is the great *Creator* of the Universe. Hinduism has no Creator in the strict sense of the word. *Matter or Maya* is held to be eternal, and the nominal Creator merely forms it anew. Souls are also held to be eternal. The more correct ideas now held by educated Hindus have been derived from Christianity. God is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness. His most glorious attribute is His holiness, in which He differs immeasurably from Hindu divinities.

The second aspect under which God is revealed in the Bible is that of *Father*. We are taught to address Him as " Our Father in heaven." He is rightly so called, because we derived our being from Him, because He supports us as a father supports his children, and because He bears a father's love toward us. We have been disobedient rebellious children, justly deserving to be shut out from His presence ; but He earnestly invites us to return to Him, offering free forgiveness. To those who do so, He stands in a more endearing relation than before.

Our moral sense is outraged when we are asked to worship Indra or Krishna, Vishnu or Siva. On the other hand, the God of Christianity far transcends our loftiest conceptions. The worship of such a Being is fitted to have the most beneficial influence upon our character.

2. **Two Great Commands** —When Jesus Christ was asked, " Which is the great commandment of the law," He replied

" Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

" And the second is like unto it. " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The two commandments may be summed up in LOVE to GOD and LOVE to MAN.

3. **Our Duty as Sinful.**—Instead of keeping God's commands, which are holy, just, and good, we have broken them

every day of our lives. All intelligent men will acknowledge the worthlessness of Hindu methods for the pardon of sin, as bathing at certain places, and other ceremonies. Jesus Christ teaches us, in the parable of the prodigal, with deep sorrow to confess our sin to our heavenly Father.

But Christianity also teaches that something more is necessary

In all ages of the world the hope has been more or less entertained that God would become incarnate to deliver man from the burden of sin and misery under which the world is groaning. Hinduism has its incarnations. The Kalki Avatāra is yet to come, when Vishnu, at the end of the Kali Yug, is to appear seated on a white horse, with drawn sword in his hand, for the destruction of the wicked and the restoration of purity.

Christianity also teaches that man is so deeply plunged in sin and his guilt is so great, that a divine incarnation was necessary for his deliverance. The Son of God came down from heaven for our salvation. Taking refuge in Him as our Saviour is also enjoined.

4. **Holiness.**—Christianity alone affords the needful "moral dynamic," the inducement to make the sinner give up the sin he loves so well. "Complete victory," says Maclaren, "over the old sinful self is to be found in Jesus Christ. Union with Him gives us a real possession of a new principle of life, derived from Him and like His own. An all-constraining motive will be found in love to Him who has given Himself for us."

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity will also be found adapted to our needs. Although Christians firmly hold God's unity; yet, in some mysterious way, there is a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who all unite for man's redemption. The peculiar office of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify us, to enable us to overcome sin, and to be adorned with all the beauties of holiness. His help is given in answer to prayer.

Besides prayer for the Holy Spirit, there must be watchfulness against sin, avoidance of temptation, study of the Scriptures, and other good books, observance of the Lord's day, attendance at public worship, association with good men, etc.

5. **Heaven**—Hindus hope to merit heaven by their ceremonies, &c. Every intelligent man can see the worthlessness of such methods, but, in any case, a dying Hindu must leave the world in great alarm about the future. During his innumerable previous births, according to his idea, he may have committed some sin not yet expiated, and when he departs he may go to one of the fearful hells described in the Purāṇas. Even at best, happiness is only temporary.

Christians do not hope to enter heaven on account of their own supposed good deeds. They confess that their best actions

are defiled by sin and need forgiveness. They hope to be saved only through the spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him their sins are forgiven and admission to heaven is obtained. At death the true Christian has no fear. As soon as breath departs, his soul goes to paradise, there to be happy for ever in God's palace.

Concluding Appeal.—About a hundred generations have passed away since some of the Vedic hymns were written.* The reader must sooner or later, follow them. It is the highest folly to think only of the world which we must so soon leave, and neglect that in which our eternal lot will be cast. Jesus Christ says, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The foregoing pages contain only some elementary truths of Christianity. The further study of the subject is earnestly pressed upon the reader. It has other doctrines which will be found to meet our deepest needs when some progress has been made in the religious life. The New Testament should receive special attention. The following will be useful at the commencement.

Short Papers for Seekers after Truth 12mo. 112 pp. 1 An.

The Teaching of Jesus Christ in His own Words. 12mo. 112 pp. 1 An.

Jesus Christ: His Life and Times. 8vo. 176 pp. 3 As.

The Founder of Christianity: an Introduction to the New Testament. 12mo. 250 pp. cloth 6 As.

The Crossbearer. Notes on Matthew. 4to 148 pp. 4 As.

Notes on the Gospel of Luke. 8vo. 173 pp. 3 As.

Notes on the Acts of the Apostles. 8vo. 164 pp. 3 As.

The *Annotated Paragraph New Testament*, of the Religious Tract Society, price 10s 6d., will be found very useful for the study of the whole volume.

The Old Testament should also receive attention. It contains an account of the Divine education of the human race preparatory to New Testament times.

In religious enquiry we ought especially to seek Divine guidance. The following prayer for light is attributed to the most famous Christian convert of early times, and may be fittingly used:

"O LORD, who art the Light, the Way, the Truth, the Life, in whom there is no darkness, error, vanity, nor death; the light, without which there is darkness; the way, without which there is wandering; the truth, without which there is error; the life, without which there is death, say, Lord, 'Let there be light,' and I shall see light and eschew darkness; I shall see the way, and avoid wandering, I shall see the truth, and shun error; I shall see life, and escape death. Illuminate, O illuminate my blind soul, which sitteth in darkness, and the shadow of death; and direct my feet in the way of peace."

THE ARYA SAMAJ

India in Transition.—Lord Lytton spoke of the change at present going on in India as “the greatest and most momentous revolution—at once social, moral, religious, and political—which perhaps the world has ever witnessed.”

India is now profoundly affected by many powerful forces, by Western civilization in various forms, railways, education, the printing-press, political institutions, moral and religious ideas. Among the results are the National Congress, aiming especially at Political Reform, Social Reform Conferences, and Societies for Religious Reform.

Among the last may be specially mentioned the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj.

Such organizations are so far a sign of life. Their members are not content, like dead fish, to float on the stream, to let things drift. At the same time this does not prevent criticism of the plans adopted. The best friends of a Society are not those who merely flatter it, but those who, in a friendly spirit, offer suggestions for its better working. The interests concerned are so vast—the welfare of one-fifth of the human race—that all such should be gladly welcomed. The object of the following remarks is to notice the ARYA SAMAJ. Some account of its founder will first be given.

Dayanand Sarasvati.—Dayanand was born at Morvi, in Kathiawar, in the year 1824. His father was a zealous Saivite. Dayanand, at an early age, studied Sanskrit grammar, and learnt the Vedas by heart. Afterwards his father wished to initiate him in the worship of the Linga, for which purpose he was to fast a whole night in the temple of Siva. When he was left alone he began to meditate. He says:—

“Is it possible, I asked myself, that this idol I see bestriding his bull before me, and who, according to all accounts, walks about, eats, sleeps, drinks, holds a trident in his hand, beats the drum, and can pronounce curses on men, can be the great deity, the Mahadeva, the Supreme Being?” Unable to resist such thoughts any longer I roused my father, asking him to tell me whether this hideous idol was the great god of the scriptures. ‘Why do you ask?’ said my father. ‘Because, I answered, I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an omnipotent living God with this idol, which allows the mice to run over his body, and thus suffers

himself to be polluted without the slightest protest.* Then my father tried to explain to me that this stone image of the Mahadeva, having been consecrated by the holy Brahmans, became, in consequence, the god himself, adding that as Śiva cannot be perceived personally in this Kali-Yuga, we have the idol in which the Mahadeva is imagined by his votaries." This explanation, however, was not satisfactory.

When Dayānand was 21 years of age his father wished him to be married against his will; so he left home secretly. Afterwards he was found and brought back, but again he ran away. For years he wandered about, for a time becoming a Sannyāsi. Even when ten years of age he saw the folly of idolatry. When he grew older, he rejected all the Hindu sacred books as inspired except the four Vedas and the Isa Upanishad which is found in the Yajur-Veda.*

In 1881, a large convocation of 300 Pandits from Gauda, Navā-dīpa, and Kāsi, was held to discuss with Dayānand his opinions. The following resolutions were carried against him :

(1) That the *Brahmaṇas* are as valid and authoritative as the *Mantras*, and that other *Smritis* or law-books are as valid and authoritative as *Manu*

(2) That the worship of Vishnu, Śiva, Durga, and other Hindu deities, the performance of the *Shraddha* ceremonies after death, and bathing in the Ganges, are sanctioned in the *Śāstras*

(3) That in the first hymn of the *Rig-Veda*, addressed to Agni, the primary meaning of Agni is fire, and its secondary meaning is God

(4) That sacrifices are performed to secure salvation

Besides lecturing, Dayānand devoted some of the later years of his life to the publication of books. Before his death he had completed a translation into Hindi of one-half of the Vedas. The principal points of his teaching are embodied in his *Rig-Vedddī Bhāṣhya Bhūmika*, 'A Prefatory Exposition of the *Rig-Veda* and others.' His *Satyārth Prakāśh*, 'Manifestation of True Meanings,' gives his teaching as to religious and social customs.

