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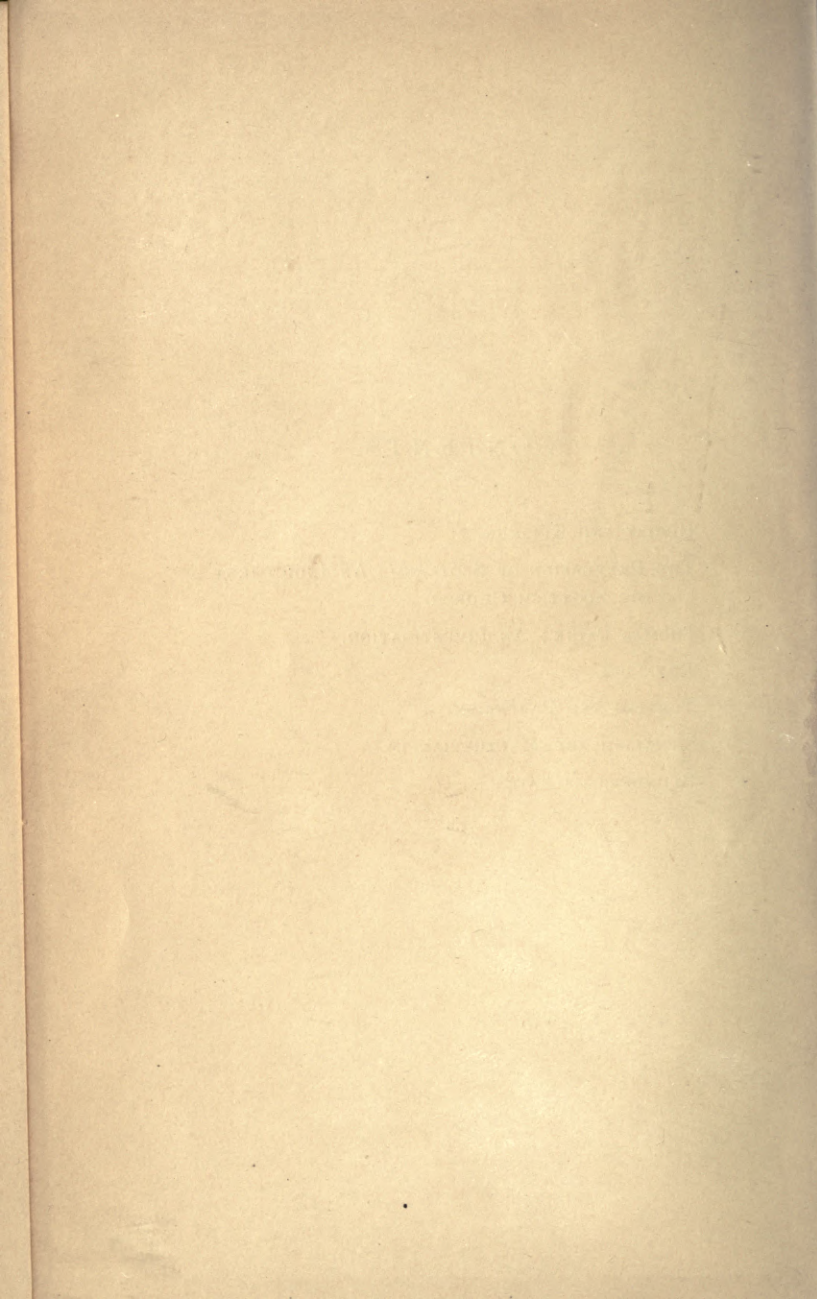
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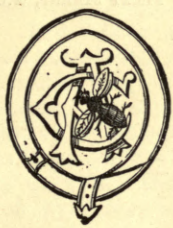
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CHRIST AND KRISHNA.

BY
Mackinnon
JOHN M. ROBERTSON.



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CHRIST AND KIRKLAND

JOHN W. BARRON

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CHRIST AND KRISHNA.

I.

SOME recent English discussion as to the historic relation of the Christ myth and the Krishna myth would seem to make desirable a judicial and yet popular¹ investigation of the subject, from the rationalist point of view. By the rationalist point of view, I mean the attitude of disbelief in the supernatural claims of all religions alike — a point of view from which, of course, the question of the miraculous origin of Christianity is already disposed of. The falsity of the bases of that creed has been directly demonstrated a hundred times, and, for those not yet convinced, may be demonstrated again by old and new arguments; and it would merely overload a discussion in comparative mythology to prove in full, by way of preamble, what is properly to be proved by several other lines of inquiry as well. What is now in hand is a question of priority of myth forms. No possible result of the inquiry can alter the general rationalist standpoint; and therefore it would be the more irrelevant

¹ The object being to put the results of scholarship within the reach of ordinary readers, and the writer being no Sanskritist, no pretence is made of indicating the values of Sanskrit consonants, as is done in specialist treatises. To the general reader these indications are useless, though vowel accents may not be altogether so. On this head it should be noted that the vowels in Indian names are to be pronounced in the Continental and not in the English manner. That is to say, the names Indra, Krishna, Gita, Veda, Purana, Siva, Rama, are to be pronounced Eendra, Kreesna, Gheetah, Vehda, Poorahna, Seeva, Rahma. The "a", long or short, is always to be sounded as in "art" or "at", never as in "hate". The long sound is now commonly indicated by a circumflex.

to put that standpoint here in discussion. Some Free-thinkers have, in my opinion, gone astray over the problem under notice, making errors of assumption and errors of inference in the course of an attempt to settle priority in a particular way; but the detection of these errors does not even settle the point of priority, much less affect the comparative principle. If, indeed, it were conclusively proved to-morrow that the Krishna cult in India is in every detail long subsequent in origin to the Christian; nay, even if it were fully proved to be substantially borrowed from that, the question of the truth of Christianity would in no sense be reopened for the rationalist.

And here I would point out that, while the Freethinker, like everybody else, is fallible, it is only he, of the two main disputants in this controversy, who can really be impartial, and so do real critical service. Inasmuch as he is discussing, not the truth of any religion, but the question which religion first developed certain beliefs, he is free to reason justly on the historical data, and so *may* arrive at just conclusions. Rationalists—Freethinkers—are divided on the historical issue, partly because of the uncertainty of the evidence, partly because of differences or oversights of logical method. But in the case of the disputant who sets out with a belief in the truth of the Christian religion, miracles and all, impartiality is impossible. He holds his own religion to be supernatural and true, and every other to be merely human and false, in so far as it makes supernatural claims. Thus for him every question is as far as possible decided beforehand. He is overwhelmingly biassed to the view that any “myth” which resembles a Christian “record” is borrowed from that; and if, in some instances, he repels that conclusion, it is still for an *a priori* theological reason, as we shall see in the sequel, and not for simple historical reasons. Jesus having been *really* born of a virgin, and the New Testament teaching having been *really* inspired, any other story of a virgin-born demi-god is to be presumed posterior to Pontius Pilate, and any morality which coincides with the Christian is to be presumed an “echo” of that, because otherwise revelation would be cheapened. In the palmy days, when the Apostolic atmosphere was almost unpolluted, the Christian saw in myths which had confessedly *anticipated* his narratives, devices of the evil Spirit. To-day, the

evil Spirit being partly disestablished, this explanation is not officially recognised; and the anticipatory myths of ancient paganism are simply kept out of sight; while as many other myths as possible are sought to be made out post-Christian and therefore borrowed. In this attitude the Christian Church is practically at one. Now, no sound critical result can ever be arrived at on these lines. No conclusion so reached can really strengthen the Christian position, because that position was one of the premises. Christianity remains to be proved all the same. The Freethinker, one says, *may* reason viciously, *may* reach the truth: the believing Christian *must* in such a matter reason viciously, and *can* only add commentary to dogma. But whereas the rationalist inquiry is in this connexion logically free of presuppositions, any permanent results it attains are pure gain to human science; and must finally strengthen the rationalist position if that position be really scientific.

II.

We wish to know, then, whether the Krishna myth or legend is in whole or in part borrowed from the Christ myth or Jesus legend, or *vice versa*. The alternative terms myth or legend, implying respectively the absence and the presence of some personal basis or nucleus for the legends of the Hindu and Christian Incarnations, leave us quite free in our treatment of the historic facts—free, that is, under the restrictions of scientific principle and logical law.

This special question of priority is one which has long been before scholars. In Balfour's "Cyclopædia of India", in the article "Krishna"—a somewhat rambling and ill-digested compilation—it is stated that "since the middle of the nineteenth century, several learned men have formed the opinion that some of the legends relating to Krishna have been taken from the life of Jesus Christ. Major Cunningham believes that the worship of Krishna is only a corrupt mixture of Buddhism and Christianity, and was a sort of compromise intended for the subversion of both religions in India," etc. In point of fact, the theory is much older than the middle of this century, as is pointed

out by Professor Albrecht Weber, in his exhaustive study of the Krishna Birth-Festival,¹ referred to in the "Cyclopædia" article. As early as 1762, Father Georgi, in his "Alphabetum Tibetanum",² discussed the question at length, founding even then on two previous writers, one Father Cassianus Maceratensis, the other the French orientalist, De Guignes (the elder). All three held that the name "Krisna" was only *nomen ipsum corruptum Christi Servatoris*, a corruption of the very name of the Savior Christ, whose deeds had been impiously debased by inexpressibly wicked impostors. The narratives, Georgi held, had been got from the *apocryphis libris de rebus Christi Jesu*, especially from the writings of the Manichæans. But his theory did not end there. The Indian epic names Ayodhya, Yudhishtira, Yadava, he declared to be derived from the scriptural Judah; the geographical name Gomati from Gethsemane; the name Arjuna from John, Durvasas from Peter, and so on.

But long before Georgi, the English Orientalist Hyde,³ and long before Hyde, Postel,⁴ (1552) had declared the name of Brahma to be a corruption of Abraham—a view which appears to have been common among Mohammedans;⁵ and Catholic missionaries early expounded this discovery amongst the Hindus, adding that the name of the female deity Saraswati was only a corruption of Sarah.⁶ Other propagandists, again, scandalised Sir William Jones by assuring the Hindus that they were "almost Christians,

¹ "Ueber die Krishnajanmâshtamî (Krishna's Geburtsfest)" in *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1867. Translated piecemeal in *Indian Antiquary*, iii, vi, (1874-7).

² Rome, 1762, pp. 253-263, cited by Weber, p. 311.

³ "Historia Religiosis Veterum Persarum," 1700, p. 31.

⁴ In his commentary on "Abrahami Patriarchæ liber Jesirah", cited by Maurice, "Indian Antiquities", 1793, etc., ii, 322 (should be 382—paging twice doubled).

⁵ Maurice, as cited, p. 323 (383). It may very well be, of course, that there is an old connexion between the Abraham myth and the religion of India. It has been pointed out ("Bible Folk Lore," 1884, pp. 25, 110) that Abraham's oak compares with Brahma's tree. The absurdity lies in the assumption that Brahmanism derives from the Hebrew Scriptures.

⁶ Moor's "Hindu Pantheon", 1810, p. 130. "Writers are found to identify Buddha with the prophet Daniel" (H. H. Wilson, Works, ii, 317).

because their Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesa were no other than the Christian Trinity";¹ and Sir William's shocked protest did not hinder his disciple, the Rev. Thomas Maurice, from speaking of the "almost Christian theology" of Brahmanism;² Maurice's general contention being that the Indian and all other Triad systems were vestiges of an original pure revelation.³ Nor was this all. As early as 1672 the Dutch missionary and trader Balde (Baldæus)⁴ maintained a number of the propositions supported in our own generation by Professor Weber (who does not refer to him), namely, the derivation of parts of the Krishna myth from the Christian stories of the birth of Jesus, the massacre of the innocents,⁵ etc.

Following this line of thought, Sir William Jones in 1788 suggested that "the spurious gospels which abounded in the first ages of Christianity had been brought to India, and the wildest part of them repeated to the Hindus, who ingrafted them on the old fable of Cesava, the Apollo of Greece";⁶ this after the statement: "That the name of Crishna, and the general outline of his story, were long anterior to the birth of our Savior, and probably to the time of Homer, we know very certainly".⁷ And in the same treatise ("On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India") the scholar took occasion to announce that "the adamantine pillars of our Christian faith" could not be "moved by the result of any debates on the comparative antiquity of the Hindus and Egyptians, or of any inquiries into the Indian theology".⁸ Still

¹ "On the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India": in "Asiatic Researches," i, 272.

² "Ind. Ant.," ii, 325.

³ *Id.*, *ib.*, and v, 785, 806, etc. The Rajputs, says the Portuguese historian De Faria y Sousa (17th cent.), "acknowledge one God in three persons, and worship the Blessed Virgin, a doctrine which they have preserved ever since the time of the apostles" (Kerr's "Collection of Voyages", 1812, vi, 228).

⁴ An English translation of his work on Ceylon, etc., was published last century in Churchill's collection of travels, vol. 3.

⁵ Cited by Maurice, "History of Hindostan," 1798, ii, 330, *note*.

⁶ "Asiatic Researches," i, 274.

⁷ *Id.*, p. 273.

⁸ In the same spirit, Maurice constantly aims at repelling the criticisms of Volney and other sceptics, always begging the question, and resenting its being raised.

later, the French Orientalist Polier, seeing in the Hebrew Scriptures the earliest of all religious lore, decided that the triumph of Krishna over the serpent Kaliya (whose head he is represented crushing under his foot, and which at times, on the other hand, is seen biting his heel) was "a travesty of the tradition of the serpent-tempter who introduced death into the world, and whose head the savior of mankind was to crush".¹ These writers had of course taken it for granted that all heathen resemblances to Jewish and Christian stories must be the result of imitation; but on equally *à priori* grounds other Christian writers argued that the "impure" cult of Krishna could never have been derived from Christianity; and the view spread that the Indian myths were of much greater antiquity than had been supposed; the Carmelite monk Paulinus² (really Werdin or Wesdin) surmising that the legendary war, with which was connected the story of Vishnu's incarnation in Krishna, was to be dated "a thousand and more years before the birth of Christ".

Thus far, both sides had simply proceeded on *à priori* principles, the view that Christianity could not give rise to anything bad being no more scientific than the view that all systems which resembled it must have borrowed from it. A comparatively scientific position was first taken up by the German Kleuker, who, discussing Paulinus' polemic, observed that he "willingly believed that the [Krishna] fable did not first arise out of these [Apocryphal] Gospels", but that nevertheless it might have derived "some matter" from them.³ According to Weber, the view that the Krishna story was the earlier became for a time the more general one. I doubt if this was so; but in 1810 we do find the English Orientalist Moor, following Jones, declaring it to be "very certain" that Krishna's "name and the general outline of his story were long anterior to the birth of our Savior, and probably to the time of Homer"⁴—this while saying nothing to countenance the theory of borrowing from Christianity, but on the contrary throwing

¹ "Mythologie des Indous", i, 445, cited by Weber.

² "Systema Brahmanicum," Rome, 1791, pp. 147, 152; cited by Weber.

³ "Abhandlungen über die Geschichte und Alterthumskunde Asiens," Riga, 1797; iv, 70; cited by Weber.

⁴ "Hindu Pantheon," p. 200.

out some new heterodox suggestions. Later the German mythologist Creuzer, in his great work,¹ set aside the supposed Christian parallels, and pointed rather to the Egyptian myth of Osiris. It was impossible, however, that this view should be quietly acquiesced in by Anglo-Indian scholarship, partly bound up as it has been with "missionary enterprise", and subservient as it is to the anti-philosophical spirit which has prevailed in English archæology since the French Revolution. It has been one of the most serious drawbacks to our knowledge of Indian antiquities that not only are the missionaries to such a large extent in possession of the field of research, but the scruples of English pietism, especially during the present century, tend to keep back all data that could in any way disturb orthodoxy at home. Of this tendency we shall find examples as we proceed. How far important evidence has been absolutely suppressed it is of course impossible to say; but observed cases of partial suppression create strong suspicions; and it is certain that the bulk of Christian criticism of the evidences produced has been much biassed by creed.

III.

On the other hand, however, the case in favor of the assumption of Christian priority has been in a general way strengthened by the precise investigation of Hindu literature, which has gone to show that much of it, as it stands, is of a much later redaction than had once been supposed. It has been truly said by Ritter that "in no literature are so many works to be found to which a remote origin has been assigned on insufficient grounds as in the Indian".² The measureless imagination of India, unparalleled in its disregard of fact and its range of exaggeration, has multiplied time in its traditions as wildly as it has multiplied action in its legends, with the result that its history is likely to remain one of the most uncertain of all that are

¹ "Symbolik," 3te Aufl. i, 42, cited by Weber.

² "History of Ancient Philosophy," Eng. tr. 1838, i, 69. Ritter's whole argument, which was one of the first weighty criticisms of the early assumptions of Orientalists, is extremely judicial and reasonable.

based on documents. It was, indeed, admitted by the first capable Orientalists that there is, properly speaking, no history in Indian literature at all.¹ All early historical traditions are untrustworthy; but no other people ever approached the flights of fancy of the Hindu mind, which has measured the lives of its mythic heroes by millions of years, and assigned to the *Institutes of Menu*, certainly not 3000 years old, an antiquity exceeding 4,320,000 years multiplied by six times seventy-one.² Of this delirium of speculation, the true explanation, despite all cavils, is doubtless that of Buckle—the influence of overwhelming manifestations of nature in fostering imagination and stunning the sceptical reason.³ From even a moderate calculation of Indian antiquity, to say nothing of the fancies of the Brahmans, the step down to documentary facts is startling; and it was not unnatural that scepticism should in turn be carried to extremes.

When the documents are examined, it turns out that the oldest Indian inscriptions yet found are not three centuries earlier than the Christian era.⁴ Nor does there seem a probability of much older records being found, there being reason to doubt whether the practice of writing in India dates many centuries earlier. Says Professor Max Müller:

“There is no mention of writing materials, whether paper, bark, or skins, at the time when the Indian Diaskeuasts [say, editors] collected the songs of their Rishis [poets or seers]; nor is there any allusion to writing during the whole of the Brahmana period [*i.e.*, according to the Professor’s division, down to about 600 or 800 B.C.] Nay, more than this, even during the Sutra period [600 to 200 B.C.] all the evidence we can get would lead us to suppose that, even then, though

¹ See Colebrooke in “Asiatic Researches”, ix, 398–9.

² Jones in “Asiatic Researches”, ii, 116. See a number of samples of this disease of imagination cited by Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i. 135–7.

³ Possibly, too, the partly entranced state of mind cultivated by Hindu sages may involve a repetitive brain process analogous to that seen in dreams, in which objects are multiplied and transformed, and the waking perception of time is superseded.

⁴ Those of king Asoka, about 250 B.C. Tiele, “Outlines of Hist. of Anc. Religions”, Eng. tr. p. 121. See them in “Asiatic Society’s Journals”, viii, xii; in Wheeler’s “History of India”, vol. iii. Appendix i; and in *Indian Antiquary*, June, 1877, vol. vi. Interesting extracts are given in Prof. Müller’s “Introduction to the Science of Religion”, ed. 1882, pp. 5, 6.

the art of writing began to be known, the whole literature of India was preserved by oral tradition only."¹

Professor Müller's division of Indian historical periods is somewhat unscientific, but Professor Tiele, who complains of this, accepts his view as to the introduction of the art of writing :

"Nearchus (325 B.C.)² and Megasthenes³ (300 B.C.) both state that the Indians did not write their laws ; but the latter speaks of inscriptions upon mile-stones, and the former mentions letters written on cotton. From this it is evident that writing, probably of Phœnician origin, was known in India before the third century B.C., but was applied only rarely, if at all, to literature."⁴

But all this, of course, is perfectly consistent with the oral transmission of a great body of very ancient utterance. All early compositions, poetic, religious, and historical, were transmissible in no other way ; and the lack of letters did not at all necessarily involve loss. In all probability ancient unwritten compositions were often as accurately transmitted as early written ones, just because in the former case there was a severe discipline of memory, whereas in the other the facility of transcription permitted of many

¹ "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," pp. 500-1. Cp. p. 244.

² One of the generals of Alexander the Great. Only fragments of his account of his voyage on the Indian coast are preserved.

³ Greek ambassador from Seleucus Nicator to the Indian king Sandracottus (Chandragupta) about 300 B.C. He wrote a work on India, of which, as of that of Nearchus, we have only the fragments preserved by later historians. See them all translated in the *Indian Antiquary*, vols. 6 and 7, (1877-8) from the collection of Schwanbeck.

⁴ "Outlines," as cited above. On the general question of the antiquity of writing, it was long ago remarked by Jacob Bryant that "The Romans carried their pretensions to letters pretty high, and the Helladian Greeks still higher ; yet the former marked their years by a nail driven into a post ; and the latter for some ages simply wrote down the names of the Olympic victors from Coræbus, and registered the priestesses of Argos" (Holwell's "Mythological Dictionary", condensed from Bryant's "Analysis of Ancient Mythology", 1793, p. 259). The question as regards India, however, cannot be taken as settled. In view of the antiquity of literary habits in other parts of Asia, it may well turn out that the estimates above cited are too low. Tiele's "only rarely, if at all," makes rather too little of the Greek testimony. The Phœnician origin of the Indian alphabets, too, is only one of many conflicting hypotheses. For a discussion of these see I. Taylor's valuable work on "The Alphabet", 1883, ii, 304, ff.

errors, omissions, and accidental interpolations. And the practice of oral transmission has survived.

“ Even at the present day, when MSS. are neither scarce nor expensive, the young Brahmans who learn the songs of the Vedas and the Brâhmanas and the Sutras, invariably learn them from oral tradition, and learn them by heart. They spend year after year under the guidance of their teacher, learning a little day after day, repeating what they have learnt as part of their daily devotion The ambition to master more than one subject is hardly known in India In the Mahâbhârata we read, ‘ Those who sell the Vedas, and even those who write them, those also who defile them, shall go to hell ’. Kumarila [800 A.C.] says: ‘ That knowledge of the truth is worthless which has been acquired from the Veda, if . . . it has been learnt from writing, or been received from a Sûdra.’ How then was the Veda learnt? It was learnt by every Brahman during twelve years of his studentship or Bramacharyâ.”¹

IV.

In point of fact, no one disputes that the Vedas are in the main of extremely ancient composition (the oldest portions being at least three thousand years old, and possibly much more)²; and that a large part even of the literature of commentary upon them, as the Brâhmanas, treatises of ritual and theology, and the Upanishads, religio-philosophical treatises, originated at more or less distant periods before our era. We have seen that Pro-

¹ Müller, work cited, pp. 501-3. Comp. Tiele, “ Outlines ”, p. 123. This description corresponds remarkably with Cæsar’s account of the educational practices of the Druids. He tells (*De Bello Gallico*, vi, 14) that many entered the Druid discipline, learning orally a great number of verses; some remaining in pupillage as much as twenty years; and this though writing was freely used for secular purposes. Cæsar offers as explanation the wish to keep sacred lore from the many, and the desire to strengthen the faculty of memory. We may add, in regard alike to Druids and Brahmans, the prestige of ancient custom, which in other religions made priests continue to use stone knives long after metal ones were invented. “ Brahmanism has kept to the last to its primitive tools, its penthouses of bamboo, its turf-clods and grass-blades, and a few vessels of wood ” (Barth, “ The Religions of India ”, Eng. tr., p. 129). Modern European parallels will readily suggest themselves.

² Barth, p. 6.

fessor Müller makes even the Sutra period—that of the composition of manuals for public and domestic guidance—begin about 600 B.C. But the religious history of India, as of every other country, is that of a process of development; and just as the system of the Vedas was superimposed on simpler forms of nature worship,¹ so the elaborate system based on the Vedas by the Brahmans was innovated upon from different sides. Thus, four or five centuries before our era, there arose the great movement of Buddhism, in which comparatively new doctrine was bound up with modifications of ancient legends; while on the other hand deities formerly insignificant, or little known, gradually came to be widely popular. Such a development took place in a notable degree in the case of the cult of Krishna, now specially under notice.

At the present moment, the worship of Krishna is confessedly the most popular of the many faiths of India; and it has unquestionably been so for many centuries. It is equally certain, however, that it is no part of the ancient Vedic system; and that the bulk of the literature in connection with it is not more than a thousand years old, if so much. Mention of Krishna certainly does occur in the earlier literature, but the advent of his worship as a preponderating religion in India is late. On the face of the matter, it would seem to have been accepted and endorsed by the Brahmans either because they could not help themselves or by way of a weapon to resist some other cultus that pressed Brahmanism hard. Hence the peculiar difficulty of the question of origins as regards its details.

The chief documents in which Krishnaism is to be studied are (1) the Mahâbhârata, a great epic poem, of which the events are laid long anterior to our era, and of which much of the matter is probably pre-Buddhistic;² (2) the Bhagavat Gitâ or “Song of the Most High”; (3)

¹ In the Veda, says M. Barth, “I recognise a literature that is pre-eminently sacerdotal, and in no sense a popular one” (“Relig. of India”, pref. p. xiii).

² See Prof. Goldstücker’s essay in the *Westminster Review*, April, 1868; or his “Literary Remains”, ii, 135, 142. The Mahâbhârata, says M. Barth, “which is in the main the most ancient source of our knowledge of these religions, is not even roughly dated; it has been of slow growth, extending through ages, and is, besides, of an essentially encyclopædic character” (“Religions of India”, p. 187; cp. Goldstücker, ii, 130).

the Purânas, an immense body of legendary and theological literature, including eighteen separate works, of which the earliest written belong to our eighth or ninth century. It is in the latter, especially in the Bhagavat Purâna and Vishnu Purâna, that the great mass of mythic narrative concerning Krishna is to be found. The tenth book of Bhagavat Purâna consists wholly of the Krishna saga. The Gîtâ is a fine poetico-philosophical composition, one of the masterpieces of Indian literature in its kind, in every way superior to the Purânas; and it simply makes Krishna the voucher of its lofty pantheistic teaching, giving the legends as to his life.¹ Of this work the date is uncertain, and will have to be considered later. The Mahâbhârata, again, presents Krishna as a warrior demi-God,² performing feats of valor, and so mixed up with quasi-historic events as to leave it an open question whether the story has grown up round the memory of an actual historic personage. But it is impossible to construct for that legendary history any certain chronology; and the obscurity of the subject gives to Christian writers the opportunity to argue that even in the epos Krishna is not an early but a late element—an interpolation arising out of the modern popularity of his cultus. We must then look to analysis and comparative research for light on the subject.

V.

The outlines of the Krishna saga are well known, but for the convenience of readers I will here transcribe the brief analysis given by M. Barth in his "Religions of India" (pp. 172-4):

"As a character in the epic . . ., and as accepted by Vishnuism, Krishna is a warlike prince, a hero, equally invincible in war and love, but above all very crafty, and of a singularly doubtful moral character, like all the figures, however, which

¹ Owing to the Bhagavat Gîtâ and the Bhagavat Purâna being alike sometimes referred to as "the Bhagavat", there has occurred the mistake of referring to the Gîtâ as containing the legends of Krishna's life.

² In one passage, "all the heroes of the poem are represented as incarnations of Gods or demons" (Barth, "Religions of India", p. 172 n.).

retain in a marked way the mythic impress. The son of *Vasudeva* and *Devakî* . . . he was born at Mathurâ, on the *Yâmunâ*, between Delhi and Agra, among the race of the *Yâdavâs*, a name which we meet with again at a later period in history as that of a powerful Râjput tribe. Like those of many solar heroes, his first appearances were beset with perils and obstructions of every kind. On the very night of his birth his parents had to remove him to a distance beyond the reach of his uncle, King *Kamsa*, who sought his life because he had been warned by a voice from heaven that the eighth son of *Devakî* would put him to death, and who consequently had his nephews the princes regularly made away with as soon as they saw the light. . . . Conveyed to the opposite shore of the *Yamunâ*, and put under the care of the shepherd *Nanda* and his wife *Yaçodâ*, he was brought up as their son in the woods of *Vrindâvana*, with his brother *Balarâma*, 'Rama the strong', who had been saved as he was from massacre", and "who has for his mother at one time *Devakî* herself, at another time another wife of *Vasudeva*, *Rohinî*. . . . The two brothers grew up in the midst of the shepherds, slaying monsters and demons bent on their destruction, and sporting with the *Gopis*, the female cowherds of *Vrindâvana*. These scenes of their birth and infancy, these juvenile exploits, these erotic gambols with the *Gopis*, this entire idyll of *Vrindâvana*, . . . became in course of time the essential portion of the legend of *Krishna*, just as the places which were the scene of them remain to the present time the most celebrated centres of his worship. Arrived at adolescence, the two brothers put to death *Kamsa*, their persecutor, and *Krishna* became king of the *Yâdavâs*. He continued to clear the land of monsters, waged successful wars against impious kings, and took a determined side in the great struggle of the sons of *Pându* against those of *Dhritarâshtra*, which forms the subject of the *Mahâbhârata*. In the interval he had transferred the seat of his dominion to the fabulous city of *Dvârakâ*, 'the city of gates', the gates of the West, built on the bosom of the western sea, and the site of which has since been localised in the peninsula of *Gujarât*. It was there that he was overtaken, himself and his race, by the final catastrophe. After having been present at the death of his brother, and seen the *Yâdavâs*, in fierce struggle, kill one another to the last man, he himself perished, wounded in the heel, like *Achilles*, by the arrow of a hunter."

In this mere outline, there may be seen several features of the universal legend of a conquering and dying sun-God; and, though the identification of *Krishna* with the sun is as old as the written legend, it may be well at the outset to indicate the solar meanings that have been attributed to

the story by various writers. The name of Krishna means "the black one", and he thus in the first place comes into line with the black deities of other faiths, notably the Osiris¹ of Egypt, to say nothing of the black manifestations of Greek deities,² and of the Christian Jesus.³ Why then is Krishna, in particular, black? It is, I think, fallacious to assume that any one cause can be fixed as the reason for the attaching of sanctity to black deities or statues in ancient religions; primary mythological causes might be complicated by the fact that the smoke of sacrifices had from time immemorial blackened statues innumerable, and by the mere fact that, as in Egypt, black stone was very serviceable for purposes of statuary. But there *is*, all the same, a primary mythological explanation; and this is offered by Professor Tiele in the present case. Krishna is "the hidden sun-god of the night"⁴ a character attaching more or less to many figures in the Hindu pantheon.

"That Parasu-Râma, the 'axe-Râma', is a God of the solar fire, admits of no doubt. He springs from the Brâhman race of the Bhrigus (lightning), his father's name is Jamadagni, 'the burning fire'. Like all Gods of the solar fire, he is the nightly or hidden one, and accordingly he slays Arjuna, the bright God of day. . . . In the myth of Krishna, on the other hand, the two sun-Gods are friendly,⁵ the old pair of deities Vishnu and Indra in a new shape".⁶

It should be also noted, I think, that Vishnu, of whom Krishna is an Incarnation, is represented as "dark blue".⁷

The complications of solar mythology, however, are endless; and it is one thing to give a general account such

¹ Plutarch, "On Isis and Osiris", cc. 22, 33.

² Pausanias, i, 48; viii, 42; ix, 27.

³ For a list of black Christian statues of Mary and Jesus (= Isis and Horos) see Higgins' "Anacalypsis", i, 138. Compare King's "Gnostics", 2nd ed., p. 173.

⁴ "Outlines," p. 145. Cp. Plutarch, "Is. and Os.", 9.

⁵ In Egypt, Typhon, who was *red* ("Is. and Os." cc. 22, 30, 31, 33) and was declared to be solar (*Id.* 41), was the enemy of the "good" sun-God Osiris, who was *black*, and who was also declared to represent the *lunar* world (*Id. ib.* Contrast 51, 52). The transpositions are endless—a warning against rigid definitions in less known mythologies.

⁶ "Outlines," p. 145. Arjuna is "himself a name and form of Indra" (Weber in *Indian Antiquary*, iv, 246).

⁷ Moor's "Hindu Pantheon", pp. 26, 27. Goldstücker, "Remains", i, 309.

as this, and another to trace with confidence the evolution of such a deity as Krishna from the beginning. Professor de Gubernatis, one of the most acute, if also one of the more speculative of modern mythologists, is convinced of the solar character of Krishna; but points out that in the Rig Vedas he is merely a demon¹—a natural character of “the black one”; is the enemy of the Vedic God Indra, and only later becomes the God of the cows and cowherds.² He remains, however, “the God who is black during the night, but who becomes luminous in the morning among the cows of the dawning, or among the female cowherds”.³ And that original relation to Indra is perfectly borne out by the written legend, in which Krishna is represented as turning away worshippers from Indra,⁴ whose worship he probably superseded, and who figures in the account of Krishna’s death and ascension as a subordinate God,⁵ (obviously—the firmament, a character always more or less associated with him in the Vedas, where he is “the pluvial and thundering God”⁶) through whose region of space Krishna passes on the way to heaven.⁷

But as against all such attempts to explain Krishnaism in terms of the observed mythic tendencies of ancient Aryan religion, there is maintained on the Christian side—not, as we shall see, by any important thinker—the proposition before mentioned, that the entire Krishna legend is a late fabrication, based on the Christian gospels. It is

¹ Compare Senart, *Essai sur la Légende du Buddha*, 2e ed. p. 322, n. In the early faiths, the “demon” of mixed characteristics is a constant figure, he being often the deity of outsiders to begin with; while in any case the need to propitiate him would tend to raise his rank. Compare the habit, common in rural Britain till recently, of “speaking the Devil fair”, and calling him “the good man”. He, being a survival of the genial Pan, exemplifies both of the tendencies to compromise. Osiris and Isis, again, were held to be raised “from the rank of good demons to that of deities”, while Typhon was discredited, but still propitiated. See Plutarch, l.c. 27, 30. Cp. 25-6.

² “Zoological Mythology,” 1872, i, 75.

³ *Id.* p. 51.

⁴ “Vishnu Purana”, B. v, cc. 10, 11. Wilson’s trans. 1840, pp. 522-7.

⁵ He acknowledges himself vanquished by Krishna (*Id.* c. 30, p. 588) and honors him (*Id.* c. 12, p. 528).

⁶ Gubernatis, i, 403.

⁷ Maurice, “History of Hindostan”, ii, 473, professing to follow the Mahâbhârata.

necessary, therefore, to examine that argument in detail before we form any conclusions.

VI.

Among modern statements of the Christian theory of Krishnaism, in its thorough-going form, the most explicit and emphatic I have met with is that inserted by an anonymous Sanskritist in a criticism of the first volume of Mr. J. Talboys Wheeler's "History of India," in the *Athenæum* of August 10th, 1867. The criticism is hostile, pointing out that Mr. Wheeler "is not a Sanskrit scholar, nor has he very carefully examined the translations with which he works", so that "we are never sure, without referring to the original, what particulars [as to Hindu legends] are drawn from the great epic, and what are from the Purânas and other sources". It might have been added that the previous performance of Mr. Wheeler had shown him to be unfit for the task of writing a good history. He had produced a number of popular abridgments or manuals of Old and New Testament history, which are of the most uncritical and unscientific description. They are not even trustworthy summaries of what the biblical books contain. Thus the compiler does not scruple to assert, in flat misrepresentation of the text, that while "Matthew, who wrote for the Jews, traces the pedigree of Joseph through David to Abraham, Luke, who wrote for the Gentiles, traces the descent of Mary through David to Adam".¹ An apologist who thus perverts fact in the interest of faith, naturally does not scruple to allege that Celsus and Porphyry "recognise" the gospels as the "genuine work of the apostles";² and for such a reasoner, it is readily intelligible, the "mythic theory" is disposed of by the argument that it would make out the history of Julius Cæsar to be a thorough myth. It is significant of the position of philo-

¹ "Abridgment of New Testament History," 1854, p. 35. Cp. "Analysis and Summary of New Testament History," 1859, by same author (p. 28), where it is explained that Luke went back to Adam because he was "desirous of proving [the Gentiles'] admission into the Gospel covenant"—the descent of David from Adam not being an established hypothesis.

² "Analysis," as cited, p. xxviii.

sophy in England at present that such a writer is actually made Professor of "Moral and Mental Philosophy and Logic" in the Presidency College of Madras, and that he should write an elaborate history of India with a considerable measure of acceptance.

