

# THE WORD OF THE CROSS To HINDUS

By  
EDGAR W. THOMPSON, M.A.

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Twenty-five years in India and fourteen years' experience as Missionary Secretary are among the author's qualifications for dealing with this subject. Hinduism remains to-day the prevalent mode of thought and worship in India. From a study of the Gospels the author turns to Jesus Himself. India is convulsed and rapidly changing and this word of the Cross must be clearly understood in this missionary epoch. The historicity of the Gospels and of the Cross as the central fact of Christianity are impressively brought out in the first part of the Lecture. This is followed by a striking comparison between the religion of Jesus and Hinduism in regard to God and man and the way of Salvation, with its end in a perfected Society of God and men.

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## PREFACE

THE title chosen for this lecture is not altogether satisfying. To think and speak of men in the mass rarely becomes the Christian pastor. In one aspect this may appear to savour of presumption—as though what he has to say is of deep concern to a multitude of his fellows; and, further, it may be thought to be lacking in that respectful regard and intimate sympathy which the Christian teacher, of all men, owes to every individual.

But an excellent precedent may be cited for this title. Obviously it has been taken from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians. The greatest of missionaries there described and summed up the message which had been given him to deliver as 'The Word of the Cross.' He preached Christ as crucified to the men of the two great types of thought and civilization making up the world in which he lived. This Word was, at the first, to Jews a stumbling-block, and to Greeks foolishness; but, in course of time, both the Messianic belief and hope of the one and the wisdom of the other have interpreted, confirmed and enriched the story and the doctrine of the Cross. And, in every age, to those who have received and understood it in any measure, this Word has been to them a power of God in the process of being saved.

I trust, therefore, that none of my Indian friends will find either aloofness or disparagement in the title. Hinduism is one of the main religious systems of the Eastern world: it was the characteristic product of India, and it remains to-day the prevalent mode of thought and worship in the country. The Hindu represents one of



the great types of the religious mind; and just as the crucified Jesus had something of infinite moment to say to Jews as Jews and to Greeks as Greeks, so He has something to say to Hindus as Hindus. There is a particular Word of the Cross for them. But, though some of my old Hindu acquaintance may be among the readers of this book, the audience for this lecture which I have more clearly envisaged is a group of my fellow missionaries or of those Indian ministers and evangelists with whom I was once associated in the preaching of Jesus. Here are set down such a series of meditations as might have been spoken in their midst. This lecture is addressed not so much to the Hindu as to the preacher to Hindus; and my chief hope of reaching the former is through the latter. The method will be in keeping with the purpose of the Fernley Trust, which requires the lecturer to have in view the preacher's message 'with special reference and adaptation to the necessities of the times.'

The attempt is made here by one of the West to see the Cross against and beneath an Indian sky. The results of such an exercise of mind and spirit may be as instructive and helpful to the Christian minister in England as to the missionary in India. The Word of the Cross to Hindus has a world-wide interest and significance: we all may hear in it a new and fuller message to ourselves.

The Christian teacher—even the most learned and spiritually discerning—cannot approach this subject with any feeling other than sacred dread. It makes so searching proof of his understanding in the Gospel; it measures so surely what depth and reality there are in his God-ward life; it demonstrates so clearly the limits of what he knows and feels of the mind of Christ and can reproduce in the habit of his thought and speech. Some of the great sayings of the Gospels which linger in the memory of the reader are the words that were false in their application to Jesus of Nazareth. There was, for



example, that implicit condemnation of Him by his Pharisee host—'This man, if he were a prophet, would have known . . . ' The next moment it was to be so graciously and so devastatingly refuted. He was a prophet, and He did know both the man who invited Him and the woman who came unbidden. Of the same kind is that word of the Samaritan woman—'Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep'—so untrue of the Master, and often felt by the disciple to be so true of himself. The Dreamer saw a sepulchre near to the Cross, into which the pilgrim's burden rolled and was no more seen. There is also a well, a deep well of truth, beside that Cross. The water drawn from it has revived the drooping souls of travel-stained and wearied men: it has brought them back to life and purity and continually refreshed them with strength and gladness. If this lecture shall carry one fresh cup-full of everlasting truth to the lips of the doubting and the tempted I am content.

In so far as this book puts forward a doctrine of the death of Christ, let it be judged by what it says and not by what it does not say. For the writer's generation Dr. Moberly's *Atonement and Personality* probably still is the most helpful and suggestive work in the English language. His warning and counsel are not yet out of place:

"Our explanations, at their best, are still always partial explanations. . . . Our insight into the doctrine may be adequate. That it should be exhaustive is inconceivable. All explanations must be given with this reserve. They are not, and never can be, the whole truth. . . . The doctrine itself remains, and will remain, something more and truer than the largest and truest explications of it in human imagery and human language. These do reflect it, vitally and really enough, to those whose natural language and imagery they are.



But they are less than it, and cannot express it fully to all minds in all times. There is a sense in which every Church period—there is a sense perhaps in which every Church member—must find its living interpretation, in his own terms, for himself.'

How great, then, is the necessity that in this missionary epoch—with an India convulsed, rapidly changing, and seeking her way to a life and place in the world—the Church of Christ in India should consider and should know what is the Word of the Cross to Hindus.

July 22, 1932.

E. W. T.



# CONTENTS

|                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| PREFACE . . . . . | PAGE<br>V |
|-------------------|-----------|

## PART I

### AN HISTORICAL INQUIRY

|                                                    |  |     |
|----------------------------------------------------|--|-----|
| CHAPTER                                            |  |     |
| I. AN EVENT IN TIME . . . . .                      |  | 3   |
| II. THE CHIEF OPPONENTS . . . . .                  |  | 23  |
| III. THE OFFENCE: NOVELTY AND DIVERGENCE . . . . . |  | 43  |
| IV. THE OFFENCE: PERSONAL CLAIMS . . . . .         |  | 79  |
| V. THE OFFENCE: REVOLUTION . . . . .               |  | 110 |

## PART II

### AN INTERPRETATION

|                                        |     |
|----------------------------------------|-----|
| FOREWORD . . . . .                     | 131 |
| I. THE AVATĀRA AND THE CROSS . . . . . | 139 |
| II. KARMA AND THE CROSS . . . . .      | 171 |
| III. YAJÑA, JEWISH AND HINDU . . . . . | 196 |
| IV. YAJÑA AND THE CROSS . . . . .      | 228 |
| V. TYĀGA AND THE CROSS . . . . .       | 256 |

### APPENDICES

|                                                                |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| I. <i>Food and the Life of the Soul</i> . . . . .              | 291 |
| II. <i>The Great Denunciation of the Pharisees</i> . . . . .   | 296 |
| III. <i>The Development of Sacrifice in Hinduism</i> . . . . . | 306 |
| IV. <i>The Historicity of Krishna</i> . . . . .                | 310 |
| V. <i>A Note on Samabhāva, Ahimsā, and Tapas</i> . . . . .     | 314 |

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| INDEX . . . . . | 325 |
|-----------------|-----|

PART I  
AN HISTORICAL INQUIRY





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## CHAPTER I

## AN EVENT IN TIME

*Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried.*—THE APOSTLES' CREED.

LET us start with the fact. Jesus died and He died upon a cross. His death in this manner is an historical event, which will not be denied nor even challenged by the greatest number of reasonable men who have the materials for framing a judgement and a sense of history. I am assuming throughout this lecture that Jesus of Nazareth was an historical person. One may ask to be excused from entering into argument with those few and abnormal individuals who would reduce Jesus to a creature of the human imagination, and equate all the story of Him with allegory, myth and legend. Jesus was born in an historical age—into a society the order of which we are well able to reconstruct, and among persons who are known to us in ways other than by their relation to Him. The common sense of the literate and civilized world to-day accepts that the birth of Jesus took place about the date traditionally assigned to it—a difference of a year or two in the reckoning there may be, but this is a matter of small importance; and Jesus lived and did His work in the generation which followed. That He rose again from the dead must provoke a doubt and inquiry. Such an event is altogether removed from ordinary happening—it is outside the general experience of mankind; but that Jesus died, sharing our common lot,



meeting that end which awaits us all, and that He died upon a cross, cut off in early manhood, no one can deny with good and sufficient reason. Why did He die upon the cross? What were the historical causes, explicable in terms of human experience, which led up to that event?

We are seeking now for causes in the dear and familiar world, which is made known to us by our senses, and not in another world, invisible and remote. Our investigation lies among such men as we ourselves are. The contemporaries of Jesus—the people, among whom He moved and spoke and wrought—are not shadowy inventions: they are men and women of our own flesh and blood. They are urged by the same motives and passions as stir and throb in our breasts. We can share their prejudices and doubts, and enter into and follow their processes of judging and deciding.

We are not starting this inquiry with abstract conceptions of God—His essential attributes, His justice and love; or of man—his free-will, moral consciousness and sin. We do not begin with a consideration of righteousness and forgiveness, of punishment and penitence in their ideal or perfect forms. Fathers of the Church and great Christian thinkers and teachers have erected systems of doctrine and theories of the Atonement by this method and upon the foundation of these ideas. They have lifted us up off this earth into another world which was of their own intellectual construction. Sometimes they have shown us there things rare and beautiful; and we have been grateful to them for vision and for inspiration. At other times they have taken us into a region where we found ourselves little at home in strange, artificial, and inhuman surroundings. We were perplexed, or even repelled, by what was offered in the name of Theology for our acceptance. The theory of the Atonement and the plan of salvation which were proposed lay like a burden upon our reason and conscience.



The present endeavour is more modest and limited in scope. We intend a strictly historical inquiry. We are not suggesting that there can be a long divorce between the story of the Cross and the doctrine of it, between the fact and the theory of the death of Jesus. Interpretation and theorizing began with the first sermon preached at Pentecost, when Peter stood up and said: 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless and wicked men did crucify and slay.' For the moment, however, we may overlook the theory that is advanced in the former half of this statement and confine ourselves to the historical fact alleged in the latter half. Let us at least begin with the fact, and ask: Why did the Jews procure the death of Jesus? What are the reasons discoverable in history for His being crucified and slain?

I cannot stress too strongly the importance and the significance of an historical inquiry such as this for Hindus. If a student of Hinduism were asked to single out any one form of it which is more characteristic of the genius of Indian thought and has exerted a greater influence in India than any other, he might unhesitatingly select the *Advaita* (Monistic) *Vedānta*. Let it be understood and remembered always that there are other schools of Hindu religion and philosophy which are radically opposed to this *Vedānta*. They claim both to interpret more faithfully the ancient scriptures of Hinduism and to give more satisfaction to the dictates of the human reason and the cravings of the human heart; but the *Advaita* has surpassed them all in prestige and in power. Even those, who are not confessedly followers of the school, often show its influence upon themselves in their habitual modes of speech and action, and in their whole attitude to life and the world. We cannot enter here into the questions at issue between the *Advaita Vedānta* and its critics and rivals. It is impossible to do more than give



the barest outline of the system which has its roots back in the *Upanishads* in the centuries before the birth of Christ, and reached its full and authoritative exposition in the Commentaries of Śankara in the Ninth Century of our era.

The main features of the *Advaita* system are its doctrines of God, or the Absolute, and of the World. The Absolute is the neuter *Brahma*, which is the sole Existent (*Sat*)—‘One without a second’ (*Ekameva advitīyam*). This abides for ever—the sole unity, changeless and unmodified. The world, on the other hand, is the scene of the manifold,—of fleeting changes and innumerable modes. *Brahma* exists in no real relation, either of subsistence or of causality, to the phenomenal world; for this is being produced without beginning and without end by the principle of *Māyā*, which defies description. Western scholars have commonly rendered the term *Māyā* by the English word, ‘Illusion,’ though Hindus are beginning to protest against the translation. It appears, however, to be as exact a rendering as we can find in the English language; and it does no wrong to the *Advaita* conception. The whole world, therefore, lies in the realm of the Non-existent, the unreal (*Asat*). The appearances of a multitude of separate or individual souls—from the Personal Creator Himself and the Great Gods down to the meanest out-caste—as of the infinite variety of material objects in all the worlds, are the products of *Māyā*. As an eternal principle, neither existent nor non-existent, enveloping *Brahma* and causing the semblance of manifoldness when there is in truth unity, and of difference when there is identity, and of change where there is no change at all, *Māyā* is likened to a great conjurer. Objectively regarded, it is the creative principle of the phenomenal universe: it keeps the weary cycle of vanity (*Samsāra śakra*) in ceaseless revolution.

*Māyā*, however, may be considered in a subjective aspect as enveloping the individual soul in man and



causing him to see a distinction of persons and things. So regarded, *Māyā* may be called Ignorance (*Avidyā* or *Ajñāna*). It deludes the soul into thinking of I, and Thou, and He, and It; of father, mother, wife and child; of this and that. In place of the One which alone exists, the soul, under the influence of *Māyā*, sees a manifold of names and forms. It may be said, therefore, that Ignorance is the parent of all that becomes and appears. When the veil of Ignorance is lifted and taken away from the Individual Soul (*Jīvātma*), it becomes one with the Universal and Supreme Spirit (*Paramātma*); and all these images of time and space flee away into nothingness like the images of a dream when a man lapses into dreamless slumber. This is Release (*Mukti*, *moksha*); and Release from the futile round of phenomenal life is Salvation.

We have said already that it is not for us here to enter into the controversy about the right interpretation of the ancient texts; nor would we ignore or belittle the efforts which are being made by modern exponents of the *Vedānta* to mitigate the rigour of this pessimistic doctrine of God and the world and to put a nobler and more cheerful content into the terms, *Brahma* and *Māyā*. It must be recognized, however, that two evil consequences have ensued from the traditional and orthodox view.

First, the natural and inevitable tendency of the *Advaita* doctrine has been to blur the difference between fact and fiction, between what really happens and what is merely imagined. It has not developed and sharpened the historical sense, but rather its effect has been to weaken and atrophy that faculty. When the whole world is regarded as belonging to the realm of falsehood and unreality, the distinction between events which occur objectively in the order of space and time and a train of images or ideas in the mind of a man becomes of minor importance: the only difference there can be is in the



degree of falsehood and unreality. It has been recognized by Śāṅkara and his followers that a sort of temporary and provisional reality must be allowed to the world for convenience' sake. So long as a man has to live in the world, he must live as do the worldly; but, all the while, the wise man is aware that he is obeying an inferior knowledge (*Aparā vidyā*), until such time as he can devote himself to the higher (*Parā vidyā*). Hinduism, therefore, has neglected the physical sciences, and the science of History.

Two generations ago, and even one generation ago, before the spread in India of the new knowledge and the introduction of new methods of research and canons of truth, there was an unwillingness or inability among learned Hindus to discriminate between the legendary account of some Hindu divine or semi-divine hero and the story of Jesus. It is, however, profoundly distressing to hear a man like Professor Rādhakrishnan say to-day: 'When the downward materialist tendency dominates life, a Rāma or a Krishna, a Buddha or a Jesus, comes upon the scene to restore the disturbed harmony of righteousness.' We may readily grant that there is a considerable element of historical value in what the Buddhist tradition has to say of the founder of the religion. Western scholars have done a notable service in extricating this from much unreliable material and in reconstructing the life of the Buddha. Yet, even so, the biographies of Jesus and Gautama cannot be placed upon the same level in respect of historicity or fulness of historical detail. As for the tales most commonly related of Rāma and of Krishna, they are by no means equal in romantic attractiveness or in freedom from offence, but they are alike in not belonging to history at all. There still are Hindus, who adopt the view that just as all religions are equally right and equally wrong, so all religious narratives are equally true and equally false: all, without distinction, may be regarded as relations of



fact or as the fictions of the religious imagination. In their estimation the Hindu Epic (*Itihāsa*) and Ancient Story (*Purāṇa*) take rank with the Gospels of the New Testament. We do not err in charity when we insist that the day for this type of judgement is gone. Hindu scholars and thinkers, who believe that they have a message for the modern world, ought to have passed beyond this indolent and shallow syncretism—the 'undiscriminating comprehensiveness of Hinduism.' The story of the Passion of the Christ cannot be treated as though it were of the same order as the legend of the Buddha's offering his body as a meal to a starving tiger. His death was not the invention of the fervid piety of a disciple—with no existence outside the imagination of its creator. It was an event in the objective order of the world, with all the significance which can be attached to an historical fact.

Secondly, even though it should grant that the death of Jesus was an event in time, the *Advaita Vedānta* would empty it of sublime significance. According to its doctrine no incident in time, no happening in this world can stand in any significant relation to the Absolute—to that *Brahma* which exists sole and apart from all becomings. These do not occur by any exercise of its will. There is no divine purpose running through and fulfilling itself in the course of history. The affairs of men—human character and human conduct—are no concern of Highest Being; and they cannot be even an imperfect likeness or interpretation of what God the Ultimate is. Between these two an unbridgeable gulf has been fixed. No predicable attribute can be attached to *Brahma*. It is without any conceivable quality (*nirguṇam*). We can only say of it—*Neti, neti*: 'It is not thus; it is not thus.' 'Nor eye nor word nor mind goes thither. We do not know it.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Na tatra lakshurgacchati na vāggacchati na mano na vidmah.*—Kena Upanishad. i. 3.



There is a sense in which Christians share in this view of God. We believe in His transcendence—that He is greater and better than all things and than all men; and that our highest thought of Him comes far short of His perfection and infinitude. But, at the same time, we believe that there is a relation of truth between God and this world, which is His; for He made it and He is in it. We see, as in a metal mirror, dimly, but we do see: we know, in part only, but we do know. Without being philosophers ourselves, we can sympathize with and understand what Professor Campbell Fraser defined as Bishop Berkeley's 'lifelong philosophic thought':—

'A sublime intuition of the phenomenal realities of sense, inorganic and organic, as established *media* for the intellectual education of finite spirits by means of physical sciences; for intercourse between individual moral agents; and for a revelation of the Eternal Spirit, in whom merely things of sense, and moral agents too, have their being.'

This lecture is not a philosophical treatise: it is a simple discourse for plain men and women. I suggest, on their behalf, that when any philosophy has arrived at a conclusion which denies the reality of all individual distinctions, makes little or nothing of the difference between the actual and the imaginary, and leaves human history without a meaning, it has missed its way and must retrace its steps from this dead end.<sup>1</sup> That is the plight of the *Advaita Vedānta*. The massive common sense of mankind is not to be explained away: it is to be explained. If Jesus really did die upon a cross, that means something:

<sup>1</sup> The *Advaita Vedānta* enumerates three kinds of existence: (i.) *Pāramārthika*—the true or absolute existence, which is Brahma alone; (ii.) *Vyāvahārika*—practical or phenomenal existence, to which order belong all things of ordinary life, commonly thought of as real; (iii.) *Prātibhāsika*—imaginary, like the water in a mirage, a horse which a man mounts in a dream, a snake which one sees through faulty perception of a rope. Only the first truly is; the second and third are the products of Illusion or Ignorance, and constitute the realm of falsehood. The third is an illusion of an illusion, a false image of falsity, a doubly-dyed non-existent. The old and learned Brahman convert Nehemiah Nilakantha Śāstri Goreh spends much space on the distinguishing of these three orders in *A Mirror of the Hindu Philosophical Systems*.



it means much more than if somebody had simply invented the tale.

Let us look at this difference between fact and fiction from another point of view. We exhaust, comparatively soon, the meaning of a character in a work of fiction, fashioned though it may have been by the genius of a great poet, dramatist or novelist. The human artist, as it were, paints a picture in the flat, in two dimensions only. His portrait of a man must be viewed from one stance. On the other hand, a person, who has actually lived, resembles a figure in the solid. He can be regarded from many various positions and angles of vision, and he presents a different aspect from each. The illustration is too poor and weak; for in truth a single historical fact, as contrasted with an imaginary event, has an infinite number of facets of truth. Any event in time has its roots running back into an inconceivably remote past with an infinite dispersion and manifolding of causes. It is both a fruit of the past and a seed of future events beyond our power to forecast and enumerate. A real historical event is a part of the handwriting of God, however we define God—whether we think of God as personal intelligence, love and will, or as the blind, unfeeling and unknowing force which has brought our world and us into a temporary existence. Is not this one of the reasons why the personality and character of Jesus have proved of so inexhaustible interest and meaning? He was a real man—an historical person. His death is a part of His true history. We can put that event into relation with other events and with many kinds of men—the Roman procurator and the Temple cohort; Herod and the Herodians and Jewish Nationalists; the officials and great Council of organized Jewish religion; its reputed saints and teachers, and the irreligious outside the pale; the dull and fickle crowd, and the inner circle of the disciples of Jesus; the simple common folk with their diseases, poverty and



sorrows; the mother and brothers of Jesus Himself. And whenever we see Jesus over against or in the midst of these, we are continually finding something fresh. This was a real man who like ourselves worked and suffered and died in a real world of men and women.

Last year, an Educational Commission of which Dr. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol, was head, visited India. In their Report they make a strong plea for giving History a central place in the curriculum of a Christian College in India. Let me quote from the Report a few sentences which are notable as coming from a group of Indian, American, and British educationists surveying modern India:

'The *Vedānta* with its consequences of apathy in the face of an unreal world, its indifference to the problems of life which is illusion, and its desire to fly from them rather than to solve them—that ancient system still rules India and forms the background from which its deepest motives issue. . . . The dominant figure in the Indian landscape is still the Hindu ascetic and sceptic, sitting by the Jumna's bank, watching the phantasmagoria of existence with indifference mingled with contempt. . . .'

'The view that all religions are the same, that everything in Christianity is already contained in Hinduism, depends in the last resort on an entire failure to understand the significance of an historical religion. If we try to get at the ultimate distinction which lies behind the conflict between Hinduism and Christianity, it is surely that Christianity is an historical religion, a religion laying stress on the all-importance of an historical revelation, permeated through and through by the belief that the purposes of God are made manifest in human history. . . . Only the study of history can make men appreciate the exclusiveness of truth.'

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Higher Education in India*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 148-9.



A word or two must be spoken about our documents. In any historical inquiry consideration must begin with the records, whenever these supply much of the evidence. In our case these are the Gospels, the reliability of which must be examined and tested. I should not feel competent to discuss in detail the allied problems of the Synoptic Gospels and of the Fourth Gospel. My predecessor in this lectureship and beloved Indian colleague, the Rev. W. W. Holdsworth, dealt summarily with both some years ago; and last year, as all will remember, Dr. Howard took as his subject, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*. These questions are highly technical in their nature and require a detailed knowledge and the training of the expert for an authoritative treatment. Both the minister in the pulpit and the man in the pew might despair of religious certainty and salvation, if they were required to seize themselves of all the *minutiae* of the evidence and to follow every fluctuation of critical opinion. Most intelligent persons, however, are capable of following the general lines of evidence and of assessing the main conclusions at their rightful value.

Happily the argument in this chapter stands clear above many of the controversies about authorship, modes of compilation, and exact date. It is sufficient for my purpose that one will allow that in the Gospels, particularly in the Triple Record, we have a considerable body of material, which is early in origin, near to the events described, and of indisputable evidential value. I would not suggest that these records have come down to us in a text miraculously intact or uniform; or that they are entirely free from historical error. There are thousands of various readings, though altogether these do not amount to much in an estimate of the experience and personality of Jesus. In some matters of fact we find the Gospels at variance one with another, and there may be traces of the distortions or exaggeration



of primitive and fervid discipleship. But, as a whole, the Gospels constitute a body of evidence of immense historical interest and significance.

We sometimes grow weary of textual and historical criticism. It seems to lay upon us in this generation a burden greater than we can bear. With some good people we may almost wish that God had given to us a New Testament that was whole—without a flaw, and had simply bidden us to take it, to read it and to believe it. Lest that temptation should ever visit us again, let us pause to consider what God has done for us in giving a Bible which is neither word-perfect nor fact-perfect. He has honoured our faculties of learning, and knowing, and judging. He has not put upon us the compulsion of a flawless book. He has left us room for inquiry and research and for the possibility of belief and unbelief. Our faith here, as in all things else, is made dependent upon our effort and our disposition towards truth. Our processes of mind have been greatly benefited and developed by the manner in which the Bible has come down to us. Textual criticism in the field of profane, no less than of sacred, literature and the whole science of history owe an incalculable debt to the methods which have been employed—under the stress of the necessity to find religious assurance and truth—in the study and evaluation of the Christian Scriptures, and especially of the Gospels.

In any case, it would be manifestly ineffective and unfair for the Indian missionary to offer his *Memoirs of Jesus* to the Hindu and to demand a total and immediate acceptance of them as an inerrant and divinely dictated record. He would provoke at once the retort that the Hindus too have their infallible *Veda* and *Śāstra*, which for them are the source of all truth and the rule of conduct. The Muhammadan, in his turn, would maintain that he had a Book superior to either Bible or *Veda*, for it had come down to earth, complete and perfect in every letter and



point, from the throne of Allah Himself. I assume nothing here, then, more than that in the first three Gospels we have records, separated by only a brief interval of time from the events which they describe and containing indubitably historical material. In so saying, one has the support of the mass of critical opinion, even of the most destructive. The three Synoptic Gospels agree not simply in informing us that Jesus died, but also in exhibiting the causes and the manner of His death.

But what are we to say about the Fourth Gospel, and what use may we make of it in this inquiry? Every reader must be conscious of a difference between it and the Synoptic Gospels. This is more than a difference in vocabulary and style, revealing itself in an English or an Indian vernacular version no less than in the Greek original: the difference extends to the method of the writer and to the substance of the matter. The layman to-day, as well as the professional Christian teacher, is aware of and deeply concerned in the questions raised by this Gospel—its authorship, its historical value, and its doctrinal purpose. We may say that the Fourth Gospel is distinguished from the preceding three by the prominence of the subjective elements in it. These do not merely consist of its preface, its confession of a didactic aim, and the testimonials to its witness. Throughout the book long discourses of Jesus are reported in a style which is the author's own—and that is inevitable; but, further, the words of Jesus seem to run into and to be merged with the author's comment and interpretation. The Jesus of this Gospel, so it is said, is engaged, from the first day of His ministry, in a self-declaration and self-vindication which provoked the unbelief and the hostility of those who heard it. And this seems very unlike the gradual revelation by Jesus of Himself which may be observed in the Synoptics.

This subjective element in the Fourth Gospel contrasts



strongly with the singular objectivity of the first three, in which the authors, with the notable exception of St. Luke's preface, do not obtrude themselves. In the main these Gospels are a simple record of whither Jesus went and how He fared, what He said and what He did. Jesus is not a subject of the writer's praise or dispraise: there is no evident attempt at an appreciation of Him. The facts are put before the reader, and he is left to make what he can of them: they tell their own story and convey their own moral. Of course, a statement of this nature must be qualified by a recognition of the psychological principle that every record of a fact, of necessity, contains a subjective element. Something of the observer has passed into every observation. In the writing of any history the author's personality has affected the resultant work, first in the selection of things to be recorded, and then in the presentation of them. When three friends walk together through the fields, though the landscape be the same, they do not see the same things. One of them may be a farmer, another a naturalist, and the third a poet. Out of the whole complex of the visible offered to their eyes, one will notice and remember some things, and his friend others. Each will choose and store up in memory according to his previous experience and his aptitude. The Gospel of St. Matthew is directed and tinged by the Messianic faith of its Jewish compiler; and the Gospel of St. Luke shows traces of the humanism and universalism of St. Paul. Yet, when this allowance has been made, a difference remains between the Fourth and the Synoptic Gospels in the degree of objectivity. In the former the reader, as a rule, is not conscious of the author: he has the sense of looking at Jesus through his own eyes without the help or intervention of another. One can imagine a reader of St. Mark, in particular, going through the Gospel with a breathless interest—asking, Who is this Jesus? and wondering what the end will be,



Is He a good man or an impostor, one of the prophets or the Messiah, and if Messiah, what then is the Messiah? It is impossible to conceive this process taking place in the same way in the reading of St. John. The author puts forward a thesis of his own and develops it. He tells us at the beginning what his view of Jesus is, and we follow him in the unfolding and proof of the theme announced upon the threshold of the book. We must admit, then, that the Fourth Gospel claims to be more than a record of events: it is also, by the confession of its author, an interpretation of events. 'The transitory here appears as the symbol of the eternal.' The works of Jesus are 'signs' of the Kingdom of God. What He says and does as man is a showing of His eternal self and of His invisible Heavenly Father. So definite an impression of this kind does the method of the Gospel create that some critics are ready to treat it as allegory rather than as history.

We ought to hesitate to adopt this view, if only for the reason that allegory has often been called in to the rescue of bad history and bad morality. When a story, hitherto accepted as a narrative of fact, is seen to be so outrageously improbable and absurd that it can be no longer regarded as history, then the attempt is made to salve it as allegory: or when natural and legitimate inferences from the story, regarded as a narrative of fact, are felt to be so gross an offence against good taste or the moral sense that they would destroy the fair name of a religion, then the cloak of allegory is thrown over it and it is retained as emblem and imagery. Modern Hinduism under the pressure of the new standards of historical truth and ethical holiness has many times resorted to this expedient. An outstanding example of this type of apologetic is the defence and explanation of the story of Krishna.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is told at great length in the Epic—the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. English readers will find a convenient presentation of it in the English rendering of the Hindi *Prēmā Sāgara* (Ocean of Love),



Moreover, there are dangers latent in the allegorical method. It seems to be history and it is not: whereby many have been led astray and confounded. No one has been deceived by the *Pilgrim's Progress*; but consider the number of the victims of the Book of Jonah. It was hung as a mill-stone on the neck of the faith of our fathers instead of being to them a fountain of gladness and comfort. Only in this generation are we beginning generally to recognize the delicate humour and tenderness, the biting irony and the moral indignation, the compassion and breadth of sympathy of this prophetic parable in which the Old Testament reaches its summit of tolerance and love for all men. It is the great foreign missionary book of the Hebrew Scriptures. Our concern, however, at the moment, is to know whether the Fourth Gospel is nothing more than allegory—the vehicle of its author's ideas about Jesus Christ: on the face of it it appears and claims to be much more. The question is not trivial. It matters to us greatly whether or not Jesus actually said, 'I and the Father are one,' or words with that significance. If this and the similar outstanding 'I am' passages were not spoken by Jesus but have been put upon His lips by the Evangelist, our world has suddenly gone darker and poorer. We have not, as we supposed, the fact that Jesus held and expressed these thoughts about Himself, but only the inferior fact that His disciple so thought of Him. We could only excuse the author of the Fourth Gospel for casting his book into the shape and semblance of a history by the standard of his age. We know that the intellectual conscience was less

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published by Constable & Co. An idea of the nature of the book may be gained by a mention of some of its contents—the exploits of the infant Krishna, his sporting with the female cowherds, his marriages to various princesses, his slaying of demons and other acts of prowess, the bliss of his city of Dwāraka, where he dwells with his sixteen thousand one hundred and eight young wives. It is in truth a dreary waste of erotic and grotesque tales, without aesthetic beauty or moral significance, because without relation to an actual world.



exigent then in insisting on the distinction between fact and fiction; and even when history was written, more was left than is allowed to-day to the resources of the writer's mind. He filled out the story of the doings of his heroes and he composed their speeches as seemed to him most fitting. And none thought that he did wrong. None the less we shall have been misled by the Fourth Evangelist; and we shall have suffered.

We have advocated above the mystical view of history with which we are in complete sympathy; but it brings its own peril. We know, by vulgar experience, that it is possible to be so set upon 'improving an occasion' as to improve it out of existence. The teacher may be so addicted to the drawing of morals that he invents his anecdote in order to append his moral. The very strength and nobility of our faith in and devotion to a person may impair the historicity of our account of him. Did anything of this sort happen to the Fourth Evangelist?

There is no sufficient reason to doubt the tradition which connects the Fourth Gospel with Ephesus as its place of origin. It was produced in and for a Hellenistic society into which the streams of Judaism, Greek philosophy, and Oriental mysticism were flowing. It was addressed to men of such a society, for it speaks their language. The writer of this Gospel, like the Fernley Lecturer, lay under the obligation 'to explain and defend his doctrines with special reference and adaptation to the necessities of the times.' The Indian missionary to-day has a similar duty to perform. He hears on every side the terms of Hindu philosophies and systems of religion; and a part of his sacred business is to relate the religion of Jesus to whatever is of common need or eternal truth in these. In the desire to propitiate and to persuade, the advocate of Christianity may pervert 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' Did the writer of the Fourth Gospel, then, stretch the facts to prove his theory, and



corrupt the history of Jesus of Nazareth in the interests of his new Theology? Did he impose his thought-scheme upon the life of Jesus and compel that life to fit in with his frame-work? Did he square events by his preconceived ideas of what ought to have happened? Or, on the other hand, does the figure of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel rise up inevitably and majestically out of the facts with a sublime and universal meaning attaching to it? Is the foundation of the Evangelist's faith and propaganda what he actually saw and heard? Dr. Howard has written:

'The essence of the problem can be put in one short sentence—"How far is it possible for us to use the Fourth Gospel as a reliable witness to the earthly life and teaching of Jesus Christ?"'

Now there are two considerations which may be adduced in support of the view that we have in this Gospel a residuum at least of historical material of great value. It is impossible to read it without being struck by the writer's familiarity with the country of Palestine—with the conditions of the age in which Jesus lived, and the manners and beliefs of the Jews. He knows the topography of Galilee and Judæa, and here and there puts in curious little and exact details of time and place. It is not possible to suppose that they are inserted with deliberate intent to give verisimilitude to a false narrative. They seem rather to be the vivid recollections of an old man who had been a witness and a disciple. The Gospel, as a rule, supplements the story of the Synoptics; but in some things it does not shrink from correcting them. That is notably true of the account of the last days of Jesus. It has been said, for example, that the Johannine account of the trial of Jesus is barely intelligible by itself: it presupposes familiarity with the

<sup>1</sup> *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*, p. 18.



## AN EVENT IN TIME

Synoptics, but it adds details of information of its own. On the other hand, there is the outstanding difference in its placing of the Last Supper on the night before the Passover and not, as the Synoptics do, on the Passover evening itself. There are strong reasons for thinking that the Fourth Gospel is here the more accurate. On the whole, the impression is made by this Gospel that it has a source of information separate from and independent of the Synoptic sources, and that it contains material of first-rate historicity. If it was not the work of an Apostle, then at least some of its passages have been derived from a disciple who had companioned with the Lord and was an eye-witness and an auditor, who drew out of the treasury of his experience for the benefit of the writer.

Secondly, when we consider some of the sayings, attributed to Jesus by this Evangelist and not to be found in any other Gospel, we feel that they do perfectly express the mind of Jesus. So far from contradicting or being out of harmony with the views of Him which are disclosed in the Synoptic Gospels, they confirm these and shed a flood of light upon them. They give us the sense of looking into and discerning the interior thought of Jesus. We are enabled to see and know what once we dimly imagined lay behind his outward actions and his conversation with the multitude. Some of the great words of Jesus in explanation of Himself seem to spring out of the heart of things: they belong to the truth of the situation and the personality of Him who was in it. Later on we may cite one or two examples of this aptness and illuminating power in the sayings. Whoever he was that supplied materials for this Gospel, he appears to have been one who had been admitted to the innermost circle of discipleship and was a rare and faithful interpreter of the mind of Christ. In all periods of the Christian era the Fourth Gospel has made its appeal to

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the devout and to the mystical. There is a profound suggestiveness in its correlation of divine and human personality, which has been attractive especially to the cultured Hindu.

I do not assume, then, that the Apostle St. John was the author of the book, but ask only that we shall allow that the Gospel contains matter of the highest historical value. It is a Gospel which links together time and eternity, history and theology, man and God. And both East and West recognize this, and esteem the book accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. A. J. Appasamy has written:—'It is argued that Mysticism has run riot in India, often with disastrous results. The Fourth Gospel, however, shows how, accepting the historical Christ, we may live in eternity. In it history and metaphysics are woven together. This correlation between time and eternity ought to prove of the greatest importance to us in India. We in India have lived in metaphysics at the expense of history, and have lived in other worlds than this. . . . Now a reaction has set in: we are keen on the present and eager to set in motion swift currents of thought which will work their way into politics. The danger now is that, absorbed in the things that happen, we may lose sight of the profound issues in them. . . . If it can base itself on the Fourth Gospel, Indian Christianity will, we may hope, avoid the danger of neglecting history.'—*Christianity as Bhakti-Mārga*, (pp. 14-15).

With this we may compare Dr Howard's sentences:

'We have the strongest emphasis upon the historic fact of the Incarnation and the reality of the experience of this human life upon earth. In this Gospel record we find the historical and the symbolical inextricably interwoven.'

'There is a sense in which we might say that this Gospel offers us theology teaching by biography. . . . The Christian religion, the perfect revelation of God, was rooted in history. . . . The supreme message of the Gospel is that all these abstractions became concrete in the incarnate life of Jesus.'

'And so the story of His life was told again that the true and living way might be found by those who thought of Jesus as a fading memory of the irrevocable past, and also by those whose religious speculations needed the control of the historic Christ.'—*The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*, pp. 26, 236-7, 242.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CHIEF OPPONENTS

*From that time began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed.*  
—ST. MATT. xvi. 21.

FROM the records we now come to Jesus Himself. They were intended to bring us to Him. The Gospels are they which particularly testify of Him. What is the figure which they portray before our eyes and the personality they impress upon our understanding? We know that these little books were written to furnish the materials for our judgement of Jesus and to fill in and shape our beliefs about Him. What, then, do we think of Jesus? Who say we that He is?

Many among us have wished at one time or another that we might come to the Gospels without having heard of them previously or being familiar with their contents through much telling and reading. We should like to enter upon this study as into an unknown and undiscovered country. That has been the way in which some great Hindu converts took up these memoirs of Jesus and began the reading of them. They read on with growing attachment and delight till faith was fully formed in them. We ourselves cannot approach the books after this fashion. We cannot capture to-day the surprise and emotion of a first impression. On the other hand, we enjoy other great advantages and have no just cause to



complain. If we have been brought up as Christians or in a Christian environment, we should have a mind prepared in some measure to estimate rightly spiritual values. And, thanks to the pains of Christian scholarship, we can follow in the footsteps of the Jesus of History: we can observe and hear more of Him even than most of the first disciples. We have been enabled to see the life of Jesus and to see it whole. When we have shut these eyes of the body, and have retired—as it were—into our interior self and can review all that we have learned about Jesus, what is the figure which rises up before our mind?

Speaking for myself—if I may say it without irreverence and without being misunderstood—I would say that Jesus appears to me, in the first instance and pre-eminently, as a man of God. Some have called Him the religious genius, meaning that He had a unique capacity for devotion to the unseen God. Beyond all possibility of questioning or denial, Jesus was one who believed that He had soul-commerce with God, and had something of infinite value to communicate to men concerning God. The many and long years of His obscurity, we may conclude with certainty, were a period during which Jesus was communing with God. His knowledge of God and Himself was being developed, and He was being prepared for His message to men about God. His supreme desire, His ruling passion was to change men's attitude towards God and to bring them into a new relation with Him. Jesus was conscious within Himself of peace and joy, certitude and strength which sprang from His knowing and loving God. His thought and will were in complete union with God. All the powers of His nature were directed to bringing men into that same experience. This was His constant effort: it has been His sole achievement in the history of mankind.

Of course, we may deny any reality to this religious experience of Jesus. We may assert that there was and



is no such God as He conceived. The God of Jesus, we may allege, was the mere fiction of an intense religious imagination—a projection of His consciousness. But if we say this, then we have put upon a foundation of falsehood the personal influence which has been exerted most widely and deeply on the human race. We are reducing to an illusion or an hallucination the experience of one who—by general consent—was among the greatest and best of men, if He be not the greatest and best. I cannot argue the point here. I am concerned only to point out that if the Father and God of Our Lord Jesus Christ does not exist, the contribution of Jesus to our life and world is gone. He gave this and nothing more: but nothing less.

The intimacy of Jesus with God cannot have begun with His public career. It was the fruit of a life of careful tending and wholesome growth, of self-discipline and earnest thought, of prayer and obedience to known duty. We have only one glimpse of His childhood; but it is significant of its beauty and its natural bent towards God. It shows a boy with an extraordinary pre-occupation with God—intense but not priggish. At twelve years of age He felt that He had to be 'in the things of His Father.' We cannot make away with the baptism by John as an unhistorical incident. The story is not one which the disciples were likely to invent: it raised difficulties for their developed faith, as it has done in all generations of Christians ever since. The baptism of John was meant to be an acknowledgement of wrong-doing, and it gave an assurance to the penitent of the forgiveness of God. It was astonishing, then, that Jesus should join Himself to this company of confessing sinners and submit to a rite which was 'for the remission of sins.' Must we not believe that He went in the humility and naturalness of His real manhood? Though unaware of wrong-doing within Himself, did He not recognize that the



ultimate vindication of a man is with God and not with himself. The conscience of a man, even the purest and most enlightened conscience, is not the final and infallible judge of character and conduct. 'Yea, I judge not mine own self,' wrote St. Paul, 'for I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord' (I. Cor. 4<sup>3-4</sup>). May we not conceive that, acting in this spirit within the limits of His human nature, Jesus submitted Himself to what He regarded as a divinely-appointed ordinance for His age? He waited in the waters of the Jordan on the verdict of God; and the voice which spoke to His innocent soul there was not, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee,' but 'Thou art my beloved son; in Thee I am well pleased.'

We may be right in thinking that at the Baptism the consciousness of Jesus that He stood in a relation of peculiar intimacy with and nearness to God burst into flower. Without going so far as to suggest that He there and then knew Himself to be the Messiah, or the Son of God, in the highest and most exclusive sense, He did come to know that He stood nearer and liker to God than other men, and he was assured that the purpose of His heart was according to the will of His Father in heaven. Jesus received His commission for His work at the Baptism.

According to the Synoptic Gospels the message of Jesus concerned the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven. That was the phrase He used to describe its content. His first word, when He began to preach was: 'The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of God is at hand' (Matt. 4<sup>17</sup>, Mark 1<sup>15</sup>). Many of His parables are an attempt to illustrate in human language and by the imagery of this world the nature and mode of operation of that heavenly Kingdom. He charged the Twelve to proclaim it, as they passed from town to town and village to village—'As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' This command was also laid upon



the Seventy, when they were sent out. Some may think that this incident was not a separate event, but a mere duplication in the narrative of the foregoing. If, however, we believe that there were two distinct Services of Dismissal, we shall note that, though the occasions and the persons were different, the charge was the same. (Matt. 10<sup>7</sup>, Luke 9<sup>2</sup>, 10<sup>9</sup>.)

Of all the many definitions which have been attempted of the phrase 'The Kingdom of God,' Dr. Hort's, conveyed to a friend in a letter, has long seemed to me to be the most helpful and suggestive—'The Kingdom of God is the world of invisible laws, by which God is ruling and blessing His creatures.' That meaning, said Dr. Sanday, is primary and fundamental, and all others are secondary and derivative. There are other rich and inspiring connotations in the New Testament. Great words cannot be shut up to one meaning. They live upon the lips of men, and with use and the growth of thought acquire for themselves a new wealth of significance. But in its root-meaning this phrase of Jesus seems not to connote a Kingdom in its modern concrete sense, but rather Kingship—the activity proper to a king, the exercise of rule itself. The Kingdom of God is primarily the Kingship of God: it signifies, first of all, not simply that God is, but also that He reigns and is reigning now. We ourselves do not always see this: we doubt it or we deny it. The consistent whole of God's good governance of our life is not perceived, nor believed in, by us. The world of His beneficent laws, into which we have not consciously entered, in which we do not consciously dwell, is invisible to us. In the stead of such laws our reason and experience may point to some ineluctable force which controls our own affairs and the fortunes, good and ill, of all men. If it be not hostile to us, then at least it is indifferent: it neither knows nor cares for us nor for any other mortal creature.



Jesus, however, lived in that world of the divine laws: it was not invisible to Him. He saw it with the surest and clearest vision. He breathed the air and moved and worked in the light of that world. He carried the atmosphere, the glory and the warmth of it, into the company which He kept. The men whom He sought out and who sought out Him discerned the brightness of God in His face. He saw God at all times and everywhere doing good to men—causing His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, sending His rain upon the fields of the just and of the unjust. This God was not indifferent to distinctions of right and wrong, virtue and vice; but His goodness was not to be turned aside nor dried up by ingratitude and malignity. The birds of the air fed of His bounty, and the wild flowers of the hillside were clothed in beauty by His good intent. He remembered and cared for the least of His creatures; and not one poor, lonely and downcast human soul was forgotten before Him. He willed food and clothing and health for the body. He had ordained and He blessed our human relations of parent and child, husband and wife, brother and sister. He felt the joys and sorrows of the home. He did not will that any should perish, but was always ready to forgive the sinner, for whom He longed and waited as a father for his prodigal. That was the fashion of God's ruling: these were the laws or modes of His Kingship.

Jesus did not despise nor forbid to men the good things of this life—the fruits of their labour, health of body, their innocent human loves and friendships. He did not ask men to renounce these as evil in themselves; but He taught that there is something above them all—the one thing needful. The *summum bonum* is to find God and to know Him and love Him and serve Him as Jesus knew and loved and served His Father. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,' He said, 'and all these things



shall be added unto you.' He declared the substance of religion and the whole duty of man to lie in one commandment, the first and greatest in any code—'Thou shalt love God with all the powers of thy nature.' Next to it, but depending on it, was the commandment to love one's fellow men. The Sermon on the Mount, with its pure and inward morality, has often been cited as the compendium of the highest utterances of Jesus—as His chief contribution to the world of religious thought and to the conduct of life. It is, however, secondary and not primary in His teaching. He makes the love of God, which includes the knowledge and service of Him, to be the essence of religion. It is there that He has placed the origin and centre of right living. The morality of Jesus arises out of and turns around His love of God. The perfection of human character, according to Him, is to be like God—Our Father in Heaven.

Arnold of Rugby made much use of a morning prayer in which he asked that he might still have the spirit and do the will of God throughout the distracting business of the day. 'When my mind cannot consciously turn to Thee,' ran his phrase. In considering the story of Jesus we can never feel that God was far out of His thoughts. None the less, since He was man, with a mind constituted like our own, there must have been with Him intervals of engrossing activity and occupation in which God was not consciously present to Him. But, when these were over, with what sure swiftness and natural ease does His mind spring back to the conscious recollection of and communion with His Heavenly Father! Even in the press of the crowd, when calls came thick upon Him, Jesus was at home with God. There were, however, those occasions, when Jesus withdrew Himself from work and from the company of the disciples, that He might be alone with God in long and unbroken communion. His habit of prayer appears in the records. A South-



Indian convert from Hinduism reproaches Western scholars for neglecting this phase of the life of Jesus. Mr. V. Chakkarai writes:

'Has it ever struck those who would penetrate into the mystery of His personality, that they should also possess such a prayer-life as His, and that then only can they understand Him?'<sup>1</sup>

But there is another mode of the life of Jesus. The world, as He saw it, was no *kindergarten*, full of pleasant things only and displaying none but mild and gentle ways. He did not make the mistake of under-rating the strength of His adversary. Obdurate evil in the disposition of men was a terrible power, and it produced terrible results. As Jesus looked out upon His own age and down the course of time He saw and forecast wars and rumours of wars, severances tearing at the heart-strings and most cruel persecutions, overwhelming calamities of Nature—even ultimately a physical world in dissolution. Jesus never promised His disciples a career of ease and comfort with immunity from peril and pain. He left room for the sterner and stronger qualities of manhood—for faith and cheerfulness, for courage and constancy in adverse circumstances and against man's enmity. But He never doubted that the goodness of God would prevail. God's throne was established to bring wickedness to an end. When it has come home to Jesus that He Himself will suffer the worst that wickedness can do, He knows and declares that all the powers of hell shall not destroy Him, nor that society He has founded. Jesus saw the Kingdom of God—God reigning, even in monstrous darkness at noontide; and except He had seen this Kingdom, He could never have consented to die. Because He saw it with clearest vision, He was able to accept even the death of the Cross.

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus the Avatār*, p. 34.



When I think of Jesus moving about among the men of His time and bringing to them all the sense of God, a feeling of the presence of a Great Another—His Father, I am reminded of Hudson's description of Valerio. Valerio was that poor man whose wealth consisted in his little flock and few horses:—

'Tell me, señor, have you ever in your life met with a man who was perhaps poor, or even clothed in rags, and who yet when you had looked at and conversed with him, had caused you to say: Here is one who is like no other man in the world? Perhaps on rising and going out, on some clear morning in summer, he looked at the sun when it rose, and perceived an angel sitting in it, and as he gazed, something from that being fell upon and passed into and remained with him. Such a man was Valerio. I have known no other like him.'<sup>1</sup>

Jesus was one who in the clear morning of his youth went out and saw God His Father in the sun, and the glory of it passed in to His face and remained with Him all the days of His working life.

It was impossible to meet Jesus without being reminded of God. Just as the sail, drawing full, or the bowing corn-field suggests unescapably the unseen wind, so did all the ways of Jesus confess His invisible Father. 'I am not alone; but I and the Father that sent me' is the seal upon His every word and act.

Jesus is the supreme example of that self-concentration upon a high purpose, with its consequent self-mutilation or self-limitation, which He Himself enjoined. No man—not even though He be the God-man—can exhibit in the course of one short life all the various faculties of human nature at their highest power and in their maturity or perfection. Jesus was no creative artist—unless it be in speech, in which His parables are the aptest of their kind, but He wrought no poem or statue

<sup>1</sup> *El Ombu*.



or temple to be the pattern and admiration of subsequent ages. He added nothing immediately to the world's sum-total of its knowledge of Nature. He was no scientist, or philosopher. He never even wrote a book. He held aloof from the burning political controversy of His generation. He did not advance the science and art of government by establishing a strong and stable administration, or by the codification and analysis of law. He was neither military conqueror nor statesman. This one thing He did—and it was the thing which above all else needed to be done—He lived with God and for God as a man should, and He has bequeathed to us the manner of it. So that, ever since, He who was no artist has been the inspiration of the greatest art; He who knew no more of Science than the men of His age has been purging Science of its bane—intellectual pride and self-seeking; He who would not side either with Jewish Nationalism or with Roman Imperialism is to-day the embodied conscience of the civilized world, before whom the most dread Governments stand in perplexity or self-condemnation. Jesus has become the test of modern life in all its departments to a degree which is true of no other man.

What was there in this comportment and doctrine of Jesus which could have aroused hatred and deadly hostility? It was so glad and gracious; and in its austerity so just and true. We might have supposed that it would win a ready acceptance, and that it could not give mortal offence to any. We shall see, however, that the teaching of Jesus made a most searching test of a man's disposition and manner of life. It was indeed, for all its grace and truth, 'sharper than a two-edged sword . . . quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart' (Heb. 4<sup>12</sup>). It threatened vested interests. It required a change in settled ways of living and ran counter to the strongest prejudices and passions. In those who were self-centred



—and who, by nature, are not?—it sought to overturn the whole habit of thought and order of life. The reform which it would institute in the nature of a man could be described as nothing less than a new birth. We, who have been made wise by experience and a survey of history, know that the religion of Jesus is not a mild and impotent thing. It is, in truth, a dynamic of terrific potency: it has proved itself the most revolutionary influence in individuals and in society.

We may mention, in our approach to this question, some minor causes of misunderstanding and opposition. In every generation fathers and mothers have found it difficult to realize that the child they have begotten and borne, and brought up from helpless infancy, has come to manhood. They are slow to recognize that a son of theirs has arrived at the fulness of a personal existence with its attributes of independence and impenetrability. The opposition between youth and age, the rising generation and the elders, has been a favourite theme of the drama. Brothers and sisters, too, will not be ready to concede that one who has been their playmate, brought up under the same roof and discipline, fed and clothed like themselves, is really very different from themselves and has transcendent qualities and powers.

The Gospels, in homely fashion, show us that the family of Jesus was very like other families. We are given one or two glimpses of their initial attitude towards Jesus. They did not believe at first in His prophetic mission. We read how they went out one day to bring Him home; for they said, 'He is beside Himself.' They feared for His mental balance and health, and proposed to take Him back with them, put Him under constraint, and compel Him to be quiet and take rest. When they reached the house where He was teaching, they found it impossible to enter, so great was the crowd of those who



were listening within. When word was passed in to Jesus, that His mother and brothers and sisters were outside, waiting to speak to Him, 'He stretched forth His hand towards His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.' It was a reminder to those who were nearest to Him in the flesh, that the deepest and most lasting affinity is in the mind and spirit. Where intellectual and spiritual sympathy is wanting, the physical tie becomes an irksome fetter. Jesus desired that the members of His own family should be of His mind and spirit. (Matt. 12<sup>46-50</sup>, Mark 3<sup>31-35</sup>, Luke 8<sup>19-21</sup>.)

There is a region in every individual—and not merely in the man who is a genius—which he must guard as his own. Each ordinary person, if he will but know it, has the dignity of a peculiar vocation, which he must assert and vindicate. No other human creature may trespass on that sacred territory of his personality, or direct and dominate him there: it is only for him and for his God. So young men and women, not of heroic stature or intellectual distinction, but plain individuals of average endowment have received in themselves the missionary's call, and have gone out from home and kindred, when even godly and loving parents have withheld their consent and disapproved the act. Happy are those fathers and mothers who are willing to stand without this chamber of the soul of a son or daughter and can wait in quietness and confidence for the decision.

Now, if this be true of us, lesser men and women, how much more true must it have been of Jesus. Among all in the family group the one who loved Him most and knew Him best was His mother. The context of her conversation with her son at the marriage feast in Cana raises a difficulty and doubt. It is the story of one of those 'nature miracles' which are most hard to understand



and to believe. None the less, the words of Mary to Jesus and of Jesus to Mary do indicate truly what was, in the end, the relation between those two. Mary is represented as allowing her womanly sympathy and kindness to prompt her to ask help from the son who had never failed her. I think she was expecting some extraordinary help, such as the son she now knew to be divinely commissioned alone could render. But here she was intruding upon that region which Jesus always guarded most jealously—the province of His unique personality. Whatever uncommon power or influence it was that resided in Jesus, He would never use it save at the direction of God. The Gospels, in their history of Jesus from the Temptation to the Crucifixion, consistently represent that this was the view He took of His peculiar dignity and powers. In this region He could share nothing with His mother: they had not this in common. The single rebuke was enough. She acquiesced and understood. Her 'Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it' was her reverent, loving and trustful word to her own family and friends: she still speaks it to the world to-day.

The initial unbelief and the natural inability of the family of Jesus to accept Him in the character of a prophet or of a greater than a prophet were not deadly. They were accompanied by an affectionate anxiety for His safety and well-being. His foes were not those of His own household. Perhaps we may say something similar of His fellow-townsmen. They had watched Him grow up; they knew His relatives, and all about them; they had seen Jesus at play and at work, and were familiar with His face and figure, and gait—the house where He lived and the clothes He wore. If other folks, who knew Him and His origins less, entertained great notions of Jesus, that was their concern: but they must not expect those who had lived in the town where Jesus was brought up to share their ridiculously exaggerated belief. Because



the inhabitants of Nazareth knew the social antecedents and the external appearance of Jesus, they were apt to imagine that they understood Him altogether and could assess Him at His true value. Jesus was well aware of the prevalent feeling. It is significant that in all four Gospels He is said to have quoted the proverb about the prophet who was not without honour except in his own country. Probably He used it on more than one occasion, and sometimes we may think with a kindly and half-humorous allowance for the failure to understand. (Matt. 13<sup>57</sup>, Mark 6<sup>4</sup>, Luke 4<sup>24</sup>, John 4<sup>44</sup>.)

St. Luke, however, has preserved a story of another and darker complexion. (Luke 4<sup>16-30</sup>.) He tells us how Jesus attended the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath day, as He had been accustomed to do from boyhood. When He was asked to read the lesson and to give the address, He chose and expounded that gladdening and comforting passage in the book of the prophet about the Year of Deliverance. His hearers were touched by and astonished at His gracious eloquence; yet they did not stop to consider whether, as the speaker declared, that year had really come and the Deliverer was there in the midst of them. They passed on to the lame and impotent conclusion—'Is not this Joseph's son?' What Jesus had said implied that the Kingdom of God was at hand: nay, that it was manifesting itself already in works of healing and liberation. The fellow-townsmen of Jesus thought of that Kingdom as though it were another earthly monarchy or despotism, with Jesus as a friend at court for them. He saw that they expected from Him a special favour as to His old acquaintance. Here, too, as in the case of His family, there was an attempt to intrude upon the province of His unique personality. He was being asked to use His powers to oblige His old associates. In reply, Jesus reminded the congregation in the synagogue that in their own Scriptures it was shown how in the



old days God had withheld His favours from Israel and bestowed them upon strangers. That aroused the fierce exclusiveness and fanaticism of the religious in Nazareth: a gust of passion swept over them. They would have seized Jesus and thrown Him headlong from the precipice which jutted above their streets. This incident appears to be exceptional. It probably was not representative of the populace of Nazareth so much as of the 'synagogue-going' in it. For the most part, the fellow-townsmen of Jesus may have regarded His work and claims with an egotistic satisfaction, or with shallow disdain and cynical tolerance. They would not have killed Him.

However it might have been with them, certainly in the wider circle of Galilee for a time Jesus enjoyed a great measure of popularity. 'The common people heard Him gladly.' The failure of these—the multitude—was negative rather than positive. They would not have slain Jesus, though they did not exert themselves to save His life. Their eyes and ears were dull of seeing and hearing; their desires were gross; they asked for immediate and material benefits—the bread which perishes. They found it hard to understand what Jesus meant or to love what He commended. The blessings He offered appeared to them unsubstantial and unsatisfying. And so the crowd fell off: many of them went away, and followed Jesus no more. If some among these Galileans, who once had wished to make Jesus a king, afterwards joined in the cry—'Crucify Him,' it was at the instigation of others and not of their own impulse.

The population of Galilee included within it elements of political extremism as of religious fanaticism. Jesus had chosen one of the Twelve from among the Zealots, who were the party in favour of violence. The teaching of Jesus about a kingdom, not of this world, to be apprehended now in the spirit, seemed to these men to



be as tame as it was incomprehensible. They looked for a restoration of the monarchy to Jewry—with David's Son enthroned in the Holy City. They could make little or nothing of what Jesus proposed. They disliked His programme as vague and ineffective. They were deeply disappointed in Him; for with His powerful and attractive personality He might have made Himself a national leader. It has even been suggested that the traitor himself, Judas Iscariot, was affected by this mode of thought; and that, at the last, despairing of all other means, he resorted to the desperate expedient of delivering Jesus into the hands of His enemies in the hope that thus He would be driven to declare Himself and to put forth His indubitable might. I do not think that the Zealots would have crucified Jesus. Rather they would have said—'He is not of our way of thinking and acting; and we have no further use for Him. A good man, doubtless, but lacking in determination and force.' They went their way, allowing Jesus to go His.

We shall look in vain for the chief opponents of Jesus among any of these—His family, His fellow-townsmen, the common folk of Galilee, the Zealots. He did not give mortal offence to any of them: nor did they seek and compass His death. The Gospels, in varying combinations, name four groups as desiring to destroy Jesus and devising plots against His life. They are the Chief Priests and Elders, the Pharisees and Scribes, with the Herodians mentioned on two occasions. In the Fourth Gospel the generic term—'the Jews'—is frequently employed to describe the implacable adversaries of Jesus. It well repays time and trouble to study each one of these terms and each combination of them in the passages where they occur in the four Gospels; but there is neither room nor necessity for this study here. The general situation during the brief public career of Jesus is well known. The Jews of Palestine had among them



two main sects—the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The former held the chief and most sacred office in Judaism—the High Priesthood with its rich emoluments. The family of the High Priests were in alliance with the semi-Jewish Herodian princelings and were supported by the Imperial power. The High Priest's position thus was buttressed by royal friendships and Roman patronage. The Sadducees were tinctured with Hellenistic culture and mingled more freely than the stricter Jews in Roman and Greek society. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were the strictest sect of the Jews, and regarded the Roman and Greek as pagan and impious. They clung to the idea of God as the only rightful King of Israel. They were rigid and meticulous in their observance of the Law with all the additions to it from Tradition, and their intercourse with the Gentiles was limited to what was necessary and inevitable.

Both sects were represented among the Elders or members of the Sanhedrin—the Supreme Council of Seventy of the Jews. Both sects had their eminent students and teachers of the Law—their Scribes or 'Men of letters'; but the Scribes who appear in the Gospels are evidently, in most cases, those who belong not to the Sadducees but to the sect of the Pharisees. They are so denominated in two passages of the Gospels (Mark 2<sup>16</sup>, Luke 5<sup>30</sup>).

In all four Gospels we can watch a conflict between Jesus and His critics and adversaries growing in intensity until it reaches its fatal climax. There is diversity of opinion about the duration of the ministry of Jesus, some assigning to it a length of three full years, others of one year only, and yet others of a period intermediate between these two terms. But whichever of these views we may adopt, it still remains true to say that a gradual development of the conflict can be traced. There are noteworthy differences in the presentation of this by



the Synoptists and by the Fourth Evangelist. The former give prominence to the Galilean ministry. In these we see much of Jesus with the common people in the open air—in the court-yard of the house, on the shores of the lake, and upon the hill-side. The Fourth Evangelist, on the other hand, tells more of the ministry in Judæa and, in particular, at Jerusalem, where Jesus was closely engaged with the religious leaders. The Synoptic Gospels give broadly an impression of a ministry which began in a bright spell of popularity. Then they show us Jesus, with set face, going up to Jerusalem under a darkening sky. As a matter of fact, however, the double response was always taking place from the beginning—a somewhat shallow and unstable acceptance with the people, and a dangerous opposition from their leaders. The Fourth Gospel makes it plain that this opposition was there at the beginning; but the Synoptic Gospels give indications of the same fact. And the Fourth Gospel, no less than the first three, shows that Jesus won a great measure of popular belief and support, and indeed that this enthusiasm of 'the crowd' continued to the very end. The main difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists in their records of the struggle is that the former puts in the foreground as the principal cause of offence the claims which Jesus advanced for Himself. This Gospel is rightly analysed into phases of the *Self-Revelation* of Jesus. But in the Synoptists, whatever may be implicit in the earliest teaching and acts of Jesus, these personal claims do not appear prominently till towards the end.

