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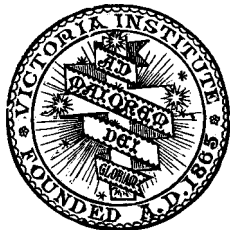
A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

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ORDINARY MEETING, MARCH 21, 1887.

D. HOWARD, ESQ., VICE-PRES., CHEM. SOC., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following Elections were announced:—

MEMBERS:—W. Dunbar, Esq., C.E., M.T.E., South Africa; S. M. Tweddill, Esq., South Africa.

ASSOCIATES:—G. B. Buckton, Esq., F.R.S., Surrey; G. C. Bompas, Esq., F.G.S., London.

Also the presentation of the following work for the Library:—

“The Mineral Springs of Keswick.” By J. Postlethwaite, Esq., F.G.S.

The following Paper was then read by the Author:—

KRISHNA, AND SOLAR MYTHS. By the Rev. RICHARD COLLINS, M.A., late Principal of Cottayam College, Travancore.

HAS the human apprehension, or idea of the Divine, described as anthropomorphism, crystallised, in more national philosophies than one, into the same theory of some local Divine Saviour manifested in a human person or character? This would seem to be the hypothesis of not a few of our modern writers. Thus it is quite fashionable to represent Jesus Christ as the Semitic development of this idea, parallel with, for instance, the Hindu developments of Krishna and Buddha. Again, some have not hesitated to represent the story of Jesus Christ as eclectic, shining with borrowed rays, for which it is much indebted to Hindu intuitions or speculations. Lately an attempt has been made to intensify and centralise this anthropomorphic theory, by representing Krishna, Buddha, and many others, together with Jesus Christ himself, as parallel national adaptations of an original myth of the Sun-God. This view is taken in a series of articles in a publication called *Knowledge*, where Mr. Richard Proctor sums up the three following features as everywhere presented by the adaptations of the ancient solar myth: “First, the Sun-God was announced by a star; secondly, he was born in a cave; and, thirdly, sacrificial offerings were presented to him.”

The Egyptian Osiris and Horus, the Persian Mithras, Adonis, Apollo, Bacchus, Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus Christ, are cited as examples. They are also represented as all "virgin-born." It is, however, to be remarked that Mr. Proctor adds in a note, relative to Buddha, that "of course, it must be understood, that these details gathered only in long later ages around the record of Gautama." That little note contains the whole gist of my argument: was it not in "long later ages" that Krishna, too, as well as others, was surrounded with features similar to those which characterised the history of Jesus Christ? If so, how did those features arise?

2. It is not my object here to enter into the whole question of these adaptations of the sun-myth, and the invariable accompaniments, according to Mr. Proctor, of the announcement in each case of birth by a star; of the date of birth being the 25th of December, the winter solstice; of the virgin-mother; of the birth in a cave; of the presentation of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, &c. I must take the case of Krishna alone. Still, it is worth observing, by the way, how freely and wildly the reins have been given to this sun-myth theory; so that with some theorists the whole of the Bible, which is, in fact, a small library of books written by different hands at intervals extending over more than 1,500 years of the world's history, is, nevertheless, but one prolonged national Semitic cryptograph, if we may so call it, or series of cryptographs, or allegories, of the solar-myth. Thus "Samson," Mr. Proctor says, "is unmistakably a solar myth." His name may mean "like the sun." And Delilah, "the languishing one," represents winter. "The hero's hair, as in all sun stories, represents the sun's rays. The Philistines are the clouds, which darken (or blind) the sun when his rays have been cut off in winter. The destruction of the Philistines represents the triumph of the sun, when at spring he returns to the glorious part of his course, over the clouds of winter, by which till then he had been, as it were, imprisoned." "In the same way," Mr. Proctor says, "the story of Jonah loses its absurdity, when we recognise Jonah as identical with the Oannes of the Chaldeans, the Winter-God or hero, issuing from the great fish which represented the gloom and cold of winter." So far I have quoted Mr. Proctor. But by others the whole Bible is represented as but astronomical allegory. The twelve tribes are the twelve signs of the Zodiac; so are the twelve apostles, and Elisha's twelve yoke of oxen. Moses is Aquarius, or Neptune, whose dwelling is where the sun rises at the equinox, therefore he is said to be "drawn out of the water." Esau is Hercules in the lion's skin—another

version of the Sun-God. The four archangels are the four seasons, and the twenty-four Elders the twenty-four hours. Elisha, whose name is "God that Saves," like Samson, is still another version of the Sun-God. It is obvious how easy it is to transform pictures in this way. Why should not David also be the Sun-God?—indeed, he may be so represented by some of these allegorists for anything I know—his harp, like the lyre of Apollo, picturing the music of the spheres, the delights of summer, the merry songs of the summer woods; Saul, the scowling and gloomy winter, seeking with his deadly javelin to pin the sun to the winter solstice, but not quite killing him? Why, also, should not Solomon be the Sun-God under still another aspect—the Queen of Sheba and her retinue being nothing else than the moon, with her retinue of stars, approaching till lost in the beams of the glorious orb of day, and so quelled by his overpowering brightness that "there was no more spirit in her"; but again receiving "of his royal bounty," so that she "turned and went to her own land, she and her servants"—that is, of course, to be manifested again as queen of the night? And, at this rate, may not future philosophers, in the ages to come, turn even the stories of Julius Cæsar and Napoleon Bonaparte, and perhaps a whole host of heroes, and even statesmen, into solar myths also? Cæsar, so named from his hair, which, as in the case of Samson, was but an emblem of the sun's rays, was the "hairy-headed one"—perhaps the "red hairy-headed one"—or the bright-rayed Sun-God. Napoleon Bonaparte was a Greek-Latin Sun-God; to the Greek the "Lion of the forest," meet emblem of the king of day; to the more domesticated Latin, the "Dispenser of good." Both marched out, overpowering the European Philistines, or the clouds, till themselves overpowered by the weather; the latter most markedly bearing the characteristics of the Sun-God in his approach to the utmost bounds of day at the winter solstice, quelled by the snows and storms of winter, and forced back again, to arouse the southern nations once more with his fire. Future criticism may show, too, that the legend of his being born in Corsica is only a relic of the cave-birth myth, and the adoration of shepherds common to all Sun-Gods in their infancy; for is not Corsica (the very name of which is indicative of pens, sheepfolds, or stables), a land of caves, which are to this day the resort of the mountain shepherds? And so any history may be converted into astrological allegories and solar-myths without much difficulty. Nay, it is impossible to exaggerate the licence that belongs to such a system of allegorising as this.

3. But let us confine ourselves to the case of Krishna. He especially is claimed as one of the most prominent of the Hindu embodiments of the sun-myth, or as a prior Hindu development of certain religious ideas, which subsequently received a fuller Semitic development in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Our simplest way will be to investigate the history of Krishna: and that, so far as we can, chronologically.

Krishna is seen, in what would appear to be the original conception of him, in the Mahâbhârata. He is introduced in the early part of that long Epic poem as a relative of the heroes of the great war which it describes. There is much that is puzzling, and apparently inconsistent, in many of the records of his actions; as, for instance, that he gave up the whole of his own army to fight for the Kauravas, and yet showed a strong spirit of partisanship afterwards towards their kinsman opponents, the Pândavas, whom he ultimately aided as Arjuna's charioteer. This is hardly like the work of a great poet. Shortly before the war he attended a council of chiefs of the Pândavas and Kauravas, as a mediator between them; and then it was that, for the first time, I think, he showed himself as the Supreme Being. Duryodhana, the chief of the Kauravas, had plotted to seize and confine Krishna, since Krishna had previously suggested that he and three other chiefs of the Kauravas ought to be made prisoners (the same Duryodhana to whom he had given his army). Krishna, however, knew of that plot; and thus addressed Duryodhana: "O Duryodhana, perchance it was because you thought I was alone in this city that you thought to bind me; but behold all the gods and divine beings, and the universe itself, are present here in me.' And at that moment all the gods issued from his body, and flames of fire fell from his eyes, nose, and ears; and the rays of the sun shone forth in all their radiance from the pores of his skin. And all the Rajas closed their eyes from the brightness of his presence. And there was a great earthquake, and all who were there trembled with great fear. After this Krishna threw aside his divinity, and became a mortal as before." (I quote from Mr. Talboys Wheeler's translation.) The whole account of Krishna's connexion with these warriors of the Mahâbhârata bristles with inconsistencies; and this extravagant picture of his divinity is quite unlike anything to be found in early Hindu imagery, but is quite akin to much that is to be met with in what is certainly much more modern. There is no longer the poetry of personification of the grand or mysterious in nature, but sheer childish exaggeration, to strike the hearer with awe—

marking a deeper degradation of religious thought, though intending to picture the deity incarnate. A similar description, though with much more detail, which I shall shortly notice, occurs in the "Bhagavad-Gîtâ," evidently the work of the same brain. It is well to observe that the whole history of Krishna is interpreted by the later scholiasts in a mystic sense—as, for instance, in the Gîtâ-Govinda; and the figure here, however ancient may be the original legends of the war between the Pândavas and Kauravas, is of a distinctly modern character; and by modern I mean later than—to take the earliest date—the third century of the Christian era. Mr. Talboys Wheeler's inference, from studying the whole of Krishna's connexion with the events related in the Mahâbhârata, is, I think, conclusive, that the Brahmans either introduced Krishna into the poem, or so modified his history as to exhibit him as divine for the furtherance of their own objects. Mr. Telang, who has translated the "Bhagavad-Gîtâ," and some other episodes in the poem, for *The Sacred Books of the East*, holds a contrary opinion. Any one interested in this question should read Mr. Talboys Wheeler's notes on the "Mahâbhârata," as well as Mr. Telang's Introduction to the "Bhagavad-Gîtâ." A discussion of the many points raised would be out of the question in this paper.