Dayānand died at Ajmere in 1883 at the age of 59 †

Numerous Societies have been formed in North India and the Punjab, called Arya Samajes, professing to follow Dayānand's interpretation of the Vedas. An Anglo-Vedic College has been established at Lahore, and a weekly newspaper in English, called the *Arya Patrika*, is issued.

Leading Opinions of Dayanand.—They may be briefly summed up in the following extract from the *Arya Patrika* :

"We do not go beyond the Veda—the Veda being the sum-total of the physical, moral, spiritual, &c., laws that govern the Universe and

* See his letter to Raja Śivaprasad, *Athenæum*, Feb. 5, 1881.

† Chiefly abridged from *Biographical Essays*, by Max Müller.

wholly adapted to the various natural requirements of man." *March 22, 1902.*

The following details are from Max Müller :

"He took his stand on the Vedas. Whatever was not to be found in the Vedas he declared to be false or useless ; whatever was found in the Vedas was to him beyond the reach of controversy."

"He considered the Vedas not only as divinely inspired, or rather expired, but as prehistoric or piehuman."

"To him not only was everything contained in the Vedas perfect truth, but he went a step further, and by the most incredible interpretations succeeded in persuading himself and others that everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas. Steam-engines, railways, and steam-boats, all were shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the Vedas, for Veda, he argued, means Divine Knowledge, and how could anything have been hid from that ?"

Like the rest of Hindus, Dayānand considered the inspiration of the Vedas to be self-evident, and not to require any proof. The *Arya Patrika* says of them "They are engraved in the starry heavens. They are kneaded into the mould of the earth. They are written in the beams of the sun. They are seen in the light of the moon. They are in the flashes of lightning. In short, they are always with God who fills all in all." (*Jan 16, 1886*).

EXAMINATION OF DAYĀNAND SARASWATĪ'S OPINIONS.

1. **The Eternity of the Vedas.**—Mr. Forman says :

"The pundits are content with putting the origin of these books back near the beginning of the world when Brahma taught Brahmā, and Brahmā issued each of the four Vedas out of each of his four months in turn, teaching them to the holy Rishis who wrote them down. Dayānand laughs at all this. He says Brahmā was not a god, but only a great Raja, and that he could not possibly have been the author of the Vedas, for he himself was a student of them. He says the Vedas are eternal absolutely, that they are the knowledge of God, and hence as eternal as God himself, that they have been given in just their present form to this world and to other worlds through all eternity, in their long passages from formation to destruction, each occupying hundreds of billions of year. That the edition for the present world was taught by God to the first four men created 100,960, 852,975 years ago. These four men were named Agni, Vāyu, Suraj and Angira. They, having learned the Vedas from God, each wrote one of the four books."

Dayânand argues that the Vedas are eternal from the eternity of sound. "Thus take the word *gau*, a cow: he says the sound *g* has always existed, so also the sound *au*; the four (Agni, Vāyu, &c.) only combined these, and in writing gave the word *gau*." Dayânand adopted this opinion from the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* of Jaimini. On the above reasoning, every book may be proved to be eternal.

It has been shown that Dayânand's theory of the Vedas being eternal is contradicted by the hymns themselves. (See p. 74.) Some of the hymns are said to be quite new, others old. The names of the writers are given. It has also been already explained that internal evidence shows that the hymns were composed when the Aryans were entering India, and had frequent wars with the aborigines. (See p. 75.)

It would be gratifying to national feeling to suppose that an eternal Revelation had been made to the Hindus. It has been mentioned that a similar claim is made on behalf of the Koran. The question is, Are the claims true?

2. **Claim that the Vedas teaches Monotheism** — Dayânand rejected the 33 crores of Hindu gods and goddesses, and claimed the Vedas to be monotheistic. It has been shown that the Vedas teach polytheism. (See pp. 63-65.) The deities are again and again said to be three-cleven in number. They have different names, parents, wives, and children, and live in different places. If they are all one, it might as well be said that 33 persons now living are all one. In later times pantheism was developed. The well known phrase *Ekam evādvityam*, "One only without a second," does not mean that there is no second God, but that there is no second anything.

Monotheism was learned from Christianity.

3. **The Eternity of Souls and Prakṛti**. Dayânand mixed up his old ideas as a Hindu with the slight western knowledge he had acquired through the vernaculars. He learned the eternity of souls and his ideas about Prakṛti from the *Sāṅkhya Darsana* of Kapila, of which they are the chief doctrines. Kapila's system is known among Hindus as the Nṛsiwara *Sāṅkhya*, or the *Sāṅkhya without the Lord*, its founder being accused of atheism.

The *Arya Patrika* reasons thus. —

"If the soul is immortal, how it can be regarded as a created essence is what completely passes our comprehension. The assumption of the immortality of the soul necessitates the assumption of its eternity. If the soul is to exist for ever, it must have been existing from time indefinite. In fact whatever exists at the present time has existed always and shall always exist. Not a single particle of what the universe at present contains can be blotted out of existence. Every thing in the universe is eternal and unperishable. The existence of

anything at the present time presupposes its existence in the past, and necessitates its existence in the future." Jan. 31, 1888.

The above is a clear statement of the Sāṅkhya doctrine. It is a fixed Hindu dogma, *navastuno vastusiddhiḥ*, nothing can be produced out of nothing.

The fundamental error of Hinduism is that expressed in the words of the Bible "Thou thoughtest that I (God) was altogether such an one as thyself." Because a carpenter cannot work without materials, the Almighty God cannot do it. "Ye do err, not knowing the power of God." He does not require, like weak and imperfect man, to stop for materials, but can call them into existence by the mere *pat* of His will.

If souls are eternal, we are all little gods. But not only men are such, so is every reptile that crawls on the ground, and every insect that flutters in the air. Souls, according to Hinduism, may also pass into plants and even into inanimate objects. Who then can estimate the number of these eternal *svayambhu* essences!

Whether is it more rational to suppose the existence of one Being, infinite in power and wisdom, or to imagine that countless unintelligent atoms and spirits have existed from all eternity?

The reasoning that if the soul is to live for ever, it must have had an eternal pre-existence, is equally unfounded. This is also a denial of God's power. He can give a future eternal existence to any creature He has called into being.

4. **Transmigration**—This doctrine is held by the followers of the Arya Samaj, although Max Muller says that the Vedas do not contain a 'trace' of it. As one error often requires another to support it, so the belief in the eternal existence of the soul, required to be accounted for by transmigration.

Only a few remarks can be made here on the subject.

1. *It is contrary to the course of Nature in which like always produces like* Every animal and plant produces animals and plants exactly like itself. According to transmigration, a man in his next birth may be a tiger, a pig, a fly, or a pumpkin.

2. *No one has the slightest recollection of any previous birth.* If the soul is eternal, why does it not recollect anything that happened previous to its present life?

3. *By transmigration persons virtually become new beings, so that they are in reality punished for the actions of others.* It is said that at every new birth something takes place by which the remembrance of former things is destroyed. In this case the person on whom it is wrought is no longer the same person. One man is really punished for the faults of another of which he is quite ignorant.

4. *It denies the Divine Mercy.*—According to Hinduism, the fruit of every work must be eaten. The office of Isvara is to

carry out strict unswerving justice. He has nothing whatever to do with mercy.

5. *Its effects are Pernicious.*—We bring most evils upon ourselves by our own misconduct. When people believe that their misfortunes arise from sins in a former birth, they rest contented, and make no efforts to remove them.

This superstitious belief is one great cause of the sufferings of the people of India, a great obstacle to their health and happiness.

¶ The world is not a place where we are rewarded or punished for actions in imaginary former births, but one where our conduct is tried. We are like the servants of a great King, who has allotted to us different duties, and according as we discharge them, we shall be dealt with at death.

For further remarks on this important subject see *Transmigration and Karma*, by the Rev. T. E. Slater. 8vo. 60 pp. 2 As.

5. **Modern Inventions supposed to be found in the Vedas.**—Max Müller says of Dayánand —

“To him not only was everything contained in the Vedas perfect truth, but he went a step further, and by the most incredible interpretations succeeded in persuading himself and others that everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas. Steam-engines, railways, and steam-boats, all were shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the Vedas, for Veda, he argued, means Divine Knowledge, and how could anything have been hid from that?”

