



THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY—A CONTRAST. ✓

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CHRISTIANITY is engaged to-day in India in the greatest conflict of faiths that the world has ever witnessed; and with a religion truly remarkable, from whatever standpoint it may be studied. The recent study of Hinduism, in its philosophic and practical aspects, by Western savants, has opened the eyes of the Christian world to the greatness and difficulty of the task of bringing the two hundred and fifty million Hindus of the Indian peninsula to an acceptance of the Christian faith. Whether regard be had to the hoary age of this ethnic religion, to its transcendental philosophy, to its resistance to other faiths, or to its absolute power over so large a portion of the human race,—in every particular it impresses one as a mighty power whose strength has not yet been adequately appreciated by the West. To one who has spent nearly two decades of the best years of his life as a missionary in this wonderful land of the Orient,—the birthplace and home of the two greatest of all ethnic religions,—a comparison of the religion of the New Testament with that of the Vedas has become almost a second nature. To institute such a comparison is the object of this article. It would be pleasant and

profitable, had we time, to study the affinities of these two faiths; for certainly they possess not a few striking resemblances—resemblances such as should be, and often are, used by the Christian missionary as means of access to the Hindu mind.

For the present, however, we shall study the dissonances of the two religions; thus emphasizing the contrast between them, and, inferentially, the real difficulty of speedily Christianizing this vast population.

The task which I have set before me is a great one; chiefly because of the manifold, complicated, self-contradictory character of the thing called Hinduism. It is rather a congeries of faiths, embracing nearly all kinds of beliefs and unbeliefs, and representing three thousand years of conflicting philosophies, internecine institutions, diverse forms of worship, contradictory legends, and warring sects. All this vast diversity of religious aspiration and practice, reaching over thirty centuries, and sanctified by numberless tomes of a very sacred literature, is lumped into the amorphous thing called Hinduism. And yet the difficulty is much less than at first seems; for there are a few fundamental and all-pervasive beliefs, doctrines, and institutions which have reached down from the most primitive times, and have united together the otherwise conflicting elements into a real whole, whose identity has not been obscured during the many ages of its existence.

Some of these are among the deepest speculations of a transcendental philosophy; and yet at all times they have entered largely into the mental make-up and religious outfit of the common people of India. In this land the philosophy of religion and the esoteric teachings of faith have been much less complex than in the West. This does not reflect upon the depth of Aryan philosophy, which is perhaps the profoundest the human mind has conceived, and abounds in the most daring flights of speculation. But

the Indian *rishi* was absolutely fearless in his thinking, and reasoned out his conclusions utterly regardless of their practical bearing upon life; a fact which gives a simplicity and continuity to his teaching such as is not possessed by the religious philosophy of the West, whose authors have been hampered by the more practical and consistent mind of their race. Considerations of use, application to common life, and efforts at being self-consistent—these things have clipped the wings of Western thought, and rendered tame its philosophy. The Oriental mind has not a few foibles, but consistency is not one of them; and it deigns not to consider the application of its thinking to life.

The prominent staple of Hindu religious thinking in all ages has doubtless been Vedantism—that subtle form of pantheism which has charmed and bewildered not a few of the great minds of the Occident also. The paramount influence of this philosophy upon all religious thought and life in India is unmistakable to-day, as it has been through the centuries. Of this, Max Müller says: “If the people of India can be said to have now any system of religion at all, . . . it is to be found in the Vedanta philosophy, the leading tenets of which are known to some extent in every village. . . . Nothing will extinguish that ancient spirit of Vedantism which is breathed by every Hindu from his earliest youth, and pervades in various forms the prayers even of the idolater, the speculations of the philosopher, and the proverbs of the beggar.”<sup>1</sup>

We may therefore, without hesitation, so far as Hinduism is concerned, found our comparisons upon those basal doctrines and their corollaries which, from the earliest days, have been the stock-in-trade of all Indo-Aryan thinkers, and at the same time the source and solvent of all the mysteries of their faith.

<sup>1</sup>India—What Can it Teach Us? pp. 259, 260.

Proceeding then to a study of the two faiths, it may be said that they differ essentially in

#### THEIR INITIAL CONCEPTIONS.

Their starting-points are almost antipodal. This will seem evident when we study their views.

1. *In reference to religion itself.*—Christianity is briefly and beautifully explained by its Founder, in Luke xv., as a divine method of seeking and saving the lost. It is the expression of the Father's love yearning for the return, and seeking the complete salvation, of the son. It is primarily and pervasively a revelation from God manward. Hinduism, on the other hand, has been the embodiment of man's aspirations after God. Wonderfully pathetic, beautiful, and elevating these aspirations have been at times; and doubtless guided at points by him whom they so ardently sought. They perhaps represent the highest reach of the human soul in its self-propelled flight towards its Maker. It is true that orthodox Hindus variously describe the Vedas as eternal, as a direct emanation from Brahma, and as a divine entity in themselves. They constitute the *Sruthi*—"the directly heard" message of God to man. But the authors of the Upanishads, which are a part of *Sruthi*, absolve man from the necessity of accepting the four Vedas, and propound a way of salvation entirely separate from, and independent of, Vedic prayers and ritual. The direct influence of the Vedas upon religious life and ritual in India to-day is practically *nil*; while that of the Upanishads, which are *fons et origo* of the all-potent philosophy, is felt to-day in every Hindu life, however humble.

This aspect of the two faiths is not unexpected when we remember—

2. *Their very dissimilar conceptions of God.*—The monotheism of the one and the pantheism of the other are clear and uncompromising. They have stood for many

centuries as representatives, to the world, of these very dissimilar beliefs. Christianity inherited from Judaism its passion for monotheism, and brings the "God of Israel" very near to our race as the infinitely loving Father. It has not only emphasized his personality, but reveals, with incomparable power and tenderness, his supreme interest in our race, and his loving purpose concerning it. On the other hand, Hinduism derived its highest wisdom and deepest convictions concerning the Divine Being from the ancient *rishis* through the Upanishads. There they accepted, once for all, the doctrine of the Brahma (neuter)—the one passionless, immovable, unsearchable, ineffable Being who, without a second, stands as the source and embodiment of all real being. Barth truly remarks, that "this is the most imposing and subtle of the systems of ontology yet known in the history of philosophy."<sup>1</sup> This inscrutable Being is the only real existence; all else being illusion projected by ignorance.

This doctrine of identity or non-duality (*advaita*) lies at the foundation of all Hindu religious thinking. This Being which is devoid of qualities (*nirguṇa*), because incomprehensible to man, can be of no comfort to him. In this respect the Hindu is an agnostic of a pronounced type; and yet with strange inconsistency, it seems to me (notwithstanding Dr. Ballantyne's effort to explain it otherwise), they clothe this absolute Being with the trinity of attributes *Satchitānautha* (*Sat*, "existence," *Īt*, "intelligence," *anautha*, "joy"). Some Christian writers have mistakenly seized upon this idea as a pre-intimation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity—God the Father, the source of existence; Christ, the wisdom of God; and the Holy Spirit, the fountain of all joy. They forget that this is the hazy description of a Being otherwise unknown and unknowable.

