Studies in Vedanta

BY

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D. B. TARAPOREVALA SONS & CO.,
190, HORNBY ROAD, BOMBAY.
1924.

PREFACE.

I have to apologize to the public for not having issued this volume on the *Vedanta* Philosophy much earlier. It consists of ten papers, bearing on different aspects of the *Vedanta*, which the author, my maternal grandfather, the late Rao Bahadur Vasudeo Jagannath Kirtikar, contributed to the " East and West " and the " Indian Review ", during a period of five years from 1904 to 1909. The introductory chapter entitled "The Leading Ideas of *Vedanta* " contains a categorical statement of the contents of that philosophy, as the author understood it. The Rao Bahadur died in August, 1911, before he could carry out completely the scheme which he has outlined in the introductory chapter. I have endeavoured, with my limited knowledge of the subject, to elucidate by means of foot-notes those passages in the essays which seemed to me to require an explanation.

The object of the author was, as he says in the introductory chapter, to expound the *Vedanta* in a language familiar to modern European thought, in order to remove certain misconceptions regarding some of its essential doctrines. He profoundly believed that the *Vedanta* was a system not only of thought but also of life. In his own life, he earnestly sought to fulfil scrupulously the duties, which, to use his own words, the *Vedanta* enjoins with reference to man's relations to himself, to his kith and kin, to his community, to his country, to the whole of mankind, nay, to the entire animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms as parts of one organism. It was, therefore, not merely from intellectual conviction, but from practical experience, that, he felt that the *Vedanta*, to use his own words again,

was one of the best systems, if not the best, which could be made the basis of universal religion for civilised communities.

The philosophy of the *Vedanta* has been expounded by European and Indian scholars, both before and since the author wrote these essays. But he has not treated the *Vedanta* as a philosophy, so much as a scheme of practical life. The difficulties he seeks to answer are those felt by the modern educated man in applying the principles of the *Vedanta* to the personal, social and national problems by which he is confronted. Religious teachers like *Swami* Vivekananda have made the *Vedanta* the basis of a new and expansive Hinduism, in contrast to the rigid system of caste and custom, which it has come to mean in the eyes of the vast majority of those who go by the name of Hindus. This development of the *Vedanta* or its presentation as a philosophy would seem to have had less attraction for the author than its utility as a scheme of life.

Readers of these pages will not fail to be impressed by the wide reading and catholic sympathies to which they bear testimony, in the spirit of the ancient *Gâyatri*, the noblest prayer that the human spirit has conceived. The author had a mind open to the light from whatever quarter it came. Amid the demands of a highly crowded life, social and professional, he managed to find time for his studies in the realm of philosophy and religion, and for giving the results of those studies to the public from time to time, as the following pages show.

M. R. JAYAKAR.

391, THAKURDWAR,
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CHAPTER I.

THE LEADING IDEAS OF THE VEDÂNTA.

THE Indian *Vedânta* (which term includes the *Sânkhya* and the *Yoga* systems) had, long before the beginning of the Christian era, reached a stage of development, which should have, ere this, received its due share of appreciation at the hands of European thinkers, and the fact should have been long ago realised that it was one of the best systems, if not *the* best, which could be made the basis of a universal religion for civilized communities.

But, unfortunately, there is considerable misconception as to its true character—whether as Philosophy or as Religion. The apparently inconsistent utterances in the Upanishads, the difficulty of understanding the terminology of the ancient writers and of following with patience the dialectics used by them, the comparative indifference of European thinkers, as a class, to any thing that is Indian—all these have more or less contributed to make the *Vedânta* as unattractive as it is difficult.

Nor is this all. I find that the almost organic theological bias of most of the European writers on Philosophy and Religion whom I have had occasion to consult, and of most of the Christian Missionaries who come here on the special mission of evangelising India, have formed a very formidable impediment to a just and correct appreciation of the Indian systems of Philosophy.

To remove the misconceptions that at present prevail in respect of some of its essential doctrines, it is necessary to expound the *Vedânta* in a language familiar to modern European thought, and to show how far it finds confirmation in parallel currents of Western thought—ancient and modern—and likewise in the discoveries of modern science.

With this view, the leading ideas of the *Vedânta* may thus be formulated at the outset:—

1. That there is only one Ultimate Reality, called the *Brahman* (ब्रह्मन्), from which the universe proceeds. It is self-existent and it alone *is* (*sat*), and, not being originated, it is Eternal and Real. All else, apparently as being the effects of causes, is *a-sat*, unreal, because it was *not* before becoming, and *will not be*, when its form disappears ; it sometimes *is* and sometimes is not. It is subject to the conditions of Time, Place, and Causation. It is called *sansâra* (संसार), implying motion and change.

2. *Brahman* is All-Pervading. There is no object without *Brahman* as its substratum ; divorced from *Brahman* the object is a non-entity. No object has accordingly any independent existence, that is, independent of or apart from *Brahman*. Its reality is only relative and phenomenal.

3. While *Brahman* is thus immanent, it is also transcendent. To use the language of metaphor, only a portion of the *Brahmic* sphere, so to speak, is occupied by the visible universe.[1]

4. *Brahman* is All-Intelligence (*chit*), infinite in its nature and therefore Eternal.[2]

5. It is also All-Bliss (*ânand*).

6. The *sat*, *chit*, and *ânand*, referred to above, are, by rigorous monists like Shankar Âchârya, considered to be the *constitutive essence* of *Brahman* and not its attributes, for, say they, that being Eternal and changeless it cannot have any attributes. Others, like Râmânuja, say that *Brahman* is not without the attributes of Goodness, Justice, Mercy, &c.[3]

7. Though *Brahman* is One, it has also become many by its own Will ; it is thus also many, when viewed from the standpoint of the universe.

8. The universe is born from *Brahman*, that is, it is brought into being either by the Word (Logos, Thought and Will) or Emanation or Evolution. It lives in *Brahman*, and in the fulness of time is dis-

[1] See Sh. Bh. on Ved. Sutr. II. I. 27 (S.B.E., Vol. 34, p. 350).

[2] *Cf.* the "Absolute Mind" of the Hegelian System.

[3] Rigorous monists do not in reality deny these attributes to the Supreme Principle, but their rigorous monism has logically led them to ascribe these attributes to *Brahman*, in its association with its own power, *Mâyâ*, in which aspect, *Brahman* is a Personal God.

solved in *Brahman*. In other words, *Brahman* is the root of the universe, and all creatures and objects in the universe live in *Brahman*, and in the end find their rest, too, in *Brahman*.

Brahman is thus that in which we "live and move and have our being." The universe ever remains one with *Brahman*, and is never cognised apart from it.

9. Rigorous monists say that the universe is the product of a power called *mâyâ*, in its association with *Brahman*, to which it belongs, and with which it is ever inseparably connected. Others, ignoring this intermediate power, consider *Brahman* itself as the substantial and operative cause of the universe.

10. Rigorous monists, like Shankar, say that individual souls are identical with *Brahman*[1]; others, like Râmânuja, posit the individuality of the souls, but admit that they are the *modes* (*Prakârâh*) of *Brahman* and are eternal with it.

11. *Brahman* is not the author of Sin or Evil. All that is of man's making, and enters the world when man violates the higher laws of his being.

12. Every embodied existence with its environment is the result of one's own past *Karma*[2]—which has become ripe for fruition and which is called *prârabdha*. This cannot be avoided, but must be worked out.

But as regards the *Karma*, which is not yet ripe for fruition and which is called *Sanchitam*, it is in the power of man to destroy by good deeds its evil effects which are to arise in future, and thus accelerate the perfection which is his goal.

13. The *Vedânta* thus recognises the doctrine of the Freedom of the Will. It says that man's happiness and misery entirely depend on himself. He himself is the "architect of his own fortune."

14. His life on earth is apparently one of probation and difficulties, since, in his ignorance, he at first attaches himself to his bodily existence, regards that as his real life, and seeks to find pleasure and

[1] *Cf.* Haldane's 'Pathway to Reality' Vol. 2, p. 169. "The central doctrine of Atonement illustrates this, for it implies the potential identity of man and God in a single subject of knowl edge.'

[2] *Karma* in the *Vedânta* includes both thought and deed.

happiness in "things earthly." In this state, his actions are egoistic and selfish.

15. The *Vedânta* accordingly lays down rules for the social, moral, and spiritual development of man, and inculcates the performance of duties, by which, with enlightenment, he gradually surrenders his lower self, and lives a larger and larger self, so as ultimately to take within his Self all the other Selves, and leave none outside.

16. The duties which the *Vedânta* enjoins have reference to man's relations to himself, to his kith and kin, to his community, to his country, to the whole of mankind, nay to the entire animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, as parts of one organism.

17. The *Vedânta* says that these duties must be performed as duties—without attachment or hope of reward, their performance must be thoroughly disinterested.

18. The *Karma* thus enjoined necessarily tends to the purification of one's heart, the ennobling of one's character, the acquisition of higher powers, by which one is capable of realising that the individual self is not merely related to *Brahman*, but is identical with it.

19. True salvation consists in a complete realisation of this identity.

20. *Until this highest state of spiritual perfection is attained, until this sense of "I" and "Thou", "mine" and "thine" has completely disappeared, man has no right to deny the reality of the universe.* Until then, he is bound to recognise the three-fold distinction of God, Man and the Universe, and to attend to his duties, social, political, moral and religious. To him, the world is not till then illusory; nor is the relation in which he stands to it, and all else in it an illusion.

It is only when the sense of individual and personal egohood (*Ahankritih* अहंकृतिः) has become completely extinct, and the great truth *Tat-twam-asi* (that thou art) fully realised by self-experience, that the true character of the Supreme Self, the identity of the Individual Self with that Self, and the illusoriness of the world as a self-subsisting externality become intelligible and acquire a meaning.

Many European thinkers consider this last position to be absolutely inconceivable. No doubt, with ordinary humanity, it is so; for, with the egohood such as we ordinarily have with the

distinction of the ego and the non-ego fully alive and staring us in the face, it is impossible to realise the truth of this position. It belongs to a different plane of thought; and if we cannot reach that plane or will not endeavour to reach it, our attitude should be to let it alone. But it is unphilosophical to comment upon it from the plane which *we* occupy, and pronounce it as absurd and nonsensical. Those who can conceive the possibility of its truth, and those who have realised it to themselves, say that it is impossible to discern the highest spiritual truths with "the eyes of the flesh."[1]

[1] The author had refrained from citing here any authorities in support of the several propositions above formulated. He had reserved doing so till he came to a discussion of the propositions here formulated, which unfortunately he did not live to do.—ED.

CHAPTER II.

THE VEDÂNTA AND ITS HEGELIAN CRITICS.[1]

PROFESSOR Dvivedi, in his introduction to the Mândukya Upanishad[2], observes that the Indian *advaita* or Monism is—

"Nothing less than the synthesis of thought underlying the different teachings of Indian Schools, and is truly that universal religion or philosophy which embraces, within the ample folds of absolute unity, the infinite variety of all shades of thinking . . . . India has given to humanity the main outline at least of the whole of the philosophy and religion of the world. This may appear to my western readers an error of judgment, but it is no little consolation that in this instance, at least, I err in good company."

This is, indeed, a bold assertion and the question is whether it is possible to establish this position. It is no doubt true that eminent thinkers like Sir William Jones, Mr. Colebrooke, Professor H. H. Wilson, Schopenhauer, and Professor Max Müller have spoken highly of the Indian systems of philosophy. Indeed, Schopenhauer says :—

"From every sentence (of the Upanishads of *Vedânta*) deep, original, and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit . . . . . In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads (the *Vedânta*). It has been the solace of my life—it will be the solace of my death. They are products of the highest wisdom . . . It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people."

Professor Max Müller, too, in his Lectures at the University of Cambridge, spoke as follows :—

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has mostly developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the

[1] This article originally appeared in the "East and West," 1904, pp. 549—559 and 649—659.

