

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION IN NON-CHRIS-
TAIN RELIGIONS AS ILLUSTRATED
BY HINDUISM.

By REV. J. R. STILLWELL, B.A.,
RAMACHANDRAPURAM, INDIA.

I. *Introduction.* As all knowledge is one, no one element in it stands in isolation, but is a living member of an articulated system. This is particularly true of theological doctrine which has its setting in the age in which it finds expression, while its roots run deep into the preceding periods. Therefore to understand with any adequacy the doctrine of salvation in a religious system, one has to familiarize himself with its history; and the more unfamiliar the history, the more need of its thorough study. It follows then that if I am to give anything approaching an adequate presentation of the doctrine of salvation as held and taught by authoritative and orthodox Hindu theologians, I shall have to trace this teaching, held with varying degrees of intelligence and consciousness by more than two hundred millions of the race, from its earliest beginnings to its full and perfect maturity. And as this Hindu teaching has been gradually evolved from the Hindu Scriptures, I shall have to give some account of the Hindu canon.

The Hindu Scriptures are of two qualities of inspiration, those of the first quality being enshrined in certain ancient volumes called Vedas. There are four Vedas. Each Veda is composed of three parts designated as Mantras or Hymnals, Brahmanas or Rituals, and Upanishads or Commentaries, the parts originating in the order mentioned.

The Hymnals. The earliest Hymns were composed and sung somewhere about fifteen hundred years before the Christian era, and their composition continued through three or four centuries. The Hymns are ad-

dressed to deified powers of nature, such as the Sun, the Wind, and the Rain; and show that, at the time of their composition, Physiolatry, or nature worship was the regular cult. Many of the Hymns are well worth preservation, for the style is simple and forcible, while the sentiment is beautiful, not infrequently reaching the sublime. The remainder, however, are of inferior quality, and had there been a discriminating spirit at the time of their crystallizing into Scripture, the Hindu would have made a smaller but much superior book of Psalms. Though doctrine is here in its incipiency, still throughout the Hymns can be traced a double trend—a trend towards monotheism, and a trend towards pantheism. Heaven is not often described, but when it is treated, it is a place where earthly joys are prolonged and intensified, to which the good who trust in the gods are admitted as a matter of grace; and from which are excluded the evil, false, irreligious, and untruthful, these latter being cast into a deep abyss. But there is nothing further; nothing as yet of any torture.

The Rituals. After a time the poetic afflatus died out, Hymnals reached completion, and in the course of a few generations they were accorded the status and authority of Revelation. Then there developed a class of Priests who became custodians of the Hymns and who transmitted them orally from generation to generation, formulating, during the transmission, a burdensome and cumbrous ritual, descriptive and regulative of the ceremonies to be performed, of the sacrifices to be offered, and of the particular Hymns to be recited at the sacrifices, with the value and enunciation of the sacred words. A vast mass of literature thus sprung up called Brahmanas, that is, Brahman Rituals. The Ritual was a later development in Hinduism, even as it is now thought in critical circles to have been a later development among the Hebrews. The Rituals, in their turn, reached completion, and in course of time were also accorded inspira-

tion. Salvation is now very largely mediated through works, partly ethical, but chiefly sacrificial; that is, merit is obtained through the offering of sacrifices, and is in proportion to their nature and costliness.

The Commentaries. Ritualism was carried to extremes and ended in a reaction started by a theological school, which set out to study the scriptures, as thus far formulated, with the object of elucidating their inner or spiritual meaning. The school's interpretation was received with favor and obtained wide vogue. The interpretation, called Upanishad, in due course, found its way into the canon, being accorded inspiration also. As the circle was now complete with, Hymns, Ritual, and Interpretation, the first canon was closed. The canon, as thus constituted, is the Bible, par excellence, of the Hindu, and reached completion five or six centuries before the Christian era. Plenary inspiration is inadequate to express the quality of Vedic Scripture, for the Vedas, as this Scripture is called, are held to be eternal in substance and form, being revealed to inspired men through an absolutely unique illumination, in virtue of which, the inspired were able to reproduce in perfect and unerring detail, the words and letters of Scripture eternally existent in the divine mind. The remaining Scriptures to be referred to later are sufficiently covered by the term, plenary.

The Upanishads are said to have numbered one hundred and fifty, but only about a dozen are known and these when bound together form no very large volume. They are the section of the Vedas chiefly studied by educated Hindus, and have been prized by other than Hindus. "Schopenhauer, thoroughly acquainted with systems of philosophy and not given to extravagant praise of any but his own, says: 'In the world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be my solace in death.'" And Max Muller, from whom I have taken the

quotation, one of the several given by him, adds that, "if these words of Schopenhauer required any endorsement, I should willingly give it as the result of my own experience, during a long life, devoted to the study of many philosophies and many religions." Even after a liberal discounting of such appreciations, one may still believe that these books which are a solace to the Hindu, possess genuine value and, for him, assume the nature of a revelation. From these books I shall mention *Three Doctrines* which have made Hinduism and which must be held in mind for an understanding of the Hindu doctrine of salvation.