But the critic of Mr. Wheeler's history in the *Athenæum* is hardly the person to take exception to intellectual tendencies such as these. His own philosophy of history includes the belief that "the history of Krishnah has been borrowed by the Brahmans from the Gospel"; and he proceeds to prove his case by the following account of the legend in the Bhagavat Purâna and Mahâbhârata—an account which is worth citing at length as indicating a number of the minor myth-resemblances in the Hindu and Christian narratives, and as unintentionally paving the way for a fresh historical investigation of the latter :

"The recital [in the Purâna] commences with the announcement that to hear the story of Krishnah and believe it is all that is required for salvation; and throughout the narrative the theme of exhortation is faith. Next it is declared that sin and impiety having spread over the whole world, the Deity resolved to become incarnate in the form of Krishnah. He determined to destroy a tyrant king, whose name signifies Lust, who ruled at Mathurâ, and who murdered children. Krishnah is represented as born the nephew of this king, and therefore of royal descent. The name of his tribe is Yadu, which is almost the same as Yahudah in Hebrew. His real mother was Devakî, which signifies the Divine Lady, and his reputed mother Yasoda, or Yashoda. His father's name was Vasudev. In comparing this word with Yûsef, we must remember that Dev in Sanskrit signifies divine, and the *d* appears to have been inserted from that word. The resemblance of the name Krishnah itself to Christ is remarkable enough, but it becomes more so when we consider that the root 'Krish' means 'to tinge', and *may well be taken to signify also 'anoint'*. Preliminary to the birth of Krishna, the four Vedas become incarnate, and the tyrant king is warned by a divine voice that a son is to be born in his house who will destroy him. Upon this he puts to death the infants that are born to the Divine Lady, and makes a great slaughter of the tribe of Yadu. Notwithstanding this, Krishnah is born and placed in a basket for winnowing corn; *in other words, a manger*. His father then carries him off to Gokula (or Goshen, the eastern side of Lower Egypt), which is represented as a country placed near Mathurâ. On finding that the child has escaped, the tyrant makes a

slaughter of infant children. A variety of puerile fables suited to the Hindu taste follow, showing how Krishnah was subject to his reputed mother, and how he reproved her. Being now thought to be the son of a shepherd, Krishnah plays in the wilderness, and is assaulted by the various fiends and overcomes them all. This temptation winds up with the overthrow of the great serpent, upon whose head, 'assuming the weight of the three worlds, he treads'. Even in the strange recital of Krishnah's sports with the cowherdesses, threads of allusions to the Gospels are not wanting. Krishnah is continually manifesting his divinity and yet disclaiming it. He goes to an Indian fig-tree and utters a sort of parable, saying, Blessed are those that bear pain themselves and show kindness to others. In another place he says that those who love him shall never suffer death. He proceeds to abolish the worship of Indra, the god of the air, and to invite his followers to worship a mountain. He directs those about him to close their eyes, and issues from the interior of the mountain with a 'face like the moon and wearing a diadem'. In this there seems to be an allusion to the Transfiguration. Then follows a scene suited to Hindu taste. Indra rains down a deluge, and Krishnah defends the inhabitants of Braj by supporting the mountain on his finger, and he is then hailed as the god of gods. Krishnah now resolves on returning from the country to the city of the tyrant king. He is followed by a multitude of women and by the cowherds. He enters the city in royal apparel. He is met by a deformed woman, who anoints him with sandalwood oil. On this Krishnah makes her straight and beautiful, and promises that his regard for her shall be perpetual; on which her good fortune is celebrated by all the people of the place. In the account of this miracle the narratives in Mark xiv, 3, and Luke xiii, 11, are blended. It may be as well to mention here another miracle, which is mentioned in the Mahá Bháráta. Krishnah is there said to have restored the son of a widow to life, 'And Krishnah laid hold of the dead man's hand and said, Arise, and by the will of the Almighty the dead man immediately arose' A great army of barbarians is assembled by a distant king to destroy the holy city of Mathurá Krishnah then transports the city and his disciples to Dwarka, which is built in the sea. *This appears to be a distorted account of the siege of Jerusalem and the flight of the Christians.* Krishnah now returns to Mathurá and combats with the barbarians; flies from their chief and is pursued into a cave of the White mountains, where there is a man sleeping, covered with a silken robe, apparently dead. This man arises from sleep and consumes the pursuer of Krishnah. In this account of the cave there are *evident allusions to the burial and resurrection of Christ*; and in a following chapter there is an account of the descent of Krishnah into Hades.

and his recovery of certain persons from the dead At the great sacrifice performed by Yudhishtira the task which devolves on Krishnah is that of washing the feet of those present. One person alone is said to have been dissatisfied, and that is Duryodhana, who is generally regarded as an incarnation of the Evil Spirit, and who, like Iscariot, here carries the bag, and acts as treasurer. . . . It must be admitted, then, that there are most remarkable coincidences between the history of Krishnah and that of Christ. This being the case, and there being proof positive that Christianity was introduced into Judea at an epoch when there is good reason to suppose the episodes which refer to Krishnah were inserted in the Mahá Bhárata, the obvious inference is that the Brahmans took from the Gospel such things as suited them, and so *added preëminent beauties to their national epic*, which otherwise would in no respect have risen above such poems as the Sháhnámah of the Persians.”¹

As to the authorship of this criticism we can only speculate. In an allusion to the doctrine of the Bhagavat Gítá the writer expresses himself as “willing to admit” that “the Gítá is the most sublime poem that ever came from an uninspired pen”; thus taking up the position of ordinary orthodoxy, which presupposes the supernatural origin of the Christian system, and prejudges every such question as we are now considering. It is to be observed, however, that the critic is a professed Sanskritist; and it is unfortunately impossible in England to assume that even an eminent lay scholar does not in his researches hold a brief for the Church, whose influence so strongly permeates the universities. Professor Max Müller, who has professed to produce an “Introduction to the Science of Religion”, is found writing to a controversial missionary in terms which imply at once belief in Christian supernaturalism and a fear that the discussion of certain questions in comparative mythology may damage the faith. “Even supposing”, he writes, “some or many of the doctrines of Christianity were found in other religions also (and they certainly are), does that make them less true? Does a sailor trust his own compass less, because it can be proved that the Chinese had a compass before we had it?” And again: “These questions regarding the similarities between the Christian and any other religions are very difficult to treat, and

¹ *Athenæum*, as cited, pp. 168-9

unless they are handled carefully much harm may be done".¹ From scholarship of this kind one turns perforce to that of the continent, where, whatever be the value of the conclusions reached, we can at least as a rule trust the scholar to say candidly what he knows, and to look impartially for the truth.

Thus Professor Weber, who refers to the *Athenæum* critic's argument in his study on the "Geburtsfest", emphatically distinguishes between what he thinks plausible and what seems to him extravagant,² though the argument in question goes to support some of his own positions. The identifications of the names Yasoda, Yúsef, and Vasudev, Gokula and Goshen, he rightly derides as being "*à la P. Georgi*"; and he mentions that the stories of the woman's oblation and forgiveness, and also that of the raising of the widow's dead son, are not from the Mahâbhârata at all, but from the Jaimini-Bhârata, a work of the Purâna order³—a point which, of course, would not essentially affect the argument. On the main question he sums up as follows:

"If we could so construe these words that they should harmonise with the view of Kleuker" [before quoted] "we might contentedly accept them. If, however, they are to be understood as meaning that the history of Krishna in the lump (*überhaupt*) was first taken from the 'Gospel history' (and indeed the author seems not disinclined to that view), then we cannot endorse them."⁴

That is to say, the theory of the Christian origin of the general Krishna legend is rejected by Weber, the oldest and most important living supporter of the view that *some details* in that legend have so originated. And no only is this rejection overwhelmingly justified, as we shall see, by the whole mass of the evidence, earlier and later, but so far as I am aware no Sanskrit scholar of any eminence has ever put his name to the view maintained

¹ Letters to C. A. Elfein, printed at end of a pamphlet by the latter entitled "Buddha, Krishna, and Christ".

² He puts a "*sic!*" after the spelling *Yashoda* in quoting this passage, and another after the word "inserted" in the phrase "appears to have been inserted from that word", apparently considering these items absurd. As to the spelling, I do not quite see why; but the "inserted" is certainly foolish enough.

³ "Ueber die Krishnajanmâshtamî", as cited, p. 315, n.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 316.

by the anonymous writer in the *Athenæum*. That writer indeed goes the whole length to which Weber says he seems inclined: the passages transcribed are sufficiently explicit. That thesis, embodying as it does the most uncritical extravagance of the earliest Christian investigators, deserves to become historic as an exemplification of the extent to which the spirit of orthodoxy has perverted and debased English scholarship. Even Mr. Talboys Wheeler, who believes all the Gospels "and more", does not go to these lengths. He is more guarded even where he suggests similar notions.

"The account of Raja Kansa", he observes, "is supposed by many to have been borrowed from the Gospel account of King Herod. Whether this be the case or not, it is certain that most of the details are mythical, and inserted for the purpose of ennobling the birth of Krishna"¹—

—it being Mr. Wheeler's opinion that the story of Krishna as a whole has a personal and historic basis. He further holds that "the grounds upon which Krishna seems to have forgiven the sins of the tailor" [who made clothes for his companions] "seem to form a travestie of Christianity";² and, like the writer in the *Athenæum* and earlier pietists, he thinks that the Gospel stories of the bowed woman and the spikenard "seem to have been thrown together in the legend of Kubja".³ On the other hand, however, he conceives that the Hindus may have invented some things for themselves:

"Krishna's triumph over the great serpent Kaliya was at one time supposed to be borrowed from the triumph of Christ over Satan. There appears, however, to be no allusion whatever to the bruising of the Serpent's head in the sense in which it is understood by Christian commentators."⁴

It may be surmised that Mr. Wheeler, being capable of this amount of prudence, would not be disposed to endorse the more original speculations of his critic in the *Athenæum*, a few of which I have put in italics. It may be noted, too, that he does not think fit to dwell much on the puerility which fits the details of the Krishna legend for the "Hindu taste" and the "Hindu mind", though his earlier writings betray no suspicion of puerility in the tales of the Gospels.

¹ "History of India", i, 464, *note*.

² *Id.*, p. 470, *n*.

³ *Id.*, p. 471, *n*.

⁴ *Id.*, p. 465, *n*.

VII.

Absurd as are the Christian pretences as to the late origin of the Krishna legend, it is necessary to cite the evidence which repels them. The point, indeed, might be held as settled once for all by the evidence of Patanjali's Mahâbhâshya or "Great Commentary", a grammatical work based on previous ones, and dating from the second century B.C., but first made in part accessible to European scholars by the Benares edition of 1872. The evidence of the Mahâbhâshya is thus summed up by the learned Professor Bhandarkar of Bombay, after discussion of the passages on which he founds, as clearly proving :

"1st. That the stories of the death of Kansa and the subjugation of Bali were popular and current in Patanjali's time.

2nd. That Krishna or Vasudeva was mentioned in the story as having killed Kansa.

3rd. That such stories formed the subjects of dramatic representations, as Purânic stories are still popularly represented on the Hindu stage.

4th. That the event of Kansa's death at the hands of Krishna was in Patanjali's time believed to have occurred at a very remote time."¹

Other passages, Professor Bhandarkar thinks, would appear "to be quoted from an existing poem on Krishna"; and in his opinion, "Not only was the story of Krishna and Kansa current and popular in Patanjali's time, but it appears clearly that the former was worshipped as a God". And the Professor concludes that "If the stories of Krishna and Bali, and others which I shall notice hereafter, were current and popular in the second century B.C., some such works as the Harivansa and the Purânas must have existed then".

Discussing the Mahâbhâshya on its publication (some years after his paper on the Birth-festival) Professor Weber had already² conceded that it pointed not only almost beyond doubt to a pre-existing poetic compilation of the Mahâbhârata Sagas, but to the ancient existence of the

¹ Art. "Allusions to Krishna in Patanjali's Mahabhashya" in the *Indian Antiquary*, Bombay, Vol. iii (1874), p. 16.

² *Indische Studien*, xiii, (1873), pp. 354-5, 357.

Kansa myth. Kansa, he pointed out, figured in regard to Bali, in the passages quoted in the Mahâbhâshya, as a *demon*, and his "enmity towards Krishna equally assumed a *mythical* character, into which also the different colors of their followers (the 'black ones' are then also those of Kansa? though Krishna himself signifies 'black'!) would seem to enter. Or", the Professor goes on, speculating at random, "could there be thereby signified some Indian battles between Aryans and the aborigines occupying India before them?" In another place,¹ alluding to the contention of Dr. Burnell² that "much in the modern philosophical schools of India comes from some form of Christianity derived from Persia", Professor Weber pointed out that "quite recently, through the publication of the Mâhabhâshya, a much older existence is proved for the Krishna cultus than had previously seemed admissible". Finally, in commenting³ on the argument of Professor Bhandarkar, Professor Weber allows that the passages cited by the scholar from Patanjali are "quite conclusive and very welcome" as to an intermediate form of Krishna-worship; though he disputes the point as to the early existence of literature of the Purâna order—a point with which we are not here specially concerned—and goes on to contend that the passages in question "do not interfere at all with the opinion of those who maintain, on quite reasonable grounds", that the *later* development of Krishnaism "has been *influenced to a certain degree* by an acquaintance with the doctrines, legends, and symbols of the early Christians; or even with the opinion of those who are inclined to find in the Bhagavadgîtâ traces of the Bible; for though I for my part am as yet not convinced at all in this respect, the *age* of the Bhagavadgîtâ is still so uncertain that these speculations are at least not shackled by any chronological obstacles".

I know of no recent expert opinion which refuses to go at least as far as Weber does here. His persistent contention as to the presence of some Christian elements in the Krishna cult I will discuss later; but in the meantime

¹ Notice of vol. iv of Muir's "Original Sanskrit Texts", 1873, reprinted in Weber's *Indische Streifen*, iii, 190-1.

² *Academy*, June 14th, 1873.

³ In the *Indian Antiquary*, Aug. 1875 = iv, 246.

it is settled that the most conservative Sanskrit scholarship on the continent not only admits but insists on the pre-Christian character of the Krishna mythus, and of such an important quasi-Christian element in it as the story of Kansa, which had so zealously been claimed (and that with Professor Weber's consent in former years) as an adaptation from the Herod story in the Christian Gospel.

VIII.

The proof of the pre-Christian antiquity of the Krishna cult, however, does not merely rest on the text of the Mahâbhâshya, or the conclusions of scholars in regard to that. The folly of the orthodox Christian argument was apparent—it was rejected, we have seen, by Professor Weber—before the passages in the Mahâbhâshya were brought forward. There have long been known at least three inscriptions, in addition to at least one other literary allusion, which prove Krishnaism to have flourished long before the period at which the Christians represent it to have been concocted from the Gospels.

1. The Bhitârî pillar inscription, transcribed and translated by Dr. W. H. Mill,¹ and dating from, probably, the second century of our era, proves Krishna to be then an important deity. The Krishna passage runs, in Dr. Mill's translation:—"May he who is like Krishna still obeying his mother Devakî, after his foes are vanquished, he of golden rays, with mercy protect this my design". This translation Lassen² corrects, reading thus:—"Like the conqueror of his enemies, Krishna encircled with golden rays, who honors Devakî, may he maintain his purpose"; and explaining that the words are to be attributed to the king named in the inscription (Kumârâgupta), and not to the artist who carved it, as Dr. Mill supposed. "As in the time to which this inscription belongs", Lassen further remarks, "human princes were compared with Gods, Krishna is here represented as a divine being,

¹ In the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, January 1837, pp. 1-17.

² *Indische Alterthumskunde*, ii (1849), p. 1108, note.

though not as one of the highest Gods". Dr. Mill, on the other hand, holds Krishna to be understood as "the supreme Bhagavat" referred to in other parts of the inscription. However this may be, the cultus is proved to have existed long before the arrival of Christian influences.

2. Two fragmentary inscriptions discovered in 1854 by Mr. E. C. Bayley¹ of the Indian Civil Service, equally point to the early deification of Krishna. One has the words "Krishnayasasa árâma" in Aryan Pali letters; the other "Krishnayasasya árâma médangisya". The two first words mean "The Garden of Krishnayasas", this name meaning "the glory of Krishna"; and Mr. Bayley thinks that "médangisya,"=corpulent, is some wag's addition to the original inscription. As to the date, Mr. Bayley writes:—"The form of the Indian letters had already led me to assign them roughly to the first century A.D.² On showing them, however, to Major A. Cunningham, he kindly pointed out that the foot strokes of the Aryan letters ally them to those on the coins of 'Pakores'; and he therefore would place them more accurately in the first half of the second century A.D.² at the earliest." Major Cunningham, it will be remembered, is one of those who see imitation of Christianity in the Krishna legends, so his dating is not likely to be over early. In any case, Mr. Bayley admits that the inscriptions "would seem to indicate the admission of Krishna into the Hindu Pantheon at the period" when they were cut. "If, however", he adds, "this be eventually established, it by no means follows that the name was applied to the same deity as at present, still less that he was worshipped in the same manner." It is not very clear what Mr. Bayley means by "the same deity"; or whether he would admit the God of the Jews to be the same deity as the Father of Jesus Christ, as worshipped by Archdeacon Farrar. But if he merely means to say that the Hindu conception of Krishna, like his ritual, might be modified after centuries, his proposition may readily be accepted.

¹ *Journal of As. Soc.* xxiii, 57.

² By "century A.D." Mr. Bayley means "century after Christ". "First century *anno domini*" is nonsense. In this paper I use "A.C." to signify "after Christ" (not "*ante Christum*"), as "B.C." signifies "before Christ". This is surely the reasonable course.

3. The Buddal pillar inscription, translated by Wilkins,¹ to which I have observed no allusion in recent writers on Krishnaism, serves equally to prove the early existence of a legend of a divine Krishna born of Devakî and nursed by Yasoda. It contains the passage, alluding to a distinguished lady or princess :—“ She, like another Devakî, bore unto him a son of high renown, who resembled the adopted of Yasodha and husband of Lakshmi ”—the Goddess Lakshmi being here identified with Krishna’s bride. This inscription was dated by Wilkins “shortly B.C.”, and by Sir William Jones 67 A.C. I have not ascertained how it is placed by later scholars ; but in any case it must long antedate the periods assigned by Professor Weber and the *Athenæum* critic to the arrival of the Christian influences which are supposed to have affected later Krishnaism.

4. In the Khandogya Upanishad, a document admittedly older than our era, there occurs² this passage :—“ Ghora Angirisa, after having communicated this (view of the sacrifice) to Krishna, the son of Devakî—and he never thirsted again (after other knowledge)—said ”, etc. On this passage I transcribe the comment appended by Professor Müller to his translation :—

“The curious coincidence between Krishna Devakîputra, here mentioned as a pupil of Ghora Angirasa, and the famous Krishna, the son of Devakî, was first pointed out by Colebrooke, *Miscell. Essays*, ii, 177. Whether it is more than a coincidence is difficult to say. Certainly we can build no other conclusions on it than those indicated by Colebrooke, that new fables may have been constructed elevating this personage to the rank of a God. We know absolutely nothing of the old Krishna Devakîputra except his having been a pupil of Ghora Angirasa, nor does there seem to have been any attempt made by later Brahmans to connect their divine Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, with the Krishna Devakîputra of our Upanishad. This is all the more remarkable because the author of the Sandilyasutras, for instance, who is very anxious to found a *śrauta* authority for the worship of Krishna Vasudeva as the supreme deity, had to be satisfied with quoting modern compilations Professor Weber has treated these questions very fully, but it is not quite clear to me whether he wishes to go beyond Colebrooke, and to admit more than a

¹ “ Asiatic Researches ”, i, 131.

² iii, 17, 6 ; Müller’s trans., “ Sacred Books of the East ’, i, 52.

similarity of name between the pupil of Ghora Angirasa and the friend of the Gopis."

Professor Weber, I may mention in passing, *does* "admit more than a similarity of name"; in his treatise on the Birth Festival¹ he founds on the Upanishad reference as indicating one of the stages in the development of Krishnaism. And as Professor Müller does not dispute in the least the antiquity and authenticity of that reference, but only queries "coincidence", it may be taken as pretty certain that we have here one more trace of the existence of the Krishna legend long before the Christian era. There is nothing in the least remarkable in the fact of the passage not being cited by a writer who wanted texts on the status of Krishna as "the supreme deity," because the passage clearly does not so present Krishna. But it is no part of our case to make out that Krishna was widely worshipped as "the supreme deity" before our era; on the contrary the evidence mostly goes to show that he only attained his eminence later. The point is that his name and story were current in India long before the Christian legends were heard of; and the series of mutually supporting testimonies puts this beyond doubt.

IX.

It does not seem likely, in the circumstances, that the force of the foregoing evidence will be disputed by any serious inquirer. At the same time, it is necessary to point out that some of the data relied on by some scholars, and in particular by Professor Lassen, to prove the early existence of Krishnaism, will not, by themselves support that conclusion. Lassen, who identifies Krishna with the Indian Hercules spoken of by Megasthenes, puts his case thus:

"Megasthenes, whose account of ancient India is the weightiest because the oldest of all those left to us by foreigners, has . . . mentioned [the] connexion of Krishna with the Pandavas, and his remarks deserve close attention . . . as giving a historical foothold in regard to the vogue of the worship of Krishna. His statement is as follows: He" [*i.e.*, the Indian Hercules] "excelled all men in strength of

¹ As cited, p. 316.

body and spirit; he had purged the whole earth and the sea of evil, and founded many cities; of his many wives was born only one daughter, Πανδαίη, Pandaia, but many sons, among whom he divided all India, making them kings, whose descendants reigned through many generations and did famous deeds; some of their kingdoms stood even to the time when Alexander invaded India. After his death, divine honors had been paid him. (Diodor. ii, 39. Arrian, *Ind.* 8.) That we are entitled to take this Hercules for Krishna appears from the fact that he was specially honored by the people of Surasena. (Arrian, *Ind.* viii, 5.)¹

“We may from this passage conclude with certainty that in the time of Megasthenes Krishna was honored as one of the highest of the Gods, and precisely in the character of Vishnu, who incarnated himself when the transgressions of the world began to overflow, and wiped them out. When Megasthenes describes him as bearing a club, there becomes apparent that writer’s exact acquaintance with Indian matters, for Vishnu also carries a club (hence his name of *Gadâdhara*). That he also, like Hercules, wore a lion’s hide, does not correspond to Krishna, and might seem to impute an inclination to make out an identity between the Greek and the Indian hero. Probably Megasthenes was misled by the fact that in Sanskrit the word lion is used to indicate a pre-eminent excellence in men, and specially in warriors.² The account of Megasthenes further corresponds with the Indian Saga in respect that there many wives and sons are ascribed to Krishna (16,000 wives and 180,000 sons. See Vishnu Purâna, pp. 440, 591). Of cities founded by him, indeed, we know only Dvârakâ; and Palibothra had another founder. Clearly, however, Pandaia is exactly the name of Pandava, especially when we compare the form Pândavya; and in that connexion my previous conclusion seems to be irrefragable, that Megasthenes has signified by the

¹ *Note by Lassen.* Besides Mathura, Megasthenes named another city of the Surasenes, Κλεισόβωρα, which Pliny (“*Hist. Nat.*”, vi, 22) calls Carisobara or Cyrisoborea or Chrysobora, and which Von Bohlen (“*Altes Indien*,” i, 233) with apparent justice reads as *Krishna-Pura*, city of Krishna. Ptolemaios names Mathura the city of the Gods.

² Lassen here assumes that Megasthenes knew Sanscrit, which is not at all certain. More probably he needed interpreters, and in talk between these and the Brahmins the poetic epithet “lion” would hardly be used. It would appear from a remark of Arrian (*Exped. Alex.* vi, 30) that only one Macedonian in Alexander’s train learned Persian, so little were the Greeks disposed to master foreign languages. In Alexander’s expedition, communications seem at times to have been filtered through three interpreters.

daughter of Krishna the sister, from whom the series of Pandava Kings were descended.”¹

Now, it is sufficiently plain on the face of this exposition that the identification of Krishna with the Indian Hercules of Megasthenes is imperfect. It leaves, says Professor Tiele, “much to be desired”.² The fashion in which the great Indianist founds on one or two details and lets go by the board some serious discrepancies, is indeed somewhat characteristic of the scholars of his adopted nation. German scholarship has the defects of its great qualities: with an enormous mass of detail-knowledge it combines a relatively infirm and erratic judgment; and the intensity of its adhesion to its speculations would at times almost seem to be a direct result of the consciousness of possessing more data than ideas, “information without knowledge”. In the whole course of this inquiry, the real light will, I think, be found forthcoming rather from France, Holland, India, and Italy, than from Germany; though the mere mass-weight of German scholarship commands attention.

In point of fact, a much more satisfactory identification of the Indian Hercules of Megasthenes lay ready to Lassen's hand in Wilson's introduction to his translation of the Vishnu Purâna. “The Hercules of the Greek writers”, says that sound scholar, “was indubitably the Bala Râma of the Hindus; and their notices of Mathura on the Jumna, and of the kingdom of the Suraseni and the Pandæan country, evidence the prior currency of the traditions which constitute the argument of the Mahâbhârata, and which are constantly repeated in the Purânas, relating to the Pandava and Yâdava races, to Krishna and his contemporary heroes, and to the dynasties of the solar and lunar heroes.”³ M. Barth, it is true, has tacitly accepted Lassen's view;⁴ but does not do so with any emphasis, and points out that it has been contested by Weber,⁵ who, regarding Megasthenes' testimony as of uncertain value in any case, declines to accept the reading of Kleisobora as Krishnapura, and considers Wilson's

¹ *Indische Alterthumskunde*, i, (1847), 647-9.

² “*Outlines*” p. 148.

³ *Trans. of Vishnu Purâna*, 1840, pref. pp. vi, vii.

⁴ “*Religions of India*,” p. 163.

⁵ *Indische Studien*, ii, 409 (1853).

theory of Bala Râma more reasonable. And M. Senart, whose masterly "Essay on the Legend of Buddha" has confessedly put him in the front rank of Indianists and mythologists, very emphatically combats Lassen's position :

"In [Megasthenes'] Hercules M. Lassen finds Vishnu: it would be infinitely more *vraisemblable*, even in respect of the association with Krishna, to see in him Bala Râma, for whom his club would constitute, in the eyes of a Greek, an affinity, the more striking because it was exterior, with the son of Alcmena. It is necessary, I think, to accept the same synonymy for the Hercules spoken of by Megasthenes, who seems simply to have confounded under this one name legends appertaining to several of the avatars of Vishnu: it is, in my opinion, an error of over-precision to identify, as M. Lassen has done, that Hercules with Krishna."¹

When we glance at the description of Bala Râma as he figures in Indian effigies, the view of Wilson and Senart seems sufficiently irrefragable :

"Bala Râma although a warrior, may, from his attributes, be esteemed a benefactor of mankind; for he bears a plough, and a pestle for beating rice; and he has epithets derived from the names of these implements—viz, Halayudha, meaning *plough-armed*, and Musali, as bearing the *musal*, or rice-beater. His name, Bala, means strength; and the beneficent attributes here noticed are by some called a ploughshare for hooking his enemies, and a club for destroying them; and *being sometimes seen with a lion's skin over his shoulders*, such statues have been thought to resemble, and allude to, those of the Theban Hercules and their legends." (Note. "The pestle is of hard wood, about four feet long, and two inches in diameter, with the ends tipped or ferrelled with iron, to prevent their splitting or wearing.")²

We shall have to consider further hereafter the mythological significance of Bala Râma and the other two Râmas. In the meantime, beyond noting how precisely the former corresponds with the Hercules of Megasthenes, it will suffice to say that one of the other Râmas, closely connected with Krishna, corresponds with the Hercules figure so far as to support strongly M. Senart's hypothesis of a combination of various personages in the Greek's conception :

"It is Rama Chandra, however, who is the favorite subject of

¹ "Essai sur la Légende du Buddha," 2e ed., p. 330, n.

² Moor's "Hindu Pantheon", p. 194.

heroic and amatory poetics: he is described 'of ample shoulders, brawny arms, extending to the knee; neck, shell-formed; chest, circular and full, with auspicious marks; body, hyacinthine; with eyes and lips of sanguine hue; the lord of the world; a moiety of Vishnu himself; the source of joy to Ikshwaku's race.' He is also called . . . blue-bodied, an appellation of Krishna, as well as of the prototype of both—Vishnu."¹

In fine, then, we are not entitled to say with Lassen that Megasthenes clearly shows the worship of Krishna to have attained the highest eminence in India three hundred years before our era; but what is certain is that the whole group of the legends with which Krishna is connected had at that date already a high religious standing; and that an important Krishna cultus, resting on these, existed before and spread through India after that period, but certainly flourished long before the advent of Christian influences.

X.

The early vogue of Krishna-worship being thus amply proved, it remains to consider the argument, so long persisted in by Professor Weber, as to the derivation of certain *parts* of Krishnaism from Christianity; keeping in view at the same time, of course, the more extensive claims made by the partisans of Christianity. With these Professor Weber is not to be identified: there is no reason to doubt that, even if he be mistaken, he is perfectly disinterested in his whole treatment of the subject. This is not to say, of course, that he has approached it from the first in a perfectly scientific frame of mind. I should rather say that his criticism represents the effects of the *general* European prepossession as regards Christianity on a candid truth-seeker who has not independently investigated Christian origins: that his attitude belongs to the period of criticism in which Christianity was not scientifically studied. It is only fair to mention that besides seeing Christian elements in Krishnaism he finds Homeric elements in the Râmâyana, the next great Hindu epic after the Mahâbhârata. That theory, however, seems to

¹ Moor's "Hindu Pantheon", p. 195.

have met very small acceptance among Indianists,¹ and need not be here discussed, any more than his old argument as to the influence of Greek art on India after Alexander, which stands on a different footing. One passage will serve to show his general position, which includes a frank avowal that there is evidence of Hindu influence on Christianity just about the time at which he thinks Christianity influenced Krishnaism :—

“ Still more deep [than the Grecian] has been the influence of Christianity, also chiefly introduced by way of Alexandria, to which is to be attributed the idea of a personal, individual, universal God; and the idea of Faith, which is not to be found in India before this time, but which from this epoch forms a common type of all Hindu sects. In the worship of Krishna, an ancient hero, which now takes an entirely new form, even the name of Christ seems to stand in direct connexion with it, and several legends of Christ, as well as of his mother the divine virgin, are transferred to him.—In an opposite manner, Hindu philosophy too exercised a decided influence upon the formation of several of the Gnostic sects then rising, more especially in Alexandria. The Manichæan system of religion in Persia is very evidently indebted to Buddhistical conceptions, as the Buddhists in the freshness of their religious zeal, carried on by their principle of universalism, had early sent their missionaries beyond Asia. The great resemblance which the Christian ceremonial and rites (which were forming just at that time) show to the Buddhistic in many respects, can be best explained by the influence of the latter, being often too marked for it to be an independent production of each faith; compare the worship of relics, the architecture of church towers (with the Buddhistic Topes), the monastic system of monks and nuns, celibacy, the tonsure, confession, rosaries, bells, etc.”²

I do not suppose that, after the banter he has bestowed in “ Krishna’s Geburtsfest ” on the Father Georgi order of etymology, Professor Weber would now stand to the above suggestion about the name of Christ; or that he would give a moment’s countenance to the preposterous argument of the *Athenæum* critic that the name Krishna, =black, might mean “ anointed ” because the root might mean “ to tinge ”. Apart from that, the argument for a

¹ See it ably criticised in K. T. Telang’s “ Was the Râmâyana copied from Homer ? ” Bombay, 1873.

² “ Modern Investigations on Ancient India.” A Lecture delivered in Berlin, March 4th, 1854, by Professor A. Weber. Translated by Fanny Metcalfe, 1857, pp. 25-6. (*Indische Skizzen*, p. 28.)

reciprocal action of the two religions is on the face of it plausible enough; and it becomes necessary to go into the details.

In the above extract, Professor Weber indicates only two respects in which Krishnaism was in his opinion modified by Christianity—the doctrines, namely, of “a personal, universal God”, and of “Faith”. In his treatise on the Krishna Birth-Festival, he posits a number of concrete details: in particular, the Birth Festival itself; the representation of Krishna as a child suckled by his mother; the curious item that, at the time of Krishna’s birth, his foster-father Nanda goes with his wife Yasoda to Mathura “to pay his taxes” (a detail not noted by the *Athenæum* critic); the representation of the babe as laid in a manger; the attempted killing by Kansa; the “massacre of the innocents”; the carrying of the child across the river (as in the Christian “Christophoros” legend); the miraculous doings of the child and the healing virtue of his bath water (as in the Apocryphal Gospels); the raising of the bereaved mother’s dead son, the straightening of the crooked woman; her pouring ointment over Krishna; and the sin-removing power of his regard.¹ These concrete details I will first deal with.

§ 1. A most important admission, it will be remembered, has already been made by Professor Weber in regard to the story of King Kansa; which he admits to be now proved a pre-Christian myth. So important, indeed, is that withdrawal, that but for the Professor’s later restatement I should have surmised him to have lost confidence in his whole position, of which, as it seems to me, the central citadel has fallen. If the story of Kansa be admittedly a pre-Christian myth, and the Christian Herod-story be thus admittedly a redaction of an old Eastern myth; what becomes of the presumption of Indian imitation of other Christian stories which, on the face of them, are just as likely to be mythical as the story of Herod and the massacre of the innocents? Did it ever occur to Professor Weber to consider how the Christian stories in general really originated? It would seem not. His argument simply assumes that the Gospel stories (whether true or not, he does not say) came into circulation at the

¹ Work cited, pp. 328-9.

foundation of Christianity, and so became accessible to the world. But as to the source of these stories—as to how these particular miraculous narratives came to be told in connexion with Jesus—he makes (save on one point) no inquiry and apparently feels no difficulty; though to a scientific eye, one would think, the clearing-up in some way of the *causation* of the Christian legends is as necessary as the explaining how they are duplicated in Krishnaism.

The one exception to which I allude in Professor Weber's investigation is his very straightforward allusion to the likelihood that the representation of the Virgin Mary as either suckling or clasping the infant Jesus may have been borrowed from the Egyptian statues or representations of Isis and Horus. For citing this suggestion from previous writers he has been angrily accused by Mr. Growse, a Roman Catholic Anglo-Indian, of "a wanton desire to give offence";¹ an imputation which the scholar has indignantly and justly resented.² Mr. Growse's pretext for his splenetic charge was the claim, cited by Professor Weber himself from De Rossi, that the earliest representations of the Madonna in the Roman catacombs, recently brought to light, follow a classic and not an Egyptian type. Says De Rossi:

"The paintings of our subterranean cemeteries offer us the first images of the Holy Virgin with her divine child; and they are much more numerous and more ancient than is indicated by the works hitherto [before 1863] published on the Catacombs of Rome. I have chosen four, which seem to me to be as the models of the different types and of the different periods which one meets from the first ages (*siècles*) to about the time of Constantine." And again (a passage which Weber does not cite); "The frescoes of our illustrations and the monuments cited by me here, demonstrate that on the most ancient works of Christian art the Virgin holding her child is figured *independently of the Magi and of any historic scene.*"³

Now, even if it be decided that the earliest "Madonnas" in the Catacombs have a classic rather than an Egyptian cast, nothing would be proved against the Egyptian deri-

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, iii, 300.

² *Id.*, iv, 251.

³ *Images de la T. S. Vierge, Choisies dans les Catacombes de Rome*, Rome, 1863, pp. 6-7, 21.

vation of the cult of the Virgin and Child. It does not occur to Commendatore De Rossi, of course, to question whether these early Madonnas were really Christian—whether they did not represent the almost universal vogue of the worship of a child-nursing Goddess apart from Christianity. There is no valid documentary evidence whatever of Christian Madonna-worship in the first century; and De Rossi's "*premiers siècles*", and his final claim that his series of images "goes back to the disciples of the apostles", leave matters very much in the vague. The whole question of the antiquities of the Catacombs needs to be overhauled by some investigator as devoted as the Catholics, but as impartial as they are prejudiced. Certainly there might be Christian, but there might equally be non-Christian, "Madonnas" of a "classic" cast before the time at which the absolute images of Isis were transferred to Christian churches,¹ and black images of Mary and Jesus were made in imitation of these.² We know that in Græco-Roman statuary, Juno (Hera), who was fabled to become a virgin anew each year,³ was represented as suckling a babe—Hercules or Dionysos.⁴ Further, we know the Greeks had statues of Peace and Fortune each carrying Wealth as a child in her arms.⁵ But further still we know that in old Assyria or Chaldæa there was a popular worship of a child-bearing Goddess. It is agreed that the Goddess Alitta was represented by such images;⁶ and there are many specimens of similar ancient Eastern effigies of small size, which were evidently cherished by

¹ See King's "Gnostics", 2nd ed. p. 173.

² See above, sec. v.

³ Pausanias, ii, 38. This myth often recurs. Juno bears Vulcan "without having been united in love" (Hesiod, "Theogony", 927); and in the same way bears Typhon (Homeric "Hymn to Apollo"). So, in Rome, Juno was identified with the *Virgo Coelestis* (Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, 1865, pp. 377, 752). The idea is ubiquitous. Cybele, the mother of *all* the Gods, was revered as a virgin, "generating without passion", though the mate as well as the mother of Jupiter, and "seized with a love without passion for Attis" (Julian, "Upon the Sovereign Sun", Bohn trans. p. 263). Equally transparent was the mysticism which made Ceres, the earth mother, a virgin too.

⁴ Preller's *Griechische Mythologie*, 1860, i, 135; Pausanias, ix, 25.

⁵ Pausanias, i, 8; ix, 16.

⁶ Layard's "Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon", 1853, p. 477; Rawlinson's "Herodotus", i, 257.

multitudes. In a case of "Miscellaneous Objects from Assyria and Babylonia" in the Assyrian basement of the British Museum, may be seen old Chaldæan figures of this kind, one of which, with the usual orthodox British dissimulation, is described merely as a "female figure holding a child", while another female figure is unhesitatingly labelled "female deity", though the deity of the former is to the full as certain as that of the latter. In another case of "Antiquities from Dali" upstairs, at the outer end of the Egyptian Hall, are a number of similar figures, in the labelling of which officialdom ventures so far as to write "Figure of Female or Aphrodite", "holding smaller figure or child". Of course the Museum officials are not specially to blame: probably they dare not put facts as they would wish, for fear of the all-pervading clerical influence that in England hampers and humiliates archæology as it does every other science to the utmost of its power. Anyhow, the fact remains that these popular "Madonnas" of the East are much older than Christianity; and it is even probable that they represent a Chaldæan cultus much earlier than the Egyptian worship of Isis.

