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BY

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AMALNERKAR ... Amalnerkar, *Priority of the Vedānta-Sūtras over the Bhagavadgītā.*
- BARNETT ... Barnett, *The Bhagavadgītā.*
- BOSE, H. C. ... Bose, *Hindu Civilization under British Rule.*
- DEUSSEN ... Deussen, *Sechzig Upanishad's des Veda.*
- DEUSSEN, P. ... Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanishads.*
- DUTT, C. A. I. ... Dutt, *Civilization in Ancient India.*
G. ... *The Gītā.*
- GARBE ... Garbe, *The Philosophy of Ancient India.*
- GOUGH ... Gough, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads.*
- HOPKINS, R. I. ... Hopkins, *The Religions of India.*
- HOPKINS, G. E. I. ... Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India.*
- KAEGI ... Kaegi, *The Rigveda.*
- KERN ... Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism.*
- KIDD, P. W. C. ... Kidd, *Principles of Western Civilization.*
- KRISHNACARITRA. Bunkim Chundra Chatterji, *Krishnacaritra*, fourth edition.
- MACDONELL ... Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature.*
- MONIER-WILLIAMS. Monier-Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism.*

- MÜLLER, A. S. L. Müller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*.
- MÜLLER, S. S. I. P. Müller, *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*.
- RHYS-DAVIDS, B. *Buddhism, its History and Literature*.
- RHYS-DAVIDS, B. I. *Buddhist India*.
- S. B. E. ... *The Sacred Books of the East*.
- SCHÜRER, H. J. P. Schurer, *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*.
- TELANG ... Telang, *The Bhagavadgītā, etc.* (Sacred Books of the East, vol. VIII).
- WEBER, I. L. ... Weber, *Indian Literature*.

GĪTĀ AND GOSPEL

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE *BHAGAVADGĪTĀ* ?

IN the whole literature of the world there are few poems worthy of comparison, either in point of general interest, or of practical influence, with the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is a philosophical work, yet fresh and readable as poetry; a book of devotion, yet drawing its main inspiration from speculative systems; a dramatic scene from the most fateful battle of early Indian story, yet breathing the leisure and the subtleties of the schools; founded on a metaphysical theory originally atheistic,¹ yet teaching the most reverent adoration of the Lord of all: where shall we find a more fascinating study? Then its influence on educated India has been and still is without a rival. Everybody praises the Upanishads, but very few read them; here and there one finds a student who turns the pages of a Sūtra or looks into Śankara or Rāmānuja, but the most are content to believe without seeing. The *Gītā*, on the other hand, is widely read and loved among the educated classes. Though it is only *smṛiti*, tradition, not *sruti*, revelation, yet it is much more studied, admired and praised to-day than

¹ The philosophic basis of the book is primarily the *Sāṅkhya* system which is essentially atheistic.

any Hymn, Brāhmaṇa or Upanishad. Editions of the text are constantly being published in all parts of the country; countless translations in English, and in Bengali and the other vernaculars are to be met everywhere; and books, essays and articles dealing with its philosophy, theology and ethics pour almost daily from the press. Nor is there any need to apologize for this partiality: the Divine song is the loveliest flower in the garden of Sanskrit literature.

The poem has also received a great deal of attention and admiring recognition from Europeans. It was the first piece of Sanskrit literature ever translated into English. This translation was by Charles Wilkins, and appeared, as early as 1785, under the title of *The Song of the Adorable One*. Since then it has been frequently brought before the English public, the most famous version of all being *The Song Celestial*, by the late Sir Edwin Arnold. Nor is this strange; for the poem has many attractions for the western mind. The lofty sublimity to which it so often rises, the practical character of much of its teaching, the enthusiastic devotion to the one Lord which breathes through it, and the numerous resemblances it shows to the words of Christ, fill it with unusual interest for men of the west. But while it has many points of affinity with the thought and the religion of Europe, it is nevertheless a genuine product of the soil;¹ indeed it is all the more

¹ Dr Lorinser's attempt (*Die Bhagavadgītā*, übersetzt und erläutert von Dr. F. Lorinser, 1869) to prove that the author of the *Gītā* borrowed many ideas from the Bible must be pronounced a failure Cf Garbe, 19, 83-85, Max Muller, *Natural Religion*, 97-100 Hopkins, *R. I.*, 429.

fit to represent the genius of India that its thought and its poetry are lofty enough to draw the eyes of the west.

What then is the *Gītā*? Can we find our way to the fountain whence the clear stream flows? A brief study of Sanskrit literature may help us.

I. MANTRA PERIOD—(a) *Composition of the Vedic Hymns.* When we first meet the Aryan tribes, they were settled partly on the outer, partly on the inner, side of the Indus (primeval patronymic of both India and her religion), and the tribesmen were soldier farmers, equally used to the plough and the sword. They were constantly at war with the aborigines round about them, and they looked eagerly for sunshine and rain to mature their crops and give them fodder for their flocks and herds. They were a deeply religious race, worshipping the Devas (i.e., the Shining Ones), and trying to win their favour with sacrifice and song. Each householder had priestly functions, approaching the gods for himself and his family. They loved song, and believed the gods shared this partiality. Hence when some man of poetic power composed a fine hymn of praise in honour of Agni or Varuṇa, it was carefully committed to memory, constantly used at sacrifices and handed down from generation to generation.

The religion of the tribes was polytheistic: they personified and worshipped the powers of nature. Their departed fathers were also believed to be a sort of demi-gods, and received the honour of regular worship. Frequently all the gods are worshipped together; they are often adored in pairs; but more often a single divinity is selected for personal praise. Several of the

hymns addressed to Varuṇa are written in a high moral and spiritual strain and come very near monotheism indeed.¹

Towards the end of this creative period philosophic speculation appeared among the Aryans, and a few hymns containing their questions and their theories have been preserved.² These deal chiefly with the origin of the universe. Some of the hymns³ take for granted the existence of primeval matter, and ask how or by whom it was transformed into a *cosmos*. In others⁴ there is more monotheistic feeling, and a creator, either Hiraṇyagarbha or Viśvakarman, is described. In others⁵ the strain of thought is agnostic.

(b) *Compilation of the Vedas*.—At a later date over a thousand of the best hymns produced in this early fertile period were gathered together and arranged in a great collection, which is now known as the *Rigveda*. Since most of the hymns are arranged in great groups according to authorship, and the hymns in each great group are arranged in smaller groups according to the gods addressed, scholars are agreed that this collection was made for the purpose of guarding the hymns from change and destruction. But this historical collection suggested another of a different order. Aryan society had so far developed by this time that priestly functions tended to be monopolized by a class of men devoting their whole lives to priestly work. They were the

¹ On the religion of the *Rigveda* see Kaegi, 27-74; Hopkins, *R.I.*, Chaps. II-VI; Macdonell, 67-115; Bose, *H.C.*, I, 6-9; Dutt, *C.A.I.*, Vol. I, Chap. V; Monier-Williams, Chap. I.

² Hopkins, *R.I.*, 141; Macdonell, 385; Garbe, 1-2; Kaegi, 87.

³ e.g., X, 90

⁴ X, 81; 82; 121

⁵ X, 129.

depositories of sacrificial rules, and they knew the appropriate hymns. These priests were even divided into orders corresponding to distinct sacerdotal duties. So some individual among the special class of priests who presided over the ritual of the Soma sacrifice made a collection of all the stanzas which he and his brother *Udgātṛis* were accustomed to chant at the pressing and out-pouring of the divine drink. This collection is called the *Sāmaveda*,¹ or chant-book. Then the *Adhvaryu* priests formed a sacrificial manual, containing not only the liturgical verses and prose formulæ which they muttered while they were preparing the altar and the sacrifices, but also their interpretation and the rules for the attendant ritual: this is the *Black Yajurveda*,² or Mixed Sacrifice-book. By the time this compilation was made the home of the Aryan people was the great middle-land between the Sutlej on the west and the junction of the Ganges and the Jumna at Prayāga on the east.³ Next a further step was taken: the verses and the prose formulæ were separated from their interpretation and the rules and were formed into the *White Yajurveda*,⁴ or Pure Sacrifice-book.

II. BRĀHMAṆA PERIOD—As time went on, the priesthood gained a greater ascendancy over the other classes, the sacrifices became more complex and elaborate and the training of the priests was correspondingly extended. The Brāhmaṇas⁵ place before us the sacerdotal learning

¹ Kaegi, 3; Macdonell, 171-174.

² Kaegi, 4; Macdonell, 174-185.

³ Macdonell, 174; Hopkins, *R.I.*, 177. ⁴ Macdonell, 177.

⁵ Kaegi, 5; Macdonell, 202 ff.; Müller, *A. S. L.*, Chap. II; Bose, *H. C.*, I, 9-12.

of this period as taught in the Vedic schools. They are in prose, and the language is considerably different from the language of the hymns. The kernel of these books consists of sacrificial rules and instructions; for each Brāhmaṇa is a handbook to one of the Vedas and was meant to enable the priest to do his part in the sacrifice accurately and intelligently; but, besides sacrificial directions and explanations, they also contain a great deal of mythology, philology, literary lore, grammar, theology, mysticism, magic and such like. In passing from the hymns of the *Rigveda* to the Brāhmaṇas one receives a very rude shock. The fresh poetry of the youth of the world has given place to the most prosaic and uninteresting disquisitions in the whole world.¹ These books thus introduce us to an altogether different period, in which we meet new men, new ideas and new ways of life. The beginnings of the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul make their appearance here.²

III. UPANISHAD PERIOD—The Aranyakas³ and the Upanishads⁴ place before us a further development of Indian religion. Reflection led to the perception of the great truth, that the kernel of religion is not the ritual act but the heart of piety behind it. Many a man who had found the endless formulæ and the showy ceremonial of the sacrifice a serious hindrance to real religion, sought refuge from the noise and distraction of

¹ Müller, *A. S. L.*, 389.

² Gough, Chap. 1; Garbe, 2-7; Macdonell, 223; Hopkins, *R. I.*, 204; Deussen, *P.*, 324-328.

³ Müller, *A. S. L.*, 313 ff.; Macdonell, 204; Kaegi, 5.

⁴ Deussen, *P.*, Müller, *A. S. L.*, 316 ff.; Macdonell, 205, 218 ff.; Kaegi, 5; Bose, *H. C.*, 1, 12-19.

the popular cult in the lonely silence of forest or desert. To run over the sacrifice in one's own mind, they reasoned, was as acceptable to the gods as to kill the horse or to pour the ghee upon the altar fire. But they soon reached the further position, that for the man who has attained TRUE KNOWLEDGE sacrifice is altogether unnecessary. For knowledge of the world-soul emancipates a man from the chain of births and deaths and leads to true felicity. The main purpose, thus, of the Upanishads is to expound the nature of the world-soul. Their teaching is by no means uniform. Not only do the separate treatises differ the one from the other; contradictory ideas are frequently to be met with in the same book. They all tend to idealistic monism; they all agree in identifying the soul of man with the world-soul; but on the questions, whether the latter is personal or impersonal, how spirit and matter are related, and how the emancipated human soul will join the divine soul after death, there is no unanimity.¹

There is thus no speculative system to be drawn from these books. Those of their ideas that are held with settled, serious conviction are taught rather dogmatically than philosophically; and, on the other hand, where there is freedom of thought, there is rather a groping after the truth than any definite train of illuminative reasoning. Yet this occasional, conversational, unconventional character gives these simple and sincere treatises their greatest charm, and fits them for that devotional use to which so many generations of pious readers have put them. To this early period there

¹ For the teaching of the Upanishads see Deussen, *P.*, Hopkins, *R. I.*, Chap. X; Garbe, 7-10; Barnett, 7.

belong only the first great group of prose Upanishads, the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, *Chāndogya*, *Taittirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Kaushītaki* and parts of the *Kena*.¹

IV. SŪTRA PERIOD—Books and writing were not used in the ancient Vedic schools; the master repeated to his pupils what he himself had learned, until they had committed it to memory. Consequently, as knowledge grew, and the compass and the number of the subjects taught in the schools went on increasing, the mass of material to be acquired became more and more unmanageable. It became impossible for the student to store in his memory everything which he wanted to know, so long as it was presented to him in the extraordinarily prolix manner of the Brāhmaṇas. A new method was therefore invented. All the knowledge which a student had to acquire was expressed in strings of aphorisms of the briefest and most pregnant description. As time went on and the new method developed, it became a conventional system of technical terms like a modern telegraphic code. These pilules of condensed knowledge were called *Sūtras*.² The method was not confined to the knowledge which the priest needed for the performance of his duties. The style was found to be of great practical utility and was therefore widely used and became the chief literary characteristic of the age.

The Sūtra period is usually spoken of as lasting for about three centuries, from 500 B.C. to 200 B.C. The upward limit is fixed roughly by the fact that the rise of

¹ See Deussen on each of these Upanishads, and especially p 264 Cf. Macdonell, 226, and Garbe, 69.

² Kaegi, 6; Macdonell, 244; Hopkins, *R. I.*, 245; Müller, *A. S. L.*, 71-74

the *Sūtra* style was contemporaneous with the life-time of Buddha.¹ The old Upanishads are probably all anterior to him; the bulk of the existing *Sūtras* are probably posterior. The lower limit does not mean that *Sūtras* ceased to be written about 200 B.C., but that forms of literature sufficiently new to characterize a new age then came into prominence.

The *Sūtra* period also covers the composition and compilation of the books of the Buddhist canon; for Buddha himself stands at the beginning of the period, while the canon was already complete and practically what it is to-day in the time of Asoka.² Note that several parts of the canon are called *Suttas*,³ which is simply the popular pronunciation of the Sanskrit word *sūtras*. The Jain canon also falls within this same period.⁴

The philosophical speculation which gave birth to the early Upanishads produced Jainism, Buddhism and scores of other schools of which we get glimpses in the early Buddhist books.⁵ Most of these schools remained within the lines of Brahmanical order: what distinguished the Buddhist and the Jain was that they broke away and produced new societies. Both these new religions met with extraordinary success, but they did not crush out the old. Brahmanic students continued their speculations along the lines of the old Upanishads, and the fruits of their labours during the period we are dealing with have

¹ Macdonell, 244; Rhys-Davids, *B.*, 53-54.

² Rhys-Davids, *B. I.*, Chap. X; Kern, 2-3.

³ Rhys-Davids, *B.*, 53.

⁴ Rhys-Davids, *B. I.*, 164.

⁵ Rhys-Davids, *B.*, 30-35.

come down to us in the five great verse Upanishads, the *Kaṭha*, *Īśā*, *Śvetāśvatara*, *Muṇḍaka* and *Mahānārāyaṇa*.¹ The brief, pointed, aphoristic character of these poems² shows plainly that they were put together to be committed to memory. The same style was used by the Buddhists of this period: compare especially the *Dhammapada* and other volumes of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*.³ These Upanishads show clearly that the six systems of philosophy which later became recognized as orthodox were then only in the making. Ideas occur in them which later took definite shape as Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Vedānta doctrines,⁴ but there is no thought of their being mutually exclusive systems. The only one that is mentioned by name is the Sāṅkhya, and that occurs but once.⁵ There is a distinct tendency in these poems to adopt the doctrine of Grace,⁶ i.e. that salvation is not a fruit of true knowledge but a gift of God. The idea of *Bhakti*,⁷ which became afterwards so popular, appears but once. Along with these verse Upanishads we may take three prose works, which are slightly later but belong to the same group, the *Praśna*, *Maitrāyaṇīya* and *Māṇḍūkya*.⁸

V. DHARMAŚĀSTRA PERIOD—As the Sūtras grew out of the Brāhmaṇas, so the Dharmaśāstras grew out

¹ Macdonell, 226. Deussen, 261, 523, 288, 544, 241.

² Deussen, 264

³ Rhys-Davids, *B*, 67 ff

⁴ *Kaṭha*, 3, 10-13, 6, 6, 6, 7-11, 6, 14-18, *Śvet. paśṣim*; *Muṇḍaka*, 2, 1, 1-3; *Mahānār.*, 63, 21. Cf. Deussen, *ad loca*.

⁵ *Śvet* 6, 13

⁶ *Kaṭha*, 2, 23. *Śvet.* 3, 20. *Muṇḍaka*, 3, 2-3. Cf. Hopkins, *R. I.*, 238

⁷ *Śvet* 6, 23

Deussen, *ad loca*. Macdonell, 226.

of the Sūtras (mainly out of the Dharmasūtras).¹ The two classes of literature differ, however, considerably in several respects: the Dharmasūtras deal only with religious rules, while the Dharmasāstras deal with the whole field of law; the Sūtras are in crabbed prose, while the Sāstras are in flowing ślokas; the Sūtras were textbooks for students, and were confined each to its own school, while the Sāstras are meant for popular use and shun the peculiarities of all the schools.² These books (above all the *Mānava Dharmasāstra*) have exercised a very remarkable influence over the life and history of the Hindu people; for they have not only been used in the law-courts but have guided the domestic life of the people in a multitude of ways. The growth of these metrical law-books was a long and slow process: scholars date the period from 200 B.C. to 500 A.D. *Manu* seems to have reached its present form not later than 200. A.D.³

It was during this period that the earlier of the short Upanishads of the *Atharvaveda*⁴ made their appearance. They fall into four great groups, according as they teach (a) pure Vedāntism, (b) Yoga practices, (c) the life of the Sannyāsin, or (d) Sectarianism.⁵ For our purpose the last of the four is of most importance. 'These sectarian treatises interpret the popular gods Śiva (under various names, such as Īśāna, Maheśvara, Mahādeva)

¹ Kaegi, 8; Macdonell, 428.