¶ The following is the mode in which Dayánand finds railways in the Vedas —

Pandits explain *Shwetam Ashwam* to mean the white horse. But Dayánand sees more in it, the meaning is the steam horse or steam. In *Ashwa* then (meaning here fire and water, and hence steam) we find the motive power for these vehicles. Again, *Karashwa*, i. e., *chhah ghore* (six horses), so the pandits, but Dayánand says, the meaning is, that the vehicles are to contain six compartments for fire and water.”

By similar reasoning, balloons, guns, &c., are discovered in the Vedas.

Dayánand's teachings concerning the sciences and the arts are but a crude combination of the ideas he had imbibed from Hinduism, with the most primary and incorrect ideas of the sciences and arts introduced by the English.

* *Biographical Essays*, p. 170.

† Rev. H. Forman, *The Arya Samaj*, pp. 52, 53.

FEATURES IN DAYANAND SARASWATI'S CHARACTER NOT TO BE IMITATED.

Dayanand was a born leader of men, and his zeal as a reformer is to be commended ; but his conduct, in some respects, is not to be followed

Dayanand accepted and rejected what he pleased of the Hindu sacred books, and put his own meaning upon them. All who differed from him were denounced as ignorant of Sanskrit and incapable of understanding the Vedas. All the translations, commentaries, and dictionaries prepared by pandits during the last 2,500 years were wrong, he alone was right. It was his plan in discussions to have a company of admirers who would join him in loud derisive laughter at his opponents. He tried this when arguing with pandits at Benares. On the second day of the debate, they gathered together a larger number of men, who hooted and laughed at whatever Dayanand said, so that the tables were turned, and he was completely defeated.

Dr. Griswold says of the sections of the *Satyarth Prakash* treating of Islām and Christianity

"For extreme unfairness, for inability to state the position of opponents without caricature and for general crudeness, these sections can hardly be matched in the whole literature of religious controversy."

Extreme hostility to Christianity was one feature of Dayanand's character, inherited by his immediate followers. There is a class of vulgar, half educated men in England, called Secularists. They are the same as the Indian Chārvākas. They do not believe in God or in any life after this world. They scoff at all religion, but they especially try to caricature Christianity and to attack it with low abuse. The Arya Samajists, in their ignorance, supposed the Secularist tracts against Christianity to be "unanswerable," and translated some of them into the vernaculars. Their objections have been known for nearly eighteen centuries; but, as a rule, they are misrepresentations of Christianity and without weight.

Happily, of late, a better spirit has been shown by the Arya Samajists.

A recent issue of the *Arya Patrika* has the following just remarks regarding our feeling towards other religions :

"Nor are we unsympathetic and indifferent towards other religions. We do approve of what is truth in them and encourage them to a corresponding extent." March 22, 1902.

Let this spirit be manifested by Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Arya Samajists.

Although Christians do not agree with the Samajists that the sum of all knowledge is to be found in the Vedas, in so far as they are seeking to spread a purer faith, to put an end to evil customs, to raise the moral condition of the people, they have their sympathy. Some of the good features of the movement are the following

1. The teaching of Monotheism and condemnation of idolatry.

The rejection of the Purānas and the 33 crores of popular Hinduism is a great step in advance

2. Belief in Prayer and in the Social Worship of God.

3. Opposition to Caste The words of Max Muller have been quoted that this system is not found in the Vedas. See page 72

4. Condemnation of Child Marriage, and the prohibition of the Remarriage of Widows

5. Efforts against Intemperance and the abominations of the Holi.

6. Zeal in behalf of Education. This is shown by the establishment of the Anglo-Vedic college

The *Arya Patrika* justly says "There is no religion higher than truth." (April 5th, 1902) a Sanskrit proverb says *Satyam Jayate* Truth conquers in the end The late Sir Madhava Row, a distinguished Indian statesman said

"What is not TRUE is not PATRIOTIC."

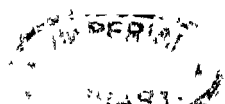
The national feeling is pleased with the thought that their sacred books are eternal and contain the germs of all knowledge The question is does this bear investigation?

Truth should be our great aim. In our search for it we should seek the help and guidance of the source of true wisdom, the great Creator of the universe, who is also the Father of our spirits.

All religions contain some great truths, but this does not prevent our pointing out any errors we believe them to contain This, however, should be done in a friendly spirit by all, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Arya Samajists

Let all join in the prayer of Tennyson

"O Father, touch the East, with light,
The light that shone when Hope was born"



APPENDIX.

PUBLICATIONS FOR INDIAN READERS.

The Religions of the World. An Illustrated Sketch of their History
8vo. 208 pp. 6 As

The Great Religions of the World are described and contrasted. India is urged to prosecute vigorously the course of reform on which she has entered. Illustrative woodcuts.

The Hindu Sacred Books Described and Examined.

VOLUME I.

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An Account of the Vedas, with Illustrative Extracts from the Rig-Veda. 8vo 166 pp 4½ As Post-free, 6 As

The principal divisions of the Vedas are described, with life in Vedic times, the gods of the Vedas, the offerings and sacrifices. Translations of some of the most important hymns in the Rig-Veda are quoted in full.

The Atharva-Veda. 8vo 76 pp 2½ As Post-free, 3 As

This is the Veda of Prayers, Charms, and Spells. A classified selection of the Hymns is given, including charms to cure diseases, expel demons, secure success in life, destroy enemies, &c. with a review of the whole.

The Brahmanas of the Vedas. 8vo 232 pp By THE REV K S MACDONALD, M A, D D, Author of *The Vedic Religion* 8 As Post-free 10 As

Accounts are given of the Bráhmānas of the Rig-Veda, Sáma Veda, Black and White Yajur Vedas, and the Atharva Veda, showing the development of Hinduísm. The state of society, the human, horse and other sacrifices, the gods and religion of the Bráhmānas are described, with many interesting details.

VOLUME II.

PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS AND LAW BOOKS.

Selections from the Upanishads. 8vo 120 pp. 4 As Post-free, 5 As

The Katha, Isa, and Svetásvatara, as translated into English by Dr. Roer, are quoted in full, with the notes of Sankara Achárya and others; and there are copious extracts from the Brihad Aranya and Chhandogya Upanishads, with an examination of their teaching.

The Bhagavad Gita. 8vo 108 pp 3 As Post-free, 5 As.

This work supposed to represent the loftiest flight of Hindu philosophy, consists of a supposed dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. It seeks to harmonise the Vedánta, Yoga, and Sámkhya doctrines, combining with them faith (*bhakti*) in Krishna, and stern devotion to caste duties. Numerous explanatory notes are added.

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This celebrated treatise, by Sadánanda, is considered the best popular exposition of the Vedánta philosophy.

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The Yoga Sástras of Patanjali examined, and the supposed Yoga powers shown to be a delusion. The true Yoga Sastra is explained, with a notice of Swami Vivekananda's Yoga Philosophy.

Great Indian Questions of the Day. No. 3.

VISHNU BHAKTI.

AN APPEAL TO EDUCATED HINDUS.

Satyam Jayati Truth Conquers,

Sanskrit Proverb.

"What is not TRUE is not PATRIOTIC."

See Mithat-ul-Raz

"From the unreal lead me to the real,

From darkness lead me to light,

From death lead me to immortality."

Rishab Anugya T. parashad

"O Father, touch the Past, with light,

The light that shone when Hope was born."

P. J. Jagan

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VISHNU BHAKTI.

AN APPEAL TO THE WORSHIPPERS OF VISHNU.

INTRODUCTION

One feature of the Hindus is their religiousness. With few exceptions, all their conduct is guided, more or less, by their religious ideas. This is so far to be commended. It is folly to be deeply concerned about a life which may terminate any moment, and regardless of that which will last for ever. The Great Teacher says, "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Importance of the Character of the God we worship.—It is well known that we become like those with whom we associate. If our chosen friends are wise and good men, we are likely to follow their example; on the other hand, if the foolish and wicked are our companions, we are almost certain to imitate them.

The higher a person is the greater is his influence. That of a king is very powerful over his subjects. The Bhagavad Gītā says "The man of lower degree followeth the example of him who is above him, and doeth that which he doeth." Krishna says in the same book "If I were not vigilantly to attend to these duties, all men would presently follow my example." As God is considered far greater than the most powerful earthly monarch, His influence over His worshippers should be much stronger than the latter over his subjects. *Yatha devah, tatha bhaktah*, 'As is the god, so is the worshipper.' There is no more important question for a nation than this, What is the nature of the God it worships?

Without an exception, the character of every nation and tribe of the human family has been formed and modified in a great degree by the character attributed to their gods.