This being so, the course of surmising a Christian origin for Indian effigies of Devakî nursing Krishna is plainly unscientific, since it passes over an obvious, near, and probable source for a remote and improbable one. To argue that India remained ignorant of or indifferent to all *Asian* presentments of child-nursing Goddesses for many centuries, and at length, when she had a highly-evolved religious system, administered by an exclusive priesthood, suddenly became enamored of the Christian presentment of Mary and Jesus—this is to set aside all reasonable probability on no better pretext than a guess. Even if there were no old Asian cultus, no multitude of portable Asian images, of a child-bearing Goddess, the idea might obviously have been derived from the Isis-figures of Egypt before Christianity came into existence. Even from the engravings appended to his paper by Professor Weber, it appears that other divine personages than Devakî and Krishna were figured as mother and child in Hindu art and mythology; and the usage might perfectly well have prevailed in India before Krishnaism became anything like universal. In this connexion Professor Tiele,

sanest of hierologists,¹ passes an unanswerable criticism on Professor Weber's argument in the Dutch *Theologisch Tijdschrift*:

"One of the weakest points of his [Weber's] demonstration seems to me to be that in which he compares the delineations of Krishna at the breast of his mother Devaki with Christian pictures of the *Madonna lactans* (the Madonna giving suck), and both with that of Isis and Horos. For in the first place it is not proved that the Indian representations are imitations of Christian models: they might equally well be borrowed from the Egyptian, seeing that India was already in communication with Egypt before our era. The Horos sitting on the lotos was certainly borrowed by the Egyptians from Indian pictures; and in return the Isis with the child Horos at her breast may well have been transported to India. Moreover, the Indian illustrations given by Weber, and equally the Christian, are of very late date; and further, it is very doubtful whether they all represent Devaki and Krishna. [Note. Under one of the four is inscribed the name Lakshmi. Another is held to stand for Lakshmi or Maya with Kamadeva. In both the Goddesses have by them a lotus, the emblem of Lakshmi. And a third gives the whole legend, Devaki and Yaçodha each lying on her bed, the first strongly guarded, while the father of Krishna, under the protection of the serpent with seven heads, carries the child through the river, to place it in safety. Hardly one of the four recalls a *Madonna lactans*; but, indeed, Weber acknowledges that that is of very late date.]"²

I cannot, with my limited knowledge, speak with Professor Tiele's certainty as to the Horos-on-the-lotos being borrowed from India; but I would suggest that if that were so borrowed, the Isis nursing Horos might be so likewise. We have really no solid ground, that I know of, for assuming that the Indian cult, in some form, was not as old as the Egyptian. We have the decisive testimony of Jerome that in the fourth century the Hindus

¹ Let me offer a plea, as well as an excuse, for this most necessary term, which Professor Tiele himself has fathered. It is in the preface to his "Outlines" that he suggests the word "hierology" as a substitute for the cumbrous phrase "Science of Religions". If this term be adopted, we might when necessary say "Comparative Hierology" instead of "Comparative Mythology", and so satisfy conservatives without having recourse to the question-begging "Comparative Theology", or to the solecism of "Comparative Religion", which is no more justifiable than "Comparative Words" for "Comparative Philology".

² Art. *Christus en Krishna*, in the *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1877, p. 65.

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were known to teach that their Buddha was born of a Virgin¹—a clear proof that the Virgin myth was current in India before our era. Such a dogma could not have gained such vogue in the short time between Jerome and the beginning of Mary-worship. If then Buddha was so early reputed Virgin-born, why should not Krishna, who ranked as an incarnation of Vishnu before him, have long earlier had the same distinction? Surely that is the reasonable assumption. What is clear, however, is that, as Professor Tiele urges, the Hindus could perfectly well have borrowed, if they did borrow, from Egypt before Christianity was heard of. There being thus so little reason for surmising Christian influence in the matter, and so much for discarding any such surmise, there is *a fortiori* presumption against Professor Weber's final contention as to the precise time of borrowing. There is a Krishnaist custom in India of "name-giving" on the festival day of Krishna's supposed birth; and in answer to criticism the Professor writes² that "It is because the custom of the Egyptian Church of celebrating the birth and the baptism of Christ on the *same day* prevailed only from the second half of the fourth century till the year 431, when the celebration of the *birth alone* took its place," that he dates the Krishnaist borrowing of the Birth Festival from Christianity "at the very time during which that custom peculiar to Egypt prevailed." Here we have perhaps the most striking example of Professor Weber's unscientific treatment of Christian origins. Why, one asks, does he not enquire as to how the Egyptian Christians came to adopt that peculiar usage of celebrating the birth and baptism of Christ on one day, for only the short period he speaks of? Was it a mere freak? And if it were, is it reasonable to suggest that this mere temporary provincial ecclesiastical freak in Christendom somehow impressed the remote Brahmans so much that they determined to adopt it, and succeeded in grafting it on the Krishna cultus ever since? Surely this is turning historical science out of doors! Surely it is infinitely more reasonable to surmise that the Egyptian Christians were the borrowers, that they borrowed

¹ "Adversus Jovinianum", i, 42 (Migne, *Patrol. Cursus Completus*, xxiii, 273).

² *Indian Antiquary*, iv, 249; *Ueber die Krishnaj.*, pp. 299, 337.

their peculiar usage from some other cult, and that it was rejected by the rest of the Church just because it was so obviously alien in its origin.

To be sure, the usage of the rest of the Church was itself an unquestionable adoption of a current Pagan one. The Western Church, long after the time when the possibility of ascertaining any facts as to the birth of the alleged Founder had ceased, adopted the ancient solar festival of the 25th of December, then specially connected in the Empire with the widespread worship of Mithra.¹ But the Eastern Churches, influenced by the Egyptian and other pre-Christian systems, adopted and for some time adhered to another date, equally solar and Pagan in its character. The facts are collected by Bingham, who points out that it "is a very great mistake in learned men" to say that Christ's birthday was always celebrated on 25th December by the churches:—

"For, not to mention what Clement Alexandrinus (*Stromata*, i) says of the Basilidian heretics, that they asserted that Christ was born on the 24th or 25th of the month which the Egyptians call Pharmuthi, that is, April; he says a more remarkable thing (*Id.*) of some others, who were more curious about the year and the day of Christ's nativity, which they said was in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus Cæsar, and the 25th day of the month Pachon, which . . . signifies the month of May, as Mr. Basnage (*Exercit. in Baron. an.* 37, p. 216) has at large demonstrated. . . . But what is more considerable in this matter is that the greatest part of the Eastern Church for three or four of the first ages kept the feast of Christ's nativity on the same day which is now called Epiphany, or the 6th of January, which denotes Christ's manifestation to the world in four several respects which were all commemorated upon this day"—*i.e.* (1) his nativity or incarnation; (2) the appearance of the star,=Epiphany or manifestation to the Gentiles; (3) the "glorious appearance" at Christ's baptism; (4) the manifestation of his divinity at Cana. . . . "And Cassian (*Collat.* x, c. 2) says expressly 'that in his time all the Egyptian provinces under the general name of Epiphany understood as well the nativity of Christ as his baptism.' . . . But before the time of the Council of Ephesus, anno 431, the Egyptians had altered the day of Christ's nativity. . . . It was not long before this that the

¹ See Julian "Upon the Sovereign Sun", Bohn trans. pp. 249-251. Cp. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, p. 755.

churches of Antioch and Syria came into the Western observation¹". . . .

All which is abundantly proved from Epiphanius and Chrysostom. Now, only a supernaturalist criticism can here fail to see that the usages of the Egyptian and Syrian churches were imitative of pre-existing Eastern astronomico-theological cults;² and if we are driven to this conclusion, what right have we left to suppose that India borrowed just such a usage all of a sudden from a short-lived borrowed practice of Eastern Christendom? We have a distinct record that in connexion with the ancient solar worship of Hercules among the Sicyonians, who sacrificed lambs to the God, "the first of the days of the Feast which they keep to Hercules they call *Names*, and the second *Hercules' Day*";³ and there is surely good reason to presume that similar usages prevailed among other solar cults long before Christianity. Why then should the Hindu usage not be as old as the Greek? The position is hopeless. Professor Weber's thesis (and Professor Weber is the only person with whom it is worth while to argue seriously on the subject) is extravagant to the last degree. In no other connexion could such a capricious hypothesis meet with acceptance; it is only anxiety to prove Christian priority by hook or crook that can induce any reader to endorse Professor Weber's view; and it is only, I submit, the habit of uncritically acquiescing, however honestly, in Christian assumptions, that could lead such a scholar to frame such an argument. He is hoist with his own petard, and his Christian followers with him. These might indeed have pointed out to him that the usage of *general baptising on Epiphany* did not disappear from the Christian Church after the Council of Ephesus. It has been continued down to modern times in the Church of Abyssinia, which has continued to receive its primate from the Church of Alexandria, and which practises general circumcision as well as general baptism on the day in question.⁴ Why should not then

¹ "Christian Antiquities", ed. 1855, vii, 280-2.

² The Cana wine-miracle, commemorated on January 18th, is certainly based on the wine-miracle of the Dionysiak festival of that date (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* ii, 106 (103), xxxi, 13; Pausanias, vi, 26).

³ Pausanias, ii, 10.

⁴ Geddes, "Church History of Ethiopia", 1696, pp. 32-33.

the Hindu usage have been borrowed from Abyssinia at a much later time than that at which the Alexandrian Church regarded Epiphany as the day of the Nativity? Why indeed should it not have been suggested by the much more general custom in the early Church of reserving all baptisms for Easter-day?¹ And why, finally, should it not have been suggested by the Catholic "Festival of the Name of Jesus", which stands in the Calendar for August 7th, close on the date of the Krishna Birth-Festival? Any one of these hypotheses would be as reasonable as that on which Professor Weber has fastened—as reasonable, and as unreasonnable. The whole theory is a fallacy.

§ 2. A more instructive part of Professor Weber's argument concerning the Krishna Birth-Festival, as now observed in India, consists in showing that no trace of it is to be found even in such late literature as the Purânas. An attempt to find authority for it in the Bhâgavat Purâna, he declares, entirely fails, except as regards quite modern MSS.; and this he considers the more curious because this Purâna, and in particular the tenth book, is the peculiar text-book of the Krishna sect. There is there no suggestion of a Birth-Festival. The time of the God's birth, he mentions, is told in detail in Book x, 3, 1-8, but without a date, save what is implied in the statement that it was under the star Rohini and at midnight; and he raises the question whether the Birth-Festival existed at the time of the composition of the Purâna. He decides that it must have done, not on account of internal evidence proving the lateness of the book, but because the grammarian Vopadeva, to whom Colebrooke, Wilson, and Burnouf ascribe the composition of the Purâna as it now stands, was contemporary with Hemâdri, the author in whom we first find specific mention of the Festival. That was about the end of the fourteenth century of our era—about a thousand years after the period at which the Professor thinks the Hindus borrowed their Festival usage from Alexandria. He might thus well decide that the usage existed before Vopadeva; and he offers

Cp. Neale, "History of the Holy Eastern Church: Patriarchate of Alexandria", 1847, ii, 347.

¹ Bingham, Work cited, iv, 69-70.

an explanation of the silence of the Purâna on the subject :

“In the Bhagavat Purâna is presented the modern development of the Krishna cult, which is chiefly concerned with Krishna’s love affairs, and in which the Mother of the God passes progressively into the background. In the Birthday Festival, on the other hand, . . . the Mother comes very prominently into the foreground, playing a principal rôle, while of the love affairs of Krishna no notice is or indeed can be taken, for he is here represented as still a suckling at his mother’s breast. I do not hesitate here to recognise a quite peculiarly ancient phase of the Festival, the more so because . . . even in that there appears in time a tendency to suppress this side, and to give the tribute of the Festival to the God alone, without his mother.”¹

That is to say, the Purâna overlooks the Festival because it preserves the old practice of honoring the Mother of the God, while at the time the Purâna was written the cult ran to the glorification of the God himself, and the celebration of his exploits. To this explanation I do not think there can be any objection. It is conceived in the historical spirit; and my only perplexity is that Professor Weber, while thus recognising that the Festival preserves an old *popular rite*, which changed much more slowly than the poetic recitals of the God’s exploits, should yet decide that even the popular rite was originally borrowed from the new Western religion of Christism by a people who rated their own religious and historic antiquity high before Christianity was heard of.

I have implied that the Purânas represent the literary development of mythic lore; but this does not mean that even their contents are not mainly made up of matter that in some form long antedates our era. On this subject, it may be well to point out that the absolute preservation of an ancient document in its integrity, unless it be a matter of rote-learned ritual like the Vedas, is not to be looked for in a state of civilisation in which manuscripts are not abundant and the knowledge of reading general. There is overwhelming internal evidence of the manipulation of the Christian Gospels: and the reason why, after a certain time, their text became substantially fixed, was just the multiplicity of the copies, and the ecclesiastical habit,

¹ *Ueber die Krishnajanmâshtamî*, pp. 240-2.

derived from old Greek political usage, of meeting in Councils. And even as it was, we know that so late as the fifth century the text of the "three witnesses" was fraudulently inserted in 1 John v, and that this one forgery was ultimately accepted by the entire Western church from about 1550 down to last century, when earlier copies were authoritatively collated. Now, in India down till recent times, the frame of mind in regard to narratives of the lives of the Gods would be exactly that of the early Christians who manipulated the first and second Gospels, and compiled the third and fourth. There was no such thing as a canon or a received text: there was no "apostolic" tradition; there were no religious councils; no scholars whose business it was to compare manuscripts. Besides, no manuscript lasted long; Professor Weber has pointed out how unfavorable is the Indian climate to any such preservation.¹ In fine, the *re*-composition of sacred narratives would be a perfectly natural course. But it would be fallacious in the extreme to argue that a late redaction meant late invention: on the contrary there is good reason to believe that late redactions would often take in floating popular myths of great antiquity, which had merely missed being committed to writing before. For this view, modern research in Folk Lore should have prepared all investigators. Our every day nursery fables are found to be in substance as old as the art of story-telling, older than literature, as old as religion.

Now, it is a general rule in ancient mythology that the birthdays of Gods were *astrological*; and the simple fact that the Purâna gives an astronomical moment for Krishna's birth is a sufficient proof that at the time of writing they *had* a fixed date for it. The star Rohini under which he was born, it will be remembered, has the name given in one variation of the Krishna legend to a wife of Vasudeva who bore to him Râma, as Devakî (sometimes held to be the mother of Râma also) bore Krishna. Here we are in the thick of ancient astrological myth. Rohinî (our Aldebaran) is "the red", "a mythical name also applied now to Aurora, now to a star".² We have seen in the case of Christianity

¹ *Ind. Ant.*, iii, 246; Berlin lecture, p. 30. A friend in Burma, to whom I had sent a book, writes me that it has to be locked up in an air-tight box during the wet season, otherwise it would be destroyed.

² Barth, "Religions of India", p. 173.

how a universal astrological festival, of immemorial antiquity, came to be specialised for Christians; and it is clearly not only possible but likely that every astrological festival of Krishnaism was in vogue in other Indian worships before Krishnaism prevailed. In these matters there is really no invention: there is only readjustment. But that a Hindu festival connected with the star-name Rohini and the birth of Krishna should be borrowed from Christianity, I can see no shadow of reason for supposing. The very fact that no account is given in the older Purânas of the rise of the festival tells in favor of its antiquity. Suppose the festival to be the oldest datum in the case, the omission to date its beginning in the record is just what would happen—just what happened in Christianity. It would have been a simple matter for the early Christians to insert 25th December in their records as the date of their God's birth; but they did *not* do so, just because that was so notoriously a festival of extreme antiquity.¹

But the most singular matter in regard to Professor Weber's argument is the fact that the date of the Krishna Birth-Festival is neither in December nor in January, but in the month of *July*.² One may go through Weber's treatise without discovering this. As he says in answer to a criticism, "The date itself (December or July, midwinter or midsummer) *plays no part at all in my discussion*, and is only

¹ It is worth while in this connexion to recal the statement of Ovid in his *Fasti* (i, 657) that he went three or four times through the official list of festivals, in vain, looking for the date of the old *Sementivæ* or Festival of Sowing, which was not written down. See Ovid's explanation and that of Macrobius (*Saturnalia*, i, 16) cited by Keightley in his ed. of the *Fasti*. There were fixed and unfixed festivals, *Stativæ* and *Conceptivæ*, of which the latter were "annually given out, for certain or even uncertain days, by the magistrates or priests".

² According to Professor de Gubernatis (*Zool. Myth.* i, 51) it is customary "towards the end of December" to give presents of cows "in celebration of the new solar year, or the birth of the pastoral God *Krishnas*"; but this appears to be an error, probably resulting from Professor Weber's omission to lay stress on the date in his standard treatise. But doubtless Gubernatis could explain the midsummer birth of the black Sun-God in terms of solar mythology. It is the white Sun-God who is born at Christmas. But on this head it should be noted that the *death* of the Sun-God Tammuz (Adonis) was celebrated in different climates at different times. See Müller, as last cited, pp. 529-530. And see hereinafter, Sec. 15.

spoken of incidentally" in a parenthesis.¹ So the proposition is that the Hindus celebrated the birthday of Krishna in July by way of imitating the Christian fashion of celebrating Christ's nativity in January. One is at a loss to understand how Professor Weber can thus make so light of such an important item. If the Krishna Birth-Festival were borrowed, why should the borrowers select a midsummer instead of a midwinter date for their importation? Why, indeed, should they not place their God's birthday, if it only occurred to them late in the day to give him a birthday, on one of the other Krishnaist festivals? I have not noticed that Professor Weber theorises on the origin of these; but their probably astronomical origin is surely important to the argument. As the historian Elphinstone has pointed out, "Even Mr. Bentley, the most strenuous opponent of the claims of the Hindus" to an extremely ancient knowledge of astronomy, "pronounces in his latest work that their division of the ecliptic into twenty-seven lunar mansions (which supposes much previous observation) was made 1442 years before our era"²—that is, one or two centuries before the first traces of systematic astronomy in Greece. Astronomical festivals, then, the Hindus must have had from a very remote antiquity;³ and every argument from analogy and experience goes to support the view that their now popular seasonal festivals are pre-historic, and that some of them may even be derived from Dravidian or pre-Aryan practice. And when we compare a few of their usages with those of Christianity, it becomes plain that we must either suppose them to have borrowed a great deal more than Professor Weber says, or give up his theory altogether and look for, if anything, a reverse historic process. The points of resemblance are numerous and suggestive.

"The new year of the luni-solar computation now in use [in India] begins with the first of Chaitra, which falls somewhere in the course of March, and in solar reckoning is said to agree with the entrance of the sun into the sign Mesha, or Aries"⁴—

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, iv, 249.

² "History of India," ed. 1866, p. 140.

³ On Vedic festivals see Professor Max Müller's "Natural Religion", 1889, pp. 524-5.

⁴ H. H. Wilson, "Religious Festivals of the Hindus," Works, ii, 159.

that is, the sign of the Ram or Lamb, which in Christianity is associated with the sacrifice of the God, symbolised as a Lamb, on a luni-solar and therefore variable date connected with the vernal equinox.

“There was, however, a period at which a different principle was followed¹ . . . the new year then commenced on the first of the solar month Māgha, the date of the Makara-Sankrānti, or the sun’s entrance into the sign Capricornus, identical with the Uttarāyana, or return of that luminary to the regions of the north, or, in fact, to the winter solstice.”²

The Indian and European dates do not actually correspond: with us 21st December is the time of the sun’s entering Capricorn, the sign of the Goat, while the Hindus put it on the first of their solar month Magha=12th January. But the astronomical *motive* is explicit; and when we note that this old festival, still in force, lasts three days, and that the day after the sun’s entering Capricorn is termed Mátu Pongal, or the feast of cattle, we see a new confirmation of the argument of Dupuis³ that the myth of the Christian God being born in a stable (which corresponds so strikingly with many other myths of Gods—as Krishna, Mercury, Hercules—born or brought up among cattle) is really at bottom astronomical or zodiacal, and is properly to be traced to the relative position of the figures in the fuller zodiac or celestial sphere. Of course the solar element is manifest in the Hindu usage. “The day of the Makara Sankrānti, or Perum Pongal, is dedicated to the sun, and the day of Mattu Pongal to Indra; they are both comprised in the term Pongal, which is in an anniversary festival of a week’s duration.”⁴ Now, several of the usages in this and other Hindu festivals are traceable in Europe in non-Christian as well as in Christian times. “The Greeks had a festival in the month Poseidon or January, in which they worshipped Neptune, or the Sea, in like manner as the Hindus [at the same time] worship the ocean.”⁵ But there is no more remarkable correspondence than that between the Hindu practice of honoring the cattle at this time and the strange Catholic function of

¹ *Note by Wilson.* According to Bentley, this was 1181 B.C. “Historical View of Hindu Astronomy,” p. 30.

² Wilson, as cited.

³ “Origine de tous les Cultes,” ed. 1835-6, vii, 104.

⁴ Wilson, as cited, p. 172.

⁵ *Id.* p. 175.

28) 365 (12
 27
 85.4

blessing the cattle—cows, horses, goats, asses, etc—at Rome on St. Anthony's day (January 17th). Let Professor Wilson testify :—

“The time of the year, the decorating of the cattle, the sprinkling of them with water, and the very purport of the blessing, that they may be exempt from evils, are so decidedly Indian, that could a Dravira Brahman be set down of a sudden in the Piazza, and were he asked what ceremony he witnessed, there can be no doubt of his answer: he would at once declare they were celebrating the Pongal.”¹

Now, can any rational enquirer believe that the Roman Catholic usage really originated, as the fable tells, in the fact that St. Anthony tended swine? These are the theories of the Dark Ages. To-day even semi-orthodox scholarship decides that

“So far as myths consist of explanations of ritual their value is altogether secondary; and it may be affirmed with confidence that in almost every case *the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth*; for the ritual was fixed and the myth was variable; the ritual was obligatory, and faith in the myth was at the discretion of the worshipper”.²

This holds true for every religion; and if we apply the principle in the case of Christianity we shall make an end of more pretences than that as to the borrowing of Christian practices by Krishnaism. It is not argued, of course, that Roman Christianity borrowed its ritual usages direct from India: on the contrary, the presumption is that these usages were even more widespread than the Aryan race in pre-historic times. The Roman Catholic celebration of St. Anthony's day probably derives from the ancient Paganalia or Feriæ Sementivæ, agricultural festivities in which the cattle were garlanded at this very season of the year;³ and it is possible that even the modern name came from that of one of the Antonines. But if Christianity is thus seen deriving its festival days from immemorial custom, what reason is there to surmise that conservative and custom-loving India came to Alexandria for the hint to celebrate the astrological birthday of Krishna? Krishna-

¹ Wilson, as cited, pp. 178-9.

² Professor Robertson Smith, “The Religion of the Semites,” 1889, p. 19.

³ See Ovid, *Fasti*, i, 663. Cp. Middleton, “Letter from Rome,” ed. 1741, pp. xv-xix, and 141-143.

ism has a number of festivals, of which no proper account seems yet to be accessible in English, that given in Balfour's *Indian Cyclopædia* being so inexact that one is at a loss to know whether in some cases different festival-names do not apply to one and the same feast. But it is clear that there is one great Dolu or Dola Yâtrâ festival, the "swinging festival", which begins about the middle of March (Phalguna) and lasts as a rule fifteen days. In the large British towns it is or was restricted to three days on account of the liberties taken; but among the Rajputs it is or was the practice to celebrate it for forty days,¹ with more or less licence. Now, this practice has certainly an astronomical or seasonal origin; and is as certainly akin to, and as old as, the ancient celebration of the Dionysia or Liberalia in honor of the Sun and Wine-God among the Greeks and Romans. The 17th of March was the date of the Liberalia in Rome; and licence was the note of the festival. It would be just as reasonable to derive the Indian "swinging-festival"² of the vernal equinox from the Christian celebration of the rising of Christ from the dead, as to argue that the Krishna Birth-Festival is similarly derived.

XI.

The further we collate the main Christian myth-motives with those of Krishnaism, the more clearly does it appear that instead of the latter being borrowed from the former, they are, not indeed in all cases the originals from which Christianity borrowed, but always presumptively the more

¹ Rev. W. O. Simpson's ed. of Moor's "Hindu Pantheon", 1864, pp. 139-144.

² So called because of the ritual practice of swinging an image in a chair. But this practice, according to Balfour's *Ind. Cyc.* (art. Krishna) would appear to obtain also at another Krishnaite festival of three or five days' duration in the month Shravana = July-August; which I take to be either the Birth Festival proper or the special form of it called *Jayanti*, which depends on a particular conjunction of the star Rohinî (Weber, p. 221; cp. pp. 262-3). On this I can find no exact information. In the month Kartika = October-November, there is yet another festival, celebrating the Gopî revels. In a note to Wilson's "Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus" (1835, ii, 264), citing the Bhavishyottara Purâna, it is

ancient; and in one or two cases they do appear to be the actual sources of Gospel stories. We have seen how Professor Weber concedes that the story of King Kansa's killing of Devaki's earlier children in the attempt to kill Krishna is not only pre-Christian but of old mythic standing, and that it was the subject of *dramatic representations* before our era. Now, the myth-motive in question is at bottom one that is extremely familiar in ancient legend; and nothing is more unsatisfactory in the modern discussion of Krishnaite origins than the way in which this fact has been overlooked. About a hundred years ago Maurice¹ called attention to the parallel between the story of Krishna's infancy and that of the infancy of Cyrus, as told by Herodotus,² four hundred years before our era. The story about Cyrus is briefly as follows. Astyages, king of the Medes, having had a remarkable (and Rabelaisian) dream about his daughter, which portended great things of her progeny, gave her in marriage to a Persian of private station, named Cambyses. A year after her marriage, when she was pregnant, he had a still more alarming if less unmentionable dream, whereupon he sent to Persia for her and put her under a guard, resolving to destroy whatever should be born of her; the Magi having signified that his dream meant that her offspring would reign in his stead. The officer (Harpagus) whom he entrusted with the task, however, shrank from the act, sent for one of the king's cowherds, Mitradatae, and ordered him to expose the child on a mountain abounding in wild beasts. All the same, the child was clothed in "gold and a robe of various colors". When the herdsman got home, his wife had just been delivered of a still-born child; and they agreed to give up its body to Harpagus as that of the young prince, dead from exposure, while they actually reared the prince as their own child, giving him another name than Cyrus. When the child grows to boyhood, he of course reveals royal quali-

explained that many of the Hindu festivals have been displaced. Thus a festival once named the Holikâ is now termed the Dola Yâtrâ (or "swinging of the Gods"); and "the Dola Yâtrâ and Rath Yâtrâ have also been displaced, and in Bengal, at least, transferred to festivals appropriated to Krishna alone, in the months of Jyeshth and Asharh, June-July".

¹ "History of Hindostan," ii, 478. ² B. i, 107-130.

ties; and while "playing in the village in which the ox stalls were" he is chosen by the other boys as their king, and causes a disobedient playfellow to be scourged. This Astyages discovers, and the story comes out. Astyages punishes Harpagus by causing him unknowingly to eat the flesh of his own child; but is told by the Magi that as his dream has been already fulfilled in the coronation of Cyrus by the village children, he may safely let him go. Later, of course, Harpagus secretly helps Cyrus to make an insurrection; Astyages impales the Magi, but gives the command of his troops to Harpagus, who betrays him, and Cyrus reigns, but without killing his grandfather. Of Cyrus' death, Herodotus tells, there were many accounts; and in one of these¹ he is declared to have been *crucified* by an Amazon queen of Scythians.

Here, then, we have an old myth, in which already, however, certain primeval mythical details are seen modified to suit history. Thus the herdsman's wife's name means "the bitch"; and it is explained that this is how the story arose of Cyrus being suckled by a bitch—a myth which at once recalls the story of Romulus and Remus, suckled by a she-wolf; and of Jupiter, suckled by the she-goat Amalthea.² Again, the secret message from Harpagus in Media to Cyrus in Persia is sent enclosed in the body of a hare—an animal which in early mythology repeatedly plays the part of a message-bringer.³ And the robe "of many colors", is, like Joseph's coat, plainly the many-tinted cloud-drapery of the Sun. Apart from these details, the story of the exposure of the infant hero is plainly cognate with the legends of the exposure of Romulus; of Æsculapius,⁴ exposed as a child, found by Autolaus and nursed by Trygon (= "the turtle-dove"⁵), or, in another myth, suckled by a she-goat and protected by a watch-dog;⁶ and of Moses, the circumstances of whose exposure are so strikingly recalled by the Jesuit story of the massacre of the innocents; and parts of the

¹ Diodorus Siculus, ii, 44.

² Callimachus, "Hymn to Jupiter", 49.

³ Gubernatis, "Zoological Mythology", ii, 77, 79.

⁴ Pausanias, viii, 25.

⁵ The mythical Semiramis was fabled to have been exposed for a whole year in the desert, and nourished by doves. Compare the ravens of Elijah.

⁶ Pausanias, ii, 26.

tale are found closely paralleled in the northern legend of British Arthur, as well as in that of *Cedipus*.¹ The child Arthur, like Cyrus, is robed in gold, and like him is secretly sent to be suckled by one not his mother.² But with all this parallelism to account for, Professor Weber and the Christian partisans have assumed out-of-hand that the story of Krishna's nativity was just taken from the Gospels, leaving the Gospel story to stand by its own sacrosanctity. In point of fact there is hardly a leading detail in the Krishna birth legend which is not paralleled in other early non-Christian mythology. In the Greek pantheon, God after God is found to have been reared under difficulties. Latona, pregnant with Apollo, is driven from place to place by the jealous hate of Juno.³ The infant Dionysos, son of Ammon and Amalthea, is sent by his father to a secluded island, and guarded by the virgin Goddess Athena from the jealous wrath of Rhea, the wife of Ammon.⁴ In another version, Semele, who bears Dionysos to Zeus, is spirited away with her child in a chest by Cadmus: the chest is thrown in the sea and cast ashore; Semele, found dead, is buried; and the wandering Io (who in the common myth is a cow) rears the child in a cave.⁵ Similarly, Zeus himself in his infancy is stolen away by the Curetes from fear of his father Kronos (Saturn) and nursed by the nymphs Ithome and Neda;⁶ while in the more familiar story Kronos devours his children successively, fearing they will dispossess him, till Rhea his wife gives him a stone wrapped in cloth, which he devours in place of the new-born Jupiter, whom she brings forth in a distant place and rears in a cave, and who in turn overthrows his father, as Cyrus overthrows Astyages.⁷ Yet again, when Rhea bears Poseidon (Neptune), he is "deposited with the flocks and fed with the lambs"; and in this case she gives Kronos a foal to eat.⁸ In yet another story, *Æsculapius* narrowly escapes being burned alive with his mother *Coronis*.⁹

¹ Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations," 1882, pp. 134, 312.

² Malory's "Mort d'Arthure", chap. iii.

³ Callimachus, "Hymn to Delos".

⁴ Diodorus Siculus, iii, 68, 70.

⁵ Pausanias, iii, 24.

⁶ Id. iv, 33.

⁷ Hesiod, *Theogony*, 477-491; Pausanias, viii, 8.

⁸ Last cit.

⁹ Pausanias, ii, 26.

Needless to speak of the serpents sent by Juno against the infant Hercules, and the battling of the young Horus against Typhon: the myth is universal. And yet we are asked to believe that an Indian variant of this myth, closely resembling one current in Persia ages before Christ, is wholly or partly borrowed from the Christian Gospels, canonical and apocryphal.

I have not seen any detailed statement of what elements in Krishnaism are supposed by Christians to be taken from the apocryphal gospels; but more than one item in these is obviously borrowed from prior myths. Thus the story of the God being born in a cave¹ is anticipated in the case of Hermes and Dionysos, and in the cave-worships of Adonis and Mithra.² But further, the account of Jesus as being chosen king by his playfellows,³ is clearly based on or akin to the Cyrus legend, above recapitulated; and the various accounts of his games with his comrades, which seem to be regarded as having suggested the Gopi revels of Krishna, are similarly indicated in Herodotus; the killing of a boy by Jesus⁴ being mildly paralleled in the chastising of a boy by Cyrus, as again more completely in the killing of an Egyptian by Moses.⁵ What is the precise historic relation between the Krishna and the Cyrus⁶ legends is still uncertain, though the connexion is undoubtedly close;⁷ but on any view the Christian claim is out of the question. The obviously mythical Christian story of the massacre of the innocents by Herod⁸ was doubtless concocted by blending the legend of the child massacre by

¹ Protevangelion, xii, 14; 1 Infancy, i, 6-20; xii, 14.

² See the present writer's lecture on "Mithraism", in *Time*, April, 1889, p. 426.

³ 1 Infancy, xviii, 1, 7.

⁴ 1 Infancy, xix, 24; 2 Inf. ii, 9.

⁵ Exodus, ii, 12.

⁶ This name, so much altered by our pronouncing the "C" as "S", is in the Greek (*Kyros*, *Küros*) and the Persian *Cosroe* (perhaps from *Coresh*, the Sun) sufficiently like Krishna to be at least as capable of connexion with that as the name Christ.

⁷ "As Laios [father of *Œdipus*] in the Theban myth is the enemy, *Dasyu*, of the devas or bright Gods, so is *Astyages* only a Græcised form of *Ashadag*, the *Azidahaka* or biting snake of Hindu legend and the *Zohak* of the epic of *Firdusi*." Cox, "Mythology of the Aryan Nations", p. 324.

⁸ As a sample of the fashion in which the cause of Christianity has been maintained in this country, I may cite the old statement of the

Pharaoh¹ with the legend of the quasi-Messianic, doom-escaping, and finally crucified Cyrus, who stood high in Jewish esteem as a liberator of the captive race and a believer in their God;² and adding the prophecy of Zoroaster.³ The item of the God being hastily transported or born on a journey, again, is plainly a phase of the universal and presumably astronomical myth; and though the myth-necessity of taking Jesus to Bethlehem might account for that detail, the flight into Egypt is mythically gratuitous. In the old stories, Mandanê comes from Persia to be delivered in Media; Rhea goes to bear Zeus in Crete; Latona wanders far to bear Apollo, and Themis⁴ nurses him; Isis wanders, Demeter wanders; Juno goes "far away" from Zeus to conceive and bear Typhon;⁵ Hagar goes into the wilderness to bear Ishmael; the daughter of Phlegyas follows her roving father far to bear Æsculapius;⁶ the mother of the deified Apollonius of Tyana is told in a dream to go into a meadow, and there she is delivered of her child;⁷ and in the Buddha legend, Maya (who becomes pregnant at the age of forty-five, a period about as late for India as that of the pregnancy of Sarah would be for Easterns) bears her holy child under a palm-tree (as Latona bears Apollo,⁸ and as Mary does Jesus in the Koran)⁹ on her way to her father's house.¹⁰

Rev. Mr. Maurice ("Hist. of Hindostan," ii, 298-9) that the argument of Origen with Celsus shows that the Jews of that day did not dispute the story of the massacre. The fact is that Origen explicitly says (i, 61) that "the Jew of Celsus" denies the story.

¹ Exod., i, 15-22.

² Ezra i; iii, 7; iv, 3; v, 13; vi, 3; Isaiah xlv, 28; xlv, 1; Daniel vi, 28; etc.

³ 1 Infancy, iii, 1.

⁴ Homeric "Hymn to Apollo", 124; Callimachus, as cited.

⁵ "Hymn to Apollo", 326-331. ⁶ Pausanias, ii, 26.

⁷ Philostratus' "Life of Apollonius", i, 5. Compare the odd legend of the Epidaurians near the temple of Æsculapius, whose women till the time of Antonine must be delivered in the open air (Pausanias, ii, 27).

⁸ "Hymn to Apollo", 117; Theognis, l. 5; Callimachus, "Hymn to Delos," l. 208; Pliny, Nat. Hist. xiv, 44.

⁹ Surā xix,— "Mary". Rodwell's trans. 1861, p. 129.

¹⁰ Professor Rhys Davids, who, with M. Senart's work before him, cannot yet recognise the mythic elements in the Buddha legend, treats this episode as historic ("Buddhism", p. 26); and even alleges that it was "in accordance with custom" that Maya went to be delivered in her father's house. His book is in this regard pre-scientific.

Of course there are variations. Maya dies, and Buddha is suckled by her sister, as we have seen so many of the Greek Gods were suckled by nurses; whereas Mary lives and keeps her child; but when Professor Weber assumes that the carrying of Krishna across the river is borrowed from the "Christophoros" legend, he not only overlooks the mythological significance of the river, elsewhere mentioned by himself, but the whole legend of Cyrus, which presents the close parallel of the herdsman's wife being delivered at the same time as Mandanê, as Yasoda bears a child simultaneously with Devaki. And, as he himself points out twice in his treatise,¹ the river figures in the Krishnaite ritual as the serpent or "serpent-prince", Kaliya, a motive not found in the gospels. On the other hand, however, when the Professor would derive from the third Gospel the item of Nanda's journey to Mathurâ to pay his taxes, we are entitled to meet him with the converse proposition that here at least it is the Christian Gospel that borrows from the Hindu drama.