The first doctrine is a spiritual Monism. At first shadowy and vague, but gradually assuming shape and definite form, this doctrine emerged out of the midst of early Hindu thought, a doctrine which conceives existence as the manifold expression of a single substance, and which was given enunciation in the ever since famous and unequivocal Hindu classical phrase: One without a Second.

The second doctrine is Transmigration. As the Hindu began to rationalize upon the efficacy of animal sacrifice he came to feel that this, as he knew and understood it, fell short of what conscience demanded. For during the dominance of the ritualistic party the land reeked with bloody sacrifices, until cultured and thoughtful minds revolted against the whole sacrificial scheme, protesting, centuries before the letter to the Hebrews was written, that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, and saying, in effect, at about the same time that Micah voiced his protest in Israel: Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 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?

Upanishad teaching was that there could be no such transfer of guilt as the priests taught, but that everyone must receive in his own person the reward of his deed, whether good or bad. The irrevocable law of finite existence is: What a man sows he must reap, and what he reaps, he must have sown. The inequalities of the present life therefore are the outcome of a sowing in a previous existence. "Who did sin that this man should be born blind?" Why, the man himself. And what shall be this blind man's future? He shall have sight, if he do well in the present; but if he works evil, he shall sink deeper. Shall his present life determine his future for all eternity? Impossible! No temporary sowing can bloom into an eternal harvest. Karma, the power resident in the deed to bring forth issue, is just, and disciplines man only until deed has its full fruition in eternal union with the Infinite Spirit. Such discipline may involve a countless number of existences but, be the number what it may, even unto the eighty-four *lacs*, that alone can be a last birth which, overcoming the pull of separate existence, merges the finite in the Infinite. Such is the doctrine of Transmigration, held by all alike, whether monists or dualists, orthodox or heterodox, theists, pantheists or atheists.

The third doctrine is Gnosis, that is, salvation through knowledge. Monism means that there is one principle of all being. But this unity of being is contravened by the consciousness of the average man which witnesses to the existence of many *separate* individualities. How can this be explained? In this way. The consciousness of the average man is an external one, due to corporeal existence which gives an outward look to the senses, thereby creating a feeling of separateness. The obstructing factor, therefore, to the consciousness of unity, is corporeal

existence. This will exhaust itself through the long line of births. Now the new teaching of the Upanishad is, that there is a briefer route to union with the Infinite, namely, through Gnosis. Salvation is thus through Gnosis, for those who can thus qualify; and is defined as union with the Infinite, a state of supreme bliss and perfect holiness, the final end of all discipline, social, moral, or spiritual.

II. *The Way of Faith.* Thus far the Scriptures of the first quality of inspiration. These give us two ways of salvation: that of "Work," in the Mantras and the Brahmanas; and that of "Gnosis," in the Upanishads. The way of Gnosis receives further development in the doctrinal systems, which are confined in their treatment to this one Way. A third Way, that of "Faith," is developed in the other remaining Scriptures as the Epics, and Puranas. These two obtain the chief attention, and need alone be considered by us, as the way of "Works" is very largely taken up, partly by Faith, and partly by Gnosis. To Gnosis belongs doctrine. Faith is for the multitude, too unsophisticated for doctrine. Still as it is the path trodden by the many, it calls for brief treatment. Its development, as based on the Upanishads, runs somewhat as follows:

The one divine essence, named Brahm the Expander, manifested its invisible being in three co-equal personal divine beings named respectively, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, their original duties being, creation, preservation, and destruction; but, as in later history, some one of the three usually obtained the chief devotion, each came to be credited with all the divine attributes. These divine persons had not only masculine but feminine qualities, which latter were afterwards personalized in the wives of the three. The emanation was continued through a hierarchy of lesser beings, gods, goddesses, and demons; while on earth, the essence found embodiment in kings, heroes, and great teachers, appearing in less noticeable

form in the common people, and still more obscurely in material objects, stones, trees, and rivers. For the monistic principle of the Upanishads means that divinity pervades everything from the highest god to the lowest form of existence on the earth, and to the most degenerate thing in the hells under the earth.

Further, the co-equal personal beings, in virtue of their superior divinity, had in themselves the power of expansion, notably Vishnu who became incarnate nine times, of which incarnations two were markedly divine, namely, Rama who contained one-half of the divine essence, and Krishna who contained the full essence, Such is the theory of the development, but the history of these expansions is somewhat different, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, being the survivals from among the gods of the early Hindu pantheon, while the gods of other faiths, resisting dissolution, were absorbed under the form of intermediate beings.