4. The Bhagavad-Gîtâ, or the Divine Song, is the great episode of the Mahâbhârata, which describes the divine character of Krishna. I have already said that Krishna became the charioteer of Arjuna, the leader of the Pândavas against their cousins, the Kauravas. When the two armies are at last ranged in battle array, and the great warriors have sounded their conchs, and Arjuna has raised his bow, a strange pity suddenly takes possession of him. Addressing Krishna, as he contemplates "fathers, grandfathers, preceptors, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, companions, fathers-in-law, and friends," he says, "seeing these kinsmen, O, Krishna, standing here desirous to engage in battle, my limbs droop down, my mouth is dried up, a tremor comes over my body, I do not perceive any good to accrue after killing my kinsmen in the battle." He casts aside his bow and arrows on the battle-field, and sits down in his chariot, his mind agitated by grief. Krishna then entreats him to "cast off his base weakness of heart," and in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, or divine speech or song, seeks to strengthen his heart by religion. In this long poem, Krishna explains to Arjuna, with the authority of Deity, his solution of the religious and philosophical problems that were evidently debated at the time when the poem was written. Many of these are questions that entered into

the Sâṅkhyā, the Yoga, the Vedânta, and the Buddhist systems. Whether these systems had already been formulated—as in the Sûtras, for instance, of Patanjali—it is difficult to say; but the terms are used as denoting distinct methods of teaching. Thus Krishna says, in chapter iii. of the Gîtâ, “In the world there is a two-fold path—that of the Sâṅkhyas, by devotion in the shape of true knowledge; and that of the Yogins, by devotion in the shape of action.” It is debatable here whether he refers to the Sâṅkhyā and the Yoga, as explained in the written Sûtras, or only to the principles so called, which were afterwards systematised. But this is a subject to which I shall revert. Certain it is that the writer of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ exhibits an eclectic philosophy. This would be natural at a time when the doctrines of the several schools of metaphysical thought were widely discussed, as no doubt they were in the early centuries of the Christian era. The motive principle was “emancipation.” How were the evils and miseries of life to be met? To solve this great question, body and soul were studied, alike by Yogins, Vedântists, and Buddhists, both in their moral and physical aspects, together with their environments. The writer of the “Bhagavad-Gîtâ” culls what he approves from teachings which are to be found, as I have said, in all these philosophical systems, but with the evident object of adding a new doctrine of his own. It is this new doctrine which has for us a special interest. It is not only that the “senses must be under control,” that man must be “self-restrained,” that there must be no “attachment,” that “desire” must perish, that “self must be subjugated,” that the devotee should constantly devote himself to “abstraction,” “in a secret place, alone . . . fixing his seat firmly in a clean place, not too high nor too low . . . fixing his mind exclusively on one point . . . holding his body, head, and neck even and unmoved, steady, looking at the tip of his own nose, and not looking about in all directions, with a tranquil self, devoid of fear” (all of which is in accordance with Patanjali’s system), in order the better to attain to complete union with the Supreme Being; but it is in order to concentrate his mind on Krishna himself, “regarding him as the final goal.”

5. Here, then, Krishna, who is introduced in the Mahâbhârata as a relation of the Pândavas and Kauravas, claims to be the Supreme—in other words the Supreme is described as incarnate in the person of the man Krishna. I believe I am correct in saying that this is the first time that the distinct idea of incarnation is to be found in the Hindu writings. On this idea

is based the new teaching of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ—namely, entire devotion to the person of Krishna. Strangely blended with the Yoga philosophy, yet as often setting even it aside, this is the peculiar doctrine of the poem. Thus, to quote Mr. Telang's translation, chapter vi., "He who has devoted his self to abstraction, by devotion, looking alike on everything, sees the self-abiding in all beings, and all beings in the self. To him who sees me in everything, and everything in me, I am never lost, and he is not lost to me. The devotee who worships me abiding in all beings, holding that all is one, lives in me, however he may be living." Arjuna fears lest he should not attain the consummation of devotion, and to him Krishna replies: "The devotee working with great efforts, and cleared of his sins, attains perfection after many births, and then reaches the supreme goal. The devotee is esteemed higher than the performers of penances, higher even than the men of knowledge, and the devotee is higher than the men of action: therefore, O Arjuna, become a devotee. And even among all devotees, he who, being full of faith, worships me with his inmost self intent on me, is esteemed by me to be the most devoted." Here the worship of Krishna is placed above even the perfection of works which yet are allowed. Krishna further enforces devotion to him to be "the chief among the sciences, the chief among the mysteries, the best means of sanctification." He says, "Whatever you do, O son of Kunti, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifice you make, whatever you give, whatever penance you perform, do that as offered to me. . . . Those who worship me with devotion (dwell) in me, and I too in them. Even if a very ill-conducted man worships me, not worshipping any one else, he must certainly be deemed to be good, for he has well resolved. He soon becomes devout of heart, and obtains lasting tranquillity . . . my devotee is never ruined. For, O son of Prithâ, even those who are of sinful birth, women, Vaisyas, and Sûdras likewise, resorting to me, attain the supreme goal." Then he adds the principle of "love": "The wise full of love worship me . . . To these . . . who worship with love, I give that knowledge by which they attain to me. And, remaining in their hearts, I destroy, with the brilliant lamp of knowledge, the darkness born of ignorance in such men only, out of compassion for them." Such sentiments find no place, so far as my knowledge goes, in the Vedic writings. He enforces his authority by claiming to be "the beginning, and the middle, and the end of all beings." And when Arjuna desires him to "show his inexhaustible form" to him, Krishna tells him, "You will not be able to

see me with merely this eye of yours. I will give you an eye divine." Then, "if in the heavens the lustre of a thousand suns burst forth all at once, that would be like the lustre of that mighty one." There the son of Pându then observed in the body of the God of gods the whole universe (all) in one, and divided into numerous (divisions). Then Arjuna, filled with amazement, and with hair standing on end, bowed his head before the God and spoke, with joined hands: "O God, I see within your body the gods, as also all the groups of various beings; and the Lord Brahman seated on (his) lotus seat, and all the sages and celestial snakes. I see you who are of countless forms, possessed of many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes on all sides a mass of glory the effulgence of a blazing fire or sun groups of gods are entering into you. Some, being afraid, are praying with joined hands, and the groups of great sages and Siddhas are saying 'Welfare!' and praising you with abundant (hymns) of praise All these sons of Dhritarâshtra, together with all the bands of kings (*i.e.*, the warriors of the Kauravas) are rapidly entering your mouths Some with their heads smashed are seen to be stuck in the spaces between your teeth. As the many rapid currents of a river's waters run towards the sea alone, so do these heroes of the human world enter your mouths blazing all round. As butterflies, with increased velocity, enter a blazing fire to their destruction, so, too, do these people enter your mouths with increased velocity (only) to their destruction. Swallowing all these people, you are licking them over and over again from all sides with your blazing mouths." Such is the Hindu writer's picture of the manifestation of the divine in the human. There is the mingling of judgment with mercy, because in the history of the Mahâbhârata it is Krishna's office to conquer the Kauravas. But the chief theme of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ is the "unbroken happiness" of faith in him. There would appear, too, to be the *claim* of novelty: "O Arjuna, being pleased with you, I have by my own mystic power shown you this supreme form which has *not been seen before* by any one but you. . . . I cannot be seen as you have seen me, by means of the Vedas, not by penance, not by gift, nor yet by sacrifice; but by devotion to me exclusively, I can in this form be truly known, seen, and entered into. He who performs acts for (propitiating) me, to whom I am the highest (object), who is my devotee, who is free from attachment, and who has no enmity towards any being, he comes to me." Besides the "bhakti," there is much in the Gîtâ that is seldom, or never, found in the same connexion in

earlier Hinduism, though parallels may be found in Buddhism. Thus, there is special emphasis laid on "absence of enmity towards any being," "hating no being," "being friendly and compassionate," "being forgiving and contented." There is also the praise of "purity" of heart as well as body. He who exercises such virtues, in common with many emphasised also by Buddha, is "dear to Krishna." But then immediately follows the great point of the poem:—"Those devotees who, imbued with faith, and (regarding) me as their highest (goal), resort to *this* holy (means for obtaining) immortality, as stated, they are extremely dear to me." Similarly, when speaking of those who have "transcended the qualities," (that is, the bodily senses and their actions), he adds, "he who *worships me* with an unswerving devotion, *transcends these qualities*, and becomes fit for entrance into the essence of the Brahman; for I am the embodiment of the Brahman, of indefeasible immortality, of eternal piety, and of unbroken happiness." After an evident reference to perhaps more than one of the Upanishads, and a reference to the Sāṅkhya system, he still draws up all the threads in devotion to himself: "dedicating in thought all actions to me, be constantly given up to me. Placing your thoughts on me, you will cross over all difficulties by my favour." And he concludes the song with a recapitulation,—“Thus have I declared to you the knowledge more mysterious than any mystery. Ponder over it thoroughly, and then act as you like. Once more, listen to my excellent words—most mysterious of all. Strongly I like you, therefore I will declare what is for your welfare. On me (place) your mind, become my devotee, sacrifice to me, reverence me, you will certainly come to me. I declare to you truly, you are dear to me. Forsaking all duties, come to me as (your) sole refuge. I will release you from all sins. He who, with the highest devotion to me, will proclaim this supreme mystery among my devotees, will come to me, freed from (all) doubts.”

6. The first point of interest is the fact that in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ we have a doctrine distinctly new in Brahmanical teaching—that is, the incarnation of deity. Equally new, too, is the doctrine of the "bhakti," the personal devotion to, and faith in, the deity so manifested, overriding every other doctrine. The Vedic deities, however much they may have been clothed with human attributes, were never incarnate. When did the idea of the Deity dwelling in human flesh first become a part of man's belief? With the Hindus not before the story of Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ. With other Eastern nations not at all, so far as I can reach

historical evidence as to the centuries before Christ. With the Jews themselves not till after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However clearly their ancient prophecies declared it, when read in the light of the life of Jesus, it does not appear that the Apostles during His lifetime had apprehended the truth that He was "God manifest in the flesh." Nor had the Jewish Rabbis ever so interpreted the prophecies as to the Messiah. Divine, indeed, they expected Him to be; but they had not in the least apprehended the doctrine of Christianity, that the Messiah must be "very God and very man."

7. How, then, did the Hindus first reach the idea of the Deity incarnate in the man Krishna? Had they embraced this doctrine before the Jews saw it in the person of Jesus Christ? This is a question of overwhelming interest in the history of religions, because the whole question of Jewish belief in reference to the Messiah, whether illustrated by the teaching of the Rabbis, or the attitude of the Apostles themselves before the resurrection, seems to imply that there is something in human nature which forbids the conception of a true incarnation before the actual fact is fully before the eyes of men. It would, I suppose, be impossible to absolutely prove that the human mind could not originate the idea of an incarnation of the Deity; but it seems in the highest degree improbable. The heathen poets had, indeed, often described the gods as coming to men in human form—as we read, for instance, in Homer and Ovid. They had also endued men with divine powers, and the men of Lystra said of Paul and Barnabas, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." But this seems to be a very different conception from that of the incarnation of the Supreme Spirit in a human person.*

8. Perhaps the only actual proof that this picture of Krishna was subsequent to the history of Jesus Christ is the strictly chronological one—when was the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* written? Mr. Telang thinks that "the latest date at which the *Gîtâ* can have been composed must be earlier than the

* Very different, too, are the "stories of god-descended persons among the Greeks," quoted by Mr. Spencer as parallel to the story of Jesus Christ in the Gospels (*Ecclesiastical Institutions*, page 702). "Æsculapius, Pythagoras, Plato," did not claim to be "very god and very man;" nor have they any claim to divine descent, except in accounts written long after their actual existence; in the case of Æsculapius, for instance, by Cicero; and in the case of the two latter by Diogenes, Laertius, and others, long after the commencement of the Christian era. Æsculapius is not a divinity in Homer, but simply the "blameless physician." Even in his fabled descent from

third century B.C." His reasonings, however, are not very conclusive, though ingenious. Several of his dates are considerably in advance of Professor Max Müller's. It is well known that the chronology of the early Hindu books is a very difficult subject; and is one which, in reference to early religions, would perhaps better repay investigation than any other study to which the Indian student can at the present time devote himself. Professor Max Müller has expended much labour on it, the result of which we have in the notes on his *India: What can it Teach Us?* and elsewhere.