Principal Fairbairn says. "*What constitutes a religion is a man's belief in a God or in gods; what differentiates religions is the sort of God the man worships.*"

If we intrust our property to a fraudulent banker, we may lose it all; if we seek to cross the ocean in a vessel not seaworthy, we may lose our lives.

But the loss is immeasurably greater if we intrust the salvation of our soul to a deity who cannot help us. In that case we shall only find out our mistake where it is too late to be rectified, and the mischief is irretrievable. While in life and a change can be made, let us therefore consider, with the deepest earnestness, the nature of the God to whom we commit our eternal well-being.

Position of Vishnu in India.—Hindus may be divided into three great classes—*Vaishnavas*, *Saivas*, and *Sháktas*. The first are the most numerous in the north, the second in the south, and the third in Bengal.

Vishnu thus occupies a very high position in the Hindu Pantheon. It is important to trace his history and describe his character as shown in the Sacred Books of the Hindus.

Vishnu is considered the second of the Hindu triad, but he is not supposed to be in any way inferior to Brahmá. On the contrary, his votaries claim him to be the great Cause of all. The name Vishnu is said to be derived from *vish*, to pervade. Williams supposes that the primary idea was the personification of the infinite heavenly space. Creation is ascribed to Brahmá, Vishnu's special work is preservation.

VISHNU IN THE RIG-VEDA

Vishnu is the only one of the great gods of the Hindu triad who makes his appearance under the same name in the Veda. In the Veda, however, he is not in the first rank of gods. While Indra and Agni have each more than two hundred hymns addressed to them, Vishnu has only one. When his name occurs elsewhere, it is in connection with other deities.

In the Rig-Veda Vishnu is the sun in his three stations of rise, zenith, and setting. This the Vedic poets conceive of as striding through heaven at three steps. This is Vishnu's great deed, which in all his hymns is sung to his praise. It constitutes the only peculiar trait belonging to him. Concerning these steps it is said that two of them are near the habitation of men. The third none can attain, not even the bird in its flight. He took them for the benefit of mortals, that all might live safe and happy under them. The middle station, the zenith, is called Vishnu's place.

Among the hymns in the Rig-Veda relating to Vishnu, Muir quotes the following.

16. May the gods preserve us from the place from which Vishnu strode over the seven regions of the earth. 17. Vishnu strode over this

(universe); in three places he planted his step; (the world or his step was) enveloped in his dust. 18. Vishnu, the unconquerable preserver, strode three steps, thereby maintaining fixed ordinances. Book I. 22.*

Another explanation of his three strides is that Vishnu is manifested in a three-fold form, as Agni on earth, as Indra or Váyu in the atmosphere, and as the sun in the heavens.

Muir has the following remarks on the subordinate position occupied by Vishnu in the Rig-Veda:

"Vishnu's three strides are usually understood to denote the rising, culmination, and the setting of the sun. The chief epithet applied to him is 'wide-stepping' or 'wide-striding.'

"Some other acts of a higher character are attributed to Vishnu. He is said to have established the heavens and the earth, to contain all the worlds in his strides, to have with Indra made the atmosphere wide, stretched out the worlds, produced the sun, the dawn, and fire. His greatness is described as having no limit. The attributes ascribed to Vishnu in some passages are such that if these latter stood alone in the Rig-Veda, they might lead us to suppose that this deity was regarded by the Vedic Rishis as the chief of all the gods. Numerous texts, however, ascribe to Indra, Varuna, and other gods, the same high and awful attributes and functions which are spoken of as belonging to Vishnu. The hymns and verses dedicated to the praise of Indra, Agni, Mitra, Varuna etc., are extremely numerous, whilst the entire hymns and separate verses in which Vishnu is celebrated are much fewer. In many hymns Vishnu is introduced as the subject of laudation among a great crowd of other divinities, from whom he is there in no way distinguished as being in any respect superior."

VISHNU IN THE BRAHMANAS.

The Bráhmaṇas, supposed to come next to the Vedas in antiquity, contain the germs of later developments.

The Aitareya Bráhmaṇa commences with the following statement.

"Fire (Agni) has the lowest place among the gods, Vishnu the highest; between them stand all the other deities."

Max Müller says, "This passage proves nothing as to the relative dignity of Agni and Vishnu."

The Aitareya Bráhmaṇa elsewhere says, "Vishnu is the door-keeper of the gods; he opens for him this door."

The Dwarf Incarnation is thus related in the Satapatha Bráhmaṇa: The gods and asuras strove together. The gods were worsted, and the asuras thought 'This world is now certainly ours.' The gods, with Vishnu at their head, asked for a share of

* *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. iv, pp. 63, 64.

† Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. iv, p. 129.

the earth. The asuras offered as much as Vishnu, who was a dwarf, could lie upon Vishnu expanded so that the whole earth belonged to the gods *

The same Bráhmāna relates how Vishnu lost his head. All the gods were present at a sacrifice. Vishnu was acknowledged to be the most eminent. As he stood resting his head on the end of his bended bow, ants gnawed the bowstring, upon which the ends of the bow, starting asunder, cut off the head of Vishnu. With this headless sacrifice the gods went on worshipping and toiling.¹

VISHNU IN MANU.

Vishnu seems to be only once mentioned by name in Manava Dharma Sastra

121 " (Also) the moon in the mind, the quarters of the heavens in hearing, Vishnu in walking, Indra in strength, Fire in voice, Mitra in excretion, and Prajapati in procreation" XII

Manu I. 10 says .

" Waters are called *narāḥ* for they are the offspring of Nara, and since they were his first abode (*ayana*) he thence is called *Nārāyana*."

Manu applies this to Brahmanā, in later times the Vaishnavas claimed it for Vishnu.

VISHNU IN THE MAHABHARATA.

Goldstucker says

" In the Mahābhārata Vishnu is often identified with the Supreme Spirit, but while in some portions of this poem -- the different parts of which belong to different epochs of Hindu antiquity -- he is regarded as the most exalted deity, he is again, in others, represented as paying homage to Siva, and acknowledging the superiority of that god over himself."

In a great part of the Mahābhārata Krishna is merely a hero, the Prince of Dwārakā. Only now and then he is said to reveal his divine form, as he did to Arjuna, when he is represented as blazing with the lustre of a thousand sons. He is then identified with Vishnu and the Supreme Deity.

The following are some of the representations of Vishnu in the Mahābhārata

Churning of the Ocean.—The Adi Parva contains an account of the churning of the ocean by means of the mountain Mandara,

* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. IV. P. 123.

† *Ibid*, pp. 125, 126. Muir both quotes the Sanskrit and gives an English translation.

‡ Chambers's *Encyclopedia*.

with its products. At last the divine physician Dhanwantari appeared, with a vessel in his hands containing the *amrit*. The Daityas sought to drink the *amrit*, but Nārāyana, assuming a beautiful form, obtained it from them. While the gods were drinking it, Rāhu, a Dānava, under the form of a celestial, contrived to get some. Vishnu informed of that by Chandra and Sūrya, cut him in two with his discus. Hence the enmity of Rāhu to the sun and moon, whom he attempts to swallow.

The Earth raised by Narayana.—In the Krita Yuga Brahmā assumed the functions of Yama. Not a creature then died, while births went on as before. Birds, beasts, including all kinds of carnivorous animals, and men multiplied so exceedingly, that, under the weight, the earth sank a hundred *yojanas*, at the same time suffering severe pain. She then appealed to Nārāyana to lighten her load.

Nārāyana, assuming the form of a boat with one tusk, blazing with effulgence, with his single radiant tusk raised the earth a hundred *yojanas*. This caused such an agitation, that the gods were alarmed, and went to Brahmā with joined hands. He calmed their fears, and told them where they might find Nārāyana. *Vana Parva*.

Markandeya in Vishnu's Stomach during a Mahapralaya.—Mārkaṇḍeya could find at first no resting-place during the dissolution, but at last he saw a large banyan tree, under which a boy of great beauty sat on a couch. The boy told him to enter into his body and rest there. When he opened his mouth, Mārkaṇḍeya was impelled to enter it. In his stomach he beheld the whole earth teeming with cities and kingdoms. He also saw all the gods, the Nāgas, Gandharvas, Yakhas and others. After living in his stomach for many centuries subsisting on fruits, he was suddenly projected by a gust of wind through the boy's open mouth. Mārkaṇḍeya then worshipped the being who had swallowed up the whole universe.

The boy then explained who he was. In ancient times, he called the waters by the name of *Nara*, and because the waters have ever been his *ayana*, or home, he has been called Nārāyana. He said, 'I am the Creator of all things and the Destroyer also of all. I am Vishnu, I am Brahmā, I am Siva, I am Yama, &c. When virtue and morality decrease, I create myself into new forms.' After this the wonderful Deity vanished. Mārkaṇḍeya then beheld creation start again into life. *Vana Parva*.