The co-equal three are not subject to the law of transmigration, but abide through all the changes which come to other beings, their end as separate personalities to be when the age runs out with its absorption of all things into Brahm from which they originally issued. The "Way of Faith" means that the true worshipper of anyone of the trinity, individual choice being allowed, is admitted directly to the heaven of the god worshipped, such entrance saving the devotee from further birth. The god thus worshipped becomes to the devotee the Supreme One.

Of the trinity, Vishnu obtains the chief devotion, being worshipped mainly in his incarnations, Rama, and Krishna. Rama's history is given in the Ramayana, a history known in every Indian household. Of Krishna a double history is given; one in the Mahabharata; and the other in the Puranas, which are later stories circulating among the indiscriminating masses, and which should have been rejected from the canon as apochryphal.

To see consistency in Hindu thinking, it must be noted, in passing, that the trinity, and other intermediate beings mentioned, are of the realm of Maya, that is, ignorance, or illusion; that they belong to the Way of Faith alone, and have no part or lot in the doctrine of Gnosis. Faith is contrasted with *knowledge* (Gnosis), and means devotion amid ignorance and superstition, the devotion being that which had value. The Hindu was too catholic and consistent in his thinking to entertain the conception that any, no matter how deeply sunk in Maya or Ignorance, should come short in the final consummation, of attaining union with the Infinite. As will appear in the sequel, Hindu doctrine sums up in this: The Infinite Spirit is One, and man is consubstantial with the Infinite Spirit. That the divine pervades everything, and that there are degrees of pervasion; this is common to both Faith and Gnosis. I need scarcely add that the trinity of "Faith" is not the same construction as the trinity of the "Athanasian Creed."

III. *The Way of Gnosis.* Enter now the great doctrinal Systematizers, or perhaps I had better call them Harmonizers, as no one could read the Vedic Scriptures without feeling the need of a harmony. I have for the moment forgotten that other class of systematizers who cannot be so designated, for these were free thinkers, acknowledging no authority but the spirit of truth. There were thus orthodox and heterodox in the field. As however we are studying the orthodox doctrine, we need not follow the latter class. Indeed we cannot follow orthodoxy through its windings, for it took many a curious turn, and arrived at many a curious result. But, as out of the welter of controversy, one system obtained almost universal acceptance, it will be sufficient if we confine ourselves to this, known as Vedanta doctrine.

I have said that certain doctrine found enunciation in the Upanishads. Now these books were the effusion of genius rather than of the scientific spirit. They were the

expression of intuitions, convictions, and guesses at truth. They were not systems of doctrine but merely adumbrations of principles underlying things. The systems of doctrine had still to be built, and the Vedanta was the chiefest of these systems. In the building every supporting pillar had to be hewn into shape and set in place. Monism was the first to be given shape, and this one pillar caused the builders more trouble than all the others combined.

For there were spiritual monists and material monists, between whom reconciliation being impossible, one or the other of the parties had to win out. There were dualists as well as monists, and here again compromise there was none. As against dualism the odds were on the side of the monists, for monism is a quality of the philosophical mind, and this the Hindu possessed in a preeminent degree. Further, the Hindu mind was constitutionally introspective and started with a spiritual cause of existence, so that a material monism made no permanent headway. Still the contention was prolonged and, like our own Christological controversy of Nicaea and Chalcedon, was carried on with great spirit and heat, the controversy among the warring Hindu theologians becoming so hot that in some instances the rival disputants are said to have had recourse to blows. Ultimately out of the clashing systems emerged the Vedanta, which not only won first place, but obtained such complete and absolute sovereignty as to become the mould into which for more than two milleniums Hindu thinking has been cast.

The Vedanta doctrine is a spiritual monism of a unique Oriental type, thoroughly indigenous and almost unknown, except as an importation, outside of India. It is the famous Illusion Theory, the creed of which runs as follows: "There is but one substance, Spirit. Spirit is the cause of all that is. Like can only produce like. Spirit cannot produce matter for matter is unlike Spirit. Matter is therefore Illusion only."

Naturally there were but two alternatives to the Hindu who starts with a spiritual monism, and whose principle of development was simple emanation, namely, either matter must be of like nature with Spirit, or it is—Illusion (This term will receive definition further on). And when his logic failed to bring matter within the category of spirit, the Hindu followed his logic and embraced the Illusion Theory, the theory adopted by Christian Science. The Christian Science text book is an open page to one at all conversant with the Oriental theory. The Hindu term for Illusion is *Maya*, and there is still today after two milleniums of the wearing of time, a century of Christianity, and half a century of a foreign educational system, no commoner expression in India than: Everything is *Maya*.