All our Evangelists, however, depict the development of a conflict. An unspoken criticism arises in the mind of the onlookers, a murmur of dissent is heard, it grows in noise and strength of purpose, it passes into murderous intention and conspiracy, and it culminates in the plot—the arrest, the trial and death of Jesus.



The Fourth Evangelist's peculiar use of the term, 'the Jews,' has attracted much attention. It is a mark of the later origin of his Gospel, when Judaism had become a recognized opponent of Christianity. Bishop Westcott wrote in the Preface to his Commentary: 'The Jews then presented to a critic, who looked back from a Christian point of sight upon the events which he described, the aggregate of the people whose opinions were opposed in spirit to the work of Christ.' But, in the sorrowful and stern business of assigning responsibility to each of the various sections of this aggregate, we cannot exculpate the Pharisees from the guilt of the extremity of hatred, as Westcott seems afterwards to suggest.<sup>1</sup> He himself has written that 'the Pharisees are the true representatives of the Jews.' All the Gospels make it certain that, in the earlier stages of the ministry of Jesus, they were His most bitter and active opponents. It is true that, at the very end, the leadership in enmity passed from them to the 'Chief Priests'—that is, to the High Priest and his party. It was Caiaphas who warned the Council that prompt and decisive action was needed; and he arranged for the arrest. The Chief Priests committed Jesus to Pilate, and pressed the charge against Him. But the arrest of Jesus had behind it the long hostility of the Pharisees: they would have slain Him had they dared, or had the opportunity been given to them. The opportunity arrived only after an agreement had been reached with the priestly party. The condemnation of Jesus issued from the whole Council, consisting of both Pharisees and Sadducees.<sup>2</sup> The death of Jesus thus was brought about by a conspiracy of the two great sects of the Jews: divided by doctrine and manner of life, they were united in fear and hatred of Him. The

<sup>1</sup> See Westcott's comment on John 11<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> We are told of one Councillor only, Joseph of Arimathea, who did not consent to the death of Jesus. Was he a Pharisee? The Fourth Evangelist records that another Councillor—a Pharisee, Nicodemus—uttered an earlier protest against the condemnation of Jesus unheard.



whole system of organized Judaism—its ecclesiastical head and supreme Council, its most earnest confessors, and its authoritative teachers—were at one in the resolve to destroy Jesus. The priestly hierarchy, the piety, and the scholarship of Judaism combined to crucify him. The men of religion slew the man of God. Why?



### CHAPTER III

#### THE OFFENCE: NOVELTY AND DIVERGENCE

*And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not. . . . The word that I spake, the same shall judge him.*—St. John XII. 47, 48.

*Such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit.*—St. Luke VIII. 15.

THE Parable of the Sower seems to me one of the saddest of Parables. It is a great teacher's survey of his work, and the results are disappointing. It serves as the introduction to all the parables of Jesus, and His speaking of it marks an epoch in His ministry and a change in His method of teaching. He had made many noble and penetrating utterances and done many gracious and wonderful things, and then He paused to consider what had been the effect on the multitudes who had heard and seen. The consideration was not encouraging: few had really understood, and fewer still were obeying the truth they had once felt. Jesus was no fond dreamer but a realist in His estimate of failure or success.

The Sower was one, and the seed—inasmuch as there was no variation in it of germinating property—was one; but there were notable differences in the results of the sowing. These were determined by the nature of the ground into which the seed fell, whether it was trodden hard or well ploughed, shallow or deep, foul or clean. Into one only, out of the four grounds described, did the



seed enter and lodge, sprout and bring forth the full ear of corn. Teaching is a sad husbandry like that. The same truth is set before all; but only in some does it produce its due effect. The result is determined by the disposition of the heart of the hearer: according to what a man is, will be his response to truth.

St. Luke here makes use of a classical Greek phrase (*ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ*) which is found nowhere else in the New Testament; 'honest and good' it has been rendered in our English versions, Authorized and Revised. The 'honest and good' man with the Greeks was the man in whose goodness there was also beauty. He was the Greek's beau-ideal of a man, his true and perfect gentleman. Those who have his disposition of heart, suggests St. Luke, are the persons who will acknowledge, love, and obey the truth when it is presented to them. If this Parable of the Four Grounds stood alone, it would be the most stern and discouraging of parables; for it contains no hint of the Great Farmer's patient and skilful tilth. It does not tell us how God ploughs up the beaten tracks, gathers out the stones, and cleanses the foul plot of its weeds. No one parable can exhibit the whole of truth, or illustrate and justify all the ways of God with men.

This parable may serve as an introduction to our inquiry into the nature of the offence given by Jesus to His contemporaries, and into the reasons for their rejection of Him. The examination undertaken in this and the next two chapters must of necessity be summary: it can only indicate a method of study and suggest conclusions. The principal causes of the opposition to Jesus may be ranged, I think, under one or other of these heads:—first, the divergence of His ideas of God and human duty from the current and accepted ideas of His age; secondly, the claims which He made for Himself; and thirdly, the revolutionary menace of His doctrine and personality to vested interests. Let us take them in this



order, understanding that it is not necessarily an order of time.

First, then, the novelty and divergence of the ideas of Jesus. There was a startling independence and originality in what Jesus believed and taught about God and human duty. Even at this point I should like to take the liberty of injecting a great Hindu term—*Dharma*—because it expresses so exactly just what I have in mind. It is not easy to find the full equivalent of *Dharma* in a single word of the English language. It denotes that which has been established as obligatory for an individual. 'The whole duty of man' is perhaps the phrase which comes as near to the comprehensive meaning of *Dharma* as any other in our tongue. Now Jesus did not think and speak about God and *Dharma* as the leaders and teachers of Judaism prescribed. His conception of God—of the divine nature, its attributes, and modes of activity—differed widely from the orthodox and prevalent notions. And out of His divergent and distinct conception of God there sprang a divergent and distinct view of what is lovable and right in human character and conduct.

A natural and fitting introduction to the teaching of Jesus, in this aspect of originality and independence, is the answer which He gave to those disciples of the Pharisees and of John who asked Him about fasting (Matt. 9<sup>14-17</sup>; Mark 2<sup>18-22</sup>, Luke 5<sup>33-39</sup>). They pointed out that the one made it of pious obligation to fast often and regularly (as a matter of fact, twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays); and the other observed fasts as a fitting expression of their stern and gloomy view of the evil which was in the world—of the necessity for repentance and for keeping the world in check: whereas Jesus and His disciples followed no such rule. They were a cheerful, happy company, eating and drinking, and to all appearances finding the world good and enjoying life. Jesus used four of the most apt and homely illustrations



in explanation and defence. First of all, He did not rebut the charge; He admitted its truth. His disciples and Himself were a festive company. He said that they were as happy as a wedding party. He compared Himself to a Bridegroom and His disciples to a Bridegroom's friends. The personality of Jesus irradiated the gladness which comes from a teacher who can impart knowledge, and such knowledge as warms and cleanses and strengthens the heart. He made real to them the goodness of God. Because He taught and made possible the love of God, His religion was necessarily a religion of joy. Fasting was the emblem of sorrow—of sin and repentance, not of a glad consciousness of that fellowship with God into which Jesus brought His companions and friends. It was inappropriate to the situation and to the mood of Jesus and His disciples.

But the reply of Jesus passed on to a statement of wider application and deeper import than belonged just to that occasion. Under three figures He spoke of His religion as new, and He recognized that there was between it and the established Judaism the inevitable opposition of the new and the old. He reminded those who had put the question to Him that it is not possible to save an old garment by sewing on to it a patch of new undressed cloth.<sup>1</sup> If that were done, the shrinkage of the new piece would rend the old. And, similarly, it is not possible to perpetuate an old and worn-out religion by taking into it scraps of truth from another.

Again, said Jesus, it would be a foolish thing to put new unfermented wine into old wine-skins. The inevitable result of such storage would be that the skins would burst and the wine would run out—both would be lost. So also—and this is the converse of what Jesus

<sup>1</sup> See St. Matthew and St. Mark. St. Luke has a variation which may be significant. He writes of taking a piece from a new garment to patch an old. The result of such mending is to spoil two garments—the new one, by taking a piece from it; the old one, because the new patch will pull and tear it.



had said before—the whole energy and spirit of a new religion cannot be preserved and shut up in the forms and observances of an old religion. The new religion will make for itself its appropriate receptacles and modes of expression.

Finally, as recorded by St. Luke alone, Jesus spoke of that old connoisseur in wine. He does not want the new wine. It seems to His cultivated taste and His sensitive palate crude and harsh. He wants the mature and mellow vintage with its fragrance and rare excellence. St. Luke records that lovely and sympathetic phrase 'He saith, The Old is good' (χρηστός). It would have been difficult for Jesus to find an apter illustration of the aristocratic disdain of one who had been nurtured in an ancient system and was capable of appreciating the noblest in it, for what was offered him in a new order. 'He saith, *The Old is good.*'

The humour and sympathy, the humility and discernment of Jesus are all apparent in this compressed parable. There is a whole book of the New Testament which was devoted to comforting and to enlightening those minds which had been oppressed and made sorrowful by the passing of the old, and were not yet reconciled to the coming of the new. It is the Epistle to the Hebrews. The great discursive argument of that book may be condensed into the sentence—God never takes away a good old thing, save to put a better in its place.

We have to notice, then, that Jesus was fully alive to this opposition between His new theology and the orthodox dogmas. It is perhaps significant that on this occasion when the novelty of His teaching and practice was under discussion, He gave the earliest hint of His passion and death. 'The days will come . . .,' He began and broke off; and then continued, 'When the Bridegroom is taken away, then will they fast.' He saw the enmity which was latent in the opposition of the new and the old. The



originality of Jesus was one of the influences that crucified Him. The powers of conservatism were ranged against Him: the 'elders,' the guardians of the old ways, joined in the conspiracy to remove Him.

Let us look a little more closely at the nature of the offence of the New. We are not speaking now of those novelties which labouring folk welcome as an escape from the monotony of a dull round of work; nor of those trifles, which the frivolous pursue in search of fresh sensations for a mind jaded and unsatisfied by self-indulgence. Such are ever seeking some new thing; and they despise the old and the familiar. There is, however, an Old, which is congenial to us: it has grown into us, and we have grown into it. The New of which Jesus speaks is something which runs counter to a part of our nature. Who likes to admit that his old and settled opinions have been proved wrong? It is humiliating to have to confess that a view with which we have identified ourselves, on which we have staked our reputation for knowledge and wisdom, has been shown to be in error. We resent, as an impertinence, the attempt to put us right and denounce the new teacher as an ignorant upstart. There are few who can listen quietly and dispassionately to an argument which is going against them. This self-opinionatedness—this obstinacy and intellectual pride—is as common in the youthful as in the aged: it is not one of the faults peculiar to old age. On many occasions the adversaries of Jesus kept silent. They could not affirm that He was wrong: they would not admit that He was right.

Yet, after all, the offence of the New must be felt most keenly by the elderly, and by the official representatives of an established order. Men grow old in mind as well as in body. They lose elasticity and power of adjustment in their mental processes no less than in the movement of the muscles. They cannot readily adapt themselves to a new idea, and have an initial prejudice against it, if it



requires of them a new way of living. A man, even in middle life, slips back into his old coat, his old slippers, and his old chair with a sigh of relief and an ineffable sense of comfort. And if it be said that this is an illustration, grotesquely unsuitable and anachronistic, let it be remembered that the analogues of these things exist in every civilization and in all ages. Novelty is an affront to our indolence and love of ease. We do not want to be bothered with new doctrine. 'Let us alone' is the cry of those who are counselled by the *dæmon* of old age. But, when a man loves the Old, with a deep gratitude for and appreciation of what is beautiful and true in it, he will regard with fear and indignation the New which rears its head against it. This New threatens the destruction of what he counts dearest and best. He sees the heritage of his people in imminent peril, and raises the cry, 'Our religion, our culture, and our civilization in danger!' The New may cut even more deeply than this into the life of a man. It may show him, as in a flash, the pettiness of his moral achievements and of the virtues he has sedulously cultivated. It may reveal to him hitherto unknown heights and depths of human character in comparison with which all that he has done and all that he is seems pitifully small and mean. It will rob him of self-complacence and self-gratulation, and call him to the mood and attitude of a little child. He will see that he has to make himself again from top to toe—to become 'a new creation.' Was not that the offence of the New, say to Nicodemus or to the Rich Young Ruler? Is it not to-day the offence of Jesus to many a high-born Hindu with his *Sanātana Dharma*—his religion and culture of immemorial antiquity?

Jesus was an arresting teacher. His doctrine was quick and vivid. He compelled men to think, and He required them to act. It was not sufficient to hear His word: the hearer must keep it and do it. So the originality and



independence of Jesus, and the newness of His doctrine helped to crucify Him. They were an affront to stubbornness and intellectual pride, to natural indolence and love of comfort, to patriotism and reverence for a national heritage, to deep-seated self-esteem and self-reliance. The way of the new religion demanded a rare candour and nobility of nature for its acceptance.<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider, in a little detail, some of those contexts in which Jesus exhibited the newness of His teaching. There is, first of all, His view of the Sabbath day. In His time, as also ever since, any discussion of the Fourth Commandment generated a fury peculiarly its own. There are six main occasions, according to the Gospels, in which Jesus became involved in controversy with the religious leaders over the observance of the Sabbath. One—and apparently the earliest—was when His disciples walked through the fields on the Sabbath and plucked and ate the ears of corn as they made a way for themselves. The other five are all incidents of healing; and here we shall be brought up against the objection that *Miracles do not happen* and that therefore these stories in the Gospels cannot be historical. Once again I must take something—and that not a small thing—for granted. I cannot enter into the whole argument for the miraculous here and now. It seems to me, however, both just and adequate to say that the evidence for some acts of healing by Jesus is overwhelming. Evidently, in common repute, He was a healer; and some notable cures were effected by Him. With our knowledge to-day of the power of mind over matter, we have not much antecedent difficulty in accepting many of the Gospel narratives. When the superlative faith of Jesus met the faith of the sufferer, something

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Plummer writes: 'Young and fresh natures, free from prejudice and open to new light and new impressions, were needed to receive the new word and preserve it, unchecked and untrammelled for future generations.'—*International Critical Commentary—St. Luke*, p. 164.



was bound to happen. We may not be quite sure as to what was the exact nature of the physical change. But, for our present purpose, I assume no more than this—that Jesus did heal on occasion; that He healed sometimes on the Sabbath; and that we have in the Gospels His defence of healing on that day, and—as a consequence—His view of the right observance of the Sabbath and of the nature of God and the duty of man.

Let us comment briefly on these incidents, one by one, and not invariably in their chronological order. Let us notice, as we make this rapid survey, what is Jesus' view of God and man, how He presents it to His hearers, and what is their response to it. The story of the Disciples passing through the cornfields is told by the Synoptists. (Matt. 12 1-8, Mark 2 23-28, Luke 6 1-5.) The Twelve were hungry; and as they walked along, they plucked the ears of corn, rubbed them in the palms of their hands, and ate them. To the Pharisees and their Scribes this appeared to be an infraction of the law of the Sabbath; for the actions of the Disciples were tantamount to reaping and thrashing and winnowing. At this date the objection appears to us trivial, and we shall find it hard to place ourselves at the point of view of those who made it. Jesus, first, takes common ground with His critics. He and they are at one in a recognition of the authority of Scripture. He appeals to that Scripture which both alike revere with His query—'Have ye never read?' and He recalled to their remembrance the story of David and his followers, desperately hungry, who took the shew-bread from the shrine at Nob and ate it. He further reminded them that the Law itself permitted the priests to set aside the Sabbath commandment to do no work in order that they might render their service in the Temple.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. 12<sup>4</sup>. The First Evangelist's report of this incident is fuller than that of the other two Synoptists. He supplies a link in the argument of Jesus which is missing in St. Mark and St. Luke.



Jesus treated this case as one of those—familiar to all professional casuists and, indeed, to all persons who are in earnest about doing their duty—in which there is a conflict of laws or obligations, and a man is laid under the necessity of deciding which law is the higher or which obligation is the more binding. He proves, by the citation of Scripture, that the law of self-preservation (or the legitimacy of satisfying hunger) takes precedence of the law of the Temple, that the law of the Temple takes precedence of the law of the Sabbath, and that, therefore and much more, the law of self-preservation takes precedence of the law of the Sabbath. Or we may put it in another way. The right of man to satisfy his hunger and preserve his life is higher than the right of the Temple to be served, and the right of the Temple to be served, is higher than the right of the Sabbath to be kept. Much more, then, is the right of man to satisfy his hunger and preserve his life higher than the right of the Sabbath to be kept. It is an *a fortiori* argument. Jesus ranges, as it were, in an ascending scale of sanctity—the Sabbath, the Temple, Man. The argument is the more notable, because it comes from One, who was ready to perish of hunger and lose His life rather than break the least commandment of His Father.

And, no sooner has Jesus completed this argument, than He enunciates a great principle—'The Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.' Had we been present on that occasion we should have been incapable of seeing and enunciating the principle before Jesus brought it forth: but I think that, as soon as it was announced, we should have perceived and felt intuitively the nobility and truth of it. Jesus insisted upon the dignity and worth of man. He said, 'Something greater than the Temple is here.'<sup>1</sup> What was it? May

<sup>1</sup> The better supported reading is *μείζον*—'a greater thing' (R.V. margin), not 'One greater' (Matt. 12<sup>9</sup>).



we conjecture that it was the supreme business of Jesus' leading the men, who were then following Him, into the knowledge of the Kingdom of God? The service of the Kingdom was vastly higher than the service of the Temple: the spiritual interests of mankind were a sovereign consideration. Jesus closed with a word, which we may take as referring to Himself. It was a corollary from the principle He had enunciated—'The Son of Man, therefore, is Lord even of the Sabbath.' Jesus claimed as man, in His capacity as representing men, to determine how and when the Sabbath shall be observed, and to subordinate the observance of it to the good of man.

Now this view of man—his place and dignity—is cardinal in the religion of Jesus; and there is allied with it a view of God. Both God and man were made apparent by Jesus in these words. Jesus delivered God from the misconception of Him as making irrational and useless and irksome laws for His greater glory. That was the God of the Pharisees: it is not the God of Jesus. God is no capricious tyrant or despot resembling the peevish child, of whom it is written:

He only does it to annoy,  
Because he knows it teases.

St. Matthew, alone of the three Synoptists, tells us that on this occasion Jesus made use of what we learn from other incidents was one of His favourite passages in the Prophets—'If you had known what this means, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice," you would not have condemned blameless men.' In the view of Jesus, all the laws of God relating to men are designed in reason and love for the true benefit of men. The institutions and the ordinances, of which God approves, have this as their end.

This simple incident, then, has been sufficient to bring to light those ideas of God and man, which were charac-



teristic of and fundamental in the thought of Jesus. Further, it discloses the method of His teaching. He was wont to seek for and to use what was of common acceptance with Him and His hearers. He appeals also to the natural conscience in men, to their unspoiled and instinctive moral judgement. The Evangelists say nothing about the effect of this conversation on those who heard it. We can tell, however, what it must have been. Those who, 'in an honest and good heart,' received and considered the words of Jesus, and obeyed the promptings of their conscience, took a step in discipleship towards Jesus: they were drawn nearer to Him in understanding and trust and reverence. On the other hand, those who after inward debate rejected what they had felt to be true took a step in opposition to Jesus: they were farther than they had been before from being able to understand or to accept either His doctrine or Himself. This power of discrimination or judgement resided in the word of Jesus.

Let us turn now to the incidents of healing on the Sabbath day. These—as we have remarked previously—are five in number. The first—the healing in the synagogue of the man who had his hand withered—is related by all the Synoptists (Matt. 12<sup>9-14</sup>, Mark 3<sup>1-6</sup>, Luke 6<sup>6-11</sup>). Their several accounts exhibit just those variations which are rather marks of a true history than a proof of un-historicity. The second and third incidents—the straightening of the poor woman bent double, and the cure of the man with dropsy—are recorded by St. Luke alone (Luke 13<sup>10-17</sup>, 14<sup>1-6</sup>); while the two last stories are found in the Fourth Gospel only—the restoration of the paralytic by the pool of Bethesda, and the giving of sight to the man born blind (John 5<sup>1-20</sup>, 7<sup>19-24</sup>, 9<sup>1-41</sup>).

It is evident that, when Jesus met in the synagogue the man who had his hand withered, the battle was already joined. Something in the previous conduct and



teaching of Jesus had given serious offence, and He had become suspect. The Pharisees were present in the synagogue, watching with averted faces and sidelong looks to see what He would do. Whether or not they addressed a question to Jesus, He was aware of the doubts in their minds and of their hostility. His own action was completely open and candid. Calling the disabled man into the midst, He bade him stand there. Then, looking round upon His critics and adversaries, He asked, 'Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do harm—to save life or to kill?'

Many commentators see in this question of Jesus an appeal to Tradition. The Rabbis, they say, did allow healing on the Sabbath, when life was in danger and delay would be fatal; and they think that Jesus was reminding His audience of what was permitted even by the Doctors of the Law. St. Matthew's account is again more ample than that of the other Synoptists. He represents Jesus as putting the case of a man who has one sheep—a pet lamb, perhaps—which has fallen into a pit (one of the open wells of the East) on the Sabbath day. Tradition suffered a man to draw a domestic animal in this plight out of the pit. It is suggested, therefore, that here, as in the earlier incident which we have just discussed, Jesus first seeks for common ground with his opponents; and that He then proceeds to argue, by a simple and natural extension of the principle in Tradition, for the legitimacy of healing the man with the withered hand. Tradition allowed the saving of life on the Sabbath. This man was dying or dead in one of his members. He was leading a poor maimed existence. St. Luke tells us that it was the right hand which was dried up. Was there any real distinction of moral value between preventing the total loss of life and the restoration of life to a limb that was dying or dead? Both actions alike came under the description of the saving of life and were good.



We may imagine, if we so choose, that this was the method and nature of the plea of Jesus; but I prefer to think that, on this occasion, He at once and boldly lifted the whole question out of the region of written Law or of Tradition. He set it before the synagogue congregation in the simplicity of universal truth. He defined the essential issue so clearly that each one present, learned or unlearned, could see it and understand it. He made his appeal to that 'right judgement' which may be in all men—'Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? Which of these two things does God desire and approve?' That was the question they were to consider; and every man had the answer to it in his own heart. The people's kindly care of their own flocks and herds, and the natural impulse to help a domestic animal in distress, pointed plainly to what they should do for a suffering neighbour. 'How much, then, is a man of more value than a sheep?' concluded Jesus. He was not one of those Vedāntīs, ancient or modern, who equate the soul or life in a man with that which is in a dumb beast.

Yet, though Jesus made an appeal to the Pharisees, so frank and winsome, so cogent and clear in its reasoning, and so subduing in its moral force, they were not willing to be convinced. Not one among them was man enough to own publicly that he had harboured an unworthy suspicion and dislike of Jesus and had been wrong in his way of thinking. Jesus waited for them to speak, but all were silent. None would give to His question the only answer of which it admitted. The vivid and brusque St. Mark tells us that Jesus looked round upon them 'with anger, grieving for them at the hardness of their hearts.' His fearless searching gaze contrasted with their evasive and downcast looks. If moral perfection must include a fish-like coldness or indifference (*vairāgya*) to the moral attitudes or qualities of men, then Jesus was not morally perfect. He does not regard all these



with equanimity (*samabhāva*). He was capable of anger; but His anger was a wholesome selfless flame which flashed out against and consumed heartlessness and dishonesty. It was the love of a good man in motion against what was unworthy of man.<sup>1</sup> The religious leaders before Jesus would have suffered the man who had his right hand withered to continue in his misery and helplessness rather than revise one of their false opinions.

We notice that, in this episode, Jesus puts forward the same view of God and man as we have traced before. He thinks and speaks of God as of infinite loving-kindness and goodwill towards men, and of man as a being of inestimable dignity and worth in the sight of God. He uses the same method of reasonable and moral appeal. His argument does not soar above the comprehension of ordinary men and women among His hearers: it does not range outside the best promptings and principles of their own hearts. Those who rejected the word of Jesus were false first to themselves; and in that falseness they committed themselves to a darker hatred, and to an opposition now grown murderous.

The scene was over. What was the sequel? St. Luke says that the Pharisees were filled with madness. They were so infuriated that they had not intelligence enough to know what to do when afterwards they met and conferred together. St. Matthew and St. Mark<sup>2</sup> write that they took counsel together against Jesus '*how they might destroy Him.*' It is the first mention in either Gospel of a deadly enmity. The Cross has now appeared in sight.

A few notes on the remaining incidents will be sufficient. St. Luke has the story about the poor creature who had been weak and sickly for eighteen years. She was unable to look up or to stand upright, and was bent

<sup>1</sup> One is reminded here of Gladstone's remark that the capacity for righteous anger is one of the marks of a truly great man.

<sup>2</sup> St Mark also mentions that the Pharisees united with the Herodians—the partisans of Herod Antipas, the Galilean ruler—in this counsel of death.



nearly double with her infirmity. There are many such women to be seen in India. She happened to be present in a synagogue, probably in Peræa, on a Sabbath day when Jesus was teaching there. He saw her in the crowd. Her lamentable condition made its mute appeal to His pity, and He called her to Him. Saying to her that already she had been loosed from the bond of her weakness, He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight and began to praise God for her deliverance.

There are elements in this story which serve to illustrate and confirm what we have already said. It contains a portrait in miniature of what we dislike and denounce as 'the official mind.' The words spoken by the 'Chief Ruler of the Synagogue' are a comedy of unconscious self-revelation. He was outraged by what had been done, since he was one of those persons who are all for doing things at the proper time and in the proper place. It was the breath of his life to maintain the regular routine and decorum of the services of the meeting-house. It annoyed him excessively that sick people should be healed on the Sabbath day and in his synagogue. He vented his annoyance, however, not on Jesus and the woman who were the chief offenders, but on the crowd who were guilty of nothing worse than of being glad that the woman was healed—'Are there not six days for working, and for getting healed? If you must be healed, do it then—but not to-day, nor in this place.' The Ruler had not the imagination to perceive that sick folk who have been fast bound in misery and humiliation do not care greatly when and where they are released: they want it anywhere and at once. Neither did this man believe that God does not limit Himself in doing good by time and place. It was a sadly straitened and hard nature which could not rejoice with the common people over the happy deliverance of the woman.



The answer of Jesus to this oblique criticism is very notable. He uses the stern term of reproach—'Hypocrites!' in addressing the Ruler and those who were of his way of thinking. The man was not a hypocrite simply because he seemed to be rebuking the crowd, and in reality was attempting to condemn Jesus. It was true that he resorted to the cowardly and disingenuous expedient of trying to get at Jesus through the people; but his chief failure was that he might have known better, if he had been willing to use aright knowledge available to himself and to judge honestly. Therein lay his hypocrisy. Anything more apt and sympathetic than the argument of Jesus it is difficult to conceive. He reminded the Ruler and the congregation that the Law and Tradition permitted or required a master to untie his ox or ass on the Sabbath and to lead it away to the watering—a work of mercy in three kinds and stages. And then, with a rare felicity of comparison and contrast, he spoke of the woman as of one who had been bound by a chain, not for a day, but for eighteen long years. And she was no beast of burden, but one of themselves by race and religion—a daughter of Abraham. It was not merely permissible, said Jesus, to release her from her weakness, and suffering on the Sabbath; it was obligatory. 'I not only may, I also *ought* to heal her' is the gist of His reply. Once again through the eyes of Jesus, we see God willing good to men, and man as the object of God's care and beneficence. Jesus' view of God and man stands out in clear definition over against the official view as represented by the Ruler of the Synagogue.

We may note, finally, the reactions of the various parties in this incident to the words and deed of Jesus. The Ruler and his following were 'put to shame': they were 'confounded,' says Dr. Bruce, but not 'convinced.' The common folk, on the other hand, rejoiced 'at all the glorious things which were being done by Him.' Those



who made less profession of religion were nearer to truth and more friendly to Jesus, because they had more genuine goodness and honesty of heart.

The second narrative peculiar to St. Luke's Gospel is the cure of the dropsical man. This happened not in a synagogue, but in the house of a leading Pharisee who had invited Jesus to dinner. In spite of the fact that Jesus was a guest, the Pharisees who were present were maintaining an espionage on him: they were on the lookout for something which might serve as the ground of an accusation. St. Luke does not say that the man with the dropsy was present by arrangement with the Pharisees. More probably he had heard that Jesus was in the house, and came uninvited through the open door. He presented himself before Jesus for help. The watching attitude of the Pharisees indicated that the views of Jesus on Sabbath observance were known. I think that the method adopted by Jesus Himself also suggests this. Before He said or did anything to the diseased man, He put the question to the company at table, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?'—as much as to say, 'You know what my belief is and what my practice has been. On previous Sabbaths and elsewhere I have healed sufferers such as this man. Can you advance any valid reason why I should not heal him to-day?' The opportunity was thus given to the Pharisees to show cause why a work of healing should not be wrought on the Sabbath; but they were silent. They were not prepared with an objection, which they could sustain. They did not consent, but they dared not forbid. Jesus then took the man and healed him; and afterwards He said to the host and His fellow-guests—'You who are owners of an ox or an ass will draw it out of a pit on the Sabbath, if it should chance to fall in.' He seems to imply that, in so doing, their motive might not be wholly unselfish. They were serving their own interests, and



saving their own property in rescuing the animal, and they were not moved by pure mercy to their beast. If the Law permitted such action, surely—and much more—would it sanction a deed which sprang from unmixed love of a fellow man. The latter must be right in the eyes of God. St. Luke says that the Pharisees had no power to reply: the reasoning of Jesus left them without the ability to raise an objection that would hold. One wonders whether the host and any other of that company became disciples of Jesus. Did they perceive that His views of God and man, from which they had differed, were, after all, just and right; and did they 'in an honest and good heart' obey the truth and follow Jesus?

The two narratives in the Fourth Gospel bring to a climax these arguments of Jesus. The miracle of the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda belongs to an early visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, and almost certainly is earlier in time than any of the incidents mentioned above. It cannot be described, therefore, as chronologically the crown of the exposition of Jesus, in connexion with the Sabbath, of His doctrine of God and man. In order of thought, however, it does complete or consummate His great argument. To change the figure, the Fourth Evangelist—in characteristic fashion—takes us deepest down into this matter. He reaches the bed-rock of truth, as Jesus knew it. The offence which Jesus gave to the Jews at Jerusalem was twofold—first, that He healed on the Sabbath; and next, that He aggravated this transgression by bidding the man to roll up his mat and carry it away on the Sabbath. The defence of Jesus is: *'My Father worketh even until now, and I work. . . . The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what thing soever He doeth, that the Son also doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth.'* I spoke in the first chapter of this lecture



of some of the sayings, attributed by the Fourth Evangelist to Jesus, as casting a sudden flood of light upon His character and personality. I said that they appear to illuminate the chamber of His mind, and to reveal to us His inmost thoughts. Is not this just such a saying? It is the very word for which we have been waiting in all this consideration of the Sabbath controversy. It has been implicit in every incident which we have examined. Now that the word has been spoken, we feel that it is true—true as an authentic word of Jesus, and true as the final *apologia* of Jesus: it is His foundation plea—‘God acts in this way. I see Him so acting. And therefore I too act.’ Jesus did all things according to the pattern showed to Him in the Mount. His vision of God determined His behaviour towards men.

The other incident—the giving sight to the man born blind—contains two incidental features of special interest to Hindus. The question of the Disciples—‘Which did sin? This man or his parents?’—prompts the inquiry whether there was any belief in transmigration among the Jews similar to that which is universal among Hindus. Further, we read that Jesus added to the simple offence of healing on the Sabbath by spitting upon the ground and making clay with the spittle to anoint the eyes of the blind man. The Jews objected to the making of clay as illicit work: the Hindu would object to it as ceremonially defiling. Saliva, in his sentiment, is one of the utterly unclean excrements of the body, polluting whomsoever it touches. Later on, we may touch upon both of these points of special concern to Hindus.

For our present purpose the important thing to note is that the Pharisees, in their hatred of Jesus, are reduced to the self-contradictory proposition—a good work, but a bad man. ‘Give glory to God’, they say to him who was once blind, ‘We know that this man is a sinner.’ But even their authority and prestige cannot impose so



absurd a conclusion upon the unlettered beggar. He retorts, 'We know that God heareth not sinners . . . If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.'<sup>1</sup> Again the simpler, less sophisticated nature comes nearer to the truth.

This story seems fittingly to close this inquiry: for it suggests that the works of Jesus were of such a kind that God must have been behind and in them. The belief and assertion of Jesus that God approved Him in the doing of them were not self-delusion and falsehood: for if God had not approved, they could never have been performed. The power that governs our world and orders our life was in some mystic way associated with Jesus in His acts: what He did, He did by virtue of that harmony and fellowship.

We have now passed in rapid survey those occasions when Jesus exhibited the divergence of His own thought from the accepted ideas of His time in connexion with the observance of the Sabbath. There was another context in which His originality and independence came into prominence. The term, *Ceremonial Purity*, sufficiently describes it. Here also there was a notable departure by Him from the doctrine and practice of the orthodox. We will take first for consideration the utterances of Jesus which followed upon a charge brought against His disciples by the Pharisees and some of the Scribes. They are preserved both by St. Matthew and St. Mark (Matt. 15<sup>1-20</sup>, Mark 7<sup>1-23</sup>). Evidently this incident belongs to a late stage of the conflict. The Galilean ministry is drawing to its close. While, on the one hand, Jesus enjoys a widespread popularity among the people and there is an amazing resort to Him for the cure of ailments, on the other hand, the opposition of the religious leaders has hardened and become

<sup>1</sup> Compare Matt. 7<sup>11</sup>, Luke 6<sup>42</sup> for the insistence of Jesus on the principle that good comes only from God—'A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.'



definitely dangerous. The attitude and words of Jesus show that He knows there is no longer a possibility of convincing his chief adversaries and of finding acceptance with them. His life is at stake. Before many more days have passed, Jesus will inform His disciples of the tragic situation, and He will begin His preparations for the last journey. The orthodox party of the North have joined hands with those of Judæa. They seem to have summoned some Scribes from Jerusalem itself to reinforce them in their observation and condemnation of Jesus. They are seeking a fresh ground of complaint, and find it in the fact that the disciples are not careful to observe the Traditional rules about washing the hands before a meal. Some of them at least have been seen to eat bread without the prescribed ablution. It is not a matter of real bodily cleanliness, but only of ceremonial purity.

The orthodox Hindu will readily appreciate the significance and seriousness of the challenge of the orthodox Jews. The caste system of India is unique. Nowhere has greater stress been laid upon the necessity for ceremonial purity at meals. Caste laws and customs deal largely with eating—what to eat, when and how to eat, with whom to eat. The meal has been made the chief social sacrament: it forms a large part of daily religious observance. St. Mark was at some pains to explain the Jewish customs for the benefit of his Gentile readers. He wrote that the Jews before taking food washed their hands, and that, when they came in from the promiscuous intercourse of the market-place, where they might have to meet all manner of strangers and Gentiles, they bathed the whole body<sup>1</sup>. Beside this, they were most scrupulous to make clean their cooking, drinking and eating vessels. Thus a great body of minute rules and regulations relating to ceremonial or legal

<sup>1</sup> Reading *βαπτίζονται* Mark 7<sup>a</sup>.



purity had been formed in course of time. It was a part of the unwritten Tradition, handed down by one generation of Rabbis to another and gathering accretions from those who passed it on. The question, then, of the Pharisees and Scribes to Jesus was, 'Why do Thy disciples transgress the Tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands, whenever they take food.'

The reply of Jesus makes clear that an advanced stage has been reached in the controversy between Him and the religious leaders. It was of uncompromising boldness and strength. The time for reserve was over. Jesus went straight to the main issue—the value of the Tradition itself. There was no attempt to secure a delay of judgement by such an excuse as that—as a rule—the disciples did wash their hands before a meal, and that the omission of the rite by some of them was due to an inadvertence. Jesus, first of all, made a direct assault upon the great system of Tradition in the name of which the objection had been lodged. He declared that this venerated system was grievously at fault. In many instances, it was not the commandment of God at all, but an invention of man which in no way represented the mind of God. It is highly significant that Jesus singled out, as proof of this defect or vice in Tradition, its treatment of the Fifth Commandment, which was an authentic word of God. The Traditionalists had made it possible for a son, merely by pronouncing a word over any property and declaring it to be a gift dedicated to God, to withhold from a parent any succour or benefit which might have been derived from it. It was like Jesus to stand for the simple and universal humanities. We have already quoted His words setting the spiritual affinity of a man to God above his physical affinity to father or mother; but it was never the intention of Jesus that His words should be used to exempt any son from the pious and loving service of his



parents. We see once again in this incident the characteristic reverence of Jesus for man, and for all that is owing by man to man. It is, in His eyes, a hideous perversion of religion, when we make use of God's name to excuse our failure in dutifulness towards those who are nearest to us by the ties of nature.

Then Jesus passed on to an open denunciation of the Pharisees and Scribes. He applied to them in irony the words of the prophet. They were like the people, He said, who served God with their lips, when their hearts were far from Him.<sup>1</sup> Finally, Jesus called to Him the people who had been standing within earshot, and He spoke to them the gnomic sentence—'Hear me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing which goes into a man from the outside that can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are the things that defile him.'<sup>2</sup> Thus, summarily, did Jesus indicate the defect of the Tradition in the case before them.

The disciples did not understand fully what Jesus meant; but they had understood enough to be seriously alarmed. They knew that He had denounced as impious the system of Tradition with which the Pharisees were identified, and the Pharisees themselves as hypocrites. And when they came into the house, they ventured to remonstrate with Him—'Master, do you know that the Pharisees were scandalized by what you said?' Jesus heard this protest of their timidity, but He was quite unmoved and undismayed. There was a sublime assurance in His reply, 'Every plant which My Heavenly Father did not plant, shall be rooted up.' He meant that the plant of Tradition was no seed or culture of God, but an evil and useless thing which would be destroyed. We see in this word again the sure confidence of Jesus that

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 29<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> See St. Mark. St. Matthew's rendering is 'Not that which goes into his mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of his mouth, this defiles him.'



He knew the mind and will of God. He went on to speak in sadness of the Pharisees—'Let them alone. The leaders are blind. If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.' The Pharisees were beyond the power of Jesus to convince and to convert. Even He could not give sight to eyes which were obstinately closed to the light of truth.

The Disciples, however, were not merely frightened by what had been plain to them; they were also puzzling over the meaning of the dark saying of Jesus. Through Peter, therefore, their spokesman, they ask for an explanation. Material things such as food, said Jesus, which are outside of a man and enter into his body by way of the mouth and pass out of it again, do not make a man unclean. On the other hand, the things which issue from his heart, the seat of his conscious being—such, for example, as words, which are the expression and final result of the processes of thought in the heart, coming out by way of the mouth—do make a man unclean. Then Jesus enumerated some of these products of the conscious self. They are not all words, for words have been suggested merely as typical results of the inner processes of the heart.<sup>1</sup> There is no logical or scientific order of classification in the list, but it served for popular use and practical purposes—'Evil disputations, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, malice, guile, wantonness, envy, slander, overweening pride, folly.' Some of these are acts, and some are motives or qualities of the soul which impel to action. In either case, they belong to the conscious self.

We may marvel at the unreadiness of the Disciples to accept the word of Jesus and to recognize its meaning and truth. Members of a nation whose most famous king and darling hero was David, they should never have forgotten the manner of his election—'The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Luke 6<sup>45</sup>. 'Out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaketh.'



appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' And their great penitential psalm voiced the prayer—'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.'<sup>1</sup> Jesus Himself, with whom they had companied for so many months, was not enunciating for the first time in their hearing the truth that, in any moral estimation, the inward state of a man is what counts. He had insisted on that principle in His teaching of the crowd, and had carried it down into some of the details of conduct. The outward act, He had said, was not the sole, nor even the chief, measure of character; the invisible motive was a truer index of the man. Murder and adultery had their residence in the heart in the shape of anger and lust. Had the Disciples forgotten altogether the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount?

Still it was the fact that, with so much to help them to an understanding and approval, the Disciples were afraid and perplexed. We who have not been brought up under a system of Tradition, regulating the minutest actions of life, can scarcely put ourselves back in the place of these first followers of Jesus; we cannot appreciate to the full the surprise and the boldness of His attack upon Tradition. The system covered in the whole sky of the religious in that generation. It enjoyed immense prestige and influence. The weak conscience trembled and was confused at any questionings of its authority. It had obscured and overlaid the first principles of morality and religion.

This, then, was not new truth which Jesus announced for the first time. Rather He excavated and brought up old truth from beneath the rubbish under which men had buried it. He gave to it once again its place in the sun with fresh beauty and strength. Since He so spoke, the world has never been able to forget or to ignore completely this spiritual standard of life. With the exposition of Jesus in their ears, and His example before

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 16<sup>7</sup>, Psalm 51<sup>10</sup>.



their eyes, the Disciples may have felt the justice and force of what He urged. It is one thing, however, to perceive and acknowledge the rightness of a spiritual principle: it is quite another thing to step out boldly, trusting entirely to it, in the walk of life, and to follow it unhesitatingly whithersoever it leads. The latter requires a courage and moral consistency which all find difficult to achieve. The very Disciple who drew the explanation from Jesus was he who—as an Apostolic leader—afterwards forsook his Master's teaching and weakly and sinfully complied with the requirements of Tradition.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus declared without ambiguity or compromise that the great system of Tradition was wrong in matters of vital concern, and that it must go. The Evangelist, St. Mark, has expressed the opinion, in a gloss of his own, that Jesus intended also the abolition of a portion of the Law—the Levitical distinction of 'clean' and 'unclean' animals.<sup>2</sup> The difference between His ideas of God and human duty (*dharma*) and those of the Pharisees and their Scribes here appears in the guise of the antagonism between the religion of the Spirit and the outward observance of a code of rules and regulations.<sup>3</sup> A deadly conflict, a *combat à l'outrance*! Two modern commentators have well remarked upon this incident: 'It was no wonder that Jesus' fate hastened to its end'; 'The response of the Traditionalists was crucifixion.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 2<sup>11-14</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Reading καθαρῶς—'This He said, making all foods clean.'—Mark 7<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> On this passage in St. Mark Dr. Montefiore writes in his *Synoptic Gospels*, Vol. I, p. 176, 'Looking back upon the whole incident after 1900 years, we see that while both parties had a certain right upon their side, though neither could persuade the other, Jesus was more profoundly right and more essentially true. The future was with Him, not with the Scribes and Pharisees. His principle would gradually win the day. It represented a higher and purer conception of religion than the opposing principle which is embodied in the Pentateuchal Law. Liberal Judaism has consciously accepted it. Jesus himself, with his keen moral and religious intuitions, went straight to the essential truths of religion.' The significance of this comment is that it comes from a Jewish scholar.

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the question of Diet and Spirituality see *Appendix I*.



One of the titles which Jesus has carried through the centuries is 'Friend of publicans and sinners.' He earned it during His lifetime: it seems to have been one of those expressive names which enemies attached to Him in contempt and derision and friends with gratitude and love. It was at once a title of honour and dishonour, His reproach and His praise. It had so great a vogue that it served to distinguish Jesus from John the Baptist—the sociability of the one from the austerity and solitariness of the other. Jesus was no anchorite, living on desert fare. He loved the company of men, and was often at their tables—even of the sinful. He was a 'friend of publicans and sinners.' Here, then, is a third context in which the novelty and divergence of the views of Jesus appear.

We may rightly conclude that there were many incidents in the career of Jesus which built up for Him this reputation and gave Him this name. Only a few are recorded, but they are sufficient, because they are typical. They represent what was the constant attitude of Jesus and His general practice towards those who were considered irreligious and outside the pale of respectability.

It was a startling innovation for a religious teacher to invite a publican—a tax-gatherer, in some degree the servant of a pagan government—to join the select band of His disciples. Jesus' call of Matthew or Levi (Matt. 9<sup>9-13</sup>, Mark 2<sup>14-17</sup>, Luke 5<sup>27-32</sup>) was without precedent. It caught the eye of the public and set the whole town talking, as well as aroused the criticism of the Pharisees. The banquet which followed was a great affair, and many were present. If it took place not in the house of Levi, as St. Luke says, but in the house used by Jesus for Himself and His disciples, as the first two Evangelists seem to suggest, then the presence of many publicans and sinners was even more significant. Jesus made them at home in His own house.

The story of the woman in the city, who was a sinner



(Luke 7<sup>36-50</sup>) and came uninvited into the house of Simon the Pharisee, where Jesus was dining, belongs to a quieter and more intimate order. From its seclusion it diffuses a fragrance of tenderness and beauty. Few stories in the Gospels exhibit in such perfect combination the gentleness and strength of Jesus—His grace and truth. There would be no doubt that He who so received and understood, so shielded and blessed a sinful woman, was indeed 'the friend of sinners.'

The remaining incident, in which an individual appears prominently, is also reported by St. Luke alone (Luke 19<sup>1-10</sup>). Jesus, entering into Jericho on His last journey to Jerusalem, looks up into the sycamore tree, and says to the little man who is an important person among the tax-gatherers of the town—'To-day I must stay at thy house.' That, like the first, was a public occasion: the accompanying crowd was great, and there would be many to take note that Jesus had chosen a chief publican to be His host.

Here, then, we have another cause of offence. It might have been treated under the foregoing head of Ceremonial Impurity, to which it is closely related. According to the Traditionalists a man might defile himself not merely by the food he ate, or the manner of his eating it, but also by the company in which he ate it. Uncleanliness came through persons as well as through food. The 'publicans and sinners' were unclean persons in themselves, and all intercourse with them was defiling: to dine with them was the offence in the extreme degree. The Gospels make this plain enough. Consider the record of Levi's banquet: 'When the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners?' (Matt. 9<sup>11</sup>)<sup>1</sup>. When the good folk of

<sup>1</sup> Compare the variants:—'The Scribes of the Pharisees said unto His disciples, He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners' (Mark 2<sup>16</sup>); 'And the Pharisees and their Scribes murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners?' (Luke 5<sup>29</sup>).



Jericho saw Jesus ask for and accept the hospitality of Zacchaeus, they knew that eating would be included in it—it would be supper and bed and breakfast for Jesus. 'And they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.'

On the other hand, the woman who was a sinner, was no fellow-guest of Jesus. She was not reclining at the table with Him, and He did not eat with her; but she touched Him, and her simple touch was polluting. The watching Pharisee host 'spake within himself—This man, if He were a prophet, would have perceived what manner of woman this is who is touching Him.' Her tears and the hair of her head upon the feet of Jesus and her clasping hands had brought legal defilement to Jesus and made Him ceremonially unclean. The system of Indian caste recognizes a distinction of persons into clean and unclean. The high-caste man is defiled by the touch of the low-caste (*Sūdra*) and of the foreigner (*mlecchha*): the very shadow of the outcaste pollutes.

Now there was, of course, a *rationale* underlying the Traditionalist restriction or prohibition of social intercourse with Gentiles and irreligious Jews. The publicans were tax-gatherers, directly or indirectly, for a foreign government, and thereby acknowledged Cæsar as King instead of Jehovah, the only king of the truly pious Jew. Their occupation gave them many opportunities for fraud and oppression. Jews, who made no profession of their religion, never used its means of grace and paid no regard to its observances; who violated flagrantly the laws of common morality and had been put out of the synagogue—were not likely to be helpful or desirable associates. Was it not best to avoid all such persons? There is practical wisdom in the proverb which says that a man may be known by his company: it means that he will become like his company. The sickly individual does well to avoid every risk of contagion and infection:



segregation is the safest and best policy for him. Similarly the average religious person, conscious of the fragility of his virtue and the fickleness of his goodness, may decide that these are to be defended and protected by a separation from sinners: he must not run into temptation. Unless a man have exceptional strength and independence, he allows his company to make him into their likeness, in their mould: he does not make them into his likeness, in his mould. An old prophet has hinted that the infection of uncleanness is more powerful than the infection of holiness (Hag. 2<sup>11-13</sup>). Common experience suggests that good men are more often corrupted by the conversation of the wicked than the wicked are converted to the thoughts and ways of the good.

What reason, then, was there why Jesus should set aside this common-sense rule of proved utility—this counsel of prudence? There is an answer which occurs at once to the mind. The rule is a rule of safety only, and it is meant for the protection and advantage of weak persons. In Jesus we see the resistance and vigour of perfect moral health. He did not catch from men the infection of their spiritual disorders, but rather conveyed to them some of the wholesomeness of His own inner life. He threw off the germs of every sickness of the soul, and irradiated sanity of body, mind and spirit. His personality ruled the company which He kept, and was not subdued to it. He raised the company to the height of His own discourse, and did not suffer Himself to sink to the level of theirs. In the table-talk, if Jesus did not always start the subjects of conversation, He made the tone. Jesus did not resort to publicans and sinners that He might become as they were, but that they might become as He was. He was justified by the results: many a man and woman saw the beauty of holiness in Him and was led to repentance and faith. Much was



forgiven them, and they greatly loved. It would appear, then, that, when Jesus was challenged for the first time about the company He kept, He replied in the happy manner of the early days with the simplest and aptest of illustrations—'The sick, not the well, want the doctor: I came not to call the righteous—the spiritually well, but sinners—the spiritually sick, to the way of health, which is repentance and faith.' It was an answer which left the so-called righteous to ponder whether their spiritual condition was as satisfactory as they had imagined. The maxim of cautious prudence, that one should have nothing to do with sinners, was out of place when applied to a strong and pure personality like that of Jesus.

But, further, Jesus penetrated deeply into the mentality which lay behind this aloofness of the religious and their leaders. He saw that they had a conception of holiness which meant merely keeping separate from sinners. 'They not only had nothing to do with sinners, they also were doing nothing for them. This was only possible because they had little love for their fellows. In the absence of love it is easy for a man of religious profession to consider that he has done his duty to his neighbour, when he has told him the truth and shown him the right way. If he will not then listen nor do as he is advised, that is not the fault of the adviser. 'Let him go his way,' says this righteous man, 'I have discharged my soul, and now I am quit of this fellow.' So he dismisses forthwith the man from his thought and troubles about him no more. And if the sight or the remembrance of him shall ever occur to mind, it will serve only to provoke and to heighten self-esteem. The good man will reflect with complacency, that he has not made the mistakes nor committed the sins of his neighbour and that he has not acquired his character and reputation. When he prays, he prays with himself, and



thanks God he is not as the rest of men, and especially not as the irreligious worldling. (Luke 18<sup>9-14</sup>.) The comparison of himself with his sinful fellow gives to him a pleasurable sense of security and superior standing. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican at prayer was no travesty of the character of many a religious man: it was, and is, true to fact. To Jesus hardness of heart and self-complacence were cardinal defects in Pharisaism. He had more hope of sinners than of those who had come under the power of this perversion of religion. 'The publicans and the harlots', He said at the last to the Pharisees, 'go into the Kingdom of God before you'; because there was more humility and readiness to receive correction among those irreligious people than among the eminent professors of religion. They had a sense of personal unworthiness and need, and they repented at the call of John and Jesus. (Matt. 21<sup>31-32</sup>).

This attitude of aloofness was wholly foreign to the nature of Jesus: it never can be adopted where there is great love. Even in our imperfect world, there are fathers and mothers whose love is not conditional upon the dutifulness of a child: no perversity or ingratitude can ever turn it aside or dry it up. It will continue to follow even the worst prodigal and to seek his good so long as life shall last. We have seen such love between man and woman—a love that did not rest only upon the loveable, but persisted in the face of many infidelities. So Hosea conceived of the God of Israel—'When Israel was a child, then I loved him. I taught Ephraim to go. How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . Mine heart is turned within me; my compassions are kindled together' (Hos. 11). The prophet knew that God was such that He could not coldly dismiss for ever from His heart the people whom He had chosen and called. It is of the nature of love to persist and to endeavour.



The fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel consists of material which he alone has preserved. Whence he derived it, we do not know. There are set down the three parables of the Lost. We do not always remember the preamble, or historical context, which gives to these parables their fullest meaning—'Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto Him for to hear Him. And both the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. And He spake unto them this parable.' It was a parable about a Lost Sheep—lost through its silliness—which had a good shepherd who sought it up hill and down dale, until he found it and brought it home upon his shoulders and made a great rejoicing with his neighbours.

But Jesus was not satisfied with His first parable, and He tried a second. Perhaps it was meant to make its special appeal to the understanding of women—the frugal housewives before Him, who knew how to make every penny go its farthest. He told the story of the Lost Coin—lost through sheer inability of itself to keep its place or to announce where it was—which a woman sought with all diligence until she found, and then summoned her friends to rejoice with her.

But Jesus was still not satisfied with these two parables. Neither separate nor put together were they good enough to show forth the relation between God and sinful men. And so He told His third parable of the Lost Son, who was lost not because he had no sense like the sheep, and neither sense nor will like the coin, but—dowered with will and knowledge—was selfish and perverse and an ingrate, and forsook his home and his father; but his father never forgot him nor ceased longing for his return, and saw him when he was a great way off, and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him and freely forgave him all his unworthiness. If one might make an image of God according to the description of Jesus, should it



not be the figure of this waiting father—God looking down the avenue of time and waiting for His world to come home to Himself?

These three parables are the *apologia* of Jesus for being 'the friend of publicans and sinners' and for His making merry and being glad with them. He could not help being their friend, because He was sure that God was their friend. We all know that the story to which we have given the name of the Parable of the Prodigal Son might be called more appropriately the Parable of the Elder Brother; for Jesus did not speak it merely to teach that God loves and is willing to forgive sinners. He spoke it to make plain that, though God loves and is willing to forgive sinners, good people often do not love and are not willing to forgive them. For all the graciousness of these parables there is an element of judgement and condemnation in them. It is a somewhat veiled and subtle irony in the conclusion of the first two, where twice the joy in heaven before God and among His angels at the repentance of a sinner is contrasted with the murmurs and gloomy dissatisfaction on earth. But in the third parable we have in the elder brother a full-length portrait of the self-righteous man—his straitened affection and his moroseness.

Thus, in the result, we find that the offence of Jesus in keeping company with sinners resolves itself into the necessary opposition between great and little love, an other-regarding and a self-regarding nature. How could those who seemed to be loving and serving God, but in reality were loving and serving themselves, be at one with Jesus who loved God and man in truth and in deed. The Pharisees—said Jesus at the last, when the conflict was open and declared, and the fatal end drew near—were seekers of money and reputation and authority for themselves, and not of the glory of God and their neighbours' welfare. He denounced their religion as an



*Hypocrisy.* They were like actors in masks, seeming to be one person and being in reality another. When He so spoke, there was no hope of reconciliation; the Cross was near at hand.<sup>1</sup>

We have tried to exhibit and illustrate the originality and independence of Jesus—the novelty and divergence of His doctrine and practice from the orthodoxy of His day—by a reference to three contexts in contemporary Judaism. These are the observance of the Sabbath, the Law and Tradition respecting ceremonial purity, and the rigid separation of the religious from the irreligious. The subject admits of a greatly extended treatment. The student will see stretching before him many paths of investigation which have not been pursued. There are many relevant incidents of which no use has been made. A wider and more competent examination of all the historical data might serve to correct details in this Chapter, but it would—I think—further illustrate and confirm its main conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> The great Denunciation of the Pharisees by Jesus—Matt. 23<sup>1-39</sup>, Mark 12<sup>38-40</sup>, Luke 20<sup>41-47</sup> (Cp. Luke 11<sup>53-54</sup>). For a fuller discussion of this see *Appendix II*.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE OFFENCE: PERSONAL CLAIMS

*'If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I ask you, ye will not answer.'*—ST. LUKE. xxii. 67-8.

*'He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of Him that sent him, the same is true.'*—ST. JOHN vii. 18.

We come now to the second great branch of the offence of Jesus—the claims which He made for Himself. The work of Jesus was more than the impersonal unfolding of a doctrine of God and man: it was, in one aspect of it, a process of self-revelation and self-assertion; for Jesus believed Himself to have a place—a high and central place—in the relations of God and man.

One cannot read and accept the general evidence of the Gospel records without gaining the impression that Jesus, before He came upon the public scene, had considered who He was and what He would do. The illustrations and proofs drawn by Him from the Scriptures which so astonished the common people and confounded His adversaries cannot have been happy improvisations, coming to Him as by a sudden inspiration. His citations of Scripture implied a long previous searching. Jesus not merely showed a knowledge of surface truths that had been most plainly announced by the prophets of old, He also brought to light principles which not so manifestly were contained in the history of Israel and were latent in the experience of the saints. The use of His Old



Testament Bible by Jesus reveals a mind ready furnished and prepared, which upon the demand of the occasion could draw out of its stores as the occasion required. We cannot imagine that those surprising answers and penetrative questions were spoken on the spur of the moment. The hidden years of Nazareth were years of prayer and study, of obedience and discipline, so that Jesus came forth in the fulness of His own time, when the forces of His manhood had been matured.

Moreover, there is a method and order in His ministry, which shows that Jesus 'knew what He would do.' He, least of all men, is the foolish builder of His own parable, who began to lay the foundation without considering whether he was able to finish, or the weak and impulsive prince who entered upon a campaign without first reckoning whether his forces were sufficient to meet and overcome those of his rival and enemy. There is a regular development by stages of the work of Jesus. He selects His disciples and trains them from point to point of faith and understanding. He proceeds by well-considered and well-devised measures to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God, and to ensure the perpetual proclamation of it. He introduces a religious experience among men of a new order and on a higher plane, and provides for its continuance through all generations. He founds a new society in such wise that the powers of decay and death shall never prevail against it. He observes the signs of the times, suppresses premature disclosures about Himself, and waits for His hour. And when His hour comes, He faces it with a resolution and serenity which even its agony can only interrupt but never extinguish.

We know well enough that the manner of Jesus' teaching was astonishing. The Synoptists use a very strong word to describe the effect of it (ἐξέπλησσοντο):<sup>1</sup> the hearers of Jesus were, so to speak, 'struck out of

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 7<sup>18</sup>, 22<sup>33</sup>; Mark 1<sup>32</sup>, 6<sup>5</sup>, 11<sup>18</sup>; Luke 4<sup>31</sup>.



their senses' by the amazing method and content of His doctrine. It is easy for us to conceive that the crowd was astonished at the reply which Jesus gave to the gross and stock conundrum of the Sadducees about the seven brothers, their common wife, and the Resurrection. If Jesus had never done so before our time, what theologian or doctor of divinity among us to-day would go to the 'Passage of the Bush' for his proof of immortality? And yet, as soon as we hear and consider the argument of Jesus, that God in the olden time would never have consented to be called after men, if they were only the creatures of a day, and that those to whom God has given in any measure His care and His love can never utterly perish, we recognize at once its simplicity and its profundity. This is a truth—so we see—which underlies the whole history of the patriarchs and Israel, of the world which God loves and wills to save—yes, and of our own lives which have been the objects of His thought and compassion.

There was, then, this amazing depth and spirituality in Jesus' handling of Scripture and in all His teaching—the fruit of fellowship with God and reflection: but it was the note of *authority*, which aroused most attention and comment. The Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark contain an almost identical observation upon the effect produced by the teaching of Jesus. In the one Gospel the verse occurs at the end of that great body of the Sayings of Jesus which we know as the Sermon on the Mount; in the other, it appears as the record of the impression made upon a congregation in the synagogue at Capernaum—'They were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their Scribes' (Matt. 7<sup>29</sup>, Mark 1<sup>22</sup>). Whether it was a great open-air audience in the uplands or an assembly in a Jewish house of prayer, the effect was the same. The people heard and saw in Jesus a teacher who knew of



Himself and was sure of His doctrine. He did not follow the method with which their own Doctors of the Law had made them familiar—quote Rabbi against Rabbi and Rabbi upon Rabbi, and so at the end arrive at a decision which was based upon the preponderance of the witness of other men. Jesus spoke as if He had been admitted to the counsels of the Most High God, and knew the mind of God in intimate communion with Him and by direct communication from Him. He did not appear to lean upon or to need the testimony of other human teachers, but out of the clarity and certitude of His own fellowship with God, He taught men what is truth and what is righteousness.

Further, we cannot help noticing the amazing assumption of authority which is implicit in the demand Jesus made upon those who would be His disciples. By what right did He lay so onerous a condition upon the Rich Young Ruler? Who was He that He should require any man to renounce all his wealth in order to become a disciple—'Yet one thing is wanting to thee. If thou wilt to be perfect, go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me.' We read in St. Matthew's Gospel that Jesus, in His instructions to the Twelve before sending them out, said: 'He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And He that doth not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of Me' (Matt. 10<sup>37, 38</sup>).

The same demand appears in St. Luke in an even stronger form, and it is addressed not to the select band of disciples but to the crowds which attended Jesus on His way to Jerusalem: 'Now there went with Him great multitudes, and He turned and said unto them—If any man cometh unto Me and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters and his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whosoever



doth not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. . . . Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple' (Luke 14<sup>25-33</sup>)—amazing words from the lips of any one! Well may we exclaim, Who is this that dares to ask so much of another? Has any Teacher the right to insist upon discipleship in this degree? The authority implied in the demand is stupendous. Our wonder is not lessened when we remember what value Jesus set upon our human kinships and the obligations attaching to them.