9. The fact is, it is impossible to prove that the *Gîtâ* was written prior to the Christian era. Mr. Telang thinks differently; but, as I have said, I do not think that his reasoning is conclusive. I have not space to follow it in detail, but confine myself to one or two points. Mr. Telang lays great stress on the unsystematic character of the teaching of the *Gîtâ*, compared with the systematic, orderly, and exhaustive method of the *Yoga-Sûtras*, which were the work of Patanjali. On this he bases the conclusion that the *Gîtâ* was the work of a more speculative age than that of Patanjali, when religious conclusions had not been systematised: that in this respect the *Gîtâ* is of the same character as the Vedic Upanishads; and that therefore the poem is the work of an age prior to that of Patanjali. For instance, he gives as an illustration a passage from the *Gîtâ*, exactly parallel to one in Patanjali's *Yoga-Sûtras*, one of which must have been quoted from the other—the passage in the *Gîtâ* is a saying of Krishna's, that "the mind may be restrained by practice (*abhyâsa*), and indifference to worldly objects (*vairâgya*)." He observes that Patanjali follows out the thought by systematic reasoning, whereas the writer of the *Gîtâ* drops the subject after the bare recital of the aphorism. But if he quotes Patanjali, this is just what we should expect. He quotes, as most men do, the main thought, which is enough for his

Apollo there is no real parallel to the incarnation of our Saviour, and the doctrine of the New Testament.

It is worthy of notice that Mr. Spencer is entirely silent in the *Ecclesiastical Institutions* as to the absolutely historical character of the New Testament, existing, as it does, by the side of monuments as well as acts, the origin of which it records, and which it would have been impossible to impose upon the world after the time of the Apostles themselves. We get very near to Christ in the Apostles, who, as I suppose few sceptics would deny, were His actual companions, some of them probably his relatives. Their testimony as to Him is very different from the legends as to Pythagoras and Plato, reported, 600 or 700 years after their careers had closed, by Diogenes, Porphyry, and Iamblichus.

purpose. I think here we have a distinct instance of a quotation from Patanjali, though Mr. Telang thinks that the writer of the *Gîtâ* is throwing out hints, which Patanjali afterwards adopts and systematises. But, again, it is not in a poem that we expect to find an exhaustive philosophical system. We should hardly go to *Paradise Lost* or the *In Memoriam* for detailed and scientifically-argued systems of divinity, political economy, or social science, though there is something on all these subjects to be found in them. The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* is a poem, and the method is evidently eclectic; and when the writer mentions the *Sânkhya*, the *Yoga*, the *Vedânta*, it appears to me more likely that he refers to the *Sûtras* than merely to the beliefs as they were discussed previous to their systematisation by the philosophical writers. It is, of course, true that the terms *Sânkhya*, *Yoga*, and *Vedânta* were in use before the *Sûtras* were written; but I judge from the parallel between the *Gîtâ* and the *Yoga-Sûtras* mentioned above as quoted by Mr. Telang, of which the most rational explanation seems to be that it is a quotation from Patanjali. Now, the date of Patanjali is still a debated question, no doubt; but Professor Max Müller places him after the third century A.D. It should also be noticed, that in one place Krishna says, "I am the author of the *Vedântas*," where, Mr. Telang says, the reference may be to the latter portion of the *Vedas*; but, nevertheless, it looks like a reference to the *Sûtras*, so-called: while in another place the word *Brahma-Sûtras* occurs, which is a common name for the *Vedânta-Sûtras*, though Mr. Telang holds that it does not refer to the *Sûtras* at all in this place, but only to instruction about the *Brahman*.

10. Mr. Telang bases another argument for the very early composition of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* on its "style and language." He observes that it does not show the love for "compounds" "presented by what is called the classical literature." This is, of course, a question on which only those well acquainted with Hindu literature can judge. But I believe it is doubtful whether in this respect the *Gîtâ* is much more simple than the writings of *Kâlidâsa*, and *Kâlidâsa* is put by Mr. Telang in the fifth century, and by Professor Max Müller in the sixth century A.D.

11. With regard to the references to the *Vedas*, and the somewhat "disparaging manner," as Mr. Telang observes, in which they are treated in the *Gîtâ*, I cannot see that that necessarily indicates antiquity, though the *Upanishads* treat many Vedic questions in much the same way. The object of the *Gîtâ* is to extol Krishna, in comparison with whom everything

must yield. This method of treatment might suit the third century after Christ, or even the tenth, as well as the age of the Upanishads.

12. Again, Mr. Telang seeks to prove that there are quotations in the Vedânta-Sûtras from the Gîtâ, and that the Vedânta-Sûtras are older than Pânini, the great grammarian, whom he places in the fourth century B.C. But both the fact of quotation and the dates are so involved in difficulties that I believe they are all very debatable, and I believe Professor Max Müller would place the Vedânta-Sûtras after the third century A.D. He says: "The philosophical Sûtras were, and are still, supposed by many scholars to belong to the centuries preceding our era. All I can say is, I know, as yet, of no sound arguments, still less of any facts, in support of such assertions." (*India*, p. 352.)

13. While we acknowledge, therefore, the extreme difficulty of fixing historical dates to many of the Hindu books, it must be allowed, I think, that there is no valid reason forthcoming at present for placing the Bhagavad-Gîtâ before the commencement of the Christian era.

14. While, however, we cannot at present fix the exact date of the Gîtâ, there are many bits of circumstantial evidence which seem to point to the conclusion that the story of Krishna in the poem was written after the beginning of the Christian era, and by one who had received some knowledge of the incarnation and teaching of Jesus Christ.

15. In this connexion it may be observed that the worship of Vishnu as the supreme god would seem to belong only to quite the latter phase of Hinduism. The Aryans first worshipped the sun; next Indra, the god of rain, becomes the chief deity adored—the natural result, as Mr. Talboys Wheeler well suggests, of life in a tropical climate, where the rain is even more precious than the sun. When the worship of Vishnu as the supreme spirit really superseded that of Indra we cannot definitely say, but it seems to belong to the more metaphysical age of Hindu thought, and is not fully developed till we come to the period of the Purânas. It is only in the accounts of Krishna that are found in these writings—as in the Bhâgavata-Purâna—that he is described as taking part in the overthrow of Indra. In the Bhagavad-Gîtâ he is once or twice addressed as Vishnu. The doctrine of the avatâras, or incarnations, of Vishnu are also only first developed in the Purânas. Thus the legends of the *Fish*, the *Tortoise*, and the *Boar* are found in the Satapatha Brâhmana; but it is only in the—much later—Purânas that they are described as incarnations of Vishnu.

16. Still more striking is the character of the revelation made by Krishna. He preaches a new faith, personal devotion to him, as the embodiment of the divine. He speaks of it, as I have before shown, as the chief among the sciences, the chief among the mysteries, the best means of sanctification. This mystery he sets above "the Vedas, penance, gifts, and sacrifices." It is to be a new creed, controlling all previous creeds. The language in which this new creed is conveyed is in itself remarkable:—The devotees, who worship Krishna, "dwell," he says, "in him, and he in them": they are "never ruined": even "those who are of sinful birth, women, Vaisyas, and Sûdras, resorting to him, attain to the supreme goal." Other quotations I have given above. Whence did the writer of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ derive these ideas of incarnation, sanctification, love, faith, the last overtopping and setting aside every previous Hindu rule of the religious life? Every one will allow, I think, that these are novel doctrines, of which there are no discernible germs in the Vedic literature. So remarkable an array of novelties of faith and practice could scarcely have been the production merely of the philosophical mind: in short, they bear evidence of having been derived from some foreign source; and they have the strongest resemblance to some doctrines which are peculiar to the revelation of Jesus Christ. Moreover, their connexion in the Gîtâ is incongruous: in many parts of the poem the current Hindu methods for attaining perfection and emancipation are laboriously set forth; the doctrine of metempsychosis is stated; and yet personal devotion to Krishna is made in one passage to render all these doctrines null and void. Still further, there is the most complete incongruity between some of the doctrines enunciated by Krishna, such as sanctification, forgiveness of sins, love, &c., in connexion with the worship of the incarnate deity, and his own character, as described in other portions of the Mahâbhârata. One scene is particularly repulsive, where, while he pronounces forgiveness of sins, he is described as standing to watch some dancing-girls, the skill of one of whom he rewards by telling her that if she will visit him, he will give her whatever she asks of him. Some of the accounts of these rewards to the forgiven would not bear transcription. His conversation with Bhima on the same occasion is also most repulsive from a moral point of view; while at the same time it is stated that Krishna had many thousands of wives. In the professed histories of Krishna's life, which were, no doubt, all written after—some long after—the Bhagavad-Gîtâ—as in the Harivamsa, which is

generally regarded as a later addition to the Mahâbhârata; the Vishnu-Purâna; the Bhâgavata-Purâna; and the comparatively modern Gîtâ-Govinda—the incongruity between the exalted doctrines of the Gîtâ and the character of Krishna is much more strongly portrayed: for in those productions he is exhibited, morally, under still darker shades. In the midst of his immoralities, however, he is still represented as doing works of mercy, some of which bear a strange resemblance to the works of Christ, and, as in the case of the doctrines noticed in the Gîtâ, forcibly suggest the idea of adaptation. Thus, in the Mahâbhârata, he is described as laying hold of the hand of the dead body of the son of Jayadratha, when, upon his saying, “Arise!” “by the will of the Almighty the dead man instantly arose.” Earlier in the epic a woman, described as “of infamous character,” is made to say, “Every day I behold the divine Krishna, and therefore all my sins are forgiven me.” Can this be a debased echo of Christ’s mercy to “publicans and sinners,” and to the Magdalene? On a journey to Hastinâpur, as he came near to the city, “multitudes of Brahmans, with clasped hands, besought him to forgive their sins:” and one said, “What an auspicious day is this, in which men behold your face to the cleansing of all their sins.” In the Bhâgavata-Purâna, there is a very singular account of his curing a hump-backed woman. She prays Krishna to allow her to anoint him with saffron and sandal; he took compassion upon her, and “placed his feet upon her feet, and his two fingers beneath her chin, and raised her up, so that she became quite straight, and by the touch of Krishna she was rendered young and beautiful.” As Mr. Talboys Wheeler remarks: “The similarity between this story and the two events recorded in St. Luke, xiii., and St. Mark, xiv., is too striking to be passed over.” The incongruity, however, between this act of mercy, and the character of Krishna, as set forth in the Purâna, is as great as it can well be; for he is described as afterwards rewarding this restored woman by a visit, the nature of which must be passed over in silence.