The Austerities of Krishna.—The gods in Hinduism are supposed to owe their greatness to their austerities. In the *Vana Parva* Arjuna thus describes the austerities of Krishna:

"In days of old, thou, O Krishna, hadst wandered over the Gandhamādana mountains for ten thousand years as a Muni having his home where evening fell! Living upon water alone, thou hadst dwelt

for full eleven thousand years by the Lake of Pushkara. With arms upraised and standing in one leg, thou hadst passed a hundred years on the high hills of Vadara, living all the while upon air, &c."

Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.—The Bhagavad Gītā is inserted in the Bhīshma-Parva. Krishna usually appears only in human form, but, at Arjuna's request, he shows himself in his divine form.

Brahma's Praise of Krishna.—After the fourth day's battle described in the Bhīshma Parva, Brahmā, with joined hands, thus addressed Krishna

Thou art the Lord of the universe I seek refuge in thee, who art the highest Divinity O great Snake, O huge Boar, O first Cause, victory to thee who art Almighty. Thou art Nārāyaṇa.

Why Hari assumed the form with the head of a Horse.—The Supreme Lord lay asleep on the hood of the serpent Sesha. Seeing him thus reposing, the Asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha, roared with laughter, saying, "Who is he? Why is he thus asleep on the hood of a snake?" Hari, thus awakened from his Yoga slumber, knew that the Asuras wished to fight with him. Having assumed the horse-head form, Hari slew them both. Hence he came to be named Madhusūdhana, slayer of Madhu.

In the Mahābhārata, written by different authors at different times, in certain passages Vishnu acknowledges the superior greatness of Siva, while in other passages Siva makes a similar acknowledgment with regard to Vishnu.

Siva acknowledges Vishnu as the Supreme Being.—In the Vana Parva he says "The great god Vishnu, who is the Infinite Spirit, the Lord Preceptor of all the gods, the Supreme Being without attributes, the Soul of the universe and pervading the whole creation."

Siva says that Brahmā sprang from the navel of Nārāyaṇa. In the Vana Parva he says, "While that everlasting being was engaged in meditation for the re-creation of the Universe, a lotus flower instantaneously came into existence from his navel, and the four-faced Brahmā came out of that navel lotus."

In the Vana Parva Arjuna says that Siva sprang from the forehead of Krishna.

Siva acknowledging the greatness of Vishnu.—In the Anuśāna Parva he says

"Hari is superior to the grandsire (Brahmā) himself. He is the eternal Puruṣha, otherwise called Krishna. He is worshipped by all the deities. Brahmā has risen from his abdomen, I have sprung from his head. He is the Supreme Soul. He is the Supreme Lord. There is none in the three worlds that is superior to Him."

On the other hand, Krishna repeatedly acknowledges the greatness of Siva.

Krishna prays to Siva.—In the Drōṇa Parva Krishna and Arjuna thus address Siva. "We bow to Bhava, to Sarva, to Rudra, to the boon-giving deity To him who is the soul of the universe, who is the creator of the universe, to him who liveth pervading the whole universe. We bow to thee that art the object of reverence of all, to thee that art the original cause of all creatures."

Krishna's acknowledgment of Siva's greatness.—In the Sauptika Parva Krishna says "Verily, Drona's son had sought the aid of that highest of all the gods, the eternal Mahādeva. He, O Bharata, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all creatures. This entire universe acts and moves through his energy."

Krishna lauds Siva as the Supreme Deity and asks eight boons.—In the Anusāsana Parva, after Krishna acknowledges the greatness of Siva, he is offered eight boons. Krishna asks (1) steadfastness in righteousness, (2) the destruction of his foes in battle, (3) eminent renown, (4) the greatest strength, (5) yoga, (6) amiability, (7) close proximity to Mahādeva, and (8) a hundred hundreds of sons. These are all granted. Umā next offers eight boons. Among them Krishna asked a hundred sons, to which Umā superadded 16,000 wives.

The Anusāsana Parva even says "This Mādhava performed austerities for a full thousand years, propitiating Siva, the god who bestows boons and the preceptor of the world. But in every Yuga Maheswara has been propitiated by Krishna, and has been gratified by the eminent devotion of the great personage."*

Battle between Siva and Vishnu.—This is said to have occurred at Daksha's sacrifice. The Shanti Parva says "At this Rudra became highly angry and rushed at Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa then seized the rushing Rudra with his hand by the throat. Seized by Nārāyaṇa, the lord of the universe, Rudra's throat changed colour, and became dark. As the whole universe trembled, the four-faced Brahmā joined his hands and addressed Rudra, says 'Throw down thy weapons O lord of the universe, from desire of benefiting the universe,' upon which Rudra forthwith cast off the fire of his wrath."

Anusāsana Parva

The Thousand Names of Vishnu.—A list of these, occupying 21 pages in the translation, is given in the Anusāsana Parva. Among them is, "He is That."

* Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. IV, p. 188.

VISHNU IN THE RAMAYANA.

In the Mahábhárata, as has been shown, sometimes Vishnu, sometimes Siva is acknowledged as supreme. In the Rámáyana the claims of Vishnu are undisputed.

The whole poem may be regarded as in honour of Ráma, an incarnation of Vishnu, but the references expressly to the latter are few. The principal will be mentioned.

Vishnu agrees to become Incarnate.—The gods are represented as living on the sacrifices offered by human beings, and after every ceremony assemble to receive their share of the oblations. When they met together for this purpose after the horse sacrifice, they complained to Brahmá, that the three worlds were grievously oppressed by a Rákshasa, named Rávana. Through fear of him the sun did not shine, the wind blow, or the ocean stir. Brahmá replied that he had granted the boon to Rávana to be incapable of being slain by gods or demons. In his pride he did not mention men: by men therefore he must be slain. Vishnu then appeared, riding on the Garuda, and sat down near Brahmá. The gods, after worshipping him, related the evils that Rávana had done, and begged him to be born as man for his destruction. To this Vishnu agreed. He would divide himself into four parts, choosing King Dasaratha as his father.

Vishnu then descended to the earth, and from out the sacrificial fire of Dasaratha there arose a mighty being, resembling a mountain peak, black, covered with hair like a lion, adorned with ornaments, and bearing a large vessel of burnished gold, containing *páyasa*.* This he gave to Dasaratha to be drunk by his queens that they might be blessed with sons. One-half was given to Kausalyá, one-fourth to Sumitrá, and the remainder to Kaikeyí.

The Birth of the Sons.—In due time when the heavens were propitious, Kausalyá gave birth to Ráma, the half of Vishnu, distinguished for his beauty, and with a voice like a kettledrum. Then Kaikeyí had a son, Bharata, the fourth part of Vishnu, and Sumitrá gave birth to Lakshman and Satrugna. On their birth the Apsaras began to dance, the drums of heaven sounded, and blossoms showered down from the sky. On the 11th day the naming ceremony was performed, when multitudes were fed and heaps of jewels bestowed upon Brahmans. The sons were trained to ride on elephants and horses, to manage cars, to be accomplished archers, and to be well versed in the Védas.

The Churning of the Milk Ocean.—

The sons of Diti and Aditi, the daityas and the gods, to obtain ambrosia making them immortal, resolved to churn the Ocean of

* A mixture of milk, rice, and sugar.

Milk. The serpent *Vāsuki* was made the cord, and the mountain *Mandara*, the stick. At the end of a thousand years, the serpent vomited poison, which burnt like fire, and threatened to destroy the universe. *Siva* then swallowed the dreadful poison as if it were nectar. On resuming the churning, the hill *Mandara* fell into the regions below. Upon this *Vishnu*, assuming the form of a tortoise, stood in the sea, supporting the hill on his back. After churning for a thousand years more, the physician *Dhanwantari* arose. Next sprang 60 kotis of shining *Apsaras*. As neither the deities nor the *Dānavas* would accept them, they are known as women belonging to all. At last the ambrosia was obtained, for which there was a terrible fight between *Aditi's* and *Diti's* sons. *Vishnu*, assuming a beautiful form, stole away the ambrosia, and the sons of *Aditi*, the gods, slaughtered those of *Diti*, the *Dartiyas*.

The Gods address Rama.—On hearing the lamentations of the monkeys and *Rākshasas*, the eyes of *Rāma* were filled with tears. Thereupon *Kuvera*, *Yama*, the *Pitris*, *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Mahādeva* and *Brahmā* came in radiant cars to *Lanka*, and thus addressed *Rāma* "O Lord, preserver of the world, how couldst thou allow *Sita* to enter the fire? Creator of the three worlds, dost thou not yet recognize thy heavenly nature?" *Rāma* replied that he knew himself to be a man—the son of *Dasaratha*. Thereupon *Brahmā* said "Thou art the great *Nārāyana*, holding discus and mace, thou art the boar with one tusk, thou art *Madhu* and *Mahendra*, the foremost of the *Vedas*, thou upholdest all creation, *Sitā* is *Lakshmi*, and thou art *Krishna* and *Vishnu*. For *Rāvana's* destruction thou hast assumed thy present form. Thy work accomplished, return to heaven."