² See especially the introduction to *Manu* in the *S. B. E.*

³ Macdonell, 428-429.

⁴ Deussen, 4; Macdonell, 238; Dutt, *C. A. I.*, Vol. I, 119; Garbe, 69.

⁵ Deussen, 541-543; Macdonell, 238-239.

and Viṣṇu (as Nārāyaṇa and Nṛsiṅha) as personifications of the Ātman. The different Avatārs of Viṣṇu are here regarded as human manifestations of the Ātman.¹ Let readers note that the doctrine of Avatārs is quite unknown in the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas, the early Upanishads, the Sūtras and the verse Upanishads.² We may also note that in groups (a) and (b) we find what is not found in earlier Upanishads, namely, the phrase *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* used as the name of a system.³ Here also the doctrines of Grace and *Bhakti*, the beginnings of which we found in the verse Upanishads, are regularly taught.

We have not yet dealt with the *Mahābhārata*. The reason is that the long process of the growth of the Epic extended from 500 B.C. to 500 A.D.,⁴ thus covering both our fourth and our fifth periods. The basis for all criticism of the Epic is supplied by the poem itself. The words we are about to quote are from Macdonell's *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 284, but any one may verify the facts for himself by reference to the first book of the *Mahābhārata*: 'We further find in Book I the direct statements that the poem at one time contained 24,000 *ślokas* before the episodes (*upākhyāna*) were added, that it originally consisted of only 8,800 *ślokas*, and that it has three beginnings.' Working from this starting point, scholars have studied the Epic with the minutest care, and have come to the

¹ Macdonell, 239 Cf. Deussen, 543 Weber, *I L.*, 153 ff

² Bose, *H. C.*, Vol. I, 4.

³ *Garbha*, 4. *Prāṇāgnihotra*, 1, *Śūlka*, passim.

⁴ Hopkins, *C. E. L.*, Chap. VI. *R. L.*, 350. Macdonell, 285-288.

conclusion¹ that the history of its growth falls into the following three stages :

(a) Early heroic songs, strung together into some kind of unity : this is the stage recognized in Book I, when the poem had only 8,800 *ślokas*, and is in all probability the point at which it is referred to by Āśvalāyana in his *Gṛihya Sūtra*.

(b) A Mahābhārata story with Pāṇḍu heroes, and Kṛishṇa as a demi-god ; this is the form in which it had 24,000 *ślokas*, and is the stage of the poem referred to by Pāṇini.

(c) The Epic re-cast, with Kṛishṇa as all-god, and a great deal of didactic matter added. This last stage was complete by about 500 A.D. Interpolations of an unimportant character have taken place since.

The third stage of the Epic thus falls in the *Dharma-śāstra* period.

VI. PURĀṆA PERIOD—As this is outside the range of our enquiry, we need only mention it.

We had better exhibit the main points of the development we have been studying in tabular form.

SANSKRIT LITERATURE

I. *Mantra Period*

(a) Composition of the Vedic Hymns.

(b) Compilation of the Vedas.

II. *Brāhmaṇa Period*

The early Brāhmaṇas.

¹ Hopkins, *G. E. I.*, 397-398 ; Macdonell, 283-286. Bunkim Chundra recognizes the second and third stages : see *Krishna-charitra*, Chap. XI.

III. *Upanishad Period*

Only the early prose Upanishads.

IV. *Sūtra Period*

The Sūtras.	The Verse Upanishads.
The Jain Canon.	The Buddhist Canon.

V. *Dharmaśāstra Period*

Manu.	Third stage of the
Yājñavalkya.	Mahābhārata.
Nārada, etc.	Early Atharvan Upanishads.

VI. *Purāṇa Period*

We have thus briefly surveyed the history of Hindu literature: what is the place of the *Gītā* in this long evolution? When was it composed?—The evidence falls under several heads, which we shall deal with separately:

(a) *The Ideas of the Gītā.* Every one knows that a large amount of the teaching of the *Gītā* is taken from the Upanishads: indeed the poem is frequently spoken of as the milk of the Upanishads. Nor is it only from the earliest group of Upanishads that these ideas are drawn. In the verse Upanishads, as we have seen, we have a few scattered references to the ideas of the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies: the word Sāṅkhya itself actually occurs once; and the doctrines of Grace and Devotion (*prasāda* and *bhakti*) occur once or twice. All these conceptions and words are as common as possible in the *Gītā*: so that we have no difficulty in perceiving that it is a later work than these

Upanishads. But the leading idea of the *Gītā* is that Kṛishṇa is Brahma incarnate; round that all the rest of the teaching gathers. Now to what period of Hindu thought does this idea belong?—We seek for it in vain in the Vedas; there is not a trace of it in the Brāhmaṇas or in the early Upanishads; it is never found in the Sūtras, nor yet in the Upanishads belonging to that period; it first appears in the Atharvan Upanishads and in the third stage of the *Mahābhārata*. There for the first time in Sanskrit literature the doctrine of *Avatārs* appears. The welding of the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga systems as Sāṅkhya-Yoga does not occur earlier than the Atharvan Upanishads, as we have seen. Thus, all the ideas of the *Gītā* point to our fifth period as the time when the poem arose.

(b) *Literature mentioned in the Gītā.* The Vedas¹ were a well known and well defined body of literature in those days; and they are distinguished from later literature by the technical name for the highest form of revelation in Hinduism, namely, *Sruti*.² The Brāhmaṇas³ are mentioned also. We need not argue that the Upanishads were well known, when the poem was composed: for that is patent in almost every *śloka*: but we may mention that in one verse⁴ at least they are distinctly referred to. In another well-known passage, Sūtras⁵ are spoken of in contradistinction to

¹ sarveshu vedeshu, II, 46 Cf. X, 22, XV, 15; XVII, 23.

² srutivipratipannā....buddhi, II, 53.

³ brāhmaṇās tena vedās ca yajñās ca vibitāh purā, XVII, 23.

⁴ vedāntakrid vedavid eva ca aham, XV, 15.

⁵ brahmāsūtrapadais ca eva hetumadbhir viniścitaih, XIII,

Vedic verses. In several places the word Śāstras¹ occurs. In one of these passages we have the phrase, 'Therefore let the Śāstra be thy authority in determining what ought to be done or what ought not to be done': clearly, the books, which the writer had in mind, were the Dharmaśāstras; they alone could be such an authority as he wished his readers to recognize. Thus, the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Sūtras*, and the *Dharmaśāstras* are all referred to in the *Gītā*: clearly, this line of evidence points again to our fifth period as the time of the composition of the Song.

(c) *The Versification of the Gītā*. On this point we shall merely refer to the opinion of the late Mr. Justice Telang of Bombay. In his introduction to the *Gītā*³ he comes to the conclusion that the versification of the *Gītā* is later than that of the verse Upanishads. This third line of evidence thus points to the same conclusion as that suggested by a study of the ideas and the literature of the Song.

(d) *The Language of the Gītā*. An analysis of the language of the *Gītā* shows (1) an element which comes direct from the earliest Upanishads, appears again in the verse Upanishads, and then is common to the *Gītā* and the Atharvan Upanishads. The next (2) element is not found in the earliest Upanishads at all, but appears in the verse Upanishads, and then in the *Gītā* and in the Upanishads of the *Atharvaveda*. But the

¹ śāstravidhim utsrījya, XVI, 23 Cf. XVI, 24 XVII, 1-5

² tasmāc chastram pramāṇam te kāryākāryavavasthitau XVI, 24.

³ S. B. E., Vol. VIII, p. 15.

largest and most characteristic part (3) of the vocabulary of the *Gītā* is not found at all in the two first classes of Upanishads, but is either original, or common to the *Gītā* with the Upanishads of the *Atharvaveda*. The two lists which follow will give our readers some idea of this common element. These lists have been compiled from Col. Jacob's *Concordance to the Principal Upanishads and Bhagavadgītā*, where the language of the *Gītā* may be readily studied.

Words common to the *Gītā* and the Atharvan Upanishads, but not found earlier :—

Apamāna, abhyāsayoga, avibhakta, aśubha, amūḍha, asammūḍha, janmamaran, jātidharma, jitendriya, jīvabhūta, caturbhūja, caturvarṇya, chinnaśansaya, kalebara, kāmabhoga, kartṛitva, kārakakūṣastha, kshama, kshānti, dambha, darpa, naraka, nasabh-yantarcarin, naishkarmya, naistika, parityaj, tyāgin, buddhiman, kṛṣhigorakshavanijyam, phalaprapada, sitoshṇa, vitaragabhayakrodha, gatavyatha, kṛipa, kshipram, durlabhatara, deveśa, nayaka, nigraha, anugraha, padmapatra, purātana, pushkala, pūja, pṛithakvidha, prali, prāpti, prīti, brahmabhūya, bhavana, manogata, mahābhūta, maheshvāsa, māmaka, mithyā, muhus, yaji, dvijottama, purushottama, jnānacakshus, jnānāgni, jnāni, guṇātita, guṇavan, anuchint, anumantṛi, anusmṛi, yugapad, rasana, varjam, viniścita, vimokshaṇa, viyuj, vivardhana, viviktadeśa, viśuddhi, vīksh, śanaih, śaucam, śrāddhāvan, sadbhāva, samantatah, samācāra, sahaja, sūkshmatva, svatejas, hitakāmyā, nityatva, nityāyukta, nityaśah, ātmabhūta, ātmayan, prasannātma, yogayukta, yogasevā, nīrama, nirahankāra, nirāśis, nirdeśa, nirdvandva, nirmama, nirmala, niścala, niścita, paratara, paratas, paraspara, punarjanma, sarva-karman, sarvakshetra, sarvatravasthita, sarvathā, sarvadukhha, sarvadharmā, sarvapāpa, sarvabhāva, sarvaveda, madbakti, bhakti-yoga.

Phrases common to the *Gītā* and the Atharvan Upanishads, but not occurring earlier :—

Sa amṛitatvaya kalpate ; lābhālābhau ; sthirabuddir asanmudha , tyaktva deham ; tyaktum aseshatah ; iccha dveshah ; sukham dukkham ; nirasir aparigrahaah ; sthasyati niścala ; mokshavishyami

ma suçah . kāmah krodhah lobhah . śabdadin viśhayan , manah
 sanyamya . nasyatra sanśayah ! natra sauśayah ; sarvapāpāih pra-
 mucyate . sarvabhūtastham ātmanam sarvabhūtāni ca ātmani ;
 sarvabhūtabhite ratah . sarvakarman sannyasya . kurma angani iva .

These long lists might be made much longer, but it is not necessary. Every reader who knows anything about the language of the *Gītā* will perceive at once that these words and phrases constitute a very large part of the most characteristic diction of the poem. Now a book containing large numbers of the technical phrases of modern evolution and biology could not be dated earlier than the second half of the nineteenth century ; and, similarly, since a very large part of the diction of the *Gītā* is the same as the phraseology of the Atharvan Upanishads, and is not found earlier, the inference is inevitable that it belongs to the same period.

(e) *External allusions and quotations.* In Hindu literature, as in the literature of other lands, every great book has left its impression deep on the later literature. Thus the Vedas are quoted and referred to innumerable times in the Brāhmaṇas, the Upanishads, the Sūtras, etc. Similarly, the early Upanishads are quoted thousands of times in later books, and so on. Now the *Gītā* is one of the greatest books that India has produced ; its influence to-day is paramount ; and all over the world it is recognized as a really great work. Hindus have been accustomed to think of it as a very early work ; but strangely enough, when we enquire where its influence begins to be felt in Sanskrit literature, we discover that the earliest certain reference to it is in the works of Kālidāsa. From that time onwards the *Gītā* is well known, is frequently quoted, and has

numerous commentaries written upon it; but before that date there is not a single allusion to it anywhere. Mr. Justice Telang is inclined to believe that it is alluded to in the *Brahma Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, but the evidence is not at all clear, and most scholars think that the *Gītā* has used the *Sūtras*, and not *vice versa*. Here then is a fact of very grave importance: if the *Gītā* is not quoted in any book earlier than Kālidāsa, clearly it cannot be an early book. It is simply impossible to believe that a work possessing the power and the charm of the *Gītā* could have existed in India for centuries and should have failed to produce the slightest impression on the great men who produced the literature. This line of evidence also fits in perfectly with that which we have already considered: if the *Gītā* belongs to our fifth period, then we can understand why its literary influence should not be felt before Kālidāsa who belongs to the very end of that period. His date is believed to be the first half of the fifth century A.D.¹

Thus we reach the conclusion that all available lines of evidence point to the same conclusion, that the *Gītā* was produced somewhere in our fifth period. We need not attempt to fix even the century to which it belongs, far less the year.² We simply recognize that all the

¹ Telang, *S. B. E.*, Vol. VIII, 28-29; Macdonell, 324-325.

² Mr. Justice Telang was inclined to put the date before the third century B.C., but his otherwise most judicious criticism is faulty in this that it does not take all the factors of the problem into consideration. Others, such as Müller, Weber, Davies and Lorinser, incline to a very late date, about the third century A.D. Most writers believe that the true date lies between these extremes. So

evidence available leads us to the conclusion that it was composed during the period when the Dharmaśāstras and the earlier Atharvan Upanishads were written.

Can we then accept the declaration of the poem itself, that it was uttered by Kṛishṇa on the battlefield of Kurukshetra?—That necessarily depends upon the history and the chronology. At what point then in the historical development of the literature which we have been studying does the famous battle stand?

It is perfectly clear from the Vedḥic hymns that, at the time when they were being composed, the Aryan tribes were still in the Panjāb. All the geographical data of the hymns point to the country watered by the Indus and its tributaries as the home of the people who made and sang the hymns. But when we look into the *Yajurveda*, we find that, when it was compiled, the home of the Aryan people was the great middle-land between the Sutlej on the west and the junction of the Ganges

Momer-Williams, Hopkins, Fraser and others. Prof. Amalnerkar's pamphlet contains a number of most interesting points. His contention, that the phrase, *Brahmāsutrapadath* (G XII. 4) refers to the *Vedānta Sūtras*, and that the *Gītā* is therefore the later work of the two, has been accepted by Max Müller (*S S I P*, 155), but Prof. Hopkins thinks the *Gītā* is earlier than the *Sūtra* (*R I*, 400). The theory which Prof. Hopkins holds, that the Divine Song was originally an Upanishad, and that it was redacted, first as a Vāishṇavite poem, and then a second time in the interests of Kṛishṇaism (*R I*, 389), would account, on the one hand, for the numerous inconsistencies in its teaching, and, on the other, for the very conflicting signs of date which it presents. For a criticism of Bunkim Chandra's views, see the Appendix.

and Jumna at Prayāga on the east. This proves that in the interval they had marched eastwards and taken possession of new territory. In the centre of this new territory is the district of Kurukshetra. The next point to notice is that, in the recension of the *Black Yajur* which was used by the Kāṭhaka school, king Dhṛitarāshṭra Vaicitravīrya is mentioned as a well-known person: this proves that the composition of this particular book was not far removed in time from the epoch of the great war. We may note also, as corroborative evidence, that the names of a number of the heroes of the war are found in the early Brāhmaṇas. Finally, we note also that already in the *Black Yajurveda* the Kurus and the Panchālas are spoken of as a united people, and that they remain a single people in the later literature. The conclusions to be drawn from these facts plainly are that the battle of Kurukshetra took place after the composition of the hymns of the *Rigveda* and before the compilation of the *Black Yajurveda*, and that, as a result of the war, the two peoples became united. This conclusion is accepted by all scholars.¹ Thus the battle of Kurukshetra occurred during the period of the compilation of the Vedas, that is, in the second division of the first period of our scheme.

The results of our study then are these:—KURUKSHETRA WAS FOUGHT IN THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE LITERATURE, WHILE THE

¹ Macdonell, 174-175, 285 ; Dutt, *C. A. I.*, Vol. I, 9-11 ; *Krishnacaritra*, 46 ; Hopkins, *R. I.*, 33, 177-179 ; S. N. Tagore in *Bangadarsan* for Baysak, 1371.

GĪTĀ WAS COMPOSED SOMEWHERE IN THE FIFTH PERIOD. We need not attempt to fix a date for either event: to all our readers it will be evident that at least a thousand years lie between the great battle and the composition of the great poem. We have seen also that, not only the language and the versification of the *Gītā*, but all its leading ideas belong to the fifth period. From these facts we necessarily conclude that the *Gītā* does not come from Kṛishṇa: being in all points the product of an age many centuries later than the time when he lived, it cannot be an utterance of his.