The gospel story of Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem to be taxed under the edict of Augustus is obviously myth: there was no such practice in the Roman world; and in any case Galilee was still independently governed by Herod-Antipas when Quirinius went to tax Judea. Only the late third Gospel tells the story: the narrative in Matthew, added late as it was to the original composition, which obviously began at what is now the third chapter, has no hint of the taxing, but implies that Joseph and Mary lived at Bethlehem; the Gospel of Mary gives the visit without the taxing; and so loosely was the myth credited that in the Protevangelion (xii, 1) the statement is that it was decreed "that all the Jews should be taxed, who were of Bethlehem in Judea". In that story, Jesus is born on the journey, in the cave, three miles from Bethlehem (xii, 5); and it is after being taken from the cave that he is laid by his mother at Bethlehem "in an ox-manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (xvi, 2).² Now, if the Krishna legend is clearly

¹ *Ueber die Krishnajanmâshtamî*, pp. 249, 280. It is further noteworthy that the Yamunâ (*i.e.*, the Jumna) has long had the poetic name of *Kâlindî*, = "daughter of Kalinda", which last is a name of the sun (Wilson, "Theatre of the Hindus," 1835, i, 302; ii, 90).

² In the "History of Joseph the Carpenter", which follows Luke

bound up with the long pre-Christian legend of Cyrus, why should we here suppose that its taxing-journey motive is borrowed from Christianity, instead of *vice versa*? The latter is plainly the reasonable hypothesis. In the Purâna story, Vasudeva, crossing the river Yamunâ, whose waters are stilled and lowered, with the babe Krishna in his arms, sees on the bank "Nanda and the rest, who had come hither to bring tribute due to Kansa".¹ The Bhagavat Purâna version "more consistently makes Vasudeva find Nanda and the rest fast asleep in their houses; and subsequently describes their bringing tribute or tax (*Kara*) to Kansa".² Again, in the Vishnu Purâna, the liberated Vasudeva goes "to the waggon of Nanda";³ and in the Bhâgavat he "does not quit Mathurâ, but goes to the halting ground of Nanda, who has come to that city to pay his taxes". On the exhortation of Vasudeva to go, "Nanda and the other cowherds, their goods being placed in their waggons, and their taxes having been paid to the king, returned to their village". Here is a detailed and circumstantial narrative, which, with its variations, we may with considerable confidence assume to have formed part of those dramatic representations of the birth of Krishna which, on the evidence of Patanjali's Commentary, are established as having flourished before our era. The Hindu story is detailed and dramatic, though of course grafted on a myth motive: the Christian story, given in one only, and that the latest, of the Synoptics, is either a mere myth-echo or is introduced in order to give a basis for the mythical birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, which the second Gospel, the fourth, and the first as it originally stood, do not assert at all. On what explanation can we fall back save that the knowledge of the Indian religious drama had been conveyed to Egypt or Syria, either by travelling Hindus or by Westerns who visited India; and that the compilers of the third Gospel got it in that way? How should such a hopeless story have been invented for such a purpose if the hint were not already in circulation?

for the enrolment story, Mary brings forth Jesus "in Bethlehem, in a cave near the tomb of Rachel" (ch. vii).

¹ Vishnu Purâna, Wilson's trans., p. 503.

² *Id.* Note by Wilson.

³ *Id.*, p. 506.

As for the old attempt of the self-frustrative Maurice¹ to derive the item of Devaki's imprisonment by Kansa within seven gates, from the Christian legend, preserved by the Mohammedans,² that Mary during her maidenhood was guarded by Zacharias in the sanctuary within seven doors, the answer here is still more easy. M. Senart³ without any thought of Maurice's contention, of which probably he never heard, gives a Hindu antecedent for the story in an utterance of Indra in the Vedas: "Being still in the breast of my mother, I saw the birth of all the devas: a hundred fortresses of brass enveloped me; I escaped with violence in the form of a falcon" (Rig Veda, iv, 27, 1). And we may further point to the close parallel in the Cyrus legend,⁴ in which Astyages puts his daughter under a guard, just as Kansa does his sister Devaki; and to the familiar myth of the imprisonment of Danaë in the brazen tower. Is it likely that the Hindu imagination would need to come to Christianity for the detail of the seven gates? Is it not much more likely that the Christian-Mohammedan legend was derived from the Hindu drama? But indeed this, like so many other details of the myth, may well have come westward with the Aryan race; it may have been pre-Aryan; and it may point mythically to the seven planets of ancient astronomy. Alcmena, who with her husband Amphitryon had come away from her own home,⁵ like so many other mothers of Gods, bears Hercules to Jupiter and the twin Iphiclus to Amphitryon in seven-gated Thebes;⁶ and a similar myth may have been taught in the Dionysiak, the Mithraic, the Osirian, or any other mysteries. Of myth there is no "original", save mankind's immemorial dream.

XII.

After what has been thus far seen of the correspondences between the Christian legends and prior myths, it is unnecessary to go at great length into the exposition

¹ "History of Hindostan", ii, 314.

² Sale's "Koran", note on chap. iii (ed. 1734, p. 39 b).

³ *Essai sur la Légende du Buddha*, p. 314.

⁴ Herodotus, i, 108.

⁵ Hesiod, "Shield of Hercules", 1.

⁶ *Id.*, 49.

of such a plainly mythical detail as the birth in a stable, which corresponds with, and is thought by Christians to have suggested, the legend of the placing of Krishna in a basket, and even, apparently, his upbringing among the Gopîs. We have seen that an orthodox English Sanskritist identifies the basket with the Gospel manger; and Professor Weber lays stress¹ on the representation of the birth of Krishna in a cow-shed in the elaborate and dramatic ritual service of the Krishna Birth-Festival, which here departs from the Purânic legend, that making the birth take place in Kansa's fortress. On this head a sufficient answer is given out of hand by M. Senart :

“The confusion, in certain sources, of the *sûtikâ-griha* (lying-in room) with a *gokula*, a stable, contrary to the strict details of the recital, seems to him [Weber] one more sign of Christian imitation. But it must be remembered that the *sûtikâ-griha* must, in the terms of the ritual, contain not only Devakî with her son and Vasudeva, but also, and all together, the images of the shepherds, of the servants of Kansa, the guards of Devakî, of the Apsaras and the armed Dânavas, of Yasoda and Rohini, without reckoning the representations of all the exploits attributed to the child Krishna [Weber, pp. 268, 280, ff.]. The intention then was not to give a faithful picture of the facts reported in the legend, but to group in a single frame all the personages included in it. How, on that footing, could separation be made of the new-born and the mother, or distinction between the prison and the dwelling of the shepherd? And of what weight is the novelty, illogical if it be, of the arrangement? The idea of representing the young God at the breast of his mother is really too simple to prove anything: there are not wanting examples of it in the religious representations of the Greeks.”²

But not only is the suckling motive, as we previously saw, pre-Christian: the items of the basket-manger and the stable are equally so. Not only is the Greek *liknon*, or twig basket, used to this day for corn and for cradling children, but we know that the infant Bacchus, in the processions of his cult, was represented among the Greeks as being carried in such a basket, which again is represented as being the cradle of Hermes³

¹ Treatise cited, p. 269.

² *Essai*, p. 335. Compare our preceding Section X, § 1, and K. O. Müller's "Ancient Art and its Remains", Eng. tr., p. 493.

³ ἱερὼ ἐνὶ λίκνῳ, "in the sacred basket". Hom. "Hymn to Hermes", 21.

and of Jupiter.¹ In the ancient Greek lexicon of Hesychius (which at this point the Christians certainly did not interpolate, though they did so at others) the word *Λικνίτης* is defined as *ἐπίθετον Διονύσου ἀπὸ τῶν λίκνων, ἐν οἷς τὰ παιδία κοιμῶνται*, "an epithet of Dionysos, from the *liknons* in which children are cradled".² Now if, as our Christian apologist argues, a basket is a manger (as it doubtless is in the East), it clearly follows on his own reasoning that the Christian story is derived from the previous Dionysiak cultus. In actual fact we find the God-Child represented, on a sarcophagus in the Catacombs, as cradled in a basket, standing under a shed, with an ox and an ass looking on at his feet.³ This bas-relief, which includes (apparently) the father and the mother, and three figures coming with gifts, is claimed as Christian by Christian scholars, who see in it the adoration of the Magi. It has been argued, on the other hand,⁴ that the sculpture is really Mithraic; a view I am much inclined to share. But in any case, Christian or Mithraic, this bas-relief, which probably belongs to the fourth century, proves that a God-Child was early represented as lying swaddled in a basket, with an ox and an ass looking on, in circumstances which irresistibly suggest the Gospel legend of the birth of Jesus; and that legend is thus clearly imitative of, for one thing, the old Greek usage of carrying in a basket the infant Dionysos, one of whose favorite animals is the ass. The cradle of Dionysos is a "long basket"⁵—exactly the description of that in the scene in the Catacomb sculpture. And if it be argued that the

¹ *Λίκνω ἐνὶ χρυσεῷ*, "in a golden basket". Callimachus, "Hymn to Jupiter," 48.

² Compare Liddell and Scott, *s. v.* *λικνίτης*, *λικνον*, and *λικνοφόρος*.

³ See the reproduction in Northcote and Brownlow's "Roma Sotteranea", ed. 1879, ii, 258.

⁴ By an able Dutch rationalist, Dr. H. Hartogh Heijs van Zouteveen, in his "Over den Oorsprong der Godsdienstige Denkbeelden", p. 56, citing Nork's *Mythen der alten Persen*, which I have not been able to see. But the point is put in Nork's *Die Weihnachts und Osterfeier erklärt aus dem Sonnencultus der Orientalen*, 1838, p. 30.

⁵ Smith's Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Ant., ed. 1849, p. 411.—Art. *Dionysia*. It is not clear to me that this is the *mystica vannus Iacchi*, as would seem to be implied by Liddell and Scott, and as is asserted by Müller ("Ancient Art," as cited, p. 494). The "mystic winnowing fan" was indeed a basket, but was it not the *Kaneon* of the *Canephorae*?

stable story is something special to Christianity, the answer is that it is one of the oldest motives in Aryan mythology. The frequency with which Greek and Indian deities are associated with cows is sufficient to indicate to any student unmesmerised by religion that a nature myth underlies every case.¹ That the cow is the foremost myth-animal in the Vedas, nobody disputes. The clouds, the firmament, the moon, the earth, all have that aspect in turn; and to the last the idea holds its ground. In the Vishnu Purâna the clouds, the "cattle of Indra", "deluge the earth with milk", and "the cows and the bulls bellow as loud as roaring clouds";² and the cow is to the Hindu to-day as sacred as ever, and preserves its cultus. But the myth of cow and stable spread world-wide with the race, so that we find the solar Hercules and Mercury fabled as living with shepherds or dealing with cows; and the thievish "night-awating" Mercury, who makes himself black with ashes,³ and who on the evening of the day of his birth steals the (cloud-) cows of the Day-God Apollo,⁴ (who himself was a cowherd⁵) was just such a figure as the black Krishna, playing among the cows with the cowherds, untrammelled by commonplace moral principles. So have we seen the solarised Cyrus playing among the ox-stalls of his foster-father's home. In the quasi-Homeric "Hymn to Venus", again, the love-sick Goddess comes to Anchises "in the stalls", while the shepherds and the cows and sheep are absent; and he disrobes her; but when these return she breathes sleep into her lover and herself puts on beautiful garments. And as we come nearer Christianity the plot thickens. In the worship of Isis, the sacred Cow (herself a virgin, supernaturally imprègnated by a flash of lightning or by the rays of the Moon⁶)

¹ In Norse cosmogony a cow plays an important part in the creation of man (Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology", Stallybrass' trans., ii, 559. Cf. p. 665). ² Wilson's trans., pp. 525, 529.

³ Callimachus, "Hymn to Artemis".

⁴ Homeric "Hymn to Hermes", 22, ff. It is noteworthy that in ancient sculpture, as in the Hymn, the child Mercury is represented as lying in *swaddling-clothes*, defending himself from the charge of cattle-stealing, and as "cattle-stealer in the cradle" (Müller, "Anc. Art," as cited, p. 487). Here we have the swaddled and cradled child-God, the Greek *Logos*, figured in connexion with cattle. J.

⁵ Iliad, xxi, 446-8.

⁶ Herodotus, iii, 28; Plutarch, "Isis and Osiris", c. 43.

was carried seven times round the temple upon the eve of the winter solstice,¹ when the sun-child rose from the lotus;² and cow-headed Isis bears the sun-God Horus, as in Indian legend the sun is born of the cows.³ And still closer comes the parallel. We know from Macrobius⁴ that the Egyptian priests exhibited a babe to the people on a certain day as being the new-born Sun-God; and from Plutarch we know that the infant Horus was figured on the lotos at the time of the winter solstice. But there is documentary evidence that in the Egyptian system, a Babe-Savior was in pre-Christian times worshipped in a manger or crib, in connexion with a virgin mother. The proof is furnished by the remarkable record in the Christian *Chronicon Paschale* (formerly but improperly called *Alexandrium*): "The same Jeremiah gave a sign to the Egyptian priests that their idols would be shaken and overthrown by a *child Savior*, born of a virgin, and laid in a manger (*φάρμη*). Wherefore they still deify a child-carrying virgin, and adore a child in a manger. And to the enquiry of *King Ptolemy* as to the cause, they answered that they had received this mystery from a holy prophet who gave it to their fathers."⁵ The *Chronicon Paschale* dates from the seventh century, and would not by itself suffice to prove the cultus alleged, seeing that a Christian might—though this in the circumstances would be extremely unlikely—invent such a story to support his own faith, that being evidently the purpose with which the chronicler cites it. But read in connexion with Macrobius and Plutarch, and the ritual of the birth of Amunoteph, it may be taken as certainly resting on a usage in ancient Egyptian religion. The Virgin and Child must of course have been Isis and Horus, whose worship was much older than Jeremiah. And the expression "Child Saviour" clearly points to a child-worshipping ceremonial, and not to the Christian idea of salvation by the crucified adult. It is needless to remark on the possibility that the ox-and-ass myth came from the same quarter, seeing that the temples of the sacred bull, Apis, and of the sacred cow, Isis, were already mystically, and

¹ Last cit., c. 52. ² c. 11.

³ "Zoological Mythology", i, 51.

⁴ *Saturnalia*, i, 18.

⁵ Migne, *Patrolog. Curs. Comp., Series. Gr.*, T. xcii, col. 385.

in the former case literally, stables. But for the ox and stable there is yet another precedent. In the worship of Mithra, on the testimony of a Christian writer,¹ the lowing of the sacred heifers was part of a festival ceremony, evidently that of Christmas eve. Now, it has been shown² that in a multitude of points the Christian myths are simply based on previous ritual, as Professor Smith says myths so often are: shall we then suppose that this primitive myth of the Christian God-born-in-a-stable, which only after a time passed current even with his own worshippers, and which early takes the form of representing him as being born between cow and ass, whose cries, in the popular fable, hide his,³ as the cries of the infant Zeus were covered in order to prevent Kronos from hearing them⁴—that this is anything but a variation of the myth-motive of pagan antiquity?

That the ox and ass in the Mithraic-Christian birth-scene have a mythic significance is very certain. They are not merely inmates of the "stable"; they are from of old symbolic animals: and they were the two of all the talking beasts who had the widest prophetic reputation.⁵ The bull or ox, again, is one of the symbol-animals of the Sun-God; while the ass is not only of phallic repute, but "carries mysteries",⁶ is constantly associated with the Sun-God Dionysos, and is probably at bottom the night-sun,⁷ as is Dionysos himself, in contrast to Apollo, the day-sun.⁸ In the sacred processions of Isis, the ox and the ass were the principal, if not the only, animals, the latter being sometimes adorned with wings.⁹ Now in the Krishna ritual,

¹ Firmicus, *De Errore*, v. See the lecture on Mithraism above cited, p. 427.

² *Ib.*, pp. 417—428.

³ "Zoological Mythology", i, 361.

⁴ Callimachus, "Hymn to Jupiter".

⁵ For ox and cow, see Livy, iii, 10; xxiv, 10; xxvii, 11: xxviii, 11; xxxv, 21; xliii, 13. For the ass, see Plutarch's Life of Antony, where the ass's name, *Nikon*, "Victory", predicts to Augustus the triumph of Actium; and the Hebrew legend of Balaam—two widely circulated stories. Cp. Gubernatis, *Zool. Myth.*, i, 247, 398. For the talking horse, see Grimm, as cited, i, 392.

⁶ Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 160; and note in Bohn trans.

⁷ Gubernatis, vol. i, ch. 3, *passim*.

⁸ Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i, 18.

⁹ Apuleius, "Golden Ass", B. xi.

the ox and the ass figure very much as they do in the birth scene of the Catacombs: and Professor Weber decides that this is one of the details borrowed from Christianity. On that view, it would be borrowed from the Apocryphal Gospel of Matthew, or "Pseudo"-Matthew as it is commonly styled. The narrative of that document, late in its present form, is doubtless in part based on much older originals, and challenges attention by its peculiarity:—

"And on the third day after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the most blessed Mary went forth out of the cave, and entering a stable, placed the child in the stall, and the ox and the ass adored him. Then was fulfilled that which was said by Isaiah the prophet, saying: The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib. The very animals therefore, the ox and the ass, having him in their midst incessantly adored him. Then was fulfilled that which was said by Abakuk the prophet, saying, Between two animals thou art made manifest. In the same place Joseph remained with Mary three days."

The reference to Habakkuk (iii, 2) is not to the Hebrew as commonly rendered, but to the Septuagint, in which by a slight variation in the vocalisation of one Hebrew word and the spelling of another, the words "years" and "make alive" (the marginal reading in the Authorised Version is "preserved alive", the text reading "revive") are made to read as "two living creatures",¹ so that we have the Greek version ἐν μέσῳ δύο ζώων γνωσθήσῃ, "between two living creatures thou shalt be known". Here then rises the interesting question, Does the Septuagint proceed upon an Egyptian or other version of the ox-and-ass myth? Let us see what the commentators have to say:—

"There is a double reading of these words in the Septuagint version of them, and both very different from the Hebrew text. The one is, *in the midst of two lives thou shalt be known*. . . . The other, by a change of the accent, is, *in the midst of two animals thou shalt be known*; so the Arabic version. Theodoret makes mention of both, and inclines to the former; 'some (he says) by two animals understand angels and men; some the incorporeal powers near the divine Glory, the cherubim and seraphim: others the Jews and Babylonians; but to me it

¹ Note in the "Anti-Nicene Library" ed. of the Apocryphal Gospels, p. 23.

seems that the prophet does not say animals, but lives, the present and future. . . . ' The latter reading is followed by many of the ancients, whose different senses are given by Jerome on the place; some interpreting them of the Son and Spirit, by whom the Father is made known; others of the two cherubim in Exodus, and of the two seraphim in Isaiah; and there were some who understood them of the two Testaments, the Old and New . . . ; and others of Christ's being crucified between two thieves . . . ; but besides these different sentiments many of the ancients concluded from hence that Christ lay in the manger between two animals, the ox and the ass, and to which they refer in their ancient hymns. [*Cognovit bos et asinus Quod puer erat Dominus*]. . . ."¹

The rest is modern Talmudism—the ancient “demoniacal possession” of verbalism over again. Nothing is to be gathered save that the Septuagint somehow adopted the reading of “two creatures”, no one clearly knowing why. In the circumstances it is idle to offer conjectures. All that is clear is that the context in the Septuagint: “thou shalt be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; thou shalt be manifested when the time is come”, was well fitted to serve as a Messianic prophecy for the Hellenic Jews. But that a merely accidental reading or misreading of the Hebrew text could be the *origin* of the myth of the stable and the adoring ox and ass, as later found in the apocryphal Gospel, is incredible. The stable, as we have seen, was an established myth, and for some reason or reasons, the ox and ass were put in the stable. If the translator of Habakkuk in the Septuagint was influenced by an Egyptian or Oriental mystery-doctrine, then we trace to pre-Christian times the entrance of the ox-and-ass myth into Judaic channels: if, on the other hand, the “two animals” was a quite fortuitous reading, we are left to what we otherwise know of the mythological standing of the animals in question.

And the passage in Pseudo-Matthew is singularly suggestive of just such a process of legend-making from old ritual as has been above contended for. Here, as in the Protevangelion, the laying-in-the-manger is entirely dissociated from the birth, and is therefore the more con-

¹ Gill's “Exposition of the Old Testament”, Doudney's ed. iv, 777.

fidently to be looked upon as a piece of narrative framed to meet a purpose; just as the pragmatic account of the lightless cave is evidently intended to have a doctrinal significance. The *need* for such a doctrine lay in the pre-existence of cave-worship, especially in Mithraism, from which Christianity so largely borrowed in other regards: the need for the laying in a manger in presence of ox and ass can only be explained in a similar way. Thus established, the myth would easily reappear in the form of the animation by the child Jesus of figures of oxen and asses,¹ and in the appearance of oxen and asses in the fabulous cortege of the family in Egypt.²

Is it then reasonable, is it plausible, to assume that this certainly derivative legend, never accepted as canonical, suddenly captured the Hindus late in our era in its Christianised form? Are we not, on the contrary, driven irresistibly to ask, Is not the Christian ox-and-ass legend one of immemorial Aryan antiquity?

And here, at least, the Hindu sacred books and ritual offer something like a decisive answer. To begin with, Agni in the Rig Veda is constantly addressed as a new-born infant, he being primarily the Fire, which is generated afresh every time the *aranis*, the fire-sticks, are rubbed together, which would seem to have been done for religious purposes (somewhat as the sacred fire was rekindled in Mexico) for ages after that laborious process had become practically unnecessary. Thus, for one thing, the ever new-born Agni of the Veda is associated with the crossed sticks, which on one theory are the origin of the cross symbol. But not only is Agni repeatedly adored as the new-born by his worshippers, he is held to be similarly adored by the forces of nature, as is the luminous Christ-child in the Protevangelion (c. 13), and by the Devas or divinities in general:—

“Agni, the bright-bodied, as soon as born, fills all dwellings with shining light. When born, thou, O Agni, art the embryo of heaven and earth, variegated, infantine, thou dispersest the nocturnal glooms. . . . Therefore the genetrices (of all things, the herbs) the cherishers (of all) with food, wait on thee who art the augmentser of food, with the sacrificial viands.”³

¹ 1 Infancy, xv.

² Pseudo-Matthew c. 19.

³ Wilson's trans. of Rig Veda Sanhita, vi (1888), pp. 1-2.

“The Vedic Gods render homage to Agni when he is born, and when he passes resplendent from his parents the *aranis*.”¹

“He [Agni] diffuses happiness in a dwelling like a son newly born.”²

“He [Agni] it is whom the two sticks have engendered like a new-born babe.”³

“Thou [Agni] art born unobstructed of two mothers [*i.e.* either the fire-sticks or the heaven and earth] . . . they have augmented thee with butter.”⁴

And this transparent infant-myth is curiously interwoven with the other primeval myths of cow and cave.

“Agni, as soon as born, blazes brightly, destroying the *Dasyus*” [demons] “and (dispersing) the darkness by his lustre: he has discovered the cows, the waters, the sun.”⁵

“In this world our mortal forefathers departed after instituting the sacred rite, when, calling upon the dawn, they extricated the milk-yielding kine, concealed among the rocks in the darkness (of the cave).

“Rending the rocks they worshipped (Agni) and other (sages) taught everywhere their (acts): unprovided with the means of extricating the cattle, they glorified the author of success, whence they found the light, and were thus enabled (to worship him) with holy ceremonies.

“Devoted (to Agni) those leaders (of sacred rites) with minds intent upon (recovering) the cattle, forced open, by (the power) of divine prayer, the obstructing compact solid mountain, confining the cows, a cow-pen full of kine. . . .

“The scattered darkness was destroyed: the firmament glowed with radiance; then the sun stood above the undecaying mountains, beholding all that was right or wrong among mankind.”⁶

This last extra-obscure passage well exemplifies the frequent difficulty, avowed by the best scholars,⁷ of making out what the Vedas mean—a difficulty further deducible from a comparison of the renderings of Wilson and Langlois with those of later German translators. But the association of Agni with cattle and cave seems certain from that and the previous extract, and there is no great obscurity in these further passages:—

“Both the auspicious ones (day and night) wait upon him

¹ Senart, *Essai*, p. 292, citing Rig Veda, vi, 7, 4.

² Wilson's trans., i, 184.

³ *Id.* iii, 253-4.

⁴ *Id.* iii, 256-7.

⁵ *Id.* iii, 261.

⁶ *Id.* iii, 115-6.

⁷ See Muir, “Original Sanskrit Texts”, ii, 214.

[Agni] like two female attendants, as lowing kine (follow their calves).”¹

“The night and the day, mutually effacing each other’s complexion, give nourishment, combined together, to one infant, [Agni] who, radiant, shines between earth and heaven.”²

Of these two extracts, the first (or one closely similar—it is difficult to trace passages with certainty in the translations) is thus rendered in the metrical version of H. Grassmann³: “To thee, Agni, shout for joy (*jauchzen*) Night and the Dawn, as in the stalls cows cry to calves.” Is it going too far to surmise that, seeing Agni himself, Fire-God and Sun-God, was in the Veda said to have been, “in the olden time, the bull and the cow”,⁴ the symbols of the Night and the Morning, here represented as saluting him, may even then have been the Ox and Ass?

It is idle to seek to force the solution of such a problem; and in so far as the Vedic evidence goes I leave the matter to the judgment of the reader, merely adding that when we compare the notion of the instantaneous growth of the new-born Agni (who “as soon as born fills heaven and earth with light”, and “*fractures, as he advances, the solid cloud*”;⁵ and who is further the “archer” and the “lord of night”⁶), the Vedic address to Indra as having “discovered the cows hidden in the cave”,⁷ and the legend that these cows were stolen by the Asuras⁸—when we compare these data with the Greek myth of the infant night-awaiting cattle-stealing Mercury, it is difficult to doubt that the latter fable derives from the Aryan original preserved in the Veda. Whether the “two mothers” had anything to do with the common myth of the suckling of the child-God by another than she who bore him, we need not here inquire. But as regards the Indian origin of the ox-and-ass myth we get a fresh light when we connect the Vedic myths of the infant Agni (who, by the way, was specially invoked at the vernal equinox⁹) with the Krishnaite ritual of the Birth Festival. In the *Jayanti* form of the festival, *the erecting of a shed*, the watching by it through the night, and *the distribution of images*, are important

¹ Wilson’s trans. i, 246. ² *Ib.* p. 252. ³ Leipzig, 1876, p. 8.

⁴ Wilson’s trans. vi (1888), p. 11. ⁵ Wilson’s trans., iii, 120.

⁶ *Id.* i, 186, 188.

⁷ *Id.* i, 16.

⁸ *Id. ib.* Wilson’s note.

⁹ *Id.* i, 157, note.

items.¹ Now, in the Catacomb sarcophagus, the basket containing the child, and the ox and ass, stand *under a sloping shed-roof*, standing on two posts, while none of the other figures do. Here there is neither cave nor inn-stable: there is only a scenic shed, exactly answering to the shed of the Krishnaite ritual; and to the right of that two palm trees, between which the mother sits. Remarkably enough, one of those trees *bends*, as do the palms in the Koran legend of Mary, and in the Buddhist legend of Maya. The trees clearly cannot be reconciled with cave or stable. How then came this shed to appear in early Christian (as is supposed) sacred art, unauthorised either by the generally received cave legend, or by the story in the third Gospel? What possible conclusion is open to us save that it represents a usage in the dramatic ritual of some other cultus; and that it was this usage that was in view in the peculiar version of the story in the Apocryphal Gospels? And what ritual usage do we know of that comes so close as that of Krishnaism? Either the scene is Christian or it is Mithraic. If the latter, we have a phase of complete identity between the Persian and the Hindu cult, which need not surprise us; and in that case Mithraism would be the channel through which the ox-and-ass, stable-, and manger-myth came into Christianity. But if we suppose the bas-relief to be strictly Christian, then it must be held to be a close imitation of a ritual usage previously existing in India—the usage which survives in our own day. For the ass appears in Indian mythology as early as the Vedas, where already he has two characters, divine and demoniacal, being at one time the symbol of Indra, Krishna's predecessor, and at another his enemy.² As the friend of the black and once demoniac Krishna, he corresponds, with reversal of color, to the ass of Egypt, who was the symbol of the evil Typhon.³ Again, curiously, one of his Vedic epithets is "childlike".⁴

And if borrowing there were on the Hindu side—which will hardly now be argued—it could perfectly well have been pre-Christian. The ass might be the ass of Typhon,

¹ Weber, p. 223.

² Zool. Myth. ii, 370-4.

³ Plutarch, "Isis and Osiris", cc. 30, 31.

⁴ Zool. Myth. ii, 364.

“who was the chief god of the Semites in Egypt”¹ though in ill-repute with the Egyptians; and it may have been from this source that the Christians derived it. It is also possible that they made a not uncommon confusion between the ass of Typhon and the *jackal*-headed Anubis, the Egyptian Hermes, “both infernal and celestial”, who was held to represent *Time*,² and who figured as the attendant of Osiris. And when we are discussing origins, we should not forget the luminous suggestion of Volney,³ that the birth of the Sun-Child between the ox and the ass is simply a fable based on the fact that in the zodiacal celestial sphere the sun would come at the winter solstice between the Bull and the Ursa Major, sometimes represented by the ancients as a boar, sometimes as the Hippopotamus, sometimes the Ass, of Typhon.

Another detail comes in to extend the proof that the Christian legend borrows from the East. In the Catacomb fresco representing the (supposed) adoration of the Virgin and child by *two* Magi, as reproduced in large and in color in De Rossi's *Imagines Selectae Deiparae Virginis*⁴ the dish tendered to the babe or mother by the right-hand man bears a *small human figure*. What is the Christian explanation of that? What hypothesis is more likely than that this is one of the Krishnaite images?

That, of course, remains a hypothesis. And, indeed, we are bound to keep in view that the manifold Egyptian ritual *may* have included just such a ceremony as that under notice. In the procession of Isis, as described by Apuleius, the ass is accompanied by a feeble old man—exactly the aged Joseph of the Apocryphal Gospels. And we know that the solarised Amunoteh III, who here seems to typify customary royal ceremony, figures in Egyptian sculpture as supernaturally announced, conceived, and born, very much as is Jesus in Christian legend.⁵ The messenger-God, Thoth, announces to the

¹ Prof. Robertson Smith, “Religion of the Semites”, p. 449. Cp. Tiele, “Hist. of the Egypt. Relig.,” Eng. tr., p. 48.

² “Plutarch, “Isis and Osiris,” c. 44; Sharpe, “Egyptian Mythology”, pp. 8-9.

³ *Les Ruines*, note on ch. xxii, § 13

⁴ Rome, 1863, pl. v. Cp. “Roma Sotteranea”, as cited, ii, 170.

⁵ See the woodcut and explanation in Sharpe's “Egyptian Mythology” pp. 18-19.

maid-mother the coming birth; the Spirit-God Kneph miraculously impregnates her; and the priests kneel and adore the new-born babe, holding up the cross of life. This must have been a matter of ritual. In the Catacomb bas-relief and frescoes, again, the adorers, the "Magi", both in the picture with two and in that with four,¹ wear the Phrygian or Mithraic cap; but instead of representing the venerable sages of modern Christian fancy, they are all young and beardless. The juvenile angel, again, exactly corresponds to that which figures in the admittedly Mithraic remains in the Catacombs, as reproduced by Father Garucci and accepted by Canons Northcote and Brownlow. On the other hand, in the fragment of the earliest dated Catacomb sarcophagus² held to be Christian, representing the ox and ass, the swaddled child, and two adorers, the men are rather of Western figure; though at the end behind them a hand appears grasping a palm tree or branch. Thus there is the suggestion of the East as well as of Western assimilation. We cannot yet decide with certainty as to the myth's line of travel; we can only decide that all Christian myth *is* an adaptation of previous myth.

The case, I think, is clear for all but pietists. The Krishna birth myth is at bottom primeval; and it is highly probable that the Birth-Festival ritual, which Professor Weber supposes to have been based on Christianity, preserves prehistoric practice. At the midnight hour of the God's birth, there is a ceremony of a "pouring out of riches"³ (*ein Guss Reichthums*), which it is a wonder the Professor does not hold to represent the offerings of the Magi. In all probability it *does* point to the *origin* of that myth. The "riches" are symbolic, an offering of melted butter and sugar—surely the "nectar and pleasant ambrosia" with which Themis fed the babe Apollo;⁴ the milk and honey on which Bacchus and the child Jupiter⁵ were nourished; the "butter and honey" that in the

¹ "Roma Sotteranea," as cited, ii, 169: *Imag. Sel.* pl. iii.

² It bears the names of the consuls of 343, A. C. See the cut in "Roma Sotteranea", ii, 235.

³ Treatise cited, p. 299.

⁴ Hom. Hymn. 124.

⁵ Callimachus, "Hymn to Jupiter," 49; and note in Bohn trans., p. 123.

Hebrew prophet¹ are named as the food of the child Immanuel to be born of the "virgin" of that time, and that were used in their rites (with milk for butter) by the early Christians, especially in the "mystery of infants", till the Council of Trullo (*i.e.*, Constantinople, in 691) forbade the usage,² doubtless because its pagan origin was recognised. And surely the ancient adoration of the ever-new-born Agni was the origin of the offering of butter to the new-born Krishna. Does not the whole mass of data go to suggest that a more or less dramatic ritual has preserved a Babe-Sun-God worship from immemorial antiquity? In pre-Christian India it became actual drama, which the Festival ritual, with its multitude of images, appears to preserve as far as may be; and I am much inclined to suspect that the form of part of the Protevangelion (xiii, xiv) comes of a semi-dramatic ritual, as the adoration of the Magi must have done, and as the legends of the Lord's Supper and the rock-tomb burial certainly did.³ Be that how it may, the theory that Krishnaism borrowed either its myths or its rites from Christianity is now evidently enough untenable.

XIII.

The study of a few of the minor myths of Christianity in connexion with Krishnaism will be found no less instructive, no less decisive as against Christian assumptions, than the comparison of the central myth-motives of the two creeds. Always the lesson is that the mythology of Christianity was derivative; and at times, though it would be inadmissible to profess certainty, there is a curiously strong suggestion of direct Christian adoption of Hindu details. I have spoken of the item of the visit of the foster-father of Krishna to the holy city to pay his taxes, which in the Krishna myth is as it were naturally embedded in the narrative, while in the Christ myth it is grafted on loosely and precariously. But the same statement may be made

¹ Isaiah, vii, 14—15.

² Bingham's "Christian Antiquities", xv, 2, § 3 (ed. 1855, vol. v, 242-3).

³ Lecture on "Mithraism", as cited.

even more emphatically in other regards. Professor Weber¹ has assumed the priority of the "Christophoros" legend, in which St. Christopher under miraculous circumstances carries the rejuvenated Christ, the Christ-child, on his shoulders across a river by night. The Professor does not ask how it was that the idea of regarding Christ *still as a child* came to persist in the Church through so many centuries, and that only gradually did he come to be pictured as a young man, and finally as a man of middle age. We can see what preserves the child image in Krishnaism—the ancient usage of dramatic ritual, which is only partially overruled by the literary presentment of the stories of his career. Now, by far the most probable hypothesis of the origin of the Christophoros myth is that, like so many others, it was invented late to explain some dramatic or other representation—that there was a ritual in which the Christ-child, like the infant Bacchus in Greece and the infant Horus in Egypt, was carried on a man's shoulder, long before the legend of the colossal Christ-bearer was framed.

For this hypothesis we have the most convincing evidence in the plural term *Christophoroi*, found applied to martyrs in an alleged letter of the third century quoted by Eusebius.² This term every orthodox authority I have seen deduces from the epithet "Theophoros", said to have been applied to Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch; and the usual explanation is that it means "full of Christ" as Theophoros meant "full of God".³ The Bohn translator, Mr. Crusé, however, insists on the etymological meaning of the word, writing that "the martyrs were called, by a strong figure, Christophori, because they bore; and Ignatius was called Theophorus for the same reason". This, I suspect, is nearer the truth than Mr. Crusé was aware of.

¹ Here adopting a thesis of the pre-scientific Georgi—cited by Von Bohlen, *Das Alte Indien*, 1830, i, 232. Von Bohlen states that Kleuker held the Christophorus story to be of Indian origin; but I cannot find such a remark in the place cited. Kleuker did, however (*Abhandlungen*, as before cited, ii, 234), argue that it was probably the Christians who borrowed from the Hindus, and that the apocryphal Gospels show distinct traces of Indian influence.

² "Eccles. Hist.," iii, 10.

³ So, in effect, Bingham, i, 6; Riddle, "Christ. Ant.," p. 134; Migne, *ad loc.*; Smith and Cheetham's "Dict. of Christ. Antiq.," *sub voce*; etc.