Rama goes to Heaven.—When *Rāma* came to the bank, *Brahmā*, with all the gods and innumerable celestial cars, appeared, and all the sky was refulgent with splendour. Pure, fragrant breezes blew, and flowers fell from the sky. When *Rāma* entered the river, *Brahmā* said, "Approach, *Vishnu Rāghava*, thou hast happily arrived with thy godlike brothers. Enter thine own body as *Vishnu* or the eternal ether. For thou art the abode of the worlds, no one comprehends thee, the inconceivable and imperishable, except large-eyed *Māyā*, thy primeval spouse."

Rāma, on hearing these words, entered heaven in his *Vishnu* form, accompanied by his brothers, where he was worshipped by the celestials, *Gandharbas*, *Apsaras*, *Nāgas*, *Dānavas*, and *Rākshasas*. *Brahmā* said that all the people who came with *Rāma* should go to *Santanaka*, next to the *Brahmā* region; monkeys and bears would enter in their celestial forms. When this had been said, all descended into the waters of the *Saraju*, (*Gogra*) having bathed there, and given up their lives, they ascended to heaven.

Promises with regard to the Ramayana.—"Reading even a single verse of this poem, one who hath no son obtaineth him; one having no riches gets them; and people are freed from all sins. By reading even one sloka people are freed from all sins which they commit every day."

VISHNU IN THE PURANAS.

In course of time Hindus became mainly divided into two sects—worshippers of Vishnu and worshippers of Siva, each extolling the pre-eminent greatness of their divinity. Books were written in praise of each. Although comparatively modern, they were called "*Purānas*," 'old,' to give them a fabulous appearance of antiquity.

The *Purānas* are all written in verse, and their invariable form is that of a dialogue between an exponent and an inquirer, interspersed with the dialogues and observations of other individuals. They vary greatly in length.

The *Purānas* are 18 in number, and in addition to these there are 18 *Upa Purānas* or subordinate works. Of most of the latter, little is known; the greater number are not procurable.

The principal Vaishnava *Purānas* are the *Bhāgavat Purāna* and the *Vishnu Purāna*. The most popular part of the former is the tenth book, which describes, in detail, the history of Krishna, and has been translated into most of the Indian vernaculars. The Hindi version is well known as the *Prem Sāgar*, or 'Ocean of Love.' The composition of the *Purāna* has been ascribed to the grammarian Vopadeva.

The main object of the *Brahmā Purāna* is the promotion of the worship of Krishna as Jagannath. The *Narada Purāna* is a modern compilation, intended to support the doctrine of *Bhakti* or faith in Vishnu. The *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāna* advocates the worship of the juvenile Krishna. The *Varāha Purāna* professes to be narrated by Vishnu in the *Varāha* or Boar incarnation.

Space does not admit quotations to be made from all the *Purānas*. They will be chiefly confined to the *Vishnu Purāna*, one of the most celebrated, of which there is a complete English translation by Professor Wilson. A translation, based on it has been published by Mr. Maninatha Nath Dutt, M.A., Calcutta, price Rs. 6.

In the following abridgments Wilson's translation will be followed.

Invocation, Authorship.—The *Purāna* begins with, "OM! GLORY TO VASUDEVA." Vasudeva grammatically denotes son of Vasudeva, from whom Krishna was descended, but the *Purāna*

derives it from *Vas*, abiding, dwelling. He in whom all things abide. Vishnu is invoked as possessed of the three *gunas*, *Sattva*, goodness, *Rajas*, passion, *Tamas*, darkness; the cause of creation, preservation, and destruction. The author says, 'I will narrate a Purána equal in sanctity to the Vedas.'

The Purána is supposed to be communicated by Parásara, a disciple of Kapila and grandson of Vatsishtha, to his disciple Maitreya.

Parásara professes to give an account of what was originally imparted by Brahmá in answer to the questions of Dakṣa. In the last chapter a different statement is made about the origin and transmission of the Purána.

The Golden Egg.—The second chapter of Book I. begins with praise to Vishnu, who is called Hiranyagarbha (a name of Brahmá as born from a golden egg), Hari, and Sankara (Siva), the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world.

Affecting the quality of activity, Hari becoming Brahmá, engaged in the creation of the universe. Vishnu, with the quality of goodness, preserves created things through successive ages till the close of a period turned a Kalpa, when the same mighty deity, Janárdhana (worshipped by man), invested with the quality of darkness, assumes the awful form of Rudra, and swallows up the universe. Having thus devoured all things, and converted the world into one vast ocean, the Supreme reposes upon his mighty serpent couch amidst the deep. He awakes after a season, and again, as Brahmá, becomes the author of creation.

Thus the one only god, Janárdhana, takes the designation of Brahmá, Vishnu, and Siva, accordingly as he creates, preserves or destroys.

Narayana raises the Earth.—The name *Náráyana* is thus explained. "The waters are called *Nára*, because they were the offspring of Nara (the supreme spirit); and as in them his first (ayana) progress (in the character of Brahmá) took place, he is thence named *Náráyana* (he whose place of moving was the waters).

Náráyana being desirous to raise the earth, as in preceding Kalpas he had assumed the form of a fish or tortoise, now took the figure of a boar, and plunged into the ocean. When the goddess Earth saw him thus descending, she adored him devoutly. Thus hymned by the earth, the mighty boar uplifted upon his ample backs the earth from the lowest regions. Placed on the summit of the ocean, it floats like a mighty vessel, and from its expansive surface does not sink beneath the waters. Book I 4.

The Churning of the Ocean.—Through the curse of Durvasas the three worlds lost their vigour; all plants withered and died; sacrifices were no longer offered. The Asurs, or Dautyas, taking

advantage of this, attacked the feeble gods, who, overcome in fight, fled with Indra and the rest to Brahmā. The gods were recommended to apply to Vishnu. Brahmā, as their mouth-piece, first addressed Vishnu, and they followed. Vishnu told them thus :

“ Let all the gods, associated with the Asuras, cast all sorts of medicinal herbs into the sea of milk, and then taking the mountain Mandara for the churning-stick, the serpent Vāsuki for the rope, churn the ocean together for ambrosia. To secure the assistance of the Daityas, promise to give them an equal portion of the fruit of your associated toil. I will take care that the enemies of the gods shall not partake of the precious draught that they shall share in the labour alone.”

The gods did as commanded. Hari himself, in the midst of the milk sea in the form of a tortoise, served as a pivot for the mountain as it was whirled around. From the ocean thus churned rose the cow Surabhi, Varuṇī, the goddess of wine, the Pārijāta tree, the Apsarasas, the Moon, Dhanwantari, the physician of the gods and Lakshmi.

The Daityas seized the Amrita cup that was in the hand of Dhanwantari, but Vishnu recovered it and delivered it to the gods by whom it was quaffed. The incensed demons fell upon the gods, but the latter into whom the Amrita had infused new vigour, put the former to flight, and they fled to Pātāl. The gods then resumed their reign, and the three worlds prospered. Book I. 9.

Story of Prahlāda.—Prahlāda was a son of Hiranyakasipu, chief of the Daityas*. Prahlāda, while yet a boy, became an ardent worshipper of Vishnu; which so enraged his father that he ordered the boy to be killed; but not the weapons of the Daityas, the fangs of the serpents, the tusks of the celestial elephants, nor the flames of fire took any effect, and his father was constrained to send him back to his teacher. When again Prahlāda extolled Vishnu, his father ordered him to be cast into the bottom of the sea, where Prahlāda lay undisturbed, praising Vishnu. After his father had been put to death by Vishnu in the Narasimha, or Man-lion incarnation, Prahlāda became sovereign of the Daityas, and finally obtained *mukta*.

The Purāna says

“ Whoever listens to the history of Prahlāda is immediately cleansed from his sins.” Book I 16-20

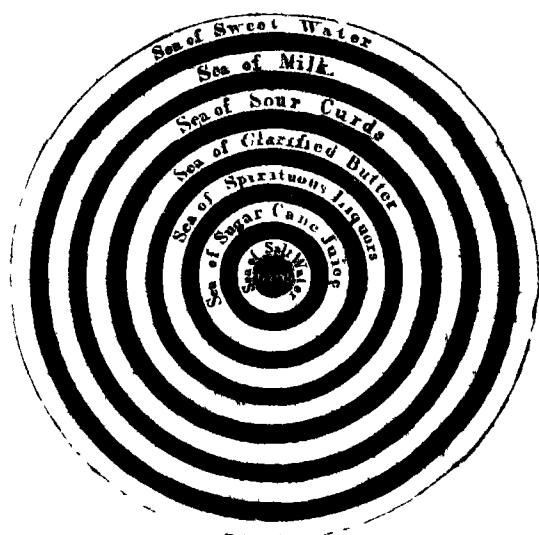
Vishnu everything.—Prithu, the first king of the earth, was born from the right arm of Vena, when rubbed by the Rishis. When Prithu was installed in the government of the earth, Soma was appointed monarch of the stars and planets; Varuna was

* The Daityas were a race of gigantic demons.

placed over the waters; Yama was over the Pitris; Airavata, was made king of Elephants; Garuda, of birds; Indra of the gods; Sesha became the snake king. All these were but portions of the universal Vishnu. In him, is the whole world interwoven. All kinds of substances, with or without shape, here or elsewhere, are the body of Vishnu. The man who knows these births shall never again experience the afflictions of worldly existence.