17. It is this incongruity between the higher teachings of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ and the other portions of it, as well as between those teachings and the character of Krishna, that strikes one as indicating a foreign source for those higher teachings; that suggests that these germs of thought, which we know of only as originating in their integrity with the Christian religion, may, or must, have been thence borrowed by the writer of the Gîtâ, to give a fresh glory to his doctrine. For, further, these are the very doctrines of Christianity that

we should expect to be received by a Hindu. The doctrines of the cross, the atonement, the vicarious sufferings of Christ, which were "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," would be equally foolishness to the Hindu, and could not be accepted by him unless he became an absolute convert to Christianity. They could not be in any way adopted as a portion of Hinduism. It is remarkable, however, that there is a weird and most impressive picture drawn near the close of the Mahâbhârata, after the great war was over, totally different from anything that could be suggested by the Hindu doctrines of transmigration of souls, or absorption into the deity after death. The Pândavas, who had survived the war, were lamenting their friends, husbands, sons, and kinsfolk, whom they had lost in the great war, when, while bathing in the Ganges, the river "began to foam and boil," and suddenly the great chiefs who had perished in the war, "in full armour, seated in their chariots, ascended out of the water, with all their armies arrayed as they were on the first day of the Mahâbhârata All appeared in great glory and splendour, and more beautiful than when they were alive enmity had departed from among them widows, orphans, and kinsfolk were overjoyed, and not a trace of grief remained among them widows went to their husbands, daughters to their fathers, mothers to their sons, and sisters to their brothers, and all the fifteen years of sorrow which had passed since the war were forgotten in the ecstasy of seeing each other again. Thus the night passed away in the fulness of joy; but when the morning had dawned, all the dead mounted their chariots and horses, and disappeared." May not this be an echo of the Christian description of the resurrection? I would suggest that these gleanings from the Christian story, if such they were, were in all probability obtained, not from a study of the Christian writings, but from what was orally taught. This is, of course, only a suggestion of probability; I have no kind of proof to offer that such must have been the case. If so, however, it would, perhaps, further account for the fragmentary and partial knowledge that we seem to encounter.

18. With regard to the position taken by Mr. Proctor, which I mentioned in the early part of the paper, that the history of Krishna illustrates the Sun-God myth, in that he was born in a cave, that his mother was a virgin, &c., I do not find, in what must be the earlier accounts of Krishna's birth, that such was the case. His mother, Devaki, was the wife of Vasudeva, who was his father. The birth was not in a cave, but in an ordinary dwelling. He was, moreover, the eighth

son of Vasudeva and Devaki. There are, however, even in what seem to be the earliest accounts of him, probable gleanings from the Bible story gathering about the legends of his infancy. For instance, the raja Kansa, the father of Devaki, being warned that a son of Devaki would be his destroyer, when he heard the child was born, "ordered that all the worshippers of Vishnu, young and old, should be slain; and commanded his warriors to make search for all young children throughout that country, and to slay every male child that possessed strength and vigour." To avoid such danger, Vasudeva took the babe Krishna, as soon as he was born, in a basket used for winnowing corn, across the River Jumna to Gokula. On crossing the river, the waters of which were very high, the babe "stretched forth his foot, and the waters were stayed, and became shallow and fordable." At Gokula, Krishna was exchanged for the daughter of Yasodâ, the wife of a cowherd named Nanda, and so was saved from the evil designs of Kansa. Here it was in the house of Nanda that Krishna was brought up. Some have thought that the name Goshen suggested Gokula, both words meaning a cowhouse; but I do not think that we need suppose that the writer of the Purâna was learned in the literal meaning of Egyptian names. It may, however, be added, as perhaps worth notice, that the tribe of the Yâdavas, to which Krishna belonged, although by marriage he is made to be related to the Kauravas and Pândavas, who were Kshatriyas, was a tribe of shepherds or cowherds.

19. Krishna is introduced in the Mahâbhârata, together with his elder brother Balarâma, as a Prince of that Yâdava tribe; and his royal city is said to be Dwâraka. They are there called "the amorous Krishna and wine-drinking Balarâma." Krishna afterwards describes himself in a speech as being, with his family, "equally related to the Pândavas and Kanravas." There is no tracing of his pedigree in the course of the poem proper. The Purânas heighten the picture of divinity according to Hindu ideas. Thus the Bhâgavata-Purâna says the marks of Vishnu were discerned on Krishna at his birth; the Vishnu-Purâna that he descended, adored by the gods, and entered into the womb of Devaki, that he might become the saviour of the world. And in this way, each succeeding story, as in the case of the later Buddhist accounts of Gautama, adds fresh adornments to supplement the meagre notices of his origin as found in the Mahâbhârata, with the object, as it seems to me, of approximating the divine character of Krishna as nearly as possible, according to the demands of the Hindu

imagination, to the divinity of Christ, as preached by the Christians.

20. If, on the other hand, supposing it to be granted that the Bhagavad-Gîtâ was written previously to the commencement of the Christian era, we seek, as many have done, for doctrines there that may have been appropriated by the New Testament writers, waiving, of course, for the moment, all the evidence for the truth of their record, how much is it possible to find that could have been appropriated? There are, indeed, ideas and expressions which have a resemblance to Christian ideas and expressions. There is the idea of incarnation. But could the picture of the charioteer, with the universe in his stomach, have been the germ of such a picture of the incarnate God as we have in the New Testament? We can only express astonishment that any sane mind could ever have given birth to such a suggestion. The truth is, that there is only one point common to the two pictures, the person of Christ, and the person of Krishna, and that is the bare fact of the incarnation of the Deity. Then there are the doctrines of forgiveness, faith, love, and union through faith with the divine; but these are set among speculations as to the soul and its environments, where they are plainly seen to be additions, unconformable to the other doctrines of the poem; they exist, like parasites on the forest trees, beautiful enough in themselves, but, having no roots in the common ground, they stand among the words of Krishna without reasons for their existence, or ends to be accomplished: while they are most utterly, as I have shown, incongruous with the character of Krishna, as set forth in other parts of Mahâ-bhârata.

The same doctrines in the New Testament are placed between antecedents and consequents, which both illustrate and enforce them; they form perfect parts of a perfect whole, and are fully explained both as to their reasons and ends. Moreover, they breathe the very essence of His character who enforced them. To try to build up the edifice of Christian doctrine from the isolated likenesses to some of its teachings which we find in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, is like trying to build a house of sand, though it be true that every grain of sand is a stone in miniature.

21. With regard to the other accounts of Krishna in the Purânas, and elsewhere, they are so evidently subsequent, and some of them long subsequent, to the commencement of the Christian era, that the question of indebtedness, if there be any, solves itself.

22. It will, of course, be asked—and this is a matter of great

interest and importance—what grounds have we for believing, even allowing that the Bhagavad-Gîtâ was composed after the first century A.D., that the Christian story had taken any hold upon India? I may here refer to what I have already suggested on this point in a former paper on Buddhism; but it will be well to note one or two points here also in evidence.

1. There is a fair amount of evidence that St. Thomas was the Apostle of India: namely, the tradition of the Christians that still exist on the Malabar coast; their early connexion with Edessa, and the fact that they still own the Patriarch of Merdin; the account in the Syriac document called *The Teaching of the Apostles (ante-Nicene Library, vol. xx.)*, that “Thomas was the guide and ruler of the Church which he had built in India, in which he also ministered there;” the *Acts of Thomas*, of which, though it is apocryphal, we should observe that the writer had nothing to gain in sending the Apostle to India, but much to gain, if the Apostle whose name he forged was well known, at the time he wrote, as having been the Apostle of India.

2. Then there is the testimony of Eusebius, that Pantænus, the predecessor in the chair of the catechetical school at Alexandria, and tutor of Clemens Alexandrinus, found a gospel of St. Matthew in India, when he went there as a missionary in the second century.

3. There are also the Christian crosses at Madras and Kottayam, with Pahlavi inscriptions; and the royal grants to early Christians inscribed on copper-plates, which also contain signatures in Pahlavi characters, showing that the Christians had in the early centuries of the Christian era already attained a position of considerable importance. The connexion between India and Persia is too long a subject to dwell upon here; but it was evidently very early, as in the sixth century the Indian *Panchatantra* was known in Persia. The Christian influence of Persia, too, may have been greater than is often supposed; for, if Mr. Thomas’s translation of the Hâjîâbâd inscription is correct, even Sapor I., in the fourth century A.D., must have been favourable to Christianity, if not a Christian himself (*Early Sassanian Inscriptions*).

23. It is worth mentioning, too, in connexion with Persia, that in the history of Manes, or Mani, there is a singular illustration of how the story of Jesus Christ was adopted by other religions. Manes identified Christ with the Persian Mithras, giving Christ the character of Mithras, and Mithras the character of Christ; so that, as in the case of Krishna, Christ was degraded by the attributes of Mithras, and Mithras exalted by the attributes of Christ.

24. It may also be added that Max Müller shows that India may have been much more indebted to the outside world than has often been thought, in the early centuries, by proving that "the knowledge of Greek astronomy, and even of Greek astronomical terminology, came to India not later than the fifth century." He quotes the actual Greek names of the zodiacal divisions in their Sanscrit corruptions, as given by Varāhamihira, who died in 587 A.D. (*India*, p. 526). This, too, should help to diminish any previous scepticism as to the possibility of Christianity also having reached and influenced the Hindu by that time.

25. In conclusion, then, there is, so far as I can discern, no indication in the early accounts of Krishna of the fact postulated by Mr. Proctor, that the Hindus were adopting the universal sun-myth theory, the chief characteristics of which all over the world, and in all time, according to Mr. Proctor, were that the God was born of a virgin, his birth-place a cave, the herald a star, his presents gold and frankincense, &c. None of these peculiarities belong to the Krishna of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ. The only title that he has to be ranked as a sun-god is that he represents Vishnu, whose *tri-vikrama*, or three steps over the heavens, is explained as denoting, to quote Professor Monier Williams, "the threefold manifestations of light in the form of fire, lightning, and the sun, or as designating the three daily stations of the sun in his rising, culmination, and setting."

26. The addition of the name "Jezeus" to Krishna, which I find in one of Mr. Proctor's articles in *Knowledge*, as also in a published lecture, by a Mr. H. J. Browne, delivered at Melbourne in 1884, has no warrant from any Hindu book that I am acquainted with; it bears no resemblance to any of the many names by which Krishna is commonly denoted in India, and it is not possible for it to be a transliteration, or even an approach to a transliteration, of any imaginable combination of letters, either in Sanscrit or the dialects of South India. I have been curious to trace its origin, but have so far failed. It looks like an extremely modern attempt to assimilate the name of Krishna to that of Christ Jesus. But at present I must acknowledge it to be a puzzle.*

* Mr. Proctor writes, in reply to a question as to the authority for the name of Jezeus, "Like my correspondent, I am *unable to understand* the modern use of this epithet, which I have used as I found it, supposing it might be a form of one of the 'thousand names of Krishna'—with some of which I am not familiar. . . . *Knowing absolutely nothing as to the real source of the epithet*, but recognising it as an impossibility in connexion with any Indian language, I venture the suggestion that it may have

27. But we do not wonder that Mr. Proctor seems somewhat shaky about his authorities, when we read that, "in each case" of the many avatars of Vishnu, "the new-born God had a virgin mother." The first avatar was a *fish*, the second a *tortoise*, the third a *boar*, the fourth a *man-lion*, the fifth a *dwarf*. Whether these were *lusus naturæ*, or whether we are to understand a virgin fish, a virgin tortoise, and a virgin pig, we are not told. A virgin mother of a dwarf would have been feasible. But these strange facts are not to be found, I believe, in the Hindu books. Neither are many other of the supposed facts, by which the theory of the universal adaptation of the solar myth, as the origin of all religious worship, is supported, to be found in what ought to be taken as the proper authorities. When the solar-myth does appear—and we do not question that the worship of the sun did greatly affect early religion—it appears as a degradation of the true, or an addition to the past, as when Manes identified Christ with Mithras, and placed his dwelling in the sun. And wherever we can really find the distinct account of a virgin-mother, birth in a cave on December 25th, a herald star, songs of angels, and presents of gold and frankincense, &c., at the birth of a professed incarnation of Deity, it will be in the romancing that took place, as in the later accounts of the Buddhists, for instance, after the commencement of the Christian era.