This, it is true, is an advance on the teaching of the Upanishads which, as we have seen, inculcate a simple monism, and describe existence as the manifold expression of a single substance. The earlier theologians, not fully aware of the difference between spirit and body, endeavored by ingenious description to deduce matter from spirit. But the attempt did not commend itself to the philosophical consciousness of a later generation which recognized a difference between the substrate underlying mental phenomena and that underlying material phenomena. This difference the Hindu could not resolve; for conceiving his Absolute as a simplicity, with no principle of difference, he made it incapable of movement. His conception was at fault—not the Absolute. But the conception ruled, even as with us abstractions ruled prior to Kant. Unable therefore to bridge the chasm between spirit and matter, the Hindu theologian, in the exigencies of his Monism, accepted the daring alternative of denying the "reality" of the phenomenal world. But there was a good deal more than mere logic involved in this unparalleled denial. There was the problem of evil. Unable to correlate this with Spirit, he correlated it with a

material organism, making evil inherent in matter. His monism thus involved a double denial, the denial of matter and the denial of evil, the former made all the more urgent on account of the latter inherent element.

If therefore according to the Vedanta system, there is but one Spirit written with a capital, and if matter be illusion, the question will naturally arise: What about the human spirit? The answer is that, as a separate personality, there is no human spirit; for the spirits which we have been accustomed to call human, are emanations from the Infinite Spirit. These emanations are parts which have broken away and become incorporate in a material organism; so deeply incarnate, that it will be only after a long wearying process that they will be able to free themselves from the entanglement with Maya, and find their way back into the bosom of their infinite home.

But what was the cause of these emanations' breaking away? The answer is, Maya, or Illusion. From all eternity Maya has been associated with Spirit, and it is through this association that portions of Spirit have been drawn off and become incarnate with similar portions of Maya, the compound thus formed constituting the human personality.

But what is this human personality? In Hindu analysis, it consists of soul, mind, and spirit, and three corresponding bodies called respectively, the physical body, the mental body, and the subtle body; the first two with their corresponding bodies belonging to Maya, while the spirit with its subtle body (that is, spiritual body) belongs to Spirit. The soul (which is the animal life) and the physical body fall off at death, but there remain the other two elements with their corresponding bodies. Chief of these for retaining the personality in separation from the Infinite Spirit, is the mind with its mental body. For it is the mind, or, in Christian Science phraseology, mortal mind, in which the Illusion has taken conscious

form of being a *separate* personality, the feeling or illusion of separateness obscuring and concealing the real underlying oneness with the Infinite. The author of "In tune with the Infinite" gives the precise Hindu emphasis, and in bringing out and developing the "unity" writes in true Hindu fashion. As the mental body is tenuous as the ether and resists dissolution, the Illusion of the separateness continues through all the countless births through which one has to pass, in the natural course of things, to obtain deliverance, or Liberation, which is the Hindu term. The number of births (known through revelation) is eighty-four lacs, that is, (a lac being one hundred thousand) eight million four hundred thousand different existences of various kinds, ranging all the way from plants and creeping things to demons and gods, the principle of the next following birth being, that if one's duties in the present existence are duly performed, there results birth in a higher order, or if one's duties have been neglected, there follows birth in a lower order. Then there are heavens and hells where provision is made for enjoying well doing prior and preparatory to further birth, or for receiving punishment for special sins committed.

This would be a rather bewildering programme for the finite particle of the Infinite to enact in order to obtain Liberation, but the Vedanta which has been building on the Upanishads, takes its doctrine of Liberation from that source, namely, the Way of Gnosis. The Way of Gnosis cuts short the "eighty-four," and brings the Gnostic at the end of life into union with the Infinite.

"Union with the Infinite"? Is not this pantheism? Let us see. Though no distinct lines are drawn, the Upanishads may be understood as defining Liberation as consisting in an uninterrupted *awareness* of union. But the Vedanta doctors are careful to define Liberation as "union" with the "awareness" omitted. In popular Hindu and popular Western thought this has been taken

to mean annihilation. But it is questionable whether the great systematizers intended to be so interpreted. For, in defining the various kinds of illusion, they give to the Illusion applied to the phenomenal world practical value, that is, relative, but not absolute reality. Is this consistent with the teaching that the Illusion existed from all eternity? I presume not; but the Hindu did his best with the only conceptions he could form at the time. But to continue. In his definition of the Infinite as Nirgunadu (without qualities) I imagine he intended no more than to deny to Deity human attributes, satisfying himself with "negative" definition much after the fashion of our Chalcedon Christology. Afraid of a transcendence in the "Faith" theory which looked like separateness (the cardinal sin for the Hindu) he fell into an immanence which he did not differentiate from pantheism. So the popular estimate of the system as pantheism has at least negative justification. There were thus two developments going forward side by side but, of course, with manifest imperfection; transcendence appearing in the Way of Faith but not strong enough to overcome polytheism; and immanence in the Way of Gnosis, but unable to keep definitely clear of pantheism. Can the two be combined?