We cannot but conclude that—rightly or wrongly—Jesus believed that He had a doctrine to impart which men could learn only in His company, and not merely by hearing it twice or thrice. He had some glorious spiritual experience to share with humanity, and they who would be the first to participate in it must be with Him constantly. He had come to bring men into a new relation with God—a hitherto unattained perception and enjoyment of the divine love and goodness; and none could enter into it except those who abode with Him. Jesus, so He said, had a boon of inestimable value to bestow upon His true disciples, and it was worthy of any sacrifice on their part. They should receive manifold more in this age and in the world to come eternal life.

We have seen already that in the Synoptic Gospels this supreme blessing is commonly described as the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. This, according to Jesus, was the Chief Good. He who had it, though he were poor in this world's goods, was rich indeed: he who had it not, though he possessed all the wealth of the Indies, was the veriest pauper. It was likened by Jesus to a hoard of coin and jewels which a farmer found in his plough-land; and for joy at the discovery he went and sold all that he had to possess himself of the field and the treasure-trove. Jesus, however, used a more excellent figure to set forth the surpassing beauty.



and worth of the Kingdom of God. He compared it to such a pearl as had haunted the dreams of a dealer in precious stones and had been the object of his life-long quest. His fidelity was rewarded at length; for he came upon the one pearl of the world and was ready to sell up house and home to secure a prize of so great loveliness.

There is a story in the Gospels which seems to me to exhibit in the most striking fashion Jesus' estimate of the greatness of the spiritual benefit He had come to confer on our human race. We read that John the Baptist sent two disciples from his prison to ask Jesus whether He really was the 'Coming One'—the Messiah, foretold and expected (Matt. 11<sup>2-19</sup>, Luke 7<sup>18-35</sup>). It is not contrary to, but rather in accordance with, our knowledge of human nature that even so strong a man as John should have chafed under and been weakened by his imprisonment. The gloom and narrow confines of his dungeon must have been particularly irksome and depressing to this desert-ranger; and the gentleness and delays of Jesus would provoke doubt and impatience in one of John's vigour and vehemence. After Jesus had given to the messengers His answer for their master, He turned to the crowd and began to speak about the Baptist. His address, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, is one of the gems of condensed rhetoric. Jesus is represented as beginning with an arresting question—'What went ye out to see?' And then He proposes an answer, which must have brought a smile to the faces of those who heard it—'A reed tossing in the wind?' That was the commonest of sights in the sedgy bed of the Jordan. Who would go out to see it? The suggestion too was ludicrous that John might in some way resemble so poor and weak a thing—changeable and easily broken, quaking at and bowing to every lightest motion of the breeze. Who was more unlike a reed than the stalwart and rugged prophet of the desert? He stood like some fortress-tower



upon a rock in the wilderness, four-square to every wind that blew.

'Well then,' said Jesus. 'what did you go to see? A man in gorgeous apparel, feeding on delicacies?' The audience who remembered John's camel-hair garment, leathern girdle, and his desert fare must have laughed outright at the incongruity between the figure called up by the words of Jesus and the man they had actually seen and heard. 'Truly,' added Jesus, 'such persons are to be found in the royal palaces, and not on the sand or in the caves of the wilderness.' Suddenly the discourse takes a grave turn. 'But what did you go out to see? A *Prophet*?' In a moment every face is sobered; the playful humour of Jesus is over. He is coming to grips with His subject. 'Yes,' He continued, 'and more than a prophet. If only you could discern aright, you would know that this was none other than the forerunner of the Messiah—the harbinger of the Lord's coming.' The interest and attention of the audience have now been brought to a fine point of intense thought and expectation, and Jesus pronounced His great eulogium upon His kinsman and herald. 'Verily I say unto you, a greater hath not been raised up among the children of men than John the Baptist.'

The climax, however, of the speech is yet to come; for Jesus follows His high praise of the Baptist immediately with the startling word—'But he that is a lesser one in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John.' What did Jesus mean by this, and what would His hearers understand?

If we are to interpret this saying with the help of what has gone before and of what follows after, we shall come to the conclusion that Jesus was instituting a comparison between an old order to which John belonged—of which he was a representative, and none higher—and the new order which Jesus Himself was about to introduce.



Religion up to that day had moved upon a lower plane: Jesus had come to raise the whole level of spiritual life and experience. Men through Him were about to attain to a new measure of spiritual freedom and dignity. They were to know God as their King and Father, as He had never been known before: they were to enter into the joy—the privileges and duties—of sonship in their Father's kingly house. Jesus would be the gateway into a new world of existence. And, thus, even one who was but little in that Kingdom of Heaven, into which he had been brought and admitted by Jesus, would be greater and more blessed than the greatest under the old order or dispensation. It was a tremendous claim for Jesus to make—both for His message and for Himself.

I say 'for Himself'; because all our records make it clear that Jesus regarded Himself as inseparable from His doctrine. He acts as though He were conscious of knowing within Himself what others did not know and could not know. He declares that the realization of the truth which He taught can be won only in fellowship with Himself. Men must follow Him, and dwell with Him, if they would enter into that experience which God intends for them. It is, therefore, altogether appropriate that this account of the interview with the Disciples of John and of the pronouncement upon John, should be followed a few verses later by the great saying, recorded by two of the Synoptists, which seems to comprise all the claims which Jesus made for Himself—even those exalted and exclusive claims which Jesus is represented in the Fourth Gospel as putting forward:—*'All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him'*—(Matt. 11<sup>27</sup>, Luke 10<sup>22</sup>). There is no need to elaborate here what many commentators and theologians have said about this passage



which is of crucial and fundamental importance. Dr. Plummer, in his commentary on St. Luke, has expressed their views adequately and summarily: 'It is impossible upon any principle of criticism to question its genuineness, or its right to be regarded as among the earliest materials made use of by the Evangelists. And it contains the whole Christology of the Fourth Gospel. It is like "an aerolite from the Johannæan heaven"'. What I desire my readers to notice is that, here and expressly, we have Jesus claiming to possess a unique knowledge of God and to be in a relation of unique intimacy with Him. In other words, that extraordinary fellowship with God of which we have spoken before as the chief characteristic of Jesus, is now brought out by Him into the open; and He declares that only through Himself may we come into our own heritage of fellowship as the sons of God.

Now, the authority, felt in such claims as the foregoing, does not seem to have aroused dangerous criticism or active hostility until it was adjudged to trespass upon the divine prerogative. The Rich Young Ruler 'went away sorrowful,' 'Upon this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him'—such was the reaction of the individual and of the crowd to some of the demands of Jesus. Hearers were perplexed, or were annoyed, or were convinced that this Teacher was not for them, since He asked more than they were ready to give; but such persons would not have crucified Jesus—they merely ceased to follow Him. Hitherto we have been tracing out to its conclusion one line of thought in the Gospels, and, in so doing, have gone ahead of events; but now we must take up another thread and go back upon our steps. The accusation that Jesus was invading the province of God Himself and was assuming functions and authority which mere man might never possess was brought against Him at a very early stage in His ministry.



The story of the healing of the paralytic at Capernaum appears in all the Synoptists: it seems to mark the beginning of the conflict arising out of the claims made by Jesus for Himself. The charge of 'blasphemy' is first heard on this occasion. (Matt. 9<sup>1-8</sup>, Mark 2<sup>1-12</sup>, Luke 5<sup>17-26</sup>.)

Jesus was in a house teaching. The friends of the paralyzed man brought him to the place; but, since the crowd was blocking the door, they mounted the roof and found a way of lowering the invalid to the presence of Jesus. If we knew what type of eastern house it was, in which Jesus was then teaching, we should be able to tell more exactly what were the means used by the four bearers to put their friend before Jesus. Moved by the determination and faith of all of them, Jesus turned to the paralytic and said, 'Son, take heart. Thy sins have been forgiven.' He saw that the sick man's mind was haunted by a sense of guilt—probably his disability was the fruit of his sin; and, in the estimation of Jesus, to restore right relations with God was the first and chief good to be achieved. By that time—early though it was in the career of Jesus—His fame had gone far and wide; and, according to St. Luke, there were present that day Pharisees and lawyers or scribes not merely from all parts of Galilee but also from Judæa and from Jerusalem itself. The unusual word of Jesus at once caught their attention: they protested against it and challenged its rightness—'Why does He so speak? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins except one—God?'

The reply of Jesus was a vindication of His authority by His power. He turned to those who felt this doubt in their hearts—and felt it legitimately—and asked which of two words was the easier to say. One word was 'Thy sins have been forgiven thee,' and the other word was 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.' Obviously there was a sense in which it was much easier, or safer,



to speak the former word. The forgiveness of sins, if it occurs at all, occurs invisibly in the secret place of a man's heart: it is a change in a spiritual relation of which there is not any immediate and sensible proof. It would be easy for any religious impostor to go about among us to-day, pronouncing absolution from sin, and no one would be able to demonstrate forthwith that his words were of no effect. On the other hand, there was the possibility of putting at once to the test the valency of the command to walk: this second word admitted of immediate sensible proof or disproof. If the paralytic still lay upon his couch, unable to rise or to walk, it was evident that the speaker had used words without meaning, and was pretending to a power he did not possess. If, however, the sick man did rise up and took his bed and went forth, none could deny that the speaker had power and that His word was true. St. Luke, in his account, uses an uncommon phrase: probably it is borrowed unchanged from his Aramaic original—'The power of the Lord (Jehovah) was present for Him (Jesus) to heal.' We might render the argument of Jesus in this way—'You know by the evidence of your senses that an extraordinary power of God is present in Me to heal this man's body. God does not give His power to one of whom He does not approve. He who is approved by God does not falsely claim authority which He does not possess. Know, therefore, that along with the power in Me to heal the body, there is also authority to heal the soul by the forgiveness of sins.'

This story leaves us exactly where it left those who witnessed the miracle and heard the words of Jesus, wondering who He is that can forgive sins. For it is manifest that Jesus did not simply declare that the man had been forgiven by God, as any true prophet or servant of God, relying upon his knowledge of God's nature as revealed in many gracious Old Testament promises and



speaking in virtue of his commission as God's servant, might give the assurance to a sinful man that he was forgiven. So the Christian minister to-day may believe that he has been given the commandment of God 'to declare and pronounce unto His people being penitent the absolution and remission of their sins.' This does not appear to have been the way of Jesus on this occasion: if it had been, there would have been no outcry. Rather it was as if He pierced at once into the state of the man's soul and saw his guilt and misery and fear, and also at the same time beheld the countenance of His Heavenly Father and knew His mind towards the man. Jesus spoke to the paralytic as one who was in closest relation to God and could address men in God's name and on God's behalf. His voice was as the voice of God Himself. That was the impression He made on those who heard His words and saw His manner. He made a stupendous claim to authority—an authority which no believer in God ought to admit without the most searching inquiry and complete proof. Jesus recognized the legitimacy of the doubt, and He furnished the proof. Those who honestly considered what He said and did were brought a stage onward in the right appreciation of the personality of Jesus: but those who closed their minds to His fair argument and took refuge in what seemed to be a reverent and pious sentiment, saying 'He blasphemeth,' were carried on towards a deadly opposition.

There is an even earlier incident which will serve to illustrate further the connexion which Jesus made between *authority* and *power*, (Mark I <sup>21-28</sup>, Luke 4 <sup>31-37</sup>). It also occurred in Capernaum, but in the synagogue and not in a house. It was the Sabbath day, and Jesus was teaching after His wont. A man 'with an unclean spirit' was present in the congregation. We may note that he recognized in Jesus one who was in intimate relation with God. His cry was, 'What is there in common



between us and Thee? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.' His disordered intellect was sensitive to the impression which Jesus gave of being with God. It is the comment of the congregation upon Jesus' healing of this poor demented fellow which is so interesting. They exclaim, 'What is this—a new teaching with authority?'<sup>1</sup> He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they obey Him' (Mark 1<sup>27</sup>). St. Luke's account of the same incident is again particularly instructive. He introduces explicitly the idea of power, and joins power with authority in writing—'With *authority* and *power* He commandeth the unclean spirits and they come out' (Luke 4<sup>36</sup>). Authority is an invisible and impalpable investiture of a man's spirit; but power must manifest itself in sensible results. The authority of Jesus was attested by His power: His claim to know and speak the mind of His Heavenly Father was supported by His works. The contemporaries of Jesus might well have thought that the authority exhibited in the teaching of Jesus was a vain and empty pretence, if it had not been accompanied by such works of power. The servants of the Sanhedrin, according to the Fourth Gospel, were sent to arrest Jesus and returned empty-handed: their excuse to their masters was, 'Never man so spake' (John 7<sup>46</sup>). The crowd supplied the complementary phrase—'He hath done all things well: He maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak' (Mark 7<sup>37</sup>). Jesus was a man of deeds as well as of words: His speech was 'in the demonstration of power.'

It may be objected that I am here using the old and well-worn argument from miracles, and that this argument carries very little conviction to the modern mind. I did not intend to use it quite in the old way, but merely to suggest that if we had lived in the day of Jesus and had kept company with Him, we should have had to find some

<sup>1</sup> Adopting a different punctuation from that of the R. V.



explanation of the phenomenon of His power. The weight of the historical evidence proves that He did extraordinary things. As a matter of fact, the enemies of Jesus were compelled to account for His power. They could not deny its existence: they attempted to change its significance. At a later stage, when the Pharisees were far gone in opposition, they were ready to attribute the power of Jesus over disordered minds—His casting out of devils—not to an alliance with God, the author of all sanity, but to an alliance with Satan. They were reduced to affirming that He was not in fellowship with God, but was in league with the Devil—'This man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.'

This slander, uttered on more than one occasion, and the reply of Jesus appear in all the Synoptists (Matt. 12<sup>24-37</sup>, Mark 3<sup>22-30</sup>, Luke 11<sup>14-26</sup>). He uses a simple and easily comprehended rebuttal—'My business.' He says in effect, 'is to destroy the works of the Devil. If the Prince of Evil employs me, he is undoing his own handiwork. He is making a division in his own kingdom, and no king will so act against his own interests. Moreover, the works which I do are in their nature good. I make health of body and of mind. Good works cannot come from an evil source, any more than wholesome fruit from a poisonous tree. It must be, therefore, that the origin of these my works is in God.' And then Jesus carried the thought a stage farther. He suggested that if God were indeed the author of what He did, then it was evident that a new manifestation of God's kingship was actually taking place—'If I by the finger of God, cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you' (Luke 11<sup>20</sup>).

Jesus concluded by warning His critics and opponents that they could not come to a right conclusion about Himself and His work, if their disposition was wrong—'How can you, being evil, speak good things?' (Matt. 12<sup>34</sup>). This was one particular instance of the truth that



' Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.' Unless there be within the will to truth, no man can arrive at the truth. When the adversaries of Jesus, against all the evidence, against the promptings of reason and conscience, ascribed to the Devil what could only have been the work of God, and professed to discover in Jesus a diabolic influence when they might have recognized the Spirit of God, they were coming near to the ' eternal sin '—that state of heart in which the very capacity to distinguish good and evil seems to be lost.

There is no discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine on this point. The Fourth Evangelist represents the Jews as saying of Jesus—' He hath a devil ' (John 7<sup>20</sup>, 8<sup>48</sup>, 10<sup>20</sup>); while Jesus, on the other hand, appeals to His works as evidence of His fellowship with the Father—' The works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me ' (John 5<sup>36</sup>). It was this claim of Jesus to be working under the divine direction and with the divine approval which inflamed the enmity of the Jerusalem party. When He said, ' My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' ' they sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God ' (John 5<sup>18</sup>). During the Feast of the Dedication towards the end, Jesus put the question, ' Many good works, have I showed you from the Father. For which of those works do ye stone Me?' They answered Him ' For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God ' (John 10<sup>32, 33</sup>). The works of Jesus, then, suggested a mysterious closeness of relation to God; and in His words He appealed to their evidence and laid claim to that intimacy. The connexion between *power* and *authority* is expressed in this manner by the Fourth Evangelist.



Jesus' employment of the argument from His works is free from the taint of miracle-mongering which can be found even in Christian apologists. Jesus is represented in the Gospels as using reverently whatever superhuman power He possessed. He 'lifted up His eyes unto heaven,' and communed with His Father before every exercise of it, as in subjection to and fellowship with the only-wise and only-good God. He never employed it hastily and for mere ostentation, but always to confer benefit on men—as a rule to heal or to comfort or to instruct them. He did not call in this power to extricate Himself from difficulty, in isolation from His Father's will. He Himself strictly limited the evidential value of miracles: we owe to Him the saying: 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead' (Luke 16<sup>31</sup>). He always refused a 'sign' to those who came with idle curiosity, desirous of seeing a spectacle, or in dishonesty, disregarding evidence already available for them. The one argumentative use He makes of His works is to insist that, in their nature and effects, they are good, and that, therefore, God must be their ultimate author; and from this conclusion He would have men learn that He Himself, as the agent of these works, must first have been approved by God and be in union with Him. Jesus was less like a miracle-monger than any of us.

This view of Jesus about miracles is exhibited consistently in the Gospels from the Temptation to the Cross. It stands immensely above earlier and contemporary thought—and also above the thought of the succeeding ages. Contrast it with the silliness and immorality of the miracles of the Apocryphal Gospels and of the mediaeval and modern Church. That such a view should be put forward in the time of Jesus is itself a true 'wonder.' We cannot imagine that the Evangelists were capable of inventing it: its only explanation is the mind of Jesus.

Thus, and as the sum of the whole matter, we come



back to the position from which we started out—that, in the controversies of life—and most of all in our religious debates and researches—the results turn upon the disposition of a man. The 'honest and good heart' has always been needed that a man may decide rightly upon the claim which Jesus makes for Himself.

We shall be led inevitably to ask whether Jesus made any attempt to define with greater exactness the relation existing between God and Himself. Did He fit it into any of the conceptions prevalent in His time, and use any of the current terms to describe who He was and how He stood towards God? All recognize that the age of Jesus was an age of expectancy. The Jews cherished ardently the Messianic hope, and were looking for the coming of a prince who would take away the shame and reproach of their political subjection, and restore the kingdom to Israel. For our purposes we need mention here only two elements in the idea of the Messiah—first his royalty and next his divine sonship. The expected Messiah was to be a king, and of the royal line of David. He was also to be Jehovah's son, the Son of God—not in the later theological or metaphysical sense of Christian speculation, but only in the sense that he would be specially near and dear to God and invested by God with unusual dignity and power: the particular favour of Jehovah would rest upon him, and his honour would be as that of an only son in the household of God. The sonship of the Messiah, therefore, connotes a special intimacy of relation to God. Both elements of the Messianic idea lie upon the surface in the two great Messianic psalms. (Pss. 2 & 89). Take for example such verses as:

'He shall say unto me, Thou art my Father,  
My God and the Rock of my Salvation.  
I also will make him my First-born,  
The highest of the kings of the earth.'

(Ps. 89 <sup>26</sup>. <sup>27</sup>).



Now, what notice did Jesus take of the national hope? Did He in any way connect Himself with that conception of the Coming One which was derived from the Scriptures? Did He or did He not claim to be the Messiah or Christ? To me it is incredible that any man could have gone about Palestine in the age of Jesus and spoken as Jesus did, or wrought a tithe of His wonderful works, without attracting to himself, wherever he went, the Messianic expectation. Whatever views we may hold of the historicity of the Fourth Gospel in general, the author's representation of the attitude of the people towards Jesus should seem to us absolutely to accord with the probability and with fact: it is true to the mentality of the nation and the circumstances of the age. In Jerusalem, as in Galilee, all men who heard of the fame of Jesus and saw and heard for themselves the manner of His speech and felt the power of His personality, must have asked within themselves and of one another, 'Is this the Christ or not?' 'Some of them in Jerusalem said, Is not this He, whom they seek to kill? And lo! He speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto Him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?' (John 7<sup>25, 26</sup>). 'But of the multitude many believed on Him, and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?' (John 7<sup>31</sup>). And again—'Some of the multitude, therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ' (John 7<sup>40, 41</sup>). Further, the Fourth Evangelist tells us that at the Feast of the Dedication, in the last winter, when Jesus was pacing to and fro in Solomon's Porch the people came round about Him, and said unto Him, 'How long dost Thou hold us in suspense? If Thou art the Christ, tell us plainly' (John 10<sup>24</sup>). I know of no reason why any should question the historicity of such records as these. At that time it could not fail to happen



that men should wonder whether one, who had the extraordinary freshness and force of Jesus and exercised His strong influence on the bodies and minds of men, were indeed the Christ. Nor, for my part, do I reject the evidence that Jesus claimed to be the Christ—not the Christ of popular expectation, but the Christ of God and the Scriptures. He interpreted His intimacy with the Father in the terms of the Messianic Sonship. That was one way of describing His relation to God, which He accepted and used. I do not say that it was the final and complete explanation; but it was one which Jesus ultimately employed for His day and for His generation.

The Confession of Peter, recorded in St. Matthew (Matt. 16<sup>13-20</sup>, Cp. Mark 8<sup>27-30</sup>, Luke 9<sup>18-21</sup>, John 6<sup>68-69</sup>) is the historical watershed of the Gospel: indeed we might say that this incident is the watershed of the three Synoptic Gospels. All that goes before it is a sort of ascent of faith to the recognition of Jesus by His disciples: all that follows after is a kind of descent into the valley of His humiliation and death. For this confession Jesus seems to have taught and worked; for it He has kept the disciples companying with Himself; for it He has waited and prayed. And now, when it arrives, a burst of thanksgiving and benediction comes from His lips—'Blessed art thou Simon, Son of Jonah: for this is no revelation from a human source. It has come to thee from God Himself—My Heavenly Father.' It was as if, after sedulous cultivation in the seed-bed of His disciples, Jesus saw a new and rare plant of faith and understanding thrusting itself up through the soil and coming into leaf. That day a soul had entered the Kingdom of God, for it had recognized the King upon earth. This knowledge of Peter would propagate itself among men. He would not be like those Pharisees who did not themselves enter the Kingdom of God and hindered those who would come in; nor like those lawyers who had taken away the key of



knowledge and left men groping outside in the darkness of ignorance. Peter was to be the first of a new order of religious experience, and would become the means through which many another would be admitted into it. He was the foundation-stone of the structure of a new society of the confessors of Jesus—a society which should continue to spread and should last, as long as the world endures.

Immediately upon this mood of thanksgiving and exultation and upon this prophecy of the growth of the Church and Kingdom, there ensues Jesus' anticipation and foretelling of His death. He accepts the attribution to Himself of the Messiahship; but He proceeds at once to give to it a new interpretation. He was the Christ, but not such a Christ as Peter and the rest imagined. He would be a suffering Christ, coming to His glory and His throne through His passion and death. He forbade His disciples to make Him known as the Christ, for that would only lead to misapprehension; and He stiffened His face to go up to Jerusalem. From that point onwards all the way led to the death of the Cross of which Jesus spoke with increasing emphasis until it was accomplished. In this sense, Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ is the watershed of the Synoptic Gospels.

There appears to have been only one occasion on which Jesus fell in with the wishes of many of the people, and gave the public to understand that He was the Messiah. It was when He made His entry into Jerusalem at the end. Even so, His manner of doing it was as much as to say, 'I am a king, but my kingdom is not of this world.' His vehicle (*vāhana*) was an ass, His heralds were children, and His conquering host was the little band of His disciples. 'Zion, behold thy king cometh unto thee *meek*.'

The confession of the disciple was consummated by the confession of the Master Himself. We are left in some doubt as to what actually occurred and as to the order of events at the trial of Jesus. St. Matthew and St. Mark



describe an important examination which took place in the house of the High Priest, Caiaphas, during the night and before dawn. According to their account, after a failure to obtain satisfactory evidence, Caiaphas himself became the examiner-in-chief, and put the question to Jesus—'Art Thou the Christ, the Son of God?'<sup>1</sup> The reply of Jesus was in the words of the Messianic passages of the second Psalm and the seventh chapter of the Book of Daniel—'I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming upon the clouds of heaven.' Thus, in what—to human seeming—was the extreme of dishonour, helplessness and defeat, Jesus affirmed His Sonship and His Kingship. When affirmation could do no harm to any man by misleading him, and silence would have been untruth to Himself, Jesus witnessed His good confession. The High Priest we are told, rent his clothes, and exclaimed—'We have heard blasphemy.'

St. Luke says nothing about the examination at night in the High Priest's house, but gives a summary report of a trial of Jesus at dawn before the full assembly of the Sanhedrin. The charge is, as above, save that the High Priest does not appear in it; and the reply of Jesus is similar. The Fourth Evangelist has no account of what took place before Caiaphas during the night or in the Sanhedrin at dawn; but we can infer from his detailed report of the proceedings before Pilate what had been the nature of the charge against Jesus before the High Priest and in the Sanhedrin. He writes that the Chief Priests in their anxiety to secure the condemnation of Jesus were driven to say—'We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God' (John 19<sup>7</sup>). This is an example of the way in which—without design—one Gospel may give corroboration to another.

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark, 'The Son of the Blessed' 14<sup>61</sup>.



It is not impossible to reconcile the accounts of the trial in the four Gospels and to fit them as parts into a consistent whole. Probably there was a preliminary examination during the night in the High Priest's house, where the testimony of Jesus against Himself was elicited and the form of the charge was decided upon. The formal accusation and condemnation took place in the Sanhedrin, regularly summoned and assembled at dawn. There also a conference was held, in which it was decided what should be the line of proceeding in the Roman court before Pilate. I am not concerned to deny the possibility of error or confusion in these historical records, nor do I care to invent harmonistic expedients. One fact seems to stand out clear from all the records—the charge against Jesus was that of claiming to be the Christ. Indeed what other charge conceivably could have been brought? This charge is a complete explanation of the proceedings, because it contains two counts. One served for the Sanhedrin, and the other for Pilate.

The Sanhedrin required to be satisfied that Jesus had transgressed before they would condemn Him. They were a religious assembly and religious men do all things in the name of religion. They borrow its cloak even when they do wrong. The intimate relation in which the Christ stood to God, or the Messiah to Jehovah, made any claim to be the Messiah border upon the blasphemous. Religious leaders who had made up their minds that Jesus was an impostor—'that deceiver'<sup>1</sup>—and a menace to their most venerated institutions, must have felt that, in claiming to be the Christ, He was guilty of sacrilegious falsehood and presumption. The Messiah was not the Lord God; but He was the Lord's Son. He was the beloved of Jehovah and His vice-regent on earth. For a pretender to lay claim to so high office and to such nearness to God was blasphemy. In declaring Himself the Christ, Jesus was in

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 27 "



effect claiming the authority and approval of God for all His condemnation of Tradition and the Temple—and that the opponents of Jesus among the Pharisees and Scribes and the Chief Priests could never for one moment tolerate. In their judgement He had proved Himself guilty of blasphemy.<sup>1</sup>

But, inasmuch as the Messiah was also King, it was easy to base upon the confession of Jesus a charge of sedition against the Imperial rule, of intending to raise the standard of revolt against Cæsar. All our sources are agreed in representing that this, in substance, was the charge before Pilate. Jesus was accused as one who was attempting 'to pervert the nation, saying that He Himself was Christ, a King.' 'And the superscription of His accusation was written over His cross, The King of the Jews.'

We ought not to assume that all the members of the Sanhedrin who condemned Jesus on the ground of blasphemy and judged Him worthy of death were guilty of a conscious hypocrisy. Probably many in that assembly acted according to their conscience and did what they believed to be lawful and right. Men, however, are the makers of their consciences; and some of those Elders had a conscience that was darkened and blind, because they had turned away from the light when it shone upon them, and they had refused to follow the earlier promptings of truth.

We may believe, however, that in the Sanhedrin there were others to whom the opportunity of forming a right judgement about Jesus had not as yet been given. They

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Montefiore writes: 'In the age of Jesus the purely human character of the Messiah was not insisted on by Jewish teachers as it became insisted on after the development of Christianity. Room was given for wide speculation and fancies as to his nature and pre-existence; he stood in a special relation to God and was in a pre-eminent sense His son. . . . If it was no blasphemy for the real Messiah . . . to speak of himself as the Son of God in the Jewish and contemporary sense, it might conceivably be regarded as blasphemy for a man to claim to be that Son, when he was not.'—*The Synoptic Gospels*, Vol. i, pp. 351-2.



had not seen enough of Him to know Him as He was. There was the utmost need for caution in dealing with a man who made a great and high claim: for the course of religion is strewn with impostures and religious genius is close allied to madness. The religion of his fathers had imbued the mind of the pious Jew with the fear of God. It had invested the person of God with glorious and dreadful attributes, with transcendent and incommunicable dignity and power. That Jesus should profess to stand so near to God as the Messiah would appear to some honest men, nurtured in Judaism, a terrible sacrilege. Those who thought in this way believed that in condemning Jesus they were defending the honour of God and the most blessed hope of their religion: they imagined that in killing Jesus they were doing God service. Christians can remember one who a few years later 'beyond measure persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it'; who, though a 'blasphemer of Jesus and injurious, yet obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly and in unbelief' (Gal. 1<sup>13</sup>, 1 Tim. 1<sup>13</sup>). Surely Jesus Himself had some of His judges in mind, when He prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'

Before we conclude this section in the offence given by Jesus through the claims which He made for Himself, we ought to recall the occasion when Jesus was directly challenged as to His authority, and was asked to indicate its source. This story, which is found in all the Synoptics, is of the utmost importance in the framing of any estimate of the responsibility and blameworthiness of the chief opponents of Jesus, who repudiated His claims and finally compassed His death (Matt. 21<sup>23-27</sup>, Mark 11<sup>27-33</sup>, Luke 20<sup>1-8</sup>). On one of the days of the last week—'the day of questions'—some members of the Sanhedrin came to Jesus, and asked Him—'By what kind of authority doest Thou these things; or who is he that gave Thee this authority?' The reply of Jesus was to put to them



another question. There was no evasion of the issue by Him, and no attempt at a dialectical victory; because the answer to the question of the Elders and Chief Priests was implicit in the answer to the question of Jesus. If only they had honestly faced the inquiry of Jesus and carried it through to its conclusion, they would have known by what kind of authority and by whose endowment and appointment Jesus spoke and acted as He did.—‘The baptism of John—was it from heaven, or from men? Answer me.’ The very form of the question indicated that there were two principal sources of all authority, religious and other: they were the divine and the human. The leaders of Judaism had come to think even of religious authority as mainly emanating from and being mediated by men. The teacher derived his authority from his Rabbi and his school: the priest from his fathers and the hierarchy. Perhaps Gould is not too severe when he writes: ‘The idea of a divine authority, communicated directly to the man by inward suggestion, and showing its warrant simply in his personal quality, was outside the narrow range of men who recognized only external authority.’<sup>1</sup>

Jesus confronted His critics with the case of one who had recently received the prophetic office. For more than three centuries, there had been no open vision of Jehovah, and no voice of His, speaking directly to the soul of a man; but a little while ago, in that generation, the word of the Lord had come to John in the wilderness. That was the general belief of the Jews of Palestine, and the effect had been immense. ‘Take this case’, said Jesus, ‘By what kind of authority did John preach and baptize, and who was he that gave him that authority?’

The members of the Sanhedrin would not say, ‘John’s authority was earth-born: and, even as such, it was not conferred by us; it sprang from his own presumptuous

<sup>1</sup> *International Critical Commentary—St. Mark*, p. 218.



and deluded heart.' They dared not say this, because they knew that the people held John to have been a true prophet. St. Luke says they would have been ready to stone any one who impugned the divine call and commission of John. The members of the Sanhedrin would not say, 'John had that kind of authority which comes from heaven. It was God who gave it to him'; for this might have suggested that the same kind of authority was in Jesus—nay, it would have led inevitably to the conclusion that such authority actually was in Jesus, since John had borne testimony to Him. So they answered—'We do not know.' There is a confession of ignorance which does honour to a man: it is a token of his humility and of his sincerity. This 'We do not know' was both cowardly and disingenuous. Gould adds to his former comment: 'It is as if Jesus had asked, how do you judge of such things? If divine authority is communicated externally and through regular channels in your judgment, I have no such credentials. But if it comes inwardly, and is attested by its fruits in your opinion, then *you are in a condition to judge fairly of my authority.*' We can imagine the silence which fell upon that group after the impotent and embarrassed reply of the Elders. At length it was broken by the word of Jesus—'Neither do I say to you by what kind of authority I do these things.' It was His sentence pronounced upon dishonesty of intellect, and His dismissal of the dishonest. They might have known, if only they had been willing to know. We are reminded of this scene by words spoken a day or two later by Jesus, when He stood before the whole Sanhedrin. They are recorded by St. Luke alone—'If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I ask, ye will not answer' (Luke 22<sup>67, 68</sup>). Where was the 'honest and good heart?'

Finally, let us recognize that the claims made by Jesus for Himself lead to the central truths of the Christian religion which gather around His personality. It is a



trite but true saying that Christianity is Jesus Christ: it is not one of His words, nor all of them put together; it is Himself. Genuine Christianity is 'the truth as it is in Jesus': it is the meaning of a person. Jesus Himself suggested that there was in the Christ a mystery of being deeper than men commonly recognized or allowed. He, of His own accord, put a question on the great 'day of questions,' and it gave a glimpse of His own thought and inward reflection. He was teaching in the Temple, and the group of listeners probably still included some of the Scribes, who had been present at other conversations and discourses. Jesus took up the popular notion that the Messiah would be the Son of David—that is to say, a mere man, although of the royal blood. He then referred His hearers to one of the well-known Messianic Psalms—the one hundred and tenth. He reminded them that they believed that the Psalm had been composed by David under divine inspiration, and that in it the author spoke of the Messiah. 'If that be so,' continued Jesus, 'how does David use the words, The Lord (Jehovah) said unto my Lord (the Messiah), sit thou on my right hand? David here calls the Messiah his Lord. How then can he be merely a son of David?' In an interpretation of Scripture, generally accepted in His age, Jesus found an intimation of a greater than human dignity in the Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The consciousness of Jesus is, for the world of religious people, a subject of surpassing and supreme interest and importance. We feel that in Him, as in no one else, the

<sup>1</sup> We may freely admit that in the matter of the authorship of this Psalm, we are not absolved to-day from the obligation to make an historical inquiry and to come to a decision upon the evidence. I adhere to the view that in matters, belonging properly to the field of scientific investigation and in themselves morally and spiritually neutral, the knowledge of Jesus in His manhood was the knowledge of His age. To borrow the words of Bishop Gore I accept 'the position that He, the very God, habitually spoke in His incarnate life on earth, under the limitations of a properly human consciousness.' The view of modern Hebrew scholarship is that this Psalm was not written by David of the Messiah, but by some priestly bard of his royal master—a prince of Judah, though later generations have found in it a Messianic significance beyond the thought of its writer.



mystery of Being is wrapped up. If we can discern truly what He is, we shall know what God is and what man is. The relation between Jesus and the Godhead does not show itself as a relation of complete distinctness and subordination. That intimacy of His with God, which has confronted us in so many forms and at every turn in His history, demands to be interpreted. We may most fittingly bring this section to a close by a brief reference to the doctrine of the personality of Jesus which is contained in the Fourth Gospel. The author makes no secret of his doctrinal aim. He tells us that he has made use of only a few of the facts, and gives us his reason for the selection of such facts as he has employed—'These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye may have life in His name.' *Christ, the Son of God*—that is precisely the view of Jesus in which the history of the Synoptic Gospels culminates. The early chapters of the Acts will show that it was also the original doctrine of the Primitive Church: it was the earliest message of the Apostles to Jews and Gentiles alike. The distinction of the Fourth Gospel is that it interprets and fills out the idea of Christhood and Sonship.

It would not be an unfair summary of the Fourth Gospel to say that, according to it, and in agreement with the Synoptics, Jesus made no public proclamation of Himself as the Christ before His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He accepted in private the earlier confessions which came from Andrew and Nathaniel, the woman of Samaria and Martha; but these were fugitive, uninformed and imperfect. Jesus practised a great reserve about His Christhood, and withdrew from the attempt to make Him king. He did, however, particularly in Jerusalem, hold discourse with the crowd, with His adversaries, and at the last with His disciples, about Himself and the relation existing between Himself and His Father.



The Fourth Evangelist devotes his book mainly to this subject, and of necessity renders the discourses of Jesus in his peculiar idiom. He mingles his own commentary with the words of Jesus. He does not, therefore, altogether escape from the charge of monotony, and of giving to Jesus the appearance of excessive self-absorption and self-assertion. It seems to me that this writer is struggling with a burden of thought almost greater than his language can bear. He has a limited vocabulary and employs none but the simplest grammatical forms. He does not wield the Greek language with all the wealth of words and variety of phrase and construction of a classical author. He can only reach his point at times by reiteration—a reiteration that may become irksome to his reader. It is a condition which is familiar to many an Indian missionary, who strives to set out his doctrine in a vernacular of which he has an imperfect command—a few words used many times, and the simplest form of sentence. But what profundity underlies the simplicity of the Fourth Gospel and its cognate Epistles! 'God is Love' is the most tremendous affirmation ever attempted. It is either the highest truth, or the most presumptuous falsehood.

The Jesus, portrayed by this Evangelist, speaks of Himself as the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Door of the Sheep, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way and the Truth and the Life, and the True Vine. These are great words of self-assertion. This same Jesus also enunciates the fundamentals of humility and self-sacrifice—'If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true' (John 5<sup>31</sup>). 'The things, therefore, which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak' (John 12<sup>50</sup>). 'How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God, ye seek not?' (John 5<sup>44</sup>). 'Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15<sup>13</sup>). The real *differentia* of the Fourth



Gospel, marking it out from the others, is that it attempts an interpretation of the inner consciousness of Jesus. It takes that intimacy, which is implied in the titles—'*the Christ, the Son of God*'—and gives to it the deepest significance. The writer brings to the exposition of the mind of Jesus the language of Oriental mysticism and Greek philosophy. He shows the Christ as the Word of God in eternity as well as in time, for the whole world and not merely for the Jewish nation. It was the Fourth Evangelist who gave a universal interpretation and an eternal significance to the unique consciousness of Jesus of God and Himself—to that communion with the Father which all the Gospels exhibit.<sup>1</sup> The Christ is more than an earthly prince, fulfilling a national hope by achieving a territorial dominion, with the temporal favour of God upon Him. He is One who was with God before the foundation of the world, and through all the acts of creation, in the union of all ageless love.

Now Jesus is the message of the Christian Church to India as to every other land. The fact that there is in the Christian religion this mystery of personality will appeal to the genius of Hindu thought as soon as it is perceived. Theism has become a barren creed. The Theism of the Jews, and the Theism of Islam, which is derivative, have exhausted their message for our world. The inexhaustible suggestiveness of the religion of Jesus consists in this, that personality dwells at the heart of it. Who and what am I? and who and what is God? What constitutes the worth of personality? These are questions of eternal interest and concern. Individual soul (*Jīvātma*) and Supreme soul or Over-soul (*Paramātma*)—who are they, and what is the relation between them? A doctrine which makes God a merely transcendental

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is only a paraphrase of what Dr. Howard wrote: 'It was the Fourth Evangelist who set the teaching of Jesus free from the Jewish time-perspective, in which the earliest Christians naturally preserved it.'—*The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*. p. 244.



Being—the Creator of man and wholly separate from him—and man, a finite and subordinate creature, utterly distinct from God, cannot be final: it is not the whole truth and it does not satisfy. 'I and the Father are one,' 'That they may be one as We are one'—what is the meaning of these phrases?<sup>1</sup> They recognize the mystery of our being, of the relation of us men to God; and they contain a profound suggestion of a fellowship and unity of which we have but dimly conceived, which we can express still less perfectly.

<sup>1</sup> It is significant that in the Fourth Gospel we have the reference of Jesus to Psalm 82—"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, ye are Gods?'" If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am (essentially) Son of God.' On which Westcott remarks, 'There lay already in the Law the germ of the truth which Christ announced, the union of God and man.' Note that it is 'union', and not identity.



## CHAPTER V

### THE OFFENCE: REVOLUTION

*'We have heard him say that this Jesus shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us.'*—THE ACTS vi. 14.

We reach now—and finally—the third kind of offence which was given by Jesus—the *threat to vested interests which manifested itself in His doctrine and personality*. He was regarded by some eminent persons among the Jews as a dangerous revolutionary, who—if He were not checked and removed—would overthrow established government and would destroy institutions on which they depended for wealth and social rank, for office and authority. The opposition of these was nakedly, or with little disguise, based upon self-interest.

In the last months of the ministry of Jesus a new party comes into prominence. They are called in all the Gospels 'the Chief Priests,' by which we are to understand the High Priest and his relatives and priestly supporters. Although the office of High Priest, in ideal, was purely ecclesiastical or religious, in practice considerable political influence attached to it. The appointment of a High Priest was subject to the approval and confirmation of the Imperial power, which also might remove him from office at its pleasure. Under such conditions it could not fail to happen that the High Priest and his following would belong to the Romanizing or Hellenizing party among the Jews: in doctrine and manner of



life they were Sadducees and not Pharisees. The Chief Priests were the official hierarchy of the Jews of Palestine, and, with the tributary princes and their court party—the Herodians, they formed the social aristocracy of the nation.

The death of Jesus is shown in the Gospels to have been brought about by an agreement between all the most influential parties of the Jews: it was effected by a conspiracy of Pharisees and Sadducees. Divided and bitterly opposed as these were in matters of faith, doctrine and life, they were united in their hatred and fear of Jesus; and they combined to destroy Him. The attempt has been made to exculpate the Pharisees and to place upon the Chief Priests the sole responsibility for the Crucifixion. The evidence does not admit of this. There is abundant proof, as we have seen, that throughout the ministry, from its early days, the Pharisees were in intense opposition to Jesus. Long before He reached Jerusalem for the last Passover, they had murder in their hearts. They would have been glad in Galilee to have removed Him by death. During the last stage in Judæa, they joined with the Chief Priests in an effort to seize Jesus (John 7<sup>32-45</sup>); they took part in the conferences which determined ultimately upon His arrest and execution; they were represented strongly in the Sanhedrin which condemned Jesus to death and committed Him to Pilate; and they were among those who mocked Him upon the Cross and gave the lie to the story of His Resurrection. The effort of our day to minimize or wholly to deny the complicity of the Pharisees in the death of Jesus would never be made, if we only realized the temper and spirit of the age of Jesus. It was an age in which men believed without a qualm in the lawfulness and rightness of putting the heretic to death. Orthodoxy did not shrink from killing the man who appeared to be teaching falsehood—to be transgressing sacred law and tradition and encourag-



ing others to do the same. How long is it, since in Christendom such ideas ceased to prevail? They are not yet extinct among communities of Christian profession. Bowels of mercy come late to Orthodoxy.

There were many ways in which Jesus might have been removed. It was possible, for example, to stir up a crowd, and to have Jesus slain in a sudden outburst of mob violence. The general popularity of Jesus, however, was a hindrance to this mode of killing. Another means would have been to employ one of the party of the fanatics and national extremists (the Zealots) and to have had Jesus assassinated. Neither of these methods was adopted. Indeed, we may perhaps allow, that the Pharisees, as the more unworldly and less practical party, were driven almost to despair, and saw no way of achieving their end. According to the Fourth Evangelist, as they witnessed the extraordinary popularity of Jesus, even at the end and in Jerusalem, 'they said among themselves, Behold, how ye prevail nothing: lo, the world is gone after Him' (John 12 <sup>19</sup>). It was left to the ecclesiastical leaders and Jewish officialdom to find the means and to show the way, the Pharisees concurring and co-operating. As Bishop Westcott has pointed out, in his comment on John 11 <sup>47</sup>—'The Chief Priests—the hierarchical Sadducæan party—take the lead.' We cannot put the case for the Pharisees more favourably and strongly, than this—that the Chief Priests took the lead, and the Pharisees followed and supported.<sup>1</sup>

If the method chosen for getting rid of Jesus was that He should be 'delivered up to the Gentiles' (Matt. 20 <sup>19</sup>, Mark 10 <sup>33</sup>, Luke 18 <sup>32</sup>), or in other words brought before the Roman Governor, accused, and made subject to a capital sentence, then there was only one party among the Jews which could initiate and carry through a legal pro-

<sup>1</sup> The combination of Chief Priest and Pharisee appears again in the Primitive Church of the Apostolic age. Saul of Tarsus was the Pharisee persecutor, and he obtained his commission from the High Priest—(Acts. 9<sup>1</sup>).



cedure of this sort. The High Priest was the chief executive officer of the people, and the President of their National Council. He had control of the Temple police, and access to the Roman Governor. Leadership, in the course agreed upon, belonged to the Chief Priests, and to the High Priest in particular: effective action could not be taken by any one other than the officials.

What, then was the nature of the offence which Jesus gave to the Chief Priests? There is one story in each of the Gospels which brings into vivid contrast the ideal of Jesus for the Temple and the actual practice of its guardians and officiants (Matt. 21<sup>12-17</sup>, Mark 11<sup>15-19</sup>, John 2<sup>13-17</sup>). The Fourth Evangelist records an incident of the cleansing of the Temple by Jesus at the beginning of His ministry during a visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at His first Passover. The Synoptists describe a similar incident which all of them place in the last fateful week of Jesus' human career before His last Passover; but they are not agreed about the exact time when it occurred. St. Matthew attaches it to the day of triumphal entry, St. Mark to the morning of the next day, and St. Luke's account is indeterminate. Students have to consider whether they are dealing here with seriously discrepant reports of the same incident, or with two distinct incidents and slightly varied reports of the second. It seems to me possible that the cleansing of the Temple was repeated by Jesus; and that there would be necessity for Him to renew an action for the remedy of an abuse against which a single protest would be quite inadequate. The difference between the words spoken by Jesus on the first occasion and the stronger rebuke of the second occasion are noteworthy. But, whatever be our opinion on these questions, it appears to be certain that, at some time or other, on one or more occasions, Jesus did make a public and drastic protest against the scandal of the Temple administration and worship.

It has been said by Christian scholars that Jesus does



not appear to have been greatly attached to the Temple ritual. Its daily services and sacrifices make very little showing in His teaching and illustrations; and He seems to belong more to its outer courts than to its inmost shrine.<sup>1</sup> We cannot cite the English translation of Luke 2<sup>49</sup> as decisive proof that the House of Jehovah on Zion's hill had captured the imagination of the boy Jesus, and that in going up to Jerusalem for the first time His heart's desire had been to see the House of God and to dwell within it. Every one, I think, knows that the original reads literally—'I must be in the things of My Father,' as much as to say 'Everything about God My Father interests Me. I must learn all I can of Him.' But, even so, adopting the alternative English translation, 'I must be about My Father's business,' it would seem that the boy Jesus regarded the Temple as the place of all places where His Father might be found and where His business was done. In later years Jesus resorted to Solomon's Porch and the Court of the Gentiles for teaching and for conversation with the people; but what He saw of the Temple management filled Him with grief and indignation. People were using the Temple court as a short cut from one part of the city to another, carrying their bundles and bales with them. Stalls of oxen and sheep for sacrifice stood within the sacred precincts; and money-changers, giving small change to pilgrims or taking their foreign coins and exchanging them into Palestinian shekels for the Temple tribute, were carrying on their business and adding to the turmoil. There was, however, more than noise and confusion to give offence to a sensitive and reverent spirit.

Jesus saw beneath that traffic greed and fraud—the service of Mammon in the House of God; and His soul

<sup>1</sup> There was a general resemblance between the ground plan of the Temple at Jerusalem and that of many great Hindu temples. It consisted of outer and inner courts with the House of God in the inmost enclosure, corresponding to the *prākāras* and *devasthāna* of a Hindu temple.



flamed out in a protest which was irresistible at the moment. The story of the Cleansing of the Temple is a supreme illustration of what one determined mind, wholly made up, can accomplish on an undetermined multitude. The Court of the Gentiles was to Jesus a reminder of the vision of a prophet of the Restoration—'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples' (Isa. 56<sup>7</sup>). That was the ideal; but the reality brought back to memory Jeremiah's day and his denunciation of his contemporaries, the priests of the Temple—'Ye have made it a den of thieves' (Jer. 7<sup>11</sup>). It is not likely that Jesus used the words of that great prophet without explanation or comment. In all probability He drew an historical parallel between the generation of Jeremiah and His own generation. Then, in the olden times, the nation was boasting of its security, because it had the Temple of the Lord in its midst; and Jeremiah had warned them that the House of God should not save them from destruction, but that, like the former house of Shiloh, the glorious building of Solomon itself should perish. 'And likewise,' Jesus declared or implied, 'this Temple, greater even than Solomon's, unfinished after forty and six years of building, shall be destroyed by your folly and your sin.' If Jesus did not draw out the analogy, there were priests and scribes present who were well able so to do.

Jesus' cleansing of the Temple was an interference with a priestly monopoly: much of the profit from the sale of sacrificial animals and birds and from the money-changing went into the coffers of the High Priest. He drew from this commerce a large revenue; and his income was imperilled by the action of Jesus. The motive which animated Annas, the ex-High Priest, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, High Priest in the year of Jesus' death, was as consciously mercenary as that which inflamed the shrine-makers of Ephesus against St. Paul: 'Sirs, ye know that by this business, we have our wealth. . . .



There is danger that this our trade come into disrepute.' It is highly significant that immediately upon the citation of the passage from Jeremiah, St. Mark writes—'And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and sought how they might destroy Him' (Mark 11<sup>18</sup>, Luke 19<sup>47</sup>). Hard too upon the cleansing of the Temple, comes the challenge of the Chief Priests—'By what kind of authority doest thou such things as these?' The action of Jesus was resented as impertinent and full of menace to vested interests.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, other and convincing evidence that Jesus foretold the destruction of the Temple. He, who was accused of being the destroyer of the Temple, might have been its Saviour, if His countrymen had believed in Him. It is rather idle and presumptuous to speculate about what might have happened if the Jewish nation had listened to and obeyed Jesus. Yet many would say with assurance that by the acceptance of Jesus the Jews would have escaped the religious fanaticism and political madness which forty years later destroyed them as a separate nation and laid the Temple in ruins. If they had only

<sup>1</sup> Abrahams in his *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, pp. 82-89, discusses the incident of the Cleansing of the Temple in an instructive manner. He argues that, if sacrifice and payment of Temple tribute were necessary and right, then it would be a convenience to many pilgrims that animals and doves and Tyrian shekels should be available in the Temple enclosure. He urges, therefore, that in principle this trading was legitimate; but he adds, 'There is evidence enough that certain rapacious priestly families were detested by the people (witness the case of the House of Hanan). There might well have been occasions on which indignation such as that of Jesus would be justified.' I think, however, that the protest of Jesus extends beyond the abuse of a necessary and legitimate commerce: it was applied to the commerce itself in that place. It was possible, though not easy, to eliminate fraud and oppression from the traffic, but not its din and disorder. These were inseparable from its activities. Is not this view indicated in the milder condemnation spoken by Jesus in the incident recorded in the Fourth Gospel—'Take these things hence. Make not My Father's house a market-house.' There is a place for trade, but it is not in a house of prayer—not even for honest trade. This is what perhaps Abrahams would characterise as the Puritan (not the Pharisaic) view. That quiet and order are becoming God's house is to-day a Christian sentiment. Do we not owe it in part to Jewish sentiment? Did St. Paul invent the idea and the phrase that God is not a God of confusion (1 Cor. 14<sup>33</sup>). It must be confessed frankly that the tumult of an Indian *yātra*, and the dirt and noise in a Hindu Temple accord ill with a Christian's idea of the decent and reverent ordering of individual and corporate worship.



understood and followed out Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom of God, overwhelming catastrophe would not have fallen upon the next generation. We need not assume that Jesus' anticipation of national disaster was superhuman. The signs of the times might be read by any shrewd political observer—or more certainly, by a man of religious discernment with a sense of spiritual values and knowledge of the operation of moral laws. The seeds of the pride and violence which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews were already present in the days of Jesus: their fruits the man of prophetic soul might foresee and foretell. Is not this implied in the answer which Jesus gave to the Pharisees and Sadducees, when they asked Him for a sign out of the heaven (Matt. 16<sup>1-4</sup>, Mark 8<sup>10-12</sup>). He reminds them that there were signs in the heavens which they could read well enough—'Red in the evening, and fine to-morrow'; and He asked why they could not observe and interpret the signs of the times. No celestial portent might be granted to such as they were. Only one sign would be given to them—a prophet and he foretelling doom, the sign of Jonah and Nineveh.

We are told that one day, as Jesus was leaving the Temple, His disciples pointed out the adornment of its walls, the massive stones of its foundations, and Jesus, in reply, spoke the word—'There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down' (Matt. 24<sup>2</sup>, Mark 13<sup>2</sup>, Luke 21<sup>6</sup>). It was evidently a saying which made an indelible impression upon those who heard it.

Jesus must have appeared to the Chief Priests as Jeremiah to the priests of his day. He was a prophet of doom, an apostle of 'defeatism'—of doom to what was indispensable to their well-being, of defeat to their chief interests in life. Jesus was sure at the last that the destruction could not be averted. He shed His tears and uttered



His lament over the city whose joy and pride—Her House of God—would be left unto her desolate. At the same time He believed and taught that this was not the end of all things and of religion. The worship of God would not cease, because the Temple was destroyed. Wherever men lifted their hearts to God in humility and faith, their prayers would come to Him, and He would be found of them. 'The hour cometh,' said He to the woman of Samaria, 'when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . . God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.'

Doctrine of this nature, whatever its beauty and profundity of truth, is not likely to have attracted much attention, or to have roused hostility; but Jesus evidently did say something about the Temple which had caught the ear of the public. The charge brought against Him by witnesses in the examination before Caiaphas, according to St. Matthew, was—'This man said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days' (26<sup>61</sup>). St. Mark's version is—'We heard Him say, I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands' (14<sup>58</sup>). There was a wide-spread belief that Jesus had said something of the kind, and that it had been brought in accusation against Him; for both these Synoptists record of Jesus upon the Cross, 'And they that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself' (Matt. 27<sup>39, 40</sup>, Mark 15<sup>29, 30</sup>).

It is an extraordinary thing that in St. Matthew and in St. Mark we cannot find anywhere a word of Jesus resembling this, nor in St. Luke's Gospel. We have to go to the Fourth Gospel for evidence of Jesus ever having made a statement of similar content, though with a notable difference. The Fourth Evangelist, in his account of the



conversation which followed Jesus' cleansing of the Temple and of the Jews' demand for a sign, says that Jesus replied 'Destroy this Temple and I will raise it up in three days' (2<sup>19</sup>). The difference between what Jesus actually said and what He was accused of saying is material. He did not say, 'I am able to destroy,' or 'I will destroy'; but 'Do *you* destroy the Temple, as you will—yet I will raise it up again.' He had not spoken of Himself as the destroyer of the Temple; for He always represented that the cause of the coming destruction lay not in Himself but in others. The claim He made was to build up and not to throw down, to restore and not to destroy. He said, as it were, 'If and when you destroy the Temple, know that the presence of God will not fail among men. His tabernacle shall still be with them through Me.' The Fourth Evangelist saw in this word a reference by Jesus to His own body, in which as in a tent God dwelt; and He wishes us to understand that through the incarnation of God in Jesus, God has come nearer to men than ever before. The Temple at Jerusalem has perished; but worship of the One invisible God has not ceased among men—it has become more real to the believer in Jesus even than to the Jew. The whole system of Judaism may pass away; but through Jesus God will still abide with us.<sup>1</sup>

In speaking about the Temple Jesus touched the Chief Priests upon their most sensitive spot: what He said about the current administration of it, and about its future gave mortal offence. The Chief Priests were not concerned in the least for the defence of Tradition: they were Sadducees and repudiated Tradition. And as for the Law, they took a moderate view of their obligations to it, and did not insist upon the strictest observance. But

<sup>1</sup> We shall miss the whole point of the Evangelist's interpretation, if we do not remember that the word used here in the original denotes only the 'house of God,' the inmost shrine of the Temple, where God was supposed peculiarly to dwell (*naós*), corresponding to the Hindu *devasthāna*.



whosoever attacked customs connected with the Temple and suggested doubts about its permanence was affecting their livelihood: if the Temple went, the priest's occupation and his gains were gone.

The Fourth Gospel contains the most illuminating account of what took place towards the end. The Chief Priests and the Pharisees are represented as gathered in Council (II 47-53). No one has any effective plan to propose, though all are agreed that the danger to their various interests is imminent. They are convinced that if the influence of Jesus continues to spread and all men come to acknowledge Him, the result will be disaster. We may feel that their fear was mistaken; but they said, and believed it, in their blindness, 'The Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.' Though Pharisees were present, there is a predominantly priestly flavour in that remark. The 'place' was probably the Temple, and by the 'nation' was meant that social and political organization in which the priests occupied so high a position. Caiaphas, who had listened with growing impatience to one timorous and futile proposal after another, at length broke forth—'You know nothing at all. This is no time for speaking of half-measures: immediate and strong action must be taken. Nothing short of the death of Jesus will suffice. You do not take into account that it is expedient, that one man should die for the people and that our whole national organization should not perish. Better that Jesus should die than that everything which you value—be it Law or Tradition or the Temple and the Priesthood—should be destroyed. This man is a menace to the continuance of our institutions.'

There is a cynical candour and aristocratic insolence in the speech of Caiaphas. The Evangelist, however, discovers in it an unconscious prophecy of the benefits of Jesus' dying not only to the Jews of Palestine but also to all those who, scattered throughout the world of all



the nations, should enter into a new relation of sonship to God and become the new and the true sacred people. The conclusion of this narrative, which we have specially to note is—'So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death' (11<sup>53</sup>).

In every subsequent detail of the movement against Jesus the Chief Priests are prominent. They look out for an opportunity to arrest Jesus in private; for, if the attempt were made in public, the people might come to the rescue, and a 'tumult' would ensue. The Chief Priests knew well that any disturbance of the public peace would bring down on all parties the undistinguishing wrath of the Roman Governor. Pilate hated a tumult among the Jews—as a British official hates a riot between Hindus and Moslems in his District. It might bring discredit on his administration and lead to inconvenient inquiries by the higher authorities at Rome. The Chief Priests enter into the negotiations with the traitor, Judas; they (with the Pharisees) send the guard and servants to Gethsemane. The High Priest conducts the preliminary examination and submits the issue to the Sanhedrin. The Chief Priests are foremost in accusing Jesus before Pilate and in inciting the crowd to ask for the release of Barabbas. Though in these proceedings before the Governor, the Scribes and other members of the Sanhedrin are associated with the Chief Priests, it was the last alone who answered Pilate's, 'Shall I crucify your King?' with the sycophantic, 'We have no King but Cæsar.' It is difficult to conceive that even their bitter hatred of Jesus could have brought the Pharisees to this denial of their belief in Jehovah's sole monarchy over Israel; but it was in line with the political subservience of the Sadducean priestly party and with their unscrupulous concern for their own safety and profit.

In St. Matthew's Gospel (21<sup>15</sup>) we read that when the Chief Priests and Scribes heard the children in the Temple



crying 'Hosanna to the Son of David' and so saluting Jesus as the Messianic King, they were moved with indignation. The claim of Jesus to be the Messiah was an offence to the Chief Priests, not primarily because it seemed to them presumptuous or blasphemous, but because they thought it to be dangerous in the highest degree. It was inconceivable to materialists, such as they were, that the Messiah should not seek to establish a secular state by overthrowing the Roman power: talk of 'a Kingdom, not of this world'—a Kingdom in the spirit—had no meaning for them. We know to-day Government and officials who find it impossible to believe that a man or woman can respond to a religious call and for the pure love of God and man can serve as a Christian missionary in a foreign land among strangers. Behind the religious profession they always suspect that there lies a political or a commercial aim. If Jesus set Himself up as the Christ, then, so the Chief Priests imagined, he must be intending a monarchy of the only kind existing on the earth: and, in any case, whatever He meant, His claim must result in a popular disturbance or rising similar to the disastrous attempts of the past.

At the trial, it is true that the High Priest exclaimed 'Ye have heard the blasphemy' and rent his clothes. To that extent the Sadducee had to do homage to religious convention and was guilty of hypocrisy. The real charge lying against Jesus in the eyes of the Chief Priests was not that He was a blasphemer, but that He was a revolutionary. He would, they thought, have overturned the existing order, and they stood for no change.

What was the 'leaven of the Sadducees?' There is a comment of pawky humour by Bruce upon the stupidity of the Disciples and their slowness in coming to understand that Jesus was not speaking literally when He warned them against the 'leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees'—'One could wish that they had understood



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that from the first, and that they had asked their Master to explain more precisely the nature of the evil influences for their own and our benefit. Thereby we might have had in a sentence a photograph of Sadducaism.<sup>1</sup> The Evangelist's own comment that the Disciples perceived that Jesus was speaking of the 'doctrine' of the Sadducees does not carry us very far. We should like to see how that doctrine arises out of or is related to an inward spirit. Our materials in the Gospels for a portraiture of the Sadducees are scanty indeed. Do we realize that they are only mentioned once by name in the whole account of the ministry of Jesus before the last week? And that was in the incident of the deputation which waited on Jesus to demand a celestial sign—of which we have spoken previously.

How are we to account for this absence or infrequency of contacts with Jesus? The explanation of it is not so much the fact that the Sadducees were a small party—less numerous by far than the Pharisees, as that they took little interest in vital religion. They were not deeply concerned about spiritual issues: the Chief Priests were only roused to action when their material advantages seemed to be in danger. Thus it is customary to say that whereas the 'leaven' of the Pharisees was hypocrisy, that of the Sadducees was worldliness.