28. It must remain—at least, for the present—an open question whether Krishna was a purely imaginary person, or whether such a name occurred in the original legends of the war of the Mahâbhârata, as denoting the charioteer of Arjuna. If the latter, it is to be observed that the Yâdava tribe, to which, in the Purânas, Krishna is said to have belonged, is traced in the Mahâbhârata to Yadu, the son of a Kshatriya râjah, Yayâti, and Devayâni, the daughter of a Brahman. Now the names of Yadu and Turvasu, brothers, are both mentioned in the Rig Veda as ancestors of the Âryan race. The name Yadu is, therefore, a very ancient one. On the other hand, the tribe of Yâdavas, which is said to be historical, would appear to have been a nomad tribe of Vaisyas—the third, or lowest, caste of the Âryan people. Here, then, the descent of the tribe from the son of a

been borrowed from some ancient Latin writing, in which, because of the close resemblance between the story of Krishna . . . and that of Christ, Krishna is called Jezeus. . . . But I should say the chances must be very heavy against this guess being correct.—(*Knowledge*, Dec. 1886.) The italics are my own. Mr. Proctor here does not say *where* he "found" this epithet Jezeus applied to Krishna.

Kshatriya father and a Brahman mother would seem to be an invention. There is, again, the peculiar way in which Krishna is also made a relation of the Pândavas and Kauravas, which is very mysterious. There is, moreover, a difficulty about Krishna's *raj*, which is put, in the Mahâbhârata, at Dwârakâ, in Guzerat, 700 miles to the south of the site of the great war, and the capital of the Pândavas. Yet between these distant places communications are kept up between him and the great chiefs of the Mahâbhârata. The destruction of Dwârakâ, too, after the war, with nearly all the Yâdavas, and the death of Krishna himself by a passing hunter, are equally strange.

29. Is it not more than probable that Krishna is an altogether imaginary person, introduced to give a new doctrine gleaned from the Christian story, as to the means of union with the divine? It is difficult to hide the suspicion that the very names, Krishna, Vasudeva (the divine Vasu), Devakî (the divine lady), and Yadu, may have been suggested by the names in the Christians' account of Christ, the tribe of Yâdavas being further suitable as a shepherd tribe, though ennobled, according to Hindu ideas, by the mythical descent from higher castes. These words are not mentioned as adaptations, but only as suggested. Krishna, meaning dark or black, may not have been an altogether uncommon name: there are still tribes in India who call their children by names indicating personal peculiarities: the Rishi Vyâsa, the composer, or compiler, of the Mahâbhârata, was also called Krishna-Dwaipâyana (the *Island-born* Krishna)—there may have been many Krishnas; but if the name here was suggested by the name *Christ*, there is a difference of only one letter. Vasu, again, contains the same sounds inverted as Yoseph, or Yusaph. Devaki I have already explained; and Yadu is a singular echo of Yahudah. It may be merely a coincidence that the different names thus echo one another; but if so, it is a very curious coincidence, and is not noticed here for the first time.

30. It should, further, not be overlooked that Krishna is the younger brother of Bala-Râma, who sometimes shares with himself the honour of being the eighth and last past avatar of Vishnu in the Hindu Pantheon. Why should such a discrepancy, or at any rate peculiarity, anywhere occur in Hindu mythology? The sixth and seventh avatars of Vishnu are both Râmas. The sixth avatar is Parasu-Râma, Râma with the axe, the great hero of the Brahmans against the Kshatriyas. The seventh avatar is Râma-Chandra, the glorious Râma, the great hero of the Kshatriyas against

the southern aborigines. The eighth avatar is sometimes also a Râma, Bala-Râma, the strong Râma, or, as he is also called, Râma-Halâyudha, Râma with the plough. May this last not originally have been the great hero of agriculture and peace that followed the long days of war? In any case, Krishna follows him in birth, though in most legends he is placed alone as the eighth avatar of Vishnu. Is not this very suggestive of the comparatively late advent of Krishna on the tablets of Hindu mythology, though it is confessedly difficult, so far, to define chronologically the exact periods to which these legends refer? Krishna seems to have *supplanted* Bala-Râma as the eighth avatar. It is also significant, that the next avatar is Buddha, who must have received this rank long after the expulsion of Buddhism as a schism from India—a consummation which is generally placed at about the eighth century of the Christian era; and that the last avatar is yet to come—that of Kalki—who is to be the destroyer of the wicked, and the liberator of the world. Whence can this idea have arisen but in the wake of revelation?

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. D. Howard, V.P.C.S.).—We have to thank Mr. Collins for a very interesting and valuable paper. The study of these ancient religions is undoubtedly one of great interest, and it is also one which now-a-days is being carried on with great vigour, although very often with a strange forgetfulness of elementary teachings as to the proper methods of investigation. You can only obtain sound inductions by duly ascertaining facts; and yet there are many who write and speak as if the *Light of Asia* were the safest authority for the history of Buddha, or other equally untrustworthy guides were the best verification for the sun myths with which they deal. It is invaluable when those who have opportunities of really studying the philosophy of different nations, whether in India or elsewhere, give us the benefit of their researches.*

* BUDDHISM AND THE VEDA.—Sir Monier Monier Williams, Boden Professor of Sanscrit in Oxford University, speaking lately at Oxford, urged that Christians had no reason to shrink from a comparison with other religious systems. He said :—“To translate the Veda or the Koran into other languages the Hindoos and the Mohammedans consider simply desecration. It is the *sound* and *intonation* of the Sacred Sanscrit and of the sacred Arabic, which is of primary importance and primary efficacy; the *sense* is merely secondary. Millions and millions who know nothing of Sanscrit are obliged to hear and repeat the Veda in Sanscrit, and millions, who are wholly ignorant of Arabic are obliged to hear and repeat the Koran in Arabic. Think of what would happen if no Christian in any part of the world were allowed to hear, read, or repeat his Bible except in Hebrew, or Greek!” Further, he found “no such revelation of our nature and needs in

In the paper we have just heard, Mr. Collins has given us a history of the Krishna myth, which is of exceeding value. He holds that this Krishna myth in all probability took its rise from evident and flagrant imitations of the Gospel histories; and on this point it is very interesting to study the Apocryphal Gospels to see how in them the incongruities and extravagances of thought, which cling to the supernatural, attach themselves like a parasite, even around the history of our Lord Himself. It is to the accurate and minute verification of these early writings and their meanings that we must look for any information as to the real rise of religious thought among the different nations of the earth. And there is another point, that it is not sufficient for us to read the translations, however accurate, of these early writings; we ought to be able, more or less, to throw ourselves into the habit of mind and thought of the people themselves. It is not enough to read the Vedas or any other of those ancient writings; we must read them, as far as possible, as the original writers, as well as those for whom they wrote, understood them. I do not say it is easy to do this; but this, I think, is the only method by which our researches can have any real value. It is difficult for us even to throw ourselves into the feelings of the writers of the Old Testament, and it must necessarily be more difficult for us to form other than a vague idea of the mind of Homer, or the actual facts about which he wrote; when we go back to the most distant ages and the habits of thought most distant from our own, it becomes more difficult still; and we are exceedingly apt to read what was then written in a sense that would profoundly amaze the authors of the books themselves. I trust that after the Honorary Secretary has read some communications that have been received, those present who have studied these subjects, will give us the benefit of their experience.

Captain FRANCIS PETRIE, F.G.S. (Hon. Sec.)—The following communications have been received :—

the Veda as in the Bible. Again, Sanctify this life and all its trials, says our Bible; Get rid of the troubles of life, says the Veda. Sanctify the body, says our Bible; Get rid of the body, says the Veda. Sanctify your daily work, says our Bible; Get rid of all action, says the Veda. Rest not on any merits of your own, says our Bible; Rest on your own merits alone, says the Veda. Get rid of sin, says our Bible; Get rid of misery, says the Veda. Moreover, the historical element is wholly wanting both in the Veda and the Koran. Then note one other very remarkable feature. Progressive development marks our Bible. The light of Revelation is gradually unfolded till the perfect illumination of the Epistles and the Revelation of St. John is reached. The very reverse is the case in the Veda and the Koran. In these the earliest utterances contain the greatest light, the later become darker and darker." After a *life-long study* of the religious books of the Hindoos, Professor Monier Williams said he felt compelled to express publicly his opinion of them. "They begin with much promise amid scintillations of truth and light and occasional sublime thoughts from the source of all truth and light, but end in sad corruptions and lamentable impurities."—ED.

" 7, Norham Gardens, Oxford,

" March 20, 1887.

" DEAR CAPTAIN PETRIE,

" I have read Mr. Collins' paper with much interest. The subject is extremely difficult, and the literature connected with it very large. I cannot enter into details. I can only say that, looking at the question from a purely historical point of view, I see no channel through which the Krishna story could have influenced Christianity, nor *vice versa*. The points of similarity are, no doubt, puzzling at first sight; the points of difference, however, are far more numerous. We must wait and be satisfied that we cannot make out everything. The chief point is a critical study of the original documents. What is the date of the Syriac document called 'The Teaching of the Apostles?'

" The name *Yezeus* was invented, I believe, by Jacolliot, and is a mere corruption of *Yadu*. I answered Jacolliot once (*Selected Essays* II, p. 422; also *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 24), but these books hardly deserve notice.

" Yours sincerely,

" F. MAX MÜLLER."

The Cambridge Professor of Sanscrit, writes:—

" Cambridge, March 15.

" MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for sending me the copy of the Rev. R. Collins' interesting paper. I am sorry that I cannot come up to London next week to attend the Meeting.

" I may perhaps mention that it seems to me not unlikely that the name *Yezeus*, referred to in p. 174, may be a corruption of the Sanskrit word *Iśa*, 'Lord.' *Iśa* properly belongs as a title to Siva; but it is sometimes used of Krishna (or Vishnu), as e.g. in the Vishnu Purāna (Wilson, Hall's ed., vol. v. p. 43). *Iśas* would be the nominative. It is a mere casual coincidence, if this is the name meant.

" I remain, yours sincerely,

" E. B. COWELL."

Dr. Leitner, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Punjab, writes:—

" Krishna is a half-historical character, and the coincidences of his life and that of Christ are too vague to justify the least connexion with, much less the derivation of any of the Krishna myths from, the narrative regarding Christ, or *vice versa*."

Dr. Edersheim writes:—

" 8, Bradmore Road, Oxford, March 20.