<sup>1</sup> Barth, *The Religions of India*, p. 72.

For this mystical philosophy one word of praise is eminently due. It is not to be confounded with that low species of Western pantheism which is rank materialism—making God and the material universe convertible terms. Sir William Jones emphasized this difference—the difference between a system which, in all that it sees, sees God alone, and that which acknowledges no God beyond what it sees. One is the bulwark of materialism; the other its most uncompromising enemy. Whatever the defects of this philosophy of the Upanishads, it must be confessed to be deeply spiritual; and yet, in this very effort to conserve the spiritual and transcendental character of Brahmà, the Aryan sage has covered him with the dark robe of mysticism, and pushed him into a far-off realm, beyond human ken. So that, the only intimations which man has of him are confessedly the false projections of ignorance. For all practical purposes this hypothetical deity—for the very existence of Brahmà is only assumed as a working hypothesis by this Theophist—is a nonentity to the worshiper. How can a being lend itself to a devout soul in worship when it is rigidly devoid of every quality that can inspire or attract the soul? Professor Flint claims “that pantheism can find room for a religion of affectionate devotion only by being untrue to its distinctive principles. The more consistent it is, the less religious it is.”<sup>1</sup>

This very fact led the ordinary Hindu to seek and develop something else as an object of his devotion. Hence the polytheism of Brahmanism. Let it not be supposed that there is any antagonism between the pantheism and the polytheism of India. One is the natural offspring of the other. The numberless gods which to-day are supposed to preside over the destiny of this people are but the emanations, the “play,” of Brahmà. Properly speaking, they are neither supreme nor possessed of truly divine

<sup>1</sup> Anti-Theistic Theories.

attributes. Even the Hindu Triad—Brahmā (masculine), Vishnu, and Siva—are but manifestations of the delight of the eternal Soul to invest itself with (*guṇa*) qualities. These three gods are no more real existences than are the myriad other children of illusion (*mayā*) and ignorance (*avidya*) which constitute the universe; and as they had their existence, so will they find their dissolution, in the fiat of the supreme Soul. India finds polytheism no more satisfying than it does pantheism. There is no more assurance or comfort in worshipping thirty-three million gods, whose multitude not only bewilders, but also carries in itself the refutation to the claim of any one to be supreme, than there is in the yearning after an absolute, ineffable Being which cruelly evades human thought and definition. It is no wonder, therefore, that the growth of the Hindu pantheon is constant, and both follows and bears testimony to the craving of the human soul for a God who can satisfy its wants, and realize its deepest longings.

3. *Their theories of the universe are also divergent.*—According to the Bible, the outer world is the creation of God out of nothing. To the Brahman of all times, the idea of creation out of nothing has seemed absurd. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* is an axiom of all their philosophies. Whether the Vedantist says it is the result of Brahmā invested with illusion, or the Sankiya philosopher attributes it to *prakriti*—the power of nature,—or the Veisashika sage traces it to eternal atoms;—they all practically agree that it is eternal.

4. *The teachings of these two faiths concerning man himself are no less divergent.*—In the Bible, man is represented as the son of God. He is fallen indeed, but with traces, even in his degradation, of his Father's lineaments. We follow him in his willful rebellion against his Father; he plunges into the lowest depths of sin. But we still recognize in him the promise of infinite and eternal possibili-

ties of spiritual expansion and happiness. Indeed, we find at work a divinely benevolent scheme through which he is ultimately exalted to heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and made the heir of infinite bliss. On the other hand, Hindu shastras represent man as mere illusion—the poor plaything of the absolute One. For man to assume and to declare his own *real* existence is but the raving of (*avidya*) ignorance.

To the practical Western mind, it seems almost impossible that a philosopher should be so lost in his philosophy as to aver that he, the thinker and the father of his philosophy, has no real existence, is only illusion, of which being can only be assumed for practical purposes. What must be said of the philosophy begotten by such an illusive being? Shall it not be its doom, also, to vanish with him into the nothingness whence he came, and which he now really *is* if he only knew it? Sir Monier-Williams aptly remarks: "Common sense tells an Englishman that he really exists himself, and that everything he sees around him really exists also. He cannot abandon these two primary convictions. Not so the Hindu Vedantist. Dualism is his bugbear; and common sense, when it maintains any kind of real duality, either the separate independent existence of a man's own spirit and of God's spirit or of spirit and matter, is guilty of gross deception."<sup>1</sup> The opposite conception, which regards the human soul (*jīvātma*) as a part of the supreme Soul, adds small comfort or dignity to it, when it is remembered that this whole of which it is declared a part is an intangible, unattractive Being—devoid of all qualities (*nirguṇa*).

Swami Vivekanantha says, that "man comes from God in the beginning, in the middle he becomes man, and in the end he goes back to God. This is the method of putting it in the dualistic form. In the monistic form, you

<sup>1</sup> Brahmanism and Hinduism, p. 37.

say, that man is God, and goes back to him again. . . . The sooner we get out of this state we call man, the better for us. . . . We have to pass through the Slough of Despond, and the sooner we are through the better for us." Even granting that this description of the Swami's is correctly Vedantic, it is difficult to understand what moral value or ethical significance can be attached to "this state we call man." If the soul existed from eternity as a part of the divine Soul, and will ultimately resume that interrupted existence, what value, ethical or otherwise, can be attached to that bondage of manhood which was thrust upon the soul (or was it voluntarily assumed?). This part of deity called individual soul certainly cannot be improved by its human conditions; and the question is not, "How soon can I pass through this 'slough of despond'; but, Why was I thrust into it at all? Was it a mere sacred whim (*truvileiadāḷ*) of Brahmā?"

Moreover, this view of the human "self" or soul carries one out too far into the sea of transcendental metaphysics to be of any practical use religiously. We know something of man—this strange compound of soul and body—and we are deeply interested in his history and destiny; the more deeply because we are included in this category. But who knows of the eternal soul—that part of the absolute—separate from human conditions and apart from all experiences of men? Is it not simply the dream of the philosopher, a convenient assumption to satisfy the needs of an impractical ontology? To magnify the soul apart from human life, and to interpret human life as the self's lowest degradation, and something to be shaken off as quickly as possible, can hardly be sound philosophy, and is certainly bad theology. It simply reduces this life into an irremediable evil, with no moral significance or spiritual value.

It must be confessed that the doctrine of the immortality

of the soul is one of the corner-stones of this philosophy. As the Hindu finds little danger in his theosophy from the insidious attacks of modern materialism, so in his psychology he is intrenched with equal safety against all attempts to reduce the soul into a mere organ of the body which shall perish with it. And yet this cannot atone for the fundamental defect of this philosophy and religion in degrading man as such, and in pronouncing his disease hopeless, and his regeneration impossible. Is it only in the loss of manhood that he can find worth and honor? This leads us to the second point of contrast, namely,—

#### THEIR ULTIMATE AIM OR GOAL.

What do these two religions propose to do with those who embrace them? The work which Christianity proposes to itself is difficult, large, and glorious. It takes fallen, sin-sodden man, and leads him out into a new life of holiness; it opens out before him a long and broad vista of life, with an ever-enlarging, blissful activity. Christ said that he came into the world that men might have life, and have it abundantly. He came not only to save the lost, but also to develop all the grand possibilities of the soul to their utmost, and to launch the human bark upon a voyage of everlasting life, which means unceasing growth in all its noblest qualities and activities and enjoyments. The picture which the Bible gives of redeemed man is bewildering in its beauty and promise. It makes him the heir of joys unspeakable, and of a heavenly inheritance that fadeth not away in that Presence where there is fullness of joy. It also proposes to cleanse him from all sin, and to make him holy, even as God is holy.