Further, in our discussion of the evidence for the date of the *Gītā* we saw that the idea of Kṛishṇa as Brahma incarnate does not occur anywhere in the literature of the first four periods, that it first appears in the Atharvan Upanishads. Clearly then Kṛishṇa cannot have claimed to be Brahma on the great battle-field. The claim, if made, would be a matter of such stupendous importance that it is impossible to believe that it was made, that it was then absolutely neglected for a long series of centuries, and that it was thereafter taken up seriously in our fifth period in the *Gītā* and the late Upanishads. Let readers conceive the idea of Kṛishṇa, about the time when the Vedas were compiled, doing what the *Gītā* says he did, declaring himself Brahma incarnate, and calling upon all men to come to him to be saved, offering them forgiveness, peace and immortality. Is it not clear that, if he had actually done this, men would have either accepted his declaration and worshipped him as God, or else would have condemned him as the vilest of blasphemers? To be

careless and indifferent in face of such a claim is impossible: men will either accept it or reject it. Now let us turn to the literature produced in the centuries immediately subsequent to the time of the battle. Let us look into the Brāhmaṇas. In not a single one of these ancient books is Kṛishṇa adored as a god. Many gods are worshipped, but he has no place among them. On the other hand, he is not condemned as a blasphemer either. There is simply not a single reference to his having made any such claim. Let us turn to the Upanishads. These books deal with the nature of Brahma: they at least will not be indifferent to such an extraordinary claim. Strange to say, there is not a single passage in any early Upanishad, nor in any of the verse Upanishads either, which refers to Kṛishṇa as the incarnate God: there is simply no mention of such a thing. Is not this absolutely conclusive proof that the claim was not made?

Further, as if to make assurance doubly sure, there is a certain passage in the *Chandogya Upanishad*¹ in which Kṛishṇa Devakīputra is mentioned, but he is spoken of merely as a man, as the pupil of a sage named Ghora Angirasa. If Kṛishṇa had claimed to be Brahma incarnate, the author of the *Chandogya*, who was so eager to know all about Brahma, and who knew about Kṛishṇa, could never have failed to mention his claim.

Such is the evidence which has convinced every historical scholar that THE STORY, THAT KRISHNA CALLED HIMSELF BRAHMA INCARNATE ON THE

¹ III, 17, 6.

GREAT BATTLE-FIELD IS A MYTH. Kṛishṇa may be a historical character. Most scholars believe that the war of Kurukshetra is historical; and Kṛishṇa may have been a Kshatriya warrior who took part in the war; but the story, that he claimed to be Brahma incarnate on the battle-field, is negatived by all the early history and literature of India. The myth is a late growth and first appears in the literature of the fifth period.

How then are we to account for the *Gītā*? Whence came its power and its beauty? and how did it reach the form it has?—We must recognize the action of three factors in the formation of the Song, the philosophy, the worship of Kṛishṇa, and the author. We have already traced in outline the genesis of the philosophy: there remain the cult and the author.

The history of the worship of Kṛishṇa in India cannot now be written in detail, but the outlines stand out quite clear. (1) First of all, in the *Chandogya Upanishad*,¹ Kṛishṇa Devakiputra is mentioned as a philosophic student, a pupil of Ghora Angirasa. Here he is a man, and only a man. In the earliest parts of the *Mahābhārata* we find Kṛishṇa represented as a great king and a warrior, but still only a man. What the connexion is between the philosophic student and the royal warrior, we cannot tell. They are two distinct pictures; they may be but different sides of the same man, or they may not; we cannot tell. In both pictures

¹ III, 17, 6

he is but a man. (2) The next stage is represented by quite a number of pieces of evidence. In Pāṇini's *Sūtras* Vāsudeva and Arjuna are mentioned together as objects of worship.¹ Whether Vāsudeva here be Kṛishṇa or not, we cannot tell. If he is Kṛishṇa, clearly he is only a demi-god; for he is on a level with Arjuna, and, therefore, cannot be the Supreme. Next Megasthenes tells us that Heracles was in his day worshipped in Methora and Kleisobora.² Most scholars believe that these words mean that Kṛishṇa was worshipped in Mathurā and Kṛishṇapur. The noticeable thing here again is that Kṛishṇa is compared with a semi-divine hero, Heracles, not with the supreme god. Thirdly, in Patanjali's *Mahābhāshya* he is still only a hero and demi-god.³ The fourth piece of evidence is the second stratum of the *Mahābhārata* in which, as we have seen above, he is only a semi-divine being. (3) Lastly, there comes the stage when he was elevated to the dignity of an incarnation of the Supreme. To this stage belong the later parts of the *Mahābhārata*, a number of the Atharvan Upanishads, the *Gītā* and several of the Purāṇas. The *Gītā* is thus one of a considerable group of poems which were composed in the fifth period of the growth of the literature, for the advancement of the worship of Kṛishṇa. It is one of a group, and differs

¹ The reference runs 'Vāsudevārjunābhyām vun' (IV. 3, 98), words which put the two on one level. Cf. Hopkins, *G. E. I.*, 390-395.

² McCrindle, *Ancient India*, 201. Cf. Hopkins, *R. I.*, 459, Macdonell, 411; Dutt, *C. A. I.*, Vol. I, 219; Garbe, 19, 83.

³ Hopkins, *G. E. I.*, 395.

from the other members of the group, not in age, nor in theology, but in power.

The author of the *Gītā* was clearly a man of wide and deep culture. He had filled his mind with the best religious philosophy of his country. He was catholic rather than critical, more inclined to piece things together than to worry over the differences between them. Each of the philosophic systems appealed to his sympathetic mind: he was more impressed with the value of each than with the distinctions between them. But his was not only a cultured but a most reverent mind. He was as fully in sympathy with Kṛishṇa-worship as with the philosophy of the *Ātman*. Indeed, it was the union of these qualities in him that fitted him to produce the noblest and purest expression of modern Hinduism. For Hinduism is just the marriage of ancient Brāhmanical thought and law with the popular cults. But without his splendid literary gifts the miracle would not have been possible. The beauty, precision and power of the diction of the poem, and its dignity of thought, rising now and then to sublimity, reveal but one aspect of his masterly ability. Much of the success of the poem arises from his genuine appreciation of the early heroic poems, which he heard recited around him, and from his consequent decision to make his own song, in one sense at least, a heroic poem. Lastly, there is the shaping spirit of imagination, without which no man can be a real poet. With him this power was introspective rather than dramatic. No poet with any genuine dramatic faculty would have dreamed of representing a warrior as entering on a long philosophic discussion on

the field of battle at the very moment when the armies stood ready to clash. On the other hand, what marvellous insight is displayed in his representation of Kṛishṇa! Who else could have imagined with such success how an incarnate god would speak of himself? Nor must we pass on without noticing that, though the situation in which the Song is supposed to have been produced is an impossible one, yet for the author's purpose it is most admirably conceived: how otherwise could the main thought of the book—*philosophic calm leading to disinterested action*—have been so vividly impressed on the imagination?

This author, then, formed the idea of combining the loftiest philosophy of his country with the worship of Kṛishṇa. He would intertwine the speculative thought which satisfied the intellect with the fervid devotion which even the uncultured felt for a god who was believed to have walked the earth. Philosophy would thus come nearer religion, while religion would be placed on far surer intellectual ground. His tastes led him to connect his work with the romantic poems of the day; his genius suggested the situation, a dialogue between a noble knight and the incarnate divinity; his catholicity taught him to interweave the Sāṅkhya with the Yoga and both with the Vedānta; and, as we have seen, his penetrative imagination was equal to the creation of the subjective consciousness of a god-man. His book was not intended to be a class-book, to be used in a Vedic school or by a few hermits in a forest, but a manual which the farmer, the soldier, the shop-keeper, and the Brahman might read day by day, while

pursuing their ordinary avocations. He did not wish to turn men into monks or *sannyāsīs* or *parivrājaks*, but wished to present a religious system which people might accept and use, while they continued their ordinary daily work and lived within the caste system. The two most significant points in his teaching are the supremacy of Kṛishṇa and the theory of *karma-yoga*. The significance of Kṛishṇa lies in this, that he is conceived of as the absolute Brahma, the object of all the meditation of the sages of the Upanishads, and at the same time as a personal god approachable with sacrifices and prayer, as Indra was in Vedic times, and other personal gods at all times. The significance of *karma-yoga* also lies in its combination of philosophy with the popular life: as Kṛishṇa unites the loftiest meditation of the philosopher with the simplest worship of the ignorant, so *karma-yoga* unites philosophic renunciation of the world with practical every-day life. The commands of *karma-yoga* are: Give up all desire for the fruits of action, and thereby fulfil the philosophic ideal, but continue to do your ordinary work in the world at the same time, and thus fulfil your duty as a member of a Hindu family and caste. The author of the *Gītā* is as anxious to persuade his readers to fulfil all the rules of caste laid down in the Dharmasāstras as he is to make them rise to the philosophic contemplation of the absolute Brahma.

Almost every point in the teaching of the Song can be traced in the earlier books. The *Gītā* has elaborated several lines of thought, but there are no startlingly new ideas in it. The beginnings even of the doctrine of *karma-yoga* can be traced in the verse Upanishads, and

the doctrine of *niyittakarma* in Manu is closely akin to it; Kṛishṇa was a demi-god before he became the Supreme; the philosophy is, as every one knows, a mixture of Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Vedānta elements; the morality comes from the Upanishads, the Buddhist canon and the Dharmasāstras. Thus the book is as far as possible from being a fresh divine revelation. It has a marvellous summing up of the best that had been thought and said in India up to that date. It is the concentrated essence of Hinduism. It is the expression of all the highest hopes, aspirations and ideals of the best Indians that have ever lived. In it we see the Hindu people longing for God, reaching out after God, expressing the deepest desires of their religious nature. It is the revelation of the Hindu people. In reading if we read their inmost thoughts and hear their unutterable prayers. As such, it is one of the most precious and interesting documents in the whole world. If any one wants to understand the Hindu people, let him steep himself in the thought of the *Gītā*. The book is to be read as the spiritual autobiography of Hinduism.

Now the chief feeling that finds expression in the *Gītā* is the desire for an incarnate Saviour. The Hindu mind calls for a Saviour, a Saviour incarnate for the good of man, incarnate to give a clear revelation of the will of God. The definiteness of the idea and the passion with which it is urged stand out in extraordinary contrast with the baselessness of the Kṛishṇa story. How startling it is to find that, though there is not a fragment of foundation for it, yet the belief grew up, and was not only expressed by a few thinkers, but was

passionately welcomed by the myriads of the people of this land! The thought that remains in the mind after a perusal of this great work is this—The *Gītā* is the cry of the Hindu people for an incarnate Saviour.

CHAPTER II

PLATO'S JUST MAN

WE must now leave the land of Bhārata and seek the shores of Greece.

In the fifth century B.C., Athens became the focus of Hellenic culture. Her achievements in the Persian wars had given her very distinctly the leadership of all the Greek states ; and the steady progress of her commerce brought her not only wealth but abundant intercourse with other cities. So that in the latter half of the century we find the peculiar genius of Hellas displayed in Athens with unexampled vigour, variety and splendour. But space will not allow us even to outline the achievements of that incomparable age in the various provinces of human culture. We must confine our attention to philosophy.

The general advance of intelligence, education and culture in Greece produced the only result possible in communities whose religion was a traditional polytheism and whose morality rested merely on custom and proverbial wisdom : scepticism, both religious and ethical, broke in like a flood. Tradition and custom could not withstand the corrosive influences of fresh thought fed by deepening experience and widening science. The Sophists were the exponents, but scarcely the creators, of this sceptical habit of thought. The philosophers had not done much to cause it, and they could do as

little to cure it. Their theories dealt with nature rather than man, and stood in no clear relation to the problems that agitated every thinking mind.

It was at Athens that this sceptical spirit showed itself most conspicuously, now in the lectures of the chief Sophists of Hellas, naturally drawn to the centre of intellectual ferment, now in the stately tragedies of her Dionysiac festivals, now in the *fin-de-siecle* conversation of her gilded youth. The timid, the old-fashioned, the conservative scolded and sputtered and threatened, blaming individuals instead of the time spirit, but had no healing word to utter.¹

From the very centre of the disturbance came the new spirit of order and restoration: Socrates, the Athenian, saved Greece. The older philosophers had discussed nature; he turned all his attention to practical human life. Like the Sophists, he trusted human reason; but unlike them, he aimed not at a display of intellectual dexterity but at reaching the actual basis of human morality, society and politics. Human conduct was the sole subject of his thought and his conversation. Hence the definite, practical value of his influence: his teaching stood in the closest possible relation to life and to the problems of the time. On the other hand, he began with introspection; self-knowledge was what he demanded of every disciple. Hence the inexhaustible significance of his work for philosophy. He gave no set lessons to his pupils, delivered no lectures, wrote no books. He spent his whole time in conversation with

¹ Zeller, *Socrates*, Chaps. I and II.

individuals, proceeding always by question and answer, thus compelling his companion to think for himself. His extraordinary intellectual skill and the loftiness and simplicity of his character drew all the best intellects of Athens around him. But what gives him his unchallenged supremacy in the history of Greek thought is the fact, that in his hands the sceptical thought, which had caused such dismay everywhere, proved to be the very means of revealing the great realities which men had feared for.¹

In 399 B.C., when he was an old man of seventy years of age, a number of his fellow-citizens brought a criminal case against him, charging him with corrupting the youth of Athens and with impiety. He was tried, found guilty and sentenced to death. A month later he drank the hemlock—such was the Athenian mode of execution—surrounded by his friends.²

How tragic! Athens, 'the school of Hellas,'³ kills her greatest teacher! Socrates, the father of ethical philosophy, the founder of the critical method, the ideal instructor, dies as an impious corruptor of the youth of Athens!

But Socrates was not merely the greatest teacher of his day. All subsequent Greek philosophy is filled with his spirit; indeed the leading schools of thought were

¹ Zeller, *Socrates*, Chaps. III to IX; Bury, *History of Greece*, II, 140-146; Grote, *History of Greece*, Chap. LXVIII.

² Zeller, *Socrates*, Chap. X. Bury, *History of Greece*, II, 147.

³ So called by Pericles, her greatest statesman. See *Thucydides*, II, 41.

founded by his pupils.¹ Consequently he is the fountain-head of all western philosophy and science: for in both Greece was the schoolmistress of Europe.

Among all the disciples, Plato best represents the master's spirit. The Megarians, the Cynics, the Cyrenaics, and, at a later date, the Stoics and the Epicureans, certainly carried on the work of Socrates, but they are deflections from the straight line: they are 'imperfect schools,' as Zeller calls them.² Plato is in the direct line of succession.

He was about twenty years of age when he began to listen to Socrates. Eight years later came the death of the great teacher. Plato then left Athens and spent a number of years in travel and in study in different places. About 390 B.C., however, he returned to the city and set up a philosophical school in a garden called Academia. For forty years thereafter he was the acknowledged leader of philosophic thought and teaching in Athens.³ His influence since his death has rested chiefly on his Dialogues, one of the most perfect literary treasures in the Greek language. The form of these beautiful compositions still reflects the question-and-answer method of Plato's master: and the debt of the pupil is everywhere acknowledged: for in most of the Dialogues Socrates is the chief interlocutor.⁴ Among the Dialogues the *Republic* is universally recognized as

¹ See Milton, *Paradise Regained*, IV, 272-280

² *Socrates*, Part III

³ Mahaffy, *Greek Literature*, II, 160-162; Ritchie, *Plato*, Chap. I. Mayor, *Ancient Philosophy*, 41 ff.

⁴ For the Dialogues see Ritchie's *Plato*, Chap. II.

the most precious; for it shows us not only his literary art at its highest, but the thought of his matured mind: it represents Plato in his strength.¹

The subject of the *Republic* is 'What is Justice?' It is thus the culmination of the ethical teaching of Socrates. Among the preliminary discussions in this book there occurs a very striking conversation between Glaucon and Socrates, in which the former gives two ideal portraits, one of a man consummately unjust, the other of a man altogether just. Here is the passage:—

But in actually deciding between the lives of the two persons in question, we shall be enabled to arrive at a correct conclusion by contrasting together the thoroughly just and the thoroughly unjust man—and only by so doing. Well then, how are we to contrast them? In this way. Let us make no deduction either from the injustice of the unjust, or from the justice of the just, but let us suppose each to be perfect in his own line of conduct. First of all then, the unjust man must act as skilful craftsmen do. For a first-rate pilot or physician perceives the difference between what is practicable and what is impracticable in his art, and while he attempts the former, he lets the latter alone; and, moreover, should he happen to make a false step, he is able to recover himself. In the same way, if we are to form a conception of a consummately unjust man, we must suppose that he makes no mistake in the prosecution of his unjust enterprises and that he escapes detection; but if he be found out, we must look upon him as a bungler; for it is the perfection of injustice to seem just without really being so. We must, therefore, grant to the perfectly unjust man, without any deduction, the most perfect injustice: and we must concede to him, that while committing the grossest acts of injustice, he has won himself the highest reputation for justice; and that should he make a false step, he is able to recover himself, partly by a talent for speaking with effect, in case he be called in question for any of

¹ On the *Republic* see Mahaffy, *Greek Literature*, II, 195–201.

his misdeeds, and partly because his courage and strength, and his command of friends and money, enable him to employ force with success, whenever force is required. Such being our unjust man, let us, in pursuance of the argument, place the just man by his side, a man of true simplicity and nobleness, resolved, as Æschylus says, not to seem, but to be, good. We must certainly take away the seeming; for if he be thought to be a just man, he will have honours and gifts on the strength of this reputation, so that it will be uncertain whether it is for justice's sake, or for the sake of the gifts and honours, that he is what he is. Yes, we must strip him bare of everything but justice, and make his whole case the reverse of the former. Without being guilty of one unjust act, let him have the worst reputation for injustice, so that his virtue may be thoroughly tested, and shown to be proof against infamy and all its consequences; and let him go on till the day of his death steadfast in his justice, but with a lifelong reputation for injustice, in order that, having brought both the men to the utmost limits of justice and of injustice respectively, we may then give judgement as to which of the two is the happier.