" DEAR SIR,—I am greatly obliged by the courteous invitation of the Council to be present at the reading of the paper, of which you have been so good as to send me a proof. I much regret that a literary engagement prevents my coming to town on Monday. I should have much liked to express my sincere appreciation of the paper, and my entire concurrence in the views of its able and learned writer. If my opinion is worth anything on these subjects, I can only state that, so far as my reading has gone, it has led me to precisely similar conclusions, and it confirms those advocated in the paper to be read before the Institute.

" Believe me, yours with much regard,

" ALFRED EDERSHEIM."

Professor Douglas writes :—

“King’s College, March 21.

“DEAR SIR,

“Living out of London as I do, besides having my hands very full of work, I find it difficult to attend evening meetings; and as the subject for discussion this evening is not one to which I have paid more than passing attention, I fear that I should not be able to throw much light upon it. But this much I may say, that nothing is so deluding as Oriental chronology, and before it would be possible to assert that the myths relating to the births of Krishna and Buddha were current prior to our era, it will be necessary to go far more critically into earlier chronology than as yet we have been able to do. Confucius may be added to the list of those sages who are said to have been born in caves, and whose births were announced by heavenly portents. But so far as he is concerned, I have no hesitation in assigning the origin of the myth to a date after Christ.

“Faithfully yours,

“ROBERT K. DOUGLAS.”

Professor Terrien de Lacouperie, Ph.D. Litt.D., writes :—

“62, Chesilton-road, Fulham, S.W., London,

“March 21.

“DEAR CAPTAIN PETRIE,

“I lecture this afternoon at the Royal Asiatic Society, and I am afraid for this reason I shall not be able to be present at your interesting Meeting to-night.

“The Rev. Richard Collins’ paper on Krishna and Solar Myths is a healthy contribution to unbiassed knowledge, with which I am glad to agree in its main lines.

“I have not the books at hand, but I think that the combination Jezeus Krishna was put forth by M. Louis Jacolliot, formerly a French magistrate in India, who wrote unsuccessfully several volumes in view of showing that Christianity was a clever adaptation of Hindu views, ideas, and books.

“Yours truly,

“T. DE LACOUPERIE.”

Rev. H. M. M. HACKETT.—I would have felt some trepidation in rising to speak on this paper, but for the letter which has just been read from Professor Max Müller, because, after carefully reading what Mr. Collins has written, I came to conclusions very different indeed from those at which he has arrived—conclusions which I did not then adopt for the first time, but which had been the result of many years’ work in India. In the first place, I am quite ready to believe in the possibility of Christian notions having filtered from various sources into Hindoo religions in ages that have passed since the coming of Christ, because I have myself seen some strange instances of this in remote villages, where stories of Christ had been repeated and believed as having reference to persons who are supposed to have lived in the neighbourhood—stories that have evidently been derived from Scripture. The theory which the author has put forward is an old

one. The Rev. Dr. Bauerjea was the first to broach it, and the objection I have to it is that it is not proved. There are three points that are necessary to its establishment : first, a late date must be given to the Gîtâ ; secondly, an early date must be given for the spread of Christian influence or knowledge in India ; and, thirdly, similarities must be proved between the Krishna myth and the history of Christ. In section 9 of the paper the author says :—“ The fact is, it is impossible to prove that the Gîtâ was written prior to the Christian era ” ; but, on the other hand, I say it is impossible to prove that it was *not* written prior to the Christian era. So long as we are content to engage in the work of destruction it is not necessary to substantiate our own theory ; but, when we begin to substantiate a theory of our own, we must have a basis for it, and we must be able to prove it. We must remember that many scholars agree that the Bhagavad-Gîtâ was written before Christ. Professor Hunter, in his *Indian Empire*, says there is an allusion to the Mahâbhârata in the work of Dion Chrysostomos, 75 A.D., which would mean that the Bhagavad-Gîtâ itself must have been written some time before that. In paragraph 15 of the paper, we read that “ In the Bhagavad-Gîtâ he (Krishna) is once or twice addressed as Vishnu. The doctrine of the avatâras, or incarnations, of Vishnu, are also only first developed in the Purânas. Thus, the legends of the *fish*, the *tortoise*, and the *boar* are found in the Satapatha Brâhmana ; but it is only in the much-later Purânas that they are described as incarnations of Vishnu. ” There is indeed a vast gap of eight centuries between Christ and the Purânas, during which Vishnu was growing into importance. But upon what grounds does Mr. Collins fix the date of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ at any particular point between the two ? Then, the author of the paper says : “ When the worship of Vishnu as the supreme spirit really superseded that of Indra we cannot definitely say, but it seems to belong to the more metaphysical age of Hindu thought. ” If we were searching for the metaphysical age of Hindu thought, we ought to look for it in the age succeeding the introduction of Buddhism. So much for the first point. Mr. Collins’ arguments have not very plainly established his own theory that the Bhagavad-Gîtâ was written in the third century after Christ. As to the next point, the necessity of establishing an early date for Christian influence in India. In section 22 of the paper we have the arguments, which, I suppose, are familiar to us all, especially that about St. Thomas as the Apostle of India ; and the further statement as to Pantænus, the tutor of Clemens Alexandrinus, finding a Gospel of St. Matthew there in the second century. Both of these are connected with the coast of India, whereas the Bhagavad-Gîtâ has for its scene Upper India ; and how this shows that Christian influence was brought to bear on Upper India and beyond the coastline I am at a loss to see. In the 24th section of the paper we find the dates put very late indeed—587 *Anno Domini*—to show connexion with the Grecians in the sixth century, and also with Persia, on the supposition that some of the Christianity was derived from Persia. But what a difference there is between the sixth century and

the third, when, as stated here, the Bhagavad-Gitâ is supposed to have been written ! But, after all, the real point at issue is the third, namely, What are the similarities between the Krishna myth and the history of Christ ? It certainly seems to me that these similarities are by no means as great as many persons seem to imagine. I believe the best answer to all these theories to be that which Mr. Collins makes in the 2nd section of his paper, where he shows how we may find myths in almost anything. I am here reminded of the various theories adopted to find the number of the Beast, 666, in the names of historical personages, by which it would not be difficult to prove any given person to be the Beast. But let us consider a few of these supposed similarities. In the first place, we have to deal with the idea of incarnation. I do not think that enough stress has been laid on the fact that the Christian idea of incarnation is absolutely unknown even at the present time in India. I allude to the Christian idea of the incarnation of Christ as perfect God and perfect man. In the 5th section of the paper Mr. Collins says :—"I believe I am correct in saying that this is the first time that the distinct idea of incarnation is to be found in the Hindu writings." I suppose he means incarnation in the human form, because, as he remarks a few pages further on—"The legends of the *Fish*, the *Tortoise*, and the *Boar* are found" as far back as "the Satapatha Brâhmana." These legends are related as distinct incarnations of Brahma, who is alleged to have come down and assumed these forms. Surely, here was the idea of incarnation many years before Christ. I am delighted, however, to see that Mr. Collins, at the conclusion of his paper, sets aside those absurd ideas with regard to the similarity of the Krishna myths with the account of Christ from His being born of a virgin, and in a cave, and so forth. Of course, there is not the smallest foundation for assertions of this kind, as Mr. Collins has clearly shown. It was only the other day that I took up a tract, written by Mr. Bradlaugh, and headed, *Who was Jesus Christ ?* in which it was ignorantly stated that Krishna was born of a virgin mother. This shows the evil of allowing statements of such a nature to pass uncontradicted, and I take it that part of the work of this Society is to show that assertions of this kind are unhistorical, and without a vestige of proof. Turning to a book with which I was familiar in India—*Isis Unveiled*—by Madame Blavatzsky, I find her idea, which runs through the work from beginning to end, to be, that religion is one, and all these myths are one. Where she gets some of these ideas, I do not know. Her imagination is certainly called into play when she says that there are credible traditions that Krishna died on a cross, and explains by saying that he was nailed to a tree by an arrow, and therefore was crucified. These theories are so curiously absurd that they do not need a single word of refutation ; but still, it is necessary to refer to them to show that they have no foundation. With regard to the similarity between the names of Christ and Krishna, it merely comes to this, that they spell Krishna with the letters Chr instead of Kr ; but the only theory that could stand is that as the name of Krishna existed before that of Christ, these stories were grafted upon Krishna,

but certainly not that the name was derived from Christ. Turning once more to Mr. Collins' paper, I notice that at the beginning of section 16, he says, speaking of Krishna:—"He preaches a new faith, personal devotion to him, as the embodiment of the divine." In my opinion, that paragraph is the strongest of all with regard to the similarity in teaching, but it is not conclusive, because in the writings of the Hindoos every god is made to claim fealty to himself, and to ask people to believe in him rather than in others. As to the idea of forgiveness, that, of course appears in the Vedas, in which there are prayers for forgiveness. With regard to the sentence in section 6 of the paper,—“Every one will allow, I think, that these are novel doctrines, of which there are no discernible germs in the Vedic literature,”—that remark, I think, may stand. Turning to the miracles mentioned on the latter part of the same page, they are, doubtless, very striking indeed, as showing a resemblance to the works of Christ; but after all, what are they but mere coincidences, such as we might readily imagine in the lives of two persons embracing a great many events, both of them believed by their votaries to be deities. In section 29 of the paper, I think the similarities are decidedly very curious. For instance, we have “Yadu,” as “A singular echo of Yahudah,” and “Vasu” as being like “Yoseph,” or Joseph, inverted. There can be no doubt that these similarities are remarkable ones; but having said that, we have said all. If we were to proceed to base theories on them, and to derive Christianity from them, or to go from them to Christianity, I agree with Professor Max Müller, and do not see what grounds we have for doing so. I would say, in conclusion, that the one thing as to which I am confident, as far at least as my own opinion is concerned, is that the origin of the Krishna myth is not attributable to Christianity in any way whatever, although it is just possible that stories may have been carried into the Krishna myth from the history of Christ. But “the truth is,” as Mr. Collins states in the 20th section of his paper, “That there is only one point common to the two pictures, and that is the bare fact of the incarnation of the Deity.” I am afraid that, speaking on the spur of the moment, I have not put my opinions as clearly as I should have wished; but I have not had time to put my thoughts into writing. I may add that I read the paper with the greatest pleasure, as it shows a great amount of thought and learning. I must apologise to the author for having differed from him; but I suppose it is right for us to express our opinions where we do differ from those who favour us, as Mr. Collins has done, with the results of their studies on particular subjects. I have here, if any one wishes to see them, two diagrams of Krishna, painted by Hindoos of Benares, and showing how he is regarded by the people of that part of India.

Professor ODELL.—I should like to ask this question of the last speaker. How ought it to affect our faith in Christ, if we are to suppose that Krishna and others taught some of the sublime doctrines of Christianity?

Rev. H. M. M. HACKETT.—I think it ought to confirm our faith in Christ, because it confirms our faith in God, as showing that He has not left Himself without a witness in all the nations of the earth.

Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen.—I agree with Mr. Hackett in saying that the connexion between Krishna and Christianity demands from us the Scotch verdict of “not proven.” We know that a school of thought has been gaining ground in England and America, which connects Buddhism and Christianity,—a school which has been chiefly guided by a work Mr. Howard mentioned, Arnold’s *Light of Asia*. I have recently heard a paper read on that work in connexion with the work of Christianity, and I must congratulate Mr. Collins, who has had a long experience in India (as also had the gentleman who read the paper I refer to), on the fact that he has not fallen into the errors which were undoubtedly apparent in the paper recently heard. But I think that the more practical way of looking at the subject is to take account of the points with which the author of the paper has dealt in relation to a number of Indian myths. There is one, for instance, which has reference to the placing of the child Krishna in a basket and sending it over a river. This is common to half-a-dozen other mythical personages, between whom we cannot establish the slightest connexion. I may mention Sargon, King of Babylonia, and the same story is told of Moses, of Romulus, and of the Greek hero, Perseus, while it appears in five or six other forms which I cannot at the present moment remember: however, it is well known that the water-baby is quite a common feature in mythology. Again, we have the birth of the hero from a virgin as a common allegation, and we are not supposed to show that every such myth is to be connected with Christianity. In fact, I think there is just as much risk in making these comparisons on the one side as on the other. The paper is written from an Indian point of view, of which I know very little, but it seems to me that the endeavour to establish the introduction and influence of Christianity in India as having a bearing on the form of the Indian religions is somewhat weak. The solar myth, we know, has been applied to Biblical heroes as well as to other heroes, and the most formidable attack of all was that on which Dr. Goltzieder based his celebrated work, *The Mythology of the Hebrews*, a good deal of which we cannot believe, though there is much in it that we must highly value. A great deal that was there advanced was founded on an essay by a German student, perhaps one of the most powerful essays that has been written on the solar myth. It relates to the myth of Samson, as it is there put, and the story of Samson presents a remarkable resemblance in name and general character to a well-known Oriental story, which Dr. Steintal made out. The essay is a very valuable one; but the danger is dealing with similarities without being able to prove any historical connexion, because if you are proving influence, one way or the other, you must prove it historically. I must say I am not sorry to find that the condition of the chronology of Indian literature is almost as difficult and perplexing as that of other nations. Mr. Budge, of the British Museum, recently discovered a document, which contains many of the clauses of the Nicene Creed. The document was taken from the Temple of Ammon, and is of a very early date, the 18th or 10th Dynasty, and yet it contains clauses of the Nicene Creed.

It would be very hard to prove any connexion between that document which has lain hid in the Egyptian tomb for all these years, and the Nicene Creed, as drawn up so long afterwards. There is hardly any old poem in the Vedic literature to which you can turn, in which you do not find such similarities. It is reasonable to suppose that religious thoughts and feelings which are the outpourings of human minds and hearts, often find expression to a certain extent in the same form, and actuated by the same influences, so that we may frequently find similarities where it would be very difficult to prove the slightest connexion.

THE AUTHOR.—There has been so formidable an array of objections to my paper that I am afraid I shall not be able in the time at our disposal to reply even to a tithe of them. There are, however, one or two points that have struck me somewhat differently from the rest. I think the description of Krishna as a perfect man, and also as the embodiment of the will of the Supreme Being, is very different from all the pictures, as far as I have studied them, both of Hindooism and the heathenism of other nations. There was no idea more common than that the Gods descended in human form; no idea more common than that which made man divine; but when we come to Krishna, and consider his person and teaching, we have such an evident resemblance in his most prominent features to the more prominent features of the Saviour's nature and teaching, that we feel there must have been some reason for it. If the similarity is merely the result of philosophic thought or of man's imagination it would seem wonderful indeed; but we have, further than this, the fact that there are a great many similarities in other directions, as Mr. Boscawen has remarked; and I would ask, how is it that so many of the heathen gods, according to the latest descriptions of them, are so very like the Saviour oftentimes in His manifestations, and very often, also, in His teachings,—why, for instance, should there be the wonderful idea of birth from a virgin in so many cases as Mr. Proctor affirms? We shall find that a great number of these histories were written only for the purpose of upsetting Christianity; as, for instance, in the notorious history of Apollonius of Tyana, by Philostratus, to gratify Julia Domna, as also in the transformation of the Persian Mithras by Manes. There is one particular point to which attention ought to be specially directed, and that is the incongruity between the character of Krishna and his teachings as developed in the Gítá. There is also the same incongruity between the teachings of Buddha and the history of his character, as given in the latest Buddhist writings.

MR. BOSCAWEN.—There is just one thing I should like to add. I do not quite see the force of Mr. Collins' argument with regard to these similarities. If they are to be traced to the influence of Christianity, how does he account for the resemblances which we know are to be found long before the time of Christ? I do not know whether he has read the *Speaker's Commentary*, in which some remarkable resemblances are stated by one who has no bias on the side of Assyrian studies, and he finds a curious similitude between Merodach of the Babylonian literature, and the Messiah of the Hebrew

writers. Merodach is the "healer" who goes between the Gods and men, and is assumed to be the nearest approach between man and God that has ever been found in the Assyrian inscriptions. This and other resemblances which are very striking, are all belonging to a period before the time of Christ. I would, for my own part, repudiate any attempt to establish that the Hebrew Messiah was an echo of Merodach; in the Babylonian inscriptions we frequently find these resemblances.

The CHAIRMAN.—It seems to me that the question is whether certain minute points of resemblance—minor points of similarity—do not show historical connexion? That certain wide similarities may appear in different myths of independent origin, there is no doubt; but one can hardly refuse to say that in certain particular cases there are similarities that can hardly be accidental. Each case must, or ought to be taken and investigated by itself. It is a moot point as to which of these two classes this history belongs; but we must not say that, because Mr. Collins thinks these idylls of the life of Krishna copied from the life of Christ, therefore all similarities of history must have been derived one from the other.

Mr. BOSCAWEN.—What I think is, that if we adopt the view put forward by Mr. Collins, other people may use the same argument in the opposite way.

The CHAIRMAN.—With regard to what has been said about the Nicene Creed, it is exceedingly possible that Athanasius derived many of the expressions he used from secular sources.

Mr. BOSCAWEN.—I saw the manuscript I have mentioned, and it is a strong argument in your favour.

THE AUTHOR.—As far as my own belief is concerned, I am of opinion that throughout the whole of the time before the Christian era there was a continuous knowledge of an early Revelation from God, and that would account for almost everything we want to account for, and I say that we have in the case of Krishna some particular facts and teachings which are, in a very special way, similar to the facts and teachings of Christianity. If the two do not belong to each other, how have they come to display this similarity, and how is it that these teachings of Krishna are so very distinct from everything in Hindooism previously?

Mr. STALKARTT.—The question seems principally to turn on a chronological question about which there can be no certainty, namely, whether this book or that was written first. We know that the Hindoos are very fond of making evidence. They make evidence for the courts. They will lay evidence twenty years in advance, and it is impossible to rely on any Hindoo chronological table, unless you have evidence on which you can base your decision.

The Meeting was then adjourned.

THE AUTHOR'S REPLY.

WITH regard to the date of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, I have not placed it in the third century of the Christian era, but "after the third century"; that is, I have spoken of the third century as the most remote date probable. And here I think I am in good company, for I believe Professor Max Müller places it in what he calls the "Renaissance period of Indian literature," the commencement of which he gives as about 300 A.D.; and Sir Monier Williams speaks of it as, at all events, "a comparatively modern episode of the Mahâbhârata" (*Religious Thought and Life in India*, p. 63). It is perfectly true, as Professor Douglas says, that "nothing is so deluding as Oriental chronology"; what is to be noted, however, is, that recent researches have somewhat modified not a few dates once pretty widely received. Mr. Fergusson's papers on Indian chronology in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* are, for instance, a case in point. And no doubt Professor Max Müller is on very sure ground when he speaks of the "blank in the Brahmanical literature of India from the first century before to the third century after our era" (*India*, p. 86, *et seq.*).

It may not be out of place to remark that there is a passage near the end of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, which may, I think, indicate that it was written at a time when Vaishnavism was seeking by a party, and perhaps more or less secret, propagandism to supplant Buddhism. The passage I refer to is as follows:—"This [namely, the teaching of the Gîtâ]* you should never declare to one who performs no penance, who is not a devotee, nor to one who does not wait on [some preceptor], nor yet to one who calumniates me" (Telang's Translation, p. 129). It has, indeed, by some been supposed that the reference is to the Saivites. But would not the "performer of no penance," the "non-devotee," the "calumniators of Vaishnavism," seem rather to point to the Buddhist than to the Saivite? At all events, this remarkable passage, when its actual reference becomes more clear in the light of a more perfect historical knowledge of Hinduism, should afford us some clue to

* Prohibitions as to certain classes of learners are found at the close of other books also, e.g., *Âitareya-Aranyaka*, iii., 2, 6, 9.

the date of the poem. If, as I suppose, the reference be to the Buddhist, when the antagonism, which ultimately led to the expulsion of Buddhism from the continent, was probably at its height, this passage must be referred to a time some centuries below the commencement of the Christian era ; while if, according to the other supposition, the dreaded enemy were the Saivite, the origin of the passage might be even more modern.

With respect to another subject, frequently expressed, that the doctrine of the Gîtâ is only a natural development of germs of religious thought already exhibited in earlier Hindu writings, especially in the Upanishads, which are generally regarded as the latest of the strictly Vedic writings, it seems to me to be a theory which cannot be substantiated. I cannot find in the Upanishads any adumbration of the special character of the Gîtâ. The Upanishads may be broadly said to be meditations—and often most charmingly illustrated meditations—on the Universal Spirit, as manifested throughout nature, and especially in the persons of gods and men ; and the nearest approach that I remember to have remarked to the teaching of Krishna is the saying of Indra to one who had *reached his heaven*, “ Know me only ; that is what I deem most beneficial to man, that he should know me ” (*Kaushîtaki-Up.*, chap. iii.). But I cannot persuade myself that this is a germ pregnant with the “ mysteries ” of the “ divine song ” ; nor can it lead up to the doctrine of the manifestation of the divine in the human, which is the specific doctrine of the poem.