Hindu philosophy and faith, on the other hand, unite in commanding that human endowments be starved, qualities suppressed, activity of all kinds stayed, ambition and every other desire, even the noblest and purest, quenched. All

the essential elements of life itself are to be mortified, that the soul may, unhampered by its human entanglements, reach that consummation which is supposed to be final. And what is it? Who can tell? The Aryan philosopher himself stands mute in its presence. All that we can predicate of it is not life and happiness, according to every standard of human experience, known or imagined. The idea that the individual soul will finally sink into, and blend with, the absolute Being, as a drop of water returns to and mingles with its mother ocean, may seem attractive to the philosopher; but of such a hypothetical existence we know absolutely nothing, and can expect nothing that would inspire hope or kindle ambition. In Hinduism there are heavens many and not a few hells. But, unlike the places of reward and punishment connected with Christianity, they represent nothing final. They are more like the purgatory of the Catholics, and represent only steps in the progress of the soul towards emancipation.

Concerning the general view of human life, its import and outcome, the two faiths are antipodal. Christianity is brightly optimistic. The future of every Christian is to be as the sun, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Unceasing progress and eternal expansion are held out before him. His is an heritage that will abide, and will resound in an ever-increasing anthem of praise throughout time and eternity. Nothing can occur hereafter to rob him of that crown of glory which is the gift of God, and which is to result in likeness to him. Hinduism, on the other hand, is essentially pessimistic. Human life is totally and irremediably evil; every power of the soul must be exercised in the endeavor to shake off this terrible burden of separate human existence, and escape all the conditions of this life—that is the only relief possible. To the Hindu the question so often discussed in Christian lands, "Is life worth living?" has no interest, since it has but one

answer possible. And even if the Indian sage forgets his present conditions and pessimism long enough to gaze down the long and dismal vista of numberless births to the final consummation (*sâyutchia*),—the final union with God,—he finds in that nothing which the Christian does not discover in tenfold richness and beauty in the Bible. To be partaker of the divine nature is a blessed reality to the Christian, without his forfeiting in the least the sense of self-identity and the glory of separate personal consciousness. To have the “life hid with Christ in God”; to be able triumphantly to exclaim, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”; to experience the blessedness and power of abiding in Christ, and to realize the answer to Christ’s own prayer to the Father, “that they also may be in us,”—all this is the joy and hope of the Christian in a manner and to a degree utterly impossible to the Hindu, whose union with the supreme Spirit is the loss and end of self, including all those faculties which are capable of enjoyment.

Looking from another standpoint, we perceive that the aim of the religion of Jesus is the banishing of sin from the life and the establishment of character. Sin is the dark background of Christianity. It explains its origin and reveals its universality. Its whole concern is with the emancipation of man from the presence and power of sin in this life. To the Vedantin, on the other hand, sin, in the Christian sense of it, is an impossibility. Where God is all, and all is God, there can be no separate will to antagonize the Divine will. Monism necessarily, in the last analysis, carries every act and motive back to the Supreme will, and establishes an all-inclusive necessitarianism, which is fatal to human freedom, and therefore excludes sin as an act of rebellion against God.

Much is made of sin, so called, in the Hindu system, as we shall presently see; but nowhere is more care needed

than here to distinguish between the ideas conveyed by this word in these two faiths. In Christianity the ethical character of sin is emphasized. It is described as a thing of moral obliquity and spiritual darkness. According to the Upanishads, the supreme and only defect of man is an intellectual one. He is in bondage to ignorance. Plato made ignorance the chief source of moral evil, and proposed philosophy as a remedy for the malady. The Vedantin differs from the Greek philosopher only in his more absolute condemnation of (*avidya*) ignorance as the mother of all human ills. Remove this,—let a man attain unto a true knowledge of self, of the fact that he has no real, separate existence, and is one with the supreme Soul,—and he becomes thereby qualified for his emancipation, and ends his long cycle of births. Moreover, in the polytheism of the Puranas, and the laws and customs of Manu, sin generally means only ceremonial defilement, and the violation of customs and usages.

Hopkins truly remarks, "In modern Hinduism, to kill, lust, steal, drink, so far from offending, may please a god that is amorous, or bloodthirsty, or, like Çiva, is the 'lord of thieves.' Morality here has God against it."<sup>1</sup> Hinduism, therefore, has never seriously addressed itself to the task of helping man as a sinner—of regenerating his heart, of establishing within him that beautiful thing known in Christian lands and philosophies as a well-rounded, symmetrical, and perfect character. For many reasons, and in many ways, it has aimed at a very different consummation in man from that consistently sought by Christ and his religion.

By what power and instrumentality are the above ends to be sought and attained? They will be doubtless quite as divergent as the aims were found to be.

<sup>1</sup> Hopkins, *The Religions of India*, p. 554.

## AGENCIES AND MEANS EMPLOYED BY THESE FAITHS.

In Christianity, God himself is the agent who works out its scheme of salvation. He entered, through infinite condescension, into human life in the incarnation. He wrought in the days of his flesh the redemption of our race—a work which finds its climax in his atoning death. In the person of the Holy Spirit he is still working and bringing to full fruition, in the hearts and lives of men, the redemption which he wrought. Into this scheme man enters not as an efficient cause of his own redemption. He cannot atone for his past, nor has he the assurance within himself for the future. Hence the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and the indwelling of the Spirit of God, which becomes in him a source of peace, of power, and of hope.

Yet in this divine work man is neither apathetic nor passive. In the exercise of saving faith, he not only appropriates the works and gifts of God, but also enters into full and active harmony and coöperation with God in his own regeneration and salvation; so that the apostle Paul aptly urges the Philippian Christians (Phil. ii. 12) to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

Far different is the picture presented to us by the Hindu shastras of the means of human redemption—a picture, however, consonant with the aims which they have set before themselves to accomplish for man. The first and all-present fact of this faith is the terrible loneliness and isolation of man in the great struggle of life. His destiny is in his own hands, and he must fight single-handed against a thousand odds in the awful battle for emancipation. *Karma* is the word used to express this thought which has possessed the Hindu mind from the earliest days to the present. It may be translated "works," and means the acts by which the soul determines its own destiny. In

Vedic times the all-powerful works were sacrifice and ritual. In the Upanishads they are meditation and self-mortification. To-day they are ceremonial in the main, with works of charity, self-renunciation, or religious mendicancy added.