"Thus, Brahman, has the first portion of this Purāna been duly revealed to you; listening to which expiates all offences. The man who hears this Purāna obtains the fruit of bathing in Pushkara lake (near Ajmere in Rajputana) for 12 years in the month Kartik. The gods bestow upon him who hears this work the dignity of a divine sage, of a patriarch, or of a spirit of heaven."

Book I. 22



Description of the Earth.—"The 7 great insular continents are Jambū, Plāksha, Sālmalī, Kusa, Krauncha, Saka, and Pushkara. They are surrounded severally by 7 great seas, the sea of salt water (Lavana), of sugar-cane juice (Ikshu), of wine (Sura), of clarified butter (Sarpi), of curd (Dadhi), of milk, (Dugdha), and of fresh water (Jala)."

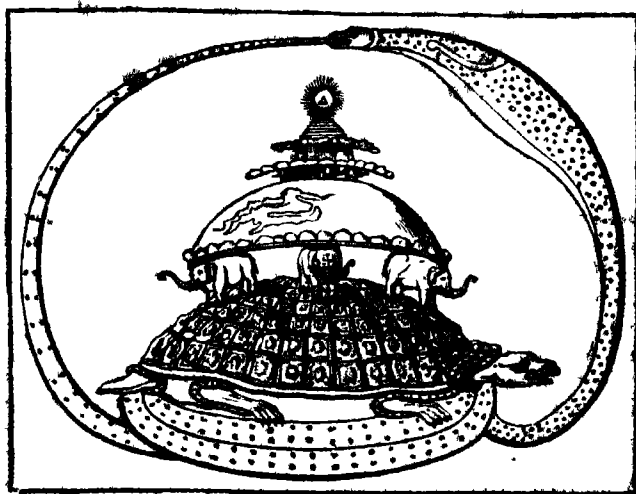
"Jambūdīpa is in the centre of all these and in the centre of this continent is the golden mountain Meru. The height of Meru is 84,000 yojanas; and its depth below the surface of the earth is 16,000. Its diameter at the summit is 32,000 yojanas, and at its base, 16,000; so that this mountain is like the seed cup of the lotus of the earth."

The boundary mountains (of the earth) are Himavan, Hemakūta, and Nishāda, which lie south of Meru . and Nīla, Sweta, and Srungi, which are situated to the north of it. The two central ranges extend for 100,000 (yojanas) running east and west. Each of the others diminishes 10,000 yojanas as it lies more remote from the centre. They are 2,000 yojanas in height, and as many in breadth.

In the centre is the golden mountain Meru. There are four mountains as buttresses to Meru, each 10,000 yojanas in elevation. On each of these stands severally a Kadamba tree, a Jambu tree, a Pipul and a Vata, each spreading over 1,100 yojanas. From the Jambu tree the insular continent Jambudwipa derives its appellation. The apples of that tree are as large as elephants, when they are rotten they fall on the crest of the mountain, and from their expressed juice is formed the Jambu river, the waters of which are drunk by the inhabitants, and in consequence of drinking of that stream, they pass their days in content and health, being subject neither to perspiration, to foul odours, to decrepitude, nor organic decay.

On the summit of Meru is the vast city of Brahmá, extending 14,000 yojanas, around it are situated the stately cities of Indra and the other regents of the spheres. The capital of Brahmá is enclosed by the river Ganges, which issuing from the foot of Vishnu, and washing the lunar orb falls from the skies, and, after encircling the city, divides into four mighty rivers flowing in opposite directions. Book II. 2.

Account of Patala and Shesha.—The extent of the surface



SUPPORT OF THE EARTH.

of the earth has thus been described. Its depth below the surface is said to be 30,000 *yojanas*, each of the seven regions of *Pātāla* extending downwards 10,000. These seven are called *Atala*, *Vitāla*, *Nitāla*, *Gabhastimat*, *Mahātāla*, *Sutāla*, and *Pātāla*. Their soil is generally white, black, purple, yellow, sandy, stony, and of gold. The Muni *Narada*, after his return from these regions to the skies, declared that *Pātāla* was much more delightful than *Indra's* heaven.

Below the seven *Pātālas* is the form of *Vishnu*, proceeding from the quality of darkness, which is called *Sesha*. He has a thousand heads; and the thousand jewels in his crest give light to all the regions. *Sesha* bears the entire world like a diadem upon his head, and he is the foundation on which the seven *Pātālas* rest.

The ancient sage *Gargi*, having propitiated *Sesha*, acquired from him a knowledge of astronomy and astrology.

The earth, sustained upon the head of this sovereign serpent, supports in its turn the garland of the spheres, along with their inhabitants, men, demons, and gods. Book II. 5.

The Sun identical with Vishnu.—The sun, though identified with the seven beings in his orb, is distinct from them as their chief. The entire and mighty energy of *Vishnu*, which is called the three *Vedas*, or *Rich*, *Yajush*, and *Sāman*, is that which enlightens the world, and destroys its iniquity. It is that also, which, during the continuance of things, is present as *Vishnu*, actively engaged in the preservation of the universe, and already as the three *Vedas* within the sun. Book II. 11.

Vishnu why so called.—"Because this whole world has been pervaded by the energy of the deity, he is entitled *Vishnu*, from the root *vis*, 'to enter' or 'pervade', for all the gods, the *Manus*, the *Rishis*, the sons of *Manus*, the *Indras* the sovereigns of the gods, all are but the impersonated might of *Vishnu*. III. 1.

Vishnu the syllable Om, the Supreme Spirit.—The syllable *Om* is defined to be the eternal monosyllabic *Brahma*, the (Supreme Divinity). The word *Brahma* is derived from the root *Vriha* (to increase), because it is infinite, and because it is the cause by which the *Vedas* are developed. *Vāsudeva* is the same with the supreme spirit, which is *Brahma*. He, distinguished as consisting of the *Vedas*, creates the *Vedas*, and divides them into branches. III. 3.

Worshippers of Vishnu not subject to Yama.—*Yama* be-
holding one of his servants with his noose in his hand, whispered to him, "Keep clear of the worshippers of *Madhusūdana*. I am the lord of all men, the *Vaishnavas* excepted. I was appointed by *Brahma* to restrain mankind, and regulate the consequences of good and evil in the universe. But he who obeys *Hari*, as his spiritual guide, is here independent of me; for *Vishnu* is of power to govern and control me. He who through holy knowledge

diligently adores the lotus foot of that Hari, who is revered by the gods, is released from all the bonds of sin; and you must avoid him as you would avoid fire fed by oil." III. 7

How to please Vishnu.—The supreme Vishnu is propitiated by a man who observes the institutions of caste, order, and purificatory practices no other path is the way to please him. III. 8

Wives and children of Krishna.—Whilst this powerful being resided in this world of mortals, he had 16,100 wives; of whom the principal were Rukmini, Satyabhāmā, Jāmbavatī, and 5 others. By them the universal form beget 180,000 sons, of whom 13 were most renowned, Pradyumna, Samba, and others.

In this manner the descendants of Yadu multiplied, and there were so many lakhs of them, that it would be impossible to repeat their names in hundreds of years. The domestic instructors of the boys in the use of arms amounted to 3 crores and 80 lakhs (38 millions).

Whoever listens frequently to this account of the origin of the heroes of the race of Vishnu shall be purified from all sin, and obtain the sphere of Vishnu. IV. 15

History of Krishna. Book V is chiefly devoted to the history of Krishna. As a full account is given in a separate pamphlet,* it will not be noticed here. The Kali age is supposed to begin from the death of Krishna.

The Kali Age.—The observance of caste, order, and institutes, will not prevail in the Kali age. Acts of penance will be unattended by any results. All orders of life will be common alike to all persons. Gold, jewels, and clothes, will all have perished, and their hair will be the only ornament with which women can decorate themselves. Cows will be held in esteem only as they supply milk. The people will be almost always in dread of dearth, they will all live like hermits upon leaves and roots and fruits, and put a period to their lives through fear of want. Women will be short of stature, gluttonous, they will be scolds and harsh. Women will bear children at the age of 5, 6, or 7 years, and men beget them when they are 8, 9, 10. A man will be grey when he is 12, and no one will exceed 20 years of life. VI. 1.