[2] p. ii.

greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which will deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thought of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact, more truly human—a life not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."[1]

But, with all such credentials, the advocates of the Indian *advaita* must not forget that there are other eminent thinkers in Europe, themselves idealists, who have urged serious objections to the Indian systems; and it is impossible to expect any reasoned acceptance of those systems by them, until those objections are satisfactorily answered. An attempt therefore ought to be made in this direction, without any preconceived bias in favour of any particular theory or dogma.

It may be asserted with confidence that the *Vedânta* is both a Philosophy and a Religion. In its search for Unity, it has succeeded in finding one Ultimate Reality as the basis of our existence, in which we find "at once an adequate object of affection and a sufficient aim for our practical endeavours." The Indian *Vedânta* has laid such a scheme for practical conduct, founded on this necessary and fundamental truth, that it satisfies the social, moral, and spiritual needs of men of every grade. While recognising the existence of only one Reality and showing man's relation to that Reality, it prescribes his duties to himself, to his kith and kin, to his own community, to the whole of humanity, nay, to the entire animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, thus insisting upon his living a larger and larger self, to the utter extinction, eventually, of his own individual lower self, and thus ultimately seeking union with that one Reality. In this process of gradual evolution and development, it holds out a hope of eternal beatitude and peace to the pure and righteous, and promises salvation even to the sinful, after their period of probation is over.

[1] "India; What Can It Teach Us"? p. 6.

But the objections urged against the Indian *Vedânta*, stated in general terms, are that the *Brahma* of this system is an empty abstraction, an infinite blank, that the *Vedânta* is a system of Acosmism, Antitheistic Pantheism, and its ethics is the negative ethics of an Asceticism which renounces the world and withdraws from it as from an empty illusion.

Objections like these would be intelligible, if taken by that class of philosophers, who are influenced by the Cartesian dualism of spirit and matter, and who assign an equal and independent reality to both, connecting the two by the arbitrary supposition of an outside God creating out of nothing. But, curiously enough, such objections come also from those who themselves are "Absolute Idealists." I mean those whose thoughts are greatly influenced by Hegelianism, which is known as a system of Absolute Idealism, and which virtually is a good deal akin to the Indian *Vedânta*, though, perhaps, only up to a certain point.

At present I shall deal only with the notion of the Indian *Brahma* being an empty abstraction or an infinite blank.[1]

Though it is generally believed that Hegel's meaning "cannot be wrung from him by any amount of mere reading," and though it is said that "he requires to be *distilled* . . . to an extent which is unparalleled," I must, at the outset, try to state what I understand to be his view of the universe and what he himself understands by an empty or false abstraction.

The Hegelian view of the universe is that it is an organism of which Man, Nature and God are the necessary components, and that none of these three elements can be conceived as existing by itself and for itself. You cannot conceive Mind without Nature, or Nature without Mind; that though, on a lower plane, there is recognised the antithesis between the Ego and the Non-Ego—that is, between spirit and matter, the Ego can transcend the Non-Ego and reconcile itself in God, in whom, while the antithesis disappears, the Ego and the Non-Ego do not lose their individuality, and the ground of such capacity is the fact that there is intelligence or reason in all the three—there is intelligence in man, intelligence in Nature, and intelligence, of course, in God. This is the doctrine of Unity in Variety.

[1] *Cf.* an answer to this charge in Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore's "Sadhana," pp. 16—18: See the passage quoted below in another connexion.—ED.

Hegel's idea of an empty abstraction may be given almost in his own words :—

"Where God is defined to be 'the most real of beings, in which negation forms no part,' it is 'the abstract of all positivity or reality to the exclusion of all negation,' and is the 'very opposite of what it ought to be and of what [the] understanding supposes it to be.' Instead of being rich and full above all measure, it is so narrowly conceived that it is, on the contrary, extremely poor and altogether empty. It is with reason that the heart craves a concrete body of truth, but without definite feature, that is without negation contained in the notion, there can only be an abstraction. When the notion of God is apprehended only as that of the abstract or most real being, God is, as it were, relegated to another world beyond; and to speak of knowledge of Him would be meaningless. Where there is no definite quality, knowledge is impossible. Mere light is Mere darkness."[1]

Hegel's idea of the ultimate Reality, as I understand it, is that it is incomplete and one-sided without its negation. In fact, in one place he has given expression to a paradox, that Absolute Being and Absolute Naught are the same.

"Being, as Being, is nothing fixed or definite; it yields to a dialectic and sinks into its opposite, which also taken immediately is nothing [saying that God is only the supreme Being and nothing more is declaring Him to be so negatively also]. The mere Being, as it is mere abstraction, is, therefore, the absolutely negative. To prevent one nullifying the other, man must first discover some fixed predicate for Being, to mark it off from Nothing; this of necessity leads to the onward movement, and gives to Being a 'true or concrete significance [and this significance consists in the idea of Becoming]. Becoming is the unity of Being and Nothing.' The unity has to be conceived in the diversity, which is all the while present and explicit. To become is the true expression for the resultant of 'to be' and 'not to be.' Becoming is the first concrete thought and therefore the first notion, whereas Being and Naught are empty abstractions. In Being, then, we have Nothing, and in Nothing [we have] Being; but this Being, which does not lose itself in Nothing, is Becoming

[1] 'Hegel's Logic' by Wallace, p. 74.

. . . Becoming is only the explicit statement of what Being is in its truth.[1] True infinitude is the unity of the finite and infinite."[2]

Without pausing here to consider whether it is not possible to arrive at the notion of the absolute in all its richness, and realise its existence without the ratiocinative process of alternate negation and affirmation employed by Hegel, and *without saying whether there is not yet beyond this a higher necessary truth*—a truth not for human intelligences only, but for all *possible* intelligences, which alone is the test of a philosophic truth—I may mention that the idea of Being and Not-Being—Becoming being the synthesis of Being and Not-Being—was not unknown to the Indian systems. In fact, the whole of one phase of philosophic thought in the *Vedânta* is based upon this very idea. I shall have to refer to it in connection with the much misunderstood conceptions of *Mâyâ* and *Avidyâ*, which are neither more nor less than this negative aspect of Being explaining the Becoming. It is enough here to give some general idea and refer to one or two passages to show that I have not sought, in my enthusiasm for the past, to "read modern thoughts into archaic writings."

In the Bhagavat Gîtâ, Shri Krishna tells Arjuna: "I am two in one by nature—*sat* and *asat*, self and not-self, *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, everlasting, but appearing and disappearing. *In me there is both Being and Not-Being.*"[3] So, too, Shankar in Mândukya Upanishad[4]:

[1] 'Hegel's Logic,' pp. 161—167.

[2] Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. I, p. 328: *Cf.* also Haldane's 'Pathway to Reality,' Vol. 2, pp. 111, 112.

[3] Bhag. Gitâ, IX. 19.

[4] I. 7. 'सोऽयमात्मा परमार्थापरमार्थरूपश्च..... तस्यापरमार्थरूपमविद्याकृतम्'; also *cf.* Dvivedi's Mând. Up., p. 21. *Cf.* also 'Svet. Up.,' 4, 18. "(He is) neither being nor not-being." *Ibid.* 5. 1. "Two there are that in the Eternal Infinite Supreme *Brahman* lie hidden, knowledge (*vidyâ*) and ignorance (*avidyâ*): Ignorance is fleeting, Knowledge eternal; yet he who as lord ordains them is that other." द्वे अक्षरे ब्रह्मपरे त्वनन्ते विद्याविद्ये निहिते यत्र गूढे । क्षरं त्वविद्या ह्यमृतं तु विद्या विद्याविद्ये ईशते यस्तु सोऽन्य : ॥—Mand. Up. 2. 2. 1. "(He is) higher than that which is and that which is not." Ved. Sutr. 1. 4. 15. "On account of the connexion (with passages treating of *Brahman*, the passages speaking of the non-being do not intimate absolute non-existence)." And *cf.* Shankar's commentary on the above Sûtra (S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 267). "We have therefore to conclude that while the term 'Being' ordinarily denotes that which is differentiated by names and forms, the term 'Non-being' denotes the same substance previous to its differentiation, *i.e.* that *Brahman* is, in a secondary sense of the word, called Non-being previously to the origination of the world. . . . . the tenet of primitive absolute. Non-existence is thus refuted and the doctrine strengthened that this world has sprung from that which is." *Cf.* Gough's 'Phil. Up.' pp. 45, 46. "Brahman *per se* is the principle of reality, the one and only being; Self alone is, and all else only seems to be. This principle of reality, however, has been, from ever-

"This *Âtman* (*Brahma*) is the totality of the Real and Unreal . . . The Unreal portion of it is that which is marked off by *Avidyâ* [*Soyam atmâ paramârthâparamârtharûpah . . . tasya aparamârtharûpam avidyâkritam*]."

The very idea that Brahma is the *Samavâyee*[1] and *Upâdâna kârana*[2] the inseparable and substantial cause of the Universe, implies the idea of Becoming and an intimate and constant relation (समवाय) between Being and Becoming. The Indian systems, while recognising, like the Eleatics, the One at the summit[3] of a theory of the universe as the only One really existing, did not altogether ignore what obtained in the system of Heraclitus, *viz.*, the doctrine of perpetual flux and motion, which is known to the *Vedânta* as *samsriti* or *sansâra* —expressions denoting the universe which is begotten from *Brahma*, which moves in it and has its being in it.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the philosophy of Becoming was discarded in the Indian systems. Even rigorous monists like Shankar insisted on the study of nature, *i.e.*, of the philosophy of Becoming, without which, they said, it was impossible to attain to a knowledge of Being. *Brahma*, says he, is *by itself* incomprehensible[4]. To man, it can be known only in its synthesis with the Becoming. The necessity of *samsâra* for a correct knowledge of the Absolute Being and for the evolution and perfection of man is universally recognised in the Indian systems[5]. The universe, its growth and decay,

lasting, associated with an inexplicable principle of unreality; and it is from the fictitious union of these principles, the one real, the other only a self-feigned fiction, that the spheres and the migrating forms of life, the external and internal world, proceed.'

[1] See Ved. Sutr. II. 1. 18 and S. B. E., Vol. 34, pp. 335, 336.

[2] See Ved. Sutr. I. 4, 26 and S. B. E., Vol. 34, p. 287.

[3] *Cf.* Ved. Sutr. II. 1. 14 and S. B.E., Vol. 34, p. 329. "The Lord stands in the realm of the phenomenal in the relation of a ruler to the so-called *Jivas* (individual souls) or cognitional Selfs (Vijnânâtman विज्ञानात्मन्) . . . His omnipotence, omniscience, &c., all depend on the limitation due to the adjuncts whose Self is nescience; while in reality none of these qualities belong to the Self, whose true nature is cleared by right knowledge from all adjuncts whatever . . . . . In this manner the *Vedânta* texts declare that for him, who has reached the state of truth and reality, the whole apparent world does not exist." This thought very much resembles what Edward Caird stated with reference to Hegel (p. 163). "One who has seen this identity in differences —who has apprehended this thought, has already risen above the abstractions whose unity in differences he has seen."

[4] Chhând. Up. III, 12.

[5] *Cf.* Mândukya Up. III, 15 and Shankar's Gloss on the same. *Cf.* Patan. Yoga Sutra, II. 18; Dvivedi's Trans. pp. 38, 39. "All this evolution of the primordial substance, in its many forms, and threefold conditions, is useful in helping us on to final absolution, by full experience of the pleasure and pain

are conceptions not unfamiliar to the Indian *Vedânta*. While *Brahma* is the *Âtman* or spirit, the universe which proceeds from it is the *Anâtman*, Not-Being, or Becoming, of the Indian *Vedânta*. With the *Vedântin* the *Brahma* is the absolutely real (*sat*), and the universe has no reality independent of or apart from it.