'Good heavens! my dear Glaucon,' said I, 'how vigorously you work, scouring the two characters clean for our judgement, like a pair of statues.'

'I do it as well as I can,' he said. 'And after describing the men as we have done, there will be no further difficulty, I imagine, in proceeding to sketch the kind of life which awaits them respectively. Let me therefore describe it. And if the description be somewhat coarse, do not regard it as mine, Socrates, but as coming from those who commend injustice above justice. They will say that in such a situation the just man will be scourged, racked, fettered, will have his eyes burnt out, and at last, after suffering every kind of torture, will be crucified, and thus learn that it is best to resolve, not to be, but to seem, just.'¹

The picture of the just man here is surely a very remarkable one. It is dramatically put into the mouth

¹ Plato, *Rep.*, II, 360 E-362 A, Davies and Vaughan's translation

of Glaucon, and part of it is by him attributed to those who commend injustice ; but these are but literary forms ; the picture is Plato's own. It is his ideal of the just man ; and the extraordinary thing is his belief, here stated so plainly, that a man whose heart is perfectly set on righteousness may be so completely misunderstood by those around him, as to be regarded by them as utterly unjust, and may in consequence be subjected to the extremest torture and the most shameful death.

No one can doubt that it was the death of his master that led Plato to perceive the great truth to which he here gives such energetic expression. The charges against Socrates were a complete inversion of the truth : his reverence was called impiety ; his brilliant work for the character of the youth of his day brought him the charge of baneful corruption. From his tragic end Plato learned that the good man who brings new truth is very likely to be completely misunderstood and to be classed with the worst wrong-doers.

CHAPTER III

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

THE history of Israel is unique in the annals of the nations. In size scarcely worthy of regard, in politics only for one brief reign of any serious account, with no special genius for art or war, for speculative thinking or scientific research, failing to keep even their racial unity in the day of their greatest strength, torn in pieces by every conqueror, deported out of their own land, and even after their return kept in subjection by other imperial races, finally stripped of their temple and sacred city by the Romans, and shattered into fragments, this feeble people has yet set its name high beside Greece and Rome, has given the world the only book which all the world reads,¹ and the religion which has produced western civilization.

¹ The Bible, complete or in part, is printed and published to-day in 480 languages and dialects. The number of Bibles, New Testaments and portions sold by the various Bible Societies of Europe and America in 1905 runs away above 8,000,000 copies. These figures do not include the Bibles and New Testaments sold by ordinary publishers. If it were possible to gather the statistics of their sales, we may be sure they would amount at least to 4,000,000 copies more. What a book that must be which circulates in 480 languages, and is sold at the rate of twelve million copies per annum!

The one duty of which the best spirits in Israel were conscious throughout the history of the people was faithfulness to Jehovah. Indeed the whole consciousness of the race might be summed up in two phrases: *Jehovah is the God of Israel* and, *Israel is the people of Jehovah*. War, government, philosophy, art might be for other peoples: Israel's one duty was to serve her God, religion the sole activity of her spirit.

The relation between Jehovah and Israel was a peculiarly tender one—'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt,'¹ says Jehovah by the mouth of one of His prophets. As Israel was Jehovah's son, he had to be taught, trained, disciplined. The history of the people, then, is simply the record of Jehovah's dealings with them in this process of loving and patient training.

Israel's education was chiefly in the hard school of experience, in national disaster and disgrace, in national recovery and victory. But not in events alone: Jehovah spoke His will out clearly through a series of most remarkable men known as the PROPHETS. What is most noticeable in these men is the directness and the certainty of the message they brought from Jehovah to His people. Usually it was criticism and condemnation, with a definite declaration of coming punishment; but now and then it was comfort and consolation, with the promise of speedy help and relief.

It would be most interesting to trace the history in detail and to watch how the people were led step by

¹ Hos. xi 1.

step to fuller and clearer knowledge of God, but we must not stay for that here. We need only say sufficient to enable readers to understand the circumstances in which the great prophecy which we wish to discuss came to be uttered.

The people were slaves in Egypt. They were brought out under Moses ; and in the peninsula of Sinai a Covenant was made between them and Jehovah, which laid the foundation of their religion and their national life. Joshua was their leader in the conquest of Palestine, an event which probably took place in the thirteenth century B.C. During the first two centuries of their residence in the land they had no settled form of government, but acknowledged as their rulers from time to time certain great personalities known as Judges. Towards the end of the eleventh century the pressure of the Philistines led to the establishment of a monarchy. Saul knit the people together ; David built up a petty empire ; Solomon gave his attention to commerce and internal organization.

But after these three reigns the nation fell in two. From 937 B.C. onward for two centuries, instead of one state there are two rival kingdoms, the northern called Israel and the southern Judah. The great events of these centuries occur in Israel. Through the prophets Elijah and Elisha the people were taught that Jehovah would never consent to be one among many gods : *They must worship Jehovah alone.* Later, Amos prophesied that Jehovah would bring about the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, because the people would not live righteously. They offered God sacrifices, while He

demanded righteous conduct between man and man. But they could not believe that Jehovah would destroy His own chosen people: 'How can we believe that He will destroy the only people in all the world that He has made Himself known to?' Swift comes the answer, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.'¹ Israel had had greater privileges than any other people; therefore Israel had a deeper responsibility, and would receive a severer punishment. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians overthrew Israel, and carried away 27,290 of the leading inhabitants and settled them in Mesopotamia and Media.² The prophecy of Amos was thus literally fulfilled.

The kingdom of Judah, which was not involved in the fate of Israel, stood for rather more than a century longer. Isaiah was the prophet of Jehovah in Judah when Israel fell. He condemned his own people just as Amos had condemned Israel, because they identified religion with ritual, and would not give Jehovah what He wanted, namely, righteousness. The state of the people was so bad that Isaiah declared that nothing could cure them. Jehovah would intervene: the bulk of the people would be destroyed, but a *righteous remnant would be saved*. Towards the end of Isaiah's life Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came, devastated the land

¹ Amos iii. 2.

² 2 Kings xvii. 1-23; the figures are from an inscription of Sargon, the victorious Assyrian King: see *Authority and Archaeology*, 101.

of Judah, took many of the cities, and demanded the surrender of the capital, Jerusalem. Isaiah advised the king not to yield, and prophesied that the Assyrian would not be able to touch the city. His prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. The huge Assyrian army was suddenly annihilated by some unknown cause, probably pestilence, and Sennacherib hastened back to Assyria.¹

A century later Judah was in a still worse condition: idolatry, polytheism, immorality were eating out the vitals of the nation. In 604 B.C. Jeremiah prophesied that Jehovah would bring Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, into Syria, and that he would destroy Judah and all the nations round about, that they would groan under the rule of Babylon for seventy years, but that at the end of that period Jehovah would punish the Babylonians for their iniquity, and would make their land desolate for ever.² But his countrymen would not listen. Jehovah had saved His people from the Assyrian in the time of Isaiah: why should He allow the Babylonian to touch them now? Yet in 585 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, burned the city and the temple, and carried away the king and all the leading families to Babylon.³ Once more the word of Jehovah, as spoken by His prophets, was literally fulfilled.

But what was to be the end?—Jehovah seemed to have utterly destroyed His chosen people: what was His purpose? what good was to come out of it?

¹ 2 Kings xix. 35-6, Wellhausen, *Israel and Judah*, Chap. vii; *Authority and Archaeology*, 105-8.

² Jer. xxv. 1-14.

³ 2 Kings xxv. 1-22

The people of the northern kingdom, carried away in 722 B.C., soon lost their religion, and were in consequence speedily lost themselves among the peoples of the East. Not so the captives of Judah: the training of Isaiah and his disciples and of Jeremiah and his friends had taken fast hold of their hearts, so that even in a foreign land, far away from home and temple, they held by the religion of Jehovah. Nor is that all: they began to take their religion seriously; they began to perceive that the prophets were right in declaring that Jehovah was a very different God from the gods of the nations around them, that He would not be satisfied with sacrifice and song, but demanded *heart-worship and righteousness*. But although they clung to their faith in Jehovah, they were naturally greatly depressed by the seeming hopelessness of their captivity.¹ To rebel against the Babylonians, and by the sword regain their freedom and their land, was an utter impossibility: they were altogether helpless under the omnipotent empire.

But about 550 B.C. Cyrus, an Elamite king, began a great career of conquest. In 549 he overthrew the Cimmerians under their king Astyages, and by 546 he was master of Persia. He then went further west to subdue Asia Minor.²

It was at this juncture, according to all scholars, that a great prophet, whose name is unknown, began to comfort and encourage the Jewish exiles in Babylon. His prophecy is preserved for us in the latter part of the book

¹ Ps. cxxxvii.

² The details have now been read in Cyrus's own inscriptions: Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, I, 541.

of Isaiah.¹ His message is that the sufferings of the exiles are nearly at an end, that Cyrus is to capture Babylon and give them leave to return to their native land.²

In 538 B.C. Cyrus marched into Babylonia, defeated the Babylonian army, and seized the city, thus fulfilling in a very striking way the second part of Jeremiah's prophecy.³ Soon after, the Judean captives received permission to return to Palestine. They were also allowed to carry with them the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from the temple in Jerusalem.⁴ The prophecy of restoration was thus triumphantly fulfilled. One company of exiles went at once, and others followed them later.

The people of Jehovah in this way began life afresh after the great national punishment of the Captivity. They had thoroughly learned one lesson at least, namely, this, that *Jehovah spoke through His prophets*. So in their new system, while they retained the old ritual of the temple, they made careful provision for the preservation of the writings of the prophets and for the instruction of the people in the Mosaic Law.

We need trace the history no further; for it was this post-exilic Judaism, with its great care for the Scriptures, and its energetic attempts to instil them into the minds of the people, that formed the environment of Jesus and His work.

But we must now return to the great prophet who spoke consolation to the exiles in Babylon, and study

¹ From Chap. xl. onwards. See Driver, *Introduction*, 217.

² Isa. xl. 1-10, xlv. 24-8.

³ *Authority and Archæology*, 123-6. ⁴ Ezra, Chap. i.

his ideas. His conception of God is very lofty. He illustrates in many ways His holiness, His faithfulness, His tender sympathy, His omnipotence, His absolute sway among nations, and His power of foretelling future events by the mouth of His prophets. On the other hand, the prophet's conception of the duty and destiny of the people of Jehovah is correspondingly high. Israel has been created and chosen by Jehovah, and therefore is precious in His sight; but He did not choose them out of favouritism, nor was it His purpose to heap blessings on them merely for their pleasure and aggrandizement. Israel is *the servant of Jehovah*. The service they have to render is to reveal God's character and purposes to all the nations of the earth. This is the end of their election and of their long training. But, as in the past the nation had fallen far short of Jehovah's ideal, so now in Babylon the people as a whole is very far from fit for the work which God has for them to do: 'Who is blind but my servant? or deaf as my messenger that I send?'

Consequently there is a further choice within the chosen people. The use of the title, the Servant of Jehovah, is narrowed. The prophet knows that God's ends will be worked out, that through Israel Jehovah's name will be carried to the ends of the earth; he also sees as clearly that the nation as a nation is unfit for this lofty duty; so he recognizes that the Servant who shall do this work will be found within the people. Whether he identified the Servant of Jehovah in this narrower sense with the small group of really God-fearing

¹ Isa. xlii 19.

men who formed the soul of Israel in his own day, or whether he thought of an individual to be specially prepared for the task by Jehovah, we do not know. Most probably this point was not clear to the prophet himself.¹

It is in four poems of peculiar dignity and surpassing spiritual penetration that this narrower use of the title occurs. In the first² of these Jehovah describes His Servant's character and work; in the second,³ the Servant tells how Jehovah prepared him for his task; in the third,⁴ we have a portrait of the Servant as a martyr; while in the fourth,⁵ he is represented, though righteous himself, as dying a shameful death as an atonement for the sins of the unrighteous. It is to this fourth poem that we would direct the attention of our readers.

THE ATONING DEATH OF THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

Jehovah—

Lo, My Servant shall deal wisely ;
 He shall rise, be uplifted, and be exalted exceedingly.
 Even as many were amazed at him,—
 So marred from a man's was his appearance,
 And his form from that of the sons of men¹—
 So shall he startle many nations ;
 Before him kings shall shut their mouths.
 For what had not been told them they shall see,
 And what they had not heard they shall consider.

¹ For the ideas of this great prophet, see *The Cambridge Bible for Schools, Isaiah*, vol. ii, pp. xxii-xxxix.

² Isa. xlii. 1-4.

³ Isa. xlix. 1-6.

⁴ Isa. l. 4-9.

⁵ Isa. lii. 13-lii. 12.

Israel—

Who believed what was heard by us ?
And the arm of Jehovah, to whom was it revealed ?

He grew up like a sapling before us,
And like a shoot out of parched ground.
He had no form, nor majesty, that we should look
upon him,
Nor appearance, that we should desire him.

He was despised and forsaken by men,
A man of pains and familiar with sickness ;
And as one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we held him of no account.

Yet it was our sicknesses that he bore,
And our pains that he carried ;
While we accounted him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced because of our transgressions,
Crushed because of our iniquities ;
Chastisement to secure our peace was laid upon
him,
And through his stripes healing came to us.

We all like sheep had gone astray,
We had turned each one to his own way ;
And Jehovah made to light on him
The iniquity of us all.

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The Prophet—

He was oppressed, yet he let himself be afflicted,
And opened not his mouth,
As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
And as a sheep that is dumb before her shearers,
And opened not his mouth.

By a tyrannical judgement he was taken away ;
And, as for the men of his time, who considered
That he was cut off out of the land of the living,
That for the transgression of my people he was
stricken ?

And his grave was made with the wicked,
And his tomb with the unrighteous,
Although he had done no violence,
And there was no deceit in his mouth.

But it was Jehovah that willed to crush him,
That laid on him sickness :
If he should lay down his life as a guilt-offering,
He would see a posterity, he would lengthen his
days,
And the will of Jehovah would prosper by his hand ;
After the travail of his soul he would see it,
And would be satisfied with his knowledge.

Jehovah—

My Servant, the righteous one, shall make many
righteous ;
For he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will give him a share with the many,
And with the strong he shall divide the spoil ;
Inasmuch as he poured out his life-blood to death,
And let himself be numbered with the transgressors ;
Yet it was the sin of the many he bore,
And for the transgressors he interposed.

In this marvellous poem we have four successive vignettes of the Servant. There first rises in the prophet's mind a vision of the awe-struck wonder with which the nations and their kings shall gaze on the Servant of Jehovah, when after unequalled humiliation he shall be uplifted in surpassing glory. The next picture takes us back to his life of humiliation: he grows up with nothing in him to strike the eye or attract the attention of men; nay, rather all turn their back on him as worthless, contemptible, smitten with divine punishment. But along with this sorrowful portrait there comes the passionate confession of the men of Israel, that the Servant in all his sufferings had been bearing their sins. The third picture shows us the suffering Servant in uncomplaining meekness enduring a criminal's death with all its shameful associations; yet this death is explained as occurring in accordance with God's will, and as being a guilt-offering. The series ends in triumph: the righteous Servant by bearing iniquity will make many righteous and will achieve the glory and the reward of the conqueror.

In this prophecy the remarkable thing is that the sufferings and death of the Servant are construed throughout, not as a martyrdom, but as much more. In

his death he lays down his life as a guilt-offering; and all his sufferings, inclusive of his death, are, from Jehovah's point of view, chastisement laid on him on account of the sins of others; from the servant's point of view, a voluntary bearing of their iniquities. His willingness to endure and his meekness under oppression are very vividly put before us; but God's purpose to crush him is insisted on with equal emphasis. The awful tragedy happens within Israel; but after it is consummated, the Servant, once so despised, neglected and oppressed, startles the nations, and kings in amazement shut their mouths in his presence. The purpose of the dread sacrifice is TO BRING MEN TO RIGHTEOUSNESS; and that end, we are told, will be widely accomplished.

Whence did the prophet draw the idea of his prophecy? If any piece of literature bears signs of inspiration, this does; but the experience which enabled him to become the vehicle of inspiration in this particular case may also be conjectured. The sufferings, which many of the prophets, and especially Jeremiah, had endured at the hands of their fellow-countrymen, had made a profound impression upon the best minds in Israel; and the affliction of the exiles in Babylon was manifestly not merely penal, but also purificatory.

CHAPTER IV

VIRGIL'S NEW AGE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

THE slow but steady rise of an obscure inland Italian town, first to the rule of all Italy, and finally to imperial sway over the whole Mediterranean world, is as full of problems for the intellect as of fascination for the imagination. Whence the extraordinary vigour and practical genius of this city? What gave it so much capacity in comparison with any other Italian town? Does the secret lie in the Roman character, the Roman intellect, or in the constitution of the republican city itself? But other questions still more serious press for answers: How did the Roman government affect the subject provinces? How did it react upon the Roman character and upon the life of the capital? Could a single city furnish men of character and ability in sufficient numbers for such a prodigious task?