The name Theophoros would never been attached to Ignatius had it not been in existence before. It literally meant, in classic usage, one "bearing or carrying a God";¹ and would naturally be applied to those who carried statues of the Gods in ceremonial or procession.² There were a score of such names in connexion with the Greek rituals. Not to speak of the soldiers and police officers called after the weapons they carried, as the *doryphoroi*, *aichmophoroi*, *mastigophoroi*, *rhabdophoroi*, etc., there were the *liknophoroi*, the women who carried the cradle-basket of Dionysos in his processions; the *kanephoroi*, women who bore sacred baskets of another sort; the *oschophoroi*, noble youths who, in the disguise of women, carried branches of vine in the festival from which came the name; the *deipnophoroi*, women who, as mothers, carried food for the youths; the *arrephoroi* (or *ersephoroi*), maidens who carried the figured peplos in the festival of Panathenaea; the *lampadophoroi*, who carried torches in the torch-races; and so on. Always the meaning is the literal *carrying* of something. Hermes with the ram on his shoulders (the admitted origin of the Christian image of the Good Shepherd³) is Hermes *Kriophoros*, the ram-bearer. Only secondarily and indirectly could the word come to have the meaning of "possessed by the God"; and the instance cited by Liddell and Scott,⁴ in which the phrase is "pains of *inspiration*", is clearly in close connexion with the primary meaning. In all probability the name Theophoros at times became a family one, just as that of Nikephoros, "Victory-bearer,"⁵ which continued to subsist long after Pagan times among Christians. The generic name *Christophoroi* must have had some solid basis than an analogy from a metaphor.

That the Christian myth of the Christ-birth is a concoction from previous myths, we have already seen; and that the borrowing was first made by way of "mystery" or ritual, the Catacomb remains go far to prove. We know too that in the Egyptian system, apart from the practice

¹ Liddell and Scott, *s. v.*, citing Æsch., Fr. 224.

² In such cases as those mentioned by Pausanias, ii, 7, 11; vii, 20, 21, etc., or in civic or royal processions.

³ See Smith and Cheetham's Dict. under "Good Shepherd".

⁴ From Æschylus, *Agam.* 1150.

⁵ For this see Athenæus, v, 27.

of carrying the new-born Sun-Child to exhibit him to the people,¹ there was a whole order of *Pastophoroi*, bearers of the *pastos*, who according to one theory bore a shawl in the mysteries of Isis and Osiris, but "according to another interpretation"—and a much more tenable one—"were so denominated from carrying, not a shawl, but a shrine or small chapel, containing the image of the God".² These *Pastophoroi* were "a numerous and important body of men", who had allotted to them a part of the Egyptian temples, called the *pastophorion*,—a term adopted by the Jews in describing the temple of Jerusalem.³ And they spread beyond Egypt, having a "college" or brotherhood at Industria, a city of Liguria.⁴ Now, it may be argued that the term Christophoroi might be jocularly applied to Christians by analogy from these and other classes with the same name-suffix; but that the Christians should have adopted it without some real reason is hardly supposable. And when we look into the admitted remains of early Christian ritual, we see at least hints of what the reason was. In early frescoes, the Christian hierophant bears a *pastos*, or a *kisté*, analogous to the sacred chest of Dionysos. They would hardly carry the serpent, as the *kisté* did; but their shrine or chest carried something. It might be, then, that this was only the sacred *host*, which to this day is "the good God" in Catholic countries. But whence then came the idea of making the mythic Christophoros, giant as he was, carry the *child* Christ? I can see no explanation save one or both of two: (1) that the persistent Pagan charge against the early Christians of eating a child in their rites⁵ rested

¹ Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i, 18. It is important to remember that Macrobius says the child is carried *ex adyto*, out of the innermost sanctuary of the temple. The *adytum* "was almost certainly in its origin a cave; indeed in Greece it was often wholly or partially subterranean, and is called *μέγαρον*, which is the Semitic *מערה* and means a cave" (Smith, "Relig. of the Semites," p. 183). Here once more the Christian myth is led up to.

² Smith's Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Antiq., art. *Pastophorus*. Ed. 1849, p. 871. Compare Apuleius ("Golden Ass," B. 11), who speaks of the *Pastophori* as carrying "the sacred images" and "breathing effigies" (Bohn trans., pp. 234-5).

³ 1 Maccabees, iv, 38.

⁴ Smith's Dict. as above, citing Maffei, *Mus. Veron.*, p. 230. Apuleius locates a college of them at Cenchrææ.

⁵ Justin Martyr, *Apol.* i, 35; ii, 14; Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* v, 1;

on a ritual custom of exhibiting or eating the baked *image* of a child,¹ a rite to which, as being a sacred mystery, the Christians were unwilling to confess;² or (2) that in the Christmas celebration a real or dummy child was actually carried in the sacred basket, just as Dionysos was in his, or as Horus was represented in Egypt, and as a child *may* have been in the rites of Mithra. And both theories are so probable that I, for one, will reject neither. The more closely we look into Christian myth, taken in connexion with the distinct records of pre-Christian ritual, the more clear does it become that the accepted notions of the rise of the cult are hopelessly wide of the facts.

Given, then, the pre-Christian existence of a child-

Athenag., Apol. c. 3; Origen, "Against Celsus", vi, 27; Min. Felix, cc. 9, 10, 30, 31; Tertullian, Apolog. cc. 7, 8, 9. On this obscure problem it has to be remembered that others than the Christians are accused of killing children in religious rites. Thus Juvenal (vi, 548-552) alleges that the Armenian and Syrian haruspices at Rome would sometimes augur from the entrails of a boy; and "according to Mohammedan accounts the Harranians in the Middle Ages annually sacrificed an infant, and boiling down its flesh, baked it into cakes, of which only freeborn men were allowed to partake" (Robertson Smith, "Religion of the Semites", p. 348, citing the *Fihrist*, and Chwolsohn). Here, too, of course, there is room for doubt. But the important fact remains that the Christians retained for their sacramental food the old name of *hostia*, "the victim"; and the Gospels all dwell on the eating and drinking of the God's body and blood with a literalness that is unintelligible on the hypothesis of mere allegory. See Matt. xxvi, 26-28; Mark xiv, 22-24; Luke xxii, 19-20; John vi, 48-58. A baked image seems the probable solution. Compare Minucius Felix, c. ix, as to the *infans farre contectus*. And that this rite, like the others, was borrowed from previous cults, is proved by a remarkable passage in Pliny as to the praise due to the Roman people for "having put an end to those monstrous rites" in which "to murder a man was to do an act of the greatest devoutness, and to eat his flesh was to secure the highest blessings of health" ("Nat. Hist.," xxx, 4). It is not clear that this refers to the Druids, mentioned in the context. Compare the point as to Mithraism in Lecture cited, pp. 421-2.

¹ Note the image on the platter of the "Magus", referred to in Sec. 12. Baked images were known in the sacrifices of the poor in antiquity (Herodotus, ii, 47); and in Mexico dough images of the God were eaten sacramentally. See H. H. Bancroft, "Native Races of the Pacific States," iii, 297-300, 389. Cp. ii, 321.

² See Tertullian, Apology, c. 7, where the denial is anything but straightforward. We may rest content with an orthodox explanation: "The method of celebrating baptism, confirmation,

carrying rite, in connexion with the Christmas festival as observed in the Egyptian and Mithraic cults, or as practised in the Dionysia; and given the adoption of this rite by Christism, the idea of making the mythic Giant Christophoros carry the Christ-child *across a river* might perhaps be grafted fortuitously on the old ritual-motive. It being necessary to have a story of the child being carried somewhere, a river was a possible enough invention. But when we are asked to believe that this legend, in which Pagan ritual was eked out with Christian fiction, so impressed the Hindus at an early period in our era that they transferred it bodily to the worship of their God Krishna, it is difficult to take the suggestion seriously. On the contrary, we are at once moved to answer that, if there was borrowing on either side, it must have been the Christians who borrowed from the religious drama or dramatic ritual of the Hindus. Once more, the carrying of the child Krishna across the mythological river by Vasudeva is naturally imbedded in the Krishna legend; while in Christian mythology it is patently alien, arbitrary, and unmotived, save in so far as it rests on the ancient epithet *Christophoros*, and the inferable usage of carrying a child or an image representing the new-born God in early Christian ritual. And, finally—what I cannot but think a noteworthy coincidence—the festival day of St. Christopher is placed in the Roman Catholic Calendar on the *25th day of July*, precisely at the time of year when in the Hindu ritual, and almost certainly in the early Hindu drama, Vasudeva would be represented as carrying Krishna across the river. Clearly the Indian *date* cannot be borrowed from the Christian: it depends on the Birth

and the eucharist; the nature and effect of these ordinances; the sublime doctrine of the Trinity; and the Creed and Lord's Prayer, were only communicated to converts about the time of their baptism. *Christians were absolutely prohibited from revealing this information to catechumens or infidels*; and whenever the early Christian writers speak on such topics (except when controversy compels them to a different course) there is usually some reserve in their manner, some reference to the peculiar knowledge of the faithful. . . . This primitive discipline is sufficient to account for the facts, that very few allusions to the liturgy or eucharistic service are found in the writings of the Fathers; and that on the more solemn part of consecration, etc., they are almost entirely silent" (Rev. W. Palmer, "Origines Liturgicæ," 4th ed. i, 14; cp. p. 33).

Festival, which is as wide as possible of the Christian Nativity. It will need some very satisfactory explanation of St. Christopher's date on other lines to destroy the surmise that it was determined by the Hindu practice.

XIV.

In an argument which so often insists on the priority of dramatic ritual to written legend, it may be well to take passing note of the state of opinion as to the origin and history of Indian drama. On that as on so many other points, Professor Weber is found surmising Greek influence, and so putting the great period of the Hindu theatre comparatively late. It is needless here to go into that question at all fully. The points for us are that in any case Hindu drama was highly developed at a period before the suggested importation of Christian legends; and that since in all early civilisations religion and drama were closely related, because originally one, there must have been an abundance of sacred drama in India before the Christian era, as there has been since. We have seen the concrete proof of this in the admitted existence of an early religious drama in which figured the demoniac Kansa as enemy of Krishna. And even if Greek influences did affect Hindu dramatic practice after the invasion of Alexander, even to the extent of bringing Western mystery-ritual into the Indian (a sufficiently unlikely thing) the fact would remain that India had these ritual elements from pre-Christian sources. But inasmuch as Professor Weber's argumentation on Indian matters is in a manner interconnected, and his theory of dramatic imitation tends to prop up his theory of religious imitation, it may be pointed out that his opinion on the dramatic question is entirely at variance with that of other distinguished Indianists. Wilson, whom Weber more than once cites in self-support on other questions, is here very emphatically opposed to him. "It is not improbable", says Weber, "that even the rise of the Hindu drama was influenced by the performance of the drama at the courts of Greek kings."¹ Says Wilson, on the other hand:

"Whatever may be the merits or defects of the Hindu

¹ Berlin lecture cited, p. 25 = *Indische Skizzen*, p. 28.

drama, it may be safely asserted that they . . . are unmixedly its own. The science of the Hindus may be indebted to modern discoveries in other regions, and their mythology may have derived legends from Paganism or Christianity; but it is impossible that they should have borrowed their dramatic compositions from the people either of ancient or modern times. . . . The Hindus, if they learned the art from others, can have been obliged alone to the Greeks or to the Chinese. A perusal of the Hindu plays will show how little likely it is that they are indebted to either, as, with the exception of a few features in common which could not fail to occur, they present characteristic varieties of conduct and construction, which strongly evidence both original design and national development."¹

I do not think anyone who reads Wilson's translations and compares them with the classic drama and; say, "Laou-Seng-Urh" in the English translation,² will have a moment's hesitation in acceding to Wilson's opinion. Nor is Lassen less emphatic. "In the oldest Buddhist writings", he points out, "a visit of play-actors is spoken of as something customary";³ and he insists again⁴ "that the dramatic art in India is a growth wholly native to the soil, without foreign influence in general or Greek in particular". The origination of Indian drama, he adds, in the former passage, "must certainly be put before the time of the second Asoka; how much earlier it is naturally impossible to say". Anyone who reads Wilson's translation of the "Mrichhakatika", "The Toy Cart", dated by him between a century B.C. and the second century A.C., will, I think, be convinced that the "origination" must be carried a very long way back. That drama really represents in some respects a further evolution—I do not say a higher pitch of achievement—than the drama of Greece; and could only have been possible after a very long process of artistic development. It has certainly not a trace of the Greek spirit:⁵ it is much more akin to the romantic drama of modern Europe.

¹ "Theatre of the Hindus", pref., pp. xi, xii.

² London, 1817. Cp. the "Brief View of the Chinese Drama" prefixed.

³ *Indische Alterthumskunde*, ii, 502. See Körösi's analysis of the Tibetan "Dulva", in "Asiatic Researches", xx, 50, the testimony cited by Lassen.

⁴ *Ind. Alt.*, ii, 1157.

⁵ The remark of Donaldson ("Theatre of the Greeks", 7th ed.,

For the rest, there is, I suppose, no connexion with the theatre in the meaning of the name Devakî, which, it appears, has only loosely and indirectly the significance of "the Divine Lady", and strictly means "the player" or "she-player". Weber translates it *Spielerinn*, and Senart *joueuse*, with no allusion to any theatrical significance.¹ Nor can I find any explanation of the phrases: "I, who am a person of celestial nature, a mortal *Vasudeva*," and "I, a man of rank, a *Vasudeva*," occurring in "The Toy-Cart",² save Wilson's note on the former passage that *Vasudeva*=*Krishna*. These passages do not seem to have been considered in the discussions on Krishnaism. They serve, however, to repeat, if that be necessary, the refutation of the absurd Christian thesis that the name *Vasudeva* was based on that of Joseph; and Wilson's note indicates sufficiently his conviction of the antiquity of Krishnaism. In act v of the same play (p. 90) the epithet *Kesava* ("long-locked", *crinitus*), constantly associated with *Krishna*, is without hesitation taken by him to apply to the same deity.

The question as to the practice of dramatic ritual among the early Christians, of course, needs a fuller investigation than can be thus given to it in a mere comparison of Christism and Krishnaism; and I hope to return to the subject in another connexion. Suffice it here to say that already orthodox scholarship is proceeding to trace passages in the apostolic Epistles to surmised ancient liturgies;³ and that such a passage as opens the third Sermon of St. Proclus (Bishop of Constantinople, 432-446), comparing the pagan and Christian festivals with only a moral

p. 7, note) that "the Indian stage, even if aboriginal, may have derived its most characteristic features from the Greek", is professedly based on the proposition that "there is every reason to believe" that *Krishna* "was an imported deity"—an extravagance significant only of the effect of the theological bias in perverting English scholarship. K. O. Müller ("Hist. of the Lit. of Anc. Greece," ch. xxi, § 2) asserts incidentally that "The dramatic poetry of the Indians belongs to a time when there had been much intercourse between Greece and India", but offers no arguments, and presumably follows some earlier Indianist.

¹ Weber, pp. 316, 318; Senart, p. 323. Senart points out, however, that in the *Mahâbhârata* the father of Devakî is a Gandharva—i.e., a "singer of heaven".

² "Theatre of the Hindus", i, 28, 145. Cf. p. 26, n.

³ See the recent articles of Dr. Jessop in the *Expositor*.

differentiation; the repeated exhortations in his fourth Sermon to "come and see"; his long account (Sermon vi) of the dialogue between Joseph and Mary; and in general all his allusions to festivals and mysteries, point in the direction of a close Christian imitation of pagan dramatic practices in these matters. It is a matter not of conjecture, but of history, that the old play on the "Suffering Christ" is attributed to Gregory of Nazianzen: and Klein, the German historian of the drama, decides that the sacrament of the Mass or the Communion is "in itself already a religious drama, and is the original Mystery-play";¹ a view accepted and echoed by the orthodox Ulrici.² Klein has further traced, perhaps fancifully at some points, an interesting series of analogies between the early Christian liturgy and the Greek tragedy, which was essentially a religious service. M. Jubinal, again, explicitly states, in a sketch of the rise of the Mystery-plays, that "the fifth century presents itself with its cortège of religious festivals, during which are simulated (*on mime*) or figured in the church the adoration of the Magi, the marriage of Cana, the death of the Savior, etc."³ This statement, made without citations, is repeated by Klein,⁴ who merely cites as his authority the words of M. Jubinal; and by Dr. Ulrici,⁵ who, carrying the statement further, merely cites these two writers; but I am unable at the moment to point to the precise ancient testimony on which it rests. It is, however, more than supported by orthodox clerical statement. Dr. Murdock, discussing the Christian adoption of the Christmas festival, observes that

"From the *first institution* of this festival, the Western nations seem to have transferred to it many of the follies and censurable practices which prevailed in the pagan festivals of the same season, such as adorning the churches fantastically, *mingling puppet shows and dramas with worship*, universal feasting and merry-making, visits and salutations, revelry and drunkenness."⁶

It is, indeed, one of the commonplaces of Protestant church historians to point out that after the State establishment

¹ *Geschichte des Dramas*, iv (= *Gesch. des Ital. Dram.* i), p. 2.

² "Shakspeare's Dramatic Art", Bohn trans. i, 2.

³ *Mystères Inédits du XVIème Siècle*, 1837, pref., p. viii:

⁴ iv, 11.

⁵ i, 4.

⁶ Note on trans. of Mosheim, Cent. iv, Pt. ii, ch. 4, § 5.

of Christianity it borrowed many observances from Paganism.¹ What the student has to keep in view is that these usages, especially such a one as that of "puppet shows and dramas", cannot have been suddenly grafted on a religious system wholly devoid of them. The Christians certainly had the practice of celebrating *some* birthday of Christ long before the fourth century; and we have seen some of the reasons for concluding that on that occasion they had a mystery-ritual. It is noteworthy, too, that the subjects first specified as appearing in Christian shows or plays were precisely those which we know to have figured in the cults of Mithra and Dionysos, and in the Egyptian system. Further; it was exactly such subjects that were represented in the earliest mediæval Mysteries of which copies remain; and it was especially at Christmas and Easter that these were performed. It is hardly possible to doubt that these representations derive from the very earliest practices of the Christian sect, established when Paganism was still in full play. The dramatic character of the early Mysteries, which, as we have seen, were almost as inviolably secret as those of the Pagans, pierces through the cautious writings of the Fathers, as read even by clerical eyes:—

"Chrysostom most probably refers to the commemoration of our Savior's deeds and words at the last supper, as used in the liturgy, when he attributes such great importance to the words of institution of our Lord, which he considers as still chiefly efficacious in the consecration of the eucharist. He often speaks of the eucharist under the title of an unbloody sacrifice. . . ."²

Other admissions are no less significant:—

"There can be little, if any, doubt that Christian liturgies were not at first committed to writing, but preserved by memory and practice." "When we examine the remains of the Roman, Italian, Gallican, and Spanish liturgies, we find that they all permitted a variety of expression for every particular feast. . . . It appears to me that the practice of the western

¹ See, for instance, Mosheim, "Eccles. Hist.", Cent. iii, Pt. ii, ch. 4, § 3; Cent. iv, Pt. ii, ch. 4, § 1, 2; Cent. v, Pt. i, ch. 3, § 2, etc.; Gieselers, "Compend. of Ec. Hist.", Eng. tr., 1846, ii, 24—26, 32, 51, 61, etc.; Waddington, "Hist. of the Church", pp. 37, 212-4.

² Palmer, "Origines Liturgicæ", i, 33.

churches during the fifth and fourth centuries, in permitting the use of various 'missæ' in the same church, affords room for thinking that something of the same kind had existed from a remote period. For it does not seem that the composition of new 'missæ' for the festivals excited any surprise in these ages, or was viewed as anything novel in *principle*."¹

That is to say, the first Christians, in their feeble and illiterate way, just tried to do what the Greeks had long done in their dramatic mysteries, which must have conformed in some degree to the creative tendency exemplified on such a splendid scale in their public drama, itself a development of religious ritual.²

"The Eleusinian mysteries were, as an ancient writer [Clem. Alex., *Protrept.*, p. 12, Potter] expresses it, 'a mystical drama,' in which the history of Demeter and Cora was acted, like a play, by priests and priestesses, though probably only with mimic action, illustrated by a few significant sentences, and by the singing of hymns. There were also similar mimic representations in the worship of Bacchus: thus, at the Anthesteria at Athens, the wife of the second archon, who bore the title of Queen, was betrothed to Dionysus in a secret solemnity, and in public processions even the God himself was represented by a man. [A beautiful slave of Nicias represented Dionysus on an occasion of this kind: Plutarch, *Nic.* 3. Compare the description of the great Bacchic procession under Ptolemy Philadelphus in *Athen.* v.] At the Bœotian festival of the Agrionia, Dionysus was supposed to have disappeared, and to be sought for among the mountains; there was also a maiden (representing one of the nymphs in the train of Dionysus), who was pursued by a priest, carrying a hatchet, and personating a being hostile to the God. This festival rite, which is frequently mentioned by Plutarch, is the origin of the fable, which occurs in Homer, of the pursuit of Dionysus and his nurses by the furious Lycurgus."³

The last proposition, coming from one of the founders of Comparative Mythology, is specially noteworthy as implying the principle which has been followed in the present

¹ *Id.*, pp. 9, 10. Cp. Mosheim, *Cent.* iv, Pt. ii, ch. 4, § 3.

² K. O. Müller, "*Hist. of the Lit. of Anc. Greece*", ch. xxi, § 2-5; xxvii, § 1. It is true that, as remarked by Fustel de Coulanges in his admirable work *La Cité Antique* (8ième ed. p. 196), the words and rhythms of the hymns in the ancient domestic and civic rites were preserved unaltered; but this would not apply to the later syncretic mysteries.

³ *Id.* xxi, § 3 (Lewis' trans., 1847, pp. 287-8).

essay—that ritual usages are the fountains of myth, and typically the most ancient things in religion. But while the central ritual was immemorial, it may be taken for granted that the secret drama and hymns were innovated upon frequently, if not annually. And this frequent or customary change, proceeding from spontaneous devotional or artistic feeling, would seem to have been attempted in some degree, and even in an artistic spirit,¹ by the first Christians, till the religious principle and the clerical instinct petrified everything into dead ritual. And only when we know much better than we do at present the details of the process by which they built up alike their liturgy and their legends, their mysteries and their festivals, from the swelter of religious systems around them, can we possibly be entitled to say that they did not take something from the ancient drama and ritual of India, to which so many Western eyes were then turned.

Finally, we must remember that in all probability the ancient race of travelling Pagan mummers survived obscurely all through the Dark Ages, as did so much genuine Paganism.² It seems to have been their encroachment on the hitherto purely clerical domain of religious play-acting that brought upon things theatrical the curse of the Church, who naturally wanted to destroy the art when she found it slipping from her hands. In any case, we know that, though the early Fathers had often denounced secular drama and actors, doing indiscriminately what Plato had done with discrimination, not till about the thirteenth century did the dramatic art and its devotees begin to come absolutely under the ecclesiastical ban. By that time the Church no longer knew—collectively, indeed, her children had never realised—that primitive drama was the very womb and genesis of the whole faith.

¹ Mosheim (Cent. i, Pt. ii, ch. 4, § 6) decides that even in the first century the liturgical hymns “were sung not by the whole assembly, but by certain persons during the celebration of the sacred supper and the feasts of charity”.

² Cp. Mr. Symonds’ “Shakespeare’s Predecessors”, p. 95; Vernon Lee, “Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy”, pp. 233-4; Ulrici, as cited, p. 10; *Academy*, April 6, 1889, p. 231.

XV.

An examination of two other minor myth-motives of Christianity in connexion with Krishnaism will perhaps be found not uninteresting, by way of winding-up the detailed rebuttal of the Christian claim as against Krishnaite legend and practice. We have seen that the Catholic Church placed St. Christopher's day at the time when, in the Hindu legend, Vasudeva carries the new-born Krishna across a river. That is not the only detail of the kind. Just a fortnight before, on July 10th, is fixed the Catholic commemoration day of the *Septem Fratres Martyres*, the seven martyred brothers.

§ 1. Here we are at once up to the eyes in universal mythology. On the very face of the Christian martyrology, these Seven Brother Martyrs are mythic: they are duplicated again and again in that martyrology itself. Thus we have the specially so-called *Septem Fratres Martyres*, who are sons of a martyr mother Felicitas, and whose martyrdom is placed in the reign of Antoninus Pius—a safe way off. But on the 18th day of the same month we have the martyred Saint Symphorosa and *her* seven martyred sons, whose date is put under Hadrian, a little earlier still. But yet earlier still we find included in the same martyrology the pre-Christian case of the seven Maccabee brothers¹ and *their* mother, fixed for August 1. And still the list mounts. On July 27—we are always in or just out of July—is the holy day of the *Septem Dormientes*, our old friends the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, fabled to have been “walled up in a cave in which they had hid themselves” in the year 250, in the persecution of Decius, and to have waked up—orto have been discovered, as the scrupulous Butler would prefer to put it—in 479.² Nor is even this all. There are further the Seven Martyrs of Samosata, whose holy day is somewhat belated, December 9th; and the Seven *Virgin* Martyrs of Ancyra, who are placed under Diocletian, so as to help to cover the martyrological ground, and who in the Roman Catholic Calendar are commemorated on May 18, but in the Armenian Church

¹ 2 Maccabees, vii.

² See their story in Gibbon, c. 33, end.

on June 20. Doubtless the Seven Virgins, all ladies of about 70 years, have a different mythic origin from the seven brothers or sleepers, who in the four first cases are invariably youths or boys; and the seven of Samosata (whose actual date of martyrdom was June 25) also divide off from the July group in respect that two of them, the leaders, are old, and that the remaining five in the story are represented as joining these two, who adored the crucifix seven times a day.¹ We are left with four sets of Seven Martyrs, three of them sets of brothers, whose mothers were martyred before or after them, they themselves suffering between July 10 and August 1.

That the Seven Sleepers are of the same myth stock, is clear. In the Musæum Victorium of Rome is, or was, a plaster group of them, in which clubs lie beside two of them; a knotty club near another; axes near two others; and a torch near the seventh.² Now the general feature of the other martyrdoms is the variety of the tortures imposed. Of the first seven, one is flogged to death with loaded whips, two with clubs, one thrown over a precipice, and three beheaded: and of the sons of Symphorosa each one dies a distinct death. The seven Maccabees are not so much particularised: but of the seven of Samosata, the first, who is old, is flogged with loaded whips like the eldest son of Felicitas; and though all are crucified they are finally despatched in three different ways. Again, though the Sleepers are commonly conceived, naturally, in their final Rip Van Winkle aspect; in the plaster group they are beardless, and "in ancient martyrologies and other writings they are frequently called boys". In the Koran again,³ still youths, and still "testifying" in bad times, they sleep, *with their eyes open*, for 309 years—a longer period than that of the Christian legend, which gives them a sleep of only some 227 years⁴—and they are guarded by a dog; while the Deity "turned them to the right and to the left", and the sun when it arose passed on the right of their cave, and when it set passed them on the left; a sufficiently obvious indication of the solar

¹ For these legends see Butler's or any other "Lives of the Saints", under the dates given.

² Butler, ed. 1812, etc., vii, 359-60.

³ Sura 18, "The Cave". Rodwell's trans. p. 212.

⁴ In one version · in others the time is under 200 years.

division of the year. And the mythic dog, Mahommedans believe, is to go with the Seven to heaven. He is, of course, of the breed of the dogs who, in certain old Semitic mysteries "were solemnly declared to be the brothers of the mystæ";¹ and his connexion with the Sleepers doubtless hinges on the ancient belief that he "has the use of his sight both by night and by day".²

Seven, as the reader need hardly be reminded, is a "sacred number"³ that constantly figures in Jewish, Vedic, and other ancient lore; and there is reason to surmise here, as in so many other cases, a Christian connexion with Mithraism. Among the admittedly Mithraic remains in the Catacombs is a fresco representing a banquet of seven persons in Mithraic caps, who are labelled as the *Septem Pii Sacerdotes*, the seven pious priests.⁴ Now, the very Catholic authorities who admit the Mithraic character of the picture, have put forward an exactly similar one as being Christian, stating that it is common, without a word of misgiving or explanation, beyond a preposterous suggestion that it represents the meeting of Jesus with *seven* disciples (John, xxi, 1-13) after his resurrection. "It is not stated", argue these exegetes, "that He Himself sat down and partook of the meal with them".⁵ So that we are to assume the Catacomb artist painted the seven fisher disciples, on the shore of the lake, sitting on a couch, in Mithraic caps, banqueting at an elaborately laid table in the presence of their Lord and Master, whose figure is considerably left to the imagination. To such desperate shifts will unreasoning piety resort rather than face disturbing facts. It is perfectly plain that the picture is either Mithraic pure and simple, or an exact Christian imitation of a Mithraic ceremony; and indeed it is very likely that the story in the fourth Gospel, which is evidently an addition, was one more fiction to explain a ritual usage. The picture could not have been painted for the story; but the story might very well be framed to suit the rite, which existed before

¹ Robertson Smith, "Religion of the Semites", p. 273.

² Plutarch, "Isis and Osiris", c. 44.

³ "An infinite number of beauties may be extracted from a careful contemplation of it." *Philo Judæus*, Bohm trans. iii, 265.

⁴ "Roma Sotteranea", as cited, Appendix B, vol ii, p. 355.

⁵ Plate xvii, vol. ii, and pp. 67-8.

the painting. And here at least Mithraism had handed on to Christianity an institution of ancient India, for the seven priests figure repeatedly in the Rig Veda in connexion with the worship of Agni.¹

We cannot here, of course, trace such a myth minutely to all its parallels; and there is a risk of oversight in bracketing it with all the Sevens of general mythology. The Rev. Sir George Cox traces these generally to the seven stars of Ursa Major :

“The seven stars” [first *rikshas*, bears; later *rishis*, shiners, sages] “became the abode of the Seven Poets or sages, who enter the ark with Menu (Minos) and reappear as the Seven Wise Men of Hellas, the Seven Children of Rhodos and Helios (Pind. Ol. vii, 132) and the Seven Champions of Christendom.”² “Epimenides . . . while tending sheep, fell asleep one day in a cave, and did not awake until more than fifty years had passed away. But Epimenides was one of the Seven Sages, who reappear in the Seven Manes of Leinster [ref. to Ferguson, “The Irish Before the Conquest”] and in the Seven Champions of Christendom; and thus the idea of the Seven Sleepers was at once suggested.”³

Sir George Cox, however, does not connect these groups with the sets of Seven Martyrs; whereas Christian and Teutonic mythology alike entitle us to do so. In every case the point is that the Seven are to *rise again*, that being the doctrinal lesson in the story of the Maccabees as well as in those of the Christian martyrs. In the northern Sagas the Seven Sleepers are the sons of Mimer, “the ward of the middle-root of the world-tree”; they are “put to sleep” in “bad times” after their father’s death; and they awake at the blast of the trumpet of Ragnarök. They are in fact the “seven seasons”, the seven changes of the weather, the seven “economic months” of northern lore; and in Germany and Sweden the day of the Seven Sleepers is a popular test-day of the weather, as St. Swithin’s day—July 15: we are al-

¹ Rig Veda Sanhita, Wilson’s trans. i, 101, 156; iii, 115, 120, etc. It was probably Mithraic example that led to the creation of seven *epulones*, rulers of the sacrificial feasts, in place of the original three; as later the institution of the seven Christian deacons. The *Septemviri Epulones* appear often in inscriptions.

² “Mythology of the Aryan Nations,” p. 26.

³ *Id.* p. 225.

ways in July—is for us.¹ Now, whereas the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus—Maximian, Malchus, Martirian, Dionysius, John, Serapion, Constantine—have no connexion with a weather-myth, the very first name of the *Septem Fratres Martyres* is Januarius, and the list includes the names of Felix, Sylvanus, Vitalis, and Martialis, all which have a seasonal suggestion. So too have the names alike of Felicitas, *Happiness*, and Symphorosa=propitious, useful, profitable. It is not to be supposed, of course, that the myth could always keep the same cast; and it may be that it is at bottom the same as that of the seven boy and girl victims of the Minotaur in the legend of Theseus; but there is certainly a close kinship between the Teutonic and Christian forms under notice. In the view of Dr. Rydberg, the myth is originally Teutonic; though he notes that “Gregorius says that he is the first who recorded in the Latin language” the miracle of the Seven Sleepers, “not before known to the Church of Western Europe. As his authority he quotes ‘a certain Syrian’, who had interpreted the story for him. There was also need of a man from the Orient as an authority when a hitherto unknown miracle was to be presented—a miracle that had transpired (*sic. trans.*) in a cave near Ephesus.” It might be answered to this not only that, as Dr. Rydberg himself candidly notes, the sleeping Endymion was located in a cave in Latmos near Ephesus, but that the seven Pleiades of Greek mythology were rain-givers, and presided over navigation, just as he says the northern Seven Sleepers did. It is doubtless this idea that occurs in the legend of the Seven Virgins of Ancyra, whom the persecutor drowns in a lake, and whose holy day, May 18, is set just about the time the Pleiades rise.² But Gregory’s derivation of the Christian myth from the East, where also are located the *Septem Fratres Martyres*, brings us back to our bearings as regards the present enquiry.

¹ Rydberg’s “Teutonic Mythology”, Eng. trans. 1889, pp. 488-494.

² The lake itself, in the Christian legend, is the scene of a local water-worship in connexion with Pagan Goddesses. Now, the Semites attached a special sanctity to groups of Seven Wells; and the Arabic name given to (presumably) one such group signifies the Pleiades. See Smith’s “Religion of the Semites”, pp. 153, n., 165, 168.

§ 2. The occurrence of all these dates of "sevens" in July, or just after July, the seventh month, is a very remarkable coincidence; and it is impossible to miss the surmise that they have a connexion with the month's ordinal number. But further surmises are suggested by the fact that in the Krishna legends there is a variation, and an evident confusion, as to the numerical place of the God in the list of his mother's children, of whom he would appear in some versions to have been the seventh, while commonly he is the eighth.¹ Devakî's eight children are said to have been seven sons and a daughter; but only the six sons are said to have been killed by Kansa; while in the Bhâgavat Purâna her seventh child is Bala Râma, and, he being "transferred" to the womb of Rohinî, her seventh pregnancy is given out as ending in miscarriage. It is hardly possible to doubt that there has been manipulation of an earlier myth-form; and the suspicion is strengthened by the confused fashion in which it is told that after the birth of the divine child the parents' eyes were closed by Vishnu, so that "they again thought that a child was born unto them"—a needless and unintelligible detail.² A fuller knowledge than I possess of the Vedas and other early Indian literature may disclose the original form of the myth, which is certainly pre-Krishnaite. "In the Veda, the sun, in the form of Mârtânda, is the eighth son born of Aditi; and his mother casts him off, just as Devakî, who is at times represented as an incarnation of Aditi, removes Krishna."³ It is almost utterly idle, in the present state of our knowledge, to speculate on the basis of such a myth; but it may be at least suggested that the six slain children of Devakî may in earlier legend have been seven,⁴ and that these seven sons of the

¹ Compare M. Barth's account with that of Maurice ("History of Hindostan", ii, 330) who follows the Bhagavat Purâna, but cites Balde, who made Krishna the seventh son.

² It is made partly intelligible in the "Prem-Sagar" ("Ocean of Love") a Hindi version at second hand of the tenth book of the Bhâgavat Purâna. The idea there is that the parents are made to forget the preliminary revelation of the divinity. Cp. Cox, p. 368.

³ Barth, "Religions of India", p. 173. See Wilson's Rig Veda-Sanhita, vi, 199. Aditi "bore Mârtânda for the birth and death of human beings".

⁴ M. Pavie, in his translation (*Krishna et sa Doctrine*, 1852) of Lalatch's Hindi version of the tenth book of the Bhâgavat Purâna,

“celestial man”¹ may be duplicates of the seven sleeping sons of the northern Mimer, whom we have seen identified with “the seven seasons”. The Christian legends have shown us how the sleepers (always young) could be transformed into martyrs. It is a curious coincidence that in one version of the legend of the twelve Hebrew patriarchs (Gen. xxx, 20-24) the undesired Leah bears to the solar Jacob seven children, six sons and a daughter, before the desired Rachel bears the favorite, the solar Joseph; just as in the dual legend of Râma and Krishna, the younger brother becomes the greater, as happens in so many Biblical cases of pairs of brothers—Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Reuben and Joseph, Pharez and Zarah, Manasseh and Ephraim.

The suspicion of manipulation is further strengthened by the fact that while the Birth Festival falls in July, the date of the birth in late texts appears to be August. It could be wished that Professor Weber had brought his scholarly knowledge to bear on the problem of the meaning of these dates rather than on the impracticable thesis he has adopted from his supernaturalist predecessors. As matters stand, I can but point to the possibility that a myth of the birth of seven inferior or ill-fated children, followed by that of one who attains supreme Godhood, may be a primitive cosmogonic explanation of the relation of the “seven planets” to the deity, which is certainly the basis of the familiar myth of the “Seven Spirits” who figure so much in the Mazdean system and in the Christian Apocalypse. Mithra, the chief of the seven Amshaspands or planetary spirits of the Persian system, who are clearly akin to the “Adityas” of the Vedas,² rose in his solar character to virtual supremacy. As to the “seven seasons” notion in old Aryan mythology, it is impossible to speak. The number in Hindu lore as preserved is six³; and though these might be connected with the six slain children of Devakî, they do not square with the eight births of Aditi. But for this last precedent, it might be suspected that Krishna had been made the eighth child of

heads the first chapter: “King Kansa kills the first seven children of his sister Devakî,” though the text is not explicit to that effect.