To human intelligence in one of the stages of philosophic development, Being and Not-Being are inseparably united in Becoming, as light and its shadow. This is what the *Vedânta* means by the expression *chit jada granthi*.

The Indian systems, in their attempts to reach the absolute truth, thus took both Being and Not-Being into account, and although it would seem that, like the Eleatics, some rigorous monists, for reasons to be explained in the sequel, regarded these two conceptions as distinct[1] instead of, like Heraclitus, as two factors of one conception, they did not *sever* the two so completely as to necessitate the absolute denial of Not-Being; on the contrary, recognising the Not-Being (Becoming) as a reality, they explained this Becoming by reference to Being. Everything that has *come* into existence is the union of Spirit and Non-Spirit —"*Kshetra-Kshetrajna samyogât*," says the Bhagwat Gîtâ in xiii. 26. They did not deny all reality to the Universe; they only said that it has no reality independent of and apart from Being; they distinguished that Being which was universal principle, intelligible to *all possible* intelligences, from the other, a principle intelligible and real to *such only* as possessed senses like our own; the one was a necessary truth, while the other was only contingent and relative.

The Vedântic expression *chit jada granthi* is very significant. It means the unity of the two contraries, Being and Not-Being—the oneness or conciliation of Being and Not-Being.

The Vedantic conception in this connection is that Becoming is only a manifestation of Being on itself, and that the connection between the two is that of Identity—"*tâdâtmya lakshanâ sambandha*."[2]

attendant on being entangled in it . . . The real knower is not in or of all this and therefore it is he who realizes himself after proper knowledge."

[1] See, *e.g.*, Bhag. Git. II. 16.

[2] See Ved. Sutr. II. 2, 38, S.B.E., Vol. 34, p. 436.

The sequel will show that if ever a solution of the problem of the Universe is possible, it is in this conception.

But now let us see how Hegel describes the Indian Brahma. Ignoring, at the outset, the question as to what really is the ultimately *necessary* truth, that is, a truth for *all* possible intelligences and not for the human intelligence alone, mixing up Hindu philosophy with mythology and the corrupted practice of asceticism, without taking the pains of understanding the esoteric significance of the second or the principles underlying the third, he has built up a structure on which he bases the conclusion that *Brahma* is a characterless nothingness, an empty abstraction, a purposeless empty power, without wisdom and without activity—a unity into which all existences pass as into a dark and eternal night. The votaries of such a deity are described as revelling in a "region of unbridled madness."[1]

Another Hegelian philosopher describes the Indian *Brahma* as "an abyss of a negative infinitude . . . . a unity which was no principle of order in the manifold differences of things, but merely a gulf in which all difference was lost."[2]

In the same strain, Professor Pfleiderer[3] —himself a Unitarian and not disposed to agree with Hegel in his vindication of the Christian Trinity[4] by his philosophy—describes *Brahma* as "an indeterminate abstract Being, which is hardly distinguished from nothing; an abyss which swallows up all finite being, *not as the positive ground which produces* and maintains the finite; it is like the cave of the lion into which all the footsteps lead but none lead out again." And the *Vedântin's* world, including the ego and its consciousness[5] is, according to him, "an untrue appearance, a delusion of *Mâyâ*," and the Brahmanic Pantheism "shows itself as Acosmism and ultimately as absolute Illusionism."

[1] Hegel's 'Phil. Rel.' Vol. I, p. 333, and Vol. III, pp. 317—329.

[2] Edward Caird's 'Evolution of Religion,' Vol. I, pp. 262, 263.

[3] "Lectures" I. 13—15.

[4] Perhaps it is not generally known in India that Hegel has attempted to reconcile philosophy and Christianity and vindicate the claim of the latter as a revelation; the resurrection of Jesus was to him an absolute historical fact. See Sterling's Notes in Schwegler's "History of Philosophy," p. 440.

[5] What would Prof. Pfleiderer say to the following sentence in Hegel's writings "the truth is that there is only one reason, one mind and that the mind as finite has not a real existence." Haldane's 'Pathway,' II, p. 101.

It is difficult to imagine from what source these thinkers could have derived their inspiration. Their description of *Brahma* sounds more like a joke than a sober and earnest statement of a philosophic view. It reminds one of the bitter mockery which Heine made of Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" or which Mr. Kirkman made of the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. The destructive criticism of Kant, according to Heine, made poor old Lampe, the servant of that eminent philosopher, disconsolate when he saw that his God was laid low; Kant's heart was softened, it is said, and he reflected that this would not do; "poor old Lampe must have his God; otherwise there would be no happiness for him," and out came, accordingly, the "Critique of Practical Reason," which guaranteed the existence of God.[1]

A similar ridicule, it is said, was sought to be thrown on the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, Mr. Kirkman professing to translate his definition of Evolution as "a change from a nohowish untalkaboutable allalikeness, to a somehowish and in-general-talkaboutable, and not-allalikeness, by continuous somethingelsifications, and stick-togetherations."[2]

Hegel himself would apparently have had no objection to the Vedântic conception of *Brahma* if it was Thought and Being—Thought implying "an activity which determines itself in itself"[3]; if it was characterised as a "principle which moves itself to its manifestation or produces it."[4] According to another Hegelian philosopher,[5] too, the modern conception of Ultimate Reality is that it must be a "unity which realises itself in differences, which by *its own inner impulse* gives rise to differences, yet even maintains itself in them and through these differences returns upon itself."

But what is the Vedantic conception of *Brahman* but this and more? The description of *Brahman* given at the very outset of the Vedânta Sutras is[6]: "Brahman is that from which the Universe proceeds; it is all Intelligence and is the source of Scripture and root of all Knowledge." In another *Sûtra* it is said that this One thought that it

[1] W. S. Lilly's "Enigma," p. 277.

[2] Hudson's 'Philosophy of Herbert Spencer,' p. 90; and Spencer's "First Principles," Appx. p. 565.

[3] See "Phil. of Rel." Vol. 3, pp. 325, 326.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 320.

[5] J. Caird's "Spinoza," p. 128.

[6] Ved. Sutr. I., 1, 2-3, S.B.E. Vol 34, pp. 15-19.

should become many and it became Many by its own *êkshana*[1]; which may be fairly translated as Thought and Will.

In other *Sûtras*[2] it is said that the Universe proceeds in a fixed order, implying Intelligence and Purpose, and unmistakably suggesting evolution or progressive development according to fixed laws.

The Hegelian conception of the Infinite returning upon itself[3] has reference to its return from its self-externalisation into a higher unity with its own self again. It means, for us human beings, the alternation of dying to the lower and rising into higher existence—a dying to live a larger and larger self—a conception not foreign to the Indian *Vedânta*,[4] if one would take the trouble of understanding it correctly. I shall have to refer to this idea at greater length later on.

I now ask if the *Brahman*, as described in the Vedânta Sûtras, can be said to be a 'characterless nothingness."[5] Is it not, to use Hegel's own language, "a principle which moves itself to its manifestation or produces it, as the unmoved which moves according to the profound expression of Aristotle?" Shankar himself expresses this very idea of a Being unmoved yet moving through its own inseparable power called *Mâyâ*. If by "characterless" Hegel meant to refer to the Vedântic idea of *nirguna Brahma*, he obviously misunderstood what that expression was meant to convey. *Guna*, though popularly translated as "quality", is, however, a technical word denoting the component constituents of Nature (*prakriti*), which characterise all that has come into being, and as such are liable to change. These *Gunas* cannot be predicated of the Pure Absolute Being, *Brahma*, which is essentially all that the Eternal Changeless One must be. They constitute in reality the *negative* aspect of *Brahma*, and are supposed to belong to *prakriti* or *Mâyâ*, which is ever inseparable from *Brahma*. In the language of Hegelianism, this takes away from *Brahma* the character of an empty abstraction and conduces for man, in the normal

[1] Chhând. Up. VI, 2, 3-4; Ved. Sutr. II. 3-13; I. 5-6.

[2] Ved. Sutr. II. 2, 1-6.

[3] See this process lucidly explained in Haldane's 'Pathway,' II. pp. 109, 157, 158.

[4] See the idea of "self-externalization" developed by Shankar in his Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I. 4, 26. S.B.E. Vol. 34, p. 287. See also Ved. Paribh. See also Bhag. Git. IX. 4. "By me all this world is pervaded in my unmanifested aspect; all beings have root in Me, I am not rooted in them."

[5] For a further refutation of this charge, see Rabindra Nath Tagore's "Sâdhana," pp. 16—18.

condition of his present embodied existence, to enrich the conception of *Brahma* in the Hegelian sense.

These writers entirely ignore the fact that the Indian *Advaita* is the ultimate synthesis of thought, underlying the different teachings of the Indian schools. They make no distinction between these several schools, which, though apparently different in their tenets, are yet considered not as being in conflict with each other, but as steps to the attainment of the highest truth,[1] and which consequently are all included under the general title of the *Vedânta*; nor do they make any distinction between the two great monistic schools of *Advaita* and *Vishishtâdvaita*, represented respectively by Shankar and Râmânuja. If these distinctions had been present to their mind, their observations would not have been of so sweeping a character as they are against the Indian *Vedânta* in general. They would have at least excepted the dualistic systems[2] of Madhvâchârya and Vallabhâchârya and the monistic teachings of the Râmânuja school, from the objection taken by them to the Indian *Vedânta*.

Râmânuja's view of *Brahma* and the creation may be gleaned from the Shri Bhâshya, which is his own commentary of the Vedânta Sûtras.[3]

The teachings of the *Vedânta*, according to him, are that there are three ultimate entities known to philosophy; the intelligent individual soul, the non-intelligent matter, and God; that God is the Supreme *Brahma*, and is the cause of the universe, matter and soul constituting his body or modes, *prakâra*, that the soul enters into matter and thereby makes it live, and, similarly, God enters into matter and soul, and guides them from within[4]; that *Brahma* is not devoid

[1] See Mândukya Up. III. 18 and Shankar's Gloss thereon; Dvivedi's Edn., p. 73; *cf.* also Bhag. Git. V. 4-5. See a reconciliation of the several systems of Indian Philosophy by Vijnyâna Bhikshu cited in Max Müller's 'Six Systems of Indian Philosophy,' pp. 591-601. This passage reminds one of the view which Hegel himself has taken of the several systems of thought. He says "the different systems which the history of Philosophy presents are not therefore irreconcilable with unity. We may either say that it is one philosophy at different degrees of maturity, or that the particular principle, which is the ground-work of each system, is but a branch of one and the same universe of thought." 'Hegel's Logic' by Wallace, p. 22.

[2] These dualistic systems represent a "return of philosophy from the heights of speculation to the uncritical conceptions of common sense, hallowed with a glow of reverential faith." See 'Aspects of the Vedânta.' (Madras), p. 18.

[3] The references in this para. are to the Madras Translation of Shri Bhâshya by Messrs. Rangâchârya and Varadarâja.

[4] *Ibid.* Introd. p. 2.

of attributes[1], but endowed with all the imaginable auspicious qualities[2]; that the world, as we see it, is not illusory but real, only the reality is not independent of or apart from *Brahma*,[3] that these three entities are naturally distinct from each other[4]; that there is no essential oneness of the individual self with the supreme self[5]; that salvation means not that the individual soul becomes identical, in essence, with the Supreme Self, but that it acquires most of the divine qualities of that Self (*âtmabhâva*), and in that sense becomes one with Him[6]; that this state of perfection is attainable only by purity of life, righteous conduct, and a loving devotion to God and by His Grace.[7] Quoting the Bhagwat Gîtâ (xiv. 2) he says that such a soul rests in God; it is not in any way hurt at the time of the *pralaya* (cosmic deluge) nor born again at the time of fresh cosmic evolution; that till such perfection is attained, the individual soul has to pass through a succession of embodied existence; that even at the time of the *pralaya*, the individual souls resume their further development, when the next cycle begins at the will of God.[8]

Brahma, according to Râmânuja, thus comprises, within itself, distinct elements of plurality, which all lay claim to reality. It is a Personal God, who is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-merciful. He "pervades and rules all things which exist—material and immaterial as their *antaryâmin*"[9] (Inner Guide).