The answer to these grave questions must be sought in the history of the last century of the existence of the republic. From about 145 B.C. to about 48 B.C. Rome was never at rest: violent political strife, faction, proscriptions and civil wars eclipse everything else in the internal history of the imperial city during these years. The old state machinery was getting worn out; the old families, corrupted by the immeasurable success

of the Rome which was their making, were grinding the provinces by their cruelty and greed, and would not budge an inch from their privileges, nor indeed lift a finger, to save Rome and Italy from the moral and economic ruin with which they were threatened. The wrongs of the slave, the Italian and the provincial cried aloud for redress; scarcely less urgent was the need for the introduction of a great deal of fresh blood into the governing classes; but the latter were bitterly hostile to every change. Hence the violent struggles throughout the century between the government and the other classes. The empire had proved too much for the old Roman character.¹ The only force that remained really efficient was the army.

Who shall describe the ruin, bloodshed, misery, desolation, wrought by these years? The national character suffered a frightful fall also: corruption in public, immorality in private, became all but universal. The weariness and the hopelessness generated by the seemingly unending strife made men forget their old passion for freedom and sigh even for tyranny, if only it would bring peace.

Relief came when Julius Cæsar crushed Pompey at Pharsalus in 48 B.C. There was fighting here and there for two years more, but it was of little consequence. Pharsalus made Cæsar the monarch of Rome. He lived barely four years after his victory; for the daggers of the conspirators found his heart on the 15th of March, 44 B.C.; yet by a series of masterly administrative and legislative acts he laid in great broad lines

¹ Froude, *Cæsar*, 12-19.

the foundation of the new empire and set in motion the healthy forces that were needed for the regeneration of Rome and Italy. His work is Titanic both in conception and execution. Seldom has such a great man executed such a mighty task.

But his murder loosed all the old fiends again, and they worked wilder woe than ever. For now the whole gigantic empire was drawn into the whirlpool, and the provinces were only a little less miserable than Italy. During Cæsar's own struggle his mighty genius and his magnanimity had thrown a glory upon the murky clouds of the storm; but now that the sun was set, black darkness settled over the unhappy empire.¹

There was a pause in the strife, when, in 40 B.C., a treaty was drawn up between Octavian and Antony at Brundisium and confirmed by the marriage of Antony to the sister of Octavian. Men hoped that the end had come at last and that the world would enjoy a lasting peace.

It was during this bright moment that Virgil, who later was to write the *Æneid*, and so earn for himself a very great name in European literature, composed a short poem, which finds a place among his Pastorals, and is named *Pollio*. Here is a translation of lines four to twenty-five, which will be found quite sufficient to bring the main ideas of the poem before us:

The last epoch of the Sybil's prophecy has come at length; the great series of the ages is being born anew; at length the virgin, Justice, is returning, returning too to the reign of Saturn; at length

¹ For the whole picture see Mommsen, especially the very last page of his history.

a new race of men is being sent down from heaven high. Do thou, Lucina, but smile thy chaste smile upon a boy with whose coming at last ceases the iron race and the golden springs up throughout the world—do so, Lucina: it is thine own Apollo that now reigns. It is in thy consulship, Pollio, that this glorious age will come in, and the months of the great year will begin their march. Under thy leadership all traces that remain of Roman crime in civil strife shall pass away, and passing, free the lands from constant fear.

He shall receive the life of the gods, and shall behold gods and heroes mingling together; and himself shall be beheld by them, and with his father's virtues he shall rule the world at peace.

Unmasked the earth shall shower upon thee, sweet boy, thy first baby gifts, the gadding ivy with the fox-glove, and lily-bear entwined with smiling bear's-foot. The goats shall bring home uncalled their milk-filled udders, the harts shall no longer fear great lions; and flowers shall spring to caress thee where'er thou liest down. The asp shall perish, the treacherous, poison herb shall perish too: and everywhere shall spring Assyrian balm.¹

The Greeks and Romans had a great system of cycles and ages, not unlike the Hindu Kalpas and Manvantaras. One cycle follows another, the beginning of each being marked by the sun, moon and stars all occupying their original positions. The Roman phrase for cycle is 'great year.' Each great year is subdivided into 'months,' that is, ages. The first age of each great year is the golden, when Saturn reigns, and a divine race of men occupies the earth; the last is the iron age, when Apollo reigns, and men are sinful.

Virgil declares, then, that the end of the old cycle has come, and that the new cycle is about to begin with all the splendour of the golden age. Saturn will reign; Justice and Peace will return to the earth; a god-like

¹ Virgil, *Eclogues*, iv. 4-25

race of men will spring up all over the world; nature will be redeemed; and primitive simplicity and innocence will reappear. Idyllic scenes of peace and plenty—trade and manufacture all forgotten—give the poem a wonderful charm.

The most outstanding idea of the prophecy, however, is that the new age opens with the birth of a boy, who is to receive special divine help, and is to be at once the pattern and the prince of the new time. Who the boy was that Virgil had in mind, the critics have not been able to decide.¹ Clearly he was a son born in 40 B.C. to one of the leading Romans; but we can say no more. Evidently Virgil believed that the civil wars were over, that a new era of peace had begun, and that this boy might be looked forward to as the ruler who should effectively transform the empire, revive primitive virtue and simplicity, and banish the foul demon war for ever.

His prediction was not verified: no boy born in 40 B.C. became a world-ruler and regenerator; and, besides, nine long years of doubt and fear, horror and blood, had to be endured, before Octavian became, by the battle of Actium, the acknowledged master of the Roman world; and, while he completed the task of Caesar, and succeeded in doing the work of a great ruler in a marvellous fashion, no one would dream of saying that he fulfilled the ideal of this poem.

It is an unfulfilled prophecy; yet it is not without interest and value for men to-day. First of all it is of interest as a revelation of the ideas and the hopes that

¹ Sellar, *Virgil*, 146; Simcox, *Latin Literature*, vol. i, 257.

filled men's minds in Virgil's time. 'The anticipation of a new era was widely spread and vividly felt over the world; and this anticipation—the state of men's minds at and subsequent to the time when this poem was written—probably contributed to the acceptance of the great political and spiritual changes which awaited the world.'¹ But it is of still greater interest as a revelation of what Virgil himself thought, Virgil, who was perhaps the purest and most interesting personality in the Græco-Roman world then. Men generally were looking for a regeneration of the world; we have here Virgil's own thoughts on the great subject. He shared with others the idea that the world was on the verge of the dawning of a new day, a day of renewed justice and peace; but he had an idea of his own, that of a great personality, a man of high moral character, specially endowed by the gods for his great task as leader and ruler of the new time. Scarcely less prominent is his idea of the nobler race of men that shall spring up in the new era. It is no picture merely of good government such as Augustus gave the world that we have here; but a prophecy of the moral regeneration of mankind under the influence of a divinely prepared leader.

¹ Sellar, *Virgil*, 145. Cf. Boissier, *La Religion Romaine*.

CHAPTER V

JESUS OF NAZARETH

1. The difference between ancient and modern times in Europe is vital. Human society is never stagnant ; development in one direction or another is constant ; so that in the course of a few centuries changes, both numerous and noticeable, take place everywhere. Thus the Europe of the middle ages differs very markedly from the Europe of to-day. Yet the one is the direct outcome of the other. On the other hand, the civilizations of Greece and Rome, although we owe them an incalculable debt, are marked off from modern civilization by differences which can only be spoken of as essential. For it is not any single element that has been added externally to ancient life so as to produce modern society ; it is rather a subtle spirit, which has modified all thinking, altered the values of things, produced organic changes in government and society, and recreated art and literature. The unexampled development of science and invention, and the extraordinary activity and vigour of European commerce and arms, which are often spoken of as the chief characteristics of modern civilization, are rather to be regarded as indications of unparalleled vitality and efficiency in the social organism than as essential products of its spirit. Science and invention flourished among the Greeks ; the Roman empire was as vigorous as any modern state in matters of war. These things prove the healthy vitality of the society of the west ; its essential spirit is to be sought elsewhere.

A comparison of ancient and modern life reveals differences at once very numerous and greatly significant. The economics of Europe have been revolutionized ; for the labour, the manufacture and the commerce of ancient times rested on a basis of slavery.¹ Government has been turned upside down ; for the ruling principle of ancient politics was hereditary and exclusive citizenship in a city-state ;² while modern politics have been created by the great principles of the equality of men irrespective of birth or station and the indefeasible sovereignty of the people.³ In ancient society human life as such had no value : infanticide was practised openly by all as a right and proper thing necessary for the well-being of the family and the state :⁴ prisoners taken in war, if not killed, were made slaves, and as slaves their lives and persons were absolutely at the mercy of their masters ; aliens had a place in the state only on sufferance : society stood in no relation to them and had no duties towards them.⁵ The social organism of modern times, on the other hand, is a new creation, produced by the conception of the inherent sanctity of human life and the divine dignity of the human personality.⁷ Modern education is

¹ See article *Slavery* in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and cf. Gibbon, Chaps. ii and xxxviii ; Cunningham, *An Essay on Western Civilization in its Economic Aspect* ; Wallon, *Histoire de l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*

² Fowler, *The City-State of the Greeks and Romans* ; Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece*, 44, Kidd, *P.W.C.*, Chap. vi.

³ Kidd, *P.W.C.*, Chaps. vii to ix. ⁴ Kidd, *P.W.C.*, 190, 223-4

⁵ Sohm, *The Institutes of Roman Law* ; Wallon, *Histoire de l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*.

⁶ Bury, *History of Greece*, i. 72.

⁷ Kidd, *P.W.C.*, 223

in form and method Greek ; but the results it produces are altogether new ; first, because it carries the modern spirit within the ancient forms, and secondly, because modern men regard education as part of the birthright of every human being. Moral ideals show very important differences, chiefly in the direction of the elevation of humility, meekness, sympathy, forgiveness and self-sacrifice, and the extraordinary advance in the conception of the right of individual freedom. In ancient times the individual citizen had no rights as against the State :¹ now we demand not only freedom in matters of profession and business, as against caste restrictions, but intellectual, moral and religious liberty. The differences between ancient and modern religion are very extraordinary in many ways. For the present we need only note the one far-reaching distinction, that to the ancients religion was a *political duty*, which the citizen was bound to fulfil, and a *civic privilege*, which only those in whose veins ran the sacred blood of the community could share ;² while modern religion is the loftiest activity of the human spirit, as far transcending the narrow limits of the State as it does the petty distinctions of race and blood. The differences, then, between ancient and modern life are not accidental but essential.

A second thing to be noticed is the altogether unexampled vitality and pervasiveness of modern civilization. During the nineteenth century alone, while the population of the rest of the world remained nearly

¹ Kidd, *W.C.*, 168.

² Kidd, *P.W.C.*, 160-172 ; Seebohm, *The Structure of Greek Tribal Society*, 4, 138.

stationary, the actual numbers of the European peoples rose from 170,000,000 to 500,000,000.¹ Here is physical life on a gigantic scale. Let readers think, next, of the extraordinary advances made during the nineteenth century in every province of natural science, from mathematics and physics up through the biological sciences to psychology and the science of religion, the swift upward progress made in literary, historical and philosophical method, and the innumerable inventions that have been produced for facilitating every form of human activity. Are not these facts evidence of an amazing store of intellectual vitality in the society of the west? Think also of the buoyancy, the hope, the youthful delight in action, the glance into the future, which characterize the progressive peoples of Europe and America. Colonization, on the other hand, exploration, missions, world-wide commerce, domination over other races, whether you call them bad or good, are incontestable proofs of energy, physical, moral and intellectual. Further, these forms of vital force are clearly of the greatest practical importance in the world. In the process of natural selection which, whether we like it or not, is ceaselessly being carried on among the races of mankind, the possession of such energy is one of the crucial factors in the struggle. But this civilization has also an altogether unique power of entering into other civilizations and working revolutionary changes there: its pervasiveness is almost as remarkable as its vitality. We need only point to India and Japan to-day for proof of this.

¹ Sir Robert Giffen, *Address to the Manchester Statistical Society*, 15.

Western civilization, then, is a thing by itself, not more clearly distinguished from ancient life than from the civilizations that have arisen in other parts of the world. What is it that has made the difference? What subtle spirit is it that appears in every aspect of the civilization, that assumes so many forms, and generates such transcending energies?

There can be but one answer: it is Christianity. In every community religion is the life principle, the central fire, which fills the whole with living force, and communicates its own spirit to every cell of the organism.¹ That is a law which is becoming ever more apparent in all anthropological, sociological and religious science. From this general law we might conclude in this particular case, that it is the religion that gives the civilization its character. But we need not appeal to general principles; history tells us in the clearest tones that the peculiarities which distinguish western civilization from every other spring directly or indirectly from the Christian faith.

Now one way of classifying religions is to divide them into two groups, spontaneous and founded. The former are results of the united unconscious action of a tribe or people: for example, the religions of Greece and Rome. The latter spring from some particular man, and are inseparably connected with his life: for example, Buddhism, Christianity and Muhammadanism.

That Christianity is a founded religion, and that it springs from Christ, admits of no question. Tacitus, the

¹ Kidd, *Social Evolution*, Chaps. iv and v.

Roman historian, in speaking of the great fire at Rome in A.D. 64, which devastated ten of the fourteen districts into which the Imperial city was divided, says that the people got their heads filled with the suspicion, that the Emperor himself (Nero was then on the throne) had used his agents to set the city on fire. He then continues :

Consequently to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished; or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.¹

Christ, then, is a historical person. He was a Jew; He founded Christianity; and He was executed by

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 44, Church and Brodrigg's translation.

Pontius Pilatus during his procuratorship of Judæa, i.e., between 27 and 37 A.D.¹ Other facts enable scholars to fix the date of His death within narrower limits: a few adopt A.D. 30, but by far the greatest number prefer A.D. 29;² and that date we adopt here.

Here, then, are the facts: Christ was put to death by the Roman Governor of Judæa in A.D. 29, but this did not extinguish Christianity; for it spread not only in Judæa but beyond: so much so, that in A.D. 64 'an immense multitude' of Christians were found in Rome, and were for their faith put to death with horrible barbarities.

Such is the first chapter of the history of Christianity in Europe. From this point onwards the facts are well known. The furious hostility visible here in the spirit of the Roman Empire against the Christian faith ended in the victory of the latter, in its gradual acceptance by the races of Europe, and the continuously increasing infiltration of Christian ideas into the minds of the people. The process is far from complete; for the contrast between the old spirit and the new is so extreme that only long ages of discipline and the slow processes of evolution will suffice to work the transformation. We have seen how essentially different the spirit in our modern life is from the spirit of Græco-Roman life: how much greater would be the contrast, if one were to oppose the pure spirit of Christ to the spirit of Paganism!

¹ Church and Brodribb's *Annals*, 374.

² For all the facts and the opinions of various scholars, see Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 410-15.

When men accept Christ, they are conscious of the authority of His perfect character and His heavenly life, and they know that He claims their complete submission to Him; but they have no idea how far-reaching this claim is. Christ demands that not only every part of the individual's life—thoughts, feelings, words, deeds—but every aspect of social and political life as well should be made subject to His law of love. This is easily stated: how hard is it to work it out, except in a long series of generations!

But imperfect as has been the perception of Christ's aims, and still more imperfect the execution of these by the peoples of Europe, yet the results of even their very partial submission to them have been, as we have seen, momentous in the highest degree. Christ has made modern Europe.

Now we found from our study of Virgil's prophecy that he believed that a new age was just about to open. Like other thinking men of his day, he felt that the civilization under which he lived was played out, that new life was needed, new morals and a fresh organization of society. He believed that in the new age the leader and king would be a great Roman, and that under him the world would be transformed.

Further, it is sufficiently striking that, while his prophecy received no literal fulfilment, yet the new age did actually begin shortly after the time when he wrote, an age which has produced a new race of men, new moral ideas and an altogether fresh organization of society, and vitality and virility, besides, such as Virgil never dreamed of. He spoke of a great leader favoured of

the gods, a noble Roman. The new age did come in under the guidance of a new leader, but he was no aristocratic Roman, but a Jew, and a man of the people, Jesus of Nazareth.

II. Christ's name and life are well-known outside Christendom. He is spoken of in very high terms in the book which all Muhammadans revere; and contact with the West has brought a certain amount of knowledge about Him to the peoples of India, China and Japan. Now the most striking fact in this connexion is this, that while most of these Muhammadans, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians condemn Christians violently, and many write against Christianity, *they one and all speak with the highest praise of the character of Christ.* The same is true of sceptics and agnostics in Christian lands. One might compile a most fascinating volume consisting merely of extracts from non-Christian writers, in which Christ is spoken of as the best of men, as the ideal man, as the man whom all men should not only admire, but imitate.

Now we have in this a most remarkable fact. There is no other character in history that is so universally revered. There is no other man whom all men join in praising with so much heartiness. Charles Lamb speaks for the human race when he says: 'If Shakespeare were to enter this room, we should all spring to our feet; if Christ were to enter, we should all fall on our knees.'