India has tried it. We have her attempt before us in the Bhagavaghita. It was composed about the beginning of the Christian era. One can only approximate dates and interpretation when dealing with Hindu books. The book is now a part of the Mahabharata, as it has all the appearance of being an independent work, I am treating it as such. It is called "The Divine Song," and is just as favorably known as the Upanishads, the two together constituting the Bible of the educated classes. The work is an attempt to do justice to both sides of the theological trend in an effort to unify in a higher synthesis the dualism from which the Vedanta theologians could not wholly free themselves. Both immanence and transcendence are taught. For Krishna is represented as personally transcendent, and also as immanent in things.

In concluding my exposition and as preliminary to my summation of Hindu principles, so far as they concern the doctrine of salvation, I have to add that the Upanishad is, for the Hindu, determinative in doctrine, and that the Bhagavaghita—the natural development of the Upanishad, and the synthesis of Faith and Gnosis—is equally determinative. I shall accordingly sum up Hindu doctrine in the light of the complete development, and shall define Liberation as, according to the Hindu, consisting in an inward, intuitional, awareness or consciousness of union with deity, contrasting it with corporeal consciousness which is external and objective. It is from corporeal consciousness *as creative of the feeling of separateness* that Liberation is sought.

IV. My summation is as follows:

I. The first word in the Hindu doctrine of salvation is Monism. For the regulative principle in all Hindu thinking and teaching is Monism, or what is known among us as Absolute Idealism. Of course the Hindu did not succeed in explaining things without remainder. And neither has any philosopher of the West succeeded. Plato had a dualism, Kant had his thing-in-itself, and Hegel the contingent in nature. The Hindu did not succeed because with his *abstract* conception of the Infinite, coupled with his *static* conception of things, he could do no other than fail. But he has not reached the end of his history. He too is a child of the modern renaissance, is conversant with current religious and philosophical thought, and is assimilating for his own use the factors which are making things more and more intelligible. With therefore the modern conception of the Infinite as self-limiting and self-revealing, and of becoming as an evolutionary process, he will get farther and fare better. But one thing remains. He is constitutionally monistic and will not find rest in any solution of things which is

not monistic. Write down therefore the one word Monism (Absolute Idealism) as your guiding principle if you care to understand the Hindu doctrine of salvation.

2. The second word in Hindu doctrine is: Man is of one substance with God. The Hindu means man, not as a composite of Maya and Spirit, but man as spirit, that is, man as man in his higher, truer, permanent nature. He came short in not discriminating between the carnal nature and a physical organism, and should not have included the latter under Maya, an inclusion due to defective ethical conception. The composite self, with truer discrimination, is depicted in graphic colors in Romans VII where we have one phase of human development as the "divided self." Further, the Hindu having but "One Substance," had no unequivocal term to express man's kinship with deity except "Emanation," even as the early church was shut up to the use of "Homousios." Though we no longer think in terms of "Substance," we understand what the earlier ages tried to express with their limited and undeveloped vocabulary. I am merely trying to bring out the meaning here for the Hindu.

The second word, therefore, in Hindu doctrine is: Man is constitutionally one with God. Given the first word and this follows; and it is just as absolute with the Hindu as is the first. For he conceives this to be so absolutely fundamental that rather than surrender it, he will deny the reality of anything and everything which marshals itself against it, even, as we have seen, to the denial of the phenomenal world, and of sin. A divinity pervades things and pervades man also, else there would be nothing to liberate. Creeds have been formulated and grown effete, nations have risen and fallen, the very gods have been born and have passed, but this belief, tenacious of life, has lived through all changes and lives today in the religious Hindu as such a constitutional, vital part of himself, as to be for him beyond all possible contro-

versy. Of two things the Hindu is certain with a certainty unshakable, of God, and of himself as consubstantial with God.

3. Salvation is the full and the perfect realization of this oneness with God. Salvation begins with the gnostic when he arrives at the inward knowledge or intuition of this unity. This is called regeneration. Salvation is completed when the intuition of the unity becomes absolutely continuous and regulative. This is called Liberation. That the Hindu recognized regeneration appears in the use of the word, "twice born," which now with the majority means little more than a ceremonial regeneration, a degeneration of the same kind as baptismal regeneration among us. Regeneration is still given the earlier meaning in that commonplace among Hindus; he who loves the truth is the true Brahman, that is, the twice born; but he who lies and does not the truth, the same is a shudra, that is, of the once born.