In prebuddhistic days, sacrifice abounded in Brahmanism; and it grew to such proportions that the revolt, headed by Gautama and incarnated in Buddhism, became universal. But vicariousness was largely wanting as an element in, and as a cause of, their sacrifices. They were rather offered with a view to nourish the gods and as a means of acquiring power. He who sacrificed a hundred horses was said to gain thereby even larger power than Indra himself possessed—a power which enabled him to dethrone this god of the heavens. Such was the power said to inhere in sacrifice, that the gods themselves combined to prevent men from the practice lest they should rise to larger power than themselves! With the triumph and subsequent absorption of Buddhism into Brahmanism, the latter abandoned its sacrifices, and accepted the buddhistic emphasis upon *Karma*, and doomed every soul to the treadmill of its own destiny. To every word, deed, or thought, however insignificant, there is fruit which must be eaten by the soul.

It is claimed for this doctrine that it well emphasizes the conservation of moral force. Christianity also conserves, to the last, moral force; not, however, by insisting upon man's bearing in himself the whole burden, but by enabling him to cast his burdens upon the Lord, who graciously offers to bear the load of human guilt belonging to every soul. Another word which in India is synonymous with large power and merit is *yogam*. It is inculcated in the *yoga* philosophy, and is supposed to stand for a high mental discipline which speedily qualifies one for absorption into the Deity. It is to be manifested in the form of

abstract meditation and austerity—an austerity embodied in asceticism and self-mortification. From early times this method has been held high in honor, and is to-day universally esteemed as the most powerful and speedy boat wherewith to cross the sullen stream of human existence. The grand object of *yogam* is to teach how to concentrate the mind—an object based upon the idea that the great and sole need of man is not moral and spiritual regeneration, but more light, i.e., a clear, intellectual apprehension of things. Not only is the basis of this philosophy false in supposing that such intellectual gymnastics can finally exalt and save a soul; it is also radically defective in its general rules and practical results.

No one who has studied the many silly rules which are prescribed to the *yogis*, or has observed in India many of even the better type of *yogis*, can fail to be impressed with the degradation to mind and morals which is indissolubly connected with it. Barth's observation on the processes of *yogam* are eminently true. "Conscientiously observed," he says, "they can only issue in folly and idiocy; and it is, in fact, under the image of a fool or an idiot, that the wise man is often delineated for us in the Puranas, for instance."<sup>1</sup> Meditation upon the Divine Being and upon self is a supreme duty inculcated by Christianity. Here God is a Personality upon whom the mind can be centered and find rest and exaltation. The self also is conceived as a being with a separate and infinitely high destiny marked out before it. Concentrated thought, deep emotion, and lofty purpose, in view of these objects, is supremely profitable. But what is there left worthy of thought for the Vedantist *yogi* when the Divine Being is the unknowable and the *yogi* himself the deluded child of (*mayâ*) illusion and (*avidya*) ignorance—those twin enemies to all true and worthy knowledge. It cannot be elevating to detach the

<sup>1</sup> The Religions of India, p. 83.

mind from things worldly and attach it to nothing! Incarnation has in later times become a popular doctrine in India. The *avatars* ("descents") of members of the Hindu pantheon, especially of Vishnu, the second member of the Triad, wield a large influence in the religious life of the masses. For its development this doctrine very probably owes not a little to Christian influence. Yet the doctrines should by no means be regarded as identical or even similar in the two faiths. It should be remembered that in Hinduism it is believed and magnified by those who also hold the law of *Karma* as supreme. There is hardly a Vaishnavite and Krishnaolater who does not believe firmly that his destiny is writ large upon his forehead—that nothing which he or any god may do, can affect his *adrishta*, which is that felt but unseen power working out the *Karma-Vivaka*, or fruition of works done by him in former births. This belief directly antagonizes incarnation from the Christian standpoint, where it appears as God's mighty instrument of grace to man.

Not so from that of the Hindu. The incarnations of Vishnu are even referred to in their shastras "as consequences of deeds which the god himself has performed. One was the fruit of sins he had committed, another, of a curse which had been pronounced upon him." And yet they are doubtless frequently referred to as undertaken with a view to benefit and help our race. If such were their intention, it is difficult to see how that benefit could be any other than racial and temporary; for there is no intimation in any of them of its being a means for the spiritual uplifting or moral regeneration of one human soul. They have nothing to do with the inner life and character of men, unless the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, Buddha, be so considered. But in that case the Brahman claims that Buddha was the incarnation of evil to completely deceive and lead astray to destruction backsliders from the

faith. In any case it is of vital importance to emphasize the character of these “descents.” There is no finality of blessing supposed to be in any one of them; and it would be sacrilege to compare one of them with the wonderful incarnation of Jesus. It is not so much that many of them appear as fish, fowl, and beast, and as such are devoid of moral aim and efficiency. Not a few are immoral, some of them, like Krishna, representing the worst type of sensuality and moral obliquity. Such examples, in the popular mythology of the land, have done and are doing inexpressible harm to the people and the country. “Like God like people”; and when the god is highly popular and conspicuously immoral the result will be marked.

From the doctrine of *avatar* has sprung the well-known *Chakti' marga*—the way of faith—or was the latter the source of the former, and both affected by Christian teaching? In any case they are closely connected. Among many this way of love and devotion to individual gods has gained preëminence over the other two ways of salvation—knowledge (*jnana-mārga*) and works (*Karma-mārga*), though it should not be forgotten that *bhakti* itself is regarded as a work of merit, and is by no means synonymous with Christian faith. Yet it must be confessed that Hinduism comes nearer at this point than at any other to touching the religion of Jesus. Of Vaishnavism, in which the *bhakti* doctrine prevails, Monier-Williams remarks, that, “notwithstanding the gross polytheistic superstitions and hideous idolatry to which it gives rise, it is the only Hindu system worthy of being called a religion. At all events it must be admitted that it has more common ground with Christianity than any other form of non-Christian faith.”

Doubtless the root idea of *bhakti* is a true one; but it needs suitable ground and condition for proper growth and development. As practiced among Hindus to-day, it is un-

worthy, on account of the abovementioned connection with works, being regarded as a department of works which in themselves are the all-efficient cause of *mukti*—emancipation. The blindness of this faith is also a serious objection to it. To the *bhaktan*, “faith is the great thing.” It matters not how hideous, morally and spiritually, the object of faith may be. This *bhakti* will triumphantly vindicate itself in the ultimate salvation of the soul. Repose faith in the idols, in ceremonial observances, in ascetic performances, in all that you religiously do, and blessing will rest upon you. This is the *bhaktan’s* creed; this is essentially the teaching of the “Divine song”—*Bhagavad-Gita*. And this it is which has so powerfully helped the moral and spiritual degeneracy of India during the past few centuries. Men have attached themselves absolutely to gods whose mythology, detailed in the Puranas and Tantras, is a narrative of lust and of moral crookedness, devotion to which can mean only moral contamination and spiritual death. Such a faith in its nature and results can only be contrasted with a loving devotion to the incomparably holy and lovely Jesus.