But HE WAS CRUCIFIED. This, the purest and noblest of men, was subjected to the most shameful form of death possible. Nor was there only the bare execution: every circumstance that could make death bitter to the

noble human spirit was added. He was betrayed by one of His own chosen Twelve; the remaining eleven deserted Him; one plucked up heart and followed at a distance, but only to deny Him. Indeed the universal breakdown of human character around Him is one of the saddest things in history. The Jewish priests and scribes, the common people, the Roman Governor and the common soldiers, all reveal their worst passions in the presence of Christ, while He stands amongst them in all the silent majesty of innocence.¹

We here quote three short paragraphs from St. Matthew's Gospel.² The first describes what took place after the members of the Jewish Sanhedrim had decided that Jesus deserved to be put to death:

'Then did they spit in His face, and buffet Him; and some smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, Thou Christ: who is he that struck Thee?'³

Then those model judges carried their prisoner before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, and after much persuasion got him to condemn Jesus to death, when the following scenes took place:

'Then the soldiers of the Governor took Jesus into the palace, and gathered unto Him the whole band. And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they kneeled down before Him, and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat upon Him, and took the reed and smote Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took off from Him the robe, and put on Him His garment and led Him away to crucify Him.'⁴

¹ Matt. Chaps. xxvi and xxvii.

² For the criticism of the Gospels see below, pp. 61-2.

³ Matt. xxvi. 67-8.

⁴ Matt. xxvii. 27-31.

' And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name ; him they compelled to go with them, that he might bear His cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, the place of a skull, they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall : and when He had tasted it, He would not drink. And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments among them, casting lots : and they sat and watched Him there. And they set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then are there crucified with Him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left, And they that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, " Thou that destroyed the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself : if Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross." In like manner also the chief priests mocking Him with the scribes and elders said, " He saved others ; Himself He cannot save. He is the King of Israel ; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on Him. He trusteth on God ; let Him deliver Him now, if He desireth Him : for He said, I am the Son of God." And the robbers also that were crucified with Him cast upon Him the same reproach.'¹

How was it that of all men Jesus should be the man subjected to all this? How can we reconcile His character and His destiny?

Let us recollect what Plato had written 400 years earlier :

The just man will be scourged, racked, fettered, will have his eyes burned out, and at last, after suffering every kind of torture, will be crucified.

Now we do not insist on the correspondence in detail between the words of Plato and the death of Christ, although that, while not complete, is sufficiently remarkable ; but we wish to emphasize, with all possible force,

¹ Matt. xxvii. 32-44.

this most extraordinary fact, that Plato foresaw that a man of the character of Jesus would suffer as He did.

How are we to explain the fact? What is the reason why the men of Christ's day treated this most humane of men with such barbarous inhumanity? The answer is that it was inevitable. Jesus is the revelation of the uttermost holiness of God, and *His attempt to lay that standard upon the human spirit*¹ roused to its utmost fury against Him all the sinfulness of our common human nature. It is the same contest of which we are each conscious in our daily life between inclination and conscience; only, in the case of Jesus, it seems as if all the little battles of every individual life had met in one gigantic struggle between sinful human nature and its Lord. And the same struggle necessarily continues wherever Christianity goes. The persecutions of the Roman Empire are merely the external signs of the convulsive efforts of the spirit of Paganism to resist the march of the Spirit of God. In every land Christ is met by the same opposition. Everywhere selfishness, self-interest and passion dissuade men from following the Man of Sorrows; and the struggle is there, terrible in its reality and intensity, even if it never break out into open persecution. But, in surveying these surging battles, the careful observer is much struck with this fact, that, while human passions inevitably fight against Christ,

¹ It was not the *teaching* of Jesus, but His *interference*, in the interests of His own supreme standards, with the traditional worship and customs of the Jews, that led the Jewish hierarchy to determine on His death. See below pp. 64-5.

yet He has in Conscience an ally, which neither by bribes nor by bullying can be made to desert Him. He is the objective conscience of the human race. He is Plato's just man.

III. Let us now try to realize what kind of a being the founder of Christianity was. Our chief sources of information are the Gospels; for from the other books of the New Testament and from outside literature we learn only scattered facts about His life on earth. We shall not appeal to the fourth Gospel, for there are still numerous questions with regard to it unsettled, but shall confine ourselves to Matthew, Mark and Luke, books recognized on all hands as of high historical value, and as having been written between 65 and 95 A.D.¹ Any one may very speedily convince himself of the splendid historical reliability of these simple narratives. From Josephus and other Jewish writers of the first and second centuries, and from casual remarks in Greek and Roman books, we are able to learn what the life of these days was like;² but nowhere do we get such vivid, detailed, realistic pictures as in the Gospels. 'They are full of feeling for the time; they understand its men, schools, classes, parties; they know the thoughts that are in the air, the rumours that run along the street; they are familiar with the catchwords and phrases of the period, its conventions, questions, modes of discussion and style of argument.

¹ See Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible, ad loca*, and Moffatt, *Historical New Testament*, pp. 272-4. The most probable dates are, for Mark, A.D. 66 to 70, and for Matthew and Luke, A.D. 70 to 75.

² See the masses of evidence gathered in Schürer, *H.J.*

And all is presented with the utmost realism, so grouped round the central figure as to form a perfect historical picture, He and His setting being so built together as to constitute a single organic whole.¹

How then does Christ appear in them?—His name was Jesus; ² Christ is a title springing from his teaching, as we shall see. He lived in the small town of Nazareth, in the district of Galilee ³ in Palestine, and worked as a carpenter there.⁴ At length, in A.D. 26 He gave up carpentry and began His public career as a preacher.⁵ The picture given of Him in the Gospels is a most attractive one. Wherever He goes, the sick, the suffering, the distressed crowd around Him. Blind beggars, outcast lepers, hopeless paralytics, even uncontrollable lunatics, receive help from His healing power. He feeds the hungry, breathes hope into the downcast, lifts up the enfeebled patient, helps the helpless. But while every form of suffering and sorrow appeals to His compassion, His heart is set on winning the souls of men. So we find Him preaching in the synagogue and by the sea, on the mountain-side and in the busy street, now stirring vast crowds, now dealing with an individual, and again pouring His rich teaching into the ears of the chosen Twelve. No man ever had such power of convincing men of sin and leading them to repentance: the simple fisherman,⁶ the fallen woman,⁷ the wealthy custom-house

¹ Fairbairn, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, pp. 328-9.

² Mark i. 9.

⁴ Mark vi. 3.

⁶ Luke v. 8.

³ Mark i. 9.

⁵ Luke iii. 1; iv. 14.

⁷ Luke vii. 36-50.

officer¹ and the dying robber,² all felt condemned in His presence, and through Him entered into the new life.

The character revealed in His words and deeds is beautiful beyond comparison. The most outstanding feature of it is His love for God and the perfect and unbroken serenity of His intercourse with Him. Love for man also shines out everywhere. But the most extraordinary point is this, that He in whom the moral ideal was so lofty, so deep and so broad, He who was so keenly conscious of sin in others, and had such power to make them feel it, betrays absolutely no consciousness of sin Himself, never asks for pardon, and never speaks of having repented, or of having passed through any crisis of the nature of conversion.³ On the other hand the perfect balance of His character is almost as marvellous as His sinlessness: judicial severity controlled by perfect love; supreme authority that is also supreme gentleness; strength filled with tenderness; regal dignity shown in acts of lowliest service; holiness that led Him among the unholy; sublimest self-consciousness, never leading to anything but self-effacement and self-sacrifice. And yet again, is there anything about Him so wonderful as His power of winning human love? The Gospels are full of instances of it, and to-day how many millions of men, women and children would count it a supreme joy to die for His sake!

His teaching is a perfectly articulated and unified whole, as may be seen from the scientific studies of it

¹ Luke xix. 1-10.

² Luke xxiii. 39-43.

³ See Harnack, *What is Christianity*, pp. 32-5.

that have been published during the last twenty years.¹ But we must not attempt to deal with that fascinating subject here, except in so far as the whole is implied in what He says about Himself. For it is only that part of it, namely, His account of Himself and His mission, that we propose to touch on.

We shall understand it best, if we begin with what happened at His crucifixion; for it was only at the end of His life that He made perfectly clear to the whole world what His claims were. People often wondered whether He were not THE CHRIST, i.e. *The Messiah*, the Anointed One, the great national deliverer whom the Jews were so earnestly expecting and praying for;² but during the three years of His public life He seldom openly made the claim.³ When, however, He went to Jerusalem for the last time, He made a royal entry into the sacred city,⁴ cleansed the Temple from the desecration of its cattle-market,⁵ and began to teach in the Temple courts,⁶ thus by both word and act publicly claiming recognition as the Christ.

The Jewish leaders had been often bitterly incensed by His teaching and His actions before. His bold seizure

¹ See specially Weiss, *N.T. Theology*; Beyschlag, *N.T. Theology*; Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*; Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*; Robertson, *Our Lord's Teaching*; and many others.

² See Schürer, *H.J.P.*, Div. II, vol. II, pp. 126ff.

³ The reason for His silence is to be found in the fact that the Messianic hope, as popularly held, had become largely political. To have confessed Himself the Christ would have been to precipitate a revolt against Rome. Cf. McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, 28.

⁴ Matt. xxi. 1-11. ⁵ Matt. xxi. 12-17. ⁶ Matt. xxi. 23; xxiii. 39.

of authority now decided them: they resolved on His death.¹ He was apprehended² and brought before the Sanhedrim,³ i.e., the High Court of Judæa. Evidence was led against Him, but it proved very unsubstantial;⁴ so the High Priest, the president of the court, formally asked Him, 'Art thou the Christ, the Son of God?' and He answered in the affirmative.⁵ Since they did not believe His claim, they could only come to the conclusion that He was an irreligious impostor, impiously arrogating divine authority to Himself. Consequently they declared that He ought to be put to death for blasphemy against God.⁶

But the Sanhedrim could not put any one to death; the sanction of the Roman Governor was necessary.⁷ He was therefore dragged before Pilate. Here they did not charge him with blasphemy, but with rebellion against the Roman Emperor. 'The King of the Jews' was a synonym for 'the Christ;' so they argued that Jesus, in claiming to be the Christ, claimed the sovereignty of the Jews, and was therefore guilty of rebellion against Tiberius.⁸ Pilate knew perfectly well that the Jewish leaders were jealous of Jesus, and that the charge was a mere pretence;⁹ his Roman sense of justice revolted against the execution of an innocent man; and he wished to save Him; but they played upon his fears, and finally succeeded in wringing a condemnation from him.¹⁰ It was because the Roman soldiers were

¹ Matt. xxvi. 3-5. ² Matt. xxvi. 47-56. ³ Matt. xxvi. 57 and 59.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 59-62. ⁵ Matt. xxvi. 63-4. ⁶ Matt. xxvi. 65-6.

⁷ Schürer, *H.J.P.*, Div. ii, vol. i. 188; John xviii. 31.

⁸ Matt. xxvii. 1-2, 11. ⁹ Matt. xxvii. 18. ¹⁰ Matt. xxvii. 11-26.

struck with the extreme absurdity of the idea of Jesus being a rival of Tiberius, that they got up their pitiable comedy of a court, and did Him mock homage as King of the Jews.

So He was led away to Calvary and crucified, and above His head on the cross was written, in three languages (Hebrew, Greek and Latin), the charge against Him—JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Thus Jesus took good care that there should be no doubt as to what He claimed to be : He did not write a book, nor cut an inscription on a rock, *but He let Himself be crucified*, that all men to the end of time might know that He claimed to be the Christ.¹

Now let us see what He meant when He called Himself the Christ. To get to understand this fully would be to learn the complete meaning of His teaching ; for it is such a perfect organism that every member of it is closely related to every other member : yet we may gain sufficient insight for our purpose from a broad survey.

The subject of the whole teaching of Jesus was *the Kingdom of God*. He held that God had been working from the very beginning for the winning of man to Himself, and that especially among His own people Israel He had shown His hand. They had not only come to know Him as the God of righteousness whose law was

¹ McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, 27-32.

holiness; they had enjoyed His love; they had experienced His mercy and His power to redeem. But with the coming of Jesus Himself a new era of the world had opened: ¹ God was now drawing near to all men, in a new relationship of love and mercy, with the purpose of saving them.² This was the coming of the Kingdom of God.³ The history of Israel had been a long discipline in preparation for this.⁴ On the ground cleared in Israel, and on the basis of the revelation already made to them, God would now reveal Himself to all men. The destiny of Israel—'I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles'⁵—would now be fulfilled.⁶

God, then, was about to enter into a new relationship with the whole human race. That new relationship would be, like the old one with Israel, characterized not only by His righteousness, but by His redeeming love. His eternal purpose, which had been in contemplation all through the centuries of Israel's training, would now be unfolded. The childhood of the world was over: its first simple lessons had been learned; the real business of Time could now be begun. The partial unveiling of God's face, which it had been Israel's privilege to behold, would now become a full revelation in the sight of the nations. The King of Israel would be seen to be the Father of men. Further, as Israel had learned her lessons through Jehovah's redemptive acts at the Red Sea, on Zion, and in Babylon, so mankind would learn

¹ Mark i. 15.

² See the parables in Matt. xxii. 2-14; and Luke xiv. 15-24

³ Mark i. 15.

⁴ Matt. xi. 13-14; Luke xvi. 16.

⁵ Isaiah xlii. 6; xlix. 6. ⁶ Matt. xxiv. 14; xxvi. 13; xxviii. 19.

the Father's love through the great redemptive acts involved in the coming of the Kingdom.

The chief conviction that Jesus had about Himself was that *in and through and by Him the Kingdom of God was coming*: this it was that constituted Him THE CHRIST. His self-consciousness is the most marvellous phenomenon within the compass of history; there is nothing else comparable with it. The primary element in it seems to have been the knowledge that He was the true man, man as God wishes Him to be, faultless both morally and religiously.¹ Closely connected with this is another element, quite as unparalleled in human experience, a feeling of close kinship to all men, a consciousness of solidarity with the whole race and of personal connexion and sympathy with every individual.² These two elements of His nature—His perfection as man, and His relationship to the race as a whole—He summed up in the phrase, which He used so often to describe Himself, THE SON OF MAN.³ Corresponding to this double relationship to man stands double relationship to God: first, He stands in the closest personal kinship to God—the Son with the Father; so that He alone can reveal God, and God alone can reveal Him;⁴ and secondly, He is God's representative to the human race.⁵ This

¹ Matt. xi. 28-9.

² Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

³ See, e.g. Matt. ix. 6; xi. 19; xii. 8; xvi. 13; xx. 18, 28; xxv. 31; xxvi. 64.

⁴ Matt. xi. 27; xvi. 17; xvii. 5.

⁵ Matt. xxi. 37; xi. 10; Mark viii. 37-8; ix. 37; Luke x. 16.

dual relation to God He expressed by calling Himself THE SON OF GOD.¹

The life of a being of this order, standing in great, pregnant relations to God on the one hand and to the human family on the other, would necessarily be of transcendent significance. So we find that He regarded His own words and acts and all the great experiences of His life as of supreme importance in the history of the world.² His coming opens a new era ;³ His public life is a wedding feast in the otherwise grey experience of men ;⁴ His teaching is the final revelation of God ;⁵ His acts are glimpses of the divine activity ;⁵ His death, which to the casual observer is but a coarse judicial murder, is the solemn sacrifice that ratifies the establishment of the new relationship between God and man.⁷

Since such were the chief convictions Jesus held about Himself and His mission, *authority* was naturally the chief note of His teaching. His hearers marked that characteristic at the very outset ;⁸ and a modern student cannot fail to be impressed with it as he reads the Gospels. He states quite frankly that He has come to fulfil the law and the prophets ;⁹ He sets up his own ' I say unto you ' not only against the Jewish traditions,¹⁰ but against the definite provisions of the Mosaic law ;¹¹ and over and over again He demands from men such love,

¹ Matt. iii. 17 ; xvii. 5 ; xxvi. 63-4 ; xxi. 37 ; xxii. 41-5 ; Luke x. 22.

² Luke x. 23-4. ³ Mark i. 15. ⁴ Matt. ix. 15 ; xxii. 2-14.

⁵ Luke x. 22.

⁶ Luke xi. 20.

⁷ Matt. xx. 28 ; Luke xxii. 20.

⁸ Mark i. 22, 27.

⁹ Matt. v. 17.

¹⁰ Matt. v. 44 ; xv. 20.

¹¹ Matt. v. 32, 34, 39 ; xv. 11 ; xix. 7-9.

faith, submission, obedience, as can be rightly given only to a Divine Master.¹

In Jesus of Nazareth, then, we have a historical person, whose time and environment are well known to us, and whose teaching and life also stand out clear and unmistakable and the most prominent thing about Him is this, that, by word and deed, and finally by His crucifixion, He made it clear to all men that He claimed to be both Son of Man and Son of God.