Thus, to use the pet expressions of Hegelian philosophers, we have, in Râmânuja's system, God, man, and nature, man transcending nature, and both man and nature finding their ultimate reconciliation in God—a unity in variety.

To such a view it is hardly possible to take any exception on the ground of its being a false or empty abstraction, or of its having a tendency to acosmism.

It is only when we come to the rigorous monism of *Advaitins* like Shankar that the objections noted above have an *apparent* relevancy, though even here they have no validity, except at a stage, which the

[1] Shri Bhâshya, pp. 156, 344—5.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 232.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 233.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 235.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 146.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 148.
[7] *Ibid.* p. 238.
[8] Ved. Sutra, S.B.E., Vol. 34, Introd pp. xxviii—ix.
[9] *Ibid.* p. xxviii.

philosophers of the West, of the present age, may well ignore, if they are either unwilling to acknowledge its possibility or unable to appreciate its truth.

Shankar, like Râmânuja, appealed to the same scriptural authority, but his view of the *Vedânta*, as taught in the Upanishads, is as follows[1] :—

Whatever is, is in reality One. There truly exists one Universal Being, called *Brahma* or *Paramâtman*, the Highest Self . . . It is pure Thought and Being—Intelligence or Thought is not however its attribute, but constitutes its essence ; it is not a thinking Being but Thought itself . . . *Associated with its own power called Mâyâ or Avidyâ*, it is the cause of the universe that we see and is called God. This power, *Mâyâ*, is neither *Sat* nor *Asat* (Being nor Not-Being)—not *Sat*, because *Brahma* alone is *Sat* ; not *Asat*, in the strict sense of the term, for it is the cause of the world. In the presence of *Brahma* which is All-Intelligence, *Mâyâ* modifies itself by a progressive evolution into all the individual existences, (*Bhcda*), distinguished by special names and forms (*Nâma Rûpa*) of which the world consists ; from it there spring in due succession the different material elements and the whole bodily apparatus belonging to sentient beings. In all these individual forms of existence, the indivisible *Brahma* is ever present ; but owing to the particular accidents or adjuncts into which *Mâyâ*, the inseparable power of *Brahma*, has specialised itself, it appears to be broken up—it is broken up, as it were—into a multiplicity of intellectual or sentient principles, (*Jîvâs* or individual souls). What is real (eternal) in each *Jîva* is only the universal *Brahma* itself : but the individual *Jîva*, instead of recognising itself to be *Brahma*, blindly identifies itself with these accidents or adjuncts (*upâdhis*), *viz.*, the body and the sense-organs, and *looks for its true Self there* ; so long as it has not discovered its true Self and clings to the sense-organs and the external objects of sense perception, it is subject to a succession of embodied existences ; at *each cycle* (*Kalpa*) *these individual souls lie in Brahma* '*in deep slumber as it were*'; if the consequences of their former deeds are not yet exhausted, they have again to enter on embodied existence

[1] The account I have given here is largely taken from Professor Thibaut's Introduction, *S. B. E. Vol. 34*, with occasional changes in the language rendered necessary for a clear statement of Shankar's own utterances.

when *Brahma* sends forth a new material world; but this round of births and deaths ceases as soon as the truth is realised of the doctrine *Tat twam asi*—the *upâdhis* attached to the individual become extinct, and it recognises its own identity with *Brahma*.[1]

This is no new view suggested by Shankar for the first time. It had its sanction in the Vedas[2], in the Upanishads, and in the Bhagwat Gîtâ, as old as Plato at least, whose ideas were developed later in what is called Neo-Platonism in a similar manner.

The view enunciated by Râmânuja represents an earlier stage in the development of Indian philosophic thought. The Indian *Vedântin* could not rest content with the dualism implied in that view. Like the Eleatics he perceived that there could be one and only one principle, the Ultimate Reality—the *Sat* from which both Man and Nature get their being and in which they both live and move and find their final reconciliation and rest. That principle is *Brahma*, the Absolute One, which, from its very nature, must be infinite and inaccessible by itself to the understanding of Man. It is possible to conceive that he viewed *Brahma* almost as Maimonides viewed the Absolute, and thought that if *Brahma* is an Absolute Unity, every element of plurality or difference must be excluded from it; it cannot be conceived as having matter for its body or as possessing attributes; for these, whether considered as its essence or considered as accidents, would equally vitiate the conception; as the essence of *Brahma* they would create a plurality of infinites, and, besides, introduce into its nature the divisibility and compositeness which belong only to corporeal things; as mere accidents they would only become so much superaddition and express nothing in the reality of the divine nature; being beyond the reach of speech, any predicates, by which we suppose ourselves to attain to a knowledge of *Brahma*, are strictly an expression of our own ignorance, and the only strictly accurate way of describing such an incomprehensible Being would be by the negative method *Neti Neti*—not so, not so—by showing not what *Brahma* is, but what it is not.[3]

[1] See Thibaut, S. B. E. Vol. 34, Introd. pp. xxiv—xxvii.

[2] See, *e.g.*, Rig Veda, X, 129, 2.

[3] See Shankar on Bhag. Gitâ, XIII. 12, and Brihadâranyaka Up. II, 3-6 and compare J. Caird's '*Spinoza*,' p. 64. To assign attributes to such a Being would be rather its degradation than elevation, says H. Spencer, 'First Principles,' p. 109

This may perhaps appear as rarefying the idea of the Supreme Principle to a logical abstraction—which is simply the negation of the finite; but such a view of the matter would be misleading. Thought does not construct Universals out of singulars, conceptions out of particulars, but begins absolutely and at once with Universals or general conceptions.[1] As I shall try to show in the sequel, the conception of the Ultimate Reality is a metaphysical conception, not reached by any process of logical abstraction; it is a psychological fact and represents the fundamental truth of all philosophy.

If the process by which this conception was reached by the *Vedântin* was a logical abstraction, his case was not singularly exceptional. Not to speak of the ancient Greek philosophers, in modern times, too, many eminent thinkers of the 17th century are said to have arrived at the pure and absolute Reality by a similar process. Spinoza was one of them. He, too, like some of the earliest Indian and Greek philosophers, considered that true happiness lay not in the ordinary objects of human desire—in riches, honours, or the pleasures of appetite and sense—these he considered to be inconstant, perishable and deceptive, having an ephemeral reality. And he, accordingly, endeavoured to find some true and abiding object of love—something in finding which he would find a perfect and eternal joy. By a process of introspection and (as Hegelianism would have it) by a process of abstraction from all determination, holding that all determination is negation, he discovered the Divine in Man, and that he called the Most Perfect Being, Single, Infinite and All-Embracing—the source and origin of the entire Universe. He is the immanent and not the transient cause of all things: all things are in God and move in God.

The God so reached was, according to Principal Caird, an "indeterminate substance of which nothing can be affirmed . . . a self-identical unity into which no distinction or difference can enter." "But still," says Principal Caird, "Spinoza intended to find in that principle the explanation of all things. The whole finite world was to be so involved in the idea of God as to be deducible from it"; he, however, adds that to achieve this result, Spinoza had recourse to an illogical expedient. . . . "He

[1] Ferrier's "Greek Philosophy." p. 235.

attempted by means of a conception to mediate between the Infinite and finite, and to gain for the latter a legitimate derivation from the former "—the conception of what he terms the "infinite modes"—a sort of connecting link between the Infinite and finite.

It is this philosophy for which Hegel pays Spinoza a compliment by saying that in thus arriving at the Absolute Reality, *Spinoza stood on a firm rock, and the system of Ethics he built was the most sublime.*[1]

The Indian *Vedânta*, assuming it to be quite Spinozistic in its character and no better, is entitled to at least this modicum of praise, if to nothing more, from Hegelian philosophers, especially when we find them having a good word for other philosophers deemed guilty of the like fault of false and empty abstraction.

Herbert Spencer, for instance, is said to have arrived at his Great Unknowable by a similar process of abstraction. But in discussing the defect of Spencer's method, Dr. Edward Caird[2] candidly recognises the element of truth it contains.

"It is true" (he says) "that the movement of thought from the finite to the Infinite is regressive and that this regression is caused by a discernment of the negative or unreal character of the finite existence from which we start. *It is the illusiveness,*[3] *the uncertainty, the instability of the things of time and sense, which in the first instance at least makes us look beyond them to God.* It is not because of what the finite *is*, but mainly because of what it is *not*, that we seek refuge in the Infinite. As it is the *illusion of appearance* that awakens scientific enquiry to search beneath or beyond it for that which is not to be found in it, so it is the failure of the world to supply what he at first sight expected to get from it that drives man back upon God. . . . *The necessity of thought to rise from the finite to the infinite lies in the awakening consciousness that the finite in itself is naught, that neither the intelligence nor the will can finally accept it as an absolute reality.* . . . . . Such being the case, it is natural that the Infinite which is reached by such a regressive process should, in the first instance, be defined as that

[1] 'Phil. Rel.' I, 99; II., 48, 49.

[2] 'Evol. Rel.' Vol. I., p. 106.

[3] The italics in this para. are the author's

in which all the limits and imperfections of the finite are done away, and that the purely affirmative Being, the Supreme Reality, should be regarded as the negative of an existence which is itself negative or unreal."[1]

If this was the process used by the Indian *Vedântin*, it must be borne in mind that this would be only a stage, preparatory for a positive movement, in which we contemplate the finite from the point of view of the Infinite, like going up a hill and taking a survey of the regions below; and that this higher stage means that the Infinite itself must be conceived not merely as that which the finite is not, but as that *which includes and explains it*, not merely as an indeterminate background of the finite, but as *a self-determining principle which manifests itself in all the determinations of the finite without losing its unity with itself.*

I have elsewhere shown, and it will be my endeavour later on to show in more detail, that the Indian *Vedânta* has taken this further step also, and the conception it has formed of *Brahma* is all that it should be to satisfy the Hegelian test, and more. It is sufficient here to refer to the Bhag. Git. xiii. 13-17, 27, 30-33.

But assuming, as some have done, that *Brahma* is no more than a negation of the finite, the question is, whether such a conception is an empty one and, therefore, inadequate to be the concrete basis of religious consciousness and life. If it is wrong Philosophy, is it bad Theology, too?

It is said that such a conception, though logically correct, is a bare abstraction, which can have nothing concrete corresponding to that conception; that to elevate it into a Being and endow it with the character of a metaphysical reality is only tantamount to a personification of an abstract principle, giving rise to a system which is a kind of poetical or imaginative Pantheism.

It would have been nothing strange if to the poetic mind of the Indian sages such a system had been found attractive. In their religious fervour and ascetic life, if the abstract conception had found a concrete embodiment in their imagination, it might become

[1] *Cf.* Shankar's explanation '*Virodhâdi abhâvah paramârthatâ iti*,' Mândukya Up. II., 32. The Absolute is the negation of negation.

efficient enough to arouse in them exactly the same sentiments of universalising spiritual principle, which in practical life is found to be a most ennobling ideal; if they felt themselves completely identified with the *principle* involved in their conception of *Brahma* and thought that they could realise it in themselves, what more was needed than such a principle, which was capable of responding to the cravings of the human heart ?[1] St. Paul is said to have fully identified himself with the *principle* manifested in Christ, while refusing to "Know Christ after the flesh."

Here is admittedly a case of abstraction of a principle, which, according to the Hegelian standard, is an empty one, because there is nothing of concrete riches in it. But it is interesting to read the justification of this abstract conception given by the very philosophers who have condemned such a process in the Indian *Vedânta*.