This distinction is somewhat too facile and will bear to be examined and filled out in meaning. Both Pharisees and Sadducees were self-centred and self-regarding: that was their essential sin, for all sin is, in essence, lack of love—separation from and neglect of God and our neighbour. Both parties sought for self-gratification: but they found it in different things. The Pharisee desired for himself the reputation of being godly—the praise and influence which men will award to one who seems to them to be just and pious. The Sadducee's

<sup>1</sup> *The Expositor's Greek Testament*: Matt. 16<sup>1-12</sup>.



heart was set upon grosser good—money and the sensible pleasures and comfort which money can buy, social rank and power of office. We may say, therefore, that while the Pharisee only seemed to be a saint, the Sadducee really was a worldling. It was all-important to the Pharisee that he should appear to be righteous. The Sadducee was under no such obligation to keep up appearances; he might show himself for what he was, since the world readily understands and makes allowances for a worldling. The things which the Pharisee coveted were not easy of attainment: they demanded a measure of self-discipline and self-denial—long prayers, fasting and almsgiving were painful observances. The Sadducee practised no such mortification of himself, but inclined to do just what was pleasing. Since he did not believe in another world, by an inward necessity he concentrated attention upon this life. He wanted a good time here and now. The genuine Pharisee—I mean the Pharisee without hypocrisy—was a man in earnest about religion, seeing goodness and mercy and coming very near to the Kingdom of God; the perfect Sadducee, on the other hand, was the complete materialist—a good fellow and pleasant companion up to a point, but, when occasion required, stopping at nothing to defend his wealth or his social position. The Sadducee confessed God, but he kept the confession within what were to him reasonable and proper limits. He was of the type which says, 'For God and my country, but always for my country'; 'For the general good and my business, but business first.' The opposition of the Sadducees to Jesus was consciously based on self-interest.

We have finished now our rapid survey of the causes discoverable in human history of Jesus' death. We have traced out an enmity against Jesus which grew in venom and determination until it became deadly. It has been suggested that there were three elements in the



ministry of Jesus which contributed to this result—the divergence of His ideas from the accepted doctrine of the time, the claims He made on His own behalf, and the danger to vested interests implicit in His personality and teaching. The treatment could not be exhaustive: it has exhibited the use of a method which should be carried out in much greater detail. I cannot hope that I have escaped error in the selection and description of a few events, or that my readers will agree in all respects with the interpretation which has been put upon them. There is so much more to be said: there is so much to be said better and more truly. Yet I trust that this general conclusion will have been made plain and will be accepted—that, in one sense, few events in history have been more intelligible and explicable than the crucifixion of Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus, being what He was and the men of His time being what they were, He must have died at their hands. Viewed in this aspect of it, there is no mystery at all in the death of Jesus: we can account for it on known and familiar grounds. The passions which Jesus stirred up, the motives which conspired in the hearts of His enemies to destroy Him, are akin to our own feelings and impulses: we know their reality and dreadful power by inward experience and by intercourse with the men of our own time. I will not say that human nature is the same as ever and that it never can change, so that if Jesus were to come among us to-day, we should crucify Him afresh. The nations which have known Him long have not so utterly failed to learn of Him. As the fruit of His living and dying and of nineteen hundred years of His influence, something has been wrought in the faith of millions, in the sentiment of peoples, and in standards of public life which would make men quicker to recognize and acknowledge the truth and beauty of a Jesus once again in their midst than were Jews and Romans in the days of Caiaphas and Pilate. Many would not only



rally to His defence, they would also devote themselves to His service. There are more humility and honesty, temperance and kindness in the world to-day than ever before. The evils of our generation are great enough in all conscience; but let us not so malign it that we belittle or ignore the achievements of Jesus through the centuries. There has been spiritual progress; but still we are near enough and like enough in nature and disposition to the men of Palestine to understand why Jesus died.

But, in another and higher sense, the death of Jesus is a profound mystery. In its man-ward aspect we can explain it: in its relation to God we are left wondering why ever it should have been allowed to happen. All through the foregoing chapters we have stressed the importance, for investigation and thought, of the consciousness of Jesus. Here was a man who lived in the most intimate and constant fellowship with God. As Jesus dwelt in that fellowship, what did He think of His own dying, and what did He say of His Father's intention in that death? The portraiture of Jesus in the Four Gospels shows us one who anticipated His death, shrank from His death, and accepted His death in the faith that His Heavenly Father knew of it, allowed it, and even willed it. Jesus, contemplating and facing His death, did not regard it as due to divine forgetfulness or to divine failure and weakness, as though God His Father had overlooked Him or could not have stayed the hands of wicked men, if He would. 'The Son of Man *must* suffer many things, and be rejected by the Elders and Chief Priests and the Scribes and be killed' (Mark 8<sup>31</sup>). 'Thus it *must* be' (Matt. 26<sup>54</sup>). What is this *must*? What kind of *necessity* lay in the death of Jesus? It is evident that the necessity of which Jesus here speaks is not the submission of a weaker man to superior human force—the helplessness of the prisoner in the hands of his captors, of the vanquished before his victor. The necessity, at which Jesus



first hinted, of which afterwards He more plainly spoke, belongs to the realm of moral or spiritual necessity. And it was a necessity, the nature and form of which Jesus found in His reading of Scripture. It is our business to examine this: herein lie both the mystery and the glory of the Cross.

I do not wish to anticipate later statements, but I would not even seem to suggest that before Jesus came into the world, there was some antecedent necessity which doomed Him to the Cross and that those men who—in their various ways—took part in the crucifying of Him, though they seemed to be free agents, in reality were the unconscious, helpless, and pre-ordained instruments of a divine plan and purpose. Even if our reason should drive us to this conclusion by an inescapable logic, we shall do well to refuse our assent: there is something defective in the argument. Is not this to begin our approach to the mystery from the wrong end—not with the facts, but with a theory; not with the history, but with a philosophy or theology? The Gospels assuredly exhibit to us men and women who believe themselves, in relation to Jesus, to be acting of their own volition, and to be capable of choice—able either to accept or to reject. The Evangelists intend that we who read their records shall see and feel that everything turns upon the disposition of the heart and that those who rejected and slew Jesus incurred a terrible responsibility and brought upon themselves a great guilt—that they sinned in the utmost degree.

God's true man dwelt in the midst of men and manifested to their conscience the grace and truth of God, and many they were who looked upon these and refused to listen to the testimony within. Is not this at least a part of the mystery and glory of the Cross that Jesus endured this 'contradiction of sinners against themselves,' and was willing to suffer and die at their hands—to be



slain of them and not to slay them? And this, so Jesus indicates, was the thought and the way of God Himself in dealing with froward and wicked men. In His dying, no less than in His words of truth and His works of mercy, Jesus was 'the complete expression in humanity of the Father.' The mind and will of Jesus in His crucifixion were the veritable mind and will of God. As Jesus thought and acted towards sinners in His suffering and death, so God has always thought and acted and ever will so think and act. Jesus did not depart out of His communion with His Father, when He consented to suffer and die; but rather He was conscious that in His passion He was fulfilling to the utmost and in the highest degree the will of His Father. In the garden He offered the petition that if it were possible the hour of suffering might pass from Him and the cup of death might be taken away; but there came the final prayer, 'Nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.' And, in the result, there was perfect unity of will between Jesus and the Father. He and His Father were one in His dying. The thought and will of God towards sinners are expressed and revealed in Jesus crucified. In the hour when Jesus died, God was most to be seen and found on earth in Him who hung upon the Cross: then at that moment, the event in our world with most divinity in it, was being transacted. The Word of the Cross was a new word of God to all sinful men: the like of it had never been heard before. God truly spoke and God truly acted in the Passion and Death of Jesus.



PART II  
AN INTERPRETATION



## FOREWORD

TO A HINDU FRIEND

MY DEAR SATYABANDHA,

In the first part of this Lecture you will find an account of the central event of Christian history and of its causes; and in this second part an attempt will be made to set forth the meaning of that event for men of whatever race or creed. But since this book is intended in part for Indian readers, it is proper and right that a comparison should be instituted between the Religion of Jesus and Hinduism.

I hope that I shall be able to avoid that irritating method, as unscientific as it is ungenerous, which selects the worst in one religion and contrasts it with the best in another. If in anything which shall be said hereafter, I shall fall into superficial inaccuracy or into deeper untruth, so that I do an injustice to the aim and spirit of any Sect or School of Hinduism, I must ask not only for your forgiveness but also for your correction. We are, both of us, travellers through this world. The beginning and the end of our pilgrimage have not been made quite plain to us, and perhaps we may hold different views about our origin and our destination. One thing, however, is certain—that we are on the road together; and we meet in this book—as it were for an evening in the *Dharmaśālā* before we part and resume our journey on the morrow. 'We are strangers and sojourners here, as all our fathers were.' How great, then, is the need that we should be kind and courteous



in our conversation, and that we should help and strengthen each other in the finding of the path of Truth, and in keeping to it, when found.

Both of us have known something of the dangers and terror of this world of our pilgrimage—the awful majesty as well as the tender grace and loveliness of the scenes through which we pass. We have had experience both of the meanness and of the heroism of the men and women who make up our company: the daily stage has shown to us a mixture of the sordid and of the sublime. If I have anything at all to say, it is because I have had the companionship of One who passed this way before, and knows—so I believe—the right path from its starting-point to its finish.

Let us remind ourselves that it is with Jesus Christ we have to do—and not with Western civilisation, nor even, primarily, with the Christian Church and its missionary. The face and the voice of Jesus, His words and His deeds, are what we are to contemplate and consider here and now. One request I will make of you that you do not allow yourself to lapse into and to remain content with an easy identification of the teaching of Jesus with other modes of thought, so that you come short of or do violence to 'the truth as it is in Him.' No one can rightly make the Teacher of Galilee and the great Masters of Hinduism say the same thing. They are at variance with one another; and you and I must recognize this fact and make our choice of leader and of path.

So far as I know and understand the Master, whose disciple I desire to be, He is One who set honesty of judgement in the forefront of the great qualities of the soul; and He was patient in dealing with all hesitations and doubts, which sprang from the love of truth. One of His disciples has given us a phrase which suggests a complete human character—'doing the truth in love,'



or 'truthing it in love,' as it has been otherwise rendered. We may be quite sure that neither of us will find the truth unless he is inspired and directed by love; and we cannot help each other in this quest, except we have mutual goodwill and the humility that arises out of it.

For my part, I am convinced that the Way of Jesus is not the Way of some great Hindu Sages: they and He have drawn up complete schemes of life, but these differ at every critical point. He conceived and spoke of God as Personal—as His Father, possessed of the good and intelligible qualities of righteousness and love; of men as truly the children of God, owing one another brotherly kindness and service; of the Way of Salvation as an acknowledgment of failure in love to God and our fellow-men, and as return to God in trust and obedience; of the duty of the Saved as bearing witness to the grace of God and doing work for the accomplishment of His purpose; and of the End as a perfected society of God and men. And, on the other hand, those Sages, of whom I have spoken, have thought of God as the Ultimate Impersonal, without known or expressible qualities; of the world as an idle and passing show; of the duty of man as obedience for a while to a conventional morality; of Salvation as escape from this world by individual discipline and meditation; and of the End as the solitude of the only Existent.

Each of these schemes is a consistent whole: but they are in opposition and contrast at every point. It is for us to determine which we will have: we cannot take both. I have sometimes imagined that the debt which the world owes to some of those Sages is that with persistence and courage they followed their path to its very end and made the discovery, on our behalf, that it leads nowhither. Jesus was not a formal philosopher; but the whole of His scheme of life rests upon an affirmation, so simple that the unlearned can understand it,



so profound that our deepest and most systematic thought has not yet fathomed all its meaning—*God is love.*

Some among my correspondents tell me that modern India is wholly occupied with mundane affairs, and is so absorbed in political agitation that she has neither time nor desire for the things of religion. Is it not, however, true to say that the great mass of the people still cling to ancient ways and cherish the familiar ideas of worship and of duty? In any case, the most intensely politically-minded person, sooner or later, will come to realise that no policy or activity of the State can for ever satisfy the whole man. I do not simply mean that when he grows old and comes near to quitting this life, he will begin to think of death and eternity: my thought is rather that to any far-seeing and honest citizen to whom his politics is more than the pursuit of his own advantage, or a game in which he finds excitement and diversion, it must become apparent that every great policy of State rests ultimately upon beliefs and convictions, which are in their nature religious. If a form of Democracy be the mode of government which India will choose for herself, then its bases must be other than the doctrines of *Karma* and Re-incarnation, on which Caste and the old Hindu society have so long stood. We cannot change our social or political order without revising our religious ideas.

You and I have often discussed together in what way and how far we may know God, and doubtless you will notice that, as the argument of this book is developed, it brings ever more clearly into view my own belief that man is made in the image of God—that of all things in our Universe he is the nearest to and the likeliest to God. An analogy can be drawn between the things of sense and that which transcends sense, and the spiritual world may be traced in natural law. The lotus in the



water, the sun reflected in a myriad rain-pools, the clay and the pot fashioned out of it, the wave which sinks into and is lost in the ocean—all these and a thousand other material objects may be used as emblems of the Invisible and Eternal: but we understand most of God and see Him most clearly when we consider man in his social relations and in his purest affections. No Theology can be true which is intrinsically inhuman: and, in this sense, the highest religion is necessarily and rightly anthropomorphic.

I think, my friend, that the time is now close at hand when you yourself will become part of an India which will walk upon her own feet, manage her own affairs, and be cast upon her own resources, material and spiritual. And then you will have to reckon with all those divisive influences, deep-seated and active in individuals and in communities, which make nationhood difficult of attainment, and mar it after it has been made. In that time I pray that India may have the continued friendship of England, and such co-operation as she desires; but a new responsibility will rest upon you. You know full well what are the anti-social forces in town and village—ignorance and apathy, lust and the love of money, personal ambition, malice and distrust—with which you will have to contend in your desire to realize the commonweal. In those days you will need the companionship of Jesus. On the view of some of India's ancient Sages I do not know why any rational being should trouble about politics: it is the madness of a day, for the State is not worth the deep and lasting concern of any wise or good man. There is a rift, an irreconcilable opposition, between India's present occupation with politics, and the ancient philosophy of the *Advaita Vedānta*. In Jesus' scheme of life, however, the family and the community, the nation and the brotherhood of the nations



of the world, have their due recognition and place. Jesus is no more a party politician than He is a formal philosopher; but He supplies the spirit and the principles of good citizenship—the will to strive and to endure, the willingness to think the best of others and to forgive injuries, the power to subordinate personal gain and fame to the general good. In your public life, in the disinterested service of your fellows, you will come to know the meaning of and to share in the crucifixion of Jesus: by the contemplation of His Cross you will be fed and strengthened, purified and enlightened in the secret places of your own soul.

And, in particular, we shall recognize that in India to-day the bitterest division of feeling is made by Religion so-called. We need not wonder if some who do not give in their adhesion to any creed, call a plague on the two houses of Hinduism and Islam. The teaching and the example of Jesus have shown to us that there is only one right means of propagating and defending any true religion; and that is by the use of and reliance upon spiritual influences—the native force of truth and goodness. So far as we have the mind of Christ, we shall be careful to abstain from insult and injury, from all corrupt persuasion and physical violence. Jesus believed with all His heart in the truth of His Gospel, and no threat could restrain Him from the proclamation of it; but His method of preaching was the appeal to reason and conscience. Sooner or later, we shall admit, India must come to the acceptance of Christ's ideal of toleration and propaganda. This alone will serve to keep the public peace.

But, though the imitation of Jesus may, in this manner, abate a public scandal and satisfy those whose chief concern is the maintenance of 'law and order,' we shall not be able to conceal from ourselves that the method of Jesus transfers the conflict to the higher regions of the spirit, where it may be waged with an even greater



intensity of suffering. You have spoken sometimes to me of friends who have returned from foreign travels or residence abroad to the land of their birth and their fathers. You have described to me, with a sympathy which was an indication of your own depth of feeling, the inward peace and satisfaction with which one of these wanderers and exiles has settled himself again amidst the familiar scenes. The gleaming tank or river with its dependency of verdant rice-fields, the rustle of the leaves and the murmuring of doves in the palm-groves, the faint but clear sound of the temple bell, the well-remembered fragrance of garlands and incense, the invocations and chants to the gods, the ten thousand tender recollections of childhood, the sacramental observances of the household, the accustomed forms of thought and speech which the man slips on again like a well-fitting garment, all his treasures recovered out of the ancient wisdom and culture of India—these gather around him once more and bind him to themselves with an added power of beauty and attraction. Surely it was of one in this mood that Jesus used the words—'He saith, The Old is good.' It will appear to such a man as this that the choice lies between Christ and the heritage of his people, and that the cost of discipleship is greater than he can bear. He cannot rise up and follow One who asks him to forsake all and to prefer Him in honour and love before even father and mother. This is not peace but war: it is a sword which pierces through his heart. A Christian may offer comfort and mitigation of the severity of this trial by giving the assurance that nothing which is beautiful and good in India's heritage need be lost, and that no one who is true to himself and obeys the call of the highest can be false or injurious to his country and people—the purest and noblest patriotism will live in him—but the almost intolerable pain of the test remains.



The Master Jesus said, 'Narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life.' This is the 'razor-edge path,' so hard to find and keep, of which the Sages used to speak. I am confident that Jesus did not mean that one who accepts His guidance and follows Him will become a man without breadth of outlook or variety of interests: nor did He mean that the way of discipleship would be a way of sadness and death. Those who have most faithfully followed Him have found joy and abundance of life. But the Master has taught plainly by His Cross that the gate of life is death: there is for each one of us a crucial experience through which he must pass into the fulness of manhood. 'Strive—agonize,' He commands, 'to enter in by the narrow door; for many I say unto you shall seek to enter in and shall not have strength.'

To this point of choice and decision any meditation in sincerity on the Cross of Christ will bring both you and me. It must seem to the Christian preacher in India that among his hearers are some by whom the choice of Christ can be made only with an effort and sacrifice greater than ever was required of himself. He will do honour in his thought and remembrance to those within the Christian Church of India who, at so great cost, have made their confession of Christ. For yourself I pray for strength to be granted you that you may strive to enter in, that you may take up your cross and follow on to the fulness and perfection of human life.

THE WRITER.



## CHAPTER I

### THE AVATĀRA AND THE CROSS

*The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*—  
Acts xiv. 11.

*The Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . .  
And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full  
of grace and truth.*—St. John i. 1, 14.

HITHERTO, of set purpose, we have spoken of Jesus as man, and we have laid emphasis upon the historicity of the Gospels. Whatever exaggerations or errors may have crept into these narratives, it is not open to doubt that they are dealing with one who actually lived and died as a man among men. We have seen that there was in Jesus a mystery of personality, which provoked in friends and in foes alike the inquiry, 'Who and what is He?' There was a unique element of authority and power in the words and deeds of Jesus; and all His conduct exhibited and claimed a strange and rare intimacy with the Unseen God, His Heavenly Father. We have now reached a point when we must be more explicit in our own views of the Person of Jesus. Why He died and what He accomplished upon the Cross are matters closely related to who He was and is. Our interpretation of the Cross depends upon our belief about the being and nature of Him who hung upon it: any doctrine of the Atonement—that is, of the effect of the death of Jesus upon and its value for the human race—must be conditioned by the doctrine of the Person of Jesus.



There is a pleasant story in the Eighth Book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of an aged couple, Philemon and Baucis, who lived in the Phrygian hill-country. One day, so the poet's tale runs, the gods Jupiter and Mercury in human guise alighted in this neighbourhood, and sought in a thousand homes for hospitality. They were everywhere repulsed, until they came to the humble thatched dwelling of Philemon and his wife. These poor folk gave a welcome to their unexpected guests; and, drawing out a rude bench and covering it with a rough-woven cloth, bade them be seated while they prepared the best meal their scanty store and little garden could provide. A mattress of soft sedge-grass was laid upon the wooden couch; and the old three-legged table was propped up before it with a potsherd, and wiped and sweetened with moist herbs. Presently the hosts set upon the board the rustic meal in its due courses—olives and endives, roast eggs in earthen dishes, and a stew from the copper kettle above the hearth, with nuts and figs and grapes and such thin wine as their jar contained. But as the meal drew to its close, a strange portent occurred. Baucis and Philemon saw with amazement and growing alarm, that the mixing-bowl, as fast as wine was drawn from it, filled itself again; and great was their fear when the visitors threw aside their human disguise and stood before them in forms of celestial splendour. The gods bade them forsake their lowly abode and follow them to a mountain near by. As they were climbing its slopes, they saw the whole countryside beneath them, together with its impious inhabitants, overwhelmed by a flood, while their thatched cottage was transformed into a temple with shining golden roofs. The gods granted the faithful and loving couple this boon, that they should serve as the keepers of the temple and that neither of them should see the death of the other. So when the end came of their human years, they were both changed at the same moment into trees. And in



token of the truth of this tale, the traveller might still see upon the spot an oak and a linden strangely grown together and entwined, with votive wreaths hung by wayfarers upon their boughs.

It has been suggested that this story was a piece of the local folk-lore, and had something to do with the behaviour of the people of Lystra, when the strangers, Paul and Barnabas, visited their remote town, and healed before their eyes one whom they had known as a cripple from his birth. Remembering the legend of their countryside, they cried out, 'The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men'; and since the populace takes greater account at first of the body than of the mind, they called Barnabas, of the larger and more imposing presence, Jupiter, and Paul, of the alert thought and vivid speech, Mercury. Under the leadership of the priest of Jupiter 'of the gate,' they made haste to render to their visitors the offerings due to the gods. The narrative in the *Acts* goes on to tell of the dismay and horror of the Christian Apostles at the ascription of divine honours to themselves—'Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you; and bring you the good news that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is' (*Acts* 14<sup>15</sup>).

This incident may serve as a graphic illustration of the difference between the Greek and the Jew in their conceptions of the Godhead and its relation to humanity. There was a general belief in the Pagan world that the gods from time to time descended from their heavenly abodes, took temporarily the semblance of human bodies, and walked among men. On the other hand, among the Jews the notion prevailed of One God, and of Him as awfully transcendent. The distance between God and man was deeply graven on Jewish thought; and the idea did not come easily to the Jew—it was even abhorrent



to him—that God could manifest Himself and might be seen and heard and felt in a human body.

Hinduism furnishes many examples of a belief similar to that of the Greeks. The meaning of the word, *Avatāra*, is precisely 'descent.' It is the 'coming down' of a god in the likeness, not necessarily of a man, but of some living thing. There is the semblance of a physical body, animal or human, which the god has temporarily assumed. Of this kind, for instance, are the *avatāras* of Vishnu as fish and boar, as man-lion and Rāma 'of the axe.' Or again, to take stories of much later date and with a more restricted currency, there are the interventions which Mahīpati, the biographer of the Mārāṭha saints, attributes to Hari or Vishnu on behalf of his devotee, Tūkārām. He tells how Hari appeared to Tūkārām when the sack of grain had fallen from his beast on to the road, and he was unable to lift and replace it. The unknown wayfarer, without an effort, set the burden again upon the back of the bullock, and led Tūkārām safely through the flooded river. Then, on the farther bank, a flash of lightning revealed the silken robe and the world-renowned jewel of the god. On another occasion, when the unworldly saint had sold his whole stock of chillies to the villagers without keeping any account, Hari took the form of Tūkārām's servant, collected all the sums which were due, and paid them to his adopted master.<sup>1</sup>

All such cases, however temporary the manifestation or illusory the form, are regarded as *avatāras*, but the word appears to gather meaning, and it is used in the fullest and strictest sense of embodiments in a human form for the duration of a human life. Perhaps we may discern a movement of thought in this direction in the order of the ten incarnations customarily attributed to Vishnu. The series begins with three in animal shape—the fish, the tortoise, and the boar; it passes through the

<sup>1</sup> Fraser and Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tākārām*.: pp. 80-82.



intermediate form of Narasimha, who has a man's body and a lion's head; and then enters the region of more human conceptions. The first of these is the Dwarf, of deformed humanity—a purely mythological personification: the others are Paraśurāma, Rāma, Krishna, and Buddha—the one indubitably historical figure in the series, with Kalkī, as the tenth and last, still to come. Rāma and Krishna, whose stories are told at great length in the Hindu Epics and Purāṇas, in Sanskrit and many popular versions, are pre-eminently the *avatārs* of Hinduism.

It has been suggested that the idea of Incarnation is derived from that of the Immanent Brahma. Granted that there is a Supreme Being which pervades the whole Universe and is resident in every man, constituting his very soul or self, then the belief in Incarnation may seem to be an easy development or an inevitable deduction. This explanation of the Hindu doctrine of Incarnation is surely wide of the mark: for, in the first place, if we believe that the Over-Soul—the one existent Brahma, as the universal substrate, is resident in everything, animate or inanimate, so that each individual, in a sense, is an embodiment of this Supreme Being or Impersonal God, then there is no reason why we should speak of one person or thing rather than of any other as an 'incarnation.' All things, on this view, are equally incarnations, veiling the Existent by illusory forms. There is no room in the *Advaita* (Monist) *Vedānta* for a doctrine of 'special' incarnations, but only for a doctrine of 'universal' incarnation. Further, the *Advaita* type of thought disparages and moves away from those varieties of religion which take an interest in and attach value to the individual, to the sensible world, and to the material body. It throws its influence on the side of ignoring and obliterating all personal characteristics and individual distinctions, and seeks to withdraw thought and contemplation to



that which becomes more and more abstract. It has an aversion from what is concrete and personal, since, these, in its estimation, belong to the realm of the transient and the unreal.

With greater appropriateness and probability, the idea of Incarnation has been associated with those schools of Hinduism which insist upon some kind of personality in God, and reject the cold intellectualism of the *Advaita*. An *avatāra*, we ought to remember, is an appearance in visible and tangible form of a deity conceived as personal: it is the manifestation of him through a material body to the senses of men. We can understand, therefore, why the belief in Incarnation should be most developed among the Vaishṇavas; for they, more than any other great Hindu sect, have laid stress upon the personal attributes of God and upon the reality and eternity of the distinction between His self and the selves of His worshippers.

It would appear, then, that the idea of Incarnation has arisen as a protest of the heart. Emotion requires that God shall be personal; and this is the legitimate demand of what is as truly a part of our human nature as the intellect. An incarnation serves to bring God nearer to man and to make Him more real. The attempt has been made in Hinduism to combine in one concept the two ideas of the abstract, impersonal Brahma and of the sole, sovereign, personal God. Pandit Sītānāth Tattvabhūṣaṇ has traced the origin of such a synthesis to the *Kaushītaki Upanishad*, where in the third *adhyaīya* the god Indra is represented as saying: 'Know me only; that is what I deem most beneficial for man that he should know me.' This chapter of the Upanishad develops this theme, teaching that Indra is the *prāṇa*, the vital breath, and the *prajñā*, the intelligence or self-consciousness in each individual. In the *Bhagavadgītā* we have the best-known example of this syncretism.



Brahma is regarded as the same as Vāsudeva, the Universal God, and the incarnate Krishna as one with Vāsudeva. It may be said that the Krishna of the *Gītā* is Brahma personalised.

Now it is into the mouth of Krishna, as the Personal Absolute and Supreme, that there has been put the text on Incarnation which is most often and widely quoted in India:

‘Though I am unborn, and of unchangeable essence, and though I am the Lord of things which become, yet presiding over (controlling) my own Nature, I become (appear) by the operation of my own *Māyā*.’<sup>1</sup>

‘Whenever there is a failure of Righteousness (Dharma) O Bhārata, an uprising of Unrighteousness, then I create myself.

‘For the protection of the saints (*sādhus*), and for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the establishment of Righteousness, I become (appear) age after age’—(iv. 6-8).

Thus the author of the *Bhagavadgītā* represents the Universal and Absolute Being as having personality and also as manifesting Himself upon the battle-field in the bodily form of Krishna to his devotee—the great archer, Arjuna. By the Monist both the personality of Vāsudeva and the incarnate form of Krishna, like every other personality and sensible appearance, are declared to be products of Illusion, and therefore impermanent and unreal. They are only a temporary accommodation to the ignorance of a disciple. By the dualists of India the personality of God, at least, is regarded as of His essence, though its bodily manifestation may not be enduring. The possibility of personal fellowship between God and His worshippers abides for ever, even when the Incarnation disappears.

<sup>1</sup> It is better to keep the original term here, for Hindu commentators give to it the most diverse interpretations. The monist Śāṅkara says it means the principle of the Cosmic Illusion: Rāmānuja, of the Qualified Dualism, assigns to it the meaning of ‘intelligence.’



Now this belief in the manifestation of God in bodily form raises the question of the relation of God discarnate to God incarnate. Hindu metaphysicians and commentators do not appear to have given sufficient thought to this question. Indeed, for the *Advaitī*, it is not of much interest, and admits of a summary answer. The Personal God or Lord of the Universe (*Īśvara*) is Himself the first product of *Māyā*, and any incarnation of Him, therefore, must be Illusion doubly-dyed—it will be an illusion of Illusion, an unreal image of Unreality. For those to whom God is truly and eternally personal, the question is of more importance and presents greater difficulty. How, in their view, does the Incarnate God stand to the Supreme God? The Hindu commentators have brought forward the idea that the divine nature is constituted of parts (*amśas*), and so is divisible or separable into distinct portions. On the face of it, an explanation of this kind cannot be accepted as satisfactory. It is a cardinal tenet of the *Advaita Vedānta* that the impersonal Brahma is *akhaṇḍa* or impartite: it exists only as one and a whole and cannot be supposed to be subject to distinction into parts, of which one may be here and another yonder. Is it not equally improper to imagine a division of personality and to assign a fraction or portion of it to this individual and some other fraction or portion to that individual? This conception of personality is too crude and unphilosophical. The Hindu theory of Incarnation borders upon the rather gross idea of a physical generation in which there may be a varying proportion of the mixture of elements divine and human.

The out-standing example of the *amśa* theory is the story of the birth of Rāma and his half-brothers. The *Rāmāyaṇa* tells how the childless king, Daśaratha, performed sacrifice to obtain royal issue. In answer to his prayer the god Vishnu appeared and gave to him a pot of nectar (*pāyasa*), which his three wives were to drink.



To Kausalyā a half was given, and of her was born Rāma, in whom half of the divine essence resided. Kaikeyī received a quarter, and her son, Bhārata, consequently had a fourth part of the divine essence. Sumitrā drank the remaining portion, and she gave birth to the twins, Lakshmaṇa and Śatrughna, who each had a share of one-eighth of the divine essence. Some incarnations, as the offspring of incarnates, are described as *aṁśāṁśāvatāra*—the part of a part. One incarnation only is generally regarded as *pūrṇa*, or full and complete; and that is the incarnation of Vishnu in the Krishna of the *Bhagavadgītā*; but even he, at other times and in other Scriptures, as for example in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which is devoted to the elaboration of his legendary tale, is spoken of as partial and imperfect.

One other question arises in connexion with the Hindu doctrine of Incarnation. What, according to Hindu belief, may be the purpose of an incarnation? The occasions for these divine manifestations or theophanies are numerous and varied in kind: many are trivial and some are unethical. The destruction of a demon, the overthrow of a persecuting king, the protection of the Brahman caste, the deliverance of a devotee from a temporal trouble, or the conferring of a boon—such are some of the typical reasons assigned for the greater and better-known incarnations. The passage, quoted above from the *Gītā*, contains the most dignified, comprehensive and ethical statement in Hinduism on the purpose and aim of an incarnation—‘To protect the saints, to destroy evil-doers, to establish *dharma*, I come (to birth) age after age.’ And yet, it is impossible to perceive any true connexion between the intention announced in these words and the character and deeds of the Krishna of the *Purāṇas* and popular worship. The Krishna stories belong to what is least admirable and moral in Indian religious literature. They are not merely unethical and



offensive to the conscience: they appear silly and tedious to the reason and taste of the modern man. One cannot conceive that the Krishna, say of the *Prema Sāgara*, in his childish pranks or in the grotesque adventures of his manhood could ever be brought into the counsels of the senate, market, or home for our guidance and direction to-day in national or family affairs. These tales have no connexion with the realities of life, and they cannot, therefore, shed any light on our problems of conduct.<sup>1</sup>

This brings us to reflect that one of the chief defects of Hinduism is that it has so uncertain a hold on morality. 'Dharma' and 'Adharma,' Righteousness and Unrighteousness, both belong to the sphere of the phenomenal. Says Śankara in his commentary on the *Gītā*: 'Even Dharma is considered to be a sin by one who wishes to obtain release (*moksha*)' (iv. 36). In other words, even ethical conduct is inferior to the knowledge by which alone, and in the last resort, a man may win salvation or emancipation from the round of illusory existence. Śankara's comment is the word of a monist, who holds that the Absolute is the impersonal Brahma.

Śankara means that the man who is interested in and concerned about *Dharma*—Righteousness, or the doing of Duty—still lives and moves in the sphere of Illusion or Ignorance: he is under the power of *Māyā*. This Brahman, Devadatta, for example, who imagines that he must study the *Veda* and perform sacrifice, is possessed by a separative Egoism. He thinks of himself as an individual agent, distinct from other individuals; and he is subject to the urge of desires and passions. All this is sheer Illusion. When he comes near to the vision of Brahma, he will see only the One Self which does not truly act, which feels no desires and undergoes no changes of mood.

It will be argued that a doctrine of this kind gives no encouragement to immorality; for the man who is on

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix IV on the *Historicity of Krishna*.



the verge of the supreme vision or knowledge feels no impulse to act in any way; and if he acts, does so without the motivation of desire. The doctrine, however, has been exposed to the corruption of saying that any follower of the way of knowledge may act as he chooses. It has been interpreted to mean that the wise man knows he can commit any sin without contracting impurity of soul, and that for him the distinction of right and wrong does not exist. On any interpretation, the *Advaita* doctrine affirms that in the state of perfection there is no sense of Righteousness—that there is no moral goodness in pure being.

The same attitude towards morality has been exhibited by those who think of God as personal. In the *Kaushītaki Upanishad*, to which reference has already been made, Indra says to Pratardana: 'And he who knows me thus, by no deed of his is his life harmed, not by the murder of his mother, nor by the murder of his father, not by theft, not by the killing of a Brahman. If he is going to commit sin, the bloom does not depart from his face.' This chapter of the *Upanishad* concludes with the words: 'For he Indra (the inner life and self-consciousness) makes him, whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds, do a good deed; and the same makes him, whom he wishes to lead down, do a bad deed.'

The Christian thinker will allow that there is a sense in which we may conceive God and celestial beings as transcending our present human morality. The Seventh Commandment would have no meaning or validity in a world where they 'neither marry nor are given in marriage,' and the race is not perpetuated by a physical generation. The positive laws of morality are related to the circumstances and conditions of life, and they may be abrogated with a change in these. This, however, is not the same thing as to assert that there is a superior or ultimate world in which there is no righteousness at all.



When one order of existence is superseded by another and higher, we may believe that an ethical purity and goodness, of which we can have no conception here, succeed to those attitudes and attributes which we are now able to know and appreciate. The distinction of right and wrong is eternal; righteousness belongs to the very being of God.

Even if we regard righteousness or morality as ordained solely for our human world and obligatory only upon us men, then we must judge that any being who enters our order of life places himself under its obligations. Should God Himself take upon Him our nature and our functions, then He would be bound by our morality, unless He would become lower than His own good man. Hindu Theism and Polytheism are deeply infected with the old pagan notion that the gods are privileged to do evil without guilt or blame. When they come in the likeness of men, they become also of like passions with ourselves; but, unlike ourselves, they are under no obligation to control those passions and may indulge them without sin. Godhead, so conceived, is not goodness: it is licence.

It follows, therefore, that wherever the view prevails of God as *amoral* or unmoral, whether the Ultimate Being be thought of as impersonal or as personal, an incarnation of God is not necessarily moral. The Godhead may manifest itself indifferently in the moral or in the immoral: it is believed to be in both. A Christian theologian has written: 'The final objection to saying that all minds are parts of God is not merely that thoroughly wicked persons exist, but that we are all wicked in our measure. . . . Thus we are justified in asserting not merely that immanence is a thing of degree, but that the degrees of it are ethically qualified. "Universal Incarnation" ignores this patent fact.'<sup>1</sup> This, however, is not a state-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mackintosh—*The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 437.



ment which can be proved by argument: it is one of the categorical imperatives of the Moral Self: it is an intuition of the Soul as a moral agent.

Enough has been said here to show that the term, *Avatāra*, is employed by Hindus in an indeterminate sense: it may denote many kinds and degrees of the appearance of a god in the likeness of a physical body. It is used to describe what is only a brief manifestation in an illusory form as well as the indwelling of a human body for the whole course of a human life. For this reason, it is a word which ought to be used by Christians with care and caution, and with a clear definition of their own meaning. When they speak of 'the Incarnation,' they mean that God's very self dwelt among men in a real human body, with a complete human nature, under the ordinary conditions of our humanity and subject to righteousness, for a moral purpose—the deliverance of men from the bondage of sin and the leading of them into a nobler life. It has often been said that whereas Christianity speaks of but one incarnation, Hinduism knows many incarnations. Hindus must consider afresh, whether in the Christian sense of the word—a manifestation in time and space of the Godhead in a real humanity for an ethical purpose of universal scope—Hinduism knows of even one incarnation.

We have to consider, then, after this preliminary survey, what truth is revealed to us by the death of Jesus about His personality. What does the Cross tell us of the being and nature of the Crucified? In the first place, the Cross of Jesus is a proof of His real and complete humanity. He was man—truly and perfectly a man, and nothing attested it more clearly than His dying. By this we intend to say much more than that the passion and death of Jesus are historical events. Later, we shall pass on to consider whether Jesus was God—that is to say, whether He was an incarnation of God. If He



were an incarnation of God, which for the moment we neither assume nor declare, then the historicity of Jesus is essential. An *unhistorical* incarnation is a contradiction in terms; for any story of an incarnation purports to be a narrative of something which has happened in time and space. No legendary tale, which is the mere invention of fancy, can be the account of an incarnation. It may be accepted as evidence that the idea of God's coming in the likeness of men was known, and that His coming was desired; but it is not the story of an incarnation. An incarnation is an historical event, or it is nothing at all. The doctrine of an Incarnation links together the unseen and the seen, mysticism and history: it affirms that God has entered, as a matter of fact, in material form, into this world of ours; and that we have evidence of it. To equate Rāma or Krishna with Jesus as Incarnates is, therefore, first of all, a confusion of the unhistorical with the historical—of what happened only in the realm of the imagination with what happened in the realm of sensible fact and is capable of scientific proof. One who says that Krishna is for him an incarnation of God as Jesus is for the Christian, and at the same time treats the question of the historicity of Krishna as a matter of no importance, falls into the strangest self-contradiction.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence for the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth is so overwhelming that we have been justified in assuming from the beginning of this inquiry that we are dealing with an historical person and with His death as an event in time. What, however, we wish to point out here and now is not simply that the death of Jesus implies that

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix IV on the *Historicity of Krishna*. Professor Rudolf Otto writes in his *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity*: 'When we entered the great temple of Vishnu-Nārāyaṇa, in Vṛndāvana, a merchant in his modest shop offered us his wares. The consecrated signs and marks of Vishnu were there, the *Gītā* and other holy Scriptures. There was also a little pamphlet there, with a strange title, in the midst of the Indian books. It was the Gospel of Luke. "Of whom does this book treat?"—"Of Jesus. He is the last *Avatār* of Vishnu." So think many in India' (p. 109).



He was man, but also that His humanity was complete. Whether or not Jesus was God Incarnate, he was certainly—and in the fullest and truest sense—our fellow-man. He did not assume any illusory or partial humanity. He possessed the whole of our human nature, and lived His life under the conditions of our humanity, not excepting our final liability to die. If He were a divine person inhabiting a human body, then His incarnation was not a temporary and limited assumption of manhood. It was a process as ordered and fulfilled as the life of any man from the cradle to the grave. If we may so put it, Jesus went through with the whole business of being a man from birth to death.

Of so many stories of gods incarnate—even if they were historical, which they are not—we should have to remark that the humanity assumed was not a real humanity. The god might have come down 'in the likeness of men,' but it was no more than a likeness: there was the outward appearance of a man without the reality of manhood behind it. The humanity was a mere mask, and the god was simply masquerading as man. He was ready to doff his disguise, when the moment required that he should. Such an incarnation reminds one of the adventures of the Caliph, whose pleasure it was to assume the guise of one of his poor subjects and roam the streets of his capital after dark. We often hear to-day of some rich man in England or America who leaves the ease and security of his home, buys a tramp's outfit and takes to the road, couching at night in the common lodging-house. There is a point, however, beyond which the monarch and the millionaire will not go: the adventure and the social experiment must be conducted within limits, they must not be pressed too far. When the disguise becomes acutely inconvenient or threatens peril to life, it is dropped: the adventurer reverts to the use of his resources and he resumes his proper station. The shoe



is cast away as soon as it begins to pinch: the comedy of the acting is not allowed to develop into a tragedy of real life. Such men as these are voluntary paupers within easy reach of their bankers. They are self-made prisoners who have the key to the dungeon in their pocket and will come out into light and liberty when the darkness and confinement have lost the thrill of novel sensation.

The death of Jesus removes His humanity altogether out of the category of the sportive jest and play-acting, or of the social adventure, undertaken from motives of curiosity or kindliness. He was man as we are men—in His nature, in the limitations of that nature, and in the experiences to which it made Him liable. He grew in bodily stature and in powers of mind. He knew all the wants and infirmities of the body—hunger and thirst and weariness from toil and travel. He felt our emotions and moods of pity and sorrow, indignation and anger, fear and courageous resolve. He wept tears and He spoke words of scathing rebuke. He was 'in all points tempted like as we are.' He craved for sympathy and fellowship, and put His faith in the Invisible. He was man in His least actions and in His greatest. When He asked, 'Who touched Me?' He was not acting a part, but speaking under the limitations of human incapacity and ignorance. If He had superhuman powers, He never used them to extricate Himself from the pains and dangers of our common lot—not even from mortal peril. That surely is the meaning of the First Temptation and of His word to the Disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane about the legions of angels.<sup>1</sup>

He was so much and so truly man that there are many still who say that He was nothing more. His death, then, is the completion of His humanity: it 'rounded off' His life. All the seen and known course of a man's career He ran, from start to finish. He endured and suffered

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 4<sup>1-4</sup>, Luke 4<sup>1-4</sup>, and Matt. 26<sup>12</sup>.



our appointed lot without rebate or curtailment: nothing in it was refused by Him. He did not draw out of being a man, when to be a man meant to die. About the reality of His manhood, what doubt can there be, when we stand beneath His cross? At His passion His judge brought Him forth to the view of the populace with the words—'Behold the Man,' *Ecce Homo*. The Centurion who watched His sufferings and saw Him die had no more doubt of His manhood than of His goodness—'Certainly this was a righteous man'—(Luke 23<sup>47</sup>, Cp. Matt. 27<sup>54</sup>; Mark 15<sup>39</sup>). There have been teachers who would have reduced His humanity to a shadow, and made of it an illusion or a garment which He lightly wore and lightly discarded; but the Christian Church throughout the ages has adhered to and affirmed the reality and the completeness of His manhood. He was, according to its most developed Creed, 'perfect in manhood . . . truly man . . . of a rational soul and body.'<sup>1</sup> Whatever His disciples afterwards came to believe about Him, they knew Him first, and without error or doubt, as man.

Our thought, however, must move forward from this point. We cannot exercise too great care over the facts belonging to the order of time and space; but we are unable to rest in these, for we are driven onwards to an interpretation of them by a necessity of our reason. Mr. H. G. Wells at the beginning of his short and vivid sketch of the career of Jesus the Nazarene has remarked: 'It is on the whole more convenient to keep history and theology apart. A large proportion of the Christian world believes that Jesus was an incarnation of that God of all the earth whom the Jews first recognized. The historian, if he is to remain a historian, can neither accept nor deny that interpretation. Materially, Jesus appeared in the likeness of a man, and it is as a man that the historian must deal with him.' This is a real distinction,

<sup>1</sup> The Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451.



and it will have proved its value if it leads an enquirer to spare no pains in the attempt to ascertain details of place and date, to describe with accuracy the deeds of Jesus as they appeared outwardly, and to record His very words. But no great historian has ever confined himself to what are merely material appearances: he is for ever transgressing the limits of the seen and heard, and entering the mysterious province of personality. He endeavours to penetrate into the motives and to portray the characters of the men and women of whom he writes: he assesses them at their moral and spiritual value. Least of all, in the case of Jesus, is it possible to give a true and adequate account of Him, if the spiritual and invisible order be ignored. He lived in it and for it: His actions and His teaching demand that we shall say who He is and what is His relation to God.

We have, therefore, to submit, in the second place, after recognizing the real and full humanity of Jesus, that His death exercised a profound influence upon the idea of God. It brought in another conception of what constitutes divinity and deity; and it revealed Jesus as God in the sense of that new way of thinking. The *New Testament* does not show to us a Jesus of Nazareth suddenly accepted, at one bound, as God incarnate; neither does it give any support to the view that there was an agelong and very gradual process leading up to the deification of Jesus, such as we may find in other cults. The *New Testament* exhibits an ascent of faith in the disciples, which mounts by swift and sure steps to a conviction of His divinity. The deification did not take place after the lapse of centuries, when the memories of the real man had grown dim and had been distorted into shapes looming vague and huge. The belief that Jesus was none other than God manifest in the flesh, God Incarnate, arose and was proclaimed among the contemporaries of Jesus, many of whom had companied



with Him. Luther's words are of great beauty and force: 'The Scriptures begin very gently and lead us on to Christ as to a man, and then to one who is Lord over all creatures, and after that to one who is God. So do I enter delightfully and learn to know God; but the doctors and philosophers have insisted on beginning from above, and so have become fools. We must begin from below, and after that come upwards.'<sup>1</sup> Is not this the order for India too—first, Jesus the man and the history of the outward; but afterwards and immediately, the process of interpretation?

We have seen already, in our earlier chapters, that there was in the words of Jesus a unique authority, and in His acts an unmatched power, which led in His lifetime to many questions being raised about His relation to God. Jesus Himself originated this process of thought by what He claimed to be. We cannot doubt that before His Passion His disciples had begun to cherish the hope that He was indeed the promised Deliverer of their nation—the Christ of a superhuman dignity. Some of them in the inner circle had made confession of their belief. The death of Jesus was a staggering blow to this incipient faith: it cast the disciples down into a gulf of utter grief and despair. No one has yet succeeded in accounting for the establishment and growth of the Christian society or Church and for the spread of the Christian religion on any basis other than the belief that the Jesus who had been crucified was risen again and had given proof of His being alive to His chief disciples. It was this belief in the Resurrection, coming so soon upon the Crucifixion, which revived the drooping hearts of the followers of Jesus, filled them with joy and courage, and also put into their hands the key to the interpretation of the Cross. It is not our proper concern here to attempt to decide what precisely were the objective occurrences

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Dr. Mackintosh in *The Person of Jesus Christ*. p. 232.



which originated and confirmed this faith in the Resurrection of Jesus. Sufficient for us to recognize the fact and to allow due weight to the fact, that within a few days of the death of Jesus upon the Cross, the circle of men and women who had kept company with Him, who had with their own eyes seen Him die, were possessed of the firm and joyous conviction that He was alive and was exercising an influence upon them—that He was indeed present with them after a spiritual fashion by His Spirit. This is the course of events as depicted in the early document of the *Acts*, which takes high rank as a history of the Primitive Church: it is the conclusion at which we arrive whenever we endeavour by any line of evidence to trace back the life and activity of the Church to its source. No other origin is discernible.

The immediate effect of this belief in the Resurrection was to restore to the disciples their earlier acceptance of and faith in Jesus as the Messiah or Christ, and to give Him an authority and majesty even in excess of what they had previously imagined. The substance of the first proclamation and teaching of the Apostolic Church at Jerusalem is contained in St. Peter's speech at Pentecost: 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made Him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified' (*Acts* 2<sup>36</sup>). And there was in the awe and repentance of the Jewish crowd which listened to these words an element of almost craven or superstitious fear: for some of them seem to have felt in a measure as if the Great One had come and gone among them unrecognized—nay worse, He had been dishonoured and slain; and what might they not expect from His vengeance at His return? This Church of the first days saw with the eye of the soul a Messiah, who was not a mere earthly prince, residing in David's city and conferring dominion upon the sacred nation, but One who had been exalted to the heavenly world and was there seated 'on the right hand



of God' in ineffable majesty and might. And this risen and exalted Jesus, in their consciousness, was still communicating with them, His followers on earth, by the channel of His invisible Spirit, conveying peace, gladness and hope, and prevalence over sinful desire.

We are not attempting here an explanation of the Holy Spirit; but we are describing the facts of the primitive Christian experience. This was how the first Christians felt: this was what they believed and proved in themselves. An experience such as this, following so closely upon the death of Jesus, had a profound effect upon the interpretation of that death. When those disciples turned from the inner vision of the risen and glorified Jesus to consider again the Jesus whom they had seen with the eyes of their flesh nailed to His Cross, and breathing out His life there, the sense of a miracle of condescending love was born in their hearts. He who had accepted that pain and that shame was none other, so they now believed, than the Lord Christ. When had meekness and patience, self-control and courage, mercy and love like these ever before been shown to man? The *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, His immeasurable love in thus dying for them, captured and subdued their hearts. The Lord Jesus Christ, as He was now known and called, became the object of their thanksgiving and adoration: praise and prayer were addressed to Him. He who had brought them to God in penitence and trust, through whom they enjoyed the present sense of sins forgiven and the powers of a new life, was counted by them worthy of their worship.

All of them were men and women in whom from childhood had been inculcated a deep reverence for God as the sole being to be worshipped. This was the strongest and noblest tradition of their race. For each one of them the first and greatest commandment began with: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One'; and they had been



bidden to worship and serve Him only. For them it was the greatest of impieties to worship any other. It was not, then, in pursuance of a line of cold or abstract reasoning that the first Christians began to worship Jesus—something much stronger than that was needed. The first Christians obeyed a natural, immediate and irresistible impulse of gratitude and reverence. The worship of Jesus was the response to the manifestation of an incomparable moral beauty and worth in His life, and above all in His death—in that lay a wealth of goodness and love such as the world had never conceived before. It would be a legitimate, though not a sufficient, definition of God to say that God is He who may be worshipped: what is truly worshipful—that is, worthy of the homage of the whole nature of man—is truly divine. And from this point of view, we may ask, What have we known more worshipful than the mind which was in Jesus crucified? In the moments when He was dying, He was showing forth the divinest thing in our human Universe. Had we been living then and had we wandered over the face of this earth in search of God, we should have been nearest to God and we might have seen most of Him in the thoughts of a broken man who hung upon a criminal's cross. It would have been infinitely strange; but it was and is for ever true. Is not this a part of what theologians mean when they say that 'Jesus has for us men the value of God'?

The death of Jesus has thus profoundly modified our ideas of what constitutes true deity. Men were apt before Jesus died to put forward as the chief attributes of the Godhead illimitable power and range of power, immunity from change and from death. We still do speak of the Deity in terms of omnipotence, omnipresence and eternity. It is difficult for men at any time to put a definite and intelligible meaning into these theological or meta-



physical terms. From the day when men began to see God in Jesus crucified, another emphasis has come into the doctrine of God. There is a Word of the Cross about God no less than a Word of the Cross to men. The Cross reveals God in the glory of His moral attributes. God is to be seen and known in the majesties of Nature; but for us, even more than in the great and strong wind, in the earthquake or in the fire, He speaks in the still small voice of Calvary.

There is a tendency in Western thought under the influence of the physical Sciences, as also in pantheistic Hinduism, to conceive God as if He, or rather It, were 'an extremely attenuated kind of matter, diffused throughout space'—an inconceivably subtle gas, or the primal all-originating energy of protons and electrons. Jesus began a new era in our imagination of God. His death gave men to see that the Ultimate and Eternal force is love, and that in the history of mankind this has manifested itself as redeeming love. 'Our deepest ground,' writes Dr. Mackintosh, 'for predicating divinity of Jesus is the presence in His life of that love, lowliness and redeeming power which constitutes the essential definition of Godhead.'<sup>1</sup>

The more men meditated upon the meaning of the death of Jesus, the more it became impossible for them to think and speak of God as the Great Exactor—the Almighty Ruler who takes constant and inexorable toll of His subjects, who demands everything and gives nothing. Lordship, under the influence of the crucified Jesus, has come to mean service: it is the excellence and prerogative of God to give and to serve beyond all others. 'The Self-giving God is wholly present in Jesus.' One of the forms which this new conception of God took was the identification by the first disciples of the Messiah, the King who was to come, with 'the Suffering Servant

<sup>1</sup> *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 436-7.



of Jehovah.' That was a combination of ideals new in Jewry. The sublime and pathetic figure of the Fifty-Third chapter of the Book of Isaiah had long been an enigma to the devout Jew. 'I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this?' was a question which had been asked of Israel's teachers by many before the Ethiopian proselyte addressed it to the Evangelist Philip. (Acts 8<sup>34</sup>.) It was seen that in Jesus crucified were combined the traits and activities of royalty and humility, sovereign power and lowliest service, Godhead and redemptive suffering.

The purpose expressed in the death of Jesus, since it was voluntarily accepted by Him, cannot have been at variance with the purpose of His life. We have seen that, from the beginning of His ministry and throughout it, His aim and constant endeavour were to lead men into penitence and obedience to God, and so to likeness to God in nature and conduct. Sin, for Jesus, meant transgression of the will of God: it was behaviour which was inspired by motives and displayed attributes other than those which exist in the mind of God. God, in the estimation of Jesus, was the source and sum of all goodness and perfection. Since Jesus thus conceived of God as righteous or ethical, He ordered His own life according to righteousness in utter fidelity to God. He satisfied the demands of the righteousness which men knew apart from His teaching and example. The death of Jesus, judged by the highest standards of contemporary Jewish or ethnic morality, was the fulfilment of all righteousness; but that death has since raised incalculably our standard of righteousness. It has not lowered the ethical ideal, but has continually and progressively ennobled and enriched it: it has given to men a measure of fidelity to truth and goodness and of love from which they shrink in the judgement and valuation of their own actions. To say that 'the Incarnation was for the



Atonement' is one mode of affirming that the Incarnation of Jesus was ethical: that it had for its object the bringing of men to a righteous and good God, and was consistent with its object. As was the aim, so was the means.

The belief that He who suffered upon the Cross was God was bound to add immensely to the significance of the death. If that were true, there must be some tremendous meaning in the event. It must mean much more than if a faithful servant or messenger, a death-despising prophet had suffered crucifixion. The death of Jesus, if He be God, must signify in a surpassing degree God's love for the sinner, His abhorrence of sin, and His determination at any cost—at any cost to Himself—to recover the sinner. If God does these things, not through another, but in and through Himself, by His own humiliation and passion, what manner of love, patience and resolution is there in God? Thus the idea that God is in Jesus Crucified and the fact of the death of Jesus upon the Cross act and re-act each upon the other. The belief that God Incarnate died upon the Cross makes the event of everlasting and universal significance; and the event itself is for ever putting new content 'into' the idea of God. The value placed by Christians in the dying of Jesus has at its root the faith—that God suffered there. This has been so long and so constantly assumed that now we can scarcely separate the two elements—the dying of the man Jesus from the passion of God, the event from its mystical interpretation; but we must recognize that the whole doctrine of the Atonement rests upon this truth of God's indwelling the Crucified Jesus.

It is not possible or desirable to attempt a history or even a summary of the Christian doctrine of the person of Jesus; but the earnest Hindu enquirer will allow that if he would know what Christianity is, he must be willing to consider what the first great Christian teachers



had to say of Jesus and how they arrived at their faith. We shall conclude this chapter, therefore, with the briefest possible reference to the types of thought which are to be found in the *New Testament*. They vary in expression with the upbringing, temperament, outlook and experience of the writer; but all converge consistently on one belief. We will pass over the forms of doctrine which are associated with St. Peter and the unknown author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and deal only with the two main types—the Pauline and the Johannine.

St. Paul's teaching is of special importance—not simply because it has exercised so deep and widespread an influence on the belief of all subsequent generations of Christians, but also because some of his Epistles are probably our earliest Christian documents, prior even to the Gospels, and they are indubitably authentic and historical. Paul was a younger contemporary of Jesus, though it would seem that he never met Jesus in His earthly ministry. His first personal contact with Jesus was in the vision on the way to Damascus. It was the crucial event of his life, changing the whole course of it, and St. Paul was never ashamed to speak of it—not even before the greatest. It was to him no delusion or subjective imagination, but a true manifestation of another living person—even Jesus risen and glorified. A contrast has been suggested between Paul's apprehension of Jesus and that of the other Apostles. They first knew Jesus as man and saw Him in His crucifixion before they beheld His glory: St. Paul first had direct knowledge of Jesus in His exalted and glorified form. He turned from that vision of the Lord in majesty to contemplate the death of Jesus of which he had had accounts from eye-witnesses, both deadly adversaries and worshipping disciples. From that summit of exaltation to that pit of humiliation, what a distance! The other Apostles looked



the reverse way—from the Cross to the seat at God's right hand. The standpoint of the observer did not matter—whichever way one looked—the impression was of stupendous height and depth.

St. Paul wrote: 'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow' (Phil. 2<sup>5-9</sup>).

Jesus was to Paul, in the first instance, the one who had borne with him in his blindness and waywardness, who had sought him out and found him, who had forgiven him and commissioned him. And what Jesus had done of His grace for him, Paul, and for others whom he knew, He was able and willing to do for all. Jesus, the Lord Christ, was the maker and centre of the company of those who had found the forgiveness of their sins along with power and purity. Jesus Christ had called them forth out of the rest of mankind, and He was the head of the new society—His Church, which was as His body. From this moral and spiritual realm of the new society of re-created individuals, St. Paul's thought travelled outwards to the physical realm and the whole Universe. He affirmed that He who had made the Christian 'a new creature' was also the agent in all creation; that the Redeemer was the Lord of the Universe in whom resided the fulness of the Godhead—'the totality of the divine powers and attributes.'<sup>1</sup> Every soul of man might have dealings with Him, and there

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Commentary on Colossians*, I, 19.



was no need of or room for intermediaries of Jewish angels, Gnostic emanations or 'partial' incarnations, which some would have placed between God and His world.

I will quote only one great Christological passage from St. Paul's letters which exhibits this ascent of faith. We may not be able now or at once to follow St. Paul in his mounting steps; but India, like the rest of the world, must take into account the movement of this man's thought and the greatness and beauty of the life which was sustained by it; for here is the authentic progress of Christian belief. And let it be specially noted that with St. Paul everything starts from an ethical experience, and not with a metaphysical inquiry or speculation. The sense of sin, of a need of deliverance, of being forgiven, and of entrance into a new life—this moral experience comes first; and the metaphysical or theological interpretation follows after:

'Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: who is the image of the invisible God . . . for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible . . . All things have been created through Him and unto Him: and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church' (Col. 1.<sup>12-18</sup>).

The only other type of *New Testament* thought and expression to which we shall allude is that which is found in the Johannine literature—the Gospel and the Epistles which go by the name of St. John the Apostle. The starting-point is the same—in an ethical experience, although an experience of a different kind: and the substance of the ensuing faith is the same, although it



makes choice of other words, suggested by Jewish theology or Greek philosophy. Whoever he was that wrote these books or supplied the material for them, he was one who was speaking of things seen and heard. He had been the witness of a life of surpassing moral beauty and strength, had passed from the state of guilty fear into the love of God, and by companying with Jesus had entered into the fellowship of the Father and His glorified Son, Jesus Christ :

‘That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled concerning the Word of life—and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us . . . that ye also may have fellowship with us. Yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ’ (1 John i. 1-3).

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him. . . . In Him was life, and the life was the light of men . . . even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world. And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us—and we beheld His glory, glory as of an only-begotten son of a father, full of grace and truth. . . . Of His fulness we all received, and grace upon grace. . . . Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him’ (St. John i. 1-18).

The Church of Christ throughout the world—the great communion of those ‘who profess and call themselves Christians’—is divided on many and great issues; but it is united in its confession of Jesus as God. The Christian teacher and preacher in India will not make a beginning with the definitions of the ancient Christian Creeds,



which contain the articles of the orthodox Christian faith. He will not offer these at the outset to a Hindu seeker after truth for his immediate and unqualified acceptance. They must be presented sooner or later, if the enquirer would have the whole account of this matter of religion; but they should come last rather than first. The facts of the living and dying of Jesus and the facts of the experience of those who, through their trust in a Jesus Risen and Glorified, receive the grace of forgiveness and the power of a new life, are first in order of time; and apart from these the Creeds are not rightly to be understood. We must beware of sharp and hard distinctions; but it will be truer to say that the understanding of the Creeds comes from the experience of salvation than to say that salvation comes from an acceptance of the Creeds. The Creeds are an attempt intellectually to define the life of Faith.

A Hindu lecturer in Europe has written with a certain mixture and redundancy of metaphor: 'To require of the student that he should swallow the pills of metaphysical theory and theological dogma, without protest, were no better than to pour concentrated carbolic or sulphuric acid on the skin and to expect the unfortunate victim to keep quiet.'<sup>1</sup> But unless the student, who has the mental capacity, be willing to consider the meaning and use of the venerable symbols of the Christian Faith, something will be lacking in his earnestness and intellectual honesty. We cannot put them aside lightly, whether or not we decide ultimately to adopt the conclusions they set forth or approve their modes of expression. It may be that for many thinkers their chief value is negative rather than positive: they do not so much explicate truth as warn against error.