4. Salvation is mediated through two processes: Gnosis and Faith. Gnosis approximates to what we mean by intuition. It is inward spiritual knowledge, as contrasted with external consciousness; the inward consciousness of being at one with God, as contrasted with the objective attitude of the faith which relates itself to God as an objective, external, and separate personality. It is really the religion of immanence as contrasted with that of transcendence. It is partially illustrated by the state of things among us a generation ago, when there were spirited controversies as to whether one could *know* that he was a child of God, those maintaining the affirmative coming under the class of "Gnosis," and those contending for the negative answer, coming under the class of "Faith." The illustration is partial, inasmuch, as even the gnostic with us, while conscious of his sonship, might not be conscious of himself as in vital organic union with God, after the simile of the Vine and the Branch. Gnosis includes the latter, that is, a living or-

ganic union with God finding expression in the intellect in terms of immanence. Similarly as we had our manuals descriptive of the process ending in the conscious regenerated state, the Hindu had his Yoga system definitive of the conditions to be observed by the gnostic. Concentration and meditation on the truth, that is, on his true relationship as being in vital union with God, are the chief factors in the process for converting his doctrine into an inward experience. The experience gained, it remained for him to make the experience regulative of his whole after life, at the end of which he passes into immediate and unbroken union with the Infinite.

But the multitude, unable to reach the inward conscious experience of unity, are taught the Way of Faith which, if consistently adhered to, admits them to the heaven of the Infinite One, where the completing process is carried on to its finish, through three further stages; nearness to deity, likeness to deity, and union with deity. The Hindu has thus no magic in his theory even of Faith, for though one did gain admittance, through faith and devotion, to the very heaven of the deity, the mere entrance does not effect a simultaneous perfecting of the imperfect, but the process must continue, even there, as an evolution until perfection is attained. Naturally the gnostic, with such an outlook, considers his own religious experience superior to that of the one who accepts the position of Faith, whether in India or elsewhere.

5. Salvation is universal. The irreligious who disregard Gnosis or neglect Faith, are disciplined through a long line of births, the millions spoken of being a general expression to signify whatever succession of existence may be necessary for the completion of the discipline. This discipline, no matter how far lengthened out, even unto the eighty-four lacs of births, is but an infinitesimal instant as compared with eternity. By contrast the religions which teach eternal punishment or suf-

fering are designated religions of *eternal despair*, whereas the Hindu designates his own as the religion of *eternal hope*.

If therefore Spiritual monism is the first word, Ethical monism is the last word. The monism of the beginning melts into the monism of the end, making the doctrine of one piece.

6. Further definition. Is the Hindu doctrine one of Salvation from sin? From ignorance chiefly; indirectly from sin. Is the Hindu doctrine one of "Works"? It is not so designated, nor would the enlightened Hindu admit it to be such. "Faith" is dependent on grace, while as to "gnosis" the Hindu, in virtue of his principle of immanence, conceives himself as rooted and grounded in the infinite, a connection mediating the very life of God. But can grace be mediated except through the suffering of Christ? If the suffering of Christ be the revelation of the suffering which has from the beginning been in the mind of the Infinite Father in his dealings with erring sinful beings, then this was included in the Hindu principle, but remained undeveloped, the reason for which will appear farther on.

Such is an outline of the Hindu doctrine of salvation. And now the question for which you have been waiting. What better is Christianity than this religion of eternal hope? Much every way, in that it has—Christ. Hinduism, in its "Faith" theory is elementary; in its "Gnosis" theory is preparatory; and in its synthesis of "Faith" and "Gnosis" still preparatory. Hinduism even in its highest thought and best religious life will find perfection, completion, and finality in Christianity.

V. Its Completion in Christianity.

1. Hindu doctrine is abstract and wanting in concreteness. Christ gives its concreteness. The Hindu conception of salvation is: conscious union with deity. This was realized in Christ of whose inner life it could

be said: "I and my Father are one," an experience expressed in terms of immanence which the Hindu can understand and receive. Cultured Hindus are thus receiving Christ as the fulfilment in actual life of their own highest religious ideal. Many have already learnt to call him: The Master.

The ideal must have content. After it has content, it may meet the needs of the philosophical spirit, but all history goes to show that Ideals get content in experience. I am not sure that even Kant took his own teach-to heart in religion, as he taught us to do in nature. For religious conceptions also get their content from experience. Thus we have the teaching of the Hebrew prophets forever enshrined in lives lived in a white passion for holiness, while we have the ideal of the emancipated child of God in the life of One who has rightly won from high and low his two great titles: Son of Man, and Son of God. Christ has thus given concreteness to the religious ideal and, in doing so, has so enlarged and universalized it, that men everywhere, Oriental and Western alike, find its embodiment in Him. An analysis of its content, which I shall now proceed to give, will make this evident.