¹ Barth, as cited, p. 172.

² Tiele, “Outlines,” p. 169.

³ Jones in “As. Res.,” iii, 258; Patterson, *Id.*, viii, 66.

the Divine Lady because he was the eighth Incarnation of Vishnu; but the Aditi myth is a strong reminder that the story of the eight children may be older than the scheme of the Avatars, the genesis of which is so difficult to trace.¹ And here we are reminded that the number eight figures in the Vedas as well as seven, there being indeed *eight* "planets" in the Indian system.² Yet again, in Egyptian mythology there are "eight personified cosmic powers" "from whom the city of Thut, Hermopolis, derived its Egyptian name", and who are "always united with Thut, but nevertheless to be distinguished from his seven assistants".³ It would seem as if an eight-myth and a seven myth, both of irretrievable antiquity, had been entangled⁴ too early to permit of any certainty as to their respective origins.

On that view, of course, the possibility remains that a week-myth may after all be bound up with the legend of Krishna and the six slain children. The names of the days of the week, ancient and modern, remind us that the "seven planets"—that is, the five planets anciently known, and the sun and moon—formed the basis of the seven-day division of time, in which the sun has always the place of honor.⁵

Now, it is a suggestive though imperfect coincidence that among the ancient Semites, who consecrated the

¹ For an ingenious if inconclusive attempt to find an astrological solution of the problem, see Salverte's *Essai sur les Noms*, 1824, vol. ii, Note C. Salverte has followed some account which makes Krishna the seventh child of Devakî.

² Barth, as cited, p. 261, *n*.

³ Tiele, "Outlines", p. 49. Cp. Herodotus, ii, 43, 46, 145, 156.

⁴ Compare Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* i, 6. Colebrooke ("As. Res." viii, 82-3) notes that "the eight Sactis, or enemies of as many deities, are also called Matris or mothers. . . . However, some authorities reduce the number to seven."

⁵ On this point, in connexion with India, see Von Bohlen, *Das Alte Indien*, 1830, ii, 245 ff. The origin of the week appears still to be disputed. Le Clerc long ago urged the planetary basis of the week against Grotius, who accepted the Judaic ("On the Truth of the Chr. Rel." i, 16); but Prof. Whitney ("Life and Growth of Language," p. 81) writes that "the planetary day-names would have remained to Europe, as to India, a mere astrologers' fancy, but for Christianity and its inheritance of the Jewish seven-day period as a leading measure of time"—a perplexing statement to me. The Day of the Sun or Lord's Day was certainly a popular institution under Paganism.

seventh day (*i.e.* Saturday), to their supreme and sinister deity Saturn, the planet most distant from the sun, the priests on that day, *clothed in black*, ministered to the God in his *black six-sided temple*¹—he having made the world in six days, the perfect number. This deity, like the black Krishna, bears signs of transformation from bad to good, from inferior to superior, since in ancient Italy he was both a good and a malevolent deity.² Of course Ovid's etymology is untenable, but it is none the less significant that for him Saturn, the *Deus Latius*, or God of Latium, is the *Deus Latens*, or "hiding God",³ considering that Saturn was commonly opposed to Jupiter, the *Deus Latiaris*, equally God of Latium, the illustrious king of the race.⁴ It may be that, as in so many other myths, the name helped the theory as to Saturn's "hidden" character; but in any case the theory was persistent; and Herodian, writing in the third century, tells that the Latins kept the festival of the Saturnalia in December "to commemorate the hidden God",⁵ just before the feast of the New Year in honor of Janus, whose image had two faces, because in him was the end of the old and the beginning of the new year. Thus he was celebrated at the time of the greatest cold, the festival lasting for seven days, from the 17th December; but the time was one of universal goodwill, calling up thoughts of the golden age past, and to come.⁶ And not

¹ Gesenius, *Commentar über d. Jesaia*, Zweiter Theil, Beilage 2, p. 344, citing Nordberg, *Lex.* S. 76 ff.

² Cp. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, i, 38; Vergil, *Ecl.* iv, 6; Georg. i, 336, ii, 538; Horace, 2 *Carm.* xvii, 23; Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, vii, 13; Juvenal, vi, 569; Propertius, iv, i, 106; Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.*, i, 19. Compare the words "saturnine", signifying gloomy, and "saturnian" as signifying the golden age. See further Lucan, i, 652, on which a curious question arises. Lucan speaks of Saturn as a baleful star with "*black fires*." Bentley proposed to read *Capricorni* for *Saturni*, giving ingenious but doubtful reasons. Mythological confusion was doubtless caused by the meteorological significance of the star, as apart from the deity, who was by many reckoned the chief of the Gods, and identified with the sky and the sun (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i, 7, 10, 22).

³ *Fasti*, i, 238.

⁴ Preller, *Röm. Myth.*, p. 85.

⁵ B. i, c. 16. Cp. Tacitus, *Hist.* v, 4; and Preller, p. 413. It is to be noted, too, that Kronos (=Saturn) was represented in art with his head veiled (K. O. Müller, "Ancient Art", as cited, p. 520).

⁶ Preller, p. 414; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i, 10.

the least curious parallel between this and the Krishnaite festival and our own Christmas festival is the old custom of making, at the time of the Saturnalia, little images, which were given as presents, especially to children.¹

This is away from the week myth. To return to that: we find that in seven-gated Thebes, Apollo the Sun-God is lord of the seventh gate² because lord of the number seven, and born on the seventh day of the month;³ and though in the Hellenic legend of the seven chiefs who die in the attack on the seven-gated city the basic myth is much sophisticated, it can hardly be doubted that there is a dualist nature-myth behind the detail of the mutual slaughter of the two opposed brothers at the gate of Apollo. More obvious is the conception as we have it plausibly explained by Sir George Cox, followed by Mr. Tylor, in the case of Grimm's story of the wolf and the seven little goats. The wolf is the darkness (Kansa was black) who tries to swallow the seven days of the week, and does swallow six, while the seventh *hides*.⁴ In the Teutonic story the six days come out again, which they do not in the Hindu; but the myth may be the same at bottom. In any case, here we have six or seven slain "children", whose fate makes part of the story of Krishna, the Hindu god honored in the seventh month; and these compare strikingly with the Christian sets of Seven Martyrs, who are all either "children" of a mother who dies with them, or simply boys, as in the case of the Sleepers of Ephesus; and who are so curiously associated with the same month. I am not arguing that the Christian myth must have filtered in the early centuries A.C. from India: I have no information as to whether the Hindu ritual includes any allusion to Krishna's martyred brothers. But at the very least the mythological basis of all the stories should be plain enough to help to disabuse all candid minds of the notion that Krishnaism drew its myths from Christianity. Here again the myth is embedded in the Hindu story, while it only fortuitously appears in Christian mythology.

§ 3. There is one other possible key to this part of the

¹ Preller, last cit.; Macrobius, i, 11.

² Æschylus, "Seven against Thebes", 801. Each gate has its God, and the virgin Minerva presides over all.

³ Scholiast on Æsch.

⁴ Cox, p. 177, *note*. Cp. Tylor, "Primitive Culture," i, 302-8.

Krishna myth, which should not be overlooked. It would appear that in old Hebrew usage the *seventh* month was also known as the *first* month, owing to a change which had been made in the reckoning. Wellhausen writes :

“The *ecclesiastical* festival of new year in the priestly Code is also autumnal. The *yom teruah* (Lev. xxiii, 24, 25; Num. xxix, 1 seq.) falls on the first new moon of autumn; and it follows from a tradition confirmed by Lev. xxv, 9, 10, that this day was celebrated as new year (ראש השנה). But it is always spoken of as the first of the *seventh* month. That is to say, the civil new year has been separated from the ecclesiastical and been transferred to spring; the ecclesiastical can only be regarded as a relic surviving from an earlier period. . . . It appears to have first begun to give way under the influence of the Babylonians, who observed the spring era”. [Note. “In Exod. xii, 2, this change of era is formally commanded by Moses: ‘This month (the passover month) shall be the beginning of months unto you; it shall be to you the first of the months of the year’. According to George Smith, the Assyrian year commenced at the vernal equinox; the Assyrian use depends on the Babylonian. (*Assyrian Eponym Canon*, p. 19).”]¹

There seems reason to suppose that a similar change took place earlier in Egypt. “The beginning of the year, or the first of Thoth”, says Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, “was perhaps originally at a very different season”.² But during the Sothic period, which subsisted from 1322 B.C. onwards, the usage would seem to have been substantially the same as it was in Cæsar’s time, when the first of Thoth, or new year, fell on 29th August.³ We have to note, too, that in Krishnaism itself there are different dates for the Birthday Festival, the Vârâha Purâna entirely departing from the accepted view. In that Purâna the Krishna Birth-Festival appears to be “only one of a whole series, amounting to twelve, which relate themselves to the ten—or rather eleven!—avatars of Vishnu as Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf,⁴ Bhângava, (*i.e.*, Parasu

¹ Wellhausen, “Prolegomena to the History of Israel”, Eng. tr. pp. 108-109.

² “Ancient Egyptians”, abridged ed. ii, 254. Cp. “Bible Folk-Lore”, 1884, p. 79.

³ Wilkinson, p. 252.

⁴ It is a small matter, but it may be as well to guard the English reader against a blunder which occurs in the Rev. Mr. Wood’s translation of M. Barth’s admirable book on “The Religions of

Râma), Râma, Krishna, Buddha, Kalkin, and Padmanâbha (*sic*)".¹ On which Professor Weber justly observes that the festival calendars of other peoples betray similar discrepancies. A case in point is that of Horus, who had more birthdays than one.² But enough, perhaps more than enough, of a mythological problem which on any view is subsidiary to our main inquiry.

XVI.

Finally, a much more important myth-parallel than the last—though I do not even here contend for more than the possibility of direct Christian borrowing—is that between the story of Krishna's "descent into hell" and the Christian dogma and legend of the same purport. In this last case as in others, Professor Weber would doubtless argue that India borrowed from Alexandria. The known historical fact is that the dogma of the "descent into hell" made its first formal appearance in the Christian Church in the formulary of the church of Aquileia late in the fourth century,³ having before that time had great popular vogue, as may be inferred from the non-canonical Gospel of Nicodemus, which gives the legend at great length. Only in the sixth century⁴ did it begin to be formally affirmed throughout the Church, Augustine having accepted it without exactly knowing what to make of it.⁵ Here clearly was one more assimilation of a Pagan doctrine; for the Pagan vogue of the myth of a God who descended into the underworld was unquestionably very great. Osiris was peculiarly the judge of the dead;⁶ and he goes to and comes from the Shades;⁷ Hercules

India." On p. 170 there is an allusion to the Avatâra of "the Brahman Nain". This should be "the Brahman Dwarf" or "the Dwarf Bahmun". "Nain" is the French for dwarf, which the translator had misconceived; and "Bahmun", in some versions, was the dwarf's name. It is only fair to say that Mr. Wood seems to have done his work in general very well.

¹ Weber, pp. 260-1.

² Plutarch, "Isis and Osiris", c. 52.

³ Nicolas, *Le Symbole des Apôtres*, 1867, pp. 221, 364.

⁴ *Id.* pp. 217-8.

⁵ *Id.* p. 223.

⁶ Herodotus, ii, 123. Compare any account of the Egyptian system.

⁷ Plutarch, "Isis and Osiris", c. 19. Professor Tiele, indeed,

went to Hades before he went to heaven, his last labor being to carry away Cerberus, the three-headed dog ; and then it was that he took away with him Theseus and Peirithous. Mercury, the Psychopompos, is not only the leader of souls to the Shades¹ but the guide of those who, like Hercules, return ;² he being the " appointed messenger (angel) to Hades ".³

In the myth of Venus and Adonis, the slain Sun-God passes six months of the year in the upper and six in the under world, as does the Sun itself ; Orpheus goes to harp Eurydice out of Hades ; and among the Thracian Getæ, who early adopted the belief in a happy immortality, the man-God Zalmoxis, otherwise Gebeleizis, who had introduced that doctrine, disappeared for three years in a subterraneous habitation he had made for himself, and on

states that " Osiris, according to the old monuments, comes back to earth no more " (" Hist. of the Egypt. Rel." Eng. tr. p. 43) ; but Plutarch's words are explicit as to his return to visit Horus. In any case, the real point is, of course, that the God does not die ; and his residence in the other world as Judge of the Dead in the Egyptian system is quite a different thing from residence in the Hades of the Greeks.

¹ Odyssey, xxiv, 1-10.

² *Id.* xi. 626.

³ Hom. Hymn, 572. Long ago, according to the indignant Mosheim (note on Cudworth, Harrison's trans. iii, 298), one Peter a Sarn " dared to compare our blessed Savior to Mercury, and to advance this as one of the principal arguments by which he attempts to bear out the comparison, that Mercury is said by the poets to discharge the twofold function of dismissing souls to Tartarus and evoking them from thence ". Mosheim's own conviction was that " Beyond all doubt a man of that name " [*i.e.* Mercurius, not Hermes] " had lived in ancient Greece and had acquired for himself a high reputation by swiftness of foot, eloquence, and other virtues and vices ; and I have scarcely a doubt that he held the office of public runner and messenger to Jupiter, an ancient king of Thessaly ". Such was the light of orthodoxy on human history one hundred and fifty years ago. It is noteworthy that Agni, the Child-God, messenger of the Gods, mediator, and " wise one " (the Logos) of the Vedas, was a leader of souls to the Shades (with Pûshan, a form of the sun) just as was Hermes (Barth, p. 23 ; Tiele, " Outlines ", p. 114). Hermes himself is a development of Hermeias, perhaps the Vedic dog Sârameya, who was once possibly " the child of the dawn ", and whose name was given to the two dogs of the Indian Hades (Max Müller, " Nat. Relig.", pp. 453, 483 ; Tiele, p. 211). But this and other identifications of Greek and Indian mythological names have been challenged, along with the whole theory of the derivation of the Aryan race from India. See Lang's " Myth, Ritual, and Religion ", i, 23, citing Mann-

his unexpected return the Thracians believed his teaching. So tells the incomparable Herodotus,¹ who "neither disbelieved nor entirely believed" the story in this evidently Euhemerized form. But the doctrine is universal, being obviously part of the myth of the death and resurrection of the Sun-God, either in the form of the equinoctial mystery in which he is three days between death and life, or in the general sense that he goes to the lower regions for his winter death before he comes to his strength again. It is bound up with the religion of Mithra. It is fully developed in the Northern myth of the Sun-God Balder, who, wounded in a great battle, in which some of his kindred oppose him, goes to the underworld of Hel, where he grows strong again by drinking sacred mead, and whence he is to return at the Ragnarök, or Twilight of the Gods, when Gods and men are alike to be regenerated.² Common to all races, it appears poetically in our legend of Arthur, the gold-clothed solar child, born as was Hercules of a dissembling father, and like Cyrus secretly reared, who after being stricken in a great battle in the West, in which the British kindred slay each other as do the Yâdavas of the Krishna lore, goes to the island valley of Avilion to heal him of his grievous wound, and to return. In pre-Christian Greece, from a very distant period, such a myth was certainly current—witness the visit of the solar Ulysses to the Shades in the *Odyssey*—and it was doubtless bound up with the doctrine of immortality conveyed in the *Mysteries*.³ As the latter belief gained ground, the myth of descent and return, always prominent in the fable of Proserpina, would become more prominent; and in the "Orphic" period, this fascinating motive was

hardt. The old race theory may now be said to be exploded (see Dr. Isaac Taylor's newly published work on "The Origin of the Aryans", which gives the results of scholarship on the subject); but the question of the relations between Indian and other myths remains to be worked out on the new lines.

¹ B. iv, 93-96.

² See the minute and scholarly examination of this myth in Dr. Rydberg's "Teutonic Mythology" (recently tr. in Eng. by Dr. R. B. Anderson. Sonnenschein and Co.), pp. 252-264, 492, 530-8, 595, 653, 655, etc.

³ K. O. Müller, "Hist. of Lit. of Anc. Greece", Lewis' tr. 1847, p. 231. Cp. Prof. Nettleship, "Essays in Latin Literature", pp. 105, 136-140, and Mosheim's extracts in note on Cudworth, iii, 296.

fully established in religious literature. In one "Orphic" poem, the *Minyas*, which elaborately described the lower regions, we have the exact title-formula of the later Christian doctrine, ἡ ἐς Αἴδου κατάβασις, "the Descent into Hades."¹ But there is reason to believe that the "Orphic" system was a result of the influence of foreign doctrine²; and indeed, of all mythic analogues to the Christian myth of the descent into Hell, I can remember none more exact than the story of the similar descent of Krishna. Take the account of Moor :

"It is related in the Padma Purâna, and in the Bhâgavat, that the wife of Kasya, the Guru or spiritual preceptor to Krishna, complained to the incarnate deity that the ocean had swallowed up her children on the coast of Gurjura or Gujerat, and she supplicated Krishna for their restoration. Arriving at the ocean, Varuna, its regent, assured Krishna that not he but the sea-monster Sankesura had stolen the children. Krishna sought and after a violent conflict slew the demon, and tore him from his shell, named Panchajanya, which he bore away in memorial of his victory, and afterwards used in battle by way of a trumpet. Not finding the children in the dominions of Varuna, he descended to the infernal city, Yamapura, and sounding his tremendous shell, struck such terror into Yama that he ran forth to make his prostrations, and restored the children of Kasya, with whom he returned to their rejoicing mother.

"Sonnerat notices two basso-relievos, placed at the entrance of the choir of Bordeaux cathedral : one represents the ascension of our Savior to heaven on an eagle ; the other his descent, where he is stopped by Cerberus at the gates of hell, and Pluto is seen at a distance armed with a trident.

"In Hindu pictures, Vishnu, who is identified with Krishna, is often seen mounted on the eagle Garuda. . . . And were a Hindu artist to handle the subject of Krishna's descent to hell, which I never saw, he would most likely introduce Cerbura, the infernal three-headed dog³ of their legends, and

¹ K. O. Müller, as cited, p. 233. Cp. Pausanias, ix, 31, as to the poems attributed to Hesiod.

² Compare Mr. Lang's "Myth, Ritual, and Religion", i, 291-3, and Grote and Lobeck as cited by him.

³ "Yama, the regent of hell, has two dogs, according to the Purânas, one of them named Cerbura and Sabula or *varied*; the other Syâma or *black*; the first of whom is also called Trisiras, or *with three heads*, and has the additional epithets of Calmâsha, Chitra, and Cirmîra, all signifying *stained* or *spotted*. In Pliny, the words Cimmerium and Cerberium seem used as synonymous; but, however that

Yama, their Pluto, with the *trisula* or trident: a further presumption of early intercommunication between the pagans of the eastern and western hemispheres."¹

For obvious reasons, the whole of this passage is suppressed in the Rev. W. O. Simpson's 1864 edition of Moor's work. But the parallel goes even further than Moor represents; for the descent of Jesus into hell, curiously enough, was anciently figured as involving a forcing open of the jaws of a huge serpent or dragon.² Thus, whether or not the Christian adaptation was made directly from Indian communications, it carried on a myth which, appearing in some guise in all faiths, figured in ancient India in a form more closely parallel with the Christian than any other. The appropriation would seem to have been made confusedly, from different sources. Christ in one view went to Hades in his capacity of avenger³—an idea evidently derived from the Osirian system, which, however, closely approaches the Indian in the story of Osiris descending to the Shades on the prayer of Queen Garmathone and restoring her son to life. In another view, which prevails in the main legend as given in the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Christ descends to the Shades, where Satan and Death are one, on a mission of liberation, taking all the "saints" of previous history with him to heaven, but further restoring to earth for three days the two sons of the blessed high-priest Simeon, who had taken the babe Jesus in his

may be, the Cerbura of the Hindus is indubitably the Cerberus of the Greeks" (Wilford, in "Asiatic Researches", iii, 408). There seems some doubt as to the antiquity of the "three heads" in Indian mythology: M. Barth (p. 23) speaks only of "two dogs" as guarding the road to Yama's realm; but the notion seems sufficiently Hindu. See note above as to the Sârameya, and compare Gubernatis, "Zool. Myth.", i, 49, as to Cerberi. Prof. Müller decides ("Nat. Rel." p. 453) that the name Kerberos is from the Sanskrit *Sarvari*, "the night"—which chimes with Wilford's definitions; but here the assumption of derivation must be discarded. In northern mythology, there is sometimes one hell-dog, sometimes more (Rydberg, as cited pp. 276, 280, 362); and there is in the underworld a three-headed *giant*. (Rydberg, pp. 295-6; Cp. Bergmann, *Le Message de Skirnir*, 1871, pp. 99, 154).

¹ "Hindu Pantheon", pp. 213-4. Compare the varying account of Maurice (ii, 377) following the Persian version of the Bhâgavat.

² See the engraving in Hone's "Ancient Mysteries Described", and that on p. 385 of Didron's "Christian Iconography", Bohn trans. In the latter the saved appear as *children*.

³ Augustine, Letter to Evodius, cited by Nicolas, p. 228, n.

arms. Now, not only was the Brahman Kasya the Guru of Krishna, but his children were *two sons*.¹ Again, for the more canonical story of Jesus going to "the spirits in prison",² which was adopted by many of the fathers³ and became bound up with the Pagan-Christian doctrine of purgatory, there is a parallel in the Purâna myth, in which Krishna, in the earlier part of his search for the lost children, reaches the under-sea or over-sea region of "Cusha-Dweepa, where he instructed the Cutilacesas in the whole system of religious and civil duties".⁴ Doubtless we shall be told once more that the Indian legend borrows from the Apocryphal Gospel, without any attempt being made to show how or whence the Christian compiler got his story. To which I once more answer that in the Indian version the myth has all the stamp of the luxuriant and spontaneous Hindu imagination, while in the Christian mythology it is one of the most obviously alien elements, and in the detailed legend it is a confused patchwork. In the Purâna, Krishna's blast on his shell at the gate of the Shades is perfectly Indian; in "Nicodemus" the thunderous voice of Christ at hell-gate may indeed be compared to the shouting of Mars in Homer, but is obviously inspired by *some* primitive myth, and may much more easily be conceived as suggested-by than as suggesting the Krishnaite tale. And if we are to choose between (a) the proposition that it was through a Christian legend that India became possessed of a myth-motive common to half-a-dozen ancient faiths before Christianity was heard of, and (b) the inference that the Christian legend was more or less directly inspired by the Indian legend in something very like the form in which we now have it—there can

¹ Maurice, as last cited.

² 1 Peter, iii, 19.

³ Clemens Alexandrinus, who accepted it, is in that connexion, I know not why, stigmatised as heretical. Compare the Abbé Cognat's *Clement d' Alexandrie*, p. 466, and Justin's "Remarks upon Eccles. Hist.", ed. Trollope, i, 231. These writers speak as if there were no scriptural basis for the doctrine of the preaching in limbo. It is important, however, to remember that Clement drew more systematically on pagan religion than any other Christian before or since. See Mosheim's "Commentaries on Christian Affairs", Vidal's trans., ii, 115-125, 186-190.

⁴ Wilford in *As. Res.*, iii, 399. Cf. pp. 349, 370.

surely be little room for hesitation among unprejudiced students.

In regard to this, however, as to some of the other myth-parallels already noticed, it might very well be that the Christian appropriation was made through the channel of Buddhism, whence so many elements of the Christian system are now admitted by almost all scholars to have come. I have devoted the less attention to that side of the case because it has been so fully dealt with by other and better-equipped inquirers—recently in England, for instance, by Mr. Arthur Lillie in his "Buddhism in Christendom" and other works. In regard to Buddhism the actual historical *connexions* with Christianity are in large part made out *a posteriori*; and if sometimes points are stretched, the general argument is irresistible. But the argument for Buddhist priority over Christianity owes a large part of its strength to the very fact that, as we shall see, the Buddhist legends are to a great extent themselves refashionings of Krishna legends. The weakness of the Christian position is that it claims originality for a body of lore which, obviously non-historical, is as obviously myth in a late and literary though trivial stage; and that this claim is made with no attempt at explaining how such myths could so appear without antecedents. For the Buddhist mythology, as M. Senart has shown, the antecedents lie in that very Krishnaism which the prejudiced Christist assumes to be borrowed from his own, so to say, virgin-born mythology. For the Krishnaite mythology, again, as we have in part seen and shall see further, antecedents lay in part in the simpler Vedic mythology, and may further be reasonably assumed to have existed in the great mass of popular religion that *must* have flourished outside the sacerdotal system of the Vedas. The scientific grievance against scholars like Professor Weber is that they claim priority on certain points for Christian myth without once asking the question as to whence the Christian myth itself came.

If, then, it be shown that any of the myths before discussed, came to Christism through Buddhism, my argument is not impugned, but strengthened, unless (which is unlikely) it be contended that the Buddhist form preceded the Krishnaite. In some cases it is plainly probable that the Buddhist legend was the go-between. Thus the late

Christian myth of the synchronous birth of the Christ's cousin, John the Baptist, is reasonably to be traced to the Buddhist myth of the synchronous birth of the Buddha's cousin Ananda,¹ rather than to the Krishnaite motive of Arjuna or Bala Râma : but this course is reasonable chiefly because the Krishnaite system gives an origin for the Buddhist myth. So, too, the motive of the Descent into Hell may have been taken by the Christists from the Buddhist fable of Buddha's expedition to preach "like all former Buddhas" the law to his mother in the upper-world of Tawadeintha, since there not only is the preaching extended to a multitude of others of the unearthly population, but there appear also the mythic "two"—in this case "two sons of Nats", who obtain from Buddha "the reward of Thautapan".² Certainly Krishna's literal *descent*, and the item of the dragon, are details that come specially close to the Christian myth; and one would have expected the Christian borrower to introduce the Christ's mother if he had before him the Buddha legend as we now have it. But on the other hand he may well have had a different version; or some of the details may have been added to the Christian story at different times, as they must have been in the Buddhist. All I stand upon definitely is that the Krishna stories are almost always the more primitive: and that if they are the basis of the mythology of the Buddhist system—a system which so largely enters into the Christian—it is plainly unreasonable to presume that Krishnaism would borrow again from Christianity. In the case of the "preaching to the spirits in prison", in particular, the Buddhist myth is on the face of it pre-Buddhistic, yet Indian. Our general argument, then, for the antiquity of Krishnaism as compared with Christianity, holds good through a whole series of myth-motives in respect of which Christianity is unquestionably a borrower, and sometimes clearly a borrower from India. It now remains to indicate briefly, independently of the Christian argument, the mythical meaning or derivation of Krishnaism itself.

¹ Bigandet's "Life of Gaudama", Trübner's ed. i, 36.

² *Id.* pp. 219-225.

XVII.

§ 1. We have seen that the latest claims as to the Christian origin of Krishnaite legends are only repetitions of guesses made by pious missionaries in the days before comparative mythology, and that there is really no more scientific argument behind the later than behind the earlier statements. It is also the fact, however, that sound and satisfying explanations of Krishnaism on the basis of universal mythology were sketched nearly a century ago; though they have been completely ignored by the later adherents of the missionary view, including even the scholarly and open-minded Professor Weber.

Not only was the solar character of Krishna recognised by the first European investigators,¹ being indeed avowed by the Brahmans, but the main elements of the whole myth were soon judiciously analysed. Take the following early exposition:

“The Earth is represented as a Cow, the cow of plenty; and, as the planets were considered by the Hindus to be so many habitable Earths, it was natural to describe them by the same hieroglyphic; and as the Sun directs their motions, furnishes them with light, and cherishes them with his genial heat, Krishna, the symbol of the Sun, was portrayed as an herdsman, sportive, amorous, inconstant.

“The twelve signs are represented as twelve beautiful Nymphs: the Sun’s apparent passage from one to the other is described as the roving of the inconstant Krishna. This was probably the ground-work of Jayadeva’s elegant poem, the *Gīta Gōvinda*. It is evidently intended by the circular dance exhibited in the *Rasijatra*. On a moveable circle, twelve Krishnas are placed alternately with twelve Gopīs, hand-in-hand, forming a circle; the God is thus multiplied to attach him to each respectively, to denote the Sun’s passage through all the signs, and by the rotary motion of the machine, the revolution of the year is pointed out.

¹ The monk Paulinus (quoted by Kleuker, *Abhandlungen*, as before cited, ii, 236), was satisfied that Krishna “originally (*primigenie*) signified the sun, and indeed the sun in eclipse” [here giving a meaning for the “black”] and that “the fable was accordingly to be referred to astronomy”. He further saw that the mythic wars meant that “the sun in the heavens fought with planets, stars, and clouds”, and that the quasi-historic (it is not clear if he thought there was ever a real) Krishna was as it were a “terrestrial sun or” [here anticipating Lassen] “Hercules, as Arrian has it”.

“Krishna obtains a victory on the banks of the Yamunâ over the great serpent Caliya Nâga, which had poisoned the air, and destroyed the herds in that region. This allegory may be explained upon the same principle as the exposition given of the destruction of the serpent Python by the arrows of Apollo. It is the Sun, which, by the powerful action of its beams, purifies the air and disperses the noxious vapors of the atmosphere. Both in the Padma and Garuda [Purânas] we find the serpent Caliya, whom Krishna slew in his childhood, amongst the deities ‘worshipped on this day, as the Pythian snake, according to Clemens, was adored with Apollo at Delphi’. Perhaps this adventure of Krishna, with the Caliya Nâga, may be traced on our sphere, for we find there Serpentarius on the banks of the heavenly Yamunâ, the milky way, contending as it were with an enormous serpent, which he grasps with both his hands.

“The identity of Apollo Nomios and Krishna is obvious: both are inventors of the flute; and Krishna is disappointed by Tulasi as Apollo was deluded by Daphne, each nymph being changed to a tree; hence the *tulasi* is sacred to Krishna as the *laurus* was to Apollo.

“The story of Nâreda visiting the numerous chambers of Krishna’s seraglio and finding Krishna everywhere, appears to allude to the universality of the Sun’s appearance at the time of the Equinoxes, there being then no part of the earth where he is not visible in the course of the twenty-four hours. The Demons sent to destroy Krishna are perhaps no more than the monsters of the sky, which allegorically may be said to attempt in vain to obstruct his progress through the Heavens. Many of the playful adventures of Krishna’s childhood are possibly mere poetical embellishments to complete the picture.”¹

Here is a rational, a scientific explanation of the main outlines of the Krishna myth, which holds good independently of the author’s further theory that the origin of Krishnaism lay in the separation of the sect of Vaishnavas from the Saivas, and that the legends may contain an element of allegory on the persecution of the new sect. The former part of that theory was put forward also by Colebrooke, who held that “the worship of Râma and of Krishna by the Vaishnavas, and that of Mahâdêva and Bhavânî by the Saivas and Sactas, have been introduced since the persecution of the Bauddhas and Jainas”.² But

¹ Patterson, in “Asiatic Researches”, viii (1803), pp. 64-5. As to the astronomic significance of the dance in Greece, see Donaldson, “Théatre of the Greeks,” p. 24.

² “As. Res.,” viii, 474.

the same sound scholar declares that he supposes both Râma and Krishna "to have been known characters in ancient fabulous history", but conjectures "that on the same basis new fables have been constructed, elevating those personages to the rank of Gods".¹ Hence he opposed the surmise that early references to Krishna in the sacred books were interpolations. There can be little doubt, I think, that Colebrooke would have admitted the "new fables" to be in many cases new only in their application, and to be really repetitions of the ancient myths of the race. This proposition, inductively proved, renders impregnable the earlier deductive position.

Every solar hero or deity necessarily repeats certain features in the myths of his predecessors; and this the more surely because on the one hand the popular fancy is so far from being clearly conscious of the identities between God and God, or hero and hero,² and because on the other the priest either sees in these, like the Jews, a system of types, or, like the Pagans, sees no harm in mystic correspondences. It is thus that so many dynasties of Gods have been built out of the same fabulous material. Now, though Krishna, figuring as he does as a demon in the Vedas, was presumably an outsiders' God even in the Vedic period, with what qualities we know not, we can find in the Vedas precedent for all his main features. Agni, the Fire-God, always tending to be identified with the Sun, is the prototype of the modern Krishna, not only in respect of being a marvellous child but of being a lover of maidens: "Agni, as Yama, is all that is born; as Yama, all that will be born: he is the lover of maidens, the husband of wives".³ That, indeed, is an extremely natural characteristic, whether mystic or anthropomorphic, of all popular deities in primitive times; and M. Senart notes⁴ that in a Vedic description of a storm, Soma, the personified God of the libation or eucharist, "plays among

¹ *Id.*, ix, 293.

² "The story of Perseus is essentially the same as the story of his more illustrious descendant [Hercules]; and the profound unconsciousness of the Argives that the two narratives are in their groundwork identical is a singular illustration of the extent to which men can have all their critical faculties lulled to sleep by mere differences of names or of local coloring in legends which are only modifications of a single myth" (Cox, "Mythol. of Aryan Nations", p. 303).

³ "Wilson's tr. of Rig Veda Sanhita, i, 181.

⁴ *Essai*, p. 321.

the Apas like a man among beautiful young girls". But "it is above all to the atmospheric Agni that we must trace voluptuous legends like those which have received such an important place in the Krishnaite myth";¹ and for the multiplications of Krishna also we find the prototype in the child Agni who, at his birth, "enters into all houses and disdains no man".² And this view is substantially adopted by the leading English mythologists. On the relations of Krishna with the Gopis Sir George Cox writes :

'This myth is in strict accordance with the old Vedic phrase addressed to the Sun as the horse : "After thee is the chariot; after thee, Arvan, the man; after thee the cows; after thee the host of the girls". Thus, like Agni, Indra, and Yama, he is the husband of the wives, an expression which, in Professor Max Müller's opinion, was probably "meant originally for the evening sun as surrounded by the splendors of the gloaming, as it were by a more serene repetition of the dawn. The Dawn herself is likewise called the wife; but the expression 'husband of the wives' is in another passage clearly applied to the sinking sun, *R. V.* ix, 86, 32 : 'The husband of the wives approaches the end'.'³

The same writer, who makes an independent and able analysis of the Krishna myth, sums up as follows on the general question :

"If it be urged that the attribution to Krishna of qualities or powers belonging to other deities is a mere device by which his devotees sought to supersede the more ancient gods, the answer must be that nothing is done in his case which has not been done in the case of almost every other member of the great company of the gods, and that the systematic adoption of the method is itself conclusive proof of the looseness and flexibility of the materials of which the cumbrous mythology of the Hindu epic poems is composed".⁴ And again : "It is true, of course, that these myths have been crystallised round the name of Krishna in ages subsequent to the period during which the earliest Vedic literature came into existence; but the myths themselves are found in this older literature associated with other gods, and not always only in germ. Krishna as slaying the dragon is simply Indra smiting Vritra or Ahi, or Phoibos destroying the Python. There is no more

¹ *Id.*, p. 322.

² *Id.*, p. 291, citing *R. V.*, x, 91, 2, from Muir's "Old Sanskrit Texts", v, 204.

³ Cox, as cited p. 369 n.

⁴ *Id.* p. 365.

room for inferring foreign influence in the growth of these myths than, as Bunsen rightly insists, there is room for tracing Christian influence in the earlier epical literature of the Teutonic tribes."¹

The fluidity of the whole of the myth material under notice is yet further illustrated in the following sketch of Krishna's many metamorphoses;

"He is also identified with Hari or the dwarf Vishnu, a myth which carries us to that of the child Hermes as well as to the story of the limping Hephaistos. As the son of Nanda, the bull, he is Govinda, a name which gave rise in times later than those of the Mahâbhârata to the stories of his life with the cowherds and his dalliance with their wives; but in the Mahâbhârata he is already the protector of cattle, and like Herâkles slays the bull which ravaged the herds [Muir, "Sanskrit Texts", iv, 206]. His name Krishna, again, is connected with another parentage which makes him the progeny of the black hair of Hari, the dwarf Vishnu [*Ib.* 331]. But he is also Hari himself, and Hari is Narayana, 'the God who transcends all, the minutest of the minute, the vastest of the vast, the greatest of the great'. In short the interchange or contradiction is undisguised, for he is 'the soul of all, the omniscient, the all, the all-knowing, the producer of all, the God whom the Goddess Devakî bore to Vishnu'.²

"The character of Rudra, said to be sprung from Krishna, is not more definite. As so produced, he is Time, and is declared by his father to be the offspring of his anger. But in the character of Mahâdeva, Rudra is worshipped by Krishna, and the necessary explanation is that in so adoring him Krishna was only worshipping himself. Rudra, however, is also Narayana, and Siva the destroyer. . . . It is the same with Râma, who is sometimes produced from the half of Vishnu's virile power, and sometimes addressed by Brahma as 'the source of being and the cause of destruction, Upendra and Mahendra, the younger and the elder Indra'.³ This cumbrous mysticism leads us further and further from the simpler conceptions of the oldest mythology, in which Rudra is scarcely more than an epithet, applied sometimes to Agni, sometimes to Mitra, Varuna, the Asvins, or the Maruts. . . . It was in accordance with the general course of Hindu mythology that

¹ *Id.* p. 371 n.

² *Sic* in Cox; but Muir, who is cited, has "to Vasudeva", p. 224.