The doctrine of the Trinity is intended to declare the Oneness of God—He is One, and not two or three;

<sup>1</sup> Sri Ānanda Āchārya, *Brahmadarśanam*, p. viii.



but one in a spiritual and not in a baldly arithmetical sense. It asserts that within the Godhead there are distinctions, which make eternally possible will and thought and love. We are not to suppose that God has ever been dependent—for self-realization—upon the material world or upon any of His creatures. There is the blessed society of the Godhead. The intercourse of Jesus with His Father in Heaven, which belongs to the essence of His life and shines forth as its most eminent feature, cannot be resolved into an illusion; nor, however strongly we feel that there was a spiritual and moral unity between the invisible God and Jesus are we to regard this unity as a bare identity. Perhaps for Indian thought the notion of Immanence may provide the most helpful avenue of intellectual approach to the study of this mystery of personality. It is a mystery of our own being as well as of the being of Jesus: for in us too there are the divine and the human, and we cannot set limits to or trace the boundaries between our personality and that of the God who works within us. The theologian, to whose helpful guidance we are already so much indebted, has written: 'One true mode of describing Christ is to speak of His person as representing the absolute Immanence of God.'<sup>1</sup>

The way, however, by which we must all come is not intellectual at all: it is moral. If a man would know Christ, he will not ask first—'What is the relation of Being to Becoming? How was the Universe created—of what elements, by what force, and in what order? What is Spirit and what is Matter?' All are legitimate and inspiring activities of the questing mind, but Christ does not descend to us as a Master of the Schools to resolve our metaphysical problems. The man who is intensely curious about the Universe and not in the least concerned about the disorder in his own soul and his

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mackintosh, *The Person of Jesus Christ*.



failures in the conduct of his own life will not even wish to learn the secret of Christ. He who would know Jesus as the Christ and Lord must ask, 'What shall I do to be saved—to be saved from baser desires, from cowardice and falseness, from pride and self-seeking? Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life—life uncorrupt and incorruptible?' This is the point at which Jesus meets us on the road, and from this place onwards He guides us into the increasing light of day and the abundance of life.

The preaching of the Cross has always been foolishness to the mere metaphysician who flies off from the plague of his own heart to speculative disputations; but to those who have been in sorrow over their sins and are being saved from sinfulness, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. These are the men who are fitted to understand and share St. Paul's doctrine of the Immanent God. We have quoted his phrase before, and shall return to it again, so charged is its simplicity with blessed meaning—'*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.*'

Stupendous height of heavenly love,  
Of pitying tenderness divine!  
It brought the Saviour from above,  
It caused the springing day to shine.

God did in Christ Himself reveal  
To chase our darkness by His light,  
Our sin and ignorance dispel,  
Direct our wandering feet aright,  
And bring our souls, with pardon blest,  
To realms of everlasting rest.



## CHAPTER II

### KARMA AND THE CROSS

*The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness.—ROMANS I. 18.*

*For, as through the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. . . . Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—ROMANS V. 19-21.*

KARMA is one of the few universal terms in Hinduism: both the word and the ideas connoted by it are familiar to all Hindus. It is derived from the Sanskrit root *kri*—‘to do,’ and signifies literally ‘what is done’—‘a deed.’ The word has a variety of uses, and often denotes ‘sacrifice’—the ceremonial deed *par excellence*. Most notably, however, it has come to mean a law of Causality, affirming that there is an invisible connexion between every action and its antecedents and consequents. It declares that any action in the present arises necessarily out of actions in the past, and that, in its turn, this will have its influence in determining what shall be action in the future. In the widest and most philosophical sense, the law of *Karma* cannot be limited to the sphere of human conduct. It is rather the law or principle governing the whole course of



Nature or phenomenal existence. It implies that in everything, animate or inanimate, there resides its determined and proper motion or activity, which is the sum-total of tendencies derived from the past. By *Karma* the sun, moon and planets keep their appointed courses; by *Karma* the tides rise and fall—the winds blow, turn about and sink to rest; by *Karma* the sap rises in herb and tree, the seasons succeed one to another, and man passes through all the stages of his life from birth to death. The law of *Karma*, however, is associated most definitely with the sphere of human conduct. It teaches that there is an inviolable connexion between what a man is and does now and what he has done previously, as also between what he does now and what he will become and do hereafter. Every deed that has ever been performed produces its fruit, and the doer must eat the fruits of his deeds. His present lot is the accumulated result of his past actions; and his future will consist of, and be determined by, the unexpended consequences of his actions in this or a previous life.

So stated, the doctrine of *Karma*, appears to be identical in some respects with the Christian doctrine of moral retribution, as it has been set forth, for example, by St. Paul:—‘Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth unto his own flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life’ (Gal. 6<sup>7-8</sup>).

‘For we must all be made manifest before the judgement-seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad’ (2 Cor. 5<sup>10</sup>).

The doctrine of *Karma* is closely linked with another Hindu doctrine—that of *Punarjanma* or Re-Incarnation. This world is conceived of as the place in which human *Karma* works itself out, and for its operation not one



birth, but many or an infinite number of births of various kinds, may be necessary. Associated with this doctrine of Re-Incarnation, *Karma* serves a double purpose. First, it seems to explain, what is felt to be otherwise inexplicable, the inequalities of human lot. One is born rich and another poor; one enjoys health and strength and another suffers lifelong pain and disease; one comes into a station of honour and authority and another becomes an insignificant member of a despised and servile order. It is claimed by the teachers of Hinduism that *Karma* tells us why one is born as a male, with the superior rights and privileges of manhood, and another to the inferior *status* of woman; why one human being issues from the womb of a Brahman mother, entitled to the study of the Scriptures, to Vedic ceremony and sacrifice, and to the knowledge which brings ultimate salvation; while another born in the same hour first sees the light in a Pariah's hut, and is condemned to a career of menial toil with no opportunity of learning or of salvation in this life, and with only the meagre hope that by exemplary behaviour now he may win a superior birth in his next incarnation. The capacity, the opportunity, the condition of this present existence, whether great or small, good or evil, pleasurable or painful, are thus supposed to have been fixed unalterably by actions in previous lives. Pain and dishonour are the punishment of their demerit: pleasure and fair fame are the reward of their merit. The fruit must be eaten, be it bitter or sweet to the taste.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that a trace of a similar belief may be found in the question which the Disciples put to Jesus about the man born blind—'Rabbi, who did sin, *this man* or his parents, that he should be born blind?' (John 9). Quotations from Rabbinical literature have been collected to show that the notion of transmigration existed in some quarters of Judaism. I think, however, that the incident in the Fourth Gospel admits of a simpler and more natural explanation. The question of the Disciples was a mark of their utter perplexity: it dealt with one of their standing problems. The thought underlying the question, or rather the axiom from which it started forth, was that all suffering is the penalty of sin. This beggar was suffering from a great disability—he was blind: therefore some one had sinned. Who was the sinner?



The Hindu *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas* (the Epics legendary Histories) contain many illustrations of this general belief that the present lot of an individual can be explained by a reference to his actions in a former birth. For example, Prahlāda, the son of the demon king, Hiranya Kaśipu, is said to have been in a previous existence a Brahman's son. He desired to attain union with the great god Vishnu, and for this purpose entered into intense meditation; but he allowed his concentrated thought to be broken by an alarm of the demons, and so was born as one of them in his next incarnation. Another well-known illustration is found in the Epic—the *Rāmāyaṇa*, where Rāma, condemned to go into exile, reflects upon the sorrow of his mother, Kausalyā.

Sure, in some ante-natal time,  
Were children by Kausalyā's crime  
Torn from their mother's arms away,  
And hence she mourns this evil day.<sup>1</sup>

On this view, we should be able to account for the condition and fortune of any man, if only we knew his past completely. The explanation lies there.

In the second place, the doctrine of *Karma*, associated with *Punarjanma*, has been put forward by orthodox Hindus as a defence of their social order—the caste system which is peculiar to Hinduism. The distinctions

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Was it the man himself? The supposition was absurd; for he had been born blind. Was it the parents—father or mother? They seemed to be decent, inoffensive folk, who had not done anything so manifestly wrong as to bring upon themselves this sorrow, or on their son this terrible deprivation. If they had, where was the justice of so penalizing the child for the sin of the parents? The whole case was an insoluble enigma. The Jews and their Scribes could not agree among themselves as to what might be the explanation: the Disciples knew of no answer. They presented to Jesus what seemed to them to be the only two possible alternatives, and neither yielded an admissible explanation. I find in their question the signs of bewilderment, but not the suggestion of a belief in reincarnation. Their first alternative was incredible: the second unjust.

<sup>1</sup> Griffiths' Translation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, quoted by Dr. Farquhar in *The Crown of Hinduism*, p. 141



of the four main castes one from another, and the great division between these castes and the fifth class, or out-castes, have been made and fixed—it is declared—by *Karma*. Thus, it is claimed, that the structure of Hindu society rests upon a foundation of the universal principles of retribution and rebirth. Every one has received his deserts. Any attempt to overthrow this order, or even to modify it, must be regarded as sacrilege and impiety; and it will also be futile, for the forces which create and sustain the order cannot be hindered or defeated in their operation and effect. It would be as well to fight against the stars in their courses.<sup>1</sup>

The question as to how this idea of *Karma* entered Indian religion does not concern us here. It makes no appearance in the pristine cults of the Vedic hymns: their cheerful naturalism is not over-cast by this gloomy conception. Some have attributed the origin and spread of the idea to climatic influences, acting on the invading Aryan tribes after they had settled down in the Ganges valley or the plains of Northern India. Others see in *Karma* an un-Aryan element which was taken over into the eclectic system of Hinduism from the earlier Dravidian inhabitants of India—though an explanation of this kind leaves one still to ask whence the aboriginal races derived their belief. Perhaps we need not go beyond recognising that, as soon as the stage of reflection is reached and enquiry arises into the cause of the inequalities apparent in the fortunes of men, the theory of *Karma* offers a simple and comprehensive explanation. That it is wholly devoid of proof and raises more difficulties than it solves will become manifest only at a more advanced stage,

<sup>1</sup> The old Law Book of Manu exhibits in detail the working-out of the principle of *Karma*—'With whatever disposition of mind a man performs any act, he reaps its result in a (future) body endowed with the same quality.' Thus, hereafter, the slayer of a Brahman enters the womb of a pig; a Brahman who steals the gold of a Brahman passes a thousand times through the bodies of spiders, snakes, and lizards; men who delight in doing hurt become carnivorous animals; a stealer of grain becomes a rat; a stealer of meat a vulture—and so on. See *The Laws of Manu*, xii 53-93, SBE, Vol. XXV.



when both reason and conscience are more enlightened and developed.

In its most severe and logical form the doctrine of *Karma* excludes both the free will of man and the grace of God. If actions entail certain consequences and there is no escape from these, it is not easy to see what either the moral agency of man or the goodwill of God can effect to avert or transform the effects of wrong-doing. To have done evil once is to condemn one's self to do evil again; and, having done evil again, to incur still further degradation. The unhappy doer, it may be said, drags a heavier and lengthening chain with each step he takes. So Deussen compares this phenomenal world of humanity and material things to a clock which is for ever winding itself up, as it runs down. In one of the *Upanishads*<sup>1</sup> the Brahman Śvetaketu, is asked by his father, Uddālaka, how it is that heaven does not become over-populated with emancipated souls. The answer given is that certain orders of being are so deeply involved in evil consequence that they can never extricate themselves, and, therefore, they will never present themselves at the gate of any heaven of the gods. Śankara in his Commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* speaks of some men who are *nityasamsārīs*, everlastingly bound to this world of false and unsatisfying appearances. The Wheel of Illusion is an instance of perpetual motion. The gods themselves are subject to *Karma*. Even the Creator, the Supreme Lord of the Universe, does not keep the wheel in revolution by His power of will: rather it revolves by the inherent force of *Karma*, over which neither the gods nor God can exercise any control.

But Hinduism is not a consistent system: it is a vast repository of religious ideas and practices. All kinds of thought—even contradictories—find place within it. No sooner have these harsh and repelling conclusions

<sup>1</sup> *Cāndogya*, 6: 9.



from the doctrine of *Karma*, in its rigour, appeared than counter-doctrines are presented and taught. The chain, it is said, can be broken in one or other of several ways—either by the gracious gift of God or by the attainment of the Supreme Knowledge of the Self. The deity whom the devotee worships with a single-hearted faith and love, be he Śiva or Vishnu, may by the exercise of his favour confer the boon of temporary release from the penalties of accumulated demerit. He may grant an age of bliss in his heaven to his worshipper, after which there may be a return to earthly life for the completion of *Karma*; but the knowledge of the Self—of the supreme Brahma—effects a final and complete emancipation. With the end of this present life, there will be no return for the Sage to the weary round of phenomenal existence—of births and deaths.<sup>1</sup>

In this Chapter, however, I am concerned mainly with the common people, or the average Hindu. Whatever may be the alleviations or corrections of the doctrine of *Karma* which Hindu philosophy and religion have provided, it must be admitted that the doctrine has tended to produce in the mass of the people and in the social life of India two effects. First, its direction has been towards fatalism and pessimism. The individual, under its influence, often comes to feel that he is in the grip of a dread power, which orders all his steps, from which

<sup>1</sup> The old Hindu writers have distinguished three kinds of *Karma*—*Sañcita*, that which has been accumulated in previous lives, and has not yet come into operation; *Prārabdha*, that which was accumulated in the past, but will be expended in the course of the present life; *Kriyamāna*, that new *Karma* which is now being formed as the result of actions in the present life, and will come into operation in some future birth. The fire of Knowledge burns up both the first and the third, and as soon as the second is spent this life will come to an end and there will be no return. Thus, it is believed, that formerly there were Sages living who had attained the Supreme Knowledge, and yet remained in the phenomenal world for a few years till the current karmic force was utterly spent, when they ceased to be as individuals and became one with the eternal Brahma. Just as the wheel of a cart, detached from its axle, will continue to run for a short distance, so those Perfect Ones continued, after the moment of ultimate vision and knowledge, to live for a brief time in the form of men.



there is no escape. The villager speaks of 'the writing upon his forehead.' The murderer on the scaffold has been known to attribute his crime to the over-ruling of his past. Every man must 'dree his weird.' For many a Hindu there is no gleam of the grace of God lighting up the desolate scene; and, as for the Knowledge of Brahma, if he has ever heard of it, he knows that it is not for one of the common people. Personal religion, under the influence of the doctrine of *Karma*, may become a closed system of determinism or fatalism. It begets a mood of apathy or despair.

A second result has been the drying up of the springs of compassion and neighbourly kindness, and the discouragement of effort for the benefit of others. There can be no moral obligation to exert one's self on behalf of others if each man will certainly receive the exact measure of his deserts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The attempt is made by modern exponents of Hinduism to deny the legitimacy of this conclusion. In *An Advanced Text-Book of Hindu Religion and Ethics*, issued by the Central Hindu College, Benares, in 1905, this passage occurs:—

'Another mistake sometimes made as to *Karma* is that which leads a person to say respecting a sufferer "He is suffering his *Karma*." Those who speak thus forget that each man is an agent of the *Karma* of others, as well as an experiencer of his own. If we are able to help a man, it is the proof that the *Karma* under which he was suffering is exhausted, and that we are the agent of his *Karma* bringing him relief. If we refuse the Karmic relief, we make bad *Karma* for ourselves.'

This exposition is evidence of the moral pressure which the doctrine and example of Jesus and His true disciples exert upon Hindu teachers to-day. The reconciliation of *Karma* and altruism, which is offered here, belongs more to Theosophy than to orthodox Hinduism. Might not the Hindu believer in *Karma*, as ordinarily taught, reply (1) that *Karma* is an irresistible force, unailing in its operation. The man who contemplates the sufferer may say, 'If his *Karma* and my *Karma* compel me to help him, I shall help him. And if I do not help him, it is proof that there is no *Karma* in him or me, compelling my aid.' (2) that, if the relief of the sufferer is now ordained by his *Karma*, it must come to pass, in any case. The man who contemplates the sufferer may say, 'Whatever I do or do not, this man's evil *Karma* has come to the point of exhaustion. If I do not relieve him, some one else will.'

The truth is that, as soon as we examine this theosophical plea, we find that it contains two ideas which have been overlaid and obscured by the doctrine of *Karma*—the free agency or power of initiation in man as a moral agent, and the solidarity of the human race, by which the good or ill fortune of the individual is made dependent in part upon the behaviour of all. As a commendation of neighbourly love, the argument above suffers from the defect that its appeal is to selfishness: it says in effect, 'Do good to another, lest evil happen to yourself.'



Imagine, then, ourselves, while under the dominance of the doctrine of *Karma*, to hear for the first time of the sufferings and death of Jesus. What effect would be produced upon our minds by the story of His Passion and Crucifixion? The first impression made by that story upon many Hindus, particularly in former days, was of amazement that one who so suffered and died could be put forward as the Teacher and Saviour of the World—the rightful Lord of Humanity. The Word of the Cross was to Jews a stumbling-block and to Greeks foolishness. To old-fashioned Hindus it was both a stumbling-block and foolishness: for it was incredible to them that a divine hero or king should die in such ignominy; while suffering in innocence was a contradiction of the principle, universally accepted among them, that all suffering can be traced ultimately to the sufferer's own ill-doing. The man in the crowd not many years ago was apt to reply—'If your Guru and Lord was put to death in this fashion, then he must have been a great sinner—if not in his life as Jesus of Nazareth, then in some previous existence of which you have not told us. He had to eat the fruit of former misdeeds.'

This was an early reaction to the preaching of the Cross in India. If it be not common to-day, one reason is that the person and character of Jesus are so much better known. Missionaries in all parts of India testify to the reverent, and almost eager, attention which Hindu audiences are now giving to the story of the Cross. Probably no books have a wider circulation in India than the little vernacular Gospels, which are sold for a fraction of a penny. It is impossible that the ordinary man—hearing or reading the words of Jesus and becoming acquainted with His deeds—shall fail to recognize His wisdom and His goodness. Countless thousands of Hindus are ready to confess that He was a great saint and religious teacher, and to give Him a place among their gods.



None the less—nay, all the more—if it be a fact that Jesus died upon the Cross, as it is a fact, then the first implication of His Cross is that something has been overlooked and left out of the Hindu account of suffering as it has been given in the doctrine of *Karma*. The assumption that the death of Jesus was in some way due to His own wrong-doing is felt to be painfully grotesque and irreverent. The Hindu himself, as soon as he becomes better acquainted with the facts, cannot away with it. But if this explanation is not available, what other can be offered?

I wish, therefore, to indicate two ways in which the doctrine of *Karma*, as commonly taught and professed, has been made to appear, in the light of the Cross, to be partial and in error.

I. It ignores the fact of the solidarity of mankind. No man lives to himself: he is a member of a human society. In a measure he has been made by others, and in his turn he makes others. My present happiness or misery, and capacity or incapacity are not the fruit of my actions alone: they have been created in part and are being continually affected by the conduct of my neighbours, dead and living. Of the *Karma* system Dr. Hogg has written—'According to it the only destiny which a man can modify is his own. . . . In no essential point can he hope to determine the destiny of even a single individual. For each individual in the coming generation, as well as in the present, his own *Karma* has already determined what sort of life-experience he must have and what measure of pleasure and pain.'<sup>1</sup>

The human race is not an aggregate of disparate individuals. The lives of men do not resemble the hairs of the head, or the hairs of those artificial switches which are exhibited so freely for sale in Indian bazaars. In

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hogg's *Karma and Redemption*. The whole of this closely-reasoned and sympathetic essay is worthy of the most careful study.



these each fibre hangs down in isolation from its fellows. Human history is rather a closely woven fabric of individual experiences, in which no single thread can be touched without all the stresses and strains being altered.

Do we need to emphasize this aspect of our lives in a world which has so suddenly grown smaller? We perceive to-day, more clearly than ever before, that the life of the individual is bound up in the bundle of the life of the community, and that the various communities of the world are mutually dependent. The races of mankind form an organic whole, and no member in the body politic can suffer but that all others suffer with it.

We may have forgotten the cartoon by a Dutch artist whose drawings had a great vogue during the War. It showed a father with bowed head sitting beside a bed on which lay the sheeted form of his dead wife. A little child clasped his knees and asked, 'What wrong did Mother do that she should so die?' We all know the answer to that poignant question. The dead mother had done no wrong that she should be killed in an air-raid; but she and that home of innocence were caught in the general wrong-doing and madness of the nations. We cannot say that Jesus sinned, because He suffered. We can see for ourselves that He was involved in the sinfulness of His generation. It is the very nature of sin to produce in a human society self-seeking and pride, suspicion and distrust, misunderstandings and resentment, prejudices and passions; and no just man could come into a society where sin prevailed and had done its work without encountering those hostile forces. When Jesus was right and others were wrong, it could not fail to happen that He should suffer. The wrath of the wicked alighted upon Him: as the Indian proverb says, 'Though thou be the Lord of the Universe, thou shalt not escape contumely.'



When we review the course of religious development as we can trace it in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, it may seem to be somewhat singular that the Christian preacher in India to-day should have to emphasize this truth of the solidarity of the human race—the fact, that the lot of a man in this world (not his personal worth or his eternal destiny—the final award upon him) is determined not by himself alone but largely by others. His health or sickness, his ease or pain, his opportunities of service or the limitations of his usefulness and influence, are fixed by forces other than those which have been generated by his own actions. His bodily and mental powers, his station in life and his environment are given to him by a power external to himself, and they appoint the boundaries of his conduct of life. They constitute the capital with which he has to trade, whether it be much or little; they are the talents entrusted to him, be they many or one. They do not deprive him of free agency and responsibility, but they determine the range of these. His responsibility begins and ends with what he has received: if he has had much, it is correspondingly great; if little, it is correspondingly small. The Final Dispenser, at the last, will render to every man not only according to his actions, but also according to his possibilities of action. We cannot, therefore, judge of the merits or demerits of men by their good or ill fortune in this life, by their present capacity or incapacity.

While we to-day, therefore, are stressing the importance of society in relation to the individual—its power over him and his fortunes, no less than his obligation to it—we may chance to recall the revolt among the Jews against the doctrine of solidarity in the form of it best known to them. Hebrew religion, like other tribal and national systems, began with an emphasis upon the value of the clan or nation as over against the individual. The divine promises of immortality and prosperity were thought



of as made to the family, or to the royal house, or to the nation. Where this type of religious belief prevailed, of necessity, the interests of the individual were subordinated to those of the race. God was regarded as being more careful to preserve the stock of the tree than its several boughs and blossoms and fruits. There appeared to be in Him an indiscriminating autocracy which tied up the lot of the righteous with the lot of the unrighteous in the bundle of the nation's life. It might be supposed that the Judge of All had neither the leisure nor the inclination to regard personal distinctions and to sort out the good from the evil. The sins of the fathers were visited upon the children, and the loyal suffered with the rebels in the penalties of disobedience and revolt.

'Our fathers have sinned and are not;  
And we have borne their iniquities,'<sup>1</sup>

was the lament even of the pious.

It was no wonder, then, that in the period of calamity and sorrow, when the little Kingdom of Judah went the way of the Northern Kingdom, murmurs arose among the refugees in Egypt and the exiles in Babylon. Even the righteous began to call the ways of God's governance into question; and we can well imagine that the young men would say—'The elders have had the privilege of making all the mistakes, and youth is now paying for them.' This unrest and bitterness of mind is reflected in the contemporary prophets. Jeremiah and Ezekiel make their reply to the proverb so much in use—'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' Both of them state nakedly and without qualification the principle of an individual judgement:—

'Every one shall die for his own iniquity: every one that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge' (Jer. 31<sup>30</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Lam. 5<sup>7</sup>.



'The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of his father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him' (Ezek. 18<sup>20</sup>).

Now it is obvious that, if these prophets meant that from that time forward, or in the good time coming, the lot of any man in this world—measured in terms of happiness or opportunity—should be strictly according to his personal merit, their message was not true. The value of their teaching was in their certainty of the justice and love of God. They were confident that righteousness would be vindicated in the ultimate decision: there would not be one end alike for the fool and for the wise, for the evil and for the good. A moral necessity, so it appeared to them, forbade that confusion. Superficially, however, it might seem that they enunciated a law of *Karma*, of individual retribution, and abrogated the law of solidarity: at least they do not make clear how these two can both operate and can be reconciled one with the other.

Further, it is to be noted that in this prophetic teaching, the law of retribution is not sole, and decisive of the ultimate destiny of any individual. It is not a law to which God Himself is subject, in the sense that He cannot modify or control it. Alongside of the individual retribution, so strongly affirmed, appears another force—the influence of God's grace. Ezekiel concludes his discussion of the problem with this voice of God:—

'But if the wicked turn from his sins that he hath committed and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live, he shall not die. . . . Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord God' (Ezek. 18<sup>21-23</sup>).

Now, although we may not be able perfectly to reconcile and co-ordinate in our thinking the modes of operation of these two laws of individual retribution and social



solidarity, yet we cannot deny the existence of either. Each is attested by the facts of experience, and is in accord with our moral sense. We see that, in a measure, here and now, the sinner does reap what he has sown. We feel that it is not merely right and just, it is also beneficent and good that wrong-doing should be followed by pain as a warning, and impenitent and unchangeable wickedness by death. If the Universe be moral, there must be in it a force which makes for the prevalence of righteousness and the ultimate extinction of evil. Our patient and even joyful endurance of present pain is made easier by this alleviating faith and hope. Christian thought has made an advance upon Jewish thought in that it perceives more clearly that true happiness or bliss is of and in the spirit. The good man in affliction may know an inward peace and joy of which outward circumstances can give no indication—which they cannot supply. And, further, the Christian believes with more confidence than the Hebrew prophets that this world is not all. There is another in which opportunity and authority are awarded to individuals according to proved merit. There will be an adjustment according to conduct—'Unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away' (Matt. 25<sup>29</sup>). There is, then, infallible moral retribution for each individual.

With equal, or even greater, clearness we perceive that men are made dependent one upon another. It cannot be otherwise in so far as man is a social being, needing the services of others and owing service to them, drawn to his fellows by many ties of love or repelled by dislike and hatred. The law of solidarity does not work in one direction only: it may affect us for weal as well as for woe. If we participate in the consequences of the ill-doing of others, we also benefit by the greatness and goodness of those who are much nobler than ourselves. There cannot be a society without this sharing of experience,



and we are unable even to conceive of man apart from society. The suffering of Jesus, then, is an outstanding example of the operation of the law of solidarity—of the good man who was involved in the misdoing of an evil human society, and of the good man who communicated his good to the whole race.

II. The doctrine of *Karma*, as ordinarily taught, ignores the fact that there is suffering which the righteous man may accept voluntarily for the good of others. If there were no more to be said than has been written above, it might appear that Jesus was the innocent and hapless victim of the sins of his age and generation. He was a righteous man living in an unrighteous world, who was caught in the meshes of its destructive malice and fury. There have been countless such victims since human society began; and, indeed, every one of us in some degree is such a victim. We have all suffered and are now suffering, in ways known and unknown, through the ill behaviour of our ancestors and contemporaries. If, however, we were to leave the matter here, we should have given a shallow and most imperfect account of the Cross of Jesus. There is suffering which the individual may avoid, if he will. It depends upon his own choice, whether or not he shall enter upon the hazardous course, with the risk or certainty of loss and pain. When the call to battle goes forth, a man may decline to hear the challenge; and, dwelling at home in ease and security, he may escape the wounds and the death.

Indeed in the Holy War there are no conscripts: every combatant is a volunteer. If a man be found in the ranks at all, it is because he has enlisted of his free choice, and is impelled to the field of battle by the spirit within him. We cannot read the story of Jesus without perceiving that here was one who was the captain of his soul and the architect of his fate. Jesus was no helpless drifter, struggling in vain against the current of events and borne away by it



to an end from which He would have escaped. There is a strength of recollectedness and purpose in His ordering of His life. We see that He was moved onwards by an inward necessity. He might have found safety either in silence and withdrawal, or in compromise and untruth; but He disdained both expedients. There was no force, other than His own spiritual convictions, compelling Him to proclaim the truth concerning God and man, as He knew it. The Gospels reveal in Jesus motives of a two-fold order. On the one side, there was His sense of the direction of His invisible Father. God was ever urging Him to speak and to do, and even when speaking and doing manifestly led to the Crucifixion, still—such is the testimony of Jesus—the voice of His Father within said, 'Go onward.' It was the will of His Father that He should remain a witness to truth, even if in witnessing He must die. And on the other side, the human side, we see that Jesus was drawn to the service of men by His sense of their need. The yearning of His heart is made apparent to us in this simple and summary record of the Gospel:—'And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness. But when He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd' (Matt. 9, <sup>35</sup>, <sup>36</sup>).

Jesus, then, thought of men as the good physician thinks of the sick, as a father and mother of their tired and hungry children, as the loving saint of sinners lost and wandering from their God. He longed to bring the highest good to His fellows. He dedicated Himself to this service without stint of time or labour; and the longer He served the more tender and self-sacrificing became the expression of His desire and will to help and to save. Jesus saw men in a degrading subjection to sin:



they were its bond-slaves, and He was ready to undertake anything and everything for their liberation. He would count no cost too great, not even if the price of their freedom were His own life—'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many' (Matt. 20<sup>28</sup>. Mark 10<sup>45</sup>). He was no hireling, but the Good Shepherd, who will accept all toil and peril in the defence of His sheep. He was ready to give that uttermost proof of love—greater than which there is none—to lay down His life, not merely for His friends, but also for His enemies.

Jesus, therefore, was at once the Servant of the Lord, and the Servant of man. By a double sense of obligation, in heaven and on earth, He entered this service and was willing to die in it. He would not disobey the revelation of truth that came to Him in fellowship with God—the known will of God for Himself: and He believed that in this fidelity to truth and in this obedience to His Father, He was bringing a supreme benefit to men.

In this aspect of His character and work Jesus appears to us as the Martyr—the one who bears witness to truth, and at the same time believes that his witness will fall out to the good of humanity. This idea of martyrdom had been made familiar to the Jews by the line of the prophets, and—to the most thoughtful and spiritual among them—by the history of the sacred people itself. What other satisfying explanation could be offered of the unmerited suffering of the faithful remnant of Israel—those who had suffered and gone into exile for no sins of their own. To them had been given the privilege of a knowledge of God and of the way of righteousness fuller and clearer than had been granted to others, and the privilege brought with it sacrificial service and suffering. The godly remnant might well be content to be 'despised and rejected,' if only they might become the Light of the Gentiles.



Now this view of the function of martyrdom—of a man as God's witness, living and dying with benefit to the race—can scarcely be found in ancient and orthodox Hinduism. It could not be prevalent there for a variety of reasons. *Karma*, as we have seen, suggests that each man must bear the consequences of his own action, and that no one can interfere with the lot of another. There is no adequate recognition of the significance of society and of human ties in Hindu thought: these are considered to belong only to the phenomenal order and not to the eternal. There is nothing in Hinduism corresponding to the Christian doctrine of the Kingdom of God—the belief that the end of Creation and Providence is a society of perfected souls and not simply the emancipation of the individual soul. Human history is left without this controlling purpose.

Moreover, Hindu philosophy issues in a habit of quietism. Rabindranath Tagore speaks in one of his lectures of meeting an ascetic in a village of Bengal:

“Why don't you preach your doctrine to all the people of the world?” I asked. “Whoever feels thirsty will of himself come to the river” was his reply. “But, then, do you find it is so? Are they coming?” The man gave a gentle smile, and with an assurance which had not the least tinge of impatience and anxiety, he said, “They must come, one and all.”<sup>1</sup>

Contrast that spirit with the immense urgency of duty and love in the mission and ministry of Jesus—‘I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!’ (Luke 12<sup>50</sup>). There can only be martyrs, in the fullest and highest sense of the term, where men believe that God wills to establish a divine society among men, and also that men are the agents whom He employs for its establishment.

It is, therefore, rather a barren and unsatisfying quest

<sup>1</sup> *Sādhana*, p. 33.



to turn to traditional Hinduism and search there for examples of suffering, *voluntarily accepted and incurred by the good in the faith and knowledge that it would bring spiritual benefit to others*. Let it be noted that both the voluntary acceptance of suffering and the faith in its efficacy are essential constituents of Martyrdom. There is the legend, often quoted, of Śiva's drinking the poison churned up out of the ocean in the early days of Creation, lest it should do harm to living creatures. It burned and stained his throat—hence his epithet of *Nilakanṭha*—'the Blue-throated One.'

Thou mad'st me Thine ; did'st fiery poison eat, pitying poor souls,  
That I might Thine ambrosia taste—I, meanest one! <sup>1</sup>

And yet how unreal and fantastic an image this is of the divine acceptance of suffering for the good of others.

There is also the story of Prahlāda, Hiraṇyakaśipu's son, who became an ardent devotee of Vishnu, and would not, for all the threats of his father, deny the supremacy of his chosen god. Of more historical value and significance are the accounts of the persecutions of Rāmānuja, and the Vaishṇava saints—the Alvārs in the south, of Tūkārām and the Sikh prophets in the north : but though these men suffered by reason of their doctrine and religious practice, the martyr's altruistic faith and purpose are not prominent in their lives. A learned Hindu Śāstri, whom it was my habit to consult, used to confess that the idea of martyrdom was somewhat foreign to the ancient Hindu conception of religion and duty.

It is, however, under modern influences, beginning to take its place in the thought of the people. Nationalism has created the idea of a united and self-governing India, and has almost personified it as the Mother. It has inculcated the belief that the individual may have to

<sup>1</sup> *Tiruvāṣagam*: Pope's Translation.



encounter and to accept suffering, personally unmerited, in the pursuit of a social good. Such self-dedication, even at the expense of life, may be the means of immeasurable benefit to others. A man may die for his people. Nationalism has thus assisted India towards a new appreciation and understanding of Jesus: and the doctrine and the example of Jesus have supplied some of the noblest elements in the modern attitude to politics.

Thus Professor Rādhakrishnan frankly recognizes that *Karma*, as commonly taught, cannot be a complete account of suffering. In one of his lectures he says:—

‘When we are perfected, we become sharers in the work of God, which is the creation and maintenance of absolute values. Thereafter all suffering is self-imposed. . . . Śiva drank poison for the redemption of mankind. . . . The Cross is not an offence or stumbling-block to the Hindu, but is the great symbol of the redemptive reality of God. It shows how love is rooted in self-sacrifice. The story of Hinduism has many instances of Rishis and Buddhas, who have . . . suffered more than they deserved for the sake of the world. This avoidable suffering is not the result of past sins.’<sup>1</sup>

I have omitted from this passage some phrases which introduce elements alien and opposed, as I think, to Christian teaching. The important thing to notice is that, in the belief of an eminent modern Hindu, those who have attained perfection of character are possessed of love for others, and are willing—if need be—to undergo suffering on their behalf; and further, that there cannot be perfection, except there be such love—with the willingness to prove itself in suffering. Is not this one way of saying that God is love, and that He Himself is willing to suffer beyond the measure of any of His saints, for true perfection is nothing other than God-likeness? We cannot suppose that perfected men can surpass God either

<sup>1</sup> ‘Hindu Thought and Christian Doctrine’ in *The Heart of Hindusthān*.



in love or in its manifestation. The perfection of love and of its manifestation will exist and be seen in God Himself. We may doubt whether a conclusion of this nature may be drawn legitimately from the premises of Hinduism. It has been put forward by a Hindu who has been in close contact with and profoundly influenced by Christian teaching. The reformed and changing Hinduism of to-day, no less than the old orthodox Hinduism, is eclectic in its method, and it contains many an unacknowledged debt to Jesus Christ.

Our argument nears its close. We perceive that we belong to a world in which two laws are in operation. One of them is what we have called the law of Individual Retribution or *Karma*. We have urged that this is not vindictive in its working. Mercy can be discerned in the provision that wrong-doing shall be followed by loss and pain, and that he who will not heed this warning shall go more steeply down the path of death. It is well that our universe should be ordered for the defence and spread of goodness and against the prevalence and eternity of evil. The other law of Solidarity is inseparable from society. The alternative to it is that each one of us should lead his life in utter solitude and isolation. The law of *Karma* attaches the evil consequence of a sin to the individual sinner: the law of Solidarity extends those consequences to all the members of the community. God in His wisdom and love has ordained both these laws, and He does not abrogate either of them in His way of salvation. The penalties of sin are not remitted, and its social influence is not inhibited. Yet, may we not think that, since God is love, He will not be content, in remoteness and inactivity, to permit these laws of judgement to take their course unchecked and unmodified? Being what He is, must He not introduce a new and counter-vailing force to restore the sinful and to undo the mischief of their sin?



May we not believe that when God made man in His own image, capable of self-initiation and self-determination, He foresaw and provided against the abuse of these god-like powers? He who created us free agents was prepared with a remedy against the errancy of free-will. The love which brought us into being is also a love which will not let us go, even though our sins be many and grievous. It follows and entreats us: it bears with our wayward manners and seeks to bring us to a better mind. This influence of God, the abundance of His grace to sinners, does not abolish immediately the penalties of sin in pain or disability, but it works to abolish Sin itself—the alienation of the sinner from God. It acts upon his pride and corruption of heart, and leads to humility, penitence and that trust and acceptance of forgiving love, called Faith, in which our life with God begins again.

Are we to suppose that such thoughts as these have sprung from our own vain imagining? Have they not rather had their origin in the mind of God? If, then, they be divinely suggested and inspired, we ought to look for some signal manifestation in history of this redeeming love of God. God Himself should speak to us in the language we can best understand—the evidence of human words and deeds. May not God prove to us the justice and rightness of the governance of our world by Himself accepting all its conditions and placing Himself under its laws? So, sharing our lot and in all respects becoming our kinsman, He may reveal to us not only His reverence for His own laws of righteousness but also the greatness of His love for us—the unsearchable riches of His grace. By an historical event—by a life of love and righteousness, transacted among men, God may introduce into human society a new influence which shall resist and overcome the destructive forces of sin: for, as through our solidarity, the ill consequences



of our fathers' wrong-doing have extended to all, so the benefits of this righteous act of the God-man shall pervade the whole race—a savour of life unto life.

Pursuing a train of thought like this, we approach nearer to an understanding of the mind of Jesus and to an explanation of the mystery of His Cross. Dr. Hogg has presented this aspect of the truth with great clearness and power. He writes:—

'It follows that, if God is freely and fully to express Himself, the universal order must have at least two inviolable laws or principles. It must have the Karmic law, the law that, if sin enters the phenomenal system, penalty must enter too. It must also have the law of Salvation, the law that, if sin enters the phenomenal system, *God shall be compelled—with reverence be it spoken!*—by all the moral forces of His nature to throw the whole infinitude of His being into the phenomenal system, that is, to incarnate Himself in order to abolish sinfulness. God cannot express Himself fully in the punishment of sin; He can express Himself fully only if, with the punishment, goes a total forth-putting of His nature in an effort to destroy sinfulness. . . . The Incarnation of God was the product of a moral necessity of the divine nature to react against sin to the extent of a complete forth-putting of itself in the effort to generate human goodness afresh. . . . The story of Christ is not the story of a divine expedient: it is the revelation of the inmost necessities of the being of God.'<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in pursuit of our argument and in devout and earnest contemplation of the life and death of Jesus, we have arrived at the idea that in some profound and unique sense the active love of God for sinful men found expression in the crucified Jesus. The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ is none other than the out-going and saving energy of God. This conclusion is seen to lie within

<sup>1</sup> *Karma and Redemption*: Chap. v.



the consciousness of Jesus, and is the only adequate interpretation of His words and deeds. The Word of the Cross, then, is the Word of an Incarnate God—of a God who is love, and who of His love accepted the uttermost suffering in the service of man. God abode in the passion and death of Jesus. He speaks from the fatal tree on Calvary to us all—Indians and Englishmen alike.

An Apostle, one of the first teachers of Christianity, has expressed this truth in words of greater simplicity, beauty and depth than any we are able to invent or employ:—

‘ Christ also suffered once in respect of sins, the righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God ’ (1 Peter 3. 18).



## CHAPTER III

### YAJÑA, JEWISH AND HINDU

*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*—I SAM. xv. 2.

*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*—MICAH vi. 8.

A STUDY of Sacrifice (*Yajña*)—the worship of a god or God with and through a material oblation—will be unattractive to many minds. By reason of the complete and long discontinuance of Jewish sacrifice, an increasing number of earnest and intelligent Christians have come to regard the subject as of merely antiquarian interest. The enquiry leads the student through a tangled mass of ceremonies, the meaning and aim of which are doubtful or lost beyond the possibility of recall. Textbooks of sacrificial ritual outgo all other religious literature in prolixity and tediousness: they exhibit some of the most unprofitable exercises of the human imagination. The excesses of sacerdotalism—the arrogance and greed of the priest, the emptiness of his knowledge falsely so-called, and the futility of a symbolism, which often obscures what it is supposed to illuminate and has the ultimate effect of suggesting the opposite of what it started out to signify—wear and disgust men of practical or scientific habit. They are particularly offensive to devout natures which have learned to see the essence of religion in the disposition of the heart and spiritual qualities, and its



most fitting expression in moral conduct and the great humanities.

We cannot, however, dismiss the subject in so summary a fashion. Sacrifice is a religious observance which can be found everywhere: it has had a universal prevalence, and it still is practised upon a vast scale. Christianity itself sprang out of a system in which sacrifice occupied a prominent place. The language and imagery of sacrifice—if not the act—were carried over into the public teaching and the writings of the Apostles. Though Old Testament sacrifice was so soon to be superseded, many phrases in the Epistles look towards its rites, and they are still upon the lips of Christian believers. Great sections of the Church of Christ claim to renew and to perpetuate the sacrificial act.

The sacrificial sections of the Pentateuch come under the ban of other priestly compilations. Only the Hebrew scholar, or the Christian of a somewhat abnormal type, will discover a lively interest in or find real refreshment of soul in a reading, say, of the *Priests' Code* in the books of Leviticus and Numbers.<sup>1</sup> And yet I venture to suggest that nothing would better prepare the reader to assess the sacerdotal literature of the Jews at its real value than to come to it after a study of the corresponding literature in some other great system of religion, say of Hinduism. Its comparative brevity and simplicity, its coherence and intelligibility, its moral and spiritual significance, would then show to great advantage.

It is an hazardous thing to advance any theory of sacrifice, so many and so wide are the differences

<sup>1</sup> It will help the reader to follow and understand the treatment of the subject in this chapter, if he will remember the four Codes or *strata* of Law which modern scholarship has laid bare in the Pentateuch: (1) *The Book of the Covenant*: Ex. 20<sup>th</sup>–23<sup>rd</sup>—the oldest of all; (2) *Deuteronomy*—the bulk of the Book, discovered in the Temple in 621 B.C. and written perhaps in the reign of Manasseh; (3) *The Law of Holiness*: Lev. 17–26, closely related to Ezekiel and the next Code; (4) *The Priests' Code* of which the main parts are Lev. 1–16, Num. 5, 6, 8, 15, 19, 28, 30, 35, 36, with some additions and omissions—probably compiled in the time of Ezra, about 445 B.C.



of opinion among the students of comparative religion who have made a world-wide survey of the facts. Perhaps, however, it will be generally agreed that early sacrifice was not symbolical at all. It was not the sign or token either of a disposition of the worshipper or of something which he put at the disposal of his god but was not able actually to present. The worshipper believed that what he offered in sacrifice did, as a matter of fact, proceed to and was received by the god whose name was invoked. As soon as men came to conceive of themselves as subject to and dependent upon superior powers—the gods of Nature—they felt the necessity of doing homage to those gods. They sought to win their favour or to avert their anger by making presents to them. Their custom in respect of earthly chiefs and monarchs was before them in dealing with the rulers of heaven. The food, which was consumed in the fire, actually ascended—so it was imagined—to the place of the gods and was enjoyed by them in some more subtle form. When a company of fellow-worshippers had made their oblation, and sat in a row or circle feasting upon their share of the offering, they found it easy and right to believe that the god himself came into their midst and joined with them in the common meal. This primitive sacrifice was a rite of propitiation, and often too of fellowship with the superior power.

It is admitted that we find early and naïve ideas of sacrifice in the oldest traditions preserved in the Pentateuch. There are traces in these of the belief that the fire-food actually reached God 'in the form of the fragrant fire-distilled essence.' Of Noah's sacrifice it is recorded—'And the Lord smelled the sweet savour' (Gen. 8<sup>21</sup>). We have retained the phrase as a figure of speech to our own day. The oldest *stratum* of law in the Pentateuch contains the command, 'And none shall appear before me empty-handed' (Ex. 23<sup>15</sup>). This verse takes on a



special significance, when we remember the etiquette of the court of an oriental monarch.

The distinction of the sacrificial practice of the Hebrews is that it was subjected to an agelong process of purgation and refinement. More and more it was made apparent that sacrifice, like all the service of man, must be rendered not to the gods but to God; and knowledge was added to knowledge of the being and nature of God. Where are we to place the beginning of the trend of Hebrew religion towards monotheism? Ought we, on historical or scientific grounds, to hesitate to take it back to the reputed ancestor of the nation—to Abraham in his age nearly two thousand years before Christ? The meaning of the story of his forsaking the land of his fathers and going forth to an unknown country in obedience to a divine call, seems to me to be this—that in some way there came to Abraham a sense of the futility and unworthiness of the worship of many gods with their idols, and that he had a view of one greater God who had entered into personal relation with him and promised him His presence and His succour. The belief that Abraham made a break with the polytheism and idolatry of Southern Babylonia is vividly and pictorially represented in Rabbinical and in Muhammadan tradition. His setting-out is the first recorded example, so I think, of emigration, not under the pressure of economic necessity, but for a religious purpose to secure liberty of conscience. Monotheism had to begin somewhere and in someone. So far as the history of the Jews is concerned, did it not begin in the heart of this man? Is not the tradition of Abraham substantially true? He was the father of the faithful—of those who have the vision of God and are not disobedient to it. He went forth into the unknown country, trusting in God as his guide and companion. A noble part of the blessing Abraham conveyed to his seed was the heritage of this, his faith and obedience.



I am not suggesting that even Abraham, so far ahead of his age and generation, was a consistent monotheist, with a clear and developed view of all the truth contained in the doctrine of One God, such as came many generations later through the seers and prophets of Israel. The great text of Deuteronomy, 'Know, therefore, this day and lay it to thine heart that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath: there is no one else,' was written perhaps twelve or thirteen hundred years later. We may prefer to describe the religion of Abraham and of his descendants for several centuries as inclining more to monolatry or henotheism than to strict monotheism. They were conscious of the care of a tribal God (*Kuladevatā*), who was their Covenant-God, choosing them and being chosen by them (*Ishtadevatā*). They did not clearly or invariably conceive of Jehovah as the sole and sovereign Deity of the universe; but the seed of monotheism had been planted in them and it grew.

The second great purificatory impulse was communicated by Moses four hundred years later. He welded the clans of Israel into the semblance of a nation, and gave them the rudiments of their laws and constitution. His leadership and teaching brought Jehovah into view as Israel's national God, and as greater than all the gods of the peoples. The worship of these and the use of idols were strictly forbidden. The patriarchs had raised their altars in all the places of their wanderings, and had offered their simple family sacrifices of homage, thanksgiving and fellowship, with the head of the house as the officiating priest. Now, with every increase in the sense of the majesty and soleness of God and with the expansion of the clan into a nation, sacrifice became a more solemn act of worship. It lost some of the informality and happiness of the domestic rite. It was not so easy to imagine the great God as the fellow-guest. He was



thought of as some Transcendent Being to be served with awe.

The next stage which I would distinguish in the development of worship by sacrifice is the reform which was attempted under Josiah in the seventh century before Christ. The Book of Deuteronomy sets out the ideal of the period. Much had happened in the hundreds of years intervening between Moses and Josiah. The people had ceased to be nomads. They had taken possession of Canaan and had settled down to the cultivation of corn-fields, vineyards and olive groves. They had set up kings of their own; and from time to time seers arose among them who rebuked them for apostasy from their ancestral faith, and carried the truths of that faith a stage farther.

The chief feature in the reform was the insistence not merely on One God but also on one place for sacrifice. The unique claim of the Temple in Jerusalem as the place where men 'ought to worship' is united with the claim of Jehovah to be worshipped as the One God—the Creator and Lord of the Universe. It is certain that in the early history of the nation after their settling in Canaan, sacrifice was not restricted to one locality. Any man in any place might raise his altar and make his offering to God in sacrifice. There were several places of special sanctity in the land of which the Israelites had taken possession. These were immemorial seats of sacrifice, and resort to them continued. Doubtless the Chapel Royal on Mount Zion in the City of David enjoyed a reputation above all other places of worship, and the splendour of its ritual was unequalled. It might have secured perhaps an earlier recognition as the only right and lawful place for sacrifice but for the division of the kingdom and the defection of the northern tribes, who established their own national sanctuaries. In many of these local centres of worship the rites of the Israelites were mingled with the



rites of the earlier inhabitants. The cruelties, including the abomination of child sacrifice, and the immoralities of the Canaanites, together with the use of images, even to serve as emblems of Jehovah, defaced and defiled the worship of the northern kingdom of Israel and of the southern kingdom of Judah. Thus, whatever Moses may have intended or commanded, the fact stands out that nearly eight centuries after his time the evils of polytheism and idolatry were rife in the nation he had rescued and formed.

Only those who have lived in a country where people, as in ancient Canaan, sacrifice 'upon every high hill and under every green tree' can realise the enormous spiritual change and benefit which ensued as a consequence of the Deuteronomic legislation. Local altars are erected most commonly to local deities—to the *numen* of the place. The *Baalim* of Canaan were gods of towns and villages with a territorial jurisdiction, often within very narrow limits. They were the 'place-gods' (*sthaladevatā*) of the Hindus. The Baal of Tyre was Lord of Tyre, and not much else. The thought underlying and expressed in these local worships is that, though there be a Great God, yet He is far-off, inattentive and inaccessible. He has left the management of local concerns to lesser gods. If a man be in need of help or desire a boon, he will do well to attract the attention and win the favour of the tutelary deity of the place. Hence the altar of the local god and the sacrifice to him, in the place where he resides and rules!

The advantages of the concentration of sacrifice in Jerusalem were many. Obviously it heightened the sense of national unity by bringing the people together in great assemblies on ceremonial occasions. It added much to the beauty, wealth and dignity of the order of sacrificial worship. It became possible to exercise control over the ritual, and to eliminate and abolish the obscenities and



evil excesses which had accompanied the local sacrifices. But the chief benefit was that it elevated the idea of God above that of a merely national Ruler and Saviour: it brought Jehovah before the eyes of the people—if we may so say—as International or Super-National. He was proclaimed as the Lord of the whole world, the Creator and Judge of all mankind—‘King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the only Ruler of princes.’

We shall never be able to explain or to understand the reform of the sacrificial cult under Josiah, unless we associate it with the earlier message and work of the prophets. These were the men who saw the greatness of God, whose spirits were moved to protest against the corruptness of popular religion and the folly and superstition of sacrifice as it was practised in their day. Elijah and Elisha, and the ‘Writing Prophets’—Amos, Hosea, the first Isaiah and Micah—had preceded the Deuteronomic reform; and in the purgation of sacrifice under Josiah we may see a late fruit of their teaching. The influences of prophet and nobler-minded priest are combined in the reform: the new purified ritual seeks to give effect symbolically to the prophetic truths.<sup>1</sup> It was the prophets who proclaimed to the sacred people the sovereignty and the soleness of their God, who denounced the faithlessness of the worship of other gods and the evils accompanying the use of idols. They rebuked the indolent and pleasure-loving prince with his fashionable women, the judge who took bribes and perverted right, and the landlord who heaped up wealth by robbing and oppressing the poor cultivator. They insisted that just and kind behaviour to one’s fellow-man was an offering

<sup>1</sup> The great age of the ‘Writing’ Prophets was from the first quarter of the eighth century before Christ to the third quarter of the sixth—from the beginning of the prophesying of Amos to the second Isaiah and the return from Babylon—say from 780 B.C. to 539 B.C. It covers the period of the two kingdoms in their last stage, the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., the decline and overthrow of Judah with the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., and the captivity in Babylon.



acceptable to the Lord, without which no sacrifice of the altar could be pleasing to Him.

Even in the naturalness and simplicity of primitive sacrifice, wrong ideas were latent. It was so easy to imagine that God Himself was dependent upon the offerings of His worshippers: or that His favour might be gained by a handsome present, no matter what was the character of the giver. The independence and self-sufficiency of God, as the Creator and Lord of the whole earth, find their classical expression in the verses of Psalm 50. We cannot tell who was the writer. The composition of the Psalm has been attributed to the Eighth Century before Christ. It breathes the very spirit of the great prophecy of that age. God is represented as addressing the nation:

‘Hear, O my people, and I will speak;  
O Israel, and I will testify unto thee:  
I am God, even thy God . . .  
I will take no bullock out of thy house;  
Nor he-goats out of thy fields.  
For every beast of the forest is mine,  
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.  
I know all the fowls of the mountains,  
And the wild beasts of the field are mine.  
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee;  
For the world is mine and the fulness thereof.  
Will I eat the flesh of bulls,  
Or drink the blood of goats?  
Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving;  
And pay thy vows unto the Most High.’

(Ps. 50<sup>7, 9-14</sup>).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With this compare the much later passage (Chap. 40, 11-14) in the Second Isaiah, a prophet of the Captivity and the Singer of the Return. The whole passage is of glorious diction, in which the word matches the majesty of the theme—‘And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering.’



This Psalm ends on the note which was sounded again and again by the prophets. They are drawing nearer to the perception that the offerings really acceptable to God are of the heart. Only that which is given in spirit is given in truth. Humility, penitence and trust towards God; justice and loving-kindness towards his neighbour—these are the genuine sacrifices which a man may render to His Maker.

The vehemence of a prophet's scorn for a religion, in which ceremonial observance is not merely unaccompanied by righteous and humane conduct, but has even usurped the place of it, flames out in Isaiah's first reproach:

'Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom;  
Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of  
Gomorrah.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices  
unto me? saith the Lord . . .

Bring no more vain oblations . . .

I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn  
assembly . . .

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of  
your doings from before mine eyes;

Cease to do evil; learn to do well.

Seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the  
fatherless, plead for the widow' (Isa. i 10-17).

The whole ethical content of the message of the prophets was summed up in the immortal phrases of Micah, who had in view both the elaborate ritual of Jerusalem and the abominable cruelties adopted from the surrounding peoples:

'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,  
or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my  
first-born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body  
for the sin of my soul?



'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' (Mic. 6, 7-8).

The great service rendered by these prophets to religion was their insistence upon the oneness and transcendence of God, who has no need to be sustained by the material offerings of men; and also their insistence upon His moral nature. God is just and loving; and because this is so, the worship of Him must be consonant with mercy and justice. No rite of sacrifice can be pleasing to God except it be in accord with the attributes of His being. To adapt an Indian proverb—'As is God, so must be the sacrificer and the sacrifice.'<sup>1</sup>

The last revision of the sacrificial system took place nearly two hundred years after Josiah's reform of 621 B.C. We know that the improvement which this king effected was partial and temporary: under his successors the nation went back to its old ways. There followed the break-up of the little kingdom of Judah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the exile of the 'remnant' in Babylon. After the Return the Temple was restored and worship began again. Under Ezra the sacrificial cult received its final form. The *Priests' Code*, to which the approximate date of 445 B.C. has been assigned, is the longest and the most elaborate Manual of Sacrifice—of law ecclesiastical and civil—embedded in the Pentateuch.

The new Code not only limits sacrifice to one place—the Temple at Jerusalem—but also the right of performing it to one family—the Sons of Aaron. This feature of the Code does not concern us here: its salient and, for the purposes of this review, most significant characteristic is the prominence given to the idea of 'holiness' in God and His worshipper. God is thought of as a being who is not lightly to be approached; for there is in Him an awe-

<sup>1</sup> Yathā devaḥ tathā bhaktah



some quality of purity. Man, as a finite creature, is incapable of seeing God as He is, or of continuing to live after seeing Him. There is, however, a greater obstacle to intercourse with God than the creaturely limitation of human powers: it is man's sinfulness and the impurity which he may have contracted in daily life, consciously or unconsciously. The object of the later sacrifices, therefore, is to remove this defilement of body and mind which makes a man unworthy of intercourse with God and brings upon him the divine disfavour and wrath. In accordance with this idea, the *Priests' Code* introduces two new sacrifices, or gives a new prominence to them. It occupies itself mainly with the Sin-Offering and the Guilt or Trespass-Offering. These are cleansing rites by means of which priest and common people alike may remove 'all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' The developed ritual of sacrifice, therefore, had the effect of deepening in the worshipper the sense of purity in God and of sin in man, although we can see that the definition both of one and of the other was imperfect and was lacking in discernment and spirituality. There still remained a perilous confusion of the physical and the spiritual, of ceremonial and moral defect.<sup>1</sup>

We may well ask whether this revival of sacrifice after the Exile and this elaboration of its ritual was in forgetfulness of, or in fulfilment of, the earlier prophetic teaching.

<sup>1</sup> The following sentences from Dr. Lofthouse's *Commentary on Ezekiel* in the *Century Bible* are so germane to what is said here and what follows after that I am constrained to quote them. Of 'Holiness' he writes:

'The word, as we find it in Ezekiel, denotes a contagious quality in Jehovah, and in certain persons and articles brought into close contact with Jehovah. . . . It is dangerous to lose, dangerous also to acquire. . . . Pollution or profanation must always rouse Jehovah's wrath. . . . To the Hebrew, the three ideas of holiness, purity and cleanness are as closely connected as they could be to us. Cleanliness is not next to godliness; it is godliness. What rouses Jehovah's wrath is any kind of filth, physical or moral. The difference between the literal and a metaphorical interpretation of the garment "unspotted by the world" was not yet realised. . . . To Ezekiel the prophetic view that the history of the past had been one long moral disobedience was joined to the priest's view that it had been one great ritual mistake.'



In answering the question we must remember that the period of the decline and fall of Jerusalem had produced its own great ethical prophet—Jeremiah; and in the captivity itself there had arisen Ezekiel, who saw his visions beside the Babylonian canal of Chebar, and also that 'Great Unknown' to whom we to-day have given the name of the 'Second Isaiah.' The experiences of the Jews in exile seem to have washed the love of idolatry clean out of their breasts. They were never afterwards in danger of reverting to it of their own free will. The handful of returned Jews which dwelt in or clustered round the city of their fathers had no temptation to erect or to resort to many sanctuaries other than Jehovah's house at Jerusalem, and they were strongly marked out from the surrounding nations.

For these reasons, it is impossible to suppose that Nehemiah and Ezra, or any other of the leaders of the little community devoted to Jehovah, forgot or deliberately set aside the teaching of men whom they regarded as inspired of their God. They may have said that the prophets had denounced not sacrifice in itself, but the abuse of sacrifice—not the observance of the altar rites, but the neglect of morals. Sacrifice for these men had lost its ancient literal or material significance: they could not think of it as a feeding of the gods, still less as a feeding of God; nor could it be to them a mode of pleasing a celestial monarch by a present. If they re-instituted sacrifice, then—in some manner and degree—it must have signified for them what the prophets had taught of God's soleness and self-sufficiency, of His peculiar claim to the allegiance of the sacred people, and of His righteousness, patience and mercy. It is inconceivable that they deliberately and defiantly rejected the burthen of prophecy. We may say this all the more confidently because in one man the priestly and prophetic strains were united. Ezekiel, the exile, was a priest by birth and



the cast of his mind, and a prophet by the calling and constraint of God. It is admitted that his ideal reconstructions of temple and ritual in a strange land, where there was no temple and no sacrifice might be offered, had a profound influence in the next century on the shaping of the *Priests' Code*.

None the less, we cannot fail to see the imperfections and perils which were hidden in the revived cult of the altar. From our Christian view-point the failure to distinguish clearly physical from spiritual defilement must lead to disaster. It is the tendency of all elaborate ritual to withdraw attention from the worshipper's motive and state of heart to an outward act of ceremony. That tendency is strengthened when great stress is laid upon rites of bodily cleansing, and a physical pollution is put in the same class as evil desire or purpose. We, after Christ, cannot believe that an involuntary contact with a leper or a dead body is sin in any kind or degree. Without the authors intending it, there was an influence latent in the *Priests' Code* which might undo the great work of the prophets in stressing moral conduct and neighbourly love.

Modern scholars have pointed out to us the incompleteness of the *Priests' Code*. It does not really cover the whole range of life and conduct. The sins for which it makes provision are defilement of the body, voluntary or involuntary, and for minor transgressions against our neighbour, largely involuntary—errors of forgetfulness, or negligence, by which he may suffer loss and damage in property or person. For great and deliberate crimes, or what a Hindu might term *mahāpātaka*, there is no cleansing and there is no forgiveness in the sacrificial system. The worship of false gods, blasphemy, murder, adultery within the marriage bond—for these the Law prescribes excommunication or death. The Levitical sacrifice itself speaks no word of mercy or absolution:



it leaves the criminal to the extremest penalty of the Law.<sup>1</sup> There was thus a great gap between the requirements of the Law and the benefit of sacrifice.

I doubt, however, whether this defect of the sacrifice was perceived and felt by the common people among the Jews. When the whole Levitical system lies before the modern Biblical scholar in review, and he brings into his consideration all men in their every action, he may see clearly enough the limitations and boundaries which were set to the efficacy of the sacrifice. But average persons are not systematic theologians or Biblical scholars—not even the pious Jews of old. And after all, one does not commit a murder every day—the ordinary citizen not once in a lifetime. Respectable God-fearing Jews did not worship other gods, nor blaspheme the Name of their own: they did not assault or rob their neighbours. The flagrant and gross transgressions, for which there was no covering in the sacrifice, were never committed by them at all. More and more, therefore, the law-abiding Jew might be led to imagine that the sacrifices performed on his behalf removed the whole of his guilt and opened the way for him to intercourse with God and to the divine favour. It is difficult to conceive that he would make a hard-and-fast distinction in his thinking between two classes of sin, one involuntary and the other voluntary, and that he would believe there was remission and atonement for the former but none at all for the latter. The sacrificial system thus appeared to provide sufficiently for any sin about which the average well-

<sup>1</sup> Num. 15 "": 'Ye shall have one law for him that doeth aught *unwittingly*, for him that is home-born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them. But the soul that doeth aught *with an high hand* (i.e. with intention, or *malice prepense*), whether he be home-born or a stranger, the same blasphemeth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. . . . His iniquity shall be upon him.' Note also that in Heb. 9<sup>1</sup>, the High Priest is said 'to offer for himself, and for the *errors* of the people' (literally '*ignorances* of the people,' ἀγνομάτων—a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament). On the whole subject of the limitation of the scope of the Levitical Sacrifice, see Dr. Loft-house's *Altar, Cross and Community*, pp. 119-121.



behaved person had any need to trouble: it covered the whole range of his life—so he would be apt to imagine—both conscious and unconscious. And therein lay its peril.