2. Christ has given ethical content to the religious ideal. An excellent thing in many recent works on Comparative Religion is an emphasizing of the similarity of conceptions in the greater religions. It becomes us to magnify agreements and to minimize differences. But—there is one difference which can be minimized only to the irreparable loss of religion, namely, the ethical difference. For the ethical content of Christianity, its crown and glory, came only after a long and painful development. The Hindu, emphasizing immanence at the expense of personality, put a drag on ethical development, with the result that his greatest need is ethical quality. The lack of discrimination as to the books admitted into his canon of scripture, the nautch girl at

marriages, and the impure statuary on his temples, all give painful witness to this undeveloped side of his ideal.

3. Christ has given social content to the religious ideal. Whence comes the conception of universal brotherhood but from him who taught that the children of the one Father are brethren. Hinduism has been excessively individualistic. The fifty millions of outcasts who are treated as "untouchables," and the thousands of subdivisions within caste limits, are sufficient evidence of the non-development of the social side of the Hindu ideal. In this connection comes the Christian doctrine of Atonement which, on account of his excessive individuality, the Hindu is unable to understand. For it is only with the recognition that all are members of one great family, that it becomes conceivable that good, through the suffering of one member, may accrue to the other members.

I may add in this connection that there is a wide difference between the one who has inherited the doctrine and the one who comes to it without inheritance of any kind. The former, aware that the doctrine has a history reflecting its age environment, works back from the doctrine and studies, in its age setting, the experience out of which it grew; whereas the latter has to learn to appreciate the occasion for it in *experience* before formulating any doctrine, and this he can only do in the terms of the life and the thought with which he is familiar. Of course this is theological commonplace. But my subject which treats, not only of another religion, but of the approach to its people, seems to call for its mention. As there are two phases of the atonement: its unique quality; and its representative character—the Hindu, who has to be approached through the intellect in order to reach the affections, will naturally come to it through the latter as that which connects with his monism.

4. Christ has humanized the conception of deity. God is now thought of in terms of Christ. The Christo-

logical principle is, that God is like Christ, and that everything Christlike, wherever found, is divine. The Hindu conception of deity, reached by negative definition, is an abstraction. But Christ is teaching the Hindu to say: Our Father who art in heaven; for the Indian Annual Congress is opened with prayer to God as the Father of all.

5. Finally, Christ supplied the dynamic. For the "imitation" of Christ there has to be the dynamic in Christ. God, as a dynamic, was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, that is, God was in His life and in His death; and in the latter, in such preeminent degree, that the Christian can say: God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world.

The Hindu has thus the conception of the unity; the Christian has the conception and its content—ethical, social, human, dynamic.

VI. In conclusion. A prominent worker in South India on one occasion narrated his own Christian experience to a Hindu acquaintance. The Hindu was a member of the Madras Legislative Council, deeply and intelligently religious, given to philanthropy, conversant with missionary conferences. At the close of the narration, the illustrious Hindu gave answer in one brief sentence: "I would not exchange my own religious experience for the one you have so kindly told me." The Hindu thought of his experience in terms of the unity which was everything to him; whereas the Christian told his experience in terms of the content which the Hindu did not sufficiently understand to appreciate. But—should not the eminent Christian propagandist have rather expressed himself in the Hindu's familiar speech: in a unity as glorified with Christian content?

In another contact, a missionary gave an account of Christ. The Hindu replied that, as Christ was an Orien-

tal, he, the Oriental, could understand him better than the missionary. The Hindu was provincial. He did not take into account the great fact that men everywhere, East and West, discover in him their own religious ideal enlarged and realized; and that Christ is more than an Oriental, that he is the universal man or, in other words, the Son of Man. That universal quality in Christ which finds an answer in every man is the divinity in him, in virtue of which we call him the Son of God. The Synoptics have much to say of Christ as Son of Man, while the fourth gospel, being later and recognized more clearly the universal in Christ as divine, speaks of him as the Son of God. In like manner when the Hindu drops his provincialism and recognizes in Christ his universal quality, he too will call him the Son of Man, and then because Son of Man, Son of God. This was the order in the beginning, is the natural order for a new people, and the order for those who have to think their theology through.