#### THE PROCESSES OF THESE TWO RELIGIONS.

In other words, we inquire in what manner do they propose to attain unto their respective ends. Christianity brings man into the new divine life through the narrow gate of a new birth. He stands justified before God, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit he begins that course of spiritual development which steadily progresses towards perfection in truth and holiness. He, “beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,” and in the fullness of his acquired and divinely bestowed powers, he passes through the gate of death once for all, to enter upon the full glories of eternal life beyond.

In Hinduism, metempsychosis is the great process. “As

the embodied soul," says the Bhagavad-gita, "moves swiftly on through boyhood, youth, and age, so will it pass through other forms hereafter." This doctrine is universally regarded as the all-potent solvent of human ills and the process which alone can lead to ultimate rest. In transmigration the soul is supposed to pass on from body to body (there are said to be more than eight millions of these births before it) in its wearisome, dismal progress towards emancipation. The bodies in which it is incarcerated will be of all grades, according to the character of the life in the previous births,—from the august and divine body of a Brahman down to a tenement of inorganic, lifeless rock. From ancient times this weary process of working out the law of *Karma* has seized upon the imagination, and wrought itself into the very being of the people of India; so that to-day it is the universal way of salvation believed and taught by the Vedantin, accepted with assurance by the idolater, and the one great bugbear in the mind of even the common cooly. This doctrine has its root in Vedantism, and is an essential part of it. The Brahman theosophist taught that all souls emanated from Brahman, and must return to their source along the way of Metempsychosis. "Transmigration had its roots," says Dr. Fairbairn, "in the Brahmanical conception of God; but the people had grown into it without knowing whence it had sprung, or that it differed in any way from the faith of their fathers. To the thinker, the theological is the distinctive side of religion, but to the multitude, the eschatological. Hence in India, while a new speculative faith as to God grew up (in the Upanishads), and assumed shape among the Brahmans, its eschatology alone took root among the people. . . . The new eschatology was the product of a new theology; but while the first became the people's the second remained the priest's."<sup>1</sup> All acts,

<sup>1</sup> Fairbairn, *Studies in Philosophy of Religions and History*, p. 137.

words, and thoughts find their exact reward in future births. If a man steals a cow he shall be reborn as a crocodile or lizard; if grain, as a rat; if fruit, as an ape. The murderer of a Brahman endures long suffering in the several hells, and is then born again and again in the meanest bodies to atone for his crime. According to Manu, the soul might pass "through ten thousand millions" of births. The passage-way to absorption is through Brahmanhood only. Transmigration is the doom of all others.

The prevalence of this doctrine in India is one of the saddest facts connected with its life and history. It is somber and depressing in the extreme, and robs the mind of a good portion of that very small comfort which the idea of absorption might otherwise bring to it. Though the doctrine has found a footing among other nations at different periods in their history, nowhere else has it prevailed so long and exercised such a mighty influence over high and low as it has in this land.

The doctrine is based upon a hypothetical identity of soul in different successive bodies—a hypothesis which can never be proved and which contradicts the universal consciousness. We learn of no one (until that erratic Englishwoman, Mrs. Besant) who has had the first intimation through consciousness or memory of a previous existence in another body. Ancient *rishis* and a few others were said, but never proved, to possess it. Strange, if such a reincarnation were a fact, that no one has ever been assured of it by any other agent than the philosopher in his search after truth. Stranger still that men in such countless millions should hang their whole destiny upon so rotten a cord—so unethical a theory as is here involved. Why should any moral being be put through a course of discipline or be punished for a past of which he has no knowledge? To inflict a punishment for any conduct or thought to which the memory does not bear evidence nor conscience

furnish assent nor the whole realm of conscious experience furnish a trace, is both unethical and in violation of the deepest laws of being.

Nor does it appear how this process as a method of discipline can achieve what is expected of it. It is maintained that ultimately all the myriads of separate souls will cross over this terrible stream of human existence and reach the further shore of emancipation. But what aptitude or efficiency there can be in metempsychosis itself to reach this end is not apparent. That the soul should ultimately reach beatitude rather than absolute, irremedial degradation through this process is merely assumed, and that without adequate foundation in reason. In view of the well-known power of sin and its tendency to settle down, through habit, into a permanent type of character; in view also of the well-tested scientific doctrine of heredity—a doctrine which easily accounts for and explains every semblance of truth in transmigration—it seems incredible that any soul in India could, through transmigration, finally emerge out of the quicksand of sin and corruption which surround and overwhelm it; especially when it is assumed that it has already passed through many births. It should also be remembered that, at its basis, this doctrine has its face turned, with equal repugnance, against all sorts of work. Desire of every kind, good as well as evil, is to be suppressed, inasmuch as it is the source of action, and action must bear its fruit, the eating of which prolongs existence, which itself is the burden to be removed. The question is not how to become good and to overcome the evil in life, but how to shake off all separate personality. To this the only answer is, By abandoning all action and suppressing all desire whatever. How this can result in holiness and lofty character is not evident. It is true that a certain sort of "good works" has large value in this process of emancipation. But quiescence rather than charac-

ter is the thing emphasized. Noble thoughts and aspirations are as fatal as are the basest to immediate deliverance—they all disturb the equilibrium of the soul which ushers it into its final rest. "The confinement of fetters is the same whether the chain is of gold or of iron."

It is doubtless true that this doctrine has some elements of truth, otherwise it could not have survived and thriven as it has. It bears consistent testimony to the immortality of the soul. It also teaches the important truth that the soul must receive the full reward of all its deeds in a body. It is also, in a certain way, a response to that deep instinct of justice which is a part of human nature. But these cannot atone for its fundamental defects and errors. Some claim that its highest merit is that it is a powerful deterrent from sin and incentive to virtue. Beyond the remarks made above, the all-sufficient refutation to such a statement is the present condition of the Hindu race itself. If any people on earth, more than others, sin with "fatal facility," and seem perfectly oblivious to the character and consequences of their deeds, they are the descendants of the *rishis* of old, and the heirs in rich abundance of this and its cognate doctrines. To judge this doctrine by its results in India is to pronounce it an error and a curse.

#### COMPARISON FROM THE STANDPOINT OF IDEALS.

No religion can regenerate and exalt men simply through a code of moral laws, or even through impassioned appeals to a high life, and threats of eternal punishment against sin. There must be, above and beyond all this, a life which stands boldly forth as an example and an inspiration to good men. The noble example of the royal Gautama did more perhaps than any other thing to disseminate Buddhism throughout India. His supreme renunciation and his loyalty to truth exalted him before his disciples and transformed him into an ideal for Buddhists of future

ages to aspire unto. This also is a preëminent characteristic of Christianity. It is the religion of the Christ. He stands supreme in it—not merely as its Founder, Expounder, and Life. He is also the embodiment of his own teaching, the ideal of life and conduct which he has brought to men. His command to all is not, “Do this or that,” but “Follow me”; not “Believe in this truth or another,” but “Believe in me” who am “the way, the truth, and the life.” For these twenty centuries he has stood before the world as the incomparable, unapproachable, perfect ideal which has wrought more for the regeneration of the world than all other forces put together. His cross is the center of all spiritual attraction. “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me” were his significant words. It was the same thought which animated the beloved John in view of the supreme joy of the future life: “Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if he shall be manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” And under the influence of his Divine example millions, through these centuries, have surrendered their all, have given themselves to holiness and works of love, and have even gladly dedicated their lives through martyrdom in their absolute devotion to him and in their supreme purpose to please him and be like him.