Here, then, we have the secret of that similarity which we are all so clearly conscious of, when we read a Gospel alongside of the *Gītā*. In the Gospels we have in historical form the authoritative utterances of the historical Jesus; in the *Gītā* we have the imaginations of a poet-philosopher who was clear-sighted enough to realize that an incarnate god would have many things to say about himself, and that his teaching would bear the note of authority. When, however, we look for exact parallels between the two, they are hard to find: the books are so utterly diverse in origin and teaching that they have little in common except the tone of the master. In a few cases, however, the resemblance is rather striking: here, then, we place side by side the words of Jesus and the imaginations of the writer of the *Gītā*.

SAVINGS OF JESUS

All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.
Matt. xxviii. 18

VERSES FROM THE GĪTĀ

Nature gives birth to movables and immovables through me, the supervisor, and by reason of that the universe revolves. ix. 10.

¹ Matt. v. 11, viii. 22, x. 37-9, xi. 28-30, xvi. 24-5.

SAYINGS OF JESUS.

All things have been delivered unto me of my Father : and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father ; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Luke x. 22.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matt. xi. 28.

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins. Mark ii. 10.

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Mark viii. 34.

So, therefore, whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Luke xiv. 33.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matt. xi. 28.

If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household ? Matt. x. 25.

VERSES FROM THE GĪTĀ

I know the things which have been, those which are, and those which are to be ; but me nobody knows. vii. 26.

Forsaking all duties, come to me as thy sole refuge. I will release thee from all sins : do not grieve. xviii. 66.

Of all mortals, he who knows me to be unborn, without beginning, the great lord of the world, being free from delusion, is released from all sins. x. 3.

In thought renouncing all actions unto me, intent on me, applying thyself to the yoking of thine intellect, be thou always thinking of me. xviii. 57.

Having thyself yoked by the yoke of renunciation, thou shalt come to me. ix. 28.

In him seek shelter with all thy might : by his grace thou shalt attain supreme peace, the eternal dwelling-place. xviii. 62.

—hating me in their own bodies and in those of others. xvi. 18.

SAVINGS OF JESUS.

And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me. Matt. xi. 6.

My yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matt. xi. 30.

Learn of me. Matt. xi. 29.

VERSES FROM THE GĪTĀ.

Deluded people . . . not knowing my highest nature as great lord of entities, disregard me, as I have assumed a human body. ix. 11.

To the constantly-yoked Yogi, who constantly remembereth me, never thinking of another, I am easy of access. viii. 14.

Learn from me. xviii. 50.

It would lead us far afield to set forth in detail all the striking things that Jesus has to say about His own person and mission, but it may be well to quote a few passages exhibiting lines of character and thought not exemplified above :—

(a) His meekness and lowliness.

‘ I am meek and lowly in heart. ’ Matt. xi. 29.

(b) The conditions of His earthly life.

‘ The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. ’ Luke ix. 58.

(c) The necessity that He should die for men.

‘ And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ’ Mark viii. 31.

(d) His spirit of service and self-sacrifice.

‘ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.’ Matt. xx. 28.

‘ But I am among you as he that doth serve.’ Luke xxii. 27.

(e) His claims on the allegiance and love of men.

‘ Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God.’ Luke xii. 8-9.

‘ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.’ Matt. x. 37-8.

(f) His universal sympathy.

‘ Inasmuch as he did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.’ Matt. xxv. 40.

(g) His declaration that He will return to judge all men.

‘ Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.’ Matt. vii. 22-3.

(h) His presence with His followers.

'For where two or three are gathered together
in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'
Matt. xviii. 20.

The *Gītā* is one of the most eloquent possible proofs of the fact that the human heart cries out for an incarnate Saviour. Scarcely less impressive is the evidence furnished by the reception of the *Gītā* by Hindu readers: not the greatest of the Upanishads, neither the *Chāndogya* nor the *Kāṭha*, has had one quarter of the influence exercised by this late poem; and the secret undoubtedly is to be found in the attraction of the man-god Kṛishṇa. How many generations of pious readers have found in the story of the life and teaching of the incarnate god something to which their deepest and most persistent religious instincts have responded! How many to-day turn to Kṛishṇa in their trials and troubles!

On the one hand, then, we have the imaginative portrait of Kṛishṇa, surrounded by millions of adoring worshippers—touching spectacle! On the other, stands the historical Jesus of Nazareth, Son of Man and Son of God, stretching out His nail-pierced hands to India as He says, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Rightly read, the *Gītā* is a clear-tongued prophecy of Christ, and the hearts that bow down to the idea of Kṛishṇa are really seeking the incarnate Son of God.

IV. We have been able to see some little distance into the self-consciousness of Jesus, and to realize in part at least that on which He grounds His claim to the

heart of every man; but we have not yet learned the secret of that most marvellous of His powers, His power to win human love. To that we must now address ourselves.

It is a well-known fact of history that, shortly after the death of Christ, His followers began to preach in His name, and that very soon the new faith began to spread rapidly. We have already learned from Tacitus that in A.D. 64 there was 'an immense multitude' of Christians in Rome itself. Now the greatest of all the early missionaries was Paul. He was the apostle of Europe. We mention his name here, because we wish to refer to one of his Epistles. These letters are the earliest of our Christian documents. The series begins with two brief letters, both written, with a short interval between them, to the Church at Thessalonica. The most probable date for them is A.D. 49, that is, only twenty years after the death of Christ. But the letter we wish to use is one sent from Ephesus to the Church of Corinth¹ about A.D. 55,² that is, twenty-six years after the death of Jesus. We must not stay here to speak of the splendour of the ethical feeling and teaching of the Epistle further than to say that it manifestly has its source in Jesus. We must direct our attention to other facts which appear in it.

Christianity, we note, has already spread from Judæa into the provinces of Asia³ and Galatia⁴ in Asia Minor,

¹ *I.e.*, *Corinthians*.

² For the dates of Paul's Epistles, see the articles in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, or Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*, 121-37.

³ xvi. 19.

⁴ xvi. 1.

and Macedonia¹ and Achaia² in Europe. Phœnicia, Syria, Cilicia and Cyprus are not mentioned; but we know from other sources³ that they too were already evangelized. Thus in twenty-six years the Church of Christ has become a great organization, extending through many lands, yet conscious of its unity in Christ.⁴ We note also that then, as to-day, BAPTISM is a solemn ceremonial act, in which a man through the action of the Holy Spirit becomes a member of the body of Christ,⁵ while THE LORD'S SUPPER is a recurrent feast, in which the members of the Church have fellowship with the Lord and with each other.⁶

But what we would call special attention to is *the place assigned to Christ* in the Epistle. With reference to the Christian, Christ is THE LORD;⁷ with reference to the Father, He is THE SON;⁸ He is spoken of as the Lord of Glory,⁹ the Power of God,¹⁰ and the Wisdom of God;¹¹ and prayer is offered to Him.¹² All spiritual authority and power are attributed to Him.¹³ The Church is His body,¹⁴ and He supplies His grace and power to every member.¹⁵ He will come back again to earth in glory,¹⁶ and will then reveal all secrets and judge all men.¹⁷

¹ xvi. 5² xvi. 15.³ Acts xi. 19, Gal. i. 21-4⁴ xii. 13⁵ xii. 13.⁶ xi. 20-34; x. 16-17.

⁷ Very frequent: cf. i. 2; i. 3; i. 7; viii. 6; xii. 3; xvi. 22. *The Lord* takes in the Epistles the place held by *the Son of Man* in the Gospels.

⁸ i. 9⁹ ii. 8.¹⁰ i. 24.¹¹ i. 24, 30.¹² i. 2¹³ v. 4; vii. 10; xiv. 37; xv. 24-8.¹⁴ xii. 12-13, 27.¹⁵ i. 4-7, 30; iii. 5; xii. 5; xvi. 23.¹⁶ i. 7; iv. 5¹⁷ iv. 5.

But there is another point still more noteworthy, and that is *the way in which the crucifixion of Christ is interpreted*. Instead of regarding that judicial murder as a regrettable incident, like the assassination of Cæsar or the death of Socrates, Paul and his fellow-believers glory in it,¹ not only as the crowning event of the divine revelation made in Christ, but as the consummation of His work as the Saviour of men.² Paul makes it the basis of all his preaching,³ and in it he finds all the wealth of spiritual wisdom which Christianity contains.⁴ He contrasts the wisdom of God wrapped up in that divine tragedy with the worldly wisdom of earthly rulers.⁵

What can be the explanation of this extraordinary attitude to such an event?—The basis of it is the solemn declaration, which Paul makes in the Epistle, and which he says he made to his converts first of all, that **ON THE CROSS CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS.**⁶ The crucifixion, as a bare event in history, is but an act of wicked folly on the part of the rulers of Judæa; but, viewed from the standpoint of morality and religion, it is a divine act of world-wide significance. In the blood of Christ a new covenant had been made between God and man.⁷ This is the Gospel, which all the Apostles teach, and which all the Churches believe.⁸ Through faith in Christ, on the basis of this tremendous assertion, the Corinthian Christians, like the rest, had been saved,⁹ i.e. they had received *the forgiveness of their sins*¹⁰ and *the*

¹ i. 17-18. ² xi. 23-6; xv. 3. ³ i. 18, 21; ii. 2; xv. 1, 11.

⁴ i. 22-4. ⁵ ii. 6-8. ⁶ xv. 3. ⁷ xi. 25.

⁸ xv. 1, 2, 11. ⁹ i. 18, 21. ¹⁰ xv. 17.

*sanctifying Spirit.*¹ They thus no longer belonged to themselves: they had been bought with a great price, the blood of the Son of God.² They were no longer part and parcel of heathen society; each one was a member of the body of Christ.³

What led Paul and all the other Apostles and all the early Christians to form such an extraordinary theory? How did they come to the conclusion that the crucifixion was not a squalid tragedy, but a divine sacrifice? This letter tells us quite plainly; the reasons were these: Jesus Himself declared, before He was crucified, that *His death was to be the basis of the New Covenant,*⁴ and this declaration of His *had been divinely confirmed by His Resurrection.*⁵

Now mark: this letter was written within twenty-six years of the event. The majority of the twelve Apostles, and multitudes of other men who had known Jesus, were still alive.⁶ Paul's good faith is beyond all question; and, as he was intimate with Peter and John and the rest of the Apostles, and also with James the brother of Jesus,⁷ he had access to the very best information possible. Further, he had been one of the most violent opponents of Christianity. His testimony is, therefore, evidence of the very highest value. We may conclude, then, with the utmost certitude that we are standing on an immovable historical foundation, when we say that *Jesus, before His crucifixion, said He was about to die for the sins of men.*

¹ i. 2, 30; iii. 16, vi. 11, 19.

² vi. 20, vii. 23.

³ vi. 15, x. 17, xii. 12-13, 27.

⁴ xi. 23-5, cf. Jer. xxxi. 31-4

⁵ xv. 4 compared with xv. 14.

⁶ xv. 6.

⁷ Gal. i. 18-ii. 10.

But this evidence does not stand alone. It is a historical fact, acknowledged by scholars of every school, that all Christian churches have from the very beginning celebrated the Lord's Supper.¹ Now this universal usage in so many churches, divided not only by long distances but in many cases also by minor differences in doctrine, cannot be explained at all except as a result of a command of Jesus Himself. If any single disciple had started such a practice, it could never have won its way to universal acceptance. Now consider the significance of this fact: Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, broke it, and bade His disciples eat it, saying, 'This is my body.' He then took a cup of wine and bade them drink it, saying, 'This is my blood.'² The scene is absolutely without a parallel in the history of the world; and it can have but one meaning, viz. that Jesus regarded His death as a sacrifice.

But the direct statement of Paul is corroborated, not only by the institution of the Supper, but also by this fact, that the doctrine, that Christ died for our sins, is an integral part of the teaching of Jesus as that is handed down to us in the Gospels. We have already seen that He held that His death was necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom. We must now set out His teaching on this subject with a little more fulness. We shall restrict ourselves to a single Gospel. In the earliest saying that refers to it, His death is a future

¹ See McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, 536.

² The event is described in Matt. xxvi. 26-30; Mark xiv. 22-6; and Luke xxii. 14-20; as well as in 1 Cor. xi. 23-6.

event, coming inevitably, and destined to bring sorrow to His disciples. 'And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast.'¹ In the next it is much more clearly defined. Its necessity is emphasized; we are told that the agents are to be the religious leaders of Israel; and it is to be followed by the resurrection. 'From that time began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.'² Twice over this same prophecy is repeated, the last time with more detail.³ Then follows a most striking saying, in which He speaks of His death as voluntary: it is a giving away of His life; and it is explained as the climax of His life of service; for the gift is 'a ransom for many,' that is a price paid, in order to redeem many from sin. 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'⁴ We need not linger over the next sayings, though each has its own interest.⁵ The last saying, occurs in the account of the institution of the Supper. In these words He teaches in the clearest way, first, that His death is to be the ground of forgiveness, and secondly, that after His death He is to be the source of the spiritual life and strength of His followers. 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and He gave to the disciples, and said,

¹ Matt. ix. 15. ² Matt. xvi. 21. ³ Matt. xvii. 22-3, xx. 17-19.

⁴ Matt. xx. 28.

⁵ Matt. xxi-39, xxvi. 2, 12.

'Take, eat ; this is my body.' And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins.'¹ The teaching of Jesus is an organic whole, and is incomplete without this, His own interpretation of His death of shame.

Jesus, then, gave Himself up to death as the sacrifice for the sins of men. Our Christian documents go on to declare that *He rose from the dead on the third day*, and that this resurrection of His was God's confirmation of the sacrifice of His Son. That men should at first sight disbelieve the astounding assertion, that the crucified Jesus rose from the dead, is not to be wondered at ; but *the fact remains*. Sceptical scholars have laboured for centuries to explain away this extraordinary occurrence, but no one of these scholars themselves will venture to say that any explanation hitherto given is satisfactory. The latest attempt, that made by Schmiedel in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, is a farcical failure. The following are the adamantine facts which no rationalism has ever yet succeeded in crushing or melting :—(a) the Christians declared that they had seen Christ and spoken with Him after His resurrection ; (b) they were absolutely sincere in this belief ;² (c) the Christian Church arose as a result of this conviction ; (d) the grave was empty. The account of Christ's appearances given in the fifteenth chapter of our Epistle is well worth study. Those who wish to look into this question further may consult Ballard's *Miracles of Unbelief*, pp. 135 ff.

¹ Matt. xxvi. 26–30.

² Now universally acknowledged.

We have thus, by a serious historical inquiry, reached the conclusion, that Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of the Christian religion, declared before His crucifixion that He was about to die for the sins of men, and that this assertion of His was sealed with the divine approval by the unique miracle of the resurrection. We have also seen that this was *the Good News*, which Paul and all the other Apostles preached, and on which the early Church was founded. It is this that has won for Jesus the love of myriads; it is this that has been the magnet to draw them away from sin. It is the source of the joy and vital power of the Christian life.

Now let us recollect the poem upon *The Servant of Jehovah*, which we considered in our third chapter. How marvellously Jesus corresponds to the extraordinary idea which that poem discloses, the despised and oppressed prisoner who endures in uncomplaining meekness the uttermost shame of a violent death, and is finally recognized as having been 'pierced because of our transgressions, and crushed because of our iniquities.' That any one should write such a poem, seems strange in the extreme; that Jesus should have fulfilled it, is infinitely more wonderful.

How comes it that this Jewish carpenter, with His three years of public life and His cross of shame, fulfils so many ideals and aspirations? He brings in the new age which Virgil and his contemporaries sighed for; He is Plato's just man; He utters from His own self-consciousness such things as the author of the *Gītā* imagined an incarnate god would say; He gives Himself up to death, in sheer love, as a sacrifice for sin, thus fulfilling

the deepest needs of man, as expressed by the old Hebrew seer ; and He is the only human being whom men of every race and clime can heartily admire and unhesitatingly imitate. Nor is this all : many other convergent lines of thought might be suggested, in the light of which Jesus stands out as the ideal of our common humanity and the fountain of the love of God.

How is all this to be explained ? Wide chasms sever the Hindu sage, the Greek philosopher, the Hebrew prophet and the Roman poet ; yet in Jesus their several ideals are reconciled in a loftier unity. Once in the course of the centuries East and West have actually met ! Nor was the meeting merely the resolution of antitheses in a wider conception : what the Jew and the Indian, the Greek and the Roman, dreamed of as the unattainable, that Jesus actually accomplished in this work-a-day world of ours, amid storms of the cruellest hatred and calumny—What is your candid opinion about Him, brother ? How are you to solve the problem raised by His life, death and place in history ? Can He be better described than in His own words, SON OF MAN and SON OF GOD ?

APPENDIX

NEO-KRISHNA LITERATURE

The Neo-Kṛishṇa movement is about twenty years old. Before 1880 Vaishṇavism does not seem to have been in great favour with the higher castes of Bengal. Traditionally they were Śaivas or Śāktas rather than Vaishṇavas; and English education, which bore very heavily for half a century on every form of Hinduism seems to have told with peculiar severity on Kṛishṇaism. But shortly after 1880 a great change becomes visible: Kṛishṇa begins to be praised on every hand, and ancient Vaishṇava books are read and studied with avidity. The new movement seems to have owed its origin, on the one hand, to the teaching and influence of Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Keshub Chundra Sen, Bijoy Krishna Goswami and Shishir Kumar Ghose; and on the other, to the efforts of two or three noteworthy literary men, who threw themselves into the task of painting the character of Kṛishṇa with extraordinary enthusiasm. The *Gītā* at once leaped into greater prominence than ever: numberless editions and translations of it have been published. Many essays have appeared comparing Kṛishṇa with Christ and Vaishṇavism with Christianity. Thus a large Kṛishṇa literature, both in English and Bengali, has sprung up. The following seem to be the more important books of this literature:—

- 1884 Essays in *Prachār* on *Krishnacharitra* by
 Bunkim Ch. Chatterji.