I have said that the Hindu who thought of Christ as exclusively Oriental was provincial. I think it only fair to the Hindu to add, that we are not absolutely devoid of the same quality; but that we share it in whatever measure we make our terms of doctrine the universal and final standard. And not only so. But even after we have discriminated between Christian experience and its interpretation in doctrine, we are still provincial in our expression of that experience to the extent that we make terms of transcendence the standard. There is but one standard—the experience of Christ; an experience which submits to expression in terms either of transcendence or immanence. Immanence is necessary for the unity, while transcendence is needed for the content. We have to combine both, and rise above racial peculiarity only when we have disciplined ourselves to express Christian experience in such form as is best adapted to the people to whom we would minister the gospel.

Of course, my concern here is with the cultured Hindu who has thought his way through his own doctrine, and because he has, adheres tenaciously to it. I trust that my exposition (which has been appreciative) has made plain that the Hindu is not only preeminently religious, but that he has formulated for himself an interpretation of his religion of no mean order. I trust also that I have shown that Christianity has its message for this class, small in numbers, it is true, but not by any means negligible as to influence.

Finally and in conclusion. There is one thing common, as we have seen, to Faith and Gnosis: belief that the divine pervades everything, and that there are degrees of this immanence. This furnishes the ground for a second common belief: Incarnation—Incarnation being recognized wherever the deity is manifestly present in fullness and power. The doctrine of Incarnation gives a point of contact with Christianity. For the educated Hindu, who becomes familiar with the Christian message, is quick to recognize the unique quality of divinity resident in Jesus. The Hindu has his degrees of incarnation as exemplified in his ascription to Rama of one-half of the divine essence, and to Krishna the full essence of deity. But his conception of the "full essence" will undergo modification in proportion as he learns what that essence means as incarnated in Jesus in whom we have the divine character and the divine purpose revealed in its fullness. When therefore he learns more of the comprehensiveness of the Christian content as thus revealed, he too will recognize that in him fullness dwells, and will say of him, even as many are fast learning to say: Thou art truly the complete and satisfying Incarnation—Thou art the Christ—Thou art the Son of the living God!

marriages, and the impure statuary on his temples, all give painful witness to this undeveloped side of his ideal.

3. Christ has given social content to the religious ideal. Whence comes the conception of universal brotherhood but from him who taught that the children of the one Father are brethren. Hinduism has been excessively individualistic. The fifty millions of outcasts who are treated as "untouchables," and the thousands of subdivisions within caste limits, are sufficient evidence of the non-development of the social side of the Hindu ideal. In this connection comes the Christian doctrine of Atonement which, on account of his excessive individuality, the Hindu is unable to understand. For it is only with the recognition that all are members of one great family, that it becomes conceivable that good, through the suffering of one member, may accrue to the other members.

I may add in this connection that there is a wide difference between the one who has inherited the doctrine and the one who comes to it without inheritance of any kind. The former, aware that the doctrine has a history reflecting its age environment, works back from the doctrine and studies, in its age setting, the experience out of which it grew; whereas the latter has to learn to appreciate the occasion for it in *experience* before formulating any doctrine, and this he can only do in the terms of the life and the thought with which he is familiar. Of course this is theological commonplace. But my subject which treats, not only of another religion, but of the approach to its people, seems to call for its mention. As there are two phases of the atonement: its unique quality; and its representative character—the Hindu, who has to be approached through the intellect in order to reach the affections, will naturally come to it through the latter as that which connects with his monism.

4. Christ has humanized the conception of deity. God is now thought of in terms of Christ. The Christo-

logical principle is, that God is like Christ, and that everything Christlike, wherever found, is divine. The Hindu conception of deity, reached by negative definition, is an abstraction. But Christ is teaching the Hindu to say: Our Father who art in heaven; for the Indian Annual Congress is opened with prayer to God as the Father of all.

5. Finally, Christ supplied the dynamic. For the "imitation" of Christ there has to be the dynamic in Christ. God, as a dynamic, was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, that is, God was in His life and in His death; and in the latter, in such preeminent degree, that the Christian can say: God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world.

The Hindu has thus the conception of the unity; the Christian has the conception and its content—ethical, social, human, dynamic.

VI. In conclusion. A prominent worker in South India on one occasion narrated his own Christian experience to a Hindu acquaintance. The Hindu was a member of the Madras Legislative Council, deeply and intelligently religious, given to philanthropy, conversant with missionary conferences. At the close of the narration, the illustrious Hindu gave answer in one brief sentence: "I would not exchange my own religious experience for the one you have so kindly told me." The Hindu thought of his experience in terms of the unity which was everything to him; whereas the Christian told his experience in terms of the content which the Hindu did not sufficiently understand to appreciate. But—should not the eminent Christian propagandist have rather expressed himself in the Hindu's familiar speech: in a unity as glorified with Christian content?

In another contact, a missionary gave an account of Christ. The Hindu replied that, as Christ was an Orien-