Do we find any counterpart to this in Hinduism? Do we find any life or example which stands related to it as Buddha's to Buddhism, or as Mohammed's to Mohammedanism, or, even in a slight degree, as Christ's to Christianity? None whatever. Starting with the absolute Brahma, we have seen this supreme soul shrouded in unfathomable, unapproachable darkness. We descend to the divine emanations of this eternal soul, and search in vain among the scores of beings which constitute the Hindu pantheon, to find one who could become an ideal of life and an inspira-

tion to the soul struggling against sin. "Godlike life could scarcely start from the examples of its incarnations, for none of their lives is superhuman in holiness. Even Rama, the most blameless character in Hindu literature, is by no means perfect; while the most popularly worshiped incarnation committed deeds so vile that even the narrator warns his hearers not to take him for their example."<sup>1</sup> The sage remarks, "Listen to the story of Hari, but do not think of doing his deeds."

We look again among the sages and heroes of India with the hope that we might possibly find one who stood conspicuously among others as the perfect type of character and the helper of those struggling after a better and holier life. Here again we are woefully disappointed; though it must be confessed that there are loftier types of goodness and of self-discipline among the men than we found among the gods. Thus, with no worthy ideal of life before them, and no one to inspire them to better things, the wonder is that men in India have not descended to a lower level than they have. It is perhaps this only reason which has discouraged men, and has led them to strive to attain unto beatitude, not by perfecting, but by destroying humanity. The renunciation and loss, rather than the realization, of self, has thus become their aim and ambition. Perhaps it is for this same reason, also, that the votaries of this faith have constructed one of the most elaborate systems of ceremonial and ritual that the world has ever witnessed; whereby, in the absence of a high ideal and of a divine inspiration, the whole life, from birth even until after death, may be directed and protected from evil. Here indeed we behold the contrast of life,—Christianity, even among its humbler votaries, representing spiritual life and character under the mighty stimulus and fostering care of Christ himself—its Divine Example and Inspirer: and

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robsons, *Hinduism and Christianity*, p. 197.

Hinduism typifying a low external life of ceremonial routine and of prescribed form and elaborate ritual which enter alike into the meanest detail as into the most important concerns of life.

#### THE CREDENTIALS OF THE TWO FAITHS.

Each has its Scriptures in which are found its original teachings, including a declaration of its source and its divine message to man. Beyond this general statement very little can be predicated of these two in common. The theories of their inspiration are dissimilar. In the Bible there is no theory of inspiration taught. Its testimony to its own divine origin is rather indirect than direct. And yet the evidence, both internal and external, that the Bible was written by men under Divine guidance and inspiration, is unmistakable and convincing. The ancient Hindu *rishis*, also, in breathing the prayers and songs of the Rig-Veda were occasionally conscious of higher influence. One speaks of his prayer as "god-given" (*devadattam*); and others refer to their petitions as "divine utterances." But neither they nor the sages who were the authors of the Upanishads, held any such theory of inspiration as was subsequently developed and attributed to these Vedic writings. They constitute the *Sruti*—"that heard with the ears, or Revelation." They are believed to have come directly from God. The *rishis* were only "Seers" who saw the truth as it came on its divine mission. Brahmâ is said to have produced Rig, Yajur, and Sama Vedas from fire, air, and the sun. Again, the four Vedas are said to have been created by the four-faced Brahmâ, from his several mouths. They are also called the breath of Brahmâ. In the Mahabharata they are ascribed to Sarasovati, the goddess of learning and the "Mother of the Vedas." Some even strenuously deny to them any origin, advocating their eternal existence. Thus among the Hindus, from times

ancient, the highest place as a Divine Revelation has been given to this *Sruti* literature. All their other religious writings, from Manu's Institutes down to even commentaries upon commentaries, are classified as *Smriti* or "tradition," and are inferior in authority to the above. And yet some of them are supreme in their influence upon Hindu life and belief to-day; and few of the votaries of this faith could be found to question for a moment their divine origin or authoritative character.

But a brief study of their internal evidences will betray not only the human origin, but also the weakness, contradictions, puerilities, and immoralities of these books. No one can fail to appreciate the beauty and sublimity of some of the Vedic hymns, nor the profound depth of the philosophic reach of the Upanishads—sublime "guesses at truth,"—nor the great excellence of the Bhagavad-gita, which is the gem of all Hindu literature. And yet the puerilities of many and the obscenity of others of the Mantras are well known. So are the strange vagaries and the rambling character of many parts of the Upanishads. And as for the Bhagavad-gita, it is simply a dialogue whose gist is the argument of Krishnan—the "supreme God"—to urge the tender-hearted and conscience-smitten Arjuna to slay his relatives in war. The argument is, that no evil which one man may do to another is of any moment, since he cannot touch his soul, which is eternal and beyond the reach of any human power. In the destiny of a soul what can the destruction of one of its bodies signify?

When one leaves these earlier Scriptures of Brahmanism and takes up the later productions—the Puranas and Tantras, he comes into a very different atmosphere, most of which is morally pestilential and spiritually degrading. The ascription of divine inspiration and special heavenly guidance in the production of such literature is nought else than blasphemy. To pass over from a study of the

Bible, with its transcendent beauty, its perfect ethics, its heavenly spirit, its Divine Saviour, and way of salvation, to the Scriptures of India, especially the more recent parts, is to exchange the pure air of heaven for the charnel house.

The "divine brevity" of the Bible is one of its most striking features. Few things could impress one with the divine source of this book more markedly than its wonderful omissions. Behold the remarkable compression of the Gospels, written as the memoirs of a divine Teacher and Saviour by ardent, devoted disciples! They had seen his miraculous works, listened to his divine wisdom, and were kept enthralled by his love and power for years. What could they omit from the career of such an one? Yet not one of these Gospels is too long to be read at one sitting. This is not man's way of writing. How very different when we examine the countless tomes of the sacred literature of India! If the salvation of a soul depended upon the reading of even a hundredth part of these, who could then be saved? Their very multiplicity and their voluminous character debar any man, however learned, from an acquaintance with more than a small fraction of them. Moreover, among learned pandits of to-day the Smriti are more frequently quoted as authority, and they wield a larger power over the life of the people, than the Sruti itself.