The real defect of the system was that its standard, both of goodness and of sinfulness, was so mean and scant: it could not indicate or measure the height and depth of either. The conception of sin was external and superficial, and morality was confined to the observance of a few rudimentary laws. The Sermon on the Mount had yet to extend the commandments of God to the inmost motions of the spirit; and the life and death of Jesus were wanted to show godliness as self-giving love and sin as its dark contrary—self-centredness and selfishness.

How did the Jew suppose that the sacrifice removed the impurity of his sin and brought him into fellowship with God? What, in his view, was the manner in which it operated for his benefit? It may be doubted whether any completely satisfying answer could be given to or by the man who had reached the point of raising such questions as these. They imply that the questioner is passing into a higher stage of religious thought and experience than had been reached by the framers of the *Priests' Code*. Many theories and explanations of the Levitical sacrifice have been advanced; but none is altogether convincing or adequate. There may have been some who at one time or another imagined that the animal was a substitute for the sinner, and that its life was accepted by God in lieu of the sinner's forfeited life. A suggestion, so irrational and unworthy of God, cannot have maintained itself without challenge and denial among the thoughtful and spiritual Jews who had the teaching of the prophets before them. The notion that sin is a sort of physical pollution or contagion which may be transferred from one body to another—from the offerer to the animal victim—belongs to the age of the



crudest speculation in things religious. For us to-day it has become utterly inconceivable. The idea of the transfer of sin—that is, of its guilt—from the guilty sinner to an innocent party is a contradiction in terms: it is made impossible by the very nature of guilt and innocence. Was a perception of this truth altogether denied to the Jews before Christ? Thought did not stand still with Ezra. In the centuries between the compilation of the *Priests' Code* and Jesus, the minds of the faithful were exercised about the meaning and value of the ritual they observed.

We may not be able to go beyond an exceedingly simple statement. When any person believes that God has prescribed a certain course of action, and that He has promised certain blessings on condition of performance, then that person will also believe that, if he does the acts, the promised blessings will ensue. Does not this principle apply in an eminent degree to the case of the Levitical sacrifice? Many a devout Jew believed without a tremor of doubt that God had ordained sacrifice, and had promised cleansing and restoration to fellowship, if sacrifice were offered. To the sacrificer, therefore, the sacrifice was a token of his submission and obedience to God, of his confession of sin, and of his sure trust in the promise of God. To a worshipper so believing the sacrifice could not fail to bring, when duly performed, the sense of inward peace and of being at one with God.

Let us attempt, then, to gather up the results of this survey of the Jewish sacrifice. What thoughts may we suppose occupied the minds of such humble and godly men and women as were Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, and the mother of Jesus? What did they intend when they brought their own offerings to the Temple, or claimed their share in the sacrifices made for the whole people? It is difficult, perhaps impossible,



wholly to avoid the error of projecting our own mentality into that distant past. How can we, with whom the animal sacrifice has ceased for so many centuries, put ourselves in the place of the Jews in the days of Jesus? I shall not be deterred, however, by the difficulty from suggesting that the sacrificial system, in one way and another, set forth and signified for the truly devout some of the following ideas:

(1) That God is the Maker of the whole world and the only Lord of men, who transcends our utmost power of thought. No material image of Him was tolerated in that House before which the altar stood.

(2) That the worshipper owes to God the homage of all he has and is—his very life. Life is the only adequate offering to God.<sup>1</sup>

(3) That there has been a failure on the part of the worshipper to render to God this service of perfect obedience. He has come short of his duty and transgressed: he has become unclean in body and soul.

(4) That the consequence of sin is estrangement from God, and its due and ultimate penalty is death.

(5) That the way of pardon and restoration is not easy. These can be achieved only at a great cost—even at the cost of life itself.<sup>1</sup>

(6) That there is a cleansing and forgiveness of God which is granted to the penitence, obedience and faith signified in the sacrifice.

(7) That he who so confesses, obeys and trusts shall be restored to fellowship with God. There is an atonement for him: he becomes at one with God.

As the godly Jew laid his hands upon his Sin or Trespass-Offering, and in intention followed the ritual

<sup>1</sup> The cardinal text is Lev. 17, 11: 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life.'



of the sacrifice, were not some of these prayers and hopes stirring within his breast? Was not the devoted animal to him a symbol of what he owed to God and had failed to render—of his own sin and mortal peril, of his acknowledgment of the divine righteousness and purity? The Burnt-Offering and Peace-Offering which followed were outward and visible signs to him that he had joyfully dedicated himself afresh to God, and had been received into renewed fellowship with Him.

If this be true, altogether or only in part, then the Jewish sacrifice, long before its abolition, had ceased to be a material oblation which, in the literal sense, was presented to and accepted by God. It had become a symbol of truths about God and of spiritual attitudes in the worshipper which are of value for all time. We may be thankful that the sign has gone, while the things signified remain. A danger always lurked within the ritual. The elaborateness of its symbolism might, with many an individual, obscure and crush the spirituality of true worship. The priest, by his insistence on the outward act, might close the door of vision into heaven which had been opened by the prophet. The Jewish sacrifices, therefore, at their best and with the most spiritual interpretation, were an imperfect instrument for the signifying of a partial truth: they looked towards and waited for a fuller truth and its perfect expression.

The history of Jewish sacrifice is complete: animal sacrifice has been totally and finally abolished among Jews and Christians. It did not come to an end solely because a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus the Temple at Jerusalem was irrevocably destroyed: a more conclusive reason was that its purpose had been fulfilled and its lesson had been learnt. Even the Jew no longer had need of its symbolic reminders. For Christians its message was superseded by the Word of the Cross:



'You have no need of the shadow' wrote, in effect, one of their early teachers, 'when the substance has come.'<sup>1</sup>

Let us now outline a parallel development of sacrifice in Hinduism. Writers on Hinduism are confronted with the difficulty that, if they would give an adequate account of the system, they must trace two distinct streams of thought, of different racial origin, which ultimately merge in one turbid flood. Neither ought to be disregarded. The difficulty of treatment is increased by the fact that one element may be found in books, while a great part of the other exists only in the unrecorded practice of the people. Too many scholars have been content to describe only that marvellous development of Indian religious thought and worship which can be studied in the religious literature, Vedic and Sanskrit. This is a literature which belongs primarily to the invading Aryan tribes who came by way of the passes of the North-West and over-spread the plains of the Panjāb and the Ganges valley. The influence of this Aryan religion, chiefly through its priests or Brahmans, has been carried into every corner of India. There is, however, a vast mass of beliefs and observances which originated with the earlier inhabitants who were in possession when the Aryan invaders arrived. These older tribes and nations have been called Dravidian, after the Drāviḍas, or Tamils, one of the most cultured and powerful nations of South India. The religion of the average Hindu to-day is the result of the fusion of these two elements: it is

<sup>1</sup> See *Hebrews* 10. I have not referred to the aesthetic prejudice which we should feel to-day against the ritual of the Jewish Temple, if it were still extant. We may recall that a little while ago when the practices at the Kālī temple in Calcutta came under Western criticism, the Editor of the *Indian Social Reformer* advanced the plea that the scenes in the modern temple of Kālī were little less repulsive than those which attended the sacrifices in the ancient Temple of Jerusalem. There is, of course, a whole world of difference in the spiritual significance of the two rituals; but even in its physical aspect the Jerusalem performance of animal sacrifice, in dignity and cleanliness, was incomparably superior to what is still taking place at Kālighat.



possible often to distinguish one from the other in the resultant mixture.<sup>1</sup>

With this explanation, I come to the subject of Sacrifice in the sacred literature of Hinduism. The most ancient Scripture of India is that collection of hymns which we know as the *Rigveda Samhitā*,—the oldest Hymn-Book in the world. Long before the hymns were brought together as a *Samhitā* or Collection, they existed separately or in smaller groups. They were learned by heart and passed from lip to lip for many generations before ever they were reduced to writing. The late Professor Macdonell has assigned conjecturally the date 1000 B.C. to the Collection. The hymns themselves and the cults to which they belong must be many centuries older. We may think, if we like, that when Abraham was going forth from Ur of the Chaldees, Aryan tribes were leaving their pasture lands and moving onwards and downwards into India.

The religious starting-point of the Aryans and of the Hebrews was in one respect the same. The attention of both was attracted towards the powers of Nature. The principal gods of the *Rigveda* are Nature-gods—the all-embracing sky, the bright sun, the lightning and the winds, and that fire (Agni) which is on earth and in heaven. The Aryan princes, warriors and herdsmen regarded themselves as dependent on these for gifts of rain and food, cattle and sons, health of body and victory in war. The sacrifice was, nakedly without any disguise, an offering to please a superior power. Agni, the fire upon the altar, was thought of not only as a god but also as the messenger of the gods—the carrier of men's gifts to their abode. The first line of the *Rigveda* celebrates the function of the sacrificial flame:

<sup>1</sup> For an illustration of the difficulty in dealing fairly by both elements, see Dr. Nicol Macnicol's paper, prepared for the Jerusalem Council, *Christianity and Hinduism*, Report, Vol. 1. pp. 1-4, and 45-9.



'I praise Agni, the priest, God, performer of due sacrifice.'<sup>1</sup>

The Aryan deities, so their worshippers imagined, actually drank the libations of *Soma* and partook of the food conveyed to their heaven in the sacrificial flame; or else they came down to earth and sat invisibly with the sacrificer upon the sacred grass. The gods derived their own strength from drinking and eating what was presented to them upon the altar.

In this belief is contained the seed of that exaggeration of the sacrificial idea which followed in the next age. It was argued that if the gods depend upon sacrifice, then that rite is of cosmic efficacy and the priest himself is almighty. Sacrifice is elevated into the position of a magic rite of infinite power. The *mantras*, or sacred texts used in sacrifice, have a terrific potency—a potency which may be lost or disastrously misdirected by a mistake in a syllable, or even in an accent. It is sacrifice which maintains the round of Nature. Sacrifice brings down the rain, and from rain comes food, and by food both gods and men live.

This astounding development of the doctrine of sacrifice, in a direction contrary to what we find in Moses and the Prophets, is contained in many treatises and manuals of the Brahman priests, (the *Brāhmaṇas* and ritual *Sūtras*). They must form, I think, the largest sacerdotal literature in the world. The most important of these compilations which is extant is the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which has been translated into English by Professor Eggeling. It occupies five bulky volumes in the series of the *Sacred Books of the East*. Nothing will give a juster impression of the nature of the whole than the words with which Professor Eggeling prefaced his first volume and his last. In the early stage of his task, he wrote:

<sup>1</sup> Agnim iṣe purohitam yajñasya devam ṛitvijam.



'In the whole range of literature few works are probably less calculated to excite the interest of any outside the very limited number of specialists than the ancient theological writings of the Hindus, known by the name of *Brāhmaṇas*. For wearisome prolixity of exposition, characterised by dogmatic assertion and flimsy symbolism rather than by serious reasoning, these works are perhaps not equalled anywhere; unless indeed by the speculative vapourings of the Gnostics, than which, in the opinion of the learned translators of Irenæus, nothing more absurd has probably ever been imagined by rational human beings.'

Eighteen years later, his translation completed, Professor Eggeling laid down his pen with the words:

'And now my task is done, and I must take leave of this elaborate exposition of the sacrificial ordinances of Indian theology. For well-nigh a score of years the work has "dragged its slow length along"; and during that time it has caused me—and I doubt not it has caused some of my readers too—not a few weary hours. In the early stages of the work, my old teacher Professor Albrecht Weber, than whom no one is more deeply versed in the intricacies of the sacrificial ritual, wrote to me: "You have undertaken a difficult, a most difficult task; and I can only hope that courage and patience will not fail you before you are through with it." And, indeed, I must confess that many a time I felt as if I should never be able to get through my task, and but for Professor Max Müller's timely exhortations and kindly encouragement, the work might perhaps never have been completed.'

According to the compilers of the *Brāhmaṇas* all things in heaven and earth and all processes in Nature are signified in the ritual. The science of sacrifice contains the triple knowledge of the three *Vedas*, *trayī vidyā*, and procures all the gains of learning. When rival ways of



achieving the Supreme Good—the Way of Knowledge (*Jñānakāṇḍa*) and the Way of Austerity or Self-torture (*Tapas*)—appear, it is claimed for sacrifice that it accomplishes all which either of them can ever effect. Even identification with the Supreme Being may be won through sacrifice. The Brahman is a god upon earth. Nay, since he alone knows and is entitled to the science of sacrifice, he is the master of the gods and may make himself the Lord of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

The prevalence of the sacrificial cult led to the humanitarian protests of the Jains and the Buddhists. The former took their rise in the Seventh Century before Christ, and still survive as a wealthy sect in India: the latter originated a century later with Gautama—the Buddha, and have exercised a world-wide influence. Both Jains and Buddhists objected to the taking of life and to offerings of blood. Their doctrine of *Ahimsā* (non-injury) has been generally adopted in the higher Hinduism; but the Brahman or Aryan rite has not become completely separated from the offering of living creatures even to this day. On rare occasions, one may hear of a sacrifice performed according to the ancient rubric. The Brahman officiant does not slay the animal with the axe or knife. He either strangles it with a noose, or suffocates it by holding the mouth and nostrils. It is 'quieted' without the shedding of blood.

This vast sacrificial system, however, has perished in large part of its own elaborateness: it has been crushed by its own weight. It would be difficult in many parts of India to find even a single Brahman who is conversant with the ancient text-books. Some of the ceremonies des-

<sup>1</sup> Hopkins' epigram may be recalled—'In the Vedic hymns man fears the gods and imagines God. In the *Brāhmaṇas* man subdues the gods and fears God'—*Religions of India*, p. 216. It is the misfortune of epigrams that sometimes a little truth must be sacrificed for perfection of symmetry. The 'fear of God' is scarcely the phrase which one would choose to describe the Brahman's attitude to the Supreme Being of the *Brāhmaṇas*—Prajāpati, a singularly colourless and uninspiring entity. Otherwise the observation is true enough.



cribed in the *Brāhmaṇas* occupied many days, even a whole year, in preparation. They could be performed only at great expense. They required the service of scores of expert priests—manual assistants, singers of the chants, speakers of *mantras* who made the oblations, and the superintending Brahman. None but princes and rich men could afford to procure a performance. Some of the great sacrifices are intended for royal occasions—such as a coronation. They may still be seen at the court of a Mahārāja with somewhat minished splendour and curtailed rites. One, the celebrated Horse-Sacrifice (*aśwamedha*), signified world-conquest and universal dominion, and is now never performed. The daily, monthly and seasonal ceremonies which should be a part of the observance of every Brahman survive only in an attenuated form, and chiefly in a Brahman's daily worship, his *sandhyāvandanā*.

And since I have spoken of the tediousness, unreason, and arrogance of this ancient sacerdotal literature, let me add a word about more pleasing features of the daily rites which are still observed. It is common knowledge to what an extent *sandhyāvandanā* has suffered under modern conditions and influences. Many a Brahman boy or student comes to school or college without having 'said his prayers' or performed the due rites. This is equally true of the man who attends the law-court or Government office, and of him who is employed in commerce, or spends his time and strength in the arena of politics. The full *sandhyāvandanā* belongs to a more leisurely age. To perform it, as prescribed in the text-books, would occupy a man for hours—almost from the watch before the dawn to noontide. Life to-day does not allow of such lengthy exercises of prayer and meditation. For these reasons, with the ordinary Hindu high-caste man, and with the Brahman himself to whom these rites peculiarly belong, the daily worship has been severely retrenched.



Three features only may be mentioned here. One is the frequent repetition of the *Gāyatrī* verse—the most sacred and potent verse of all Aryan literature, into which it is believed the essence of the whole *Veda* has been distilled:—

‘May we meditate on (or attain to) that excellent glory of the Sun-God:

May he prosper our meditation’<sup>1</sup>

—a beautiful invocation of the rising Sun to which time has added a wealth of religious meaning! The second feature is the prominence in the ritual of the idea of a defilement to be removed or to be averted. There is the same blending or confusion as in Hebrew ritual of the notions of a physical and of a spiritual uncleanness. The preliminary bathing, the many acts of ceremonial ablution, and the sippings of water are in keeping with this main idea. It is believed that a cleansing of body and of soul is effected by the rites. Notably in that part of the ceremony which is known as *aghamarśana* (the ‘rubbing-off of sin’) does this intention appear:—

‘The sins have to be got out of the worshipper: so he takes up some water and holds it in his right hand. Next closing his left nostril with his left thumb, he breathes hard down into the water, whilst he says the *mantra* (“O Sun, burn up my deeds of the night—sins of thought, word or deed, committed by hand, foot, stomach or the senses. I throw all these sins into the sacrificial fire of the *Gāyatrī*, which is lit in our hearts that they may be burnt up”), and then throws the water and all the sins which it contains violently to the left. As he throws it, he says inwardly, “May all my sins and wicked demons be destroyed.” He throws it with such violence, indeed, that the water is dashed into a thousand

<sup>1</sup> Tatsavitur vareṇyam bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ praçodayāt. *Rigveda* iii. 62. 10.



fragments, and all the time he keeps his eyes firmly closed, in order that he may not even look upon the sinful liquid.<sup>1</sup>

And the third element is the gleam of benevolence—of thought and intercession for others, which shines in this concluding prayer:—

‘May all in this world be happy, may they be healthy, may they be comfortable and never miserable. May the rain come down in the proper time, may the earth yield plenty of grain, may the country be free from war, may the Brahmans be secure, may the sonless gain a son, may those who have sons gain grandsons, may those without wealth gain wealth, and all live for hundreds of years.’

There is kindness in this, even if it be not petition of the most spiritual order.

By study of the *Veda*, offerings in the altar-fire, libations of water, hospitality to his fellow-Brahmans, and food scattered upon the ground, the pious Brahman should daily make his five-fold sacrifice (*pañcamahāyajña*) to Brahma, the gods, the fathers, man, and all living creatures. The Brahman theory and practice are seen at their best in these daily rites.

But what about the religious observances of the non-Aryan peoples who were the older inhabitants of India? The Brahman priests and thinkers, like the Law-giver in the desert, and the rulers of the Israelites who dwelt in Canaan, had to determine their attitude to other cults. As the Aryan tribes descended from the passes and took up their residence on the Indian plains, they came into contact with the religion of great masses of Dravidian folk. It is in this impact and in the ensuing relation, that the contrast between Brahmanism and Hebrew religion becomes most marked. From a Christian view-

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson's *The Rites of the Twice-Born*, pp. 220-1. In her book, Monier-Williams' *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, and Padfield's *Hindu at Home* will be found accounts in detail of the daily rites. The details vary greatly in different parts of India.



point—and I think also from the view-point of science and universal morality, for the two ought to coincide,—the religious history of India appears as a tragedy of compromise, or as the failure of syncretism. The Brahman has never properly appreciated the intolerance or exclusiveness of truth. The evil results of his method of 'undiscriminating comprehensiveness' are writ large all over India.

As Brahmanism comes into touch with the faiths and worships of the non-Aryan tribes and nations, it does not choose some and reject others—it does not seek to reform and elevate—rather it adopts and justifies all. No superior standard of truth and goodness is applied: no principle of selective holiness can be discovered at work. The result is Hinduism as it has been for centuries, and still is. The movement in Aryan religion is not towards monotheism, but towards an exaggeration and degeneracy of polytheism. The pantheon of the *Vedas* is not contracted: it is made capable of indefinite enlargement. The number of gods is not kept at 'thrice eleven'<sup>1</sup> but becomes more than men can tell. A place is provided for every new deity that is encountered—male or female, beneficent or maleficent, godlike or more demon than god.

The facts of India's religious history may be sorely perplexing to one who believes in the governance of the world by a Spirit of Truth. They must, however, be faced and considered by those who hold the Christian faith. We shall not defend or propagate that faith by refusing to see them. When the true explanation is found, we shall have an enrichment of our understanding of the ways of God with men—a broader and deeper comprehension of His love, patience and wisdom. As things appear to us to-day, we may well ask:—How came it about that the sages and law-givers of India should choose a path

<sup>1</sup> *Rigveda* i. 139, 11; iii. 6, 9, &c.



diverging so widely from that which was shown to and trodden by the prophets and priests of Palestine?

The temple-worship of India is, and always has been, a worship accompanied by sacrifice—that is, it is conducted with and through material oblations. In the greater temples a Brahman is usually the officiating priest. To worship his god in the temple is only one part of the Brahman's daily duty; but for the common people the temple-worship may be the chief part of religious observance. The sacrificial ritual of the temple does nothing to correct the notion of the god's dependence upon the gifts of his worshippers. It rather expresses and strengthens that idea: indeed it may be said to inculcate it in an objectionable form. The offering of food to the god (*naivedya*) is a part of a cult which is anthropomorphic in the lower and illegitimate sense of that term. The god is waked, bathed, clothed, adorned, fed, lauded and entertained, and at the close of day is undressed and put to sleep. If it be said, in excuse and explanation of such a ritual, that it is not intended for God but only for a god, the distinction may be allowed; but the defence proves how far the popular worship of the Hindus has moved away from and neglected God. The deity actually served is in creaturely dependence upon his devotee: in the meaner sense he is such an one as man is.

And, further, as Brahmanism has failed to bring into clearer view the truths of monotheism, so also it has not defended the people against the immoralities of polytheistic worship with its use of idols. Some of the stories told of the greatest of the gods are unedifying and unclean. Dedicated women are attached to shrines of general resort and wide renown, and their festivals are the occasion for sexual excess. Hindu *bhakti*—personal and utter devotion to a chosen deity—has deteriorated with some of the sects into eroticism.



The Brahman repugnance to the taking of life is, as we have seen, of great antiquity. The doctrine of *Ahimsā*, which makes 'harmlessness'—'not injuring any living creature,' the crown of all virtues, and killing the most heinous of crimes, goes back centuries before the Christian era. It is older than the rise of Buddhism in which the doctrine occupies so prominent a place. This being so, it must strike the observer as extraordinary that Brahmanism has not succeeded in abolishing animal sacrifice, even in its most repulsive forms. The reason, in part, may be that the repugnance to the taking of life was more physical or aesthetic than humane and moral; but the continuance of the practice, even to this present, is due much more to that principle of 'undiscriminating comprehensiveness' of which we have previously spoken.

All over India to-day some of the gods, and especially the local deities, the godlings of town and village, are propitiated with offerings of blood. The most conspicuous examples of this practice are the cults of the various 'Mothers'—deities conceived as female, and all of them maleficent. They are thought to be the authors of small-pox, cholera and plague—of drought and famine, and other evils which afflict mankind. If I draw my illustrations from South India, let it be understood that similar practices exist in all parts of India—in Bengal and in the Panjāb no less than in the Madras Presidency, among the Mārāṭhas of the West coast as well as among the Telugus of the East.<sup>1</sup> When an outbreak of cholera is threatened or has occurred, it is common to prepare a rude clay image of the goddess which is then carried in procession. Offerings of flowers, fruit and camphor, of cocks, goats, and a buffalo are made to the goddess.

<sup>1</sup> Almost any Gazetteer or District Manual of India will supply information about the worship of these minor deities. I may mention, however, two little books, which in much detail describe the customs of the South—Bishop Whitehead's *The Village Gods of South India*, and Dr. Elmore's *Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism*.



Only when it is thought that her thirst for blood has been slaked, does the slaughter cease. The officiating priest, the *pūjāri*, drinks the blood of the chief victim, and wearing the entrails of the animal around his neck and holding its liver between his teeth, he goes around the village expelling the demons of disease.

It is agreed by all observers and students of these sacrifices that they are nothing more than rites intended to placate capricious and cruel deities with a lust for blood. One writes:

‘The sole object of the worship of these village deities is to propitiate them and avert their wrath. There is no idea of praise or thanksgiving, no expression of gratitude and love, no desire for any moral and spiritual blessings. The one object is to get rid of the cholera or cattle-disease or drought, or to avert some of the minor evils of life.’<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Whitehead has suggested that some of the rites may have had a totemistic origin, but I think that Dr. Elmore has shown that there is no foundation for this view. In any case, the question is of merely academic interest; for the Bishop says truly:

‘Whatever may have been the origin of these sacrifices in prehistoric times, they are now regarded by the worshippers simply as means of appeasing the deity’s wrath by satisfying her lust for blood. . . . There is no penitence for sin, no thought of the consecration of human life to a just and holy God, but simply the desire to appease the ill-temper of a vengeful spirit by an offering of blood. And even in unbloody offerings of fruit, camphor and incense to the more refined and respectable of the goddesses, who are supposed to be shocked by the sight of blood, the idea of sacrifice does not rise above the conception of a propitiatory gift. It is the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Dr. Elmore from *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, vii, p. 502.



kind of offering that is made to the local policeman or a tyrannical Government official to secure his favour.<sup>1</sup>

Now, though these local worships are of Dravidian origin and prevail among the lowest classes, yet the higher castes and even the Brahmans are involved in them. The Brahman has been caught in the meshes of his own net of compromise. The priest of the goddess of pestilence is usually a man of low caste, or an out-caste; but the Brahman of the village will join with the rest in making his offering to the goddess, when danger threatens the community.

The principle of 'undiscriminating comprehensiveness' has been exercised to the extent that these local deities have been taken up into the Hindu pantheon and recognized as incarnations or manifestations in various forms of the wife of the Great God—Śiva. Local *Purāṇas*, or legendary histories, have been written in Sanskrit to show why and how the manifestation took place. In outward observance and influence on character there is little to distinguish the popular worship of Durgā or Kālī or Ćamuṇḍī from the rites of the village, save that the one is more grandiose than the other. The image of Kālī in Calcutta's best-known temple is of an horrific being, and her worship is the placation of a capricious and lustful deity by offerings of blood.<sup>2</sup> Now and again the newspapers of India publish the ghastly evidence of some secret crime of human sacrifice before an idol of one of these forms of Śiva's wife.

<sup>1</sup>*The Village Gods of South India*, pp. 153-4. Dr. Elmore's own view is indicated in the words—'The fundamental idea of the sacrifices is undoubtedly that of propitiation. The spirits are blood-thirsty, and so blood is shed before them.'

<sup>2</sup>In the *Kālikā Purāṇa* Śiva is represented as addressing his sons and initiating them into the mysteries of the worship of his Consort—'The flesh of the antelope gives my Beloved delight for five hundred years. . . . By a human sacrifice, attended by the forms laid down, Devi is pleased one thousand years. . . . An oblation of blood, which has been rendered pure by sacred verses, is equal to ambrosia: the head and flesh also afford much delight to the goddess Ćaṇḍikā.'



## CHAPTER IV

### YAJNA AND THE CROSS

*Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God.*—HEB. ix. 14.

If our review of the history of Sacrifice in Hinduism be at all accurate and just, it will appear that there has not been a progressive refinement of the idea or ideas set forth in sacrificial rites. We have seen that the earliest sacrifice of the invading Aryans, as discernible in the Vedic hymns, is an act of propitiation, natural and comparatively innocent. The gods are believed to partake of the food and drink offerings, and are pleased and sustained thereby. That idea in the next age is worsened. The Brahman promulgates the notion that the gods depend wholly upon sacrifice, and draw their strength from it. The *mantra* becomes a word of magical power, and the priest who knows the ritual is a god on earth. No limit is set to the efficacy of sacrifice performed with ceremonial correctness. We saw that protests were made against the absurdity and burdensomeness of the sacrificial ritual, and that for a few a Way of Austerity or a Way of Knowledge was instituted; but popular worship was not widely affected nor ennobled by these. The Brahman sacrificial system itself has shrivelled under modern conditions. Some great ceremonies have totally disappeared: the rest survive chiefly in an abbreviated daily worship. In this there are elements of beauty; but the notions of a magical



power in the *mantra* and of the propitiation of demons and evil spirits persist. The Aryan influence did not purge out of the older and aboriginal cults their baser elements. The superstition that there are gods who are dependent upon their devotees for material gifts and bodily service was rather fostered than checked in the common temple worship. In the cults of the lesser deities of pestilence and famine—and of the Great God, Śiva, and his Consort—as ruthless and maleficent powers, sacrifice prevails widely as a rite of bloody placation.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, are we to say? In our age have we passed not only beyond the use of sacrifice, but also beyond the range of all the ideas that once were signified by it? Should we cease to trouble ourselves about its ancient significance, and discard altogether the imagery and the language of sacrifice? Or, on the other hand, shall we find that the symbolism was so apt and instructive that we cannot abstain from preserving it in another fashion—as a figure of speech, if not as a manual act; and that there are truths typified in the ritual which men would not have learned or remembered by any other means, which we ourselves shall forget at our peril and to our immeasurable loss?

One thing may be said without fear of contradiction. The Christian teacher must not employ any sacrificial phrase which implies that the death of Jesus was an offering of blood to placate an angry God. Over against the vengeful deities of popular Hinduism, or the sinister figure of the Great Destroyer Śiva and his horrific wife, we must maintain that God—the power who brought us into being and orders the course of our lives—is not such as they are. He is Righteous Love.

We ought to remember that, at times, our Protestant Christianity, in its desire to emphasize the divine abhorrence of sin, the aversion of the divine nature from all

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



untruth and impurity, that 'wrath of God,' which is being continually manifested against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, has come perilously near to this error of thought and doctrine. There is no great need, to-day, however, to utter a protest or to give a warning against an explanation of the death of Jesus, in which this deplorable blemish appears. The dangers of our age lie in another quarter.

Dr. Moberly has written :—'The untenable elements of thought which have too often been characteristic of the atoning theories of popular Protestantism may be said to have arisen out of a mischievous misuse of such phrases as Propitiation, Reconciliation and Justification. Out of these words have been drawn—perversely enough—the conceptions of an enraged Father, a victimized Son, the unrighteous punishment of the innocent, the unrighteous reward of the guilty, the transference of innocence and guilt by fictitious imputation, the adroit settlement of an artificial difficulty by an artificial and strictly irrelevant transaction.'

If Christian preachers in India of the Word of the Cross were in any danger of repeating that error, the practice of popular Hinduism, the worship of the village goddesses, should cover them with shame and confusion of face. Bishop Whitehead has expressed for all of them what they must think and say of a view of the Divine, as—in any degree or form—a vengeful being requiring to be placated by blood :—'Taking the system, therefore, as a whole, as it exists at the present day, we can only condemn it from a moral and religious point of view as a debasing superstition; and the only attitude which the Christian Church can possibly take towards it as a working system is one of uncompromising hostility.'

If there are some words of St. Paul which have been made the foundation of an unlovely perversion of the truth of the Cross of Christ—and these are among the



things in his Epistles which are 'hard to be understood'—let us never overlook the fact that with St. Paul the origin and support of all the grace and goodness which were manifested in Jesus was God Himself. It was of the love of God the Father that Jesus came, and in the comfort and as the proof of that love He suffered and died. It has often been remarked that the terms 'reconcile' and 'reconciliation,' used nine times by the Apostle of the relation between God and man, connote in every case a change in man and not a change in God. His nature always was and is purity and love—holy love, clean and righteous love. It is man who needs to be reconciled to God, not God who must be reconciled to man. The Father from the beginning has loved: of His love He sent His Son. He sustained Him with love in His mission, and now waits in love for its fruit.

We must begin here, then, any doctrine of the death of Jesus. A theory of the Atonement which denies or diminishes or dishonours the fundamental fact of God's love is not for one moment to be accepted. The writers of the great Epistles are at one in this view of the life and death of Jesus:—

'God commendeth His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. 5 \*).

'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation' (II Cor. 5<sup>19</sup>).

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. . . . We bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the saviour of the world. . . . God is love' (I John 4<sup>10,14,16</sup>).

The career of Jesus from Bethlehem to Calvary began, continued and ended in the love of His Father. Whatever St. Paul or the author of the Johannine Epistles



meant by some of the terms they used, it was a meaning consistent with—nay, springing from—the love of God.

As we look again at the ideas connected with sacrifice, Jewish and Hindu, while we reject unhesitatingly and recoil from the superstition that God is a vengeful being who must be placated with an offering of blood, is there no belief which we can adopt and carry forward into our own day? Before we can come to a decision we must know what was the mind of Jesus Himself towards the Levitical sacrifice. It has been said that Jesus stands rather aloof from the services of the Temple. He resorted to it, and loved it as an house of prayer. He used its outer courts as a place of assembly and teaching; but we do not read of His watching or taking part, as a member of the sacred people, in the sacrificial worship.<sup>1</sup> His attitude towards sacrifice seems to have been closely akin to that of the prophets. We have noted already (p. 53) that, on two occasions, he quoted the great saying of Hosea, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' He looked with approval upon, and warmly commended, the Scribe who cited the first two great Commandments of love to God and love to man, and went on to add that to keep these 'was more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices' (Mark 12<sup>29</sup>). One who had attained to such knowledge as this was, in the eyes of Jesus, 'not far from the Kingdom of God.' Further, Jesus taught that it was idle to make an offering to God upon the altar, while hatred against a brother man was burning in the heart. The sacrifice would not be acceptable to God, until it was accompanied by forgiving love (Matt. 5<sup>23-24</sup>). On the other hand, He recognised the Levitical system as of social utility and bade the leper who was healed 'to go and show himself to the priest and offer the gift which Moses commanded' (Matt. 8<sup>4</sup>). We have seen that Jesus foretold the des-

<sup>1</sup> St. John 7<sup>37</sup> is a possible exception.



truction of the Temple, and the substitution for its local and symbolic worship of a universal worship in spirit and truth, and that His teaching on this theme caused some misgiving. By His cleansing of the Temple Jesus showed that he would not tolerate a ritual apart from morality, and so gave mortal offence.

The lamb in the great passage on the Suffering Servant of Jehovah (Isaiah 53), which we know to have been in the mind of Jesus as He stood close to His own Passion (Luke 22 <sup>27</sup>), was not the lamb of the priest and the altar, but

‘The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed,’

meek and dumb before the butcher and its shearers. There is not necessarily any sacrificial reference in the saying of Jesus, ‘The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many’ (Matt. 20 <sup>28</sup>). The imagery here may well be of redemption from slavery, or from a sentence of the Law. It is denied by some Biblical students that in the rite of the Last Supper there is any connection with the Levitical sacrifice. Without going into these questions, it can be said that the infrequency of Our Lord’s references to the Jewish sacrifices and the little emphasis He lays upon them give us liberty to consider whether or not we shall continue the use of the language of Sacrifice. One thing which is clear from what Jesus has taught is that no service can be acceptable to God which does not come from a pure and loving heart. The homage of the spirit is the true worship.

Everything, therefore, turns upon what we ourselves conceive to be the ideas expressed in Sacrifice. I have spoken already in condemnation of the idea—once, in its primitive stage, comparatively innocent but developed later into a presumptuous or childish superstition—that the God under whose governance we are depends upon our material gifts for His own well-being. Yet even here



is there not something which can be translated to a higher plane and made truth? Is there not a sense, eternally valid, in which God the Self-Existent and the Self-Sufficient, is dependent upon men? There is an offering of which He is in need from us; and until it is given, even He Himself is not satisfied.

This dependence and need of God arises out of His essential nature as love. All love is a reciprocal relation. It is sometimes said that the love of a mother for her child is higher than the love of man for woman or of woman for man, inasmuch as it is unselfish, self-effacing and self-sacrificing. It seeks and demands no reward in a return of love. I do not imagine that any one of us, on reflection, will be prepared to maintain this view of a mother's love. It is true that it begins before there is the possibility of the return of love in the same degree and kind, and that it persists in the face of neglect, disobedience or ingratitude after a child has come to years of discretion; but all the while the heart of a mother, and of a father, craves for the love of a son or a daughter. And when this relation exists in its ideal or perfected form, it is a reciprocal relation—love given and love received. Nor is this craving of a parent's heart selfish, because it goes along with the desire that the loved child shall be altogether worthy. However much a father or a mother may seek to disguise or to ignore the fact, ingratitude or neglect on the part of the child is an unlovely and an unworthy thing. It detracts from that beauty and perfection of character which every wise and loving parent desires above all things to see in a beloved son or daughter. All love, then, of whatsoever kind, being reciprocal in its nature, seeks for and can only be satisfied by a return of love. Such is the image which Jesus Himself has given us of God as Our Father, who is in heaven. He loves His children, and seeks for a response in their hearts; and when love is withheld from Him by



the errant and disobedient, He does not dismiss them from remembrance, but seeks to bring them to a filial mind. In one respect the Parable of the Lost Sheep is greater even than the Parable of the Lost Son. In the latter the Father's love is exhibited merely as passive. It stays at home and waits and watches for the returning prodigal. But the Parable of the Lost Sheep shows us the love of God as active in the shepherd who goes forth upon the mountains in search of his sheep and brings it home upon his shoulders. The words of Jesus about Himself and the writings of the Apostles make it plain that Jesus was the messenger and minister of this active love of God. In Him God's seeking love of a world of sinful men became incarnate.

Now, if this is so, then may we not say reverently that man has something to render to God without which God Himself is not complete and satisfied? This is the love of my heart. John Wesley has expressed the truth for us in his noble rendering of the majestic German hymn:—

Fountain of good! All blessing flows  
From Thee; no want Thy fulness knows:  
What but Thyself can'st Thou desire?  
Yet, Self-Sufficient as Thou art,  
Thou dost desire my worthless heart;  
This, only this, dost Thou require.

The ineffable and infinite God, Lord of the Universe—  
forasmuch as He is my Father, and I am His child—  
wants me, and will not be satisfied without me. He has  
no need of my libations of water or wine, of my gifts of  
corn or the flesh of beasts; but He asks for my remem-  
brance of His mercies, for my gratitude and obedience,  
for the uttermost homage of my entire being, for the  
love of my whole nature—'with all my heart, and with  
all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my  
strength.' All the thank-offerings and whole burnt-



offerings of men, upon all the altars of the world, so far as they were true in direction or intent, were faint expressions of this debt of man to God, and of God's dependence in love upon man. With the offering of the affections and dispositions of our heart, God is well pleased: He cannot do without them.

This view of sacrifice sheds a great light on the death of Jesus. We feel and know that we ourselves ought to have loved God and to have rendered Him a service without flaw or failure: but we are conscious that we have sinned and come short of our duty of love. We have rejected the beautiful and the good and have declined upon evil and base things: we have followed the devices and desires of our own corrupt hearts and have despised and broken the pure commandments of God. Though we may have longed to do better and to render a full and perfect obedience, we have found ourselves disabled by sin and incapable of performing what our better self approved. But when, in our shame and humiliation, we lift up our eyes and consider Jesus, we see in Him a perfect love of His Heavenly Father expressed in that complete obedience, which is our obligation, though we have never achieved it. The life of Jesus, from its first day to its last, is the whole offering of Himself to God: it is the perfect sacrifice. The Jewish code required that the sacrificial animal should be without 'spot or blemish'; and in presenting the living victim to God as a thank-offering or whole burnt-offering, the Jews signified that our human due to God is the entire homage and service of whatever a living man is. The sacrifice was the acknowledgment of the claim of God's goodness and love upon men, and it was a ritual dedication and gift of man's life to God. What we men have vainly desired to do, Jesus has accomplished in truth. He lived with God: His was the life which had all its outgoings 'towards' God—(*πρὸς τὸν θεόν*).



In this aspect of it, the Passion of Jesus is the supreme test of His love for and trust in God and of His obedience. There is no greater proving either of love or of obedience than their proving by the peril of death. Jesus not only faced the peril, but also He actually incurred the death.

'And, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea the death of the Cross' (Phil. 2 \*).

Dr. Moberly has dwelt in memorable words upon this uttermost testing of the love and obedience of Jesus by the Cross, both in prospect and in actual endurance. He reminds us that this testing was not, as in the case of many a martyr, brief and without the possibility of escape; but it was prolonged and required only a change of the will for its removal. It was consummated in the Crucifixion:—

'That the conscious identity of will with God (expressed on one side in unceasing prayer, on another in unceasing obedience) might stand triumphant over the utmost straining of counter-influences which could be possibly brought to bear against it, it was necessary that the drama of Bethlehem and Nazareth should find its culmination in Calvary. . . . He would perfect obedience in fallen human nature; and therefore He must be liable to feel, that He might triumph through and over, the uttermost sollicitation to which His human consciousness could make His person accessible, towards the possibility of deflection, if but for a moment, of His suffering will from God. . . . For the climax of temptation, for the climax of sollicitation addressed through the body to the will, it was necessary that the body should be pressed to the point of its own destruction. . . . Only try to imagine the unimaginable pressure of this last concentrated temptation upon his human will. For none apart from Himself can put one pang upon Him.



One moment's unwillingness to suffer—and He can wholly be free.'

It was a great unknown Disciple of the first generation who saw in the death of Jesus the perfect and final expression of what any whole burnt-offering upon the altar had ever attempted to say—the rendering of the complete life to God, the oblation of an obedience, tested to the uttermost limit and without defect or failure. He wrote of Jesus:

'Who . . . though He was a son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered.'

'Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God.'

'Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not.

But a body didst Thou prepare for me.

In whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure:

Then said I, Lo I am come. . . .

To do Thy will, O God'

(Heb. 5<sup>5</sup>; 9<sup>14</sup>; 10<sup>5-7</sup> *Cp.* Psalm 40<sup>6-8</sup>).

Jesus rendered to God the Father by His love and obedience that joy and satisfaction, for which the heart of God has ever been looking from each of His children.

When we ourselves contemplate with humility of heart and adoration this perfected obedience of Jesus, we are—in effect—making our acknowledgment to God that such obedience is due from ourselves. And in the proportion of this humility and adoration, we are—in veritable fact—confessing and repenting of our sin and offering ourselves to God in a new-found submission and obedience. Conscious as we are of our failure in the past to render our due, we feel that none can better serve as our friend and helper than He who was so completely our brother in temptation and sorrow, and at the same time utterly acceptable to and beloved by God. If ever there were



One who might serve as an introducer of a sinful man to the sinless God, then it was Jesus who 'once died, with reference to sins, the righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, to bring us to God (1 Peter 3<sup>18</sup>).

There is, however, one other truth implicit in the Jewish sacrifice, to which I should like to call attention. It is that forgiveness, the restoration of right relations between God and man, is not an easy process; it is costly—infinitely costly. When Satan said to the Lord 'Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life' (Job 2<sup>4</sup>), he was voicing a universal sentiment. And when the Jews selected a living animal, in preference to an inanimate substance, as the sacrificial oblation, they were appointing—consciously I think—for the use of the altar what is the costliest thing in the world—life, mysterious and more precious than flower, or fruit, or cake of meal, or gem, or hoard of coin. In taking out of the flock or herd an unblemished lamb or bullock, the Jew chose a perfect thing in the costliest order of existence. Life stood at the top of the scale of values. It still is there in common repute. The sickly dying millionaire would surrender his balance at the bank for health and a few more years of life upon earth.

We find this idea of the extreme cost of Forgiveness in the New Testament. St. Paul, in one of his Epistles, twice reminds his readers of the greatness of the price of bringing them into a new relation with God (1 Cor. 6<sup>20</sup>; 7<sup>23</sup>). Though his illustration is taken not from sacrifice but from the institution of domestic slavery—the purchase of a bondman's freedom—still the truth which the Apostle is emphasizing is this, of the costliness of salvation. There is, however, a passage in the First Epistle of St. Peter, where the two institutions of slavery and of sacrifice are brought together and laid under contribution. 'Ye were redeemed not with corruptible



things from your vain manner of living inherited by you from the fathers (*ἐκ τῆς ματαίας ὑμῶν ἀναστροφῆς πατροπαραδότου*), but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot—of Christ' (1 Peter 1<sup>18</sup>). The Levitical sacrifice, in its dim and imperfect manner, did suggest that the process of the recovery of a sinner is not easy; that Forgiveness is achieved at a great price. 'Apart from shedding of blood, there is no remission,' wrote one in review of the system. (Heb. 9<sup>22</sup>.)

What do we mean by 'the blood of Jesus,' or 'the blood of Christ'? When we say of men beloved by us, who died in the Great War, that they shed their blood for us, we mean that they laid down their lives for us. Their devotion to their country and their concern for our honour and welfare was not a gesture only in the realm of the spirit, nor merely an eloquent phrase: it was not content to express itself in a contribution of money, or in the incurring of some slight personal discomfort and inconvenience. It was a loyalty which accepted the long torture of the trenches and the hazards of battle; they actually died and laid down their lives. In our experience of ourselves we know full well that our resolutions, which seem to be sincere and firm, are never wholly to be trusted until they have been put to the proof of pain. In the mystic union of body and spirit, the willingness of the spirit to endure bodily suffering and its extremity—death, is the supreme and ultimate test of the spirit's resolution. When, therefore, we speak of 'the blood of Jesus,' the words certainly are a reminder that Jesus died a physical death upon the Cross, but they also imply much more than this. They mean that the fidelity of Jesus to truth and the constancy and fortitude of His love were put to the proof of mortal peril and pain; and that He could not possess these qualities of soul without accepting that suffering. The shed 'blood of Jesus' is thus an outward



sign and testimony of the 'mind which was in Jesus'<sup>1</sup> There is, of course, no efficacy whatever in the mere shedding of physical blood—not even of the 'blood of Jesus'—apart from an activity or exercise of the spirit; but the phrase teaches us that His spiritual concern was such that it was ready to undergo the extremity of pain and achieved its end through death. There is an obstinacy and power in sin such that it will not be overcome save the utmost effort be put forth against it. 'You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin,' was the reproach which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews brought against his readers, and he invited them to 'consider Jesus'—the manner and the degree of His resistance, which extended to His acceptance of the Cross. Sanday and Headlam quote from Ruskin's last Oxford lectures in their *Excursus* on 'The Death of Christ considered as Sacrifice.'<sup>2</sup>

'The great mystery of the idea of Sacrifice itself, which has been manifested as one united and solemn instinct by all thoughtful and affectionate races, since the world became peopled, is founded on the secret truth of benevolent energy which all men who have tried to gain it have learned—that you cannot save men from death but

<sup>1</sup> Dr. R. F. Horton in *How the Cross Saves* has thus dealt with the modern repugnance to the use of the term 'blood':

'The repulsion to this term in Scripture is due to the misuse of figurative language. Directly we venture to press for a definite answer to the question, What is meant by the blood? and begin to see the truth which is described under that metaphor, the offence is removed. For the offence arises only from a stupid and unimaginative literalism. Now what is meant by the blood in this connexion is Our Lord's offering of Himself in the death of the Cross. . . . Many are kept from Christ by the unthinking reiteration of the phrase, "The blood of Christ." Under these circumstances we have two alternatives open to us. Either we must renew instruction in Old Testament, Semitic, and even Hellenic, religion in order that the mind may approach the idea of the blood with a historic preparation . . . or we may seek to pierce to the inner meaning of the metaphor, and dropping the metaphor, which has now become of merely antiquarian interest, we may endeavour to convey the religious truth of the Cross in those psychological and spiritual terms which appeal to the modern mind, as the sacrifices and rites of the altar appealed to antiquity.' These words are of value and authority as coming from a well-known preacher of our day.

<sup>2</sup> Commentary on *Romans*, p. 93.



by facing it for them, nor from sin but by resisting it for them.'

He, then, who would be the Saviour of the World, must be willing to be the chief sufferer—to undergo all the pains by which alone the result can be achieved.

The objection is raised that forgiveness should be possible without any suffering at all. Why should not God freely forgive the sins of men, it is asked, on the simple condition of their repentance and trust? If He is love and goodness, nothing more should be required for Him to pardon and to receive back into fellowship with Himself the children who have erred from the paths of obedience. The method of forgiveness exhibited in the Parable of the Prodigal Son is cited as an example and type of the right and divine way of dealing with all sinners: it is urged that here nothing is said about suffering in relation to forgiveness.

But, quite apart from the general consideration that no single parable can illustrate all aspects of truth, one may reply that, as soon as we exercise our thought upon the parable, we see that forgiveness was not without suffering on the part of the father who represents God. The demand of the son for his portion of the family estate showed an utter forgetfulness of past care, an indifference to present love, a disregard of filial obligations, an absence of desire for the fellowship and company of his father—which were all so many wounds to the father's heart. And what is to be said of the pain of separation, of anxiety over an absent son in a strange land, of shame and grief at the plight of the scion of an honourable house, of the longing for the prodigal's return? Whenever we employ our imagination to fill in the details of the picture which has been drawn for us in simplest outline, we see that the father's forgiveness had been preceded by long pain and suffering. The truth is that, wherever love exists, there also exist the capacity and



the occasion for suffering: he who would never suffer, let him never love. We are authorized by the teaching of Jesus in this parable to carry up this idea of love and suffering into the heart of God Himself. Forasmuch as He is perfect love, is there not in Him also the capacity to suffer in a pre-eminent degree?

There are three kinds of forgiveness known to us men. The first is that condonation of sin which comes from one who is indifferent to right or wrong and has no sense of the obligations of goodness or of the turpitude of sin. He murmurs in the ear, 'What you have done is what everybody does. You are no worse than others. Don't trouble yourself about sin: it does not matter greatly.' This is the kind of forgiveness, if we may call it such, which deceives and destroys the soul accepting it or finding comfort in it. The second sort of human forgiveness is offered to us by the friend who says, 'You have committed sin: there is no denying it. What you have done is shameful and hideous in itself; but I am not the person to condemn you, for I also have done the same. Let us together try to do better.' So, as a fellow-man and fellow-sinner, he links his arm in ours; and together we face the upward 'track. We bless God for such understanding and faithful friends; but at the same time we know that there is an element lacking in their forgiveness. It is easy for our friend to forgive, because something is wanting in him of a full capacity to feel the sinfulness of our sin, and to see the beauty of goodness. A man can forgive without great effort 'the sins to which he is inclined.' The third kind is rare. It is that of a man who has not had and never will have any share in the committing of our sin. It is foreign to his nature. He is altogether above it. He has no lurking sympathy with it. He abhors and repels it with all the force of his will and affections. When such an one forgives, it is only by a great inward effort. Love prevails over



repulsion; and the love of this our truest friend also will go out in an effort to bring ourselves to his point of view and to his state of feeling. It seems to me that it never was quite a fair putting of a particular theory of the Atonement to say about it that it set one attribute or side of God's nature against another attribute or side of His nature; that the death of Jesus was shown as provided by the love of God to give satisfaction to His justice. I would rather say that the act or process of forgiveness, whatever it be, must be such as to be completely in accord with all that God is: it must be the worthy expression of His whole nature. And when there is a nature of perfect love, and at the same time of perfect purity or holiness, the act of forgiveness will be at once an expression of God's abhorrence of sin and of His love for the sinner. It will not palliate or condone sin—if it did, it could not truly help the sinner; but rather it will affect him to a deeper penitence, while it assures him of being loved beyond all his deserts and power of conceiving.

We ourselves, under the safe and luxurious conditions of modern civilization, may suffer from a moral flabbiness,—a sloppiness of thought arising out of our self-indulgence and worship of comfort and wealth. We may avert our eyes from the fact of suffering and the necessity for an heroic endurance of it in the recovery of mankind to goodness. We may believe and preach a Gospel of the Love of God, which is really a form of degenerate sentiment. Some Christians have not avoided that great error and Hinduism has fallen into it. It has a doctrine of Grace which makes the forgiveness of sins the easiest and the cheapest thing imaginable. According to the Scriptures of the Sects it is sufficient to repeat with fervour only the name of Rāma, or of Śiva, to obtain at once a remission of sins and the bliss of heaven. The temples and sacred rivers vie with one another in the claims which they make for efficacy in the removal



of guilt and impurities. An oblation to the god in this shrine or that will win a superlative pardon; bathing in this pool or in yonder waters-meet will wash away all the sins of this and other existences. Here is a professed mode of forgiveness which makes it a process marvellously facile and painless. Tukārām sang of Viṭhoba's shrine at Pandharpur:—'You can buy liberation there for nothing.' The 'blood of Jesus' utters a protest against this type of thought and belief, whether it be found in the West or in the East. What the old Levitical sacrifice said faintly and obscurely, the Word of the Cross declares in piercing accents for all to hear, 'Sin is a force terrible in its persistence. It must be resisted to the utmost. Its forgiveness has been achieved at an infinite cost—even the laying down by Jesus of His life.' The sinner, truly forgiven and at peace with God, knows that, in the last resort, there was nothing for him to do but to receive with childlike humility and trust the free gift of God's forgiveness. The hands, however, which hold out the gift are pierced, and the God who forgives is One who has declared His mind in the Crucified. The gift of forgiveness can only be free to men, because the cost of it to God has been so great. God has for ever made it impossible for us to misunderstand His grace by an act in history—the death of Jesus upon the Cross, which shows forth both His righteousness or reverence for right, and His love. We can never justly suppose that God forgives easily.<sup>1</sup>

Does God forgive without effort and without suffering? Let us consider for a moment what our thought would have been, if there had been no Cross. Let us imagine, if we can, that Jesus came as a teacher of the purest

<sup>1</sup> This is a fragment of St. Paul's meaning in the passage :—' All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being *justified freely by His grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to shew his righteousness . . . that He might Himself be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus ' (Rom. 3 23-25).



and most sublime morality and of the infinite love of God; and that about sin and forgiveness He had done no more than to say, 'If you repent and trust your Heavenly Father, He will forgive you.' In these circumstances, we ourselves should say (if not at the outset, then ultimately after reflection), that such forgiveness is for God an exceedingly easy thing. He has not known our temptations, and He has never experienced the stress and sorrow of living in a human society in which the influences of our fellow-men often make for evil, in which the just and good man, for all his innocence, is involved in the consequences of the wrong-doing of others. Moreover, that forgiveness of God would be much inferior in moral quality to the forgiveness which many men are called upon to exercise, and do in fact exercise. They forgive those who have done to them an actual injury. They are wounded and pierced by the transgressions of others, and yet they forgive. But yonder, so we should think and speak, is that impeccable and impassive God, beyond temptation and beyond sin, incapable of being affected by the sins and sorrows of men, abiding in endless bliss without limit or imperfection. A God, merely transcendent, outside of and above His world, might well be required by His creatures to forgive: or rather He might be told that He had no right to condemn. If such a God forgave, it would be without effort and painlessly. But what moral value or efficacy would there be in such forgiveness? It would have no meaning, and it could do no good.

This whole conception of the being and nature of God is at fault; for He is truly in our midst and within us. He is most intimately related to us by the ties of His love for us; and forasmuch as this is so, He must suffer. If it be said that in so thinking and believing we are running into the ancient heresy of *Patropassianism*, let it be so. This is far better than that we should dwell



at the opposite pole of thought. Dr. Hogg has well said in the context of the problem of Love and Evil:—

'In the more fundamental matter of the conception of the Divine Nature no compromise is possible. If we acquiesce in the endeavour, so typical of Hinduism and of much European thought, to conceive of infinitude as consisting in *imperturbable self-sufficiency*, than no solution of the problem of evil is possible other than the desperate expedient of declaring that evil is unreal—unmistakably existent indeed for human consciousness, but non-existent for supreme or divine consciousness. But *imperturbableness of this kind is not characteristic of the Father revealed in Jesus*. His infinitude is a moral infinitude. He is infinite not because He is undisturbed by evil, but because He is willing to be infinitely disturbed by it. His freedom is the freedom of love.'<sup>1</sup>

The immutability and peace of God are not to be thought of as the qualities of the stock or stone, nor as the indifference or equanimity (*samabhāva*) ascribed to Krishna, which is to be imitated by his devotees:—

'I am alike to all creatures: none is hateful to me, and none dear.'<sup>2</sup>

Brahma, the Supreme Being, is said to be of the form of joy, *ānandarūpam*. What, however, is the nature of the divine bliss? The peace of God and the joy of the Lord are a moral and spiritual unchangeableness, consistent—we may devoutly imagine—with real activity and with sorrow. To use our faint human analogy, the truly good man is always the same in disposition and character, whatever be his circumstances; and, even when pain and grief press in upon him, he knows a deep unalterable joy and peace. So God never departs from His essential nature, but abides for ever true to that.

<sup>1</sup> *Karma and Redemption*: Chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Samo'ham sarvabhūteshu na me dveshyo'sti na priyaḥ. Bhagavadgītā*: ix. 28.



Let us attempt to go a little deeper in our analysis of the implications of love, and the relation which it institutes between God and man. There are passages in the New Testament which suggest an intimate connection, an identification, of Jesus with the sinner. We find it hard to understand them, and still harder to convey to others the meaning which we may have discovered for ourselves. It is as though we were unable to gain the view-point of the writer, and to perceive the truth which he was struggling to express. One such passage is St. Paul's 'Him, Who knew no sin, He made sin on our behalf' (II Cor. 5 <sup>21</sup>); and another is St. Peter's 'Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the wooden (cross)' (I Pet. 2 <sup>24</sup>). In what sense can it be true that Jesus was made sin, and how could He bear our sins? It is impossible to conceive how one who was in very truth sinless could be made a sinner, or could be regarded and treated by God as sinful. The guilt of sin could not be found in One who had not committed sin; nor can we attach any intelligible meaning to the transfer of the guilt of sin from the sinful to the sinless. It is suggested that here the Apostles are using very strong phrases to describe the identification of Jesus with sinful men in all the *consequences* of sin—its pain, its shame, its sorrow, its loneliness and desolation of spirit. Jesus, they would give us to understand, was not aloof from these: He shared them with us to the uttermost. These are the things which He bore, but not the consciousness of His having done wrong, nor the displeasure of God by a fiction of His having done wrong.

The writer, who has been more helpful to me than any other in dealing with this mystery—Dr. Moberly, says:—'We have in many ways overdone our lesson, and exaggerated, in common thought and theory, the *mutual exclusiveness of human personality*.' It is a sentence which Indian theology will appreciate, for which it will



be grateful. And he goes on to speak of the 'self-identifying of one person with another in the unity of nature and love,' which issues in 'a unity more ultimate and essential than the *distinctness* of personalities.'

The juristic conception of the Atonement has ceased to be helpful to the religious inquirers of our day. One reason is that they feel so strongly it is of the very nature and function of justice that penalty shall alight upon the wrong-doer himself. For the innocent to suffer and the guilty to go scot-free seems to be a denial of the first principles of justice—its complete failure in administration. There is, however, another and a more influential reason, why we do not now resort to this analogy. It is that the relation of the judge to the criminal is not the most intimate and comprehensive which human society can afford.<sup>1</sup> Our English bar and bench, we like to believe, are unsurpassed in the world for integrity and for humanity; but the judge sees the prisoner in the dock in one relation only—his relation to the law of the country. The sole duty of the court is to decide whether or not the accused has broken that law. The judge does not aim, and cannot aim, at knowing the prisoner in all the relations of his life—in his home, among his friends, in his business, amusements and chance occupations. When guilt is proven, the judge puts on his black cap and pronounces sentence, and goes home to dress for dinner and the pleasant circle of his friends. Moved though he may be, even to tears—for such instances are on record—in passing condemnation of death, he does not enter profoundly into the experience of the prisoner. If he were to make the attempt in the case

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Scott Lidgett in *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement* has written: 'The divine Fatherhood is supreme, all-embracing and all-controlling. It is clear, at first sight, that Fatherhood is a higher, more vital, intimate, and gracious relationship than any other which can be named; than, for example, that of creator, king, or judge. It is equally true, though not so immediately apparent, that Fatherhood includes all these other relationships in a higher and larger whole' (p. 229).



of every criminal tried in his court, life would become insupportable to him. He can only live sanely and happily by a severe limitation of his interest, his sympathy, his identification of himself with those who are brought before him for judgement. How different are his feelings from those of the father, the mother, the wife, the child of the condemned man!

The Old Testament contains the most affecting story in the world of a father's grief over a criminal son. David's personality was defiled and disabled by sins of lust and cruelty; but in his heart he retained the capacity for incalculable love and sorrow. Justice spoke by the mouth of the Cushite runner—"The enemies of my Lord the King, and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." But the father's heart spoke in that cry which still rings across the great separating intervals of time and space in its poignancy of suffering and love. "And the King was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." (II Sam. 18<sup>32-33</sup>).

Now if there be such suffering of love, such grief of heart in an earthly father, who was evil, what may we suppose was the suffering in the heart of Jesus over those with whom He had identified Himself in love? And what is the sorrow in the heart of God, who is our Heavenly Father and is wholly goodness and love?

Dr. Moberly's well-known illustration is taken from the realm of a mother's love. "I will ask you to think," he writes, "of a father or a mother—pure, holy, tender-hearted, loving—whose own beloved only child, son or daughter, is branded with the deep reality of irretrievable disgrace. I will ask you to compare the grief of such a mother over the shame of a stranger, and over the shame of her own, her best-beloved. Even towards the stranger,



there might be the deepest concern, the tenderest, truest, most winning and restorative sympathy. But the shame which is her own child's is her own. For *herself* the light is gone out of her life. Her heart is not merely, as in the other case, tenderly concerned, her heart is broken.

'And then, compare this grief of the mother, with the grief of the child, whose own the shame is. . . . But this very fact that the sinful will is her own (the daughter's) while it may fill her penitence with wildness and alarm, blunts its edge and dims its truth. . . . But the mother's anguish is not less anguish, but more, because it is without that confusing presence of the sin. . . . The penitent anguish of the mother who is holy is, even in proportion to her reality of holiness, more undimmed, keener of edge, deeper in truth—in the shame of the child with whom, in nature and in love, she is wholly self-identified—than it is, than it can be, in the child of whose mind and will the sin itself is still part.'