A Mahapralaya or Dissolution.—All the end of a thousand periods of four ages, the earth is for the most part exhausted. A total dearth then ensues, which lasts a hundred years, and all beings perish. The eternal Vishnu then assumes the character of Rudra the destroyer. He enters into the seven rays of the sun, and drinks up all the waters of the globe. The solar rays thus fed become seven suns which set the three worlds and Pātāla on fire. The great fire, when it has burnt all the divisions of Pātāla, proceeds to the earth, and consumes it also. A vast whirlpool of

* Krishna is described in the *Purāṇas* and *Mahābhārata*, 8vo. pp. 24 A.

flames then spreads to the region of the atmosphere and the sphere of the gods, and wraps them in ruin. The inhabitants of the two upper spheres, annoyed by the heat, remove to the Maharloka. When that becomes heated, its inhabitants, if so disposed, depart for the Janaloka. Janárdhana, having consumed the whole earth, breathes forth heavy clouds, resembling vast elephants in bulk, showering down torrents of water, these clouds quench the dreadful fires which involve the three worlds, and they rain uninterruptedly for a hundred years, and deluge the whole world, all things animate or inanimate having perished.

When the waters have reached the region of the seven Rishis and the whole of the three worlds is one ocean, they stop. The breath of Vishnu then becomes a strong wind which blows for more than a hundred years, until all the clouds are dispersed. The wind is then reabsorbed, and Hari reposes, sleeping upon Sesha in the midst of the deep.

When the universal spirit wakes, the world revives, when he closes his eyes, all things fall into the bed of mystic slumber. In like manner as a thousand great ages constitute a day of Brahmá, so his night consists of the same period, during which the world is submerged by a vast ocean. Awakening at the end of his night, the unborn, Vishnu, in the character of Brahmá, creates the universe anew VI 3, 4

EXTRACTS FROM OTHER PURANAS.

Vishnu the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer.—"In the beginning of creation, the great Vishnu, desirous of creating the whole world, became threefold Creator, Preserver, Destroyer. In order to create this world, the Supreme Spirit produced from the right side of his body himself as Brahmá, then, in order to preserve the world, he produced from his left side Vishnu, and in order to destroy the world, he produced from the middle of his body the eternal Siva. Some worship Brahmá, others Vishnu, others Siva, but Vishnu, one yet threefold, creates, preserves, and destroys, therefore let the pious make no difference between the three" *Padma Purana*

Siva acknowledges the superiority of Vishnu.—Addressing his wife he says

"I will acquaint thee with the real essence and form of Vishnu; know then that he is in truth Náráyana, the Supreme Spirit, and Parabrahma (the great Brahmá), without beginning or end, omniscient, and omnipresent, eternal, unchangeable, and supremely happy. He is Siva, Hiranyagarbha, and Súrya; he is more excellent than all the gods, even than I myself. But it is impossible for me, or Brahmá, or the gods to declare the greatness of Vāsudeva, the originator and lord of the universe." *Padma Purána.*

* Kennedy's *Hindu Mythology*, p. 246.

Brahma sprang from Vishnu.—It has been shown that the term *Nārāyaṇa* was applied by Manu to Brahmā. In the Pu-



VISHNU REPOSING WITH BRAHMA SPRINGING FROM A LOTUS.

rānas the Vaishnavas have appropriated it, and even claimed that Brahmā sprang from Vishnu. The following extract is from the *Varāha Purāṇa*

“The supreme god *Nārāyaṇa* having conceived the thought of creating this universe, considered also that it was necessary that it should be protected after it was created, ‘but as it is impossible for an incorporeal being to exert action, let me produce from my own essence a corporeal being, by means of whom I may protect the world.’ Having thus reflected, the pre-existing *Nārāyaṇa* created from his own substance an ungenerated and divine form on whom he bestowed these blessings.— ‘Be thou the framer of all things O Vishnu’ Be thou always the protector of the three worlds and the adored of all men. Be thou omniscient and almighty, and do thou at all times accomplish the wishes of Brahmā and the gods.’ The Supreme Spirit then resumed his essential nature. Vishnu, as he meditated on the purpose for which he had been produced, sank into a mysterious slumber; and as in his sleep he imagined

the production of various things, a lotus sprang from his navel. In the centre of that lotus Brahmā appeared; and Vishnu, beholding the production of his body, was delighted."*

Vishnu as Mohini. - At the churning of the ocean, he is said to have assumed a very beautiful female form, called Mohini, to fascinate the asuras while the gods drank the amrit. It is related in the Bhāgavata that Vishnu, at the request of Siva, again assumed the form of Mohini. Siva lusted after her, and from their union was born a son, called Aiyanaḥ or Hari-hara putra.

REPRESENTATIONS OF VISHNU

Vishnu is represented as a black man, with four arms. In one hand he holds a club, in another a conch shell; in a third a chakra or discus with which he slays his enemies, in the fourth, a lotus. He wears a yellow robe and rides upon Garuda, half man, half bird. Vishnu's wife is Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune. There are different accounts of her origin. The one commonly received is that given in the Rāmāyaṇa, which describes her as produced at the churning of the Milk Sea.

Vaikuṇṭha, Vishnu's heaven, is sometimes described as on Mount Meru and at others as in the Northern Ocean. It is made entirely of gold, and is 80,000 miles in circumference. The waters of the Ganges fall from the higher heaven on the head of Dhruva, the Polar Star; from thence into the hair of the seven Rishis, and from thence they fall and form a river. On a seat glorious as the meridian sun, sitting on white lotuses, is Vishnu, and on his right hand Lakshmi, from whose body the fragrance of the lotus extends 800 miles†.

AVATARAS OF VISHNU

Goldstucker has the following general remarks on this subject

"The large circle of myths relating to Vishnu in the epic poems and Purāṇas is distinguished by a feature, which, though not quite absent from the mythological history of Siva, especially characterises that of Vishnu. It arose from the idea, that whenever a great disorder, physical or moral, disturbed the world, Vishnu descended in a small portion of his essence to set it right, to restore the law, and thus to preserve the creation. Such descents of the god are called his *Avatāras* (from *ava* down and *ti* descend), and they consist in Vishnu's being supposed to have either assumed the form of some wonderful animal or superhuman being, or to have been born of human parents, in a human form, always, of course, possessed of miraculous properties. Some of

* Quoted by Kennedy.

† Ward, from the Mahābhārata.

these Avatāras are of an entirely cosmical* character; others, however, are probably based on historical events, the leading personage of which was gradually endowed with divine attributes, until he was regarded as an incarnation of the deity itself. With the exception of the last, all these Avatāras belong to the past; the last, however, has yet to come."

INCARNATIONS IN THE EARLIER BOOKS AFTERWARDS CLAIMED
BY THE VAISHNAVAS.

Boar Incarnation.—In the Taittiriya Brāhmana and the Satapatha Brāhmana, the creator Prajāpati, afterwards known as Brahmā, took the form of a boar for the purpose of raising the earth out of the boundless waters. The Taittiriya Saṁhita says, "This universe was formerly waters, fluid. On it Prajāpati becoming wind, moved. He saw this (earth). Becoming a boar he took her up. Becoming Visvakarma he wiped (the moisture from her). She extended. She became the extended one (Prithivī). From this the earth derives her designation as 'the extended one.' The Taittiriya Aranyaka says the earth was "raised by a black boar with a hundred arms." The Satapatha Brāhmana states, "She (the earth) was only so large as the size of a span. A boar called Emusha raised her up."

Kurma or Tortoise.—In the Satapatha Brāhmana it is said that "Prajāpati, having assumed the form of a tortoise (*Kurma*), created offspring."

Fish Incarnation.—The earliest mention of the fish Avatāra occurs in the Satapatha Brāhmana, in connection with the Hindu legend of the deluge. Manu found, in the water which was brought to him for his ablutions, a small fish, which spoke to him and said, "I will save thee" from a flood which shall sweep away all creatures. The fish grew to a large size, and had to be consigned to the ocean, when he directed Manu to construct a ship and to resort to him when the flood should rise. The deluge came, and Manu embarked in the ship. The fish then swam to Manu, who fastened the vessel to the fish's horn, and was conducted in safety. The Mahābhārata repeats this story with some variations.

The incarnations of the boar, the tortoise, and the fish are thus in the earlier writings represented as manifestations of Prajāpati or Brahmā. In the Mahābhārata Vishnu has become one of the most prominent of the gods, and some of his incarnations are more or less distinctly noticed; but it is the Purānas that they receive their full development.†

* Relating to the universe.

† Chambers's *Encyclopædia*
; Dowson's *Hindu Mythology*