In the Christian Bible we are, moreover, permitted to see a progressive revelation. From age to age and from page to page we see new glimpses of truth, and are attracted by the divine light whose illumination grows ever brighter from Genesis to Revelation. This is what we should have expected from a God-inspired book. We should have looked forward to a gradual transition from the starry midnight of the far-off past to the rising, in Christ, of the Sun of righteousness with healing in his

wings. In Hindu literature this process is reversed. The surest, I may say the only, evidence we have of divine guidance in the production of this literature is to be found among its earliest productions. There we see earnestness of purpose combined with heavenly aspiration and deep searching after truth. Subsequent to this we see the light vanishing, and earnestness giving place to triviality of thought, the ravings of superstition, and the inanities of ceremonialism and the laws of social and religious bondage. All this progress downward is in direct ratio to the distance from Vedic times. What could be more conclusive proof of the human source and direction of these prolific writings? Educated Hindus are sensible of this fact. They constantly hark back to the Vedas, to the Upanishads, and to the Bhagavad-gita; conscious of the fact that these represent the high-water mark of their faith and literature.

#### OTHER DISTINGUISHING TRAITS.

These are not a few, and they aid in presenting the two faiths in bold relief.

1. *Their attitude towards the individual and society.*—Nowhere are they more antipodal to each other than here. Christianity is preëminently a faith which exalts the individual. It presents with marked clearness his rights and responsibilities. His first duty is to God and to his own conscience. His liberty of thought, of belief, and of action, is fundamentally sacred, and to be conserved at all hazards. His obligations to society are great, and here find emphasis; but they are secondary, and must not enslave the individual. The consequence of this is, that in all lands where Christianity has found its highest exposition and intelligent advocacy, human liberty has been held precious, individual rights have been emphasized, and conscientious scruples protected and fostered. Liberty of con-

science in religion and in other matters is held in highest honor only in Christian lands.

Hinduism is the stanchest foe of individual freedom. It concedes no right to the individual which others are bound to respect. It has erected above the individual, and in such a way as to overshadow him entirely, the stupendous caste system. And it has subordinated his every right and privilege to the whim of this demon caste. Man is its abject slave—cannot swerve one inch from its dictates; and these reach down to the smallest detail of his life. If the vast majority of the members of a caste were high in their morals, and strict in their integrity, and pure in their beliefs, the aid to a higher life which this system might render to the individual would, in small part, compensate for its destruction of his manly independence. But caste discipline directs itself to petty forms and observances, and to the perpetuation of mean jealousies, rather than to the development of character. The Bhagavad-gita says, "Perfection is alone attained by him who swerves not from the business of his caste."

In India alone is caste a religious institution. The Brahman merged the individual in the corporate body, thus perfecting his bondage, and he set class against class to prevent the lower from rising and to make national union impossible. Men were created differently, even as different kinds of animals. To bring them together is as unnatural as it is sinful. Thus every man within the pale of this religion has his social as his religious status fixed unchangeably for him before his birth; and woe be to him who tries to shake off this bondage or even in a small degree to kick against the pricks. No better system than this has been devised under heaven to rob man of this birthright of independence and self-respect. And the population of India bears, in its character and conduct, ample testimony to this.

2. *The religion of Jesus fosters progress.*—Not only do we behold Christian nations the most progressive, we also find that, as this faith obtains in its purity, so do its votaries enjoy the large spirit and results of progress both in religion, science, the arts, and in civilization. In India, on the other hand, conservatism is a fetich, and custom a divine law of conduct. In the West the question asked, as men approach a certain line of action, is, whether it be reasonable. Among Hindus the invariable inquiry is, "Is it customary?" "Did our forefathers practice it?" This again is the legitimate product of the caste system. It conserves and deifies the past. It never tolerates a doubt or question as to the wisdom of the ancients. The code of Manu, which is the source and supreme authority for this system, has done more to stereotype and degrade social and religious life in India than has any other code in all the history of other lands. One of the saddest things in India to-day is the apparent contentment which rests like a pall upon the lower classes, who have been taught for many centuries, sometimes by severe discipline, that to aspire to a higher grade and position than that which was originally given them by Brahmâ is a sin of the deepest dye. To desire to be like one's grandfather is the test of piety and the acme of orthodoxy. Whatever progress has taken place in India during modern times has been thrust upon it from without by a Christian people, often against bitter protest and no little opposition. The philanthropic effort of Westerners to prevent child marriage by enacting a law to raise the marriageable age of girls even to the tenth year is met with a strenuous opposition even on the part of educated Hindus, on the ground that it would run counter to their Scriptures and customs!

3. *The religion of Jesus is exclusive.*—It claims to be the only way of salvation. Not that it is unwilling to acknowledge the truths which are found in other faiths.

While it recognizes such, it maintains that they are but broken lights of the Truth which it presents in all its full-orbed glory. It reveals Christ as the fulfillment of the desire of the good and pious of all nations, and his revelation as the realization of all truth wherever found. But as a means of salvation it stands alone, and will brook no rivalry, nor accept divided homage.

In Hinduism, on the other hand, we see tolerance incarnate. It is true that the caste system lends itself readily to intolerance, that some of the most refined and cruel forms of persecution are conducted by it against Christians to-day. Yet in itself this faith has a genius for toleration. It does not go out of its way to attack other faiths. On the contrary, it generally reaches forward the flag of truce and peace to them. It will even willingly appropriate much of their teaching and ritual. It placed in its pantheon its arch-enemy Buddha, and has dignified many of the demons of the primitive cult of South India in the same way. And herein lies the subtle power and supreme danger which inheres in it to other faiths. For it never appropriates from another religion without purposing at the same time to absorb it entirely at some convenient season. It accomplishes the same thing ultimately as Christianity, so far as other faiths are concerned. With this difference, however, Christianity merges from the conflict pure, triumphant, and free from the errors of its antagonist. Hinduism, through its process of absorption, is transformed, and henceforth partakes largely of the character of the faith absorbed. This is what is meant by "Hinduism" to-day. It is that strangely patched product—a combination of Brahmanism with Buddhism and the primitive cults of India. Thus also is it that the inconsistencies and conflicting elements of this religion are legion, and beyond any attempt at reconciliation or harmony.

4. *The faith of India is purely ethnic.*—It has no am-

bition to reach to other peoples beyond this peninsula. It is true that a few enterprising, Western-trained, presumptuous men have crossed the seas and have recently endeavored to promulgate their philosophy in the United States and England. But they recognize, though they are loath to confess, that, while their philosophy may be transplanted, their faith in its myriad forms, rites, and practices, cannot thrive outside of India. Indeed their Scriptures strictly forbid any of its votaries to cross even the narrowest sea. So that one has first to excommunicate himself from the religion of his fathers in order to qualify himself to preach it elsewhere! This faith has a hundred ways of expelling and excommunicating its members,—only one door by which it may receive outsiders, namely, by the formation of a new caste.

Christianity, on the other hand, is preëminently a missionary religion. It claims to be the universal faith. The last command of the Lord upon earth, and the first work of the Holy Spirit upon his descent, was to propagate the faith and to carry it to many lands and peoples. Hinduism is conserved by the social organism of caste; Christianity, by its leavening influence upon all that comes in contact with it and by the outreaching power of its life within.