The application of this parable here is that Jesus has our nature: that He is in the completest degree our kinsman. And He is bound to us by the tie of a love for men, which knew no reservation. He loved to the uttermost and to the end. Therefore, in this unity of nature and of love, He has entered into our life and experience. He feels the shame and degradation of our sin more keenly than we do ourselves. He expresses a penitence, an abhorrence of sin, and a devotion to righteousness, more strong and pure than any penitence and devotion we, with our marred natures, are capable of expressing.

We have, earlier in this chapter, laid some stress on the fact of the physical death of Jesus, a death of His body which was an outward and visible event; but the course of our thought has now brought us to a consideration of what was the nature of that agony of mind and spirit which Jesus underwent. The devout student has



always felt that there was something mysterious and profound in that Passion. It lay beyond the realm of mere physical pain, terrible though that was in prospect and in incidence. What was it that troubled the soul of Jesus, drew from Him the sweat of His agony in the garden, and His cry upon the Cross, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me'? This was something other and greater than physical pain; some state of mind of which we have experience. It seems to have been an insupportable grief which destroyed the body before it should have died normally by crucifixion.<sup>1</sup>

It was as if being ours, by 'unity of nature and love,' in the fullest sense our brother man and our lover, the sordidness and shame of human life, the ingratitude and baseness of men, the flagrant vice and pride of the oppressor, the fragility of virtue and the falseness of religion, the fickleness and cowardice of discipleship—all these, the whole weight of them and more, bowed Him down to death. He entered into the feeling and sense of sin as only one of the purest nature could. The cry of Jesus upon the Cross was the cry of one who had trusted all His life in God and in the goodness of the Universe, and at the last, for a moment—ought we to say it?—felt Himself in a world without God or goodness, confronted with and surrounded by all the powers of evil. 'If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?'

For one moment—may we imagine it?—Jesus found Himself sinking in an abyss of evil that seemed to be bottomless, without God as the rock beneath His feet. If there be time and place for the utmost chastening of thought and simplicity of speech, it is when we stand at the foot of the Cross in contemplation of the suffering

<sup>1</sup> 'And Pilate marvelled if He were already dead' (Mark 15<sup>44</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> 'But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs' (John 19<sup>33</sup>).



of Him who hangs upon it. It may be true to say that such is the closeness of the connexion between body and spirit that the body has power temporarily by its pain and exhaustion to shut out God from the view even of His saints. That power is planted in the mystic union of the two. We too have known some of the holiest and best of men who—for a while—were thus without the sense of God's presence. I would prefer, however, to say simply with my friend, an old Chinese missionary:—'Faith does for a time suffer eclipse, but trust in divine love returns: there comes a day of resurrection.' Even this experience of men was not withheld from Jesus.

But what has the suffering of Jesus to do with God? How does God, the Invisible, enter into the matter at all? We may grant that the Jesus of history in His mission to men and in His endeavour to turn them from sin to righteousness encountered pain and death. Men were changed in heart and made forgivable only at the cost of His own extreme suffering; and His forgiveness of them was in an immeasurable grief and shame at their sinfulness. This, you may say, was historic fact; but all of it was the sorrow of Jesus and not the sorrow of God.

Let us recall the principle now guiding our thought—'We have overdone our lesson, and exaggerated the *mutual exclusiveness of personality*.' One consequence is that we have failed to perceive and remember how one human person—such as we ourselves are—may, in 'the unity of nature and love,' seem almost to identify himself or herself, to become one, with another person—as a father with his son, a mother with her child. And, similarly, we have been slow to believe and understand how complete was Jesus' identification of Himself with sinful men, whose nature He took, to whom He was bound by love.



Now, may we not carry this principle a stage farther and higher, even into the region of the mystery of the Godhead.<sup>1</sup> May we not believe, and say that in a perfect 'unity of nature and love,' passing all our experience of personal relations, there was a self-identification of God with Jesus and of Jesus with God in the suffering and death of the Cross? God was then and there one with Jesus, and Jesus was one with God. God was in the Crucified, and the Crucified was in God. Dr. Mosserly has written of the mother of his similitude:—'Her own broken heart—it is the very expression of God in her. It is God in her, even if and even whilst it is also the bowing of the head in an anguish of spirit unto death.' Must we not also conceive that when the Holy One of God hung and died upon the Cross, His agony and shame were 'the very expression of God' in Him—an expression, full and perfect, of the heart and will of God towards sin and sinful men?

We know that it is grievously wrong to think and speak as if Jesus were all grace and compassion, and God Almighty were all justice and wrath. Is it not equally an error to imagine that Jesus was all grief and suffering, and God was all tranquillity and bliss? Our Christian poet knew better. He saw the paradox of the Godhead and the Cross:—

'Impassive He suffers: Immortal He dies.'

We shall not, then, permit ourselves to think that it was a human Jesus or a God Incarnate who paid the price of our salvation in mortal pain, while a God Disincarnate and Impassive looked on; for God Himself, in the fulness of His being, who is over all, blessed for ever, provided and participated in the payment of that price. The Passion of Jesus was the Passion of God.

<sup>1</sup> Is not the principle of St. Augustine applicable no less in the region of feeling than of activity—'Omnia ergo simul et Pater et Filius et amborum Spiritus pariter et concorditer operantur'?



Never love, nor sorrow was  
Like that my Saviour show'd:  
See Him stretch'd on yonder Cross,  
And crush'd beneath our load!  
Now discern the Deity,  
Now His heavenly birth declare!  
Faith cries out, 'Tis He, 'tis He,  
My God, that suffers there!

'God was in Christ'—yes, in the Crucified Christ—  
'reconciling the world unto Himself.'



## CHAPTER V

### TYĀGA AND THE CROSS

#### SELF-DENIAL OR SELF-ANNIHILATION

*And He said unto all, If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it. . . . What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?—ST. LUKE ix. 23-25.*

*Almighty God, who hast given Thine Only Son, to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that His inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord.—THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.*

THERE is a verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews which is unique in the New Testament: it presents an unaccustomed aspect of the mind of Jesus towards His death. The writer speaks of Him as one 'who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising shame' (Heb. 12<sup>2</sup>). The phrase creates in our thought an image of Jesus as looking down the avenue of the ages and seeing from afar the satisfying and gladdening fruit of His soul's travail. If we may use a metaphor which is traditional in India, it is as though Jesus were looking over the dark and troublous sea of His humiliation, sorrow and death to some farther shore, the bliss of



which would more than compensate Him for the loneliness, peril and suffering of His crossing. What is that blessed shore at which He trusted to arrive in the boat of His sacrifice and death?

All the great religions of the world have something to say about the end of the journey—the goal which the seeking and striving soul will reach at the last. They have a doctrine of Salvation, Perfection, or Eternal Life; of *Moksha*, *Mukti* or *Nirvāṇa*—by whatever name the End is called.

Jesus taught His disciples that His death was an experience which He would accept and endure for the sake of them and all men; and in that respect Christians will feel that it cannot be reproduced and imitated. He loved us and gave Himself up for us; and it is our part 'alway to remember the exceeding great love of Our Master and only Saviour thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits, which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained for us.' Yet Jesus also taught His disciples that it was not enough for Him to die *for* them, they also must die *with* Him. Christian discipleship, as Jesus has defined it, is a Way of the Cross, in which the Christian follows behind His Master to the 'place of the Skull' and is crucified with Him. St. Paul, as a great and true Christian, learned by experience and set forth the truth that we are to be united with Christ as in the likeness of His resurrection, so also in the likeness of His death. (Rom. 6<sup>s</sup>.) There is a process of mortification, a crucifixion of parts of our nature, which we must undergo, if we would reach perfection. (Gal. 2<sup>20</sup>; 6<sup>14</sup>.) The death of Jesus on the Cross, therefore, is not only a supreme and perfect sacrifice for the benefit of men; it is also an example and pattern to them for imitation in the control and conduct of their own lives. The Cross is for us as well as for Him: we are all to be cross-bearers. And if we follow 'the blessed



steps of His most holy life,' they will assuredly lead us on to the place of our self-crucifixion.

Christianity warns us that there is a self which is the ultimate enemy; and that, unless a man deny or subject this self, he cannot have the fulness of life. He must give up, even slay, this self, if he would see perfection. Hinduism, too, speaks of a self which is the great hindrance to supreme bliss; and in all its main sects there is the idea of *Tyāga*—the abandonment or renunciation of the self. The language, then, of these two great systems of religion exhibits similarity in a remarkable degree. Do they, however, mean the same thing? Is the end which both envisage the same, and do they enjoin the same methods of attainment? It is important that we should answer quite clearly and definitely such questions as these; for there is a vital difference between Self-renunciation, as the Christian understands it, and Self-annihilation—between the correction of selfishness and the suppression of self-consciousness, between the purging away of egotism and the extinction of the Ego.

Let us consider the replies of the two great types of Hindu religion—the School of *Knowledge* (*Jñāna*) and the School of Devotion (*Bhakti*), which correspond largely to the distinction between the Monist and the Dualist interpretations of the Universé. According to the *Advaita Vedānta* the sense of individuality, of myself as distinct from other selves and things, is steeped in falsehood: it belongs to the unreal phenomenal world. *Ahankāra*, or the principle of Egoism, is the second in descent from *Māyā* or *Avidyā*—Illusion or Ignorance.<sup>1</sup> Egoism

<sup>1</sup> Most of the Schools of Hinduism make use of the Categories of the *Sāṅkhya* School. In the *Sāṅkhya* system there is a dualism of Soul (*Puruṣa*) and Matter (*Prakṛiti*). The *Sāṅkhya* order of derivation is *Prakṛiti*, *Buddhi*, *Ahankāra*—thus making Self-consciousness a sort of subtle, refined form of Matter. The *Advaita Vedānta* merely substitutes *Māyā* for *Prakṛiti*. It denies that there is any other Existent such as *Prakṛiti*, independent of and co-ordinate with Soul, and thus it constitutes the individual Self-consciousness a mode of Unreality or Ignorance.



thus lies near to the root of the misery and imperfection of our human life. That 'I' which is the centre of the individual's consciousness, to which he relates all his experiences, is itself a product of the Unreal, and in its turn it is the cause of unreality. Every state of consciousness in which there is the sense of an 'I' knowing and of an object known belongs to the realm of Ignorance. Egoism or Self-consciousness, therefore, whatever its content, is declared to be evil: it is not simply an occasional instrument of evil, but it is the enemy itself which must be destroyed. The aim of religion accordingly must be to get rid of this 'I'ness—*Ahankāra* or *Aham-bhāva*—and to arrive at a condition where there is no longer any cognition of the individual self and of something over against it which is different from it. The state of perfection or complete salvation will be that in which the individual self has been utterly lost or merged in the Supreme or Universal Self—that is, in *Brahma*. This final state of identity, oneness, or soleness can never be described, because it lies altogether outside the range of our present experience.

And just as the result is something unrelated to any state of mind of which we can have knowledge, so also the nearer a man approaches to that ultimate identification with *Brahma*, the more unlike will his condition be to our normal consciousness. The means which he adopts to achieve this end must be in agreement with the nature of the end itself. Like end, like means. The figure of the *Yogī* or *Sannyāsī* is familiar to all Hindus and students of Hinduism. The essence of his method is 'to suppress all mental modifications' (*Cittavṛttinirodha*).<sup>1</sup> He will seek out a retired and quiet place, and adopt a correct and convenient pose. He will restrain all the outgoing activities of the sense-organs, and practise some form of mental concentration. He may

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Patanjali's Yoga Sūtra*, I. 2.



fix his gaze upon a point of the body—the tip of the nose or the roof of the palate; or fasten his attention intensely upon an internal object of thought. Thus he will become insensible to all impressions from without; and this world of material things and other selves will become of no significance and worth to him, and will fade away, until at last there comes the vision of Brahma—No, not the vision, for in seeing the distinction of Seer and Seen always exists, but rather, identification with Brahma, the Ultimate and the Absolute. What is given in that consummation cannot be told; for even in the sentences which attempt to describe the result—*Aham Brahmāsmi*, 'I am Brahma'; *Tad tvam asi*, 'That art thou'—the distinction between the Ego and what is not the Ego remains. The whole apparatus of human thought and speech is incurably vitiated by Self-consciousness; and until a man ceases to be what he now characteristically is—an individual—he cannot arrive at perfection. The creature of Untruth cannot know Truth: indeed one does not know Truth, but rather becomes Truth, or gains identity with the Sole Existent. This perfect state in which there is no distinction of the correlatives of subject and object, nor any image at all, is known as *nirvikalpa Samādhi*. For him who has attained it, there is eternal release, or *Moksha*, and no return to the round of phenomenal appearances after the Karmic force of this current life has been exhausted.

To the ordinary man of the Western hemisphere, and probably for most men all the world over, waking consciousness represents the fulness and greatest reality of human life: other states such as sleep and dreams are regarded as inferior to it. The *Vedānta* philosopher, on the other hand, places the states or conditions of human existence in the following order of ascent—*Jāgara*, the waking consciousness; *Svapna*, the dream-state; *Sushupti*, dreamless sleep; and beyond them all *Samādhi*, the final



and eternal condition of identity with Brahma. To Shakespeare sleep was not the emblem of life: it was death's 'twin-brother'; but to the Vedānti dreamless sleep, in which there is no consciousness of an Ego, or of any object presented to it, is the emblem of *Samādhi*. It is true that he recognizes a profound distinction between the two; but his belief is that we are nearest to *Samādhi* in 'dreamless sleep and farthest from it in waking consciousness.'<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider next the School of *Bhakti*, or Devotion to a Personal God. These are they who believe—though not with unfaltering conviction, as we shall see later—that the distinctions are real between God and men, between one man and another, and between men and the manifold of things. According to the teaching of this school salvation or perfection is to be won by worship of the Lord rather than by an intellectual process in which one false attribute after another is stripped off, until the pure Brahma is reached. Yet here again let us notice that, though the internal content of the *Bhakta*'s experience may be different from that of the *Jñānī*'s, still his relation to the outside world becomes much the same. The *Jñānī* must realize in the end, without the presence of visible person or of any mental concept, the inconceivable and ineffable Brahma: there is neither name nor form in that which is beyond all thought and speech. The *Bhakta*, on the other hand, will have present to his ardent imagination the face and form of his chosen god, even if in the intensity of his contemplation and worship he shall afterwards choose to pass beyond the sense of separateness and merge his own being with that of the deity and, as it were, become one with it. The Hindu would describe one state as imageless and undifferentiated (*nirvikalpa*) *Samādhi*, and the other as imaged

<sup>1</sup> Compare the aphorism—*samādhisushuptimoksheshu brahmarūpā* (*Sāṅkhyapraśaṇa Bhāṣya* V, 116).



and differentiated (*vikalpa*) *Samādhi*. The result is the same, so far as the outside observer is concerned. Both men are lost to the world, and the world is lost to them. They pay no heed to what is happening around them, and are in a condition of ecstasy or trance. The traditional signs of extraordinary and meritorious devotion are abundance of tears, the erection of the hairs of the body, fixity of the vision, redness of the eyes, and insensibility to all impressions from without.

Max Müller in his little volume—*Rāmakrishna, His Life and Sayings*, has given us a picture of a modern Hindu saint of the devotee type. The biographical materials, he tells us, were supplied to him by Vivekānanda, who was Rāmakrishna's most eminent disciple. According to Vivekānanda his Master was addicted to the trance condition: he habitually cultivated this, and it was his method of realizing the presence of his *Ishtādevatā*—Mother Kālī, in whose temple at Dakṣiṇesvar near Calcutta he served. There, according to the account of his disciple, he was wont, in the ardour of his prayer and worship, to lose consciousness—not for brief intervals of time but for long periods at a stretch. He forgot for years that he had been married. When his disciples visited him, it would often be necessary for them to touch his feet to call his attention to their presence. On some occasions he was beaten with a club to bring him out of an ecstasy, and his food was forced down his throat whilst he was half-conscious. It is said that, in these trances, he not merely realized the presence of the goddess—saw her form and heard her voice—but also passed beyond the *vikalpa* condition into the *nirvikalpa Samādhi*, attaining to the Ultimate Brahma and achieving in three days what the ordinary *Sannyāsi* requires years of effort and discipline to accomplish. In a similar fashion, we are told, he learned all the truths that Islam and the Christian religion have to teach,



having meditated on Christ for three days, and having seen Him in vision, so that 'he would speak of himself as the same soul that had been born before as Rāma, as Krishna, as Jesus, or as Buddha.'

I do not cite this biographical account of Rāmakrishna as a strictly historical narrative: neither did Max Müller publish it as such. A part of his Introduction is taken up with a dissertation on what he calls 'the Dialogic Process,' which is only a scholar's way of describing the fact that a story, as it is passed from mouth to mouth, gathers in bulk and may be changed out of all recognition from the original. On the material supplied by Vivekānanda Max Müller remarks that it shows 'clear traces of the Dialogic Process and the irrepressible, miraculising tendencies of devoted disciples.' If, however, for many and sufficient reasons, we cannot regard this biographical sketch of Rāmakrishna as exact history, we can accept it as the putting forth of an ideal. Its very exaggerations demonstrate what traditional Hinduism considers to be a right and fruitful method of religious research and discovery, and also what it expects and admires in a man of religion. The cultivation of the trance condition is implicitly commended as the means by which God is to be known in the pre-eminent degree; and the state of ecstasy is extolled as superior to the normal consciousness.

It will be noticed that in Vivekānanda's narrative there is a characteristic effort to blend several types of Hindu religion, so that we are left in some doubt as to whether Rāmakrishna was a dualist *Bhakta* or a monist *Jñānī*. According to one story Rāmakrishna was really an *advaitī*, who acted only temporarily and provisionally as a devotee of Kālī, but all the while was conscious that this devotion belonged to the lower knowledge (*aparā vidyā*) and must be superseded for the purpose of ultimate release.



When the Yogī Totāpuri—an *advaitī* ascetic—ridiculed Rāmakrishna for his worship of and attachment to the goddess Kālī, he is said to have explained his devotion on this wise:—

‘Rāmakrishna made him understand that in the Absolute there is no Thou, nor I, nor God—nay that it is beyond all speech or thought. As long, however, as there is the least grain of relativity left, the Absolute is within thought and speech and within the limits of the mind, which mind is subservient to the Universal Mind or Consciousness; and this Universal Mind or Consciousness was to him his Mother and God.’<sup>1</sup>

I have only referred to Rāmakrishna because he was a modern *bhakta*, seen and known by men who are still living. Attached to a temple, devoted in an extraordinary manner to its goddess, he was, whatever his inner thought may have been, to the public an example of the *bhakta*. We might have taken other men,—the author of the Tamil *Kural*, for instance; or Tukārām; or the Ālvārs of the South—as nobler and more consistent examples of the Way of Devotion. Some of these were consciously and by conviction dualists—opponents and denouncers of the doctrine that man and the Absolute are, or ever can be, one. What we, however, are concerned to notice is that in the Way of Devotion no less than in the Way of Knowledge there is a certain depreciation of, or even contempt for, the normal processes and states of thought. Perfection consists in the abnormal, and must be sought through the abnormal. *Tyāga* means the renunciation of Self-consciousness—the disuse and suppression of the regular activities of the senses and of the faculties of reasoning and judgement. The realisation of God is put in the region of the extra-conscious—let us not say super-conscious.

Now, I would point out that this runs contrary to

<sup>1</sup> *Rāmakrishna, His Life and Sayings* : p. 48.



the long course of Christian thought. Let us look for a moment at the development of Old Testament prophecy, which—in one aspect of it—is man in most intimate intercourse with God. There are two stories of Saul's prophesying in the First Book of Samuel. The former relates how Samuel told Saul, who at that time had not become king, that he should meet a band of prophets, and the tale continues:—

'Thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines, and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, and they shall be prophesying; and the spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon them, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man' (1 Sam. 10 5-13).  
And it happened so.

The second tale is similar. It belongs to the period when Saul was reigning as king and was pursuing his supposed rival and enemy, David:—

'And it was told Saul, saying, Behold David is at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David; and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. . . . And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah; and the spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?' (1 Sam. 19 18-24).

These ancient tales make plain what was the original conception of prophecy among the Israelites. They thought of it as an abnormal condition, which might



be induced by loud music, or caught contagiously from the excitement of a crowd. It was a condition of ecstasy or trance in which the individual no longer had control of himself, and even completely lost for a while his normal consciousness. The history of prophecy in Israel is a history of progress from this lowly and irrational origin. We know nothing of what Samuel's band of prophets spoke, or of the ravings of Saul, but the great prophets of Israel still speak to the world in the sphere of morality and religion. They were men who lived in the fulness of normal life, and employed in the service of God and man all the powers of the human nature with which they were endowed. They were men of prayer, often withdrawn from public life in secret communion with God; and occasionally they had visions of God, but those visions were not in supersession of their normal consciousness. What they so saw, they were authorised and able to tell others. Dr. Davidson has written of Old Testament prophecy:—

'The cessation of the ecstasy left the prophet his proper self; he was conscious of being an individual and independent person, and as such he entered into fellowship with God. He was no more driven or overpowered by an impulse from without, which superseded his proper self; his communion with God was a communion of two moral persons. God, it is true, did not speak to him face to face and externally as He did to Moses, but He spake no less really to his mind.'

The word 'ecstasy' (*ἐκστασις*) occurs seven times in the New Testament. In four passages it connotes merely an extraordinary excitement or perturbation in the normal consciousness. In the other three cases of its occurrence it describes an abnormal or trance condition. Twice it is used of the vision which came to St. Peter when he was waiting for his meal and was praying upon the house-top (Acts 10<sup>10</sup>; 11<sup>5</sup>); once it refers to the



experience of St. Paul, when he was praying in the Temple not long after his conversion and heard the voice of the Lord who told him that he would be sent thence to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. (Acts 22<sup>17</sup>.) Those visions arose out of and were naturally related to the normal consciousness: there was afterwards no difficulty in incorporating them with it.

St. Paul is the most 'psychic' of the Apostles. Truth seems to have been mediated to him on some critical occasions in his life by visions of the day or night. We may recall the epoch-making vision in the road to Damascus of Jesus, the risen Lord. (Acts 9<sup>1-5</sup>.) So, too, Paul saw in vision Ananias coming to lay hands upon him (Acts 9<sup>12</sup>); Christ in the Temple, dismissing him to the Gentiles (Acts 22<sup>17-21</sup>); the man of Macedonia, pleading for help (Acts 16<sup>9</sup>); the Lord at Corinth (Acts 18<sup>9-10</sup>), and at Jerusalem (Acts 23<sup>11</sup>), and an angel of God in the storm at sea (Acts 27<sup>23-24</sup>) bidding him be of good courage, and assuring him of the divine protection.

Such visions as these have come to many humble folks, who have not possessed a tithe of St. Paul's intellectual greatness and power. A large number of simple Christian converts still think in pictures; and to some of the most godly among them the will of God has been made known veraciously in inward images. St. Paul, however, is the one Apostle who speaks of an experience which transcended any vision of this kind. Once, as he told his spiritual children at Corinth, he had been taken, whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, into the third heaven,—nay to the seventh heaven, to Paradise itself,<sup>1</sup> and had heard 'unsayable sayings,' which it was not lawful for him to utter. (2 Cor. 12<sup>1-4</sup>.) But that was only one incident in a life of abounding normal thought and activity. St. Paul

<sup>1</sup> St. Paul's imagery here belongs to the conventional Jewish belief of his age. The Rabbis distinguished seven heavens, of which 'Paradise' was the last and most glorious.



himself refused to boast of it even <sup>to</sup> the Corinthians, 'lest any man should attribute to me <sup>more</sup> than what he sees me to be and hears from me.' As Dr. Plummer has said, 'He wishes to be judged by what <sup>their own</sup> experience of him tells them—by his conduct, <sup>preaching</sup> and letters.' St. Paul enriches and influences our life to-day, not by virtue of any incommunicable revelation made to him in a trance condition, but through the truths which he learned by normal methods in a life of prayer and heroic obedience, expressible in the terms of human thought and speech.

Consider, however, the pattern of Jesus Himself. Was there ever a life of complete sanity, balance and self-control? With the possible exception of the story of the Transfiguration, there is no suggestion in the Gospel that He ever entered the trance-condition. That experience on the Mount, whatever it was, He shared with three of His disciples. We ourselves say that we believe in God the Father, and also in the Communion of Saints. What vividness and closeness of fellowship with God and His saints Jesus might achieve in prayer, we—with our littleness of faith and love and the disabilities of our sins—may scarcely conceive. The three disciples who were admitted to this communion of Jesus with a heavenly order 'told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen'; but they did not refrain afterwards, and their experience had been such as could be compassed by human thought and words. The episode of the Transfiguration did not for a moment interrupt the normal life of the Master: rather it fitted into and equipped the Master and His disciples for the daily round and the daily task. Thus it has become the very emblem of the right relation between the inner life of the soul and its outward activity—

'Twixt the mount and multitude,  
Doing or receiving good.



not read of Jesus twice that His soul was troubled: the prospect of His Passion, and particularly at the betrayal of one of His disciples (John 12<sup>27</sup>; 13<sup>21</sup>); and again that, when He entered the garden of Gethsemane, 'He began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled, (*ἤρξατο ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδυνατεῖν* Mark 14<sup>22</sup>; Cp. Matt. 26<sup>27</sup>). The second word here is found only in these two parallel passages of the Synoptists, and its derivation is uncertain. It seems as though, in the hour of His great peril and confronting the extremity of His suffering, the spirit of Jesus was aware that there was none among men to whom He could turn for companionship. The stress of that moment might have driven Him from His self-control. He was tempted to lose grip of Himself in a panic of fear and the desolation of utter loneliness. We know how Jesus took hold of and kept Himself in hand. The pressure of those impulses was resisted and overcome; and afterwards Jesus met His end with calm and resolution.

The stories of the Temptations of Jesus in the wilderness appear to represent pictorially what were real interior experiences of Jesus. They are so profoundly true to the circumstances of His life that we cannot help surmising that Jesus Himself told them to His disciples as parables of the inward conflicts of His soul: they seem, in their simplicity and richness of meaning, to go beyond the spiritual insight and imaginative power either of the Apostles or of the Evangelists. The common interpretation of the Tempter's invitation to Jesus to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the Temple has failed to satisfy or convince many readers of the Gospels. Commentators have treated this as though the suggestion were made to Jesus that He should exact from His Heavenly Father some signal demonstration of the honour and love bestowed upon Himself as the Messiah. God was to be compelled to



give public and overwhelming proof of the Messiah of Jesus by a miracle of preservation. To this end was to cast Himself down from a turret of the Temple in full view of a crowd of worshippers, and His deliverance from what seemed to be a certain death would convince Israel that this was indeed the One who was to come. Apart from the fact that there is not in the story a trace of any indication of the presence of spectators—and publicity is of the essence of an interpretation of this kind—this exposition seems to miss the whole connexion with what has gone before.

If we take the account in St. Matthew as giving the correct psychological order, then another meaning will appear. The key to any interpretation of these stories—it is universally admitted—is to be found in what has immediately preceded in the waters of the Jordan. Jesus has been taken into retirement after the momentous self-revelation of His baptism. He knows Himself by the testimony of God, by the voice which spoke to His inmost soul, to be the Christ, the Son of God; and all the temptations turn upon that new self-knowledge. 'If Thou art the Son of God, as Thou art and now knowest that Thou art,' says the Tempter, 'command that one of these stones be made bread.' Jesus, we are told, had not gone into the wilderness of His own choice, but under a sense of divine direction and compulsion. His fast was not self-imposed. He had been 'led up of the Spirit.' He was where God had placed Him, and in the condition appointed to Him by His Father—in the wilderness fasting, hungry and at the point to perish. The Tempter says, 'Feed Thyself. Thou canst do it, if Thou wilt. Take care of Thyself, save Thyself: God has forgotten Thee, or He puts Thee to the proof beyond endurance.' The temptation found Jesus in that mood of complete trust and obedience, which was to be the note of all His career. His reply was, 'Man shall



not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'—as much as to say—'My life consists in obedience to God. I am now waiting upon Him for the manifestation of His will. His present will is that I shall hunger and endure. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me. Though He slay Me, yet will I trust and obey Him.'

And is it not out of this very mood of complete trust and obedience that the next temptation arises? The Tempter says, 'If Thou art the Son of God, and dost trust and obey Him, as Thou now professest, put Thy trust in God Thy Father to the proof. Cast Thyself down from this height, and show whether Thy faith in God will accept this challenge. Has the Scripture not said that He will bear Thee up? Wilt Thou venture on His care to this degree?' It was a temptation to Jesus through the very perfection of His faith in God—such a temptation as can come only to men of great faith and is intelligible to them alone. The Holy One of God was tempted through the very excess of His quality of faith.

The physical imagery of this temptation is most apt and suggestive. Some persons are strangers to the feeling of vertigo—they can climb perpendicular precipices and stand upon pinnacles of rock and razor-edges without any sense of giddiness or fear. There are others who are not so endowed at birth. One of these can only climb a ladder, or look down in safety from a tower by an effort of moral control. He has to keep himself in hand and refuse consciously to surrender to the impulse which urges him to let go and give up, no matter what happens. There is the exact analogue of this in the moral sphere. Were there not many occasions in the life of Jesus when He was tempted to abandon all direction and governance of Himself and to throw everything upon God? But Jesus was not to be misled even by the



greatness of His faith. He was ready to trust God and to continue to trust God in any situation of privation or peril in which God had placed Him; but He was not willing weakly or wantonly to put Himself in danger that God might afterwards deliver Him. The providence of God is not intended to supersede man's duty of self-protection. The reply of Jesus to this most insidious suggestion of the Tempter was, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not put His goodness and power to the proof by weakness or presumptuous folly.' Jesus saved Himself from the Cross, until avoidance of it any longer would have been disobedience to the will of His Father in Heaven. And then He was cast down from the pinnacle of life by wicked men into the nethermost abyss of shame and death; but the hands of God have borne Him up and set Him for ever in glory.

The two stories of the Temptation exhibit in the form of parables that opposition or conflict of great qualities and virtues which is active in strong and pure natures—and was active pre-eminently in Jesus of Nazareth. At the same time they demonstrate how perfect was the balance of virtues and qualities which Jesus maintained in the management of His earthly career—His prudence and His faith, the strength of His own will and His voluntary submission to His Father, His direction or control of His self and His utter dependence upon God.

If to-day the announcement were to be made that new materials had been found for constructing the life of Jesus and we were asked to add to the Gospel records stories of how Jesus as a boy in the Temple, or as a youth in the carpenter's shed, or as a prophet upon the mountain-side, was often found in a state resembling insensibility, and on such occasions was recalled with difficulty to consciousness by His parents or neighbours or disciples; and how the people were impressed by such



abnormal states and found in them the signs and proofs of sainthood or divinity, we should unhesitatingly repudiate these stories as forgeries. By no conceivable expedient could they be fitted into the picture of Jesus as He was. We should feel that such tales were utterly incongruous with the authentic records; and our sense of incongruity would be an indication of that world of thought and practice which separates the ideal of sainthood, embodied in Jesus, from an ideal prevalent in Hinduism. The difference is not superficial: it is fundamental. The religion of Jesus and Hinduism are at variance in the values which they attach to the Individual Self, the material World, and the life of the Individual in this World.

'Jesus of Nazareth, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good' (Acts 10<sup>38</sup>) is a phrase which sums up the Jesus of History. The actual Jesus was one who often retired from the company of men and sought God in the intercourse of private prayer; but He always returned—and soon returned—from the secrecy of this communion to the society and service of men; and whether in private prayer or in public ministry he never put off the integrity of His manhood. His body, senses and reason were the means He employed both to know God and to make God known.

According to the ancient Creed of the Church, as we have seen, Jesus was 'perfect in manhood . . . truly man . . . of a reasonable soul and body.' The *Advaita Vedānta*—the influence of which has penetrated deeply into Schools which do not formally accept its tenets—would say that, if that were so, then Jesus, so long as He remained man, could neither know nor be God; for the whole human nature—constituted of the bodily organs, the senses, and the faculties of imagination and reasoning—is both the creature and the instrument



of Ignorance, which is essential evil or sin. According to this doctrine, we must rid ourselves of manhood in its entirety before we can reach Salvation. With Jesus the body and the mind are not, in their proper constitution, false or sinful: on the contrary, they are designed for truth and goodness, and rightly used, they become the instruments of the knowledge and of the service of God. In His own case Jesus employed them fully, and found them adequate for His high purpose of leading men to the knowledge of God.

The advocates of religion must recognize that, if true religion means the disuse or the destruction of all the powers of human nature, as properly constituted, and if the marks of genuine piety are orgies of sentimentalism and such unedifying symptoms as horripilation or a burning skin, then the best of men will not wish to be either religious or pious. It is not conceivable that India will long continue to do homage to such ideals of sainthood. I am free to confess that there seems to me to be much divinity in the little band of men, Indian and European, who climbed Mount Kamet, and, near to the top, made way for the porter who carried the heaviest burden to be the first to set foot upon the summit. Their intelligence and foresight, their constancy and contempt of toil and death, their loyalty to one another and mutual respect were—in any right estimation—greater moral qualities and achievements than can be attributed to many a *yogī* sitting idly upon an Himālayan slope. 'Spirit', wrote Dr. Mackintosh, 'means supernatural power, yet not for St. Paul, power revealed most typically in ecstatic rapture, but the ethical force from which spring such normal Christian graces as love, joy, peace, long-suffering and kindness.'<sup>1</sup>

When Jesus, therefore, spoke of a man's denying himself, He certainly did not mean 'destroying his individu-

<sup>1</sup> *The Person of Jesus Christ*: p. 57.



ality or his self-consciousness.' On the contrary, he spoke of a man's self as his most characteristic and precious possession, for the loss of which no wealth in the world could compensate. While Jesus did not conceive of the mind as fashioned in Ignorance and itself being the cause of sin or imperfection, yet He did recognize that there are elements in our human nature which are out of place. There is a disorder within the kingdom of the individual Self, where the lower often usurps the function of the higher. Appetites of the flesh, for example, dominate higher principles of the soul. Such usurpation is sin, and the man in this evil case is a bond-slave of sin. St. Paul interpreted in part the thought of his Master when he wrote:—

'And they that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof.' (Gal. 5<sup>24</sup>).

'Our old man (our nature, as it was before it came under the renewing influence of God in Christ) was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin' (Rom. 6<sup>6</sup>).

'Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body that ye should obey the lusts thereof: neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God . . . and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God' (Rom. 6<sup>12-13</sup>).

'If by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live' (Rom. 8<sup>13</sup>).

That is the first summons of the religion of Jesus to the earnest disciple: he must subordinate the instincts and appetites of the bodily part of him, and set and keep them in their proper place. He has not to walk as the animal—as the ape or the tiger, but as a son of God, capable of knowing the will of God and under obligation to do it. Denying one's self, however, means



much more than this putting of the fleshly appetites in their due place of subjection, though that for many is a task sufficiently clamant and arduous. By the flesh St. Paul denotes in some passages passions and principles, which are not carnal in the literal and obvious sense of the term. He includes envy, factiousness, jealousy, pride among the works of the flesh. What is the Self which is to be denied or crucified only becomes apparent, when we see the whole purpose of Christ and put the individual Self into His scheme of things.

The Universe of Jesus contained God and my Neighbour; and the end towards which He looked was not a solitude—an undifferentiated unity, but a communion of Himself with God and of others through Him with God. Jesus believed that the Kingdom of God—in its primary sense, as the Kingship or Kingly authority and power of God—which was manifested in Himself, would establish ultimately the Kingdom of God—in its secondary sense—a blessed order of society in which all persons are brought into their right relation with God and with one another, 'The idea of a society of holy spirits,' writes Mr. V. Chakkarai, 'with adequate moral, spiritual, intellectual strength, in communion with the Supreme Spirit, is the goal of Christ's redemption.'<sup>1</sup> We commonly think of religion as regulating the relations of men with God, and of morality as determining the relations of men with one another. In the phrase 'ethical religion' the two terms coalesce, and indeed they should never be kept apart; for true and complete religion is a system which embraces all persons and prescribes and governs their right relations.

All the Selves—God or the Supreme Self, my Neighbour, and Myself are recognized by Jesus; and in the two Commandments which He extols as the first and greatest, comprising the whole Law, He brings these Selves together

<sup>1</sup> *The Cross and Indian Thought*: p. 19.



and puts them in the order of their pre-eminence, each in its due place:—

‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Mark 12<sup>30, 31</sup>).

When the disciple Simon Peter denied Jesus, he denied that Jesus stood to him in the relation of Master—he renounced and repudiated the Lordship of Jesus over him. Similarly when a man denies his self, he renounces and repudiates the dominion of his self over himself. As it were, he stands away from his self and contemplates his self over against those other selves; and he says:—‘Thou, my individual little isolated self, art not my lord: thou shalt not rule over me.’ He submits his self to the governance of God, the all-wise and the all-good, and devotes his self to the service of his fellow-men. He renounces not self-consciousness, but self-seeking, self-glorification, or selfishness. He subordinates the narrow and immediate gains of self-interest to the glory of God and the welfare of mankind; and, in so doing, he truly comes to life. When he can do this constantly and perfectly, he has come to the progressive perfection of human life. St. Paul has given us a glimpse of this manner of denying and slaying the egotistic self. He had effected it in the fellowship of Christ; for his knowledge of Jesus and the love for Him which had sprung up in his heart were the means which had enabled him to subordinate the individual self:—

‘I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live—and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me’ (Gal. 2<sup>20</sup>).

There is no loss of self-consciousness here: rather it has been intensified and heightened. ‘I have died,’ says



St. Paul, 'as on a cross: and yet I am alive. Never before was I so completely alive; and this fulness of personal existence has come to me in the path of trust in and obedience to Christ.' If intelligence, joy, and strength of will are measures or contents of the individual life, then Paul the Apostle, wholly surrendered to God and man through Christ, was more truly and gloriously alive than Saul the Pharisee.

While, then, Christ recognized the independence and the importance of the individual, He also stressed by precept and example the truth that the individual is designed for society and realizes himself only in society through fellowship and service. Man, the individual, is declared to be a social being, with obligations Godward and manward. Dr. Hogg, as we have seen before, has commented on the excessively 'individualistic' character of the *Advaita Vedānta*; and this may seem to be surprising, even paradoxical, in speaking of a philosophy which denies real existence to the individual. We see, however, what Dr. Hogg means, when we read:—'In reaction from the idea of a finite self, crushed under the might of an immemorial self-made destiny, it (the *Vedānta*) went to the extreme of affirming that each individual is himself the Absolute, and that for every man all his suffering has no other significance than that of being the means whereby he may some day come to know himself.'<sup>1</sup>

The *Vedānta* is 'individualistic' not merely because—in the final and decisive stages of the journey at least—each individual must travel alone to the end, regardless of all the rest, but also because the end itself is conceived as a solitude—a lone oneness. The *Vedānta* is 'individualistic,' inasmuch as it knows one Individual only, which must be solitary. In this double sense, therefore, when we consider both the journey and the goal, the

<sup>1</sup> *Karma and Redemption*: Chap. II.



means and the end, we shall feel it just to say that the *Vedānta* is an unsociable philosophy. Modern exponents of the *Vedānta* attempt to charge this lonely Entity—the *Brahma*—with more meaning, and so to make it more attractive. They gloss over the fundamental doctrine that *Brahma* is attributeless (*nirguṇa*), and emphasize the tenet that *Brahma* is Existence, Intelligence and Joy (*Saccīdānanda*). If it be thought that our criticism of this religion and philosophy is too severe and is based upon a partial understanding of it, we shall do well to recall the words of two eminent and learned Brahman converts of the former time. Dr. K. M. Banerjea and Nilakaṇṭha Śāstri Goreh were both of them men who knew the letter of the Hindu Scriptures and also the spirit of the great systems out of which they had come. Their works are not much read to-day, but in Hindu erudition they have never been surpassed.

Dr. Banerjea wrote of the *Vedāntis*:—‘They labour to tranquillize the soul by simply telling it there is no hope for tranquillity but in the cessation of sentient existence, or the destruction of individual consciousness. . . . We do not seek to fall into a state of irreparable insensibility, but we seek for an eternal life of perfect sentiency, that we may live for ever, intelligently and consciously to laud and magnify the goodness and mercy of God.’<sup>1</sup>

The Śāstri said:—‘The emancipation of the *Vedāntis* is to be delivered from all pain, and to remain like a stone, utterly void of intelligence. And in this there is no experience of happiness. . . . They describe *Brahma* as being Intelligence and Bliss. I have shown, however, that their *Brahma* is only nominally Intelligence and Bliss. He is Intelligence that cognizes nothing, and Bliss without fruition of happiness. What hope is there that the soul would be happy, if it came to such a state

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*, Dialogue X.



as this? . . . Their Emancipation amounts to annihilation.'<sup>1</sup>

The notion of a single and solitary Existent—a Brahma which is beyond the range of thought and speech—may be difficult to comprehend, but it has a certain austere dignity; and, moreover, it yields some satisfaction to the intellectual craving for an immutable One in the endless flow of the changing Many. There is, however, another and different solution of the riddle of the Universe which has been propounded by two allied Schools of Hindu Philosophy—the *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga*, to which hitherto only the barest reference has been made.<sup>2</sup> These have taught that there are two main orders of Existence—Souls, which are infinite in number, and Matter. The individual Soul is the spectator of the play of Matter, and its salvation is accomplished by disentangling it from its association with Matter. To the resultant state the name of *Kaivalya* was given, which may be rendered 'sheerness' or 'mereness.' It connotes the condition of the Soul existing purely in and by itself, free from all contact with anything else. 'It is the power of the Soul centred in itself' (*Yoga Sūtra* iv. 34)—'the state of singleness.'

The notion of a multitude of liberated Souls, each existing inactive and isolated, without a link or connexion of any sort with any other, like so many extinct stars in a dark and motionless Universe, has nothing to redeem it from irrationality; though one commentator is anxious to explain that '*Kaivalya* is not any state of negation or annihilation, as some are misled to think. The Soul in *Kaivalya* has his sphere of action transferred to a higher plane limited by a limitless horizon. This

<sup>1</sup> *A Mirror of the Hindu Philosophical Systems*: Sect. III, Chap. X.

<sup>2</sup> The Twenty-Five Categories of the *Sāṅkhya*, as we have noticed before (p. 258), have been adopted by all the philosophic Schools, Monist or Dualist; and similarly the Eightfold means of attaining *Samādhi*, which are enjoined in the *Yoga*, are accepted and practised by all—whatever may be the differences in the definition of *Samādhi*.



our limited minds cannot hope to understand.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, this doctrine has had very little influence on Indian religion, and has been almost ignored by Monist and Dualist alike: it possesses only an interest for curiosity. I have mentioned it here, because I wish to bring out, by way of contrast, what was in Christ's thought—an infinite number of souls, not existing sole and unrelated, but each in relation to the rest and all acting in harmony, obedient to the one law of their world; an ordered Universe of souls with God as its source and centre; the Kingdom of God.

Now if this be the End which Jesus saw from afar—not simply emancipated individual souls, but a social order for which individuals are prepared by emancipation from all which makes them unfit to be with God or with their fellows—then, as the End is social, so also must the means be social or moral in the highest and broadest sense of the term. There is, we have insisted, a necessary correlation between means and end, and the two can never be different in kind.

The Schools of Knowledge and of Devotion alike seem to err in the means which they advocate for Perfection, if Perfection is to be conceived, as in any sense, a moral and spiritual condition. Orthodox Hinduism cannot be blamed for the multitude of idle and immoral Sādhus, Yogīs, and Sannyāsīs, who still infest India. The *Sanātana Dharma*, the Eternal Duty of Man or the Law of Caste, and the *Vedānta* do not allow a man to become a forest-dweller or a homeless ascetic, until he has gone through the stages of student and householder, and has discharged some obligations to family and community. There is, therefore, to this extent a recognition of what a man owes to others before he seeks in solitude an individual liberation. Most of the professional Sādhus or Yogīs, from the viewpoint of orthodoxy, are men who have taken an illicit short-cut to the life of abandonment.

<sup>1</sup> Manilal Nabhubhai Dvivedi, *The Yoga Sūtra* : p. 99.



Moreover, there is a recognition of morality in the Yoga system. Its Eight-fold method of Renunciation may be divided into three stages or kinds—moral, physical and mental. It is laid down as a preliminary, that a man must not steal or lie or kill or commit adultery, and that he must refrain from anger and cruelty. In the second stage, he gives attention to posture, the control of his breath, and the restraint of the senses; and finally, he practises concentration of thought upon some chosen object through which he reaches *Samādhi* at last.

We cannot help observing that the morality which is enjoined here is of a rudimentary type; and, further, that in this course of discipline, it is assigned the first and the lowest stage of all. It is only a sort of preparation for other methods, considered to be more efficacious, which lead to the finer results. Morality carries the traveller only a short distance along his road: he must exchange it for a superior vehicle, if he would traverse the higher and ultimate stages of his journey. We need not doubt that the physical and mental means prescribed may create pleasant and peaceful states of abnormal consciousness; but they are unspiritual and unmoral, being simply modes of self-hypnotism. What we cannot believe or admit is that by fixing the gaze upon the tip of the nose, or by choosing some agreeable mental image for intense and prolonged meditation,<sup>1</sup> the result will be a state of moral nobility or of true spiritual discernment. The stream does not rise higher than its source; and the unmoral and unspiritual do not produce the moral and spiritual.

So soon, however, as we think of the End as a society of perfected individuals—as man brought into right

<sup>1</sup> Rāma, Siva, Krishna, Christ, Buddha or even any imaginary entity, answering to the requisite quality will do, according to one's predilection—says Dvivedi (p. 22). 'Undiscriminating comprehensiveness' can scarcely go farther than this.



relation with God and his neighbour, morality acquires dignity, elevation and comprehensiveness. There is no limit to it: it has neither beginning nor ending, and we cannot even think of out-growing it, or leaving it off. It is seen far to surpass the ordinary conventions and the observance of a few elementary laws: it penetrates deeply into the recesses of motive and points to excellencies of character which will provoke our reverence, and almost our despair, by their remoteness and seeming inaccessibility. The moral man is he who, in all respects—in inward disposition no less than in outward deed—behaves as he ought towards God and towards man—that is, towards all selves other than himself. Ethical religion, in a word, is perfect love: it is, to borrow the phrases of a great lover and servant of Jesus, 'simplicity of intention and purity of affection.'

In the Eighteenth Century John Wesley, and his brother Charles, the hymn-writer, encountered much opposition among professedly religious people in England, because they would preach a doctrine of Christian Perfection which they held was to be found in the New Testament, and was meant for men who were in earnest about religion. John Wesley defined Perfection after this manner:—'It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this—the pure love of God and man, the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running all through our tempers, words and actions.' Wesley believed that a man might come to this state on earth during his life, though he admitted that they were few who had arrived. It was plain, he said, that the first Christians to whom the Apostles addressed their letters were not perfect in this sense, in spite of their being called 'saints'; and that the Apostles themselves at times fell short of this standard.



This condition of Perfection was not to be thought of as static but as progressive: it was consistent with many failures and infirmities 'such as impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation, and a thousand nameless defects either in conversation or behaviour.' It did not raise a man, therefore, above the lack of refinement or the ignorance which were imposed on him by the circumstances of his birth, his walk in life, and the age in which he lived; but it did deliver him from the dominion of sin, which Wesley defined in this context as 'a voluntary transgression of a known law.'

We may feel that this is a trite and uninspiring definition of the perfect man—'the one who has arrived,' the living emancipated, the '*jīvanmukta*.' If that be our first verdict, let us pause and consider, on the one hand, what is the length and breadth, and depth and height of the goodness of God revealed to us in Jesus; and what ought to be our response in reverence, gratitude and obedience: and, on the other hand, let us examine afresh our own hearts that we may discover how far we are from that simplicity and purity of love which the great Commandments require of us. There is a selfishness within which is not to be slain at a blow: it must be crucified daily. The vitality and resilience, the deceitfulness and variety of our egotism are such as may cause us to doubt whether we can ever be completely rid of it and can achieve the love of God and our neighbour to which our conscience of goodness summons us. The grosser sins perhaps we may renounce and overcome—the greed of money or of land, and carnal lust; but the love of fame and vain glory will persist, and manifest themselves even in eminent professors of religion.

'I come out alone to my tryst, but who is this that follows me in the silent dark?



'I move aside to avoid his presence, but I escape him not. He makes the dust rise from the earth with his swagger; he adds his loud voice to every word that I utter.

'He is my own little self, my lord; he knows no shame, but I am ashamed to come to Thy door in his company.'

All the qualities of an heavenly citizenship are summed up in love: it is whatever goes to the making up of a member of the Kingdom of God. This love does not connote an exaggerated or morbid eroticism: it is consistent with the austerity which abhors evil and rebukes a sinner. In all situations it seeks the welfare of men and is conscious of the 'unsearchable riches' of the divine grace. Can we deceive ourselves into thinking that it is easy to come by such a virtue as this? How hard it is to attain, another passage from John Wesley's writings may serve to remind us. He was attempting to answer the question whether or not the state of perfect love may be reached at an early stage in a Christian's life, and instantly. Let us overlook the strangeness and quaintness of some of his Eighteenth Century expressions and confine our attention to the substance of the matter. Wesley would have had every man make haste to attain; but he knew that this virtue is set upon an height, and that he who has won it, may be the last to claim possession of it:—

'Neither dare we affirm, as some have done, that all this salvation is given at once. There is indeed an instantaneous, as well as a gradual, work of God in His children; and there wants not, we know, a cloud of witnesses who have received in one moment either a clear sense of the forgiveness of their sins, or the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit. But we do not know a single instance, in any place, of a person's receiving in one and the same

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, 30.



moment, remission of sin, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new, a clean heart.

'Indeed how God may work we cannot tell, but the general manner wherein He does work is this:—Those who once trusted in themselves that they were righteous, that they were rich and had need of nothing, are, by the Spirit of God applying His word, convinced that they are poor and naked. . . . In their trouble they cry unto the Lord, and He shows them that He hath taken away their sins and opens the Kingdom of Heaven in their hearts, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

'In this peace they remain for days, or weeks, or months, and commonly suppose that they shall not know war any more, till some of their old enemies, their bosom sins, or the sin which did most easily beset them—perhaps anger or desire—assault them again, and thrust sore at them that they may fall. Then arises fear that they shall not endure to the end, and often doubt whether God has not forgotten them, or whether they did not deceive themselves in thinking that their sins were forgiven.

'And now first they see the ground of their heart, which God before would not disclose unto them. . . . Now they see all the hidden abominations there, the depths of pride and hell. . . . Then God is mindful of the desire of them that fear Him, and gives them a single eye and a pure heart; He createth them anew in Christ Jesus . . . and fixing His abode in their souls, bringeth them into the "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

This is the Christian's *Samādhi*—a heart at leisure from itself, a soul freed from self-seeking for love and service. The fellowship of such souls is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christ stands and calls to us at the entrance to His



Way of the Cross.' We see in Him the perfection of love to God and to man. He is One who set aside the strong and natural desire to preserve His life, in order that He might obey God His Father and serve our need. The truest tribute paid to Him upon His Cross was the word of scorn spoken by those who railed upon Him:—'He saved others: Himself He cannot save.' Truest, yet most untrue—for if ever Jesus saved Himself, it was when He willed to deny Himself for our sakes, and found His life in consenting to die for us. The secret of the art of living was with Jesus: He will impart it to us.

If we have seen the beauty of the Lord and the ground of our own hearts—that singleness and purity of love yonder and this impure blend of love and egotism here—we shall know that there is something in us which must be taken away and crucified. We are able to tread this Way of the Cross, because Christ is our companion and leader. He has not simply left us an example of dying, but He is also spiritually with us in our dying. We do not walk or die alone, but we walk and die with Him. And this road which bears the name of sorrow and death will become to us, as to Him, the Way of Joy and Life Everlasting.

What John Wesley said in prose, let his brother speak to us in verse:—

Did'st Thou not die that I might live  
No longer to myself but Thee,  
Might body, soul, and spirit give  
To Him, who gave Himself for me?  
Come, then, my Master and my God,  
Take the dear purchase of Thy blood!



APPENDICES



## APPENDIX I

### *Food and the Life of the Soul*

It is worth while to consider a little more closely the implications of the great saying of Jesus—'Whatsoever goes into a man from the outside cannot defile him: whatsoever comes out of a man, that defiles him.' This has been expounded by some in such a way as to describe and assert a complete isolation of the material and the spiritual, the physical and the psychical. It has been interpreted as though it amounted to saying—'Material causes can only produce material effects, and spiritual causes alone can produce spiritual effects. Food is a material thing. As such, it cannot achieve any other than a material or physical change. It may affect the body, but it cannot affect the soul. This being so, in a moral or spiritual consideration, it is a matter of pure indifference, what we eat or drink.'

This is to make a total opposition between matter and spirit, body and soul, and to overlook or deny the mysterious and intimate union and causal relation between them. In our human experience the two are never apart, and never unrelated. We can have no conception of existence in which these two sides of reality are not present. Matter and spirit, body and soul, act and re-act each on the other. The food which we take into the body—some of it at least—does not 'go out into the draught' immediately, it is not at once evacuated: it remains for a while and becomes incorporate in the body. As a part of the body, it produces mysteriously its effect on mind and spirit. We are bound, therefore, by a regard for our mental and moral well-being, to consider what we shall eat and what we shall drink. The argument against alcohol rests ultimately on this foundation. It is urged that it stimulates the baser passions—anger and lust, and that, at the same time, it weakens the power of self-control. Hinduism, ancient and modern, has paid much attention to diet, and the effect of food on the mentality of the eater. Each food is supposed to produce its due and proper effect in mind. A meat diet, so the Hindu Law-books teach, develops the more active and violent qualities of the soul: on the other hand, a vegetarian



diet promotes tranquillity, clarity of mental vision and concentratedness. The common distinction of food into three kinds, corresponding to the *guṇas* and according to moral affinity and effect, will be found in the *Bhagavadgītā*: xvii, 7-10. By general admission, and in agreement with the findings of common sense, there is a distinction of food into wholesome and unwholesome; and one test of wholesomeness or unwholesomeness is the mental mood which a food produces.

Let us recognize, however, that the work of the Self, as a moral agent, only begins with presentations in the conscious mind. The physical processes of eating and drinking and assimilation and that insolubly mysterious process by which the agitation of a nerve or brain-cell is transmuted into a conscious presentation are not actions of which the Self has cognisance, for which the Self can be held responsible. Its responsibility arises when it begins to deal with the images and ideas, the impulses and emotions which emerge into consciousness as a result of the food eaten. Using non-technical terms, I would say that wholesome foods, as a class, do not present any particular images or ideas to the mind. They simply give nourishment and vigour to the whole bodily frame, supplying each organ and member with what it needs and enabling them all to serve efficiently as the instruments by which true impressions are conveyed to the inner Self from the world without and by which that inner Self can operate upon the world without. It is, however, the nature of some unwholesome foods, such for example as alcoholic liquor and narcotic drugs, to directly stimulate the nerves and brain centres and to present to the mind false images—that is images out of true relation with the external world. The opium addict reclines amid pleasant images of the unreal: the drunkard sees what is not and is enraged at imaginary wrongs. But when a man is wholly under the influence of a drug or liquor, the conscious Self—how we know not—is not present in its integrity and cannot act any more than in somnambulism. Images are in mind without the ability of the Self to judge and control them. Even the Law does not make a man completely responsible for what he does when intoxicated, since he is not then a complete moral agent. His moral responsibility existed and was exercised at an earlier stage, when he was himself and knew what acts he might perpetrate, when drugged or drunken. In this view, addiction to drugs and the habit of drunkenness is a form of moral suicide: it is the reduction by a man of himself to the condition of an *amoral* being—the 'loss or forfeiture of his own self.'



It might seem, then, that on this occasion Jesus made use, for popular purposes, of a strong and vivid expression, which, when closely examined, is not strictly or universally true. A study of the great sayings of Jesus will reveal that He never was afraid of simple and strong language which served the occasion. His speech was under the limitations of all human speech, which can rarely be made to suit all occasions and to cover every case. Some of the sayings are not true, when taken out of their context; but we have no right to remove them from their context in expounding their meaning. The measure of truth which we must often apply to a preacher or teacher of morality is that what he says shall fit the need of the moment, shall tell men what they most need to know, and shall impel them in the right direction. But we need not resort to this apologetic on this occasion. As a matter of fact, this problem of the relation of body to soul, and of foods as wholesome or unwholesome, was not before Jesus and the Pharisees at this time: it was not under their consideration at all. The foods of which both were thinking and speaking were all *ex hypothesi* clean and wholesome. The question was whether such wholesome foods might be contaminated by unwashed hands and could defile a man—that is, make him sinful.

The answer of Jesus first established the distinction between (not the absolute separation of) the material and the spiritual. He asserted that sin belongs to the latter sphere; and that no man is truly defiled, in his essential being and nature as man, until some transgression and deterioration has taken place in his conscious life, in his heart. The real uncleanness of a man is not of the body, but of the soul. There was a tendency in Jewish religion to think of sin as a sort of physical state which might be conveyed by a physical contagion and likewise removed by a physical ablution. With that type of thought Jesus would make no truce; it was, in His view, viciously and radically false—'Evil reasonings . . . adulteries . . . false speaking . . . these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.' The food of which Jesus was speaking was not even physically contaminated by the unwashed hand, and it did not injure the body. These, however, were not the considerations urged by Jesus. He said simply that such food as they were in the habit of eating, whether with washed or with unwashed hands, did not and could not of itself make a man morally or spiritually impure. The Pharisees were misdirecting the care of the people from keeping the issues of the heart to mere washings of the hands. The attention we give to or withhold from the



presentations that come into our minds, the desires we permit to grow there, the resolves and purposes we form—in a word, all the outgoings of our Self towards its experiences, these are what make us good or evil, pure or impure. This alchemy of the heart is infinitely more important than the alchemy of the stomach.

Hinduism has a perception of the truth on which Jesus laid so great emphasis. It has, in many varieties of form, the proverbial saying that if water can wash away sin, then the fishes in the sacred river or tank must be the holiest of creatures: but it also has suffered Tradition to overlay spiritual religion. Outside a village well known to me, once stood a miserable hut inhabited by a solitary Brahman. His story was this: For some years he had kept a pariah woman as his mistress and no law of his caste condemned him. One day he was so ill advised as to take a meal from her hands, and at once he was excommunicated. In a system of religion which so judges and acts, the commandments of men have taken precedence of the words of God.

We may note that the early doctrine of Buddhism comes nearer to Christ's than the later orthodox Hindu teaching. The original rule of the Order permitted any member to accept and eat food offered to him as alms, when he was on his rounds. The rule was challenged, but the Buddha refused to alter it. A much-quoted hymn attributes to Kasappa—the Buddha who, in the legendary succession, immediately precedes the historical Buddha—the view that it is not the eating of flesh which defiles a man, but the doing of evil deeds. (*Sacred Books of the East*, x. part 2, p. 40.)

I cannot pursue here the doctrine of the *Advaita Vedānta* which regards the conscious Self as part of the phenomenal world. On this view Mind is only a mode or product of the material: it is the unreal in a somewhat subtler form than gross matter. The true Self or Soul (*Ātma*) within is identical with the One Existence (*Brahma*); and it is altogether independent of any states of Mind, virtuous or vicious. It is immersed in this phenomenal world and in the individual consciousness, but it is wholly unaffected by them, just as the lotus leaf lies in the water, but is not wet. The true Self is above and outside of all distinctions of morality; neither the terms good and right nor the terms bad and wrong are applicable to it. Sin can never touch it: it is folly to speak of the essential man as a sinner. A doctrine like this makes absolute and total the distinction between Matter and Spirit, the body and the Self: but it empties both of meaning and of value. The *Advaiti* would agree with the statement that no



food, entering into the body, can in any way or degree impair or defile the Soul or Self; but he would also go on to deny the second part of the statement of Jesus that evil thoughts and desires and resolves with the words and acts which are their fruit can defile the Soul. These, says the *Advaiti*, have nothing whatever to do with the *Ātma*: they have no power over it, and it undergoes no change as a result of their prevalence in the Mind. No material thing and no mental state ever has defiled or ever will defile the true Self. We may say of the Self, so conceived, that, if there is nothing in it to repel or condemn, so also there is nothing in it to desire, love or worship. But we can do no more than briefly allude to this doctrine: the full discussion of it would take us too far afield.



## APPENDIX II

### *The Great Denunciation of the Pharisees*

In considering the relation of Jesus to the Pharisees there is a question which must be faced and answered. We have seen that, up to the very close of the ministry of Jesus, His principal opponents were the Pharisees and their Scribes. We shall remember that, according to St. Matthew (Chap. xxiii.), on one of the days of the last week in Jerusalem, Jesus delivered a tremendous attack upon the Scribes and Pharisees with an oft-reiterated 'Woe unto you.' In scathing language He denounced their vanity, spiritual blindness and hypocrisy. He compared them to cups and platters of which the outside only has been cleansed, while the inside remains unwashed and filthy, and to whitened sepulchres which are beautiful to all outward appearing but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and corruption. The question has been raised as to whether this antagonism between Jesus and the Pharisees was inevitable. Was there no failure in understanding and charity on His part? If He had been more restrained and patient, might not this disastrous conflict have been averted?

The Rev. R. Travers Herford,<sup>1</sup> not as an orthodox Christian, but as a close student of Judaism and Christianity, has put the case before us: 'Until Jesus actually appeared the like of Him had never been known. . . . The effect of His coming into the world has been greater than that made by any one else in history. . . . It can only be understood as due to the impression made by a personality of tremendous force and intensity. If there be in every human soul a divine element, if there be a point of contact (so to speak) where the soul is in touch with God, then I would say that in Jesus this became no longer a mere contact but a deep and overwhelming consciousness of God. . . . To assume in Him a personality marked by spiritual force and intensity to a degree unknown before or since is, I believe, the one and only clue to the right understanding of Jesus. . . . It will probably

<sup>1</sup> *The Pharisees*: pp. 198-212.



be admitted that one in whom there was so vivid a consciousness of God would neither seek nor recognize any human authority for what He said or thought or believed in regard to religion. The ultimate authority is of course, in every case, that of God Himself, however it may be apprehended. It was so for the Pharisees no less than for Jesus; but while for them it was apprehended through the Torah and its injunctions . . . by him the authority of God was owned and felt in immediate experience. . . . And if this is so, this is the point of collision between him and Pharisaism, the irreconcilable difference which admitted of no compromise.'