Professor Pfleiderer[2] says :—

"True as it is that the Spiritual Christ of Pauline preaching rests upon an abstraction, which may appear poor in comparison with the fulness of life in the real historical Jesus, *yet it is also certain that it was only by this abstraction from all externalities and contingencies in its manifestation that the ideal principle of the religion revealed in Jesus could be put in such clear light—that its truth might be made luminous and noble—as holding good universally for the humanity of all peoples, and all times.*"

Dr. Edward Caird, again, says as follows[3] :—

"The Stoic, isolating himself from all the life of the family and state found in the isolated self upon which he withdrew the

[1] It is interesting to note that even a critic of the *Vedânta* like Gough has to admit that the *Brahma* is not an empty abstraction, as the Indian Mystic in his hour of ecstacy knows well; that the *Brahma* is positive and self-affirming, for, says Shankarâchârya, *the last residuum of all abstraction is not non-entity but entity.* It is the object of the notion "I," and is present to every soul. अहंप्रत्ययविषय अहंपदप्रत्ययलक्षितार्थ (See Gough's 'Phil. Up.' p. 37).

Gough further quotes (*ibid.* p. 38) Ânandagiri from Taitt. Up. that Brahma is a vastness unlimited in space and in time and in content, for there is nothing known as a limit to it, and the term applies to a thing of transcendent greatness.

The italics in the above passages are the author's.

[2] "Lectures," Vol. I, 156. The italics are the author's.

Cf. Edward Caird's 'Evol. Rel.,' Vol. II, pp. 215, 219.

[3] 'Evol. Rel.,' Vol. II, p. 130.

Cf. also, E. Caird's 'Evol. Greek Theology,' Vol. II, pp. 237, 242.

principle of a cosmopolitan society, and thus rose to a new *positive* conception of the relation of men to men which could take the place of the old relations of kinsmen or fellow-citizens."

It is thus clear that the richness of an abstract conception depends upon its efficacy in awakening the religious consciousness of man. Where an intensive feeling is aroused thereby, it transcends the limits of logic, and is capable of a richness and fulness of content, which baffle definitions and outstrip the compass of the hard and fixed categories of the understanding. Our most exalted spiritual experiences are least capable of being expressed by precise scientific formulæ, and when we attempt to express them, the language we use insensibly takes a negative form. [1]

The richness of an abstract conception thus depends very much on the *capacity* of the mind to grasp it and so to realise it in practical life as to give it, so to speak, a concrete form. All ideals are illustrations of this truth.

But what false or empty abstraction is involved in our conception of *Brahma?* Is the theory of knowledge by which modern philosophy in Europe tests these questions itself correct?[2] Professor Ferrier and Professor Veitch tell us that it is not, and requires correction; it takes no note, at the outset, of what man, as a fact, *does* know; it ignores the fact that the laws of our knowing the object in time and space are not necessarily the laws of our knowing all objects[3]; it takes no note of the fact that all important and primitive truths are known to Reason not by any syllogistic process. The *cogito ergo sum*, for instance, of Descartes, is not a syllogism but an enthymeme. Without an exhaustive study of psychology, without fully realising what actually is involved in the conception of thought, it boldly ventures to stigmatise psychological and metaphysical facts as unthinkable fictions, empty abstractions, devoid of content, etc., etc., when these facts are found to be inconsistent with that theory. The truth is that the gulf supposed to exist between Being and Knowing is at once bridged by the

[1] J. Caird's 'Introd. Phil. Rel.,' pp. 24-25.

[2] Modern speculative thought is impotent to reach the heights to which *Vedânta* has gone. See an article in Vol. II Brahmavâdin for 1906, pp. 57 and following, on the Brâhmic condition of Mind.

[3] Veitch, p. 3.

principle known to the ancients long before Descartes enunciated it as *cogito ergo sum*. Knowing and Being are fused in one intellectual comprehension, the subject and object becoming implicative.[1]

If the *Vedântiń* recognises in the *Brahma* Absolute Existence and Absolute Intelligence (*Sat*, *Chit*), the Absolute *Sat* to which all existences are referable, the Absolute Knowledge which considers things in their eternal and infinite connection with itself and never apart from it, the true principles of all being and all knowledge here flow into one. And there is no empty abstraction in such a case with which the *Brahma* of the *Vedânta* is charged.

Assuming that in reaching our conception of *Brahma* there is involved a process of negation and abstraction, this negation would be only a partial one. In the very process of negation the affirmation is implied as its correlate, and *vice versa*; besides, what is negated is, in fact, not the reality of the world we see, but the *isolated* and *independent* substantiality, which in our unenlightened condition we are apt to assign to the finite creation; the positive unchanging element in it, *viz.* the *Sat*, is unreservedly recognised in this process of negation as its *substrate* and necessary accompaniment. Our knowledge of the Absolute is either intuitive or empirical. If intuitive, it may be abstract but not empty.[2] It would in this view be founded on a certainty—an ultimate fact from which we cannot escape. It would be a psychological fact. If empirical, we reach the *noumenal* reality through our experience of the *phenomenal* world, and having got at it thus and recognised it as the eternal and ultimate reality, we cling to it as the eternal reality (*Sat*), not forgetting at the same time that inasmuch as, generally speaking, every cognition implies the synthesis of the *Sat* and *Asat* (the Universal ego and the particular predicate which is the object of the cognition for the time being), the two are in this sense inseparable in cognition. So that when one speaks of the *Sat* alone, there is something of the concrete attaching to that conception even in its negative character of *Neti Neti*; it is thus

[1] See Ved. Sutr. III, 2. 21 Shankar's Gloss on the same, S.B.E., Vol. 38, p. 160, where thought and existence are regarded as inseparable.
See also S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 106, where nature without mind and mind without nature are regarded as impossible.

[2] See Hegel's 'Phil. Rel.' Vol. I, pp. 120, 328.

not a pure and absolutely unrelated abstraction in the strictest sense of the term. Though not capable of verification apart from the phenomenal world, it is clearly and intelligibly distinguishable from the latter.[1]

The conception thus reached is not purely logical but metaphysical, and a metaphysical abstraction can never be an empty one. It distinguishes the eternal from the contingent, the real from the phenomenal, and says that except the eternal, and independent of it, nothing in reality exists.

We view *Brahma* as Spirit becoming known to man, in and by reason of its manifestions on itself, as the *prius* of all such manifestations. In doing so, we do not merely personify or hypostatise a bare abstraction or spiritualise our impressions, as is commonly supposed.[2]

[1] *Cf.* a very instructive statement of this view in H. Spencer's First Principles, pp. 87-89, from which a short quotation is subjoined :—

"Besides that *definite* consciousness of which logic formulates the laws, there is also an *indefinite* consciousness which cannot be formulated. Besides complete thoughts, and besides the thoughts which, though incomplete, admit of completion, there are thoughts which it is impossible to complete: and yet which are still real, in the sense that they are normal affections of the intellect. . . . To say that we cannot know the Absolute, is, by implication, to affirm that there *is* an Absolute. In the very denial of our power to learn *what* the Absolute is, there lies hidden the assumption *that* it is, and the making of this assumption proves that the Absolute has been present to the mind, not as a nothing, but as a something. . . The Noumenon, everywhere named as the antithesis of the Phenomenon, is throughout necessarily thought of as an actuality. It is rigorously impossible to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of Appearances only, without at the same time conceiving a Reality of which they are appearances, for appearance without reality is unthinkable. . . . . Clearly, then, the very demonstration that a *definite* consciousness of the Absolute is impossible to us, unavoidably presupposes an *indefinite* consciousness of it."

Cf. also Seth's "Hegelianism and Personality," pp. 111-12.

[2] It is interesting to note that a similar imputation of a false abstraction has been made against Plotinus in that he arrived at the highest reality and treated it as having no need of anything but itself; that in ascending, he had *drawn up the ladder* after him and left himself no possibility of descending again; yet some way downwards has to be found. It is argued that if the One, as complete in itself, has no need to create and if yet It has created, Plotinus is bound, in some way, to account for the fact and to cut the knot, if he cannot untie it. Accordingly, it is said that in describing the movement downwards he has had to take refuge in metaphors and analogies. See E. Caird's 'Evol. Greek Theol.' Vol. 2, pp. 253-4.

In such a movement downwards, Dr. Caird further asks, with reference to Spinoza, can one consistently reassert the reality of that which in one's movement upwards one has denied to be real? *ibid.* p. 230.

Why not? In tracing the source of a river you may go up that river and again come back by it. The truth is that in going up you do not deny the *reality*, but the *independent character* of that reality.

If the *Brahma* of the Indián *Vedânta* is a false and empty abstraction, the idea of the Absolute Being in the Hegelian system would be no less so. Hegel's own utterances exposed him,[1] according to Professor Seth, to the charge of having transformed his *logical* Absolute into a *metaphysical* existence, by a leap across "the ugly broad ditch" which dialectic is powerless to bridge. But Professor Seth suggests a sympathetic explanation of Hegel's meaning. That explanation is, that we first go to the Absolute Being as a logical abstraction and then again, *as it were*, come back through our experiential knowledge of actual fact to the *quasi* or dependent reality of Nature, and thence back again to the full reality of the Spirit. It is because we ourselves are Spirits, that we cannot stop short of that consummation. The pure form craves, as it were, for its concrete realisation.[2]

The truth is that if one *feels* the presence of the Infinite in every sense-perception of external objects, this Infinite can hardly be said to be a merely logical and therefore an empty abstraction. It is the discovery of a psychological fact that man can and does find the Infinite behind the finite, and he is conscious of both simultaneously.[4] "The Infinite *per se*, as a mere negative," says Professor Max Müller,[3] "would have had no interest for primitive man, but as the background, as the support, as the subject or the cause of the finite in its manifestations, it came in from the earliest period of human thought."

The Hindu might well say with Descartes: I ought not to think that I perceive the Infinite only by the negation of the finite, as I perceive rest and darkness by negation of motion and light; on the contrary, I clearly perceive that there is more of reality in Infinite substance than the finite.

Dr. Ballantyne rightly remarks that the "empty substratum, which the *Vedântins* are fancied to place in the room of the Supreme, is precisely what, as a nothing, does not enter into their conception of the Supreme at all."

[1] See however justification of Hegel in E. Caird's "Evol. Greek Theol.," Vol. 2, pp. 246-7. Will not the same apply to the *Vedântic* conception? See also Haldane's "Pathway," II, p. 69.

[2] Seth's "Hegelianism and Personality," pp. 111-12.

[3] See H. Spencer's "First Principles," pp. 87-89.

[4] "Natural Religion," p. 149.

When the ancient Hindu addressed, for instance, his hymns to the Dawn, he did not adore a bare abstraction, but something more and higher than the Dawn, something within or behind it which did not vanish; which came again and again, day after day, and manifested itself in the Dawn. It was the "visible Infinite" reached not by any long process of abstract reasoning.[1]

He was not satisfied with Devas such as Prajâpati or Vishvakarman; the spirit of honest doubt, in the further stages of his development, gave rise to what Professor Max Müller calls *adevism*, not atheism, and name after name was tried to signify what was believed to be higher than the concepts of Prajâpati, Vishvakarman, and tried in vain. Each quest after his higher principle was answered by *Neti Neti* (*not-so, not-so*). The old gods were abandoned, not because the ancient Aryan believed or desired less, but because he believed and desired more. At last, he found what he wanted and expressed the same by a neuter name, higher than masculine or feminine, not lower. He wanted a sexless, but by no means a lifeless God.[2]

In their desire to have such a God, full of every content, the Indian Mystics passed through a process, which has been aptly described by Professor James in his 'Varieties of Religious Experiences,' p. 416, in the following words:—

'Their very denial of every adjective you may propose as applicable to the ultimate truth,—He, the Self, the Âtman, is to be described by "No! no!" only, say the Upanishads—though it seems, on the surface, to be a no-function, is a denial made on behalf of a deeper Yes. Who so calls the Absolute anything in particular, or says that it is *this*, seems implicitly to shut it off from being *that*—it is, as if he lessened it. So we deny the 'this,' negating the negation which it seems to us to imply, in the interest of the higher affirmative attitude by which we are possessed. The fountain-head of Christian Mysticism is Dionysius, the Areopagite. He describes the Absolute Truth by negatives exclusively.'