- 1886 1. *Krishnacharitra*, Bunkim Ch. Chatterji, 1st edition. A volume in Bengali prose on the character of Kṛishṇa.
- 1887 2. *Raivatak*, Nobin Ch. Sen. An epic poem in Bengali on Kṛishṇa's youth.
3. *The Bhagavad Gītā, or the Lord's Lay*, Mohini M. Chatterji. An English prose translation of the text and of parts of Śankara's commentary. An attempt is made to put the *Gītā* on the same level as the New Testament.
- 1888 4. *Krishna Jivani*, Prosanna Kumar Vidyaratna. A life of Kṛishṇa in Bengali prose.
- 1889 5. *Srikrishner Jivana O Dharma*, Gaur Govinda Ray. The life and religion of Kṛishṇa from the standpoint of the New Dispensation : Bengali prose.
- 1890 6. *Srimadbhagavadgītā*, Krishnananda Swami (i.e. Krishna Prasanna Sen). The text in the Bengali character with a Bengali commentary and translation.
- 1892 *Krishnacharitra*, Bunkim Ch. Chatterji, 2nd edition. This edition contains a great deal of new matter.
7. *Amiya Nimai Charit*, Shishir Kumar Ghose. First part. A life of Chaitanya in Bengali prose.
- 1893 *Amiya Nimai Charit*, Second part.
8. *Kurukshetra*, Nobin Ch. Sen. An epic poem in Bengali on Kṛishṇa at Kurukshetra.

- 1894 9. *The Landmarks of Ethics according to the Gītā*. Bulloram Mullick.
Amiya Nimai Charit. Third part.
- 1895 10. *Kātā Chānd Gītā*, Shishir Kumar Ghose.
A sort of Krishnaite Song of Solomon in Bengali verse. It is said to have been composed in 1888.
- 1896 11. *Srikrishna, his Life and Teachings*, Dharendra Nath Pal, 3 vols.
12. *Srikrishner Kalanka Kena?* Nava Kumar Devasarma. A Bengali prose defence of the character of Kṛishṇa.
13. *The Bhagavad Gītā*, Annie Besant. New and revised edition. An English prose translation with an introduction and a few notes.
14. *Prabhās*, Nobin Ch. Sen. An epic poem in Bengali on the later years of Kṛishṇa's life.
- 1897 15. *Lord Gaurānya*, Shishir Kumar Ghose, 1st volume. A life of Chaitanya in English prose, with a discussion of the doctrine of Incarnations.
- 1898 16. *Krishna and Krishnaism*, Bulloram Mullick.
Lord Gaurānga, 2nd volume.
17. *Hindu Theism*, Sitanath Tattvabhusan.
18. *An Elementary Treatise on Universal Religion*. Kshetra Mohan Mukerji. The religion of the *Gītā* is here put forward as the universal religion.

- 1899 19. *Incarnation*, Nanda Krishna Bose. This treatise follows in most points the theory of Incarnation put forward in *Lord Gaurāṅga*.
- 1900 20. *The Young Men's Gītā*, Jogindranath Mukharji. An English prose translation with introduction and notes.
21. *Srimadbhagavadgītā*, Prasanna Kumar Sastri, 2nd edition. The text in the Bengali character, with several commentaries, and a Bengali translation by Sesadhar Tarkachuramani.
- 1901 22. *The Imitation of Sreekrishna*, S. C. Mukhopadhyaya. A daily textbook, containing extracts in English from the *Gītā* the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Bhāgavat Purāṇa*.
23. *Sree Krishna*, Muralidhur Roy. An account, in English prose, of the life and character of Kṛishṇa.
24. *Srimadbhagavadgītā*, Bhudhur Chattopadhyaya, 4th edition. The text in the Bengali character, with a Bengali commentary.
- 1903 25. A most elaborate edition of the *Gītā*, edited by Damudar Mukerji, is being published in parts.
26. A Bengali verse translation of the *Gītā* by Satyendra Nath Tagore is appearing in *Bhārati*.

This revival of interest in Kṛishṇa and his worship is clearly part of the great national movement which has been so potent in Bengal, religiously, socially and politically, these last twenty years. This period has witnessed

the appearance of the whole Neo-Hindu movement, with its literature, lectures, societies and missionary propaganda, the rise of the Indian National Congress and of the social reform movement, the advance of native journalism to its present extraordinary influence, and the establishment of the native unaided colleges, which have so seriously changed the balance of influence in Higher Education. Neo-Krishṇaism, then, is one result of the operation of that potent spirit whereby India has become conscious of her unity, and her sons have been roused to a vigorous defence of all that they have inherited from the past. This rise of the national spirit, though it may be troublesome in small matters to the rulers of India, is undoubtedly the last and greatest justification of English rule; and, while, with its exaggerations and insincerities and follies, it cannot fail to provoke criticism, yet its power to awake self-reliance, self-respect and the passion for freedom ought to win for it the approval and the encouragement of all good men.

There can be no doubt that among the influences which have produced Neo-Hinduism, Christianity is one of the most potent, if not the chief. This is peculiarly evident in the case of the Neo-Krishṇa literature we are discussing. In 1899 the Bengal Librarian wrote, 'There is no denying the fact that all this revolution in the religious belief of the educated Hindu has been brought about as much by the dissemination of Christian thought by Missionaries as by the study of Hindu scriptures; for Christian influence is plainly detectable in many of the Hindu publications of the year.' But

beyond this general influence, which cannot fail to be noticed by any one who will take the trouble to read the volumes, it is, we believe, perfectly plain that the very ideas which have given birth to the literature are the result of Christian influence. A distinct taste for such books as the Gospels has sprung up; and men have come to feel the need of a perfect character, such as Christ's is, for daily contemplation and imitation. The Neo-Kṛishṇa movement endeavours to supply these needs from within Hinduism, offering the *Gītā* instead of the Gospels, and Kṛishṇa instead of Christ.¹

Nobin Ch. Sen seems to have been the first to conceive the idea of a modern rendering of the character of Kṛishṇa; for he laid the project before some of his friends in 1882.² His famous epic trilogy, *Raivatak*, *Kurukshetra* and *Prabhās*, are the result of this pregnant thought. But, while he and Shishir Kūmar Ghose have done a great deal to popularize the movement, there can be no doubt that Bunkim Ch. Chatterji's *Krishmacharitra* has been by far the most influential volume in the whole of this literature. Gaur Govinda Ray's work, *Srikrishner*

¹ Many other signs of Christian influence might be noted: thus *The Young Men's Gītā* is a counterblast to a Christian edition of the Song, and it is besides most evidently arranged and printed in imitation of some tasteful edition of *The Imitation of Christ*: while *The Imitation of Sreekrishna* proclaims its origin by its very name.

² See an essay by Hirendra Nath Dutta, which originally appeared in *Sāhitya*, now republished as an appendix to Nobin Chundra Sen's *Kurukshetra*.

Jivana O Dharma, is a piece of excellent characterization, and has won the high regard of many thoughtful men.

The books on our list fall into two classes, *Historical* and *Traditional*. In the Historical class there are only two volumes, Tattvabhushan's *Hindu Theism*, and the *Young Men's Gītā*. These two frankly acknowledge that the *Gītā* is a late book. In the *Young Men's Gītā*¹ its date is said to be a century or two before, or a century or two after, the Christian era; while in *Hindu Theism*² the *Gītā* is regarded as the point of transition from the old Vedānta to the religion of the Purāṇas. The standpoint of these two books is thus thoroughly historical, but it necessarily implies the abandonment of the divinity of Kṛishṇa.

All the rest of the books on the list fall into the second class; for they hold the traditional position about Kṛishṇa. Most of them make no attempt at criticism of the sources, but treat the *Mahābhārata*, the *Gītā*, the *Harivansa* and the Purāṇas as all historical and all equally trustworthy. A few of the authors, however, state plainly their own critical conclusions, and two or three enter into some discussion of the main problems. These attempts at criticism are the most pitiable parts of the whole literature. The talented author of *Sri-krishner Jivana O Dharma*, by far too sincere and candid to ignore the Purāṇic elements in the sources, frankly confesses their presence; yet, believing these books to be genuine representatives of the age of Kurukshetra, he is driven to the extraordinary conclusion

¹ p. ii.

² pp. 74-6.

that the Vedic, the Vedāntic, and the Purāṇic ages were contemporaneous.¹ The late Bulloram Mullick, in discussing the eighteen Purāṇas, goes so far as to say, 'Whatever may be the views of European savants, there is indubitable proof that some of these Purāṇas existed in the eleventh or twelfth century before Christ.'² Even Bunkim Chundra Chatterji himself not only unhesitatingly adopts Goldstücker's rash guess, that Pāṇini's grammar was written before the Brāhmaṇas and the Upanishads, but on the basis of that unwise conjecture, pushes back Pāṇini's date to the tenth or eleventh century B.C.,³ i.e. four or five centuries earlier than the pre-Buddhistic date which Goldstücker⁴ wished to establish. Dharendra Nath Pal, seeing that Bunkim Babu found it so easy to leap over a few centuries, goes a little further and suggests the twelfth or thirteenth.⁵ But, indeed, without some such strange perversion of history, it is impossible to construct an argument for the authenticity of the *Gītā* and the historicity of the *Mahābhārata* that shall have even the semblance of reason.

We note next that of all the books of the second class, Bunkim Chundra's *Krishnacharitra* is the only work that gives any independent criticism: all the rest, with the single exception of *Srikrishner Jivana O Dharma*, merely echo his arguments. Thus Bunkim Babu's theory is the only one we need discuss.

¹ p. 1.

² *Krishna and Krishnaism*, 16.

³ *Krishnacharitra*, 42.

⁴ *Pāṇini, his Place in Sanskrit Literature*, 227.

⁵ *Srikrishna, his Life and Teachings*, Vol. I, p. xxv.

Now the whole critical structure of the *Krishna-charitra* rests upon the passage on pages 41 and 42, where the date of Pāṇini is discussed. Pāṇini is pushed back to 1000 B.C. ; and, the 'original' *Mahābhārata* being earlier than Pāṇini, we are asked to believe that it was produced within a century or two of Kurukshetra, and that it is in consequence trustworthy historically. The whole argument thus rests on the date of Pāṇini.

We translate this important passage :—

Goldstücker has proved that, when Pāṇini's Sūtra was composed, Buddha had not arisen. In that case Pāṇini must belong to the sixth century B.C. But not only that, in his time the Brāhmaṇas, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads and the other parts of the Vedas had not been composed. Apart from the Rīg, the Yajur, and the Sama Vedas, nothing else existed. Aśvalāyana Sāṅkhāyana and the rest had not appeared. Max Müller says that the age in which the Brāhmaṇas were composed began about 1000 B.C. Dr. Martin Haug says that that was the end of the age, and that it began in the fourteenth century B.C. Therefore, if we say that Pāṇini must belong to the tenth or eleventh century B.C., we do not say too much.

Now the first remark we make on this extraordinary piece of criticism is this, that Goldstücker and Max Müller are most unfairly conjoined to support a date which both of them would have indignantly repudiated. For Müller's date for Pāṇini is the fourth century B.C.,¹ and Goldstücker never proposed to push him further back than the sixth century ; indeed all that he claims is that he has brought forward evidence which affords a strong *probability* that Pāṇini preceded the origin of the

¹ *Physical Religion*, 76.

Buddhistic creed.¹ Our next remark is that, though more than forty years have passed since Goldstücker's book appeared,² he has convinced no one that the Brāhmaṇas and the Upanishads are posterior to Pāṇini's grammar: opinions still differ as to Pāṇini's precise date, but no scholar to-day puts him before the Brāhmaṇas.³

Can the grounds for this unanimity among modern scholars be vividly set forth? We believe they can. Here, as in our first chapter, we shall not attempt to fix a definite chronology, but shall simply aim at reaching *the relative age* of the great books we are dealing with; and we shall not deal with the meaning of disputed passages, but shall rest the case altogether on the clear and prominent features of history which every one can appreciate. There is, then, first of all the great broad fact that the Sūtras depend on the Brāhmaṇas, and are, in general, posterior to them, and that *the language and style of Pāṇini's Sūtras show that he belongs to about the middle of the Sūtra period.*⁴ All the detailed study

¹ Pāṇini, *his Place in Sanskrit Literature*, 227.

² It was published in 1861.

³ Macdonell, 430-1; Kaegi, 7; Max Müller, *Physical Religion*, 63-4; Haraprasad Sastri, *A School History of India*, 4-7; R. C. Dutt, *Brief History of Ancient and Modern India*, 17, 27; Böhtlingk's *Pāṇini* (Leipsic, 1887); Weber, *Indische Studien*, V, 1-172; Hopkins, *R. I.*, 350; Buhler in *S. B. E.*, Vol. II, pp. xxxv, xxxix-xlii; Eggeling in *S. B. E.*, Vol. XII, p. xxxvii; Bhandarkar, *Early History of the Deccan*, 5.

⁴ Max Müller, *A. S. L.*, 311-2; Macdonell, 36, 39, 268. Cf. what Whitney says, 'The standard work of Pāṇini, the grammarian-in-chief of Sanskrit literature, is a frightfully perfect model of the Sūtra method' (*Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1, 71).

of the last forty years *has gone to strengthen this stable conclusion.*

But there is another and still more conclusive proof that Pāṇini comes long after the early Brāhmaṇas. *These ancient books are written in Vedic Sanskrit.*¹ The early Upanishads are more modern in character, but even they belong to a stage of the language a good deal earlier than the Sūtras: Professor Macdonell's words are, 'the oldest Upanishads occupying a position linguistically midway between the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras.'² Thus the Brāhmaṇas were composed while Vedic Sanskrit was still the language of the Indo-Aryans. Now Pāṇini's grammar *deals with classical Sanskrit*, not the Vedic speech. He deals with many points of Vedic grammar, it is true, but he deals with them as exceptions; his subject is classical Sanskrit. He laid down the law, which has ruled Sanskrit throughout the centuries since his day. Thus he arose at a time, *when the language of the Brāhmaṇas had become archaic*, and modern Sanskrit had taken its place.³ It is thus absolutely impossible to believe that Pāṇini lived and wrote before the Brāhmaṇas were composed: to propose to put him back before their composition is much the same as proposing to push Johnson's Dictionary back before Chaucer.

Another line of proof may also be indicated. Careful study of the early Brāhmaṇas has made it plain that

¹ Max Muller, *Natural Religion*, 296, Macdonell, 203-4

² Macdonell, 205.

³ Max Muller, *A. S. L.*, 138, *Natural Religion*, 297-8, Macdonell, 22-3.

they were composed after the collection of the hymns of the *Rigveda*, but before ¹ the formation of the *Sanhitā* text (i.e. the text in which the words are joined according to the rules of *Sandhi*) and the *Pada* ² text (i.e. the word by word text). The author of the *Pada* ² text is Śākalya.³ Now Yāska refers to Śākalya as a predecessor;⁴ and Yāska himself is earlier than Pāṇini.⁵ Thus the historical order is the early Brāhmaṇas, the *Sanhitā* text, Śākalya, Yāska, Pāṇini.

Bunkim Babu's date for Pāṇini being thus altogether untenable, his whole argument for the historicity of the *Pāṇḍava Mahābhārata* and Kṛiṣṇa's character as therein portrayed tumbles in ruins, and brings down with it all the rest of this Kṛiṣṇa literature.

We would invite our readers to turn away from these vain attempts to turn a myth into sober history, and to listen to the teaching of those really scholarly Indians who study Hinduism from a scientific standpoint. We have already referred to Sitanath Tattvabhushan's *Hindu Theism*, and we have frequently used Bose's *Hindu Civilization under British Rule* and R. C. Dutt's works as authorities. We would now call attention to a monograph by one of the greatest scholars in Bengal (*Comparative Studies in Vaishnavism and Christianity*, by Brajendra Nath Seal), where ⁶ the growth of the Kṛiṣṇa legend is frankly discussed;⁷ also to a very

¹ Macdonell, 50.

² On these texts see Kaegi, Note 77; Macdonell, 48, 50.

³ Macdonell, 51.

⁴ Macdonell, 268.

⁵ Macdonell, 269. Goldstücker (*op. cit.* p. 225) acknowledges that Yāska is earlier than Pāṇini.

⁶ pp. 8-10.

⁷ See also Bose, *H. C.*, 33-5.

remarkable essay on *Buddhist and Vishnuite* in a recent number of *Sāhitya*¹ by the late Umes Chundra Batabyal, in which grave historical reasons are given for concluding that the *Gītā* is in part at least a polemic against Buddhism; and to the late Mr. Justice Telang's introduction to his translation of the *Gītā* (*S. B. E.*, Vol. VIII), with regard to which readers will note, that, although the date is put a little earlier than most scholars would put it, no attempt is made to defend the traditional theory of the origin of the Song.

¹ 13th year, 1st part.

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