So far, this seems to be admirably expressed, but Mr. Herford goes on to make the question of the Pharisees about the unwashed hands, of Mark 7<sup>5</sup>, the occasion when 'the challenge was definitely made.' He continues of Jesus: 'He flashed out a sharp retort to a quite natural question. . . . He made no attempt to reason with them and show them where, as He thought, they were in error. He denounced them straightway as hypocrites "making void the command of God by their tradition." . . . Their opponent had not attempted to show them "a more excellent way"; He had only lashed out at them with a fierceness which would not tend to make them yield to Him. . . . Both were right. But the significance of the incident is that it shows clearly the nature of the collision between Pharisaism and Jesus as the mutual impact of two irreconcilable conceptions of religion.'

On the final denunciation of the Pharisees by Jesus and the view of orthodox Christians upon it, Mr. Herford observes: 'And even they, believing that Jesus justly regarded the Pharisees as his enemies, might sometimes wonder what had become of the earlier precept—"Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you." If the Pharisees were as He supposed, were they not in even greater need of healing than the sinners and the outcastes? . . . The more the alleged spiritual depravity of the Pharisees be emphasized, the more striking is the absence of any slightest attempt to lead them into a better way on the part of one who "came to seek and to save that which is lost."'

We must face this question fearlessly. No one was more tolerant than Jesus Himself of a personal criticism which was based upon a genuine misunderstanding or arose out of the love of truth and goodness. He has left it on record that any word spoken against the Son of Man may be forgiven, except that, in uttering it, one shall be speaking against the Spirit of Truth within him. (Matt. 12<sup>31, 32</sup>.) We do not honour Jesus when



we refuse to acknowledge and to resolve a doubt that has occurred inevitably in the course of our discipleship; and we shall never convince a world of our Master's perfection and of His right to its whole-hearted allegiance, unless we are ready with an answer to questions which are presented—not captiously, nor of malice—but in the sincere desire to arrive at the truth concerning Him.

Mr. Herford's attitude seems to me to contain an element of self-contradiction. He believes that there was in Jesus, in a unique degree, the consciousness of fellowship with God—of knowing and making known to others the mind of God. This intimacy of relation to God is, in the view of Mr. Herford, what distinguishes Jesus from all other men and from all other religious teachers, including the Pharisees and their Scribes. If, however, this be so, we are compelled to ask at once whether Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees took place within the sphere of His communion with God or outside of it. If we believe and affirm that there was no severance between the soul of Jesus and His Heavenly Father when He was denouncing the Pharisees and repudiating their system of Law and Tradition, then which of the two parties in the contention was in the right? The *gravamen* of the charge of Jesus against Pharisaism was that it did not represent the mind and will of God, but was grievously out of harmony with these. Its precepts were not the authentic words of God, but only commandments invented by men which were remote from the love and goodwill of God. It will not do, therefore, to suggest, as Mr. Herford does, that both parties in this contention were right. We cannot explain away the opposition between the way of life commended and pursued by Jesus and the way of the Pharisees as though they were simply two different paths of religion, each alike ordained of God and each conducting to Him in the end. We cannot prove and we ought not to assert that the revelation which came to Jesus direct in communion with God and the revelation which the Pharisees professed was theirs through the Tradition were both equally divine and equally true. Mr. Herford himself says that the method and conceptions of Jesus and those of the Pharisees were in an irreconcilable antagonism. God does not stultify Himself by giving two diverse revelations which cannot be reconciled each with the other. Either Jesus was right in His view of Tradition and in His estimate of the religiousness of the Pharisees and they were in sinful error: or else they were right and Jesus was grievously to blame for his condemnation of them and the system for which they stood.



We cannot impugn the justice of Jesus' denunciation without denying that it had its origin in the mind of God. It is possible for the critic to urge that, in general, Jesus did maintain an intercourse of extraordinary closeness with God; but that, as in other great and good men, there were moments in His life and tracts of experience in which He, as it were, let go of God and acted of Himself without the direction of the divine wisdom and love. So, it may be said, in dealing with the Pharisees the prejudices and passions of Jesus were so strong that they prevailed: the commerce of His soul with God was, in this particular, suspended or broken, and He spoke inadvisedly, of himself and not of God. An examination, however, of the occasions, on which Jesus came into conflict with the Pharisees, will show that then, if ever, He claimed to be speaking in fellowship with God, on God's behalf and in God's name. His accusation against the actual religion of the Pharisee was that it was a system in outward seeming devoted to God and making great use of God's name, but in reality it was out of touch with God and proceeded from a self, estranged from God and seeking its own honour and advantage. The Pharisaism, which Jesus condemned, had no heart of mercy and kindness in the commands it laid upon other men and in its judgement of the sinner.

Earlier in this lecture I have described Jesus in terms similar to those used by Mr. Herford: I have spoken of Him as, in the superlative degree, 'a man of God.' I have assumed the validity of Jesus' consciousness of God—that it was an objective experience, bringing Him into relation with the Existent, and not merely a self-delusion. I fail to see how, at one and the same time, we can admit the prevalence of this consciousness in Jesus and deny the justice and rightness of His condemnation of the Pharisees.

Further, Mr. Herford has not attempted to trace chronologically the development of the conflict with the Pharisees. He has not even made a survey as rapid and imperfect as that which has been essayed in this book. As soon as we review the evidence, does it not become apparent that the conflict developed gradually? The incident of the unwashed hands which Mr. Herford cites as typical of the method and manner of Jesus cannot, on any reckoning, be placed in the first stage of His ministry. It had been preceded by several other encounters—by the questions about healing on the Sabbath day and keeping company with sinners. On those early occasions, as we have seen, the appeal of Jesus had been to Scripture and to the good and kindly impulses



of the heart. It is wholly contrary to the weight of evidence to say of Jesus in His dealing with the Pharisees—'Their opponent had not attempted to show them "a more excellent way." He only lashed out at them with a fierceness which did not tend to make them yield to Him.' The denunciation of Jesus at the last was terrific—there is nothing more terrific in the whole Bible. No Old Testament prophet ever uttered a more scathing and damning impeachment of the conduct and character of his contemporaries. Let it be recognized, however, that this great address of denunciation comes not at the beginning, but at the very end of the earthly career of Jesus. St. Matthew places it in the Passion Week, two or three days before the Crucifixion. Neither of the other Synoptists has related the discourse at length; but both of them have indicated its time and place in agreement with St. Matthew, and have given a short extract from it. (Mark 12 <sup>38-40</sup>, Luke 20 <sup>45-47</sup>.) It is quite clear, then, that this denunciation was the final delivery by Jesus of His soul against Traditionalism and its representatives: it was spoken when all efforts at persuasion and every appeal to conscience and to Scripture had failed.

In so writing, I do not forget that in St. Luke's Gospel some of the sayings of the Great Denunciation, though with significant differences, appear in another context. This Evangelist relates that they were spoken by Jesus in the house of a Pharisee who had invited Him to breakfast, and marvelled that He sat down to eat without first bathing or washing. (Lk. 11 <sup>37-54</sup>.) It is quite possible—it is even probable—that Jesus used the same language of the Pharisees on more than one occasion. Even so, this denunciation of the Pharisees and of the Scribes in a Pharisee's house belongs to a late stage in the ministry of Jesus. It forms a part of St. Luke's travel document—his detailed account of the last journey up to Jerusalem.

There is a passage in the Great Denunciation which seems to sum up the case against Pharisaism and the Pharisees: 'Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law—judgement, and mercy, and faith.' Judgement—surely not, as some commentators have it, 'the sense of justice,' or 'doing justly.' Jesus meant something more vital than this. The nearest equivalent in our language seems to me to be the phrase in the Anglican Collect—'a right judgement in all things.' The reference is to the faculty of discriminating between what is true and what is false, between what is good and what is evil; and the emphasis is on the supreme importance of



being faithful and obedient to the verdicts of that inner judge. There lay the initial failure of the Scribes and Pharisees—the root of all their error. They did not judge rightly within. Jesus had appealed in the first encounter and many times afterwards to their faculty of judgement, and He had appealed in vain. They would not hearken to nor obey the voice of that true inward counsellor. So, at the last, in summation of all that has gone before, Jesus lays emphasis again on the sovereign value of honesty of heart. All hypocrisy begins in a suppression of the Moral Sense, 'in holding down the truth in unrighteousness.' The great things in God's estimation—'the weighty matters of His law,' said Jesus, are these—that a man should be true to himself, loving to his neighbours, and humble and trustful in his approach to God.

Last of all, the proper remedy for Hypocrisy is *exposure*. Perhaps it is the only sufficient cure. The mask must be torn from the face of the hypocrite, and he must see the fashion of his own countenance, which he has forgotten. There is an hypocrisy which is gross and conscious of itself. Jesus mentions it. The man who was making long prayers and robbing widows, unless he was very far gone in self-ignorance, knew that he was a hypocrite. The Rabbi, who imposed arduous obligations and duties on his pupils and granted to himself exemptions and indulgences, also knew that he was a hypocrite. Preaching without practice—'saying without doing,' is a species of hypocrisy which is crude and obvious. There is a variety of hypocrisy, however, which is more subtle than this; and Jesus had most to say about this kind. Men who are careful and exact in religious observances—in praying and fasting and giving alms and attendance at the synagogue—may not be conscious at all that, in so much which seems to be mindful of God and their neighbour, they are really self-centred and self-regarding. They slay God's saints and think they are doing God's service. They compass sea and land to make one convert, not really from a pure and unselfish desire for his salvation, but to vindicate their own opinions; and, when the convert is made, he is more egregiously egotistic than themselves. They have chosen the worse reason and call and believe it the better: they have made wrong their right and do not know it. The nemesis of hypocrisy is that—in the end—the hypocrite cannot recognize himself for what he is: his falseness has deceived his own self. Hypocrisy is perfected in self-deception. 'No man is a great hypocrite,' wrote Samuel Butler, 'until he has left off knowing that he is a hypocrite.'

We, who live to-day, know how hard it is to determine what



in truth our motives are; there is so subtle and inseparable a mixture of incentives within. We do not understand our own hearts. We cannot tell what we really are, but need that some one shall give us to see ourselves in truth. That service Jesus has rendered for all time to men of outward religious habit by His denunciation of Pharisaism. Hypocrisy is the bane of all good religion. There is no hypocrisy where the standard of morality and religion is low. It appears only where a religion has an elevated standard of character and conduct which has won a general assent and admiration. Men then want the honour of being thought good without the pains of goodness. For this reason Christianity produces more hypocrisy than any other religion. Hypocrisy is the counterfeit of true piety, the shadow which dogs the substance of goodness, the homage which vice pays to virtue. Because hypocrisy is the corruption of the best, it is the worst evil that can afflict the soul. When Jesus denounced Pharisaism, He pilloried hypocrisy for every race and every generation of men. He uttered His protest against the subtlest, deadliest foe of all true religion. If He had never used His scathing imagery of the cup, clean without and foul within, and of the white-washed tomb, we should have missed two great sign-posts of warning on the road to self-deception.

We shall not admit that Jesus would ever have withheld from the Pharisee the patience and compassion He showed towards publicans and sinners; but there can be no forgiveness without repentance. So long as a man remains completely satisfied with himself, while he is censorious and hard in his treatment of others, he is not in a condition to be forgiven. What Jesus would do to a penitent Pharisee we know from the greatest of His disciples, who was 'as touching the Law a Pharisee,' but saw at its true value and abjured his own goodness and 'was found in Christ, not having a righteousness of his own, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith' (Phil. 3<sup>d</sup>, 9). There was nothing mean and vindictive in the wrath of Jesus against the Scribes and Pharisees. It was a true indictment which He brought against them. He spoke it out of a regard for the liberty and purity of religion, and for the welfare and spiritual progress of mankind. History has been His judge. The principles of Jesus remain and rule supreme in the world of morality and religion: the Traditionalism of the Pharisees has survived only as the system of a sect of the Jews. It has no interest for and exercises no influence over the world at large. We owe our spiritual liberty to Jesus.



After all, the most understanding and tender appreciation of Pharisaism ever spoken comes from the lips of Jesus. It is that gentle remonstrance which he puts into the mouth of the father of his best-known parable, 'Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine.' The Elder Brother, if he had but known it, had access to and the use of all the treasures of the house: the one thing which he did not share or possess was his father's mind and heart. He needed only love—and how great a lack was that!—to make him as his father. A change in his disposition and outlook, an endowment of love, would have made him an incomparably finer and more effective man than the prodigal, who had been a 'waster.' He was able to bring to the service of his father and the family all the powers of his manhood undiminished and unimpaired. What a Pharisee can become, when penitence and humility, a sense of God's goodness and thankfulness enter into his heart, the histories of those converted Pharisees—Saul of Tarsus and John Wesley—may serve as examples and proofs. Their past in Pharisaism was not wasted: at their conversion, which was the incoming of love into their hearts, they brought into the service of God and man an unblemished body, a disciplined and furnished mind, habits of prayer and prompt obedience—great latent powers which were released and set on fire by the grace of God as they found and accepted it in Jesus Christ. These two were Scribes who entered into the Kingdom of Heaven bringing with them the treasures of the old to add to the new.

We have seen that the Christian's questioning of Jesus has turned upon a consideration of charity—that charity which Jesus exhibited so conspicuously to sinful and penitent men and women. The orthodox Hindu may challenge the propriety and rightness of Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees upon another ground. Any excessive agitation of the mind appears to be inconsistent with or detrimental to sainthood or sagehood, as Hinduism conceives it. It is unbecoming the perfect man, or the man on the way to perfection, to allow any strong emotion to take possession of his mind. The highest poise of the soul is Equanimity (*Samabhāva*), in which there is neither attraction nor repulsion and the Self is as far from love as from hatred. It maintains an even tranquil state like the flame of a candle in a windless place. The doctrine of *Ahimsā*, or Harmlessness ('Not injuring' any living creature) can by no means be equated with the Christian doctrine of love. It is too much a negative attitude or quality of the soul for such identification; but it has produced



an aversion from all violent thought or violent speech as well as from violence in act or physical violence. To minds which are under the influence of these Hindu ideals, it must come at first with a shock that Jesus should address to any men words of so fierce and burning indignation. The possibility of righteous and justifiable anger is not conceded in the highest Hinduism: it has scarcely been considered. It is all the more significant, therefore, that an Indian writer, not a Hindu but of Parsee antecedents, should have taken up the defence of Jesus and furnished what seems to me an illuminating exposition of His purpose in dealing with the Pharisees. Professor Ardaser Sorabjee Wadia devotes a chapter in his book on *The Message of Christ* to 'Christ and Pharisaism.' In terms stronger than those used by Travers Herford he describes the apparent outrage of Jesus' attack upon the Pharisees. Both the accusation against Jesus and the defence are summed up in the following sentences:—

'How are we to reconcile His general commandments of Resist not, Judge not, Be ever merciful to the evil and the base, with this deliberate heartless attack on what was the most intellectual part of the evilly-disposed. Moreover it may be asked—Why did the Evangelists leave this damning piece of evidence of their Master's questionable taste and temper behind them?

'Strange that He, who would in the largeness of His heart find pity and make allowance for the infirmities and iniquities of the publican and the harlot, of the woman taken in adultery and the most abandoned sinner, had no pity and made no allowance for the sins and shortcomings of the Scribe and the Pharisee!

'If we look a little closer and a little deeper into the nature of their transgressions, we shall soon perceive that He did that for a very good reason. For the sins of the publican and the prostitute, though they may be "gross as a mountain," were yet open and palpable, and neither the sinners themselves had any doubt of their sins, nor did their victims cherish any delusions about their misdeeds.

'The Saviour's general principles of Non-resistance and Forgiveness—if extended to hypocrites—would destroy the very purpose of the principles themselves. For the idea behind the principle is to allow the evil to reach unimpededly its point of reaction and remorse, and thus automatically obtain its forgiveness; or to let it work its own destruction by giving it an absolutely free run and simultaneously to develop certain Christian virtues in the aggrieved party by curbing the natural impulse to resist it. It is, therefore, important that for the full and proper working



out of the idea, and to get the desired results from it, both the evil-doers and their unfortunate victims must be really *conscious* of the evil. If they are not, but on the contrary believe, as did the hypocritical Pharisees and their simple-minded dupes, that their deeds were meritorious acts, then not only the very purpose of the principles is frustrated, but the principles, if put into practice, would actively co-operate in the spread of the very evils they were designed to overcome. For the spread of so subtle and insidious an evil as hypocrisy would eventually come to poison the wells of a nation's moral life, develop a paralysing convention, and, destroying in men's minds the very conception of virtue, end in a general stagnation of the soul. When we thus realize the peculiar malignancy and fearful potency of hypocrisy, well can we understand the Saviour's towering wrath against its votaries and fully do we justify the use of those impassioned words that in the agony of His tormented soul escaped Him: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"



### APPENDIX III

#### *The Development of Sacrifice in Hinduism*

I do not know of any attempt by modern Hindu writers to exhibit the course of sacrificial observance in India as a rational or spiritual development other than that which will be found in *An Advanced Text-Book of Hindu Religion and Ethics*, which was produced by combined Hindu and Theosophical authorship. Two chapters of this book treat of Sacrifice. They aim at showing that through the Hindu Scriptures an increasing purpose runs. The underlying principle of Sacrifice, it is affirmed, is that every living creature exists by the offering of another's life for it (*Jīvo jīvasya jīvanam*). Creation begins in the Creator's sacrifice of Himself to produce creatures, as declared in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*: xiii. 7, 1. There it is written that Brahma the Self-Existent (*Svayambhu*), 'having sacrificed himself in all living things, and all living things in himself, acquired greatness, self-effulgence and lordship.' It is alleged that this text contains 'the essential idea of sacrifice,' which is 'the pouring out of life for the benefit of others,' the Supreme Being Himself being the chief exemplar of this universal law. The Hindu system of sacrifice is said by the authors of the *Text-Book* to have as its object the gradual weaning of men from lower to higher thought. Sacrifices are first enjoined for the winning of material benefits—health and wealth in this world; then, for future and postponed bliss in another world; finally, for service, without desire of reward, for the benefit of others and with devotion to the god—the highest form of sacrifice consisting not in material gifts, but in virtuous thought and action. The fivefold daily sacrifices of the Brahman and his other recurring rites are to secure an orderly rendering of what is due to all in the universe.

However seemly and admirable this outline may be as a scheme of religious discipline or as an ideal reconstruction of Hindu ritual, it cannot be accepted either as an account of the historical development of Sacrifice in Hinduism or as a correct exposition of the Scripture quoted. The very foundation of the whole is



at fault. The *adhyāya* in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, from which the text quoted above is taken, is occupied with a description of the *Sarvamedha* or 'All-Sacrifice,' a ceremonial of ten days which includes the Great-Sacrifices. It is to be performed by the sacrificer for the sake of gaining 'possession of all created things,' for universal dominion and glory. There is not a trace in it of the altruism which Theosophical Hindus would import into it. The Supreme Being in this *Sarvamedha* section of the *Brāhmaṇa* is referred to as the neuter Self-existent Brahman—*Brahma Svayambhu*; but elsewhere in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, he is called most commonly *Prajāpati*, 'Lord of Creatures.' As the Procreator, sometimes described in rather gross terms, he begets all things by a duplication or multiplication of himself. He is pre-eminently a theological figment in a cosmogony. *Prajāpati* is a being singularly destitute of such personal or moral attributes as might arouse and sustain the devotion (*bhakti*) of a worshipper. One might as easily conceive of Fissiparous Protoplasm being erected into a deity to be loved and imitated in love. *Prajāpati* never won popular recognition, and faded out of the Hindu Pantheon. His so-called sacrifice of himself was a mere cosmogonic expedient of the priests. It did not and could not become an inspiration to self-sacrifice or unselfishness in the moral or spiritual sense. So far as it was conceived as having motive, the motive was self-aggrandisement. It would be a totally false exposition which related this to God's sacrifice of Himself in Christ, or to Christ's sacrifice of Himself for our sakes.

The *Bhagavadgītā*, in its small compass, brings together an extraordinary variety of Hindu ideas upon Sacrifice. The eclectic purpose and temperament of the author appear in the treatment of this as of all other subjects. Some of the principal passages are: iii. 9-16; iv. 12, 23-33; ix. 15, 16, 22-28; xvii. 11-13; xviii. 5. It is not easy to reconcile all these with one another; but the attempt may be made to arrange them in some sort of order upon an ascending scale.

1. Sacrifice has been ordained for men, and the good do not neglect the performance of Sacrifice. This world is not for the non-sacrificer. (iv. 31; xviii. 5.)

2. The gods bestow worldly boons upon those who offer sacrifices to them, and thanks are due to the gods for their gifts. He is as a thief who withholds his meed of gratitude. (iii. 12; iv. 12, 25a.)

3. Sacrifice has a magical potency: it maintains the cycle of the Universe, the round of earthly existence. (iii. 11, 14, 16.)



4. Sacrifice, as a work, as 'the work' *pāṭ excellence*, is itself the product of Works—that is of *Karma* and the prescription of Scripture. (iii. 14, 15.)

5. Sacrifice has been appointed by the Creator: it is the 'Cow of Plenty' (*Kāmadhuk*) for mankind. (iii. 10.)

6. Sacrifice, without any desire for 'fruit' or personal benefit, entails no bondage to the world, and leads towards salvation. (iv. 23; xvii. 11.)

7. Sacrifices conduct to the Beings to whom they are offered. Sacrifice with devotion to Krishna-Vāsudeva, the Lord of grace, will bring the worshipper to blissful union with Him. (ix. 14-16, 22-28, 34.)

8. The greater and truer sacrifices are not material oblations, but control of the breaths, repression of the sense-activities, and mental inhibitions. (iv. 26-30.)

9. The best of all sacrifices is the concentration and tranquillising of thought leading to the knowledge of the Supreme Being—the Imperishable, which is beyond all thought and speech. This is the means of ultimate salvation. (iv. 24, 25b, 33.)

Doctrines and practices of opposed schools of Hinduism are strangely blended by the author of the *Gītā*. What Dr. Barnett has written of the poem as a whole is true of its teaching on Sacrifice—'Its thought is confused, its utterance loose and rambling. The learning that it parades is shallow and ill-assorted.' For these reasons the Hindu Monist and Dualist—the severely Intellectual school of thought and the Emotional, the followers of the Way of Knowledge (*Jñāna*) and of the Way of Devotion (*Bhakti*)—have all claimed to find in the *Gītā* authority for their views of life and religion. Probably the Monist Sankara's attempt to harmonise all its teachings by the expedient of recognizing a Higher and Lower Knowledge is the most successful. According to Sankara, as we have seen, the Absolute and Ultimate Being is the nameless, attributeless Brahma; and the personal deity—Krishna-Vāsudeva—who figures in the poem, is only a lower and phenomenal being, an early product of Illusion for the benefit of men who are still in the world of sense and under the influence of the passions and emotions.

It is possible, by isolating certain elements in the poem, to find in it 'a gospel, telling of a consecration of life's every work to the selfless service of God, and an Infinite Love that at every place and every time pours forth its illimitable grace to all that seek after it' (*The Bhagavadgītā or the Lord's Song*: Introdn.



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pp. 79-80). Dr. Barnett may be right in asserting that this was the message the author of the poem desired above all else to convey; but in the attempt to include some other types of religious thought and practice, he has overlaid and obscured his own fervent belief in the personality and grace of God the Ultimate. The *Gītā*, as it is, bears a very uncertain testimony to a Personal God, who is the treasury of all good qualities: it is always veering away from this God to the bare and inconceivable Absolute of the *Advaita*.

So also, in respect of Sacrifice, the *Gītā* seems to recognize and make legitimate many kinds of sacrificial observance: they are all useful and right according to the intention or desire in the mind of the sacrificer. The *Gītā* is not a prophetic book, which summons men to leave the lower and to obey the highest only. A date, accepted by many for the authorship of the poem, is about the beginning of the Christian era. The earlier the date we assign to it, the more marked becomes this absence in it of prophetic power or of the exclusiveness of truth. It has not, like the writings of the Hebrew prophets, transformed a popular sacrificial rite: the lowest and the highest still exist side by side in Hinduism centuries after the publication of the *Gītā*, and with a measure of approbation for both.



## APPENDIX IV

### *The Historicity of Krishna*

It is very doubtful what, if any, is the meagre historical basis of the Krishna legends. The reader may be referred to the late Dr. Farquhar's *Crown of Hinduism* for a tracing of the growth through the centuries of the Krishna cult, which does not appear in the Vedic literature. One theory is that Krishna was a warrior prince of some renown in Northern India—probably of Dravidian race, since he is always represented as dark of colour. The *Bhagavadgītā*, in which he appears as the incarnation of Vāsudeva, the Universal God, is regarded by modern scholars as an interpolation into the epic, the *Mahābhārata*.

It does not belong to the realm of probability that a god, in the guise of a charioteer, should delay the conflict on the battle-field to deliver a long philosophical and religious discourse. This can be no more an historical fact than the dying Bhīṣma's utterance, from a couch of arrow-heads, of the vast treatise on Statecraft (*Rājadharmā*) which forms another section of the same Epic. These are legitimate poetical expedients, and especially, in the case of the *Gītā*, not devoid of appropriateness and beauty; but they cannot be taken as the historical settings of discourses actually so delivered.

Indeed, it would be highly inconvenient and repugnant to the feelings of many modern Hindus, if the *Gītā* were to be regarded as a narrative of fact, and not simply as the exposition of a doctrine, the truth of which is independent of the person by whom, the time when, and the place where it was spoken. It would follow inevitably from an acceptance of the *Gītā* as history, that Krishna had inculcated, in the most literal sense, the necessity for and the righteousness of killing; and that he had taught that there is one community—the soldier or warrior (*kṣatriya*) caste—which is bound to wage constant warfare and fails in duty when it abstains from fighting. This is, beyond question, a doctrine which is embedded in the Hindu theory of the Castes and constitution of society. Perhaps it is a legitimate



deduction from the *Gītā*, on any interpretation of the poem; but there may be room for doubt, if its historicity is not assumed.

If, however, we believe that a living Krishna, in bodily form, on the particular occasion described by the poem, actually spoke the words attributed to him, then there is no escape from the conclusion that Krishna sanctioned warfare of the most wanton and ruthless type. The teaching of the poem would be in flagrant contradiction of any doctrine of *Ahimsā* or *Satyāgraha*, Soul-force. Mr. Gandhi, to whom the *Gītā* has been as the staff of his life, seeks to turn the point of this objection by declaring that the setting of the poem is unhistorical—that it is an allegory.

The Krishna of the *Bhagavadgītā* is the mere mouthpiece of the poet's doctrine: he is *vox et præterea nihil*. If we ask the Hindu devotee for a Krishna of history, for one who lived and performed actions, he will refer us to the Purāṇic tales as the only sources of information. The following extracts from Pincott's translation of the *Prema Sāgara* may be taken as samples of these: they are neither better nor worse than the average. They may serve to give an English reader, not familiar with this popular literature, some idea of its nature.

The first extract is from the Tales of the Infancy:—

'One day, later on, Krishna and Balarām were playing in the courtyard with companions, when Krishna ate some dirt; thereupon one companion went and informed Jasodā. She angrily, taking a switch in her hand, got up and ran towards him. He, having perceived his mother coming filled with passion, wiped his mouth and stood frightened. As soon as she got near, she said, "How now! why hast thou eaten dirt?" Krishna, fearing and trembling, said, "Mother! who has told thee?" She said, "Thy friend." Then Mohan angrily asked the friend, "How now! when did I eat dirt?" He, fearing, said, "Brother! I know nothing what thou sayest; what shall I say?" As soon as Krishna began to expostulate with the companion, Jasodā went and seized him. Thereupon Krishna began to say, "Mother! be not thou angry; do human beings ever eat dirt?" She said, "I will not listen to thy prevarication; if thou art true, show thy mouth!" When Śrī Krishna opened his mouth, the three worlds were seen within it. Then knowledge came to Jasodā, and therefore she began to say within herself "I am a great fool, in that I am esteeming as my son the Lord of the Three Worlds".'

The next describes an exploit of Krishna's manhood—his recovery of the famous Sumantakā jewel, which had been carried



off by the Bear-King, Jāmawant, and was flooding his cave-dwelling with its brilliant light:—

'Mahārāj! having said this, Hari entered that dark, frightful cavern, and, proceeding onwards, arrived where Jāmawant was sleeping, and his wife was standing rocking her child in a cradle. She, having seen the Lord, being afraid, cried out, and Jāmawant woke up; then rushing out, he came and clung to Hari, and a wrestling match began. When no stratagem nor force of his had any effect upon Hari, he began to reflect within himself thus, "Lakshman and Rāma are of my strength; but in this world who is so strong as to fight with me?" . . . Rāja! when Jāmawant, having recognized the Lord, made this statement, then Śrī Murāri (Krishṇa), the benefactor of devotees, perceiving the affection of Jāmawant, and being gratified, assumed the guise of Rāma, and holding a bow and arrows, revealed himself. Thereupon Jāmawant, having abased himself to the earth, rose up, joined his hands, and said, with exceeding humility, "O Ocean of Kindness! Friend of the Meek! should I receive your permission, I will make known my wish." The Lord said, "Well, speak." Then Jāmawant said, "Purifier of the Guilty! Lord of the Poor! it is in my heart that I should give this girl Jāmawati to you in marriage, and acquire fame and greatness in the world." Bhagwān said, "If such is thy wish, I also agree to it." As soon as this promise issued from the mouth of the Lord, Jāmawant at first worshipped Śrī Krishṇa Chand with sandal, unbroken rice, flowers, perfume, lamps, and consecrated food, and afterwards gave his daughter in marriage, according to Vedic ritual; and he presented that jewel also in her dower.'

The last is an account of the felicity of Krishṇa's city, Dvāraka, beside the waves of the Western ocean:—

'Mahārāj! in Dvāraka city Śrī Krishṇa Chand ever abides; increase and prosperity shine in every house of the Yadubānsis; men and women are ever forming fresh designs with dresses and ornaments; rubbing on scent and sandal, they apply perfume; the traders have the markets, roads and squares, sprinkled, swept and cleaned; there traders from various countries are bringing many different articles to sell; here and there the citizens are amusing themselves; in different places Brāhmanas are reciting the *Veda*; in every house people are listening to and repeating stories from the *Purāṇas*; good and virtuous people are, night



and day, singing the glories of Hari. . . . Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chand, the root of joy, was ever disporting himself with his sixteen thousand one hundred and eight young women. At times, the young women, engrossed in love, were making themselves up like the Lord; at times, Hari, being engrossed, is adorning the young women; and the mutual sports and frolics they indulge in are unutterable; they are not describable by me; only by being seen can it be realized. . . . Afterwards all the women are disporting themselves with Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chand, and remain constant in attendance; they are celebrating the virtues of the Lord, and receiving the reward which their hearts desired; and the Lord was carrying out the duties of the householder state in a conscientious way. Mahārāj! the sixteen thousand one hundred and eight queens, which have been previously described, had each of them ten sons and one daughter apiece, and their offspring was innumerable. I have not the power to describe them; but I know this much, that there were thirty millions eighty-eight thousand one hundred schools for the instruction of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chand Jī's offspring, and just the same number of teachers. Furthermore, whatever sons, sons' sons, and daughters' sons, which Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chand Jī had, none were deficient in beauty, strength, bravery, wealth, or virtue. Each one excelled the other; how shall I attempt to describe them?'



## APPENDIX V

### *A Note on Samabhāva, Ahimsā, and Tapas.*

In this Appendix I wish to make a few notes on Hindu terms and ideas which have been brought into relation with the Christian conception of Love, and indeed have been offered as the equivalents of it. The first is *Samabhāva*, with its cognate synonyms—*Samatva*, *Sāmya*, *Samabuddhi*, etc. The best rendering in English which I can suggest is 'Equanimity,' though this is not altogether satisfactory, for it fails to convey adequately the elements of 'detachment,' 'indifference,' and 'impassivity' which are contained in *Samabhāva*.

We have already noticed that in the *Bhagavadgītā* there are different strains of thought which it is hard or impossible to reconcile. The seeming inconsistency or contradiction within its doctrines may be illustrated by a reference to *Samabhāva*. On the one hand, there are passages of the *Gītā*, which imply that there is a Supreme Personal Being; that this Personal God is concerned for the welfare of His creatures, and especially for men; that He assists them with His grace; and that salvation consists in union with Himself which is won by devotion or faith on man's side, answering to grace in God. It might be said that the whole imagery of the poem suggests and sustains this belief. We have a picture of the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva incarnate in Krishna, condescending in grace to converse with and enlighten and save His devotee, Arjuna.

On the other hand, there is another strain of thought running all through the *Gītā*, which puts before the mind of the reader a very different view of the Supreme or Ultimate Being. It suggests that this Being, or God, rests satisfied and blissful in itself, and has never had, nor ever will have, any real contact with or concern for the created Universe. It is both impassive and inactive; for, whatever may be the appearances, it never truly suffers and it never truly acts. It is quite unattached to the world, and feels neither love for nor aversion from any living creature. It is equally in all, and is indifferent to all creatures.



Salvation consists in the removal of the Ignorance or Illusion, which alone distinguishes a man or any individual thing from the 'One without a Second.'

A similar opposition will be found in the disposition and qualities of the Wise Man or the Saint of the *Gītā*. On the one hand, he is represented as being gentle and benevolent, taking delight in the good of all creatures (*sarvabhūtahite rataḥ*); and, on the other hand and more often, he is spoken of as having no attachment whatsoever to them. This aspect of his character is described by many epithets, simple and compound. He is said to be unattached (*asaṅga*), one released from attachment (*muktasāṅga*), devoid of attachment (*sangarahita*). He has renounced the fruit of works (*karmaphalatyāgi*. See XVIII. 2, 11). He has, therefore, no desire for or concern about the result of his actions; he is of the same mind in success or failure (*samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau*). He has passed beyond the dualities of desire and fear, joy and grief, love and hatred (*dvandvātīta*), and is without acquisitiveness or possessive egotism (*nirmama*). He has brought all the sense organs under control (*sannyāsī, yatī*); and, though his Self may seem to act, yet it never truly acts, but dwells inactive in the nine-gated city of the body, having its bliss solely within itself. Friends and foes are alike to this Wise Man: he is indifferent to all. In brief, as is the Supreme Self, so is the Individual Self.

It would be possible to cite many passages from many sections of the *Gītā* to show that this contradiction exists: but I will quote here only one or two:—

'The Lord (*Prabhu*) does not create the agency or the acts of the world, nor the connexion between an act and its fruit: it is Nature (*Svabhāva*) which operates.

'The Lord (*Vibhu*) does not accept either the sin of any man, or his good deed. Knowledge is enveloped by Ignorance; by it creatures are deluded.'

(Na kartṛitvam na karmāṇi lokasya sṛijati prabhuḥ  
Na karmaphalasamyogam svabhāvastu pravartate  
Nādatte kasyācītpāpam na śaiva sukṛitam vibhuḥ  
Ajñānenāvṛitam jñānam tena muhyanti jantavaḥ.

—V. 14, 15.)

It really does not matter whether we take the *Prabhu* and *Vibhu* of these verses to denote the Lord of the Universe—the Supreme Spirit, or to denote the Lord within the breast of man, his Individual Spirit; for the doctrine is that both are the same, and as is the one, so will be the other. Śankara, as we might expect,



identifies *Svabhāva* (Nature) with *Māyā* or *Ajñāna*: it is the active principle which by its envelopment of Brahma has created the appearance of the Universe. Rāmānuja has nothing to say on these verses, which touches the real issue.

Another verse, which presents the paradox in an acute form, is IX. 29, where Krishna says to his devotee:—

'I am alike (indifferent) to all creatures: none is hateful to me, and none dear. But those who worship me with devotion are in me, and I am in them.'

(Samo' ham sarvabhūteshu na me dveshyo' sti na priyaḥ

Yebhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teshu cāpyaham)

The devotee (*bhakta*) will be as his Lord, indifferent to foe and friend (samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca—XII. 18.)

'The wise see the same in a Brahman of learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and the cooker of dog's flesh (outcaste).'

(Vidyāvinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini

Śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ

—V 18.)

We know Śankara's method of resolving the paradox. It is that the Personal God, Vāsudeva or Krishna, is among the products of Illusion. He is a mere expedient by which the soul approaches nearer to reality or truth. The Way of Devotion, as the *Gītā* says, is easier for the ordinary man than the Way of Knowledge. For a time, therefore, and for some distance along the road, a man may be led by the notion that there is a God who cares for him and helps him by His grace; but when he comes nearer to the goal, all this folly must be discarded, and he must realize that the only God which exists is the attributeless Brahma, as devoid of love and grace as of hatred and malice.

If we do not accept this explanation of the *Advaita* School, what is the alternative left to us? We shall be driven to imagine a Personal God who creates and sustains the world without desire or purpose in His creation. He does good, but he does not intend or seek it. He judges the sinner, but feels no aversion from evil; he saves the penitent and devout, but has no love for them. The Good Man's character, too, must be modelled on this pattern. It would be no travesty, on this view of the *Gītā*, to say that its Ethics may be summed up in the command to Arjuna—'Slay your enemies, the Kauravas, without hating them: protect your brethren, the Pāṇḍavas, without caring for them.'

The truth is that this conception of *Samabhāva* will not fit in with any doctrine of God as love, or of Salvation by grace: it belongs



naturally to another and opposed system of religious thought. The Christian recognises a virtue of Equanimity; but with him it denotes constancy of faith and trust in God, of love and goodwill towards those around him, of resolution and hope in all outward circumstances. His ideal is not of Equanimity by unattachment, but by attachment in the highest and purest degree. An instructive parallel can be drawn between the Stoic and the Hindu virtue of Equanimity. The Stoic had ideas of the soul's bliss in itself (*eὐδαιμονία*), of its self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκεια*) and of its impassivity (*ἀπάθεια*). Things external to the Soul were to be indifferent to it (*ἀδιάφορα*). Mr. Edwyn Bevan, in his *Stoics and Sceptics*, has drawn out this comparison. Hindus will be able to judge of the ideal of *Samabhāva* with the greater impartiality, when they see it mirrored in an ancient European philosophy:—

'The Wise Man was not to concern himself with his brethren—that is the point—he was only to serve them. Benevolence he was to have, as much of it as you can conceive; but there was one thing he must not have, and that was love. Here, too, if that inner tranquillity and freedom of his was to be kept safe through everything, he must engage in action without desire. He must do everything which is possible for him to do, shrink from no extreme of physical pain, in order to help, to comfort, to guide his fellow-men, but whether he succeeds or not must be a matter of pure indifference to himself. Pity . . . is actually a vice. . . . He may sigh, Epictetus says, provided the sigh does not come from his heart. There is one thing he must never sacrifice, his own eternal calm.

'To me, it would make all the difference in the world, if, when my friend sighed for my trouble, I thought he really minded or not. I do not think that the Stoic doctrine forbidding sympathy and pity, forbidding what we understand by love, was a perversion of their principle: it seems to me the essential consequence of it . . . the keystone, as it were, of their system.

'I think it is important to realize that mankind has two different ideals before it; and I do not see how the ideal of Detachment is compatible with the ideal of Love. If we choose one, we must forego the other; each ideal appears faulty when judged by the measure of the other. With the one goes to a large extent the intellect of Ancient Greece and India, with the other the Christian Church and the hearts of men, the *anima naturaliter Christiana*; for neither in Greece nor India nor China have the philosophers been the whole of the people.

'And we may see, I think, that the Stoics and Sages of India



could say no less without giving up their whole scheme. If the supreme end is Tranquillity, of what use would it be to set the Wise Man's heart free from disturbance by cutting off the Fear and Desire which made him dependent upon outside things, if one immediately opened a hundred channels, by which the world's pain and unrest could flow into his heart through the fibres, created by love and pity, connecting his heart with the hearts of men all round.

'Where love is, action cannot be without desire; the action of love has eminently regard to fruit, in the sense of some result beyond itself—the one thing that matters is whether the loved person really is helped by your action. Of course you run the risk of frustrated desire and disappointment. The Stoic sage was never frustrated and never disappointed. Gethsemane, looked at from his point of view, was a signal breakdown. The Christian Ideal Figure could never be accepted by the Stoic as an example of his typical Wise Man.'

Another term, which has been put forward as having the same value and significance as Christian Love, is *Ahimsā*. An admirable account and criticism of *Ahimsā* will be found in Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson's *Heart of Jainism*. The origin and history of the word are well known. The use of it goes back to the protest against animal sacrifice and the rise of Jainism in the Seventh Century before Christ. Originally it was inspired by a truly humane sentiment against cruelty to living creatures and against wanton slaughter; but it has deteriorated into a selfish regard by a Saint for his own soul. The Jain, as also the high-caste Hindu, will not kill or put some poor suffering creature out of its misery, because—as he supposes—he will thereby incur guilt and impair his spiritual prospects. On the one hand, the Jain ascetic will feed human vermin rather than destroy them, drink his water through a strainer-cloth lest he shall swallow *animalculae*, and sweep the path before him that he may not tread upon a crawling insect; and, on the other hand, the villages of India and their environs are haunted by cattle, donkeys, and dogs trailing broken limbs or slowly dying of malnutrition. The Brahman, who either sells or hands over his useless cows to the outcaste for slaughter, or suffers them to die miserably of disease and old age, is neither moral nor humane: the first method is, upon his own view, a cowardly attempt to transfer guilt from himself to another, and the second inflicts more hurt and injury than a swift and painless killing.



The Christian doctrine, which makes Man the lord of living creatures, and assigns to him the right and the duty of regulating lower life in the interests of the highest, has both more reason and more humanity. It recognizes that the noxious creature must be destroyed or not suffered to propagate, and that the happiness of the animal lies in physical well-being. With the departure of this, the reason for life has gone. This lordship of man is always to be exercised with mercy. The obligation to regulate life remains with men, quite apart from any custom of flesh-eating; for, though they were all to become vegetarians, the merciful master would still have to decide how he would deal with any ageing, diseased, or mutilated domestic animal.

It is noteworthy that this is the point of view to which Mr. Gandhi has advanced. Four years ago he had a sickly calf painlessly destroyed: it was an action that brought upon him much adverse criticism from orthodox Hindus. He replied to them vigorously in his paper, *Young India*: (October 4, 1928), in the following terms:

'The current (and, in my opinion, mistaken) view of *Ahimsā* has drugged our conscience, and rendered us insensible to a host of other and more insidious forms of *himsā*. . . . Let a man contrast the sanctimonious horror that is affected by the so-called votaries of *Ahimsā* at the very idea of killing an ailing animal to cut short its agony, with their utter apathy and indifference to countless cruelties that are practised on our dumb animal world. . . . To take the life of any living being out of anger or a selfish interest is *himsā*. On the other hand, after a calm and clear judgement, to kill or cause pain to a living being, with a view to its physical or spiritual benefit, from a pure and selfless intent, may be the purest form of *Ahimsā*.'

It is generally known in India, if not in England, that one of the two reasons for Mr. Gandhi's foregoing the use of cow's milk was that he might make a protest against a particularly barbarous method of milking the cow, which obtained in Bengal and some other parts of India.

It is clear, then, that, in its original meaning and in the context which is still common, *Ahimsā* cannot be taken as the equivalent of Love. Its content is negative, and its range of application is far too narrow: the word means simply 'not injuring or hurting living creatures.' But to-day a new and nobler connotation is being imported into *Ahimsā*. It is said to represent the great principle of 'Non-violence,' the limitation and the defect of Physical Force. As such, it is commended to our distraught and



fear-ridden world as the principle of Peace in all our affairs, national and international. It bids us lay down our arms, and for the cruel arbitrament of War to substitute non-violent methods.

I should hesitate to say that Physical Force can never accomplish any moral good. Are there not occasions when it may prevent the infliction of loss and pain and death on the innocent? Does it not sometimes give an interval of enforced restraint and inaction during which other and directly moral influences may come into play? And, may we not suppose that Physical Force, like every other external action, must be judged ultimately by its motive, and that its effect will be according to the spirit directing it? However that may be, one thing is certain—Physical Force, apart from great spiritual qualities, never has achieved and never will achieve the greatest and most complete of all victories—the conquest of a man's soul. Indeed, must we not go farther than this, and say that he who aims at the conquest of a man's soul will disdain and abjure the instrument of Physical Force? He will see that it is both inappropriate and futile. Now, Jesus did aim at nothing less than changing and subduing the hearts of men. He wanted the sinner, of his own accord, to repent and to return to God. The Kingdom which He sought to establish was a Kingdom within the spirit of a man—a reign by assent. This can be set up only by truth and goodness; and mankind has seen these at their highest in the Cross of Jesus. What the sword and legions of angels could never have effected, His dying achieved. Jesus is that King who has come to His throne not by inflicting pain on others but through His own suffering, not by killing but by being Himself put to death. In that sense, we may see in His Cross the supreme example of *Ahimsā* and of its power. The spiritual virtue in the Jesus on this Cross makes its appeal to our conscience, wins our affections and subdues our whole soul to His allegiance. *In hoc signo vinces* the Church and the world will ever say to Him, no less than to His followers.

This brings us, finally, to the consideration of a third term, *Tapas*, which connotes one of the leading ideas of orthodox Hinduism. *Tapas* is literally 'heat' or 'burning.' It is the terrific fire of self-torture or self-mortification, of austerity and penance, which can melt rocks and dry up the ocean. The belief is that in self-inflicted pain a tremendous potency resides, and that the greater the pain, the more efficacious it will be. Hindu mythology is full of tales of the frightful *Tapas* practised in the



ancient times. The gods themselves sought to gain sovereignty over one another by a resort to *Tapas*. Men engaged in *Tapas* so mighty that the gods became alarmed for their own dominion and superiority, and sent down celestial courtesans to divert the ascetic from his practice, as Menakā was despatched to Viśvamitra. It was by *Tapas* that the Demon-king, Rāvaṇa, became invulnerable to gods and demons alike, and subjugated wide regions of the earth. From the first age of history India was known to the outside world by her *tapasvīs*—the men who sat in the midst of four fires with the sun blazing overhead, or held their arms aloft, till they could not be drawn down again and the nails had grown a span long. The figures of these men loom up through the earliest Greek records.

The belief that extraordinary merit or power attaches to self-inflicted torture may be illustrated from the old custom of *Dharmā*, which is a particular application of the principle of *Tapas*. When a creditor had been unable to recover payment of his debt, or a petitioner had failed to obtain his heart's desire, he would sometimes seat himself before the door of the man from whom the demand was made, and threaten to remain there without food or drink until either his demand was conceded or he died of thirst and starvation. It is not impossible to analyze into its elements the influence inherent in such a course of action. Suffering in another furnished a disagreeable spectacle: it would create an unpleasant impression in the man who beheld it, and a physical repulsion would impel him to remove it. Further, it would be apt to produce a sympathetic reaction. The imagination of what the creditor or petitioner was undergoing would stir up a charitable impulse to give relief. Then, too, it would be apparent that the suitor was very much in earnest, and it might prove to be the best thing to satisfy him with the least possible delay and so get rid of him. Again, it would be quite certain that if the man died, whatever might be the merits of the case, the blame of his death would be attached to the person refusing the request, who thus would suffer in reputation. And, lastly and chiefly, the object of the action would be afflicted with a superstitious fear, that, if he did not give in and if he became the indirect cause of the death of a fellow man, he would incur a guilt which would dog him in this life and must be expiated in another existence. We can readily understand, on psychological principles, that self-inflicted pain has a certain influence or power over others. *Tapas* was an attempt, on a larger scale than *Dharmā*, to present to the Universe the spectacle of



unexampled pain; and to wrest from whatever gods there might be a coveted boon. Is it not an affront to the dignity and purity of the character of Jesus that we should associate His suffering with *Tapas* in any kind or degree?

Even in some recent Christian writing in England, there are traces of the idea that the operative principle in the Cross was pain, and self-inflicted pain. Evidences of the same type of exposition can be found in India. Professor Rādhakrishnan, for example, says in the passage from which we have quoted previously (p. 191):—'When we are perfected, we become sharers in the work of God, which is the creation and maintenance of absolute values. Thereafter, all suffering is *self-imposed*. . . . *Tapas* is the suffering *voluntarily undertaken* by those who are still in the pathway to perfection for the sake of self-development or world-welfare.'

This passage will enable me to bring out more clearly the contrast between the ideal of *Tapas* and the Passion of Jesus. The Professor will allow that many, if not all, the traditional examples of *Tapas* are examples of tortures self-inflicted by gods or demons or men for personal gain and aggrandisement, without the slightest regard for world-welfare. Indeed, if we are to accept these tales as narratives of fact, then we must conclude that the result of the *Tapas* was greatly to the world's disadvantage. The point, however, is that, in the sense of orthodox Hinduism, the sufferings of Jesus were not *self-imposed*, nor *voluntarily undertaken*. There is a real distinction between the *acceptance* of suffering, made inevitable by continuing in the path of truth, and the *infliction* of suffering on one's self for the acquisition of power.

It must be pointed out, therefore, that the notion of self-mutilation or self-torture was abhorrent to the Hebrews, and was expressly forbidden by their religious laws. There is nowhere in the Gospels a suggestion that Jesus inflicted pain or death upon Himself. There is not even an instance of a self-imposed fast. Jesus undertook no spectacular fasts, and He never used the coercive argument of a threatened suicide. As for His death, Jesus accepted it as imposed on Him by the wills and hands of wicked men. He never desired it, nor courted it; but shrank from it and prayed to be delivered from it. He accepted it, because He saw that there was no escape from it save by a flight from His humanity, that is, by a resort to superhuman power; or by a flight from Righteousness, that is, by compromise with evil. Neither of these alternatives could be the choice of a true



and good man; and they could not be the will of God whose will is that man shall be true and good. The saving element in the Cross of Jesus was not pain, still less self-inflicted pain: it was His perfect obedience in love. This was the spiritual principle of the Atonement. This was the quality in His death that satisfied God His Father: and this, too, is the quality that has drawn men to Him. His love was greater than pain or death. Pain gave the measure of His love: but not the content of it. Love saves, whether with or without pain: in this world, because of sin, Holy Love could not save without the acceptance of pain and even of death.



# INDEX

(N.B.—In this book a few words in common use are printed in their anglicised forms, e.g. Krishna, Brahman; but most of the Sanskrit terms employed in Hindu religion and philosophy are rendered according to an accepted system.)

## A

- Abraham, 199-200  
 Abrahams, I., 116  
 Advaita Vedānta, 5-10, 258, 273, 278-80, 294-5, 316  
*Advanced Text-book of Hindu Religions*, 178, 306  
 Agni, 216  
 Ahankāra, 258-9  
 Ahimsā, 219, 225, 303, 311, 318-20  
 Ajñāna, or Ignorance, 7, 315  
 Allegory, 17  
 Amsā, 146  
 Anger of Jesus, 56  
 Appasamy, Dr., A. J., 22  
 Arnold of Rugby, His Prayer, 29  
 Austerity, Way of, 219, 320-3  
 Authority and Power distinguished, 90-2  
 Avatāra, 142ff.  
 Avidyā, or Ajñāna, 7, 258

## B

- Baalim, 202  
 Banerjea, 279  
 Baptism of Jesus, 25-6  
 Barnabas, St., 141  
 Barnett, Dr., 308-9  
 Baucis, 140  
 Berkeley, Bishop, 10  
 Bethesda, Paralytic at pool of, 61  
 Bevan, Edwyn, 317  
*Bhāgavadgītā*, 145, 307-9, 310-11, 314-16  
*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, 17, 147  
 Bhakti, 261  
 Bhishma, 310  
 Blasphemy, Charge of, 88, 93, 101  
 Brahma, 6, 260, 307  
*Brāhmaṇa, Śatapatha*, 217-220, 306-7  
 Bruce, Dr., 59, 122  
 Buddha, 8, 9, 143  
 Buddhism, 219, 294  
 Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* vii, 18  
 Butler, Samuel, 301

## C

- Caiaphas, 41, 99, 118, 120  
*Cāndogya Upanishad*, 176  
 Caste, Hindu System of, 64  
 Chakkarai, Mr., V., 30, 276  
 Chief Priests, 41, 110-11, 121-2  
 Christian Higher Education in India, 12  
 Creeds, Christian, 167-9  
 Criticism, Textual and Historical, 14

## D

- David, 105, 250  
 Davidson, Dr. 266  
 Deussen, 176  
 Deuteronomy, 201-2  
 Devil, Jesus alleged to be possessed by, 92-3  
 Dharma, 45, 148  
 Dharmā, 321  
 Drāviḍas, 215  
 Durgā, 227  
 Dvivedi, Manilal Nabhubhai, 281-2

## E

- Ecstasy, 266ff  
 Eggeling, Professor, 217-8  
 Elmore, Dr., 226-7  
*El Ombu*, 31  
 Ephesus and the Fourth Gospel, 19  
 Equanimity, or Imperurbableness, 247, 317-8  
 Existence, Three Kinds of, 10  
 Ezekiel, 183-4, 207  
 Ezra, 206

## F

- Fact and Fiction, 11  
 Family of Jesus, 33-5  
 Farquhar, Dr., 310  
 Fasting, Jesus' view of, 45, 322  
 Fernley Trust vi, 19



Food, 291ff  
 Forgiveness, Jesus' manner of, 90;  
     Human and Divine, 243ff  
*Fourth Gospel*, Doctrinal Aim, 106-8;  
 —, Evidence of, 15-22, 40-2, 61  
 Fraser, Campbell, Professor, 10  
 Fraser and Edwards, 142

## G

Gandhi, Mr., 311, 319  
*Gāyatri*, 221  
 Gladstone, 57  
 Gore, Bishop, 105  
 Goreh, Nilakantha Śāstrī, 10, 279-80  
 Gospels, Reliability of, 13-22  
 Gould, Dr., 103-4  
 Grace of Jesus Christ Our Lord, 159,  
     194, 245  
 Guilt or Trespass-Offering, 207

## H

Heart, as seat of conscious life, 67-8,  
     293-4  
*Hebrews*, *Epistle to*, 47, 238  
 Herford, R. Travers, 297ff  
 Herodians, 39  
 History, importance of, for Hindus, 5  
 Hogg, Dr., 180, 194, 247, 278  
 Holdsworth, Rev. W. W., 13  
 Holy Spirit, The, 159  
 Hopkins, 219  
 Horse Sacrifice, 220  
 Hort, Dr., 27  
 Horton, Dr. R. F., 241  
 Hosea, 53, 75, 232  
 Howard, Dr., 13, 20, 22, 108  
 Hypocrisy, 59, 66, 77-8, 301ff  
 Humanity of Jesus, 154-5

## I

Impassivity, 253-5  
 Isaiah, The First, 205; the Second, 203,  
     26  
 Īśvara, 146  
*Itihāsa*, 9

## J

Jainism, 219, 318  
 Jeremiah, 183-4  
 Jīvanmukta, 284  
 Jīvātma, 108  
 Johannine View of the Divinity of  
     Jesus, 166-7  
 John the Baptist, 84-5, 103

Joseph of Arimathea, 41  
 Josiah, 201  
 Jupiter, 141

## K

Kaivalya, 280  
 Kālī, 227, 262, 264  
*Karma*, 171ff  
*Kaushītaki Upanishad*, 144, 149  
 Kingdom of God, 27, 83-4, 276  
 Knowledge, Higher and Lower, 308  
 Knowledge, Way of, 219, 316  
 Krishna, 8, 147, 247, 310-13, 316

## L

Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees,  
     122-4  
 Lidgett, Dr., J. Scott, 249  
 Lindsay, Dr., 12  
 Lofthouse, Dr., 207, 210  
 Lost Sheep, Coin, Son, Parables of, 76-7

## M

Macdonell, Professor, 216  
 Mackintosh, Dr., 161, 169, 274  
 Maenicol, Dr. Nicol, 216  
*Mahābhārata*, 17  
 Mantras, 217  
 Martyrdom, The Idea of, 188-92  
 Max Müller, 262-3  
 Māyā, 6, 258. *See also* Ajñāna, Avidyā  
     and Svabhāva  
 Mercury, 141  
 Messiah, Christian Belief, 157-9  
 —, Jesus' Claim to be, 96-101, 105  
 —, Jewish Expectation of, 95, 101  
 Messianic Psalms, 95, 105  
 Micah, 205-6  
 Miracles, 50, 91-2, 94  
 Moberly, Dr., vii, 230, 237, 248, 250-1  
 Moksha, 7, 257, 284  
 Monier-Williams, 222  
 Montefiore, Dr., 69, 101  
 Moses, 200  
 Mukti, 7. *See* Moksha, Samādhi

## N

Nationalism, 135-6, 190-1  
 Nazareth, People of, 36-7  
 Necessity for Death of Jesus, 126  
 Nehemiah, 208  
 Nicodemus, 41  
 Nilakantha, 190-1  
 Nityasamsāris, 176



O

- Old Wineskins and Wine, 46-7  
 Otto, Professor Rudolf, 152  
 Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 140

P

- Padfield, 222  
 Pandit Sitanāth Tattvabhūṣaṇ, 144  
 Paralytic at Capernaum, 88-90  
 Paramātma, 108, 315. *See also* Brahma  
 Patanjali, 259  
 Paul, St., as Mystic, 266-8  
 —, Doctrine of Atonement, v., 231, 239, 240, 248  
 —, His View of the Divinity of Jesus, 141, 164-6  
 —, On Crucifixion of flesh, 275-8  
*Pentateuch*, Codes of Law in, 197  
 Perfection, Christian, 283-7  
 Peter, St., 5, 67, 69, 97-8, 266  
 —, *First Epistle of*, 239, 248  
 Pharisees, 39, 41, 51, 55-7, 60-1, 62, 63, 111ff, 296ff  
 Pharisee and Publican, Parable of, 75  
 Philemon, 140  
 Philip, Evangelist, 162  
 Pilate, 100, 121  
 Plummer, Dr., 50, 87, 268  
 Prahlāda, 174, 190  
 Prajāpati, 219, 307  
*Prema Sāgara*, 17, 148, 311-13  
*Priests' Code*, 197, 206-12  
 Prophets, Writing, 203-6  
 Publicans, Jesus friend of, 70ff  
 Punarjanma, 172, 174-5  
*Purāṇa*, 9, 17, 147, 227, 311  
 Purity, Ceremonial, 63-9

R

- Rādhakrishnan, Professor, 8, 191, 322  
 Rāma, 8, 147, 174  
 Rāmakrishna, 262-4  
 Rāmānuja, 190, 316  
*Rāmāyaṇa*, 146, 174  
*Rigveda*, 216, 221  
 Ruler of the Synagogue, 58-9  
 Ruler, Rich young, 82  
 Ruskin, 241

S

- Sabbath, Controversies, 50-63  
 Sacrifice, Primitive, 198-9, 216  
 Sadducees, 39, 81, 111ff

- Sādhu, 281  
 Saliva, Hindu Sentiment, 62  
 Salvation in Hinduism, 7. *See also* Moksha  
*Samabhāva*, 57, 247, 303, 314-18  
*Samādhi*, 260-1  
 Samaritan Woman, vii  
 Sanātana Dharma, 49  
*Sandhyāvandanā*, 220-2  
 Sanhedrin, 39, 41, 100-1, 102  
 Sanity of Jesus, 268ff  
 Śankara, 6, 8, 176, 308, 316  
 Śāṅkhya Philosophy, 258, 280-1  
 Sannyāsi, 259  
 Sarvamedha, 307  
 Satyāgraha, 311  
 Saul, King, 265  
 Saul of Tarsus, 303  
 Scribes, 39  
 Simon the Pharisee, 71  
 Śiva, 190, 227  
 Solidarity of Mankind, 180ff  
 Soul, Individual and Universal, 7  
 Sower, Parable of, 43-4  
 Stephenson, Mrs. Sinclair, 222, 318  
 Stoic Wise Man, 317-18  
 Suffering Servant of Jehovah, 161-2, 233  
 Sushupti, 260-1  
 Svabhāva, 315-6  
 Śvetaketu, 176

T

- Tagore, Rabindranāth, 189, 284-5  
 Tapas, 219, 320-3  
 Temple, Cleansing of, 113-16  
 Temple, Destruction of, 117-19  
 Temple of Kālī, 215, 227  
 Temple, The Jewish, 215  
 Temple Worship, Hindu, 224  
 Temptations of Jesus, 269-272  
 Theosophical Interpretations, 178, 306  
 Tradition of Elders, 65-9  
 Transfiguration, The, 268  
 Trial of Jesus, 120-1  
 Tūkārām, 142, 190, 245  
 Tyāga, 258ff

U

- Upanishads*, 6, 9. *See also* *Cāṇḍīya* and *Kaushītaki*

V

- Valerio, 31  
 Vāsudeva, 145, 308, 316  
 Vidyā, Lower and Higher, 8  
 Village Deities, 225-7  
 Vishnu, Ten Incarnations of, 142-3  
 Vivekānanda, 262-3



## W

Wadia, Professor A. S., 304  
Wells, Mr. H. G., 155  
Wesley, John, 235, 283, 285-7, 303  
Westcott, Bishop, 41, 109  
Whitehead, Bishop, 226, 230

## • Y

Yajña, 196ff, 306-9  
Yoga Philosophy, 280-2  
Yogi, 259, 281

## Z •

Zacchaeus, 71-2  
Zealots, 37-8





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THO

Zoology

BOOK  
27

B