5. *The acceptance of Hinduism does not involve the necessary belief of any doctrine or system.*—It is well understood that a man of any belief, or of no belief, may be a genuine and orthodox Hindu, provided he observes caste rules and ceremonies. One has well observed that the seat of other religions may be in the soul or mind; Hinduism surely finds its seat in the stomach. It is not what a man is or believes, but what and how he eats, that determines his religious status. It has been more than once insisted upon that a man may accept Christ as his Saviour, and his religion as his firm belief, and still remain a Hindu, if he only submit to the demands of caste. Not a few Hindus

are trying to live up to this strange dual system to-day; and I fear that some native Christians have not got rid of the same delusion. I am aware that not a few Christians depend more upon observance than upon belief and life. But where could be found any one who would maintain, as Hindus do, that truth is nothing and observance is everything?

#### THE RESULTS ACHIEVED.

Both of these faiths have worked long enough to have brought forth certain definite results, and these we see in India and in Christian lands to-day. They appear—

1. *In the form of well-known types of character.*—It is true that these may depend to a certain extent upon climatic influences also. And yet we see in India and in the West to-day those types of character which correspond with the faiths which have produced them. In India we see the dreamy mystic, ever aspiring after union with the unseen in ways that seem absurd and impracticable to the West. This, however, has given him a spiritual gift and another-worldliness which the West has to acquire with much more labor. Character is abnormally developed upon the passive side; quiescence and self-discipline are exalted as the *summum bonum* of life. Add to this the want of truthfulness and sincerity, which are too often adorned by a dissimulated affability, which deceives nobody in India. The product of Christianity is certainly far more symmetrical. The pious man of Christian lands is no more a man of the world nor does he think less of matters transcendental, than the Hindu sage. But he has more strength and vigor. If the passive virtues are not so well developed in him, he has more regard for truth and righteousness, and is prepared to deny himself largely in their behalf, and to stand up for manhood in all that that significant word implies. He is practical, and applies faith-

fully to his life the truths which he accepts. There is no gulf in Christian lands, as is so common in India, between one's belief and life, conviction and conduct.

2. *In the social conditions.*—The caste system provides for the Hindu with a vengeance. At his birth he drops into his niche and must forever remain there. And thus society is divided into almost innumerable, clearly-defined, compact, unchanging bodies, every one of the members of each of which must find all his good in that body alone. Among these divisions, jealousies, hatred, pride, and narrowness abound. Sympathies of members, association and marriage relationship, are confined within the limits of a caste. The consequence is that society is made up of a host of these inelastic, narrow-minded, selfish, mutually suspicious castes, whose attitude towards each other prevents any united action of the people, and consigns them to weakness and subjection to other peoples. Among Christians such a state would be intolerable, and could not last a day. The very spirit of their religion is totally opposed to this corporate tyranny and divisiveness, and makes for union and brotherhood.

3. *In the condition of woman.*—Within the pale of these two faiths this is rightly deemed a true criterion of the religions themselves. In India, woman is the slave of man, and has not been considered worthy of even a limited education. The Shastras maintain that it is a sin to teach her the Hindu Scriptures; and she is frequently referred to as the source of man's weakness, sin, and evil destiny. In no sense is she considered man's equal. Her only hope of paradise is through obedience to her lord and by his intercession.

How different this is from the state of Christian society, where woman stands as queen, possessed of privileges and power such as men cannot boast of! Wherever Christ is preached, and the gospel has free course and is honored,

there is woman crowned with her regal rights, wielding an influence that is immeasurable.

#### THEIR FUTURE OUTLOOK.

Standing on the summit of the above observation, and having regard to the whole situation in which these two faiths are found, it will not be presumptuous to divine the future which awaits them.

Hinduism must wane and vanish. It is an ancient faith and has survived not a few storms. It has a strong place in the hearts of a great people. But the leaven of dissolution and death is mightily at work within it to-day. The times are changed, new circumstances are bringing in a revolution of thought. Foreign ideas, language, and customs are the rage; a new civilization, the deadly foe of the strongholds of the faith, is supplanting the old. This faith has nothing to offer with a view to meeting this new and complicated situation. It opposes all progress; through its pandits and orthodox defenders it defies modern civilization and scientific advancement at every point. It is given up to a degrading idolatry and a debasing, all-absorbing ceremonialism. It is the foster mother of ignorance. But the mighty influence of Christianity is being felt, and the thousand-headed, thousand-handed civilization of the West is grasping and slowly transforming all their ideas of life. Verily India is in the throes of a new birth. Hinduism has done good doubtless. It has had a mission in the world, and that has unquestionably been in the conservancy of the great doctrine of God's immanence at a time when the Western world had given it up. But this work is no longer needed. To-day this truth is emphasized also by Christianity, and in the only safe and practical way, in combination and harmony with the personality and fatherhood of God. Swami Vivekanantha eloquently proclaims to his coreligionists that India has always stood,

and must continue to stand, for high spirituality. He must also know that she stands to-day for that type of spirituality which is the offspring of the grossest superstition, when, through the *yoga* system, it does not border on idio-  
iocy.

Christianity, on the other hand, has in itself the promise of the future. Truth, progress, enlightenment, character, power—these are the pledges of its assurance. It is spreading over the whole world in ever new and diversified forms of life and energy. Christ, its Founder and Power, is more and more recognized as its center, and as the center of the world's hope and redemption. In India to-day his blessed religion is advancing triumphantly, and is recognized by Hindus as the only power in the land before which their faith must eventually retire. Christ himself is to-day the most potent influence in the land. The famous Chunder Sen exclaimed, nearly twenty years ago, "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus, ever deserved this precious diadem, India; and Jesus shall have it." He is certainly entering yearly into a larger possession of this his possession.

#### CONCLUSION.

I think that we have seen clearly the fundamental dissonances of these two religions. Nor are they merely differences at certain points only; they pass through the whole gamut of religious thought, feeling, and practice. When brought into contact with each other, they produce harsh and constant discord. Harmony there is at few points; and these should be known by the missionary especially. But this should not blind any one to the general antagonism of the two faiths; nor does it encourage those who believe that Christianity has anything to gain in India by compromise or by aught less than a kind but firm call to surrender. To-day the Vedantic philosophy is flaunted as the highest glory of Hinduism and as the mightiest oppo-

sition to Christianity. As a philosophy it certainly is one of the keenest, deepest products of the human mind. Dr. Ballantyne says of it, that it is "a calm, clear, collected exposition of principles which Germany constantly, and England occasionally, gropes after, without ever grasping them with any such grasp as that with which India has taken hold on them." And yet philosophy is not religion, and can never be used as its substitute; and human thought can never make unnecessary Divine mercy in the salvation of man. Hindus will soon completely learn this fact, and relegate their ancient philosophy to that class of antiquities whose interest will be only historical. In the meantime the conflict is waging mightily in India. To the missionary at least the issue does not seem doubtful nor remote. But the type of Christian piety which will issue as the result of this struggle will take its coloring from the East, and differ in many of its aspects and in its points of emphasis from the Western article. And he who best appreciates this fact, and studies well the Hindu mind and nature, and adapts his teaching to the requirements of the land and to the capturing of the Hindu heart—he it is whose success will be greatest, and whose life will be happiest as a Christian missionary to the countless millions of Southern and Eastern Asia.