³ Muir, iv, 146, 250. So cited in Cox; but 250 should apparently be 150, where the passage runs: 'Thou art the source of being and cause of destruction, Upendra (the younger Indra), and Madhusûdana. Thou art Mahendra (the older Indra). . . . ''

the greatness of Rudra, who is sometimes regarded as self-existent, should be obscured by that of his children."¹

Further illustration could be given, if need were, of this interfluence of myths in the case of the three Râmas, Bala Râma, Parasu² Râma, and Râma Chandra, who pass for three different incarnations of Vishnu, but who were early surmised by students to be "three representatives of one person, or three different ways of relating the same history";³ and whom M. Senart declares to be indeed mythologically one :

"In effect, there is really only one Râma. The contrary opinion of Lassen (*Ind. Alt.*, ii, 2, 503) rests on an Evhemerism which will find, I think, few adherents. But he appears to us under a triple form . . . the popular Râma, brother of Krishna; the Brahmanic Râma, who destroys the Kshatriyas; the Kshatriya Râma, King's son and happy conqueror. The axe of the second, like the ploughshare of the first, represents the same weapon of thunder, which the hero wields against the demons."⁴

Now, Bala Râma, whom Sir William Jones⁵ identified with the Greek and "Indian" Dionysos, but whom we have seen (Sec. ix) to be probably the Hercules of Megasthenes, "appears to be an ancient agricultural deity that presided over the tillage of the soil and the harvest. He is armed with a ploughshare" [Cp. Sec. ix, citing Moor] "whence his surname *Halabhrîr*, 'the plough-bearer'; and his distinctive characteristic is an ungovernable passion for bacchanalian revels, inebriation, and sensual love."⁶ Like each of his duplicates, he was doubtless a

¹ Cox, pp. 365-7.

² According to Moor, "Parasu" means a sword; according to Balfour's *Ind. Cycl.*, a club; according to Tiele (before cited), an axe! Here, too, is trinity.

³ Moor, "Hindu Pantheon", p. 191.

⁴ *Essai*, p. 234, n.

⁵ *As. Res.*, ii, 132.

⁶ Barth, p. 173. M. Senart writes (p. 325, n.): "As to his name of Bala, the analogy of Krishna would suggest that it also had originally a more specially demoniac significance, and that the form Bala is only an alteration of Vala, a Vedic personage connected by name and function with Vritra. This is indeed certain as regards the epic Bala, enemy of Indra." In the same note M. Senart draws a connexion between Rama and the Persian Râma-gastra, who is an atmospheric genie watching the "pastures" of Mithra, and who figures both as lightning and sun.

Sun-God (Râma Chandra, who represents the moon,¹ being also solar);² and it might conceivably have been his fortune to become the supremely popular deity instead of Krishna. He too has a Birth Festival, which Professor Weber supposes to be based on that of Krishna, which it very closely resembles; he too figures then as the Child-God; and he too is associated with the stable-myth in that Jamadagni, the father of Parasu Râma, was intrusted by Indra with the charge of the boon-granting cow, Kama-denu.³ His old standing was the cause of his being made Krishna's twin; and at present he ranks next him in popularity.⁴ "Like Krishna, Râma is a hero, an exterminator of monsters, a victorious warrior. But, idealised by the poetry of a more fastidious age, and one less affected by the myth [*i.e.*, in the Râmâyana], he is at the same time, what we cannot maintain in regard to the enigmatic son of Devakî, the finished type of submission to duty, nobility of moral character, and of chivalric generosity."² But Krishna in turn has his transfiguration in the Bhagavat Gîtâ. In fine, ancient India, then as now a manifold world of differing peoples and faiths, had a multitude of Sun-Gods apart from those of the priest-made Vedas, but based like these on immemorial myth; and of these Krishna, ancient as the others were ancient, is the one who, by dint of literary and sectarian manipulation, has best been able to "survive".

§ 2. It may be, however, that while the antiquity of the main material of Krishnaism is admitted, it will still be argued, as by Professor Weber, that only in comparatively late times was Krishna a deity at all, and that this alleged lateness of creation permitted of, and partly depended on, the adoption of some of the Christian legends early in our era. But it will, I think, only be necessary to state Professor Weber's position in contrast with the argument of M. Senart to make clear the soundness of the latter and the untenableness of the former.

Professor Weber seeks to trace the rise of Krishnaism by way of the chronological order of the references in the documents, taking the Vedic allusions as representing the

¹ *Id.*, p. 177.

² See above, Sec. v, citing Tiele, and ix, citing Moor.

³ Moor, p. 190.

⁴ Moor, p. 192.

⁵ Barth, p. 176.

beginnings of the cult, the passage in the Khandogya Upanishad as pointing to a quasi-historic personage, the legends in the Mahâbhârata as a development of his story, and so on.¹ M. Senart, in answer, points first to the admitted fact that the Kansa legend was already old for Patanjali, and contends that the presence in that text of the name of Govinda sufficiently shows that the myth of the sojourn among the shepherds, which was the inseparable preparation for the slaying of the tyrant, was already ancient and popular, and that it was as the companion of shepherds and lover of the Gopis, not as the hero of the epic, that Krishna was first deified.² It may be added that the antiquity of the similar myth in connexion with Cyrus is a further ground for the same conclusion, as has been shown above. M. Senart then goes on to cite, what is perhaps less important, the testimony of Alexander Polyhistor [fl. 85 B.C.] that in his day the Brahmans worshipped Hercules and Pan. There is, M. Senart argues, no other Hindu deity who could so well suit the latter title as Krishna—a contention which seems to me inconclusive in the circumstances. Might not Alexander's Pan be Siva, whom M. Barth,³ following Lassen, identifies with the Dionysos of Megasthenes? Certainly the latter is the more plausible conjecture; but is not Dionysos fully as close a parallel to Krishna as Pan would be? In any case, though M. Senart connects his conjecture, as to Krishna being Alexander's Pan, with the rest of his argument, that works itself out independently, and will stand very well on its own merits:

“This testimony is the more important in that it leads us to carry further back the date of the legends of this order. M. Lassen, in spite of his opinions on the antiquity of the doctrine of Avatars and the cult of Krishna, seems on this point to go even further than M. Weber. In support of that opinion there is little weight in the negative argument from the silence of the ancient works which have come down to us. What idea should we have had of the date and importance of Buddhism, if we were shut up to the testimony of Brahmanic literature? We can certainly distinguish in Krishna a triple personage; it does not follow, however, that these mean simply three successive aspects of the same type, until it be determined that logically they derive and develop one from the other. Now,

¹ Treatise cited, p. 316.

² *Essai*, p. 339.

³ As cited, p. 163.

the fact is quite the contrary: an abyss separates each one of these stages from the next, if we take them in the supposed order. How could a sacred poet, the obscure disciple of a certain Ghora, suddenly have become the national hero of an important Indian people, the bellicose performer of so many exploits, not merely marvellous, but clearly mythological? And how could this warrior, raised so high, from the epic period, in the admiration and even in the worship of Indians, be subsequently lowered to the position of the adopted child of a shepherd, the companion of shepherds, and mixed up in dubious adventures, which do not fail at times to disquiet and embarrass his devotees? It is clear that the first step at least of such an evolution could only be made under powerful sacerdotal pressure: now there exists in this connexion no sign of such a thing in the literature we possess: the cult of Krishna is not a Brahmanic but a popular cult. In fine, there is no doubt that we must reverse the statement. Krishna must have been at first the object of a secondary cult, connected especially, as it remained in the sequel, with the legends of his birth, of his infancy, and of his youth. Localised at first among the Sûrasenas and at Mathura, this cult would have sufficed to introduce into the epic legend of the Kshatriyas, fixed in that epoch under Brahmanic influence, the bellicose character in which we know him. On its part, the Brahmanic school, desirous to appropriate him, would put him in the list of its singers and masters, until the ever more powerful spread of his popularity forced it to embrace him, under the title of Avatara of Vishnu, in its new theory and in its modern systems. It must not be forgotten that the organisation of castes creates, alongside of the chronological succession, a superposition not only of social classes but of traditions and ideas which could live long side by side in a profound isolation. Thus considered, the history of the cult of Krishna resolves itself into two periods, which I would not, however, represent as necessarily and strictly successive. Krishna was at first a quite popular deity, whose worship, more or less narrowly localised, spread little by little; till at length, identified with Vishnu and admitted to the number of his incarnations, he was *ipso facto* recognised by the superior caste.

“It is possible, indeed, that Christian influences may have developed among the Indians in his connexion the Monotheistic idea and the doctrine of faith. . . . However that may be, what interests us chiefly at present is the age not so much of his cult, still less of a certain form of his cult, but of the legend of the hero, and more precisely of that part of his legend which embraces his infancy and his youth. Now, this narrative has its roots in the images of a perfectly authentic naturalism: it cannot be isolated from the various kindred

mythological series: and if we only apply, without rashness and without prejudice, the customary methods of mythological analysis, it leads us obviously to more ancient conceptions; and the homogeneity which is exhibited by the whole demonstrates the normal and consequent development of all the parts. Several precise testimonies, independent of any argument borrowed from resemblances, attest the existence of essential elements of the legend at an epoch when there can be no question of those influences which have been conjectured; and these influences finally rest on a very limited number of very inconclusive facts, which, besides, only touch entirely secondary details."

This argument has been criticised by Professor Weber in a review of M. Senart's essay in which, while differing from his conclusions, he speaks in high terms of his French opponent's scholarship and ability. With his invariable candor, the Professor, remarking that the theory of Krishna's herdsmanship being derived from the cloud-cows of the Vedas is new to him,¹ admits that in itself it is very plausible. But, he goes on,

"Only in the *latest* texts do we find this Gopî idyl: the older records *know nothing of it*, but recognise Krishna only as assiduous pupil or brave hero. Recently, indeed, passages have been made known from the Mahâbhâshya which set forth Krishna's relation to Kansa; even further, from Panini, his being evidently worshipped as Vasudeva; and the existence of his epithet *Kesava*; . . . but, on the one hand, the herdsman idyl is there awaiting; . . . and on the other hand, in view of the doubts which Burnell and Böhrtlingk have expressed, in connection with my inquiry, as to the value of the evidence for Patanjali's date given by the words and citations in the Mahâbhâshya, Senart's assumption that that work dates 'from before the Christian era' is very questionable. The testimony of Alexander Polyhistor that the Brahmans worshipped a Hercules and a Pan, is again too vague to permit of its being founded on in this matter."²

The force of the last objection I have admitted; and as to the date of Patanjali, of which Professor Weber had seemed formerly³ to take Professor Bhandarkar's view (shared by both Senart and Barth), it can only be said that if the "doubts" are ever strengthened, that part of

¹ Though, as we have seen, the stealing and herding of cows has frequently such a significance in Greek myths.

² *Indische Streifen*, iii, 429.

³ See above, sec. vii.

our evidences will have to be reconsidered; though Professor Weber and the doubters will also have to face and explain the fact of the ancient currency of the Cyrus myth on the Iranian side. In any case Patanjali would have to be dated *very* late to countervail the implied antiquity of the phrases he quotes. But as regards the Professor's objection that the Gopî idyl is not mentioned in the oldest documentary references to Krishna, the reader will at once see that it is no answer to M. Senart, whose argument is that the Gopî idyl is part of an immemorial popular myth, originally current outside the Brahmanic sphere. Nor does the Professor in any way meet M. Senart's refutation of his own development theory, or answer the questions as to how (1) the deity could be developed out of the student of the Upanishad, and how (2) the warrior hero of the epic could be lowered from that status to the position of the adopted son of a shepherd and companion of shepherds, given to dubious adventures, unless there were an old myth to that effect¹? These questions, I make bold to say, are unanswerable. We are left to the irresistible conclusion that the myths of Krishna's birth and youth are not only pre-Christian but pre-historic.

§ 3. But yet one more reinforcement of the strongest kind is given to the whole argument by M. Senart's demonstration² of the derivation of a large part of the Buddha myth from that of Krishna, or from pre-Krishnaite sources. It is needless here to give at length the details, which include such items as the breaking of Siva's bow by Kama, the God of Love, of Kansa's by Krishna, and of various bows by Siddartha (Buddha)³; the exploit against the elephant, similarly common to the three personages⁴; the parallel between the births of Buddha and Krishna⁵; their early life of pleasure,⁶ and their descent from "enemies of the Gods".⁷ There is, in fine, a "close relationship" between the Buddhist and the Krishnaite legends,⁸ as we have partly seen above.

"In nearly all the variations of this legendary theme, one

¹ There are in the Mahâbhârata allusions which show the herdsman characteristics to have been associated in the hero. See Senart, p. 340, n.

² *Essai*, p. 297 ff.

³ *Id.* p. 302.

⁴ *Id.* p. 303.

⁵ *Id.* p. 312.

⁶ *Id.* p. 305.

⁷ *Id.* p. 315.

⁸ *Id.* p. 326.

point remains fixed and constant : it is among shepherds that the hero is exiled ; and it is impossible to separate from the series either the *vraja* or the herdsmen and herdswomen who surround the youth of Krishna. And this trait is found in the story of Sakya."¹

And while it is impossible to say with certainty how and whence the Buddhist adaptations were made, it is frequently found here, as in the Christian parallels, that the Krishnaite form of a given story is by far the more natural. The exploit against the elephant evidently " belonged to the Krishnaite legend before being introduced into the life of Sakya [Buddha] : it is infinitely better motivated in the former than in the latter ". Again, the genealogy of Buddha is in large part a variant on that of Râma. If, then, the theory of imitation from Christian legends were sound, we should have to hold either (*a*) that Buddhism, which so extensively influenced Christianity, did not even borrow from Christianity direct, but did it at second-hand through Krishnaism, or (*b*) that Krishnaism borrowed from Buddhism legends which the Buddhists had already assimilated from the Christians. I think we have now seen reason enough to decide that such theories are impossible. It remains to investigate the theory of doctrinal as distinct from mythical assimilations.

XVIII.

§ 1. Professor Weber has more than once advanced the opinion that, in addition to the mythical narratives which we have discussed in the foregoing sections, Krishnaism borrowed from Christianity certain of its leading doctrines, in particular its insistence on the need and value of " faith ", and its monotheistic view of its deity. One of his earlier statements of this opinion has been already cited (Sec. x) ; and he has maintained it to the last. In the " Birth Festival " treatise, after enumerating the alleged myth-imitations, he continues :

" Their Christian origin is as little to be doubted as the conclusion [*Ind. Studien*, i, 423] that ' in general the later exclusively monotheistic tendency of the Indian sects who worship a particu-

¹ *Essai*, p. 319.

lar personal God, pray for his favor, and trust in him (*bhakti* and *sraddha*), was influenced by the acquaintance made by the Indians with the corresponding teaching of Christianity'; or, in the words of Wilson (quoted in Mrs. Speir's 'Life in Ancient India', p. 434: cp. my *Abh. über die Rāmatāp. Up.*, p. 277, 360), 'that the remodelling of the ancient Hindu systems into popular forms, and in particular the vital importance of faith, were directly [*sic*] influenced by the diffusion of the Christian religion'."¹

Here, it will be seen, Professor Weber quotes Wilson at secondhand from Mrs. Speir, who cited an Indian magazine. She made the blunder of writing "directly" for "indirectly"; but she states fairly enough that Wilson only "hints" his opinion; and this the Professor overlooks, though doubtless he would have given Wilson's passage more fully if he had been able to lay his hands on it. Its effect is so different when quoted in full that I think it well so to transcribe it:

"It is impossible to avoid noticing in the double doctrine of the Gītā an analogy to the double doctrine of the early Christian Church, and the same question as to the merits of contemplative and practical religion engendered many differences of opinion and observance in the first ages of Christianity. These discussions, it is true, grew out of the admixture of the Platonic philosophical notions with the lessons of Christianity, and had long pervaded the east before the commencement of our era; it would not follow, therefore, that the divisions of the Christian Church originated the doctrine of the Hindus, and there is no reason to doubt that in all essential respects the Hindu schools are of a much earlier date: at the same time it is not at all unlikely that the speculations of those schools were reagitated and remodified in the general stimulus which Christianity seems to have given to metaphysical inquiry; and it is not impossible that the attempts to model the ancient systems into a popular form, by engrafting on them, in particular, the vital importance of faith, were indirectly influenced by the diffusion of the Christian religion. It is highly desirable that this subject should be further investigated."²

This, it will be seen, is a very different deliverance from Weber's, and also from what Wilson is made to say in the incomplete and inaccurate quotation of his words. Pro-

¹ Treatise cited, p. 339.

² H. H. Wilson, in review of Schlegel's trans. of the Bhāgavat Gītā, *Orient. Quart. Rev.*, Calcutta, vol. iii; in Works, v, pp. 156-7.

fessor Weber, without bringing forward any important new facts, makes a positive assertion where Wilson expressed himself very cautiously and doubtfully, and does not meet (having apparently not seen) Wilson's propositions as to the antiquity in India of the general pantheistic doctrine which prevailed in the East before Christianity.¹

Before we come to a decision on the point at issue, it may be well to see what it was exactly that Wilson understood by the doctrine of faith, which he thought *might possibly* be *indirectly* influenced by Christianity, and which Weber holds to be without doubt entirely derived thence. In his Oxford lectures he declares that in the Purânas the doctrine of the sufficiency of faith is

“carried to the very utmost abuse of which it is susceptible. Entire dependency on Krishna, or any other favorite deity, not only obviates the necessity of virtue, but it sanctifies vice. Conduct is wholly immaterial. It matters not how atrocious a sinner a man may be, if he paints his face, his breast, his arms, with certain sectarial marks, or, which is better, if he brands his skin permanently with them with a hot iron stamp; if he is constantly chanting hymns in honor of Vishnu; or, what is equally efficacious, if he spends hours in the simple reiteration of his name or names; if he die with the word Hari or Râma or Krishna on his lips, and the thought of him in his mind, he may have lived a monster of iniquity—he is certain of heaven.”²

Now, it cannot be denied that all this bears a very close resemblance to the practical applications of the Christian doctrine of faith in European history, and that that is of all Christian doctrines the one which may with most plausi-

¹ Professor Weber's misunderstanding as to Wilson's view on *bhakti* seems to have become a fixed idea. In a later letter to Dr. John Muir on the subject, he speaks yet again of “Wilson's theory that the *bhakti* of the later Hindu sects is essentially a Christian doctrine”. Wilson, as we have seen, had no such opinion. Dr. Muir might well write: “I am not aware in which, if in any, of his writings Professor Wilson may have expressed the opinion that the Indian tenet of *bhakti* is essentially Christian. I find no express statement to this effect in his ‘Sketch of the Religious Sects of the Hindus’, though he there says that ‘the doctrine of the efficacy of *bhakti* seems to have been an important innovation upon the primitive system of the Hindu religion’” (Art. in *Indian Antiquary*, March, 1875, vol. iv, p. 79).

² “Two Lectures on the Religious Practices . . . of the Hindus,” Oxford, 1840, p. 31, = “Works”, ii, 75. See also Works, i, 368.

bility be held to have originated, in Europe, with the New Testament. If our object were merely to discredit that religion, we might very readily allow the claim that it gave rise to such a teaching alike in Europe and Asia; and indeed, if there had been no traces of it in India before the Purânas, it would be difficult to gainsay the Christian hypothesis. An impartial inquiry, however, reveals that the doctrine of salvation by faith is already fully laid down in the Bhâgavat Gîtâ; and the Christian hypothesis involves the conclusion that that famous document is a patchwork of Christian teaching. Now, there are decisive reasons for rejecting such a view.

§ 2. Its most confident and systematic expositor is Dr. F. Lorinser, a German translator of the Gîtâ, whose position is that "the author [of the Gîtâ] knew the New Testament writings, which, so far as he thought fit, he used, and of which he pieced into his work many passages (if not textually, then following the sense and adapting it to his Indian fashion of composition), though these facts have hitherto not been observed or pointed out by anyone".¹ This startling proposition, which is nominally supported by citation of the general opinions of Professor Weber, rests deductively on early Christian statements as to the introduction of Christianity into "India", and inductively on a number of parallels between the New Testament and the Gîtâ. The statements in question are those of Eusebius as to the mission of Pantænus, and of Chrysostom as to an "Indian" translation of the Gospels or other Christian writings. The narrative of Eusebius is as follows:

"The tradition is, that this philosopher was then in great eminence He is said to have displayed such ardour and so zealous a disposition, respecting the divine word, that he was constituted a *herald* of the Gospel to the nations of the East, and advanced even as far as India. There were even there yet many evangelists of the word, who were ardently striving to employ their inspired zeal after the apostolic example, to increase and build up the divine word. *Of these Pantænus is said to have been one, and to have come as far as the Indies.* And

¹ *Die Bhagavad-Gita, übersetzt und erläutert von Dr. F. Lorinser, Breslau, 1869, p. 272.* (The argumentative appendix has, I believe, been translated in part in the *Indian Antiquary*, October, 1873, vol. i, pp. 283—296.)

the report is that he there found his own arrival anticipated by some who were acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew, to whom Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached, and had left them the Gospel of Matthew in the Hebrew, which was also preserved until this time. Pantænus, after many praiseworthy deeds, was finally at the head of the Alexandrian school."¹

The statement of Chrysostom, again, is that "the Syrians, and the Egyptians, and the Indians, and the Persians, and the Ethiopians, and innumerable (*μυρία*) other peoples were taught, though barbarians, to be philosophers, by his [John's] teachings translated into their own language".²

On this latter record Dr. Lorinser comments :—

"It may be argued that the significance of this testimony is weakened by the addition 'and innumerable other peoples'. This apprehension, however, disappears when we consider that all the translations here specified by name, with the single exception of the *Indian*, are both heard of otherwise and still in existence. In any case, Chrysostom would not here have explicitly named the Indians if he had not had positive knowledge of an existing translation in their language. Chrysostom died in the year 407 A.C. The Indian translation of which he had knowledge must have existed *at least* a hundred years earlier, for the knowledge of it to reach him in those days. Apparently, however, Pantænus, the teacher of Clemens Alexandrinus, of whom we know that he had himself been in India, had already brought this knowledge to the West. The origin of this translation may thus possibly go back to the first or second century after Christ."³

The most astonishing point about this astonishing argument is that Dr. Lorinser seems entirely unaware that the names "India" and "Indians" were frequently applied by ancient writers to countries and peoples other than India proper. Yet not only is this general fact notorious,⁴ but

¹ "Eccles. Hist.", v, 10 (Bohn trans.).

² Comm. in S. Joann., Hom. ii (i), 2, in Cap. i, v. 1 (Migne, *Ser. Gr.* lix, 32).

³ Work cited, pp. 268-9.

⁴ "After the time of Herodotus the name India was applied to all lands in the south-western world, to east Persia and south Arabia, to Ethiopia, Egypt, and Lybia, in short, to all dark-skinned peoples, who in Homer's time, as Ethiopians, were allotted the whole horizon (*Lichtrand*) of the South. Virgil and others signify by India just the East; but most commonly it stands for southern Arabia and Ethiopia." (Von Bohlen, *Das alte Indien*, i, 9-10, citing Virg. *Æn.*

it has been made the occasion of much dispute as to what country it was that Pantænus visited, even orthodox opinion finally coming round to the view that it was not India at all. Mosheim wrote that most of the learned had held it to be Eastern India proper, an opinion countenanced by the statement of Jerome that Pantænus was sent *apud Brachmanas*.¹ But the name Brachman was, as he further pointed out, used as loosely by the ancients as that of India; and the evidence of Jerome further varies from that of Eusebius in stating² that the "Indians" had sent delegates to Alexandria asking for a Christian instructor, and that Bishop Demetrius sent Pantænus. That Indian Brahmins should have sent such a deputation is simply inconceivable. Vales, Holstein, and others accordingly surmised that the mission was to Ethiopia or Alysinnia, which was constantly called India by the ancients. Mosheim, rationally arguing that the Hebrew translation of Matthew must have been used by Jews, decided that the delegates came from a Jewish-Christian colony, which he located in Arabia Felix, because he held that to have been the scene of Bartholomew's "Indian" labors.³ It matters little which view we take here, so long as we recognise the absurdity of the view that the locality was India. Indeed, even if the "Indies" of Eusebius had meant India, the testimony is on the face of it a mere tradition.

The same arguments, it need hardly be said, dispose of the testimony of Chrysostom, who unquestionably alluded to some of the many peoples of Western Asia or Africa commonly dubbed Indians. If further disproof of

viii, 705; *Georg.* ii, 116, 172; Diodor., iii, 31; Lucan, ix, 517; Fabric., *Cod. Apoc. N. T.* p. 669; Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, i, 23, 40, 404; ii, 129.) Von Bohlen states that the name India first appears among the Greeks in Æschylus, *Supplic.* 282. There the reference is clearly not to India proper, the words running: "I hear that the wandering Indians ride on pannier-packed camels fleet as steeds, in their land bordering on the Ethiopians".

¹ *Epist.* 83, quoted by Mosheim.

² *Catal. Scriptor. Ecclesiast.* c. 36, cited by Mosheim.

³ "Commentaries on the affairs of the Christians", Vidal's trans. ii, 6-8, note, (citing Tillemont, *In Vit. Barthol.* in *Mem. Hist. Eccles.* i, 1. 60-1). In the original, pp. 205-7. See also Murdock's note in his trans. of Mosheim's History, Cent. ii, part i, c. i, § 3. Compare the admissions of Gieseler ("Compendium," i, 79, 121, notes), who thinks Thomas and Bartholomew probably only went to Yemen.

Dr. Lorinser's extravagant assumption be needed, it lies in the fact that even Tertullian, in his reckless and worthless catalogue of the nations that had embraced Christianity, a list which includes Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the people of "Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia and Pamphylia"—the whole Pentecostal list—does not say a word of India;¹ and that Irenæus in his allegation as to the spread of the faith does not do so either.² In any case, neither Chrysostom nor Eusebius, nor yet Jerome, pretends that the "Indians" had a complete translation of the books of the New Testament; and nothing less than a complete translation in an Indian tongue is wanted for Dr. Lorinser's argument, as we shall see when we examine his "parallel passages". He admits, in a piquant passage, that it is impossible to say in what dialect the translation was made, whether in one of those spoken by the people or in Sanskrit, then as now only known to the Brahmans. Dr. Lorinser observes that it is all one (*gleichgültig*) to him. I do not doubt it!

§ 3. An argument for the derivation of the teaching in the Bhagavat Gîtâ from the New Testament has the advantage, to begin with, involved in the difficulty of fixing the time of the composition of the Gîtâ from either internal or external evidence. There can be no doubt that, like so many other Hindu writings, it was formerly dated much too early. Ostensibly an episode in the great epic, the Mahâbhârata, it stands out from the rest of that huge poem as a specifically theological treatise, cast in the form of a dialogue which is represented as taking place between Krishna and the warrior Arjuna on the eve of a great battle. I may say at once that I cannot regard it as having been composed at the same time as the portion of the poem in which it is inserted. Mr. K. T. Telang, the able Hindu scholar who has translated it for the "Sacred Books of the East" series,³ and who argues persuasively for its antiquity, confessedly holds "not without diffidence"—indeed, very doubtfully—to the view that it is a genuine "portion of the original Mahâbhârata".⁴

¹ *Adversus Judæos*, c. 7.

² *Adv. Hæreses*, c. 10.

³ Vol. viii, 1882.

⁴ *Introd.*, pp. 2, 5, 6. In the introduction to his earlier translation of the Bhagavat Gîtâ in blank verse (Bombay, 1875), Mr. Telang took up a stronger position; but even there he declared: "I own I

Where he is diffident, the rest of us, I fear, must be disbelieving. There is much force in Mr. Telang's contention that the Gîtâ belongs to a period before that of the system-makers; indeed the flat contradiction, to which he alludes,¹ between Krishna's declarations on the one hand that to him "none is hateful, none dear",² and on the other hand that a whole series of doers of good are "dear" to him³—this even raises a doubt as to the entire homogeneity of the document. But it is one thing to reckon the Gîtâ ancient, and another to regard it as a portion of the "original Mahâbhârata". It is not easily to be believed that a piece of writing in which Krishna is not only represented as the Supreme Deity but pantheistically treated, can belong originally to the epic in which he is a heroic demi-god. It must surely belong to the period of his Brahmanic supremacy.

Where *that* period begins, however, it is still impossible to say with any approach to precision; and, as Professor Weber remarks, Dr. Lorinser's thesis is thus far unhampered by any effective objections from Hindu chronology. It must, however, stand criticism on its own merits, and we have seen how abjectly it breaks down in respect of the patristic testimony to the existence of an "Indian" mission, and an "Indian" translation of part of the New Testament, in the first Christian centuries. It is morally certain that no such translation existed, even of the Gospels, not to speak of the entire canon, which Dr. Lorinser strangely seems to think is covered by his quotation from Chrysostom. His argument from history being thus annihilated, it remains to be seen whether he succeeds any better in his argument from resemblance. It is not, I think, difficult to show that, even if the Gîtâ were composed within the Christian era, it really owes nothing to Christianity.

The derivation of the Gîtâ's teaching from the Christian Scriptures Dr. Lorinser claims to prove by about one

find it quite impossible to satisfy myself that there are more than a very few facts in the history of Sanskrit literature which we are entitled to speak of as 'historically certain' (p. vii). The earlier essay, however, contains a very able and complete refutation of Dr. Lorinser's arguments, well worthy the attention of those who are disposed for a further investigation of the subject.

¹ P. 12.

² Gîtâ, ix, 29.

³ *Id.*, xii.

hundred parallel passages, in which Gîtâ sentences are matched by texts selected from nearly all the New Testament books. He divides them into three classes: (1) passages in which, with differences of expression, the sense coincides; (2) passages in which a characteristic expression of the New Testament appears with a different application; and (3) passages in which expression and meaning coincide. The nature of these "coincidences" can be best set forth by a simple selection of about a score of them. I have made this quite impartially, taking the majority consecutively as they happen to stand at the heads of the sections, and picking out the remainder because of their comparative importance. It would be easy to make a selection which would put Dr. Lorinser's case in a much worse light.

BHAGAVAT GITA.

NEW TESTAMENT.

(First Order.)

The deluded man who, restraining the organs of action, continues to think in his mind about objects of sense, is called a hypocrite.¹ iii, 6.

But those who carp at my opinion and do not act upon it, know them to be devoid of discrimination, deluded as regards all knowledge, and ruined. iii, 32.

Every sense has its affections and its aversions towards its objects fixed. One should not become subject to them, for they are one's opponents. iii, 34.

[Arjuna speaks]: Later is your [Krishna's] birth; the birth of the sun is prior. How then shall I understand that you declared (this) first? [Krishna answers]: I have

I say unto you that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Matt. v, 28.

A man that is heretical [after a first and second admonition] refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned. Titus, iii, 10-11.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof. Romans, vi, 12. Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, etc. *Id.* viii, 7.

The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? John, viii, 57.

I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye [*i.e.*, the

¹ I have followed throughout the prose translation of Mr. Telang; and I have occasionally given in brackets parts of a passage elided by Dr. Lorinser as not bearing on his point. The context clearly ought to be kept in view.

passed through many births, O Arjuna ! and you also. I know them all, but you, O terror of your foes, do not know them. iv, 4.

I am born age after age, for the protection of the good, and for the destruction of evil-doers and the establishment of piety. iv, 8.

He who is ignorant and devoid of faith, and whose self is full of misgivings, is ruined. iv, 40.

To me none is hateful, none dear. ix, 29.

Jews] know not whence I came, or whither I go. *Id.*, 14.

To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. John, xviii, 37. The devil sinneth from the beginning. 1 John, iii, 8.

He that believeth [and is baptised] shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. Mark, xvi, 16.

There is no respect of persons with God. Rom. ii, 11.

(*Second Order.*)

For should I at any time not engage without sloth in action, [men would follow in my path from all sides, O son of Pritha !] *If I did not perform actions*, these worlds would be destroyed. I should be the cause of caste interminglings. I should be ruining these people. iii, 23-4.

Even those men who *always act on this opinion of mine* full of faith, and without carping [“*die lästern nicht*” in Lorinser] are released from all actions. iii, 31.

. . . . me *the goal* [“*der Weg*” in Lorinser¹] than which there is nothing higher. vii, 18.

My Father *worketh even until now, and I work*. John v, 17. [*As against passage in brackets*]: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross. Matt. xvi, 24.

If a man *keep my word* [he shall never see death]. John, viii, 51.

. . . . that the word of God be not blasphemed. Titus, ii, 5. [*Compare the preceding sentences of the epistle.*]

I am *the way*. . . . No one cometh unto the Father, but by me. John, xiv, 6.

¹ Dr. John Muir, than whom there is no higher authority in this country, rejects Dr. Lorinser's translation of “way” and anticipates Telang's:—“Here, as in many other passages of the Indian writings, [the word] certainly signifies ‘the place reached by going’, ‘resort’, ‘refuge’.” *Indian Antiquary*, March, 1875 (vol. iv), p. 80. To the same effect, Professor Tiele, in *Theolog. Tijdschr.*, 1877, p. 75 n.

(Third Order.)

To the man of knowledge I am dear above all things, and he is dear to me. vii, 17.

I am not manifest to all. vii, 26.

It [*i.e.* divine knowledge] is to be apprehended directly, and is easy to practise. ix, 2.

I am [the father of this universe, the mother, the creator, the grandsire, the thing to be known, the means of sanctification, the syllable Om (= past, present, and future) the *Rik*, *Saman*, and *Yajus* also] *the goal*, [the sustainer, the lord, the supervisor, the residence, the asylum, the friend,] the source and that in which it merges, [the support, the receptacle, and the inexhaustible seed]. I cause heat, and I send forth and stop showers. [I am immortality, and also death; and I, O Arjuna! am that which is and that which is not.] ix, 18, 19.

[That devotee who worships me abiding in all beings, holding that all is one,] lives in me, however he may be living. vi, 30.

But those who worship me with devotion (dwell) in me, and I too in them. ix, 29.¹

He [that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that] loveth me . . . and I will love him. John, xiv, 21.

No man hath seen God at any time. John, i, 18.

Whom no man hath seen, nor can see. 1 Tim. vi, 18.

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

I am the way [and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me]. John, xiv, 6.

I am the first and the last, [and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades]. Rev. i, 17-18.

He maketh his sun to rise [on the evil and the good], and sendeth rain [on the just and the unjust]. Matt. v, 45.

[As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so] he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me. John, vi, 57.

I in them, and they in me [that they may be perfected into one]. John, xvii, 23.

¹ As to the passage "They who devoutly worship me are in me, and I in them", Dr. Muir writes: "In the Rig Veda some passages occur which in part convey the same or a similar idea. Thus in ii, 11, 12, it is said: 'O Indra, we sages have been in thee'; and in x, 142, 1: 'This worshipper, O Agni, hath been in thee: O son of strength, he hath no other kinship'; and in viii, 47, 8: 'We, O Gods, are in you as if fighting in coats of mail. . . . And in viii,

I am the origin of all, and all moves on through me. x, 8.

For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. Rom. xi, 36.

I am the beginning, and the middle and the end also of all beings. x, 20.

I am the first and the last.¹ Rev. i, 17.

The first comment that must occur to every instructed reader on perusing these and the other "parallels" advanced by Dr. Lorinser, is that on the one hand the parallels are very frequently such as could be made by the dozen between bodies of literature which have unquestionably never been brought in contact, so strained and far-fetched are they, and that on the other they are discounted by quite as striking parallels between New Testament texts and pre-Christian pagan writings. Take a few of the more notable of these latter parallels, in the order in which the New Testament passages occur above.

He who means to do an injury has already done it. SENECA, *De Irâ*, i, 3.

Though you may take care of her body, the [coerced wife's] mind is adulterous, nor can she be preserved, unless she is willing. OVID, *Amor.*, iii, 4, 5.

Not only is he who does evil bad, but also he who thinks to do evil. ÆLIAN, *Var. Hist.*, xiv, 28.

In every man there are two parts: the better and superior part, which rules, and the worse and inferior part, which serves, and the ruler is always to be preferred to the servant. PLATO, *Laws*, B. v (Jowett's tr., v, 298).

[In B. iv of the *Laws* (Jowett, v, 288-9) is a long sentence declaring that the contemner of right conduct is "deserted by God" and in the end "is utterly destroyed, and his family and city with him".]

The unruly passions of anger and desire are contrary and inimical to the reason. CICERO, *Tusculan Questions*, iv, 5.

I [Cyrus] am persuaded I am born by divine providence to undertake this work. HERODOTUS, i, 126.

The Muses . . . whom Mnemosyne . . . bare, to be a

81, 32, the worshipper says to Indra, 'thou art ours, and we thine'. " (*Ind. Ant.*, as cited, p. 80).

¹ Dr. Lorinser also brackets the Christian "I am the Alpha and the Omega" with the Gîtâ "I am A among the letters" (x. 33). But Mr. Telang points out (B. G. trans. in verse, *Introd.* p. lv) that the Indian writer merely takes A as the principal letter. Note that the Deity is already "the first and the last" in Isaiah (so-called):—xli, 4; xliii, 10; xlvi, 12. Why should not the Brahmans have studied the prophets?

means of oblivion of ills, and a rest from cares. HESIOD, *Theogony*, 52-5.

The Gods look with just eyes on mortals. OVID, *Metamorph.* xiii, 70.

God is verily the savior of all, and the producer of things, in whatever way they happen in the world. ARISTOTLE, *De Mundo*, 6.

Zeus, cause of all, doer of all What can be done by mortals without Zeus? ÆSCHYLUS, *Agam.* 1461—5 (1484—8).