"The cause of all things is neither soul nor intellect; nor has it imagination, opinion, or reason, or intelligence; nor is it reason or intelligence; nor is it spoken or thought. It is neither number, nor

[1] *Cf.* Max Müller's "Natural Religion," p. 145.

[2] *Cf.* Max Müller's "Origin and Growth of Religion," pp. 145, 310-11, 319.

order, nor magnitude, nor littleness, nor equality, nor inequality, nor similarity, nor dissimilarity. It neither stands, nor moves, nor rests. . . It is neither essence, nor eternity, nor time. Even intellectual contact does not belong to it. It is neither science nor truth. It is not even royalty or wisdom; not one; not unity; not divinity or goodness; nor even spirit as we know it, etc., *ad libitum*."

But these qualifications are denied by Dionysius, not because the truth falls short of them, but because it so infinitely excels them. It is above them. It is *super*-lucent, *super*-splendent, *super*-essential, *super*-sublime, *super* everything that can be named. Like Hegel in his logic, Mystics journey towards the positive pole of truth only by the 'methode der Absoluten negativitat.' The German Mystic Eckhart's thoughts in this connection are apposite. He says "God is nameless, for no man can either say or understand aught about him. If I say, God is good, it is not true; nay more; I am good, God is not good. I may even say, I am better than God: for whatever is good, may become better, and whatever may become better, may become best. Now God is not good, for He cannot become better. And if He cannot become better, He cannot become best. For these three things, good, better, and best, are far from God, since He is above all. If I also say, God is wise, it is not true; I am wiser than He. If I also say, God is a Being, it is not true; He is transcendent Being, and superessential nothingness." Concerning this St. Augustine says: "The best thing that man can say about God is to be able to be silent about Him, from the wisdom of his inner judgment. Therefore be silent and prate not about God, for whenever thou dost prate about God, thou liest, and committest sin. If thou wilt be without sin, prate not about God. Thou canst understand naught about God, for He is above all understanding." A master saith: "If I had a God whom I could understand, I would never hold Him to be God."[1]

If this really was the process involved in the *Neti Neti* of the Indian *Vedânta*, there is no room to stigmatise the idea as a bare logical and empty abstraction, void of all content. Every attempt made by the

[1] See Inge's "Light, Life and Love," pp. 1, 2. *Cf.* also Zeller's 'Outlines of Greek Philosophy,' p. 61, where similar teachings are attributed to Parmenides.

Indian *Vedântin* was to obtain a higher and richer conception and not an empty nothing.

Indian metaphysicians may have adopted a dialectic which to the Hegelian system would perhaps not be commendable, but their ideas of *Brahma*, God, the Soul, and the Universe, were the result of deliberate thought and were not accepted simply as "made and ready" by the canon of popular conception. The Indian *Vedânta* is the synthetic result of a long course of philosophic meditation and review of the diverse teachings of Indian schools of thought, tested by the theories of knowledge which they had enunciated.

And the most important concepts, which the *Vedântin* thus gained with their concept of *Brahma*, were those of Law and Order, implying Perfect Intelligence and Wisdom. Shankar himself refers to this idea in Mundak Upanishad I, i, 7, which is equivalent to saying *In natura nihil fit per saltum.*

The Vedântist's *Brahma*, in the Hegelian mode of expression, is therefore an absolute, self-conscious, self-determining spirit—of thought, which reveals itself in the manifold differences of the finite world. While it remains one with itself, it is yet the productive source of an actual world of ideas and intelligences—a Being which has in it the *impulse* (*Sphoorti*) to realise itself in all the manifold individualities of the finite world, either directly, as suggested by the conception of the Word (Logos) or Emanation, or indirectly through its own ever inseparable power called *Mâyâ*. There is, thus, the recognition of a principle of self-consciousness or of Thought, which in all its determinations remains one with itself; it embraces in its concrete unity the whole inexhaustible wealth of the finite world, which it lets out and in the fulness of time draws in (as the tortoise draws in its limbs, *Kûrmângâni iva*) at its free will, to be again let out in view of *further* development.[1] The finite world is not lost in the *Vedântic Brahma*, but retains its individuality. Even the individual, who has reached perfection and realised his own identity with it, is not lost; the idea is that such a one remains, so to speak, centered in his Self, and is no longer subject to the rounds of births and deaths; he may, and generally does, continue his individuality for the regeneration of mankind, maintaining his own freedom and continuing

[1] *Cf.* H. Spencer's First Principles, pp. 182-8, 190.

unaffected by this ever changing *Samsâra*. The history of the Saviours of mankind all over the world is just this.

The *Brahma* is, accordingly, no *abyss* which swallows up all finite beings; it is no cave into which everything passes as into a kind of eternal night; it is no lion's den into which all the footsteps go and none lead out again. To use Professor Pfleiderer's own expression, "It is the positive ground which produces and maintains the finite." In Shankar's language, it is the "root of the Universe, and these creatures—moveable and immoveable—have their root in it; during their continuance, too, they rest in it." It is that in which we live and move and have our being.[1] The sentiment of a Hindu, that his salvation is in his own union with *Brahma*, ought to be intelligible to those who are familiar with the Christian idea of "union with God," "sleeping in Christ Jesus" &c. That notion is not absurd any more than the other is.

[1] Chhând. Up. VI, 8, 4.

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT ENIGMA[1].

In the last chapter I endeavoured to show that the conception of *Brahma* is not an empty logical abstraction, as Hegel and his followers generally suppose; that it is a metaphysical reality which is the fundamental basis of all our experience. It is Absolute Thought and Being. I have also there stated that the *neti neti* (not so, not so) of the Indian *Vedântin* indicates a higher affirmative attitude, which he took in his quest after the Absolute Being. It is undisputed that he had passed the initial stage of pure Objectivism, and started, from the opposite standpoint, to comprehend and explain the Universe by a *single* principle, contemplating the finite from the point of view of the infinite, and recognising his *Brahma* as a self-determining principle manifesting itself in all the determinations of the finite, without losing its unity with itself. And his refusal to assign any attributes to that principle was due to his conviction that any attributes which man could think of, would fall infinitely short of the exact truth. He found that it was simply degrading the Supreme Power in the very process of thus scanning It; the truth being, as Prof. James puts it, "*super*-lucent, *super*-splendent, *super*-essential, *super*-sublime, *super*-everything that can be named".[2]

We have, unfortunately, no historical data of how the ancient Indian sages arrived at the results which are found formulated in the writings which have reached us. Possibly, as Dr. Roer surmises, "in the dawn of philosophical thought it is found more easy to give the *result* of researches than the researches themselves." But there are abundant grounds for the belief that the Hindu passed through exactly the same stages of mental development as other nations elsewhere did, and, probably, in the same order. He looked, first *outward* then *upward*, and then *inward*.

[1] Originally contributed to 'East & West,' for 1904, pp. 869–78, and 993 to 998.

[2] *Cf.* the same idea in Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14. S.B.E., Vol. 34, p. 329.

So long as he was in the first stage, he would naturally make a distinction between what is called Spirit and Nature, and assign to each an independent reality. In the next stage, he would see that these two co-existing eternal principles would be a limitation of each other, and destroy the infinitude of both; he would, therefore, if an idealist, subordinate Nature to Spirit, matter to mind; but he would, in that case, feel the necessity of an explanation by which the antithesis between the two could be reconciled; for, without it, a transition from the one to the other would not be possible. He would know that the dualism of the finite and infinite must be overcome and substantial unity reached; and his explanation at this stage would probably be like the one which has more or less influenced Christian philosophers since the time of Descartes; and where polytheism (though not quite in the Greek sense of the term) prevailed side by side with monotheism, each phenomenon in Nature would have its own God to explain it by.

But when the divine in man was discovered to be identical with the divine in Nature, that fact itself would furnish an explanation by which to overcome the apparent dualism of the finite and the infinite. In other words, when the *Vedântin felt* that his own self gave him an idea of Thought and Being, when he saw that there was, underlying all phenomena, also a Self—a Supreme Power—Thought and Will—whose manifestations they are, when he took the further step and recognised the identity of the subjective self in man and the objective self in nature, he thought that he had found a solution of the grand problem of the Universe[1].

And, indeed, what better explanations of this problem can be given than those suggested by the Indian *Vedântin*?[2] (A) Either view the whole cosmos as one living organism in an Eternal Now[3], and

[1] As to evolution of Indian philosophic thought see the well considered remarks of Prof. Deussen in his 'Philosophy of the Upanishads,' pp. 183—5, 158, 168, 171 and 236, showing how the strict *Adwaita* doctrine reconciled itself with the popular idea of the Universe and the traditional doctrine of the Rig Veda.

[2] See Viveka Chûdâmani, verses 230, 232, 233, 394, 397.

[3] As to this conception, see Clifford Harrison's 'Notes on the Margins,' pp. 249—251, where he says that the history of all the worlds is actually travelling in space, without ever absolutely disappearing, that *all past events are present and indestructible in the bosom of the infinite.*

Cf. also Leadbeater's 'Clairvoyance,' pp. 109—113.

Haldane's 'Pathway,' II, pp. 157—158, also pp. 12, 46, 64.

Deussen's 'Phil. Up.' p. 137—the eternal day of *Brahman.*

Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 1-4. S.B.E. Vol. 34.

treat the appearance of the Universe as *an independent entity* to be illusory, leaving the question, as to how it appears so originated in time and space, practically unexplained ; or, (B) if one must seek an explanation of this apparently differentiated and isolated universe, that explanation must be sought in some such conceptions[1] as that of (1) the World, or (2) Emanation or Evolution, or (3) the inscrutable power of the Eternal Being—the *Mâyâ* of the *Vedânta* system.

By one or other of these, the Indian Vedântin has sought to explain the problem.

Rigorous *Advaitins* like Gaudapâda and Shankar adopt the first of these views. They leave unexplained how the universe has come to appear as a differentiated reality ; they attribute this appearance to *Mâyâ*, the inscrutable power (*âtma shakti*) of *Brahma*, and say that it has no reality *independent of or apart from Brahma*. Whatever is, is all One—from Eternity—in an Eternal Now. There is no evolution, no emanation, no causation, &c., &c., which are purely time conceptions.[2]

But while adopting this view as being the most correct from a philosophic standpoint, they do not reject any of the other views which I have above mentioned. They freely accept the texts which maintain them, as being necessary for the edification of people of varied intellectual capacity. Shankar distinctly says that the explanations therein suggested may be either true or metaphorical, although he personally is inclined to the latter view. It may be, he says, that "the Lord Omniscient, Omnipotent, the Great Conjuror, did, like a conjuror, do all this illusion to facilitate explanation as well as com-

[1] See Dvivedi's Mand. Up. Introd. pp. xxiv and xxviii, where many of such conceptions are stated and explained.
Cf. also the विवप्रतिबिंबवाद relied on by Shankar in his Vâkya Sudhâ.

[2] See Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 9, 16, 35, 36 ; S.B.E., Vol. 34, pp. 311, 332, 360, 361 ; and Mândukya Up. IV, 22, 46, 58, &c.
Cf. Veitch "Knowing & Being," p. 21. "All is one," *cf.* Bhag. Git. VII, 7, and Brihat. Up. II, 5, 15.
It is interesting to note that Lotze's solution is very similar to Shankar's ; see Hegel's 'Phil. Rel.', pp. 33-40 and 105, (no causation) ; p. 88 (no emanation) ; pp. 91 and following (no projection) ; p. 121 (no production).
Cf. a similar notion of Spinoza that the Universe is not to be conceived as arising or beginning to be ; it *is*, and from eternity it was (See 'Hist. Pantheism,' Vol. 2, p. 322). Shankar expresses the same idea by the term *Anâdi Samsâra* (अनादि संसार:)
As to modern Christian thought regarding the world in time and space as a realisation of the pure unity of thought in matter, see Edward Caird's 'Evol. Greek Theol.', Vol. II, p. 241.

prehension, as stories, though false," are meant to convey truths.[1] Or, it may be that the texts which give those explanations are "only meant as means to assist the true realisation of the *Âtman*—as helps to assist the mind in grasping the unity of the *Âtman*."[2]

What Plato's conception of a World Soul did for his system, what the Logos did for the Neo-Platonism of Alexandrian philosophy, these conceptions of the Word, Evolution and *Mâyâ* have done for the Indian *Vedânta*.

From a philosophic point of view, it may, perhaps, be said that these are mere expedients or devices adopted as a substitute for rational thought, for, from the standpoint of the Absolute no explanation might be necessary. To *know* the Absolute is, as Schelling says, to *be* the Absolute, and all differentiations would necessarily vanish with that Knowledge. It is only from the standpoint of the universe, where the phenomenal world presses on our attention and we cannot escape its recognition as a differentiated and independent entity, that we are bound to suggest some explanation of how the One has become many or appears to have become many.[3] That explanation may appear more or less metaphorical; but how can we avoid the use of metaphorical language in our explanations of spiritual truths. Hegel's own dialectic affords a remarkable illustration of this necessity. What may be fairly insisted on, in such cases, is that the explanation offered must be one, which is intelligible without being irrational.

When the *Vedântin*, for instance, says that the world originated from the Word, and that this Word is Brahma[4]; when Shankar said, on the authority of some *Smriti*, that "in the beginning Divine Speech (*Vâch*), consisting of Veda, was uttered by the Self Existent from

[1] Ait. Up. IV; *cf.* Ved. Sutr. S.B.E., Vol. 34, pp. 328 and following. *Cf.* also S.B.E., Vol. 38, pp. 178, 401 union with *Brahman* a metaphorical expression).

[2] See Mândukya Up. III, 15, 16 and 23, and Shankar's Gloss on the same. See also Patanjali's Sûtras, II, 18.

[3] In reality, says Shankar, 'the creation of the world and similar topics are not at all what the *Shruti* wishes to teach us. . . passages about creation and the like..subserve the purpose of teaching *Brahma*; . . the creation is described merely for the purpose of teaching us that (what is supposed to be) the effect is not really different from the (supposed) cause.' See Ved. Sutr. S.B.E., Vol. 34, pp. 265, 266, 357. See also *ibid.* p. 267.

[4] See Ved. Sutr. I, 3, 28; S.B.E., Vol. 34, p. 201.

Cf. also Max Müller's 'Six systems Ind. Phil,' pp. 520-22, 534 and following; Max Müller's "Theosophy," pp. 519 and following;

Cowell's 'Sarv. Dar. Sang.', p. 209, and 'Mahabh. Shanti Parva' quoted at p. 90 of Max Müller's 'Six systems Ind. Phil.'

which all activities proceed;" when in other Upanishads, too, it is said that *Brahma* "thought and willed to become many and accordingly became many[1], they used a language which, to say the least, was highly suggestive.

This idea of the Word (Thought and Will), says Max Müller[2], is "not a cobweb or a metaphysical dream of abstruse philosophy; it is one of the most natural, and most accurate, nay, most true conceptions of the creation of the World."

The idea signifies the unity of thought and sound—a thought conceived and carried out. As in Plato's system, the Universe is but a copy of the Divine Idea, so the universe, in this view of the *Vedânta*, is *vâchârambhanam vikâro nâmadhêyam*[3], which literally means that it is a modification or change originating in the Word and specialised by Name and Form. In other words, "the Unmanifest became manifest by name and form[4]". "I am one, let me be many," &c.

So, too, as to Emanation. This conception is intimately connected with that of the Word, on the one hand, and Evolution (*parinâm*), on the other. It is highly suggestive of the modern theory of Evolution. It implies, with the *Vedântin*, that *Brahma*, through the laws of its own being, throws itself into manifestations on itself. The *Vedântin* illustrates this idea by the similes of a spider and its web, the hair and nails growing on an animate body, the sea and its waves and foam[5], the sun and its rays playing on the rippling water. But

[1] See also Ved. Sutr. 1, 1, 5, and Shankar's Gloss thereon, S.B.E., Vol. 34, pp. 47-48.

[2] See Max Müller's "Theosophy," p. 382. See also pp. 380-3.

[3] See Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14, S.B.E., Vol. 34, p. 321.

[4] Compare Kant's "Matter and form.' Matter is that which gives the sensation (Rupa ?) and Form is the "relation under which we consider the perceptions of our senses, in order to co-ordinate them, . . it is only a law inherent in the nature of our mind, by which we co-ordinate the impressions furnished by sensibility." Time and Space are the forms, that is to say, the relation which we conceive between objects, in order to co-ordinate them. In themselves they are nothing, but the mind could not represent phenomena except as successive and objects except as juxtaposed. "Kant's System," Madras Edn. p.14.

[5] See the same simile employed by a modern writer; "an infinite and eternal ocean upon whose surface arise a numberless variety of forms, from tiny bubbles to little ripplets, and from these again, to huge and mighty waves. Yet from the ocean they arise; upon its surface they are borne; back into its depths must they be merged. Water they are, and water they will ever be. . . the forms or bodies of all things perish, they gradually change, then pass away. But the soul abides for ever." 'Hist. Panth.', Vol. 2, p. 317; *cf.* also *ibid.* p. 322. "All that is in God; and nothing is, nor can be conceived to be, without God, so that modes are to substance very much what waves are to the sea, appearances on the face of reality not things apart from it, but merged in it.

in doing so he does not predicate that what is thus let out is separated from *Brahma*, which is designated its cause. Like Sir William Hamilton, the *Vedântin* recognises an identity of existence in the effect and its cause—between *causatum* and *causa*. The effect is always latent in the cause; the cause is identical with effect, *kârya kârana abheda*. What *Brahma* manifests on itself as an activity was what, potentially, was contained in it[1].

The becoming many, says Shankar, does not relate to *other* things as in the case of begetting a son. The becoming many is by manifestation in name and form of that which existed in it, but in its unmanifested condition. When the name and form, which exist in it unmanifested, unfold, then the name and form unfold in all situations, without abandoning their original nature and without being divided from *Brahma*, either in space or in time; and this manifestation of name and form is the *Brahma's* becoming many[2].

The Indian *Vedânta* is not unique in its theory of Emanation. It found favour with some of the most eminent Christian philosophers and German mystics; the names of Thomas Aquinas, Eckhart, Tauler, for instance, may be mentioned in this connection. And though this theory is inconsistent with Hebraic cosmogony as given in the Book of Genesis, it seems in no way incompatible with the spirit of the New Testament[3].

The Indian *Vedântin* repudiates the unscientific conception of creation, which implies, first, a creation out of nothing, and, secondly the separation of the Creator from His creation, and which, thirdly, in this implication, leaves unexplained the *organic* growth and development of the Universe.

The *Vedântins*, especially those who advocate the theory of Emanation or Evolution (*parinâm*),maintain (what science has also proved) that nature is not created, but *begotten* with the elements of life and growth *inherent* in it, no external impulses being necessary for its development. The whole cosmos is a living organism—one life pervad-

[1] Ved. Sutr., II, 1, 15-20.

[2] See Taitt. Up., II, 6. Madras Translation, pp. 167-8. The objection, that such a conception is out and out pantheistic, is answered below. For a discussion of the question of one and many in connection with the philosophy of Plotinus by Edward Caird, see "Evol. Greek Theol.," pp. 253-7; where Dr. Caird appears to be unnecessarily severe in his criticism.

[3] See Max Müller's 'Theosophy or Psychological Religion," pp. 296-7.

ing all and connecting all, from the highest to the lowest order of beings, in such defined relations to each other as to show intelligence and purpose. All "threaded on the Lord, as jewels on a string"[1]. The regularity, says Shankar, with which everything in nature performs its functions argues an intelligent controller[2].

The third conception recognised by the *Vedânta* as furnishing an explanation of the phenomenal world is that of *Mâyâ*, the enlightened *âtma shakti* or power of *Brahma*.

This word *Mâyâ* plays a most important part in the philosophy of the *Advaita Vedânta*; and it is this word which has misled foreigners, and even puzzled, in a manner, the Indian mind, the greatest blunder in this connection being, that it is associated with the idea of illusion as meaning a positive blank.

This word occurs in the Rig Veda, where it seems to have been used in the sense of intelligence (*pradnyâ*). In the Nirukta of Yâska it is used to denote the intelligence through which all things are measured and comprehended. In a few places it is also used to denote "a wonderful power"—the wonderful power of the Grand Architect of the Universe[3].

And although the word does not occur in the principal Upanishad except in the Swetâsvatar and Maitrâyani and in one place in the Brihad—Âranyak[4], it has its *germ* in the Vedas[5].

[1] Bhag. Git., VII, 7.

[2] Taitt. Up., II, 8.

[3] The view propounded here is confirmed by Gough in his 'Phil. Up.' where he says, *Mâyâ* is part and parcel of the primitive Indian cosmological conception as exhibited in the Upanishads themselves, [and Colebrooke is wrong in imagining that it is a later graft upon the old Vedantic philosophy]. The *Nâsadîya Sûkta* (नासदीय सूक्त) Rig Veda, X, 129 and a number of passages from the principal Upanishads are quoted by Gough to show Colebrooke's error, which error, he says, has arisen from Colebrooke's reliance on a passage from Vidnyâna Bhikshu, an opponent of the *Vedântin*. Gough positively asserts that "the tenet of *Mâyâ* is no modern invention; the thought, if not the word, is everywhere present in the Upanishads, as an inseparable element of the philosophy, and the word itself is of no infrequent occurrence; . . . there has been no addition from without, but only a development from within; *no graft but only a growth*. (p. 248) . . . what has been implied has become more explicit (p. 258). The *Nâsadîya Sûkta* seems to be the earliest announcement of the *eternal coexistence of a spiritual principle of reality and an unspiritual principle of unreality* (p. 241). . . . . Shankarâcharya was right in holding it for such, and his philosophy is the philosophy of the Upanishads themselves, only in sharper outlines and in fresher colours. The *Vedânta* has a just title to be styled, as it is styled, the *Aupanishadîya Mimânsâ*," (p. 237). The italics are the author's. See also *ibid.* pp. 15 and 81, and the whole of chap. IX. As to the origin of the doctrine of *Mâyâ*, *cf.* also Deussen's 'Phil. Up.' pp. 42, and 226-235. *Cf.* also "Aspects of the Vedant," p. 39.

[4] See S. B. E., Vol. 34, introd. p. cxvii, note.

[5] See H. H. Wilson's "Essays on the Religion of the Hindus" and Vol. VII, 'Brahmavâdin,' p. 260.

But, as correctly pointed out by M. Paul Regnaud, it was not possible that it could receive any development till the subjective stage of philosophic thought was reached in India. As stated before, the idea, that two co-existing eternal principles of Spirit and Nature, Mind and Matter, would destroy the infinitude of both, is one which necessarily represents a later phase of thought, necessitating, on the part of the Idealist, the recognition of Spirit alone as an eternal principle to the exclusion of the other; but this does not mean the denial of *all* reality to Nature. In fact, no idealist (except, perhaps, the *Vidnyân Vâdins* in India) ever went this length. All that philosophic consistency required was to refuse it recognition as an eternal, independent reality, and to explain the whole problem of existence by a *single* principle, that is, in terms of the *Âtman*.

This phase of thought can be traced in the Bhagavat Gîtâ and the Upanishads; but it seems to have received, as the sequel will show, a consistent philosophic development at the hands of Gaudapàd and Shankar.

In one sense *Mâyâ* may be viewed like one of the infinite modes in the system of Spinoza—a sort of connecting link between the phenomenal world and the Supreme Essence—Absolute Thought and Being. But it is by no means a purely fictitious or artificial link. *Brahma*, for obvious reasons, has to be conceived as *nirvikâra*, as perfectly free from all attributes involving motion and change; the whole function of "letting out" the universe is, therefore, conceived as pertaining to that power called *Mâyâ*, which is the illuminated *âtma shakti* of *Brahma* and ever inseparable from it, the intelligence observable in the moral order of the Universe being considered as due to the guidance of *Brahma* which is All Intelligence. *Brahma* itself being Eternal and as such not liable to any modifications or changes, the whole of the manifold finite existence is ascribed to this agency; *yet the unity of the Brahma is retained*; instead of conceiving the Absolute, like Aristotle, "as unmoved yet moving[1]," the moving in this conception is supposed to be that of its own power, which is ever inseparable from it and which is ever under its own intelligent guidance.

[1] See Brihad. Up., IV. 3-4, quoted in Deussen's 'Phil. Up.,' pp. 135-136.

Such an idea of *Mâyâ* may well stand comparison with the Nous in the system of Anaxagoras and Plotinus, or the Logos as an Emanation in the Johannine Gospel, or the Logos as the Second Person in the teachings of St. Paul.

The word *Mâyâ* has been variously described, but I take Shankar's description of it, because it is his rigorous monism which has evoked much opposition to the *Vedânta*, and any justification of the *Advait* doctrine without an explanation of Shankar's views would be incomplete. He describes *Mâyâ* thus :—

"It is a power of the Lord from which the world springs—the Divine Power in which names and forms (that is, all finite existences) *lie unevolved*, and which we assume as the antecedent condition of that state of the world in which names and forms are evolved."[1]

Like the infinite moods in Spinoza's system, *Mâyâ*[2] is neither *sat* nor *asat* (real or unreal)—not *sat*, because it is not eternal but ever

[1] See Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutra, 1, 4, 9, S.B.E., Vol. 34 p. 255. The original is दैवी शक्ति: अव्याकृतनामरूपा नामरूपयो: प्रागवस्था. *Cf.* Bhag. Gît. XIV, 3. See also Wilson's 'Sânkhya Kârika,' section 22, n. *Cf.* an excellent description of *Mâyâ* by the Maratha Poet Râmdâs in his 'Dâsa Bodha,' VI, 5; *cf.* also *ibid.* VII, 1, verses 53 and following; '*Brahma* is without attribute, and form, *Mâyâ* is endowed with both; *Brahma* is infinite, *Mâyâ* finite; *Brahma* immaculate and serene, *Mâyâ* fleeting and restless; *Brahma* is without adjuncts, *Mâyâ* is full of them; *Mâyâ* is visible, *Brahma* invisible; *Mâyâ* perceptible, *Brahma* imperceptible; *Mâyâ* perishable, *Brahma* imperishable; *Mâyâ* groweth, *Brahma* waxeth not; *Mâyâ* diminisheth, *Brahma* waneth not; *Mâyâ* appealeth to the ignorant, *Brahma* attracts him not; *Mâyâ* is born, *Brahma* is birthless; *Mâyâ* dieth, *Brahma* is deathless; *Mâyâ* descendeth into cognition, *Brahma* is beyond cognition; *Mâyâ* fructifieth, *Brahma* doth not; *Mâyâ* dissolveth, *Brahma* is indissoluble; *Mâyâ* palleth, *Brahma* is a joy for ever; *Mâyâ* changeth, *Brahma* is immutable; *Mâyâ* acteth, *Brahma* is beyond all activity; *Mâyâ* assumeth various forms, *Brahma* is formless; *Mâyâ* is of the five elements, manifold, *Brahma* is one and eternal. . . *Mâyâ* is spread everywhere enveloping the Brahma, the sage alone can pierce through the mist'. *Cf.* a modern writer's explanation of *Mâyâ*, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's 'Sâdhana,' pp. 95 and the following—ED.

[2] An important function that *Mâyâ* has played in the evolution of Indian Theology is that, acting with *Brahma* as its *âtma shakti*, it has made *Brahma* intelligible as a personal God to numberless devotees. This personal God is not a "Myth" as Prof. Pfleiderer and Gough, and other writers, similarly disposed, have ventured to describe, in their ignorance of the true working of the Hindu mind and feeling. See 'Pancha Dashî' III, 40. 'United with its own power (*Upâdhi Shakti*) *Brahma* appears as *Ishwara* (Supreme Lord)'; तच्छक्त्युपाधिसंयोगाद् ब्रह्मैव ईश्वरता व्रजेत् See also Ved. Sutr., 1, 4, 3 and Shankar's Gloss thereon, S.B.E., Vol. 34, p. 243, quoting from 'Svet. Up.,' IV, 10. 'मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् मायिनं तु महेश्वरम्' (Know thou *Prakriti* is *Mâyâ*, and the Great Lord he who is affected with *Mâyâ*.)

See also S.B.E., *ibid.* p. 329.—ED.

changing—nor *asat*, in the sense of precluding all possibility of existence in one's experience, like the 'horns of a hare', or 'the son of a barren woman,' while *Mâyâ* is the cause of the world, which we see, and in which we experience the good and evil in it, pleasure and pain, &c. If it is neither *sat* nor *asat*, what then is it? The answer is, it is inexplicable (*anirvachanîya*)—a technical expression meaning a thing which appears in consciousness as something and, therefore, more than nothing, and which yet is proved by experience to be less than real, because transient or ephemeral[1].

But it is not an illusory nothing. It is a phenomenal something, having for its substrate the Eternal Absolute. It is the cause of a phenomenal world and not of a fictitious world. The world has a relative reality, dependent and resting on *Brahma* and never apart from or independent of it.

This is what the *Mâyâ* doctrine really means. It is, indeed, true that in course of time, from being the wonderful power of *Brahma*, the word naturally came to mean the *work* of that power, the universe and all of which knowledge is possible through the senses; and inasmuch as creation itself was a mystery presenting appearances which could not apparently be brought in harmony with the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being, the word also came to mean the natural incapacity of man to understand Nature in its true character. It thus became synonymous with cosmic nescience (*Avidyâ*).

In this view *Mâyâ* is deemed to possess two powers, called *âvarana* (enveloping) and *vikshepa* (projecting), one enveloping the soul and giving rise to the conceit of personality, egoity (*asmitâ buddhi*), and the other, projecting the phantasmagoria of a world, which man regards as external to himself[2].

Writers on the *Vedânta* say that *Mâyâ* has a threefold aspect; viewed in the light of the teachings of *Shruti*, it is unreal; viewed in the light of its nature, it is simply inexplicable; but from a practical or *vyâvahâric* point of view, it is something existent[3]. In other words, the universe, which has come into being by the play of the *Mâyâ* is, for all practical purposes, real.

[1] See 'Siddhânta Muktâvali,' p. 13, note.

[2]. See Ballantyne. See also Shankar's "Viveka Chûdâmani," Verses 142-146, where the two powers of *Mâyâ* explained.

[3] See 'Pancha Das hi.'

In Hegelian language[1], *Mâyâ* may be represented as the Not-Being of the Absolute Being; the negative aspect explaining the *Becoming*. It moves (*sansarati*) and brings into existence the world which in the *Vedânta* is called *Sansâra*. In the language of the *Vedânta*, it is the power of *Brahma* to which the phenomenal reality of the world is due, and which thus renders the Unrelated and Absolute a Personal God in His relation to that world. "*Brahma*, in so far as it is associated with *Mâyâ* . . . is more properly called *Ishvara*".[2]

This idea is further developed and made practically intelligible in the religious ritual based on the teachings of the *Vedânta*. *Mâyâ* is there personified as a goddess and a mistress of the Universe[3]. What she is made to say of herself it is very interesting to read:—

That which exists in Brahma as the 'I,' that ancient I-ness I am. He who is the inner soul of all beings becoming 'I' is remembered as the Hari [God]. I am, therefore, that ancient I-ness of all beings, . . . God Nârâyan exists and I, the Luxmi, am His highest Idea, and the meaning of 'I' becomes accomplished when it is united with I-ness. That which takes rise from the idea of 'I' is known as the I-ness . . . . I do not exist without Him, nor He without me. We both exist together, depending upon each other. Know, therefore, that the relation between me and the Lord is that of Substance and Quality. Without I-ness, the 'I' deprived of its expression, becomes meaningless; and without the idea 'I,' the I-ness, losing its support, becomes meaningless[4].

The above quotation, though from a work not connected with the *Advaita* system, is fully acceptable to *Advaitins* from a *vyâvahâric* or practical point of view. Shankar himself calls *Mâyâ* the Supreme *shakti* of the Supreme Lord, and extols her as a "goddess whose existence is inferred from her acts by the highest intellects only."[5]

It will appear from what I have said above that the result arrived at by the *Mâyâ* doctrine is practically the same as in the case of the other two conceptions of the Word and Emanation. Whether the

[1] See Haldane's "Pathway," II, pp. 156, 157.

[2] See Ved. Sutr. S. B. E., Vol. 34, introd. p. xxv.

[3] In the "Ânanda Lahari" Shankar himself addresses the Goddess *Mâyâ* as the supreme Queen of the *Parabrahma* 'त्वमसि परब्रह्ममहिषी.'

[4] 'Lakshmi Tantra,' quoted in Vol I Brahmavâdin, p. 298.

[5] 'Viveka Chûdâmani' verse 101.

explanation of the Universe is sought in the Word (Thought and Will), or in the conception (Evolution), or in the conception of the *Mâyâ*, the *Brahma* as a self-conscious spirit is ever present in its own manifestations on itself, that is, in every finite existence; whether the universe be brought out in form by *êkshan* (thought and will), or "let out of itself" (*visrishti*) or brought into being by the play of the *Mâyâ*, the Absolute Being and its manifestation (*chit* and *jada*) go hand in hand; and though mentally distinguishable, the *jada* is never conceived as an unlike and separate entity existing independently by itself. The two are one, not many[1]. There is *chaitanya*, the Brahmic element, everywhere, and it is in this sense that what is called Matter is considered not dead. There is what may be termed Brahmic vitality in it—a vitality, which manifests itself, in its own way in accordance with its own laws, in such degrees of activity apparently, that one might with truth join with Schelling in saying that the feeling of life *wakes* in man, *dreams* in animals, *slumbers* in plants and *sleeps* in stones. Shankar expresses this very idea in his *bhâshya* on *Ved. Sutr.* I. 1-11, as follows:—

Although one and the same self is hidden in all beings, movable as well as immovable, yet owing to the gradual rise of excellence of the minds which form the limiting conditions of the Self, Scripture declares that the Self, although eternally unchanging and uniform, reveals itself in a graduated series of beings, and so appears in forms of various dignity and power[2].

Such are the explanations suggested by the *Vedânta* of the problem of the Universe. It might, perhaps, be urged that they are not all consistent with each other, inasmuch as rigorous monists like Shankar object to the Word and Emanation theories as implying an *activity* and consequent changes (*vikâr*) in *Brahma*; but this inconsistency is more apparent than real. For under the *vivarta* theory, too, which

[1] Ved. Sutr. S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 106.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 63. *cf.* Shankar on Brihat. Up. 'Life is everywhere, and not small or large according to the size of the body.' *Cf.* 'Ait. Âranyaka' which in II. 3, 2, speaks of the gradual development of the self. See S.B.E. Vol. I, p