The real character of Vaishnavism, as distinguished from earlier Hindu religious thought, needs to be carefully studied. The new phase in Vaishnavism is the worship of a personal God, originating from the incarnation of Vishnu in the person of Krishna ; and this is at the real root of Vaishnavism, and plainly discernible in its branches, through its many subsequent entanglements. The thesis of Vaishnavism, and some of the most prominent parts of its construction, are so manifestly of the same nature as the thesis of Christianity, and some of its most prominent features, that it is difficult indeed to believe that they have arisen without any connexion whatever between them. And to suppose—a supposition that we know to have been made—that Christianity itself has borrowed some of the gems of Vaishnavism, and has rescued them from a setting of fable and immorality, to give them a fresh setting in the midst of the divine light of purity ; nay, to claim—and the claim has been made—that they are themselves the very germs and parents of that divine light in the midst of which they glow in the Christian Scriptures, is to make a

supposition in defiance of all ordinary reason. But the fact of such theories having been mooted shows how strong the conviction has been of some real connexion between the two. And I cannot see the ultimate "danger" that is represented as attending the discussing the nature of such apparent connexion. That Christianity is the real source from which Vaishnavism received its new doctrine of the worship of a personal God, seems to me historically consistent. The only remaining supposition possible is, that both are indebted to some early, and more perfect system; this is apparently a not uncommon view of the case: but where, then, is the more perfect original from whence both Christianity and Vaishnavism have derived their leading thoughts? One position, indeed, remains from which my argument might be broken; and that is the denial of the fact that there are so many actual parallelisms between Vaishnavism and Christianity as I have stated. And this we must leave to the judgment of the individual student, who will study Vaishnavism as it develops about the person of Krishna, from the Mahâbhârata on through the Purânic period. The quotations that I have given from the Mahâbhârata and Gîtâ are only samples of many, the limits of a paper forbidding more detailed statements. And these are not to be taken as mere coincidences, but in connexion with the origin and peculiar character of what is called Vaishnavism. Since writing this paper I have had the pleasure of reading Sir Monier Williams' *Religious Thought and Life in India*; and his conclusions with regard to Vaishnavism are so similar, as it seems to me, to what I have advanced, that I venture to quote some of his remarks. He says (pp. 96 and 97), "Vaishnavism is, like Saivism, a form of monotheism. It is the setting aside of the triune equality of Brahmâ, Siva, and Vishnu in favour of one god, Vishnu (often called Hari), especially as manifested in his two human incarnations, Râma and Krishna. 'Brahmâ and Siva,' said the great Vaishnava teacher Madhva, 'decay with their decaying bodies; greater than these is the undecaying Hari.' And here, at the outset of an important part of our subject, I must declare my belief that Vaishnavism, notwithstanding the gross polytheistic superstitions and hideous idolatry to which it gives rise, is the only real religion of the Hindu peoples, and has more common ground with Christianity than any other form of non-Christian faith. Vedism was little more than reverential awe of the forces of nature and a desire to propitiate them. Brâhmanism was simply an Indian variety of pantheistic philosophy. Buddhism, which was a product of Brâhmanism, and in many points very similar to Brâhmanism, gained many followers by its disregard of caste distinctions, and its

offers of deliverance from the fires of passion and miseries of life ; but in its negations and denials of the existence of both a Supreme and human spirit, was no religion at all ; and in this respect never commended itself generally to the Indian mind. Saivism, though, like Vaishnavism, it recognised the eternal personality of one Supreme Being, was too severe and cold a system to exert exclusive influence over the great majority of the Hindu peoples. Vaishnavism alone possesses the essential elements of a genuine religion. For there can be no true religion without personal devotion to a personal God,—without trusting Him, without loving Him, without praying to Him, and, indeed, without obeying Him. Who can doubt that a God of such a character was needed for India,—a God who could satisfy the yearnings of the heart for a religion of faith, love, and prayer, rather than of knowledge and works ? Such a God was believed to be represented by Vishnu.” And again (page 140), “The idea of devotion (*bhakti*) as a means of salvation, which was formally taught by the authors of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, Bhâgavata-Purâna, and Sândilya-sûtra, was scarcely known in early times. The leading doctrine of the Vedic hymns and Brâhmanas is that works (*karma*), especially as represented by the performance of sacrifices (*yajûa*), constitute the shortest pathway to beatitude, while the Upanishads insist mainly on abstract meditation and divine knowledge as the true method.”

It should be observed that this worship of a personal deity in devotion, faith, and love, which is the essence of Vaishnavism, originates in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, in the descent, or avatâra, of Vishnu in the person of Krishna. The other avatâras, or manifestations of Vishnu, are of subsequent development : that is, though the Râmas were historically before Krishna, they were only long afterwards deified. Moreover, the common heathen idea of Gods visiting the earth in human or other form, like Euripides' Bacchus, and numberless other instances, such as those found in Homer's *Od.*, p, 484, Ovid's *Met.*, viii. 626, or such as the fish, tortoise, and boar of the Satapatha Brâhmana, belong to quite a different line of thought. How are we to account for this new departure of Vaishnavism from the earlier Hindu systems of religious teaching ? Could the “religious need ” of India have itself produced the idea of the personal God it required ? I believe I am indebted to Bishop Temple—though I write from memory—for the aphorism, that while we may allow of a development of religion under suitable influences, we cannot allow of evolution from the spontaneous conclusions of the human mind. The latter is the heresy of the day in which we live. That the central thought of Vaishnavism

is an improvement upon earlier Hinduism seems to be allowed on all hands. Its approach to some of the central thoughts of Christianity is emphatically noted by Sir Monier Williams. Must not this change of religious thought and practice which is at the root of Vaishnavism have come from without? This will be found to be always the case in great religious changes; just as Rammohun Roy and Keshub Chander Sen were indebted for their innovations to Western lore. I cannot believe that, as one of my critics seems to suggest, God was "witnessing" to India by revelations to the writer of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ of some wonderful but disjointed truths, to be put into the mouth of the Krishna of the Mahâbhârata. But I can believe that some echoes of the Christian story, such as recommended themselves to the mind of the Brahmân teacher of the period, should find their way into the religious mind of India. I know of no really valid reason against the Bhagavad-Gîtâ having been written long after the third century, though I know that this is not the popular view of the case. And with regard to the probable early influence of Christianity in India, it is a subject that has received too little attention, especially in the matter of search for remains, because it has not been believed. There is no evidence that Pantænus visited only the west coast of India, where the Syrian Christians remain to-day. There is the Christian cross, with Pahlavi inscription, like those on the western coast, at St. Thomas, near Madras, indicating an early Christian settlement on the eastern coast also. Some of the first Roman Catholic missionaries describe other Christian crosses, though unknown at the present time, probably destroyed. Early Christian crosses have also been found in the Nizam's territory. That there is no body of Christians there now is not in evidence. It has been the same in China. In Shensi, in China, there is the now well-known stone with Christian inscription, but no vestige of Christianity around. It is said to have been erected in 781 A.D.,—that is the date, according to Chinese chronology, on the stone itself,—and it records an Imperial proclamation in 638 A.D. authorising the dissemination of Christianity through the Empire. It is a fair inference that this Imperial edict was not issued in the very infancy of Christian preaching in China. The Persian and Syrian Christians were early about in the world. At the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325, a Bishop signed himself "Metropolitan of Persia and the Great India." Here, again, it has been doubted whether "India" may not have meant Arabia, or any portion of, or the whole of the East; but Megasthenes, 600 years before, must have known that the world would understand him when he named his book *Indica*.

There is, surely, very strong presumption, amounting, I should say to demonstration, that Syrian and Persian Christians (often called Nestorians, though I doubt whether that term is always correctly applied) were busy in the farther East during the very early centuries after the Christian era. Pantænus, in the second century, was not the first preacher in that part of India, wherever it was, that he visited, for he found a Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldee, gospel of St. Matthew, which had already been brought there: this being the version used by what has been called the "Hebrew party" in the Church, as distinguished from the "Hellenic party"; and is the version which we should suppose, if one of the Twelve, or any of their immediate disciples, visited India, they would be likely to bring with them.

With regard to the date of the document called the "Teaching of the Apostles," it was brought to light by Dr. Cureton, and placed by him in the Ante-Nicene period. I regret that I cannot here give his reasons for assigning this early date to it, as I have not been in possession of the book since my return to England. The document, annotated if I remember rightly, is to be found in the *Ante-Nicene Library*, vol. xx.

In particular, I should wish to emphasise most strongly the fact, already stated, that I do not quote mere casual coincidences or similarities,—though all such, wherever found, must have some explanation if it can be reached,—but similarities which are parts, and integral parts, of two great wholes, two great systems, both aiming at approach to God, and that by a new phase of religious faith, the one by steps of absolute perfection, the other by steps exactly similar in their main design and intention, but coarse and imperfect in their work, laid in rubbish, and running into inaccessibility.

A great deal might be written upon similarities in other directions; but in a brief paper it is not possible to touch other than salient points. Take the instance given by Mr. Boscawen of Merodach, the "healer," "who goes between the gods and men." I should be disposed to claim this as on my side of the question. Why should not Merodach be an echo of an earlier revelation? in which, for my part, I most firmly believe. So, with regard to the expressions in the document from the Temple of Ammon, which are the same with some of the clauses of the Nicene Creed; they may be vestiges of an early Divine worship, some of the very expressions of which may have become traditional, and embodied in early Christian teaching; just as the first clause of the Lord's Prayer had been common among the Jews for ages. Christ came

not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law, or earlier revelation. It is just the case of the rebuilder of a ruined house using some of the old material.

The ancient heathen systems are degradations of what was once the worship of God by Divine appointment, and cannot but contain some recognisable vestiges, degraded though perhaps the vestiges themselves may have become. In the same way, when a new revelation was added in confirmation and expansion of the old, its echoes may be expected to be found when they are properly sought for (as, for instance, they are found in the Korān), perhaps in wider tracks than even those traced by the inventors of Krishna's and the embellishers of Buddha's histories. A man who believes in the evolution of religions from man's inner consciousness will not care to see this ; but for others, my own belief is that this light will become more and more evident.

I am not able to believe that the Hindu could sit down and deliberately think out a true antidote to some of the deepest religious needs of his nature, namely, a human manifestation of the Deity, all-comprehensive in his acceptance of those who should offer him the homage of entire acknowledgment, devotion, faith, and love ; these are foundation-stones in Christ's revelation of Himself ; and in their connexion with a human manifestation of God absolutely new to Hinduism, as, indeed, to the rest of the heathen world. The picture in itself would be perfect, were it not spoiled by the person of Krishna himself. However historical the original of Krishna may have been, he (the historical Krishna) did not shine as a thousand suns, or exhibit the universe in his body, or go through the cities healing the infirm, raising the dead, restoring deformed women, receiving harlots on their confession of faith, and preaching forgiveness of sin to all who sought it from him, he himself the grossest picture the Hindu has ever drawn of human weakness and immorality. The beauties of the picture do not belong to it. They belong only to the perfect God-man. Even a knowledge, however supposed to have possibly reached the Hindu, of the previous prophecies as to the Messiah could not have suggested such individuality in the features of the picture. I cannot avoid the conviction that the original is only to be found in the veritable history of Christ. And on chronological grounds I fail, I confess, to see the difficulty that some express. In point of fact, there is, after much study by many minds, no reliable evidence for giving the Bhagavad-Gîtâ an earlier date than that of a possible communication of the Christian story in India. So far as the argument founded on supposed quotations from the Gîtâ in other early

documents has gone, there is not a single instance that appears to me conclusive. One instance I have discussed in an early part of the paper.

One word may be said as to the unfairness of denying to the Jewish race, during their captivity at Babylon and dispersion elsewhere, any influence in a religious sense on surrounding nations. This is too long a subject to be dwelt upon here, and I do not at all think myself that it would explain anything in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ ; but it may, perhaps, ultimately be found to explain a good deal in other directions.

I would venture upon the suggestion, that the doctrines of the Gîtâ may indicate a possible attempt at a compromise with Buddhism in some of its most attractive features, with the object of defeating it by setting up a rival system containing some of those features even more vividly portrayed, as gleaned from Christian doctrines.

I may add that I do not think that sufficient notice has been taken of the very artificial way in which Krishna's history and the intricacies of his genealogy, indicating a design on the part of the writer in preparation for the "mysteries" of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, is introduced into the Mahâbhârata.