All things are full of Jove: he cherishes the earth; my songs are his care. VERGIL, *Eclogue* iii, 60.

The temperate man is the friend of God, for he is like to him. PLATO, *Laws*, B. iv (Jowett's tr. v, 289.)

Not to every one doth Apollo manifest himself, but only to the good. CALLIMACHUS, *Hymn to Apollo*.

It is enough for God that he be worshipped and loved. SENECA, *Epist.* xlvii, 18. Cp. xcv, 50.

God, seeing all things, himself unseen. PHILEMON, *Frag.*

God, holding in his hand the beginning, middle, and end, of all that is. PLATO, *Laws*, B. iv. (Jowett, v, 288).

Zeus was, Zeus is, Zeus shall be. *Ancient Song*, in PAUSANIAS, x, 12.

God comes to men: nay, what is closer, he comes into them. SENECA, *Epistle* 73.

God is within you. EPICETUS, *Dissert.* i, 14, 14.

Pythagoras thought that there was a soul mingling with and pervading all things. CICERO, *De Natura Deorum*, i, 11.

Such parallels as these, I repeat, could be multiplied to any extent from the Greek and Latin classics alone; while the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" furnishes many more. But is it worth while to heap up the disproof of a thesis so manifestly idle, so nearly childish? It is difficult to understand how a scholar, knowing the facts, can hope to prove such a proposition by such evidence, much more, how he can bring himself to believe in his own case. More than half the resemblances are such as could be manufactured by the dozen between any two books dealing with similar questions. On Dr. Lorinser's principle, Jesus and his followers were indebted to pagans for very much of their ethical teaching—as indeed they were unquestionably indebted for a good many of their theological ideas, not to speak of the narrative myths. But surely a very small endowment of common sense, to say nothing of scholarship, suffices to make it clear that certain common-places of ethics as well as of theology are equally inevitable

conclusions in all religious systems that rise above savagery.¹ Four hundred years before Jesus, Plato (*Laws*, v) declared that it was very difficult for the rich to be good: does anyone believe that Jesus or any other Jew needed Plato's help to reach the same notion? Nay, does any one even doubt that such a close coincidence as the comparison of the human soul to a team of horses in the Katha Upanishad and Plato's *Phaedrus*, pointed out to Dr. Lorinser by Professor Windisch,² might not be quite independent of borrowing?

If all this were not clear enough *a priori*, it is sufficiently obvious from the context of most of the passages quoted from the Gitâ, as well as from the general drift of its exposition, that the Hindu system is immeasurably removed from the Christian in its whole theosophical inspiration. We are asked to believe that Brahmans expounding a highly developed pantheism went assiduously to the (unattainable) New Testament for the wording of a number of their propositions, pantheistic and other, while assimilating absolutely nothing of distinctively Christian doctrine; choosing to borrow from the Christians their expressions of doctrines which had been in the world for centuries, including some which lay at the root of Buddhism—as that of the religious yoke being easy—though utterly rejecting the Christian doctrine of atonement and blood sacrifice and the Christian claim as a whole. Such a position is only possible to a mesmerised believer,³ and it is incredible that it can ever

¹ In Dr. John Muir's valuable little pamphlet "Religious and Moral Sentiments freely translated from Indian Writers" (published in Thomas Scott's series) will be found a number of extracts from the Mahâbhârata and other Sanskrit works, which, on the Christian theory, must have been borrowed from the Gospels. Thus in the epic (v, 1270) we have: "The Gods regard with delight the man who . . . when struck does not strike again". If this be Christian (it is at least as old as Plato: see the *Gorgias*) whence came this: "The good, when they promote the welfare of others, expect no reciprocity"? (iii, 16796). It is plainly as native to the Indian poet as is the "Golden Rule", thus stated: "Let no man do to another that which would be repugnant to himself; this is the sum of righteousness; the rest is according to inclination". But Christians are kept carefully in ignorance of the fact that the "Golden Rule" is common to all literatures, and was an ancient saw in China before Jesus was born.

² Cited by Dr. Muir in *Ind. Ant.* as last cited, p. 78.

³ It appears from Dr. Lorinser's notes (p. 82) that he thinks the

have any scientific acceptance. Even were ancient India in doctrinal communication with Christendom at the time in question, which we have seen it was not, it lies on the face of the case that the Brahmanic theosophy was already elaborated out of all comparison with the Christian. It had reached systematic (even if inconsistent) pantheism while Christianity was but vaguely absorbent of the pantheism around it. The law of religious development in this regard is simple. A crude and naïf system, like the Christism of the second Gospel and the earlier form of the first, borrows inevitably from the more highly evolved systems with which it comes socially in contact, absorbing myth and mystery and dogma till it becomes as sophisticated as they. It then becomes capable in turn of dominating primitive systems, as Christianity supplanted those of northern Europe. But not even at the height of its influence, much less in the second century, was Christianity capable of dominating Hindu Brahmanism, with its ingrained pantheism and its mass of myth and ritual, sanctioned in whole or in part by documents of the most venerable antiquity. Be the Gîtâ pre-Christian or post-Christian, it is unmixedly Hindu. Dr. Lorinser's thesis is a chimæra.

§4. When it is thus seen that all the arguments to prove imitation of the Gospels in the Bhagavat Gîtâ are baseless, it is hardly necessary to deal at any length with Professor Weber's favorite general argument as to the necessary derivation of the doctrines of *bhakti* and *sraddhâ* from Christianity. The very proposition betrays some of the "judicial blindness" labored under by Dr. Lorinser. It has never occurred to either theorist to ask how the doctrine of salvation by faith came to be developed in Christism, or whether the same religious tendencies could not give rise to the same phænomenon in similar social conditions elsewhere. I cannot burden this already over-lengthy treatise with an examination of the development of the Christian doctrine of faith from Judaic germs. It must suffice to say that the principle is already clearly indicated in the prophets;¹ that faith in divine protection

author of the Gîtâ may have profited by a study of the Christian fathers, as Clemens Alexandrinus and Athenagoras! He further implies that the Hindu had read the book of *Wisdom* in the Septuagint!

¹ Micah, iii, 11; Isa., xxvi, 3; 1, 7-10; Jer. vii, 14; Nahum, i, 7; Zeph. iii, 12; Psalms, *passim*.

is expressed in the early documents of other Eastern systems; and that the tendency to believe in the all-sufficiency of devotion, and the needlessness of personal merit, is noted by Plato (to name no other), and is in some degree really an inevitable phase of all systems at some stages. It found special development under Christism in a decaying society, in which the spirit of subjection had eaten away the better part of all self-reliance; and just such a state of things can be seen to have existed in many parts of India from the earliest historic times. It would be small credit to Christianity if it *were* responsible for the introduction into India of a doctrine so profoundly immoral in principle, so demoralising in practice; but as it happens, the historic facts discountenance the hypothesis. For though we cannot trace all the stages by which the doctrine of faith reached its full development, we do know that the germs of it lie in the Veda. Take first the testimony of Dr. John Muir:

“Dr. Lorinser considers (p. 56) that two Sanskrit words denoting faithful and reverential religious devotion (*sraddhā* and *bhakti*), which often occur in the Bhagavad Gītā, do not convey original Indian conceptions, but are borrowed from Christianity. This may or may not be true of *bhakti*; but *sraddhā* (together with its cognates, participial and verbal) is found even in the hymns of the Rig Veda in the sense of belief in the existence and action of a deity, at least, if not also of devotion to his service. In pp. 103 ff. of the fifth volume of my “Original Sanskrit Texts” a number of passages are cited and translated in which the word occurs, together with a great variety of other expressions in which the worshipper’s trust in, and affectionate regard for, the God Indra are indicated. He is called a friend and brother; his friendship and guidance are said to be sweet; he is spoken of as a father and the most fatherly of fathers, and as being both a father and a mother; he is the helper of the poor, and has a love for mortals.”¹

These remarks are endorsed by Mr. Telang, who cites other Vedic passages;² and again by Professor Tiele:—

“The opinion that not only did Christian legends find an entry among the Indian sects of later times, but that even peculiarly Christian ideas exercised an influence on their dogmatics or philo-

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, iv, 81. Also in Dr. Muir’s pamphlet “Relig. and Moral Sentiments”, as cited, p. vi.

² Trans. of B. G. in verse, introd. p. lxxxii.

sophy, that is to say, that the Hindus acquired from the Christians their high veneration for piety or devotion, *bhakti*, and faith, *sraddhâ*—as is contended by Weber (*Indische Studien*, 1850; i, 423), and after him by Nève (*Des Eléments Etrangers du Mythe et du Culte de Krichna*, Paris, 1876, p. 35)—seems to me unjustified. Already in the Rig Veda there is frequent mention of faith (*sraddhâ*) in the same sense as is given to that word later; and although we cannot speak actually of *bhakti*, which there as yet only means ‘division’ or ‘apportionment’, yet this has already in very old sources the sense of ‘consecration’, (*toewijding*), ‘fidelity’ (*trouw*), ‘love resting on belief’ (*op geloof rustende liefde*).”¹

We have already seen that the idea of the God entering into his worshippers existed in the Veda (as it notoriously did among the ancient Greeks), though that too was held by Dr. Lorinser to be of Christian derivation; and the one rebuttal reinforces the other. We have also seen how completely Professor Weber was mistaken as to the opinion of Wilson. It only remains to say that in the rejection of Weber’s own theory we are fully countenanced by M. Barth;² and that Dr. Lorinser’s special proposition is scouted by M. Senart.³ The Christian theory on this as on other heads may thus fairly be said to be ruled out of court by logic and scholarship.

XIX.

There is, I think, only one more proposition as to the influence of Christianity on Krishnaism that calls for our attention; and that can be soon disposed of. Among the ricketty theses so long cherished by Professor Weber, not the least paternally favored is his interpretation of a certain mythic tale in the Mahâbhârata,⁴ to the effect that once upon a time Nârada, and before him other mythic personages, had visited the Svetadvîpa, or “White Island”, beyond the “Sea of Milk”; had there found a race of perfect men, who worshipped the One God; and had there received the knowledge of that God from a supernatural voice. This, the only record that can be pretended to look like a Hindu mention of the importation of Chris-

¹ Art. *Christus en Krishna*, in *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1877, p. 66.

² “Religions of India”, pp. 218–220, 223.

³ *Essai*, pp. 342–3, n.

⁴ xii, 12702, ff.

tianity, is fastened upon by Weber and others as a piece of genuine history; and the "White Island" (which might also mean the "island of the white ones") is assumed to be Alexandria, for no other reason than that Alexandria seems the likeliest place whence the knowledge of Christianity could come.¹ Lassen, who followed Weber in assuming that the legend was a historic testimony, surmised on the other hand that Svetadvīpa would be Parthia, "because the tradition that the Apostle Thomas preached the gospel in that country is an old one". On the other hand, however, he thought it just possible that there had been an apostolic mission to India, though he admitted that it was not without weighty reasons that many ecclesiastical historians held the "India" of Bartholomew and Pantænus to be Yemen. We are thus left to believe, if we choose, that Christianity was very early imported by Christians into India, and yet that Brahmans went elsewhere to learn it: so loosely can a great scholar speculate. It is only worth noting as a further sample of the same laxity that Lassen thought the hypothesis about Svetadvīpa was put on firm ground (*eines festen Grundes*) by citing the fact that in the late Kūrma Purāna there is a legend about Siva appearing in the beginning of the Kali Yuga or Evil Age to teach the "Yoga" system on the Himalayas, and having four scholars, "White", "White horse", "White hair", and "White blood". In the Mahābhārata legend the Yoga is represented as the source of the true knowledge; hence it follows that both stories refer to the same thing, which is Christianity!²

It will readily be believed that these assumptions find small favor with later investigators. Telang in India, Tiele in Holland, Senart and Barth in France, all reject them. Mr. Telang's criticism is especially destructive.

"I cannot see the flimsiest possible ground for identifying

¹ Weber, *Ueber die Krishnajanmāshantā*, pp. 318-321; *Indische Studien*, i, 400; *Indische Streifen*, ii, 21. Lorinser, as cited. Weber's view is shared by the French Catholic scholar, Nève, who says "It is even certain, at least highly probable, that the White Island . . . is Alexandria" (*Des Eléments Etrangers du Mythe et du Culte de Krichna*, Paris, 1876, p. 24, quoted by Tiele, *Theolog. Tijdschr.*, as cited, p. 70). I regret I have not been able to meet with M. Nève's book, which is not in the British Museum. It does not appear, however, to have added anything to the German arguments.

² *Indische Alterthumskunde*, ii (1849), 1099-1101.

the Svetadvîp of the legend with Alexandria, or Asia Minor, or the British Isles [this has been done by Col. Wilford, *As. Res.* xi] or any other country or region in this world. The Dvîp is in the first place stated to lie to the north of the Kshîrasamudra; and to the north-west of Mount Meru, and above it by thirty-two thousand yojans. I should like to know what geography has any notion of the quarter of this earth where we are to look for the Sea of Milk and the Mount of Gold. Consider next the description of the wonderful people inhabiting this wonderful Dvîp. [Sanskrit quoted.] It will be news to the world that there were in Alexandria or elsewhere a whole people without any organs of sense, who ate nothing, and who entered the sun, whatever that may mean! Remember, too, that the instruction which Nârada receives in this wonderful land is not received from its inhabitants, but from Bhagavân, from God himself. Nor let it be forgotten that the doctrines which the deity there announces to Nârada cannot be shown to have any connexion with Christianity. On the contrary, I think it must be at once admitted that the whole of the prelection addressed to Nârada bears on its face its essentially Indian character, in the reference to the three qualities, to the twenty-five primal principles, to the description of final emancipation as absorption or entrance into the Divinity, and various other matters of the like character. Against all this what have we to consider? Why, nothing more than the description of the inhabitants as white, and as *ekânta*, which, Professor Weber thinks, means monotheists (*Sed quære*). It appears to me that the story is a mere work of the imagination."¹

The details as to the supernatural character of the inhabitants of the White Island, be it observed, are ignored by both Weber and Lassen, who pursue the Ephemeric method. Professor Tiele emphatically endorses Telang:

"With all respect for such men as Lassen and Weber, I can hardly conceive of such a species of historical criticism. All the places and persons in the legend are purely mythological: Nârada can as little as his predecessors be reckoned a historical personage." [Quotes Telang.] "We are here in sheer mythology. Svetadvîpa is a land of fable, a paradise, a dwelling of the sun, such as we meet with in so many religious systems; and the white inhabitants, exalted above personal needs, are spirits of light. Nârada receives there a monotheistic revelation, not from the inhabitants, but from the supreme deity himself; but one only needs to glance at the words in which it is con-

¹ "Bhagavat Gita trans. into Eng. blank versè". Introd. pp. xxxiv-v.

veyed, to perceive its Indian character. And whencesoever the poet may have derived this monotheism, at least the legend says nothing as to its being derived from Alexandria or any other religious centre." ¹

Equally explicit is the decision of M. Senart :

"It is certain that all the constituent elements of this story are either clearly mythological or, in the speculative parts, of very ancient origin: both belong to India, apart from any Christian influence. It is another matter to inquire if the use made of the materials, the manner of their application (the *Kâtha Upanishad*, i, sq. shows us, for instance, *Nasiketas* going to the world of *Yama* to seek philosophical instruction) betrays a Western influence, and preserves a vague memory of borrowings made from Christian doctrines. The question cannot be definitively handled save on positive dates, which we do not possess: inductions are extremely perilous. It has been sought to show (*Muir, Sanskrit Texts*, iv, 248, ff) that the *Pandavas* were the founders of the cult of *Vishnu-Krishna*. Who would venture to see in these "white heroes", whom *Lassen* holds on the other hand to be new comers from the West (*Ind. Alt.* i, 800, ff.) the representatives of a Christian influence on the religious ideas of India?" ²

And *M. Barth* in turn, even while admitting that *Brahmans* may have early "visited the Churches of the East", and that there were probably Christian Churches in India "before the redaction of the *Mahâbhârata* was quite finished", regards the *Svetadvîpa* legend as a "purely fanciful relation".³ Common-sense and scholarship combined, I think, may be held to have settled this question also.

It is needless, for the rest, to go into the question of the manner of the "introduction" of the monotheistic idea into India, or into the point raised by Professor *Weber*⁴ as to the commemoration of the Milk Sea and the White Island, and the veneration of *Nârada*, in the *Krishnaite* ritual. The latter circumstance plainly proves nothing whatever for his case, though he professes to be placed beyond doubt by it; and the idea that *Brahmans* could derive the idea of monotheism from the Christians of Alexandria, after *Athanasius*, is on its merits nothing short of grotesque. It is strange that a disinterested scholar can be led by orthodox habit to see an exemplary

¹ Art. cited, p. 70.

² *Essai*, p. 342, n.

³ "Relig. of India", p. 221.

⁴ *Ueber die K.*, as last cited.

monotheism in the Christian Trinity; and hardly less strange that he should not recognise how naturally the monotheistic idea tends to be evolved in all religious systems. In other connexions, moreover, Professor Weber assumes the Hindus to have been influenced by Greek thought at and after the conquest of Alexander: why then should they not have had the idea from Greek philosophy, not to speak of Persia, or Egypt, before the Christian era? Even Lassen, while holding the Christian theory of Svetadvipa, held that no practical influence on Indian religion could justly be attributed to the Christian missionaries in the early centuries, and rejects the view that the Hindus derived monotheism from Christianity.¹ In fine, it is with the alleged doctrinal influence of Christianity on Krishnaism as we have seen it is with the alleged mythological influence. The assumptions are baseless, the proofs visionary, the argumentation illogical, all along the line.

XX.

It may be well to sum up concisely the results, positive and negative, of the foregoing investigation. They may be roughly classed under these two heads. On the one hand,

1. The cult of Krishna is proved by documentary evidence to have flourished extensively in India before the Christian era, though it has developed somewhat and gained much ground since.

2. In its pre-Christian form it certainly contained some of the myth elements which have been claimed as borrowings from Christianity, such as the myth of Kansa; and that myth was made the subject of dramatic representations.

3. Other leading elements in the myth, such as the up-bringing of the God among herdsmen and herdswomen, are found long before Christianity in the solar legend which attached to Cyrus; while this myth and the story of the God's birth are found strikingly paralleled in the pre-Christian mythology of Greece and Egypt. There

¹ *Ind. Alterthumsk.*, ii, 1102-3, -5, -9.

is thus an overwhelming presumption in favor of the view that these myth elements were Hindu property long before our era.

4. The fact that Krishna is in the Vedas a dæmon, is rightly to be taken as a proof of the antiquity of his cult. Its mythology points clearly to an extra-Brahmanic origin, though it includes myth-motives which closely coincide with Vedic myth-motives, notably those connected with Agni. The attribute of blackness in a beloved deity, too, is a mark of ancient derivation, remarkably paralleled in the case of the Egyptian Osiris, to whom also was attributed a dæmonic origin. The same attribute is bound up with the conception of the God as a "hiding one", which is common to the oldest mythologies.

5. Ritual is far more often the basis of myth than the converse; and the Krishnaite Birth-ritual in itself raises a presumption in favor of the antiquity of the cult.

6. The leading elements in the Krishna myth are inexplicable save on the view that his cultus is ancient. If it were of late and Brahmanic origin it could not conceivably have taken in the legend of the upbringing among herdsmen.

7. The ethical teaching bound up with Krishnaism in the Bhagavat Gitâ is a development, on distinctly Hindu lines, of Vedic ideas, and is no more derived from the New Testament than it is from the literature of Greece and Rome.

8. The close coincidences in the legends of Krishna and Buddha are to be explained in terms of borrowing by the latter from the former, and not *vice versa*.

In fine, we are led to the constructive position that Krishna is an ancient extra-Brahmanic Indian deity, possibly in his earliest phase non-Aryan, who was worshipped by Aryan-speakers long before our era, and, either before or after his adoption by the Brahmans, or more probably in both stages, was connected with myths which are enshrined in the Vedas. He acquired some of the leading qualities of Agni, and supplanted Indra, whose ancient prestige he acquired. All which positively ascertained facts and fully justified conclusions are in violent conflict with the hypothesis that Krishnaism borrowed mythological and theological matter from Christism.

On the other hand,

1. Such phænomena as the Birth-Festival ritual and the pictorial representation of the babe Krishna as suckled by his mother, cannot reasonably be held to be borrowed from the Christians, any more than the myths positively proved to be pre-Christian. On the contrary, since the Christian Virgin-myth and Virgin-and-Child worship are certainly of Pagan origin, and of comparatively late Christian acceptance, and since the Virgin-myth was associated with Buddhism even for Westerns in the time of Jerome, the adoration of a Suckling-God is to be presumed pre-Christian in India (which had a Babe-God in Agni in the Veda); and it becomes conceivable that certain parts of the Christian Birth-legend are derived from Krishnaism. It is an extravagance to suppose the converse.

2. It is equally extravagant to suppose that such a usage as the Krishnaite "name-giving" was borrowed from the short-lived usage of the Church of Alexandria in the matter of combining the Nativity and the Epiphany. A similar usage prevailed in the pre-Christian cult of Hercules, and was presumably widespread.

3. Nor can we without defying all probability suppose that such motives as the "ox-and-ass", the "manger", the "tax-paying", and the "Christophoros", were borrowed by the Hindus from Christianity, which itself unquestionably borrowed the first two and the last from Paganism. The fair surmise is rather that the third was borrowed from India; and the necessary assumption, in the present state of our knowledge, is that the others also were ancient in India, whether or not any of them thence reached Christism in its absorbent stage. It is further possible that the introduction of shepherds into the Christian Birth-legend in the late third Gospel was suggested by knowledge of the Krishna legend. The converse hypothesis has been shown to be preposterous.

4. The myth of the massacre of the innocents is the more to be regarded as pre-Christian in India because it connects naturally with the motive of the attempted slaying of the God-child, and is already found in Semitic mythology in the story of Moses, which is minutely paralleled in one particular in the Egyptian myth of the concealment of Horus in the floating island,¹ and related

¹ Herodotus, ii, 156.

in others to the universal myth of the attempted slaying of the divine child. The natural presumption is that the Hindu massacre of the innocents is as old as the Kansa myth: the onus of disproof lies with those who allege borrowing from the Gospels.

5. The resemblances between certain Krishnaite and Christian miracles, in the same way, cannot be set down to Hindu borrowing from Christism when so many of the parallel myths¹ are certainly not so borrowed, and so many more presumably in the same case. For the rest, some of the parallels alleged on the Christian side are absurdly far-fetched, and bracketed with etymological arguments which are beneath serious notice.

6. The lateness of the Purânic stories in literary form is no argument against their antiquity. Scholars are agreed that late documents often preserve extremely old myth-material.²

In fine, as against the Christian theory, we are led not only to the conviction that the Christian legend is a patchwork of pre-Christian mythology, but to the presumption that some of it came from Krishnaism. And this presumption is fortified by the correlated evidence that much of Christism *did* come from Buddhism. Through that medium, if not directly, it may have derived features of the myth of the Descent into Hell. Christianity, in short, we know to be wholly manufactured within historic times: Krishnaism we have seen to have had a pre-historic existence. Thus every claim made in this connexion by Christians recoils more or less forcibly on their own creed.

CONCLUSION.

I cannot hope, of course, that the foregoing exposition will be found free either from errors or oversights in matter of fact or from miscarriages in theory. Even if there were not the substantial drawback of very imperfect qualification on my part, the circumstance that the essay

¹ It need hardly be mentioned that not a title of the mythical stories connected with Krishna have been mentioned above. They are extremely numerous, and are all either explicable in terms of the sun-myth or mere poetic adornments of the general legend.

² Compare Mr. Lang, "Myth, Ritual, and Religion", i, 291.

was in course of being printed while it was being composed, told against sound arrangement as well as against ripe treatment. Already I have found errors which have passed the press, and omissions which can only be indicated by a postscript. I can but hope that my survey will serve to put the subject in some respects in a clearer light than formerly. On the Christian side the matter had first been grossly obscured by religious fanaticism, and then been even more dangerously darkened by honest and pre-eminent scholarship which labored unconsciously under general Christian prepossessions. On the Freethought side there had been corresponding misconceptions, arising out of the darkness created by the Christians. A strenuous Freethinker of the early part of this century, Godfrey Higgins—a scholar whose energy and learning too often missed their right fruition just because his work was a desperate revolt against a whole world of pious obscurantism—unwittingly put rationalists on a false scent by adopting the view that Krishna had in an ancient legend been crucified, and that it was the missionaries who had contrived to withhold the fact from general European knowledge.¹ His assumption rested mainly on a freak of the archæologist Moor,² who in collecting Hindu God-images had a Christian crucifix presented to him as a native “Wittoba”—a late minor Avatar commonly represented as pierced in one foot. Krishna is indeed represented in the Purânic legend as being slain by an arrow³ which pierced his foot, here comparing curiously with the solar Achilles of Hellenic mythology; but he is not crucified. The later missionaries no doubt have suppressed what they conveniently could; and it is far from certain that we yet know all the relevant modern facts. As long ago as 1626, the Portuguese Jesuit Andrade, in his letters from Tibet to the General of his Order, testifies to the existence of a crucifixion myth in that country. They believe, he tells, in the triune God, but give him absurdly wrong names, and

“They agree with us in saying that Christ” [*i.e.*, their Second

¹ “Anacalypsis,” 1836, i, 144-6 (ch. ii).

² “Hindu Pantheon,” pp. 416—20, and pl. 98.

³ In the Mahâbhârata and the Vishnu Purâna the slayer is the hunter Jara (= “old age”, “decay”). In the Bhagavat Purâna, the slayer is the forester Bhil. In both cases, the slaying is unintentional, but predestined.

Person, known as "the great book"] "died for the saving of the human race; but they do not know the manner of his death, knowing little or nothing of the holy cross, holding only that he died shedding his blood, which flowed from his veins on account of the nails with which he was put to death. It is very true that in their book the cross is represented, with a triangle in the middle, and certain mystic letters which they cannot explain."

Andrade further testifies that there were three or four goldsmiths of the King of Tibet, natives of other countries, to whom he gave money to make a cross; and they told him that in their country, two months' journey off, there were many such crosses as his, some of wood, others of metals. These were usually in the churches, but on five days in the year they were put on the public roads, when all the people worshipped them, strewing flowers and lighting lamps before them; "which crosses in their language they call Iandar".¹

This evidence is remarkably corroborated in 1772 by the Jesuit Giorgi, who, in the very act of maintaining that all Krishnaism was a perversion of Christianity, declares on his own knowledge of Tibet, that in Nepal it was customary in the month of August to raise in honor of the God Indra *cruces amictas abrotono*, crosses wreathed with (?) abrotonus, and to represent him as crucified, and bearing the sign *Telech* on forehead, hands, and feet. He appends two woodcuts. One is a very singular representation of a crucifix, in which the cross seems wholly covered with leaves, and only the head, hands and feet of the crucified one appear, the hands and feet as if pierced with nails, the forehead bearing a mark. In the other, only the upper part of the deity's body is seen, with the arms extended, the hands pierced, the forehead marked, but without any cross.² Godfrey Higgins reproduced and commented on those pictures, but I can find no discussion of the matter in recent writers so far as I have gone, though it appears that the Nepalese usage in question still flourishes. Dr.

¹ *Histoire de ce qui s'est passé au Royaume du Tibet*, trad. d'Italien en François, Paris, 1629, pp. 45-6, 49-50, 51. Cf. p. 84. Andrade will be found cited by M. V. La Croze, *Hist. du Christ. des Indes*, La Haye, 1724, p. 514. La Croze has a theory of Nestorian influences.

² *Alphabetum Thibetanum, Romae*, 1772, p. 203.

H. A. Oldfield states that in the Indra festival in August-September at the present time, "figures of Indra, *with outstretched arms*, are erected all about the city"¹—i.e., Kathmandu—but he gives no further details. Professor Weber would seem to have entirely overlooked the matter, since he makes no allusion to it. This, however, goes for nothing as regards Krishnaism, though Krishna was the supplanter of Indra. The only suggestions of the cross in Krishnaism, apart from its appearance in late sculpture or pictorial art, are in the curious legend² that the God was buried at the meeting point of three rivers—which would form a cross—and in the story of Yasoda binding the child Krishna to a tree, or to two trees. The trees opened and there appeared two Brahmans—a tale which the indignant Giorgi held to be a perversion of the crucifixion of Christ between two thieves.³ The story given by Wilford⁴ of the holy Brahman Mandâvya, who was crucified among thieves in the Deccan, and afterwards named Sulastha or "cross-borne", is stated by the narrator to be told at great length in the "Sayadrichandra, a section of the Scanda Purâna", and to be given briefly in the Mahâbhârata and alluded to in the Bhagavat Purâna "and its commentary"; but as the matter is never mentioned by Weber or other later Sanskritists it must be, I presume, one of the frauds practised on Wilford by his pandits.⁵ The Christian crucifixion story falls to be studied in other lights, one of which was indicated above.

It may be that I have in my turn overstrained the possibilities of Christian indebtedness to Krishnaism as regards some minor myth motives; but at least I have in no way staked the argument on such suppositions. I have not even founded on the decision of Wilson (who is so often

¹ "Sketches from Nepal," 1880, ii, 314.

² Balfour's *Ind. Cycl.*, art. *Krishna*.

³ *Alphab. Thib.*, p. 253. Giorgi held that the detail of Krishna's commending the care of his 1,600 wives to Arjuna was a fiction, based on the records of the multitude of women who followed Christ from Galilee! (p. 259).

⁴ "Asiatic Researches," x, 69.

⁵ On this see Prof. Max Müller's article "On False Analogies in Comparative Theology", in the *Contemporary Review* of April, 1870, reprinted with his "Introduction to the Science of Religion", 1873. I am not aware that there has been any detailed discrimination of the genuine and the spurious in Wilford's compilations.

cited to other purpose by Professor Weber) to the effect that Gnostic Christian doctrines were borrowed from Hinduism in the second century.¹ That there was then "an active communication between India and the Red Sea" is indeed certain; and it is, I think, now beyond doubt that Christism borrowed from Buddhism; but the testimony of Epiphanius,² on which Wilson founds, is clearly worthless, were it only because he uses the term "India" at random, like so many other ancient writers. It is impossible to say what is the force of the reference of Juvenal³ to the "hired Indian, skilled as to the earth and the stars"; and though there is no reason to doubt that India was actually visited by Apollonius of Tyana, and no uncertainty, for instance, as to the embassies sent by Porus to Augustus, and by the king of "Taprobane" to Claudius,⁴ it is one thing to be convinced of the communication, and another to know what were the results. I have made no attempt to build on the fact that the Christians made a sacred place of the Egyptians Matarea,⁵ which certainly suggests knowledge of Mathura. I simply insist on the proved error of the main Christian assumptions, on the utter illegitimacy of the others, and on the reasonable contrary hypothesis in certain cases. As to the question of authority, I have chosen rather to multiply extracts from accredited scholars than to seem to claim weight for my own opinion apart from argument.

In so far as I may have gone astray, I know I lay myself open to that kind of criticism which is bestowed on the mistakes of rationalism by writers whose customary frame of mind on religious matters is the negation of reason. The believer lives for his own part in a thought-world of lawless credulity; but if the unbeliever should in his research deviate even unimportantly from strict

¹ Trans. of Vishnu Purāna, Introd. p. viii.

² *Adversus Manichæos*, i, (*Hæreses*, xlvi sive lxvi).

³ vi, 585.

⁴ Strabo, xv, 1, 74; Pliny, Nat. Hist., vi, 24 (22). It is worth noting that Pliny in this chapter says of the people of Taprobane (doubtless Ceylon) that "Hercules is the deity they worship". This confirms our previous argument as to the antiquity of the hero-God worships.

⁵ 1 Infancy, viii.

historical or verbal accuracy, he is impeached on the instant as an ignoramus or worse. And when he errs grossly, like the unfortunate M. Jacolliot, who, ill-fitted for exact study in any case, seems to have fared worse than Wilford at the hands of Hindu Shapiras, his religious critics point to his miscarriage as a sample of rationalist research in general. Jacolliot's "La Bible dans l'Inde", which has misled Freethinkers inexperienced in Indian matters, was contemptuously dismissed at the start by such critics as Professor Tiele and M. Senart, who are both "sceptics"; but the Rev. Dr. Ellinwood of New York, who seems to get his whole knowledge on the subject from the review article of Professor Max Müller, discusses Jacolliot's extravagances, with the candor of his profession, in a magazine paper under the heading of "The Credulity of Scepticism".¹ Jacolliot's follies are held to put in countenance the follies of Christianity.

The present research ought, of course, to have been undertaken by a Sanskritist. There did not seem, however, the slightest prospect of its being so undertaken in England, since the few Sanskritists are mostly in the Universities,² which in this country do almost no scholarly work that would be unwelcome to the Church. We are still in the thick of bought scholarship, bought silence, bought orthodoxy; and even where our scholarship is not perverted by religious prejudice or paralysed by ecclesiastical control of endowment, it is too often vitiated by the temper of conformity. In matters connected with religion, you cannot as a rule trust an English scholar to say what he knows. There seemed, therefore, nothing for it but that a mere "sceptic" should grapple with the problem in the light of reason and of the English and Continental literature on the subject. For Continental scholars, the Christian view of Krishnaism had been sufficiently over-ruled by Tiele and Senart; but I was fain to hope that something might be done for the English reader, even though the weighty authority of M. Barth had been ignored. It may be that after such a beginning the matter will be taken up, even in the "church-ridden

¹ *Missionary Review of the World*, New York, Feb., 1890.

² Dr. John Muir, whose memory is above my praise, effectively answered Dr. Lorinser; but a controversial undertaking like the present lay outside of his scholarly work.

kingdom of the leopards,"¹ by more competent hands. In that case the credit, such as it is, will lie with the editor of the *National Reformer*, who has opened the pages of his journal to the present essay, and has thus made possible a publication which probably no other English press than his would meddle with.

¹ "In dem aberkirchlichen 'Reiche der Leoparden'," a phrase of Alexander von Humboldt in a letter printed by Professor Weber, *Ueber die Krishnajanmäshtami*, p. 314.

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

- Pp. 6, 34, 73, n. 1. For "Georgi" read "Giorgi" (Lat. "Georgius").
- P. 8, note 3. For "Alterthumskunde" read "Alterthümer". (The work is a translation, by J. F. Fich, of papers from the "Asiatic Researches", with notes and comments by Kleuker.)
- „ 14, line 12. For "the legends" read "no legends".
- „ 16, note 2. For "i, 48" read "i, 42".
- „ 21, line 11 from bottom. For "controversial missionary" read "Christian propagandist".
- „ 36, note 3. For "Sovereign Sun" read "Mother of the Gods".
- „ 46, note 2, end. For "Müller, as last cited," read "Max Müller, 'Natural History of Religion,' 1889".
- „ 54, note 7. The view that Astyages = Azidahaka, which appears to have been first advanced by Lenormant, is scouted by Tiele, "Outlines," p. 179. "Azhi dahâka is a purely Aryan demon, and Astyages has nothing to do with him." This view, however, will have to be tested by the reconstructed theory of Aryan derivation; and in any case it is not clear why Astyages should not rank as "purely Aryan". Cp. Taylor, "Origin of the Aryans", pp. 190, 319-321.
- „ 58. *Re* the Seven Gates. The antiquity of this myth is proved by its occurrence in the legend of Ishtar's Descent into Hades, "Records of the Past," vol. i.
- „ 60, note 1. For "Callimaohus" read "Callimachus".
- „ 64. *Re* ox and ass in Krishna ritual, Professor Weber seems in one passage (*Ueber die K.*, p. 339) to imply that one ox and one ass stand under the shed; in another (pp. 280-1) it would appear that what he refers to are the *images* of oxen and asses which stand beside those of the leading personages of the legend.
- „ 72. It should have been noted in Sec. xii that "the winnowing fan, the *Mystica vannus Iacchi*, is always used in the rites of Cal, Cali, and Durga; but the Hindus at present affix no other idea of mystery to it than its being an appendage to husbandry. They use it as a tray, on which they place before the image of the Deity the . . . articles used in the ceremony. . . . On all solemnities the rituals prescribe exclusively the use of this fan, which they call *Surp*." Patterson, in "Asiatic Researches", viii, 52.
- „ 79, note 3. The antiquity of the "Dulva" passage is disputed by Weber, "Hist. Ind. Lit.", Eng. tr., p. 199. But see p. 198, note 210.

- P. 90, note 2. For "verson" read "version".
- „ 92, note 5. Re the week, cp. Max Müller, "On False Analogies in Comparative Theology"; *Indian Antiquary*, March, 1874 (iii, 90); Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," Eng. tr. i, 264; Wellhausen, "Prolegomena," p. 113.
- „ 97, note 3. It should have been mentioned that Krishna, who is identified with "Budha", the name given by the Hindus to the planet Mercury (Max Müller, "False Analogies," in vol. "Introd. to Sc. of Rel.," p. 308), is himself a "conveyer of the souls of the dead", and is invoked at funerals by his name Heri, the cry being "Heri-bol!". Balfour's *Ind. Cycl.*, art. NEMI.
- „ 100, middle. The story of Queen Garmathone and Osiris is given in the pseudo-Plutarchean treatise "Of the Names of Rivers and Mountains", *sub tit.* Nile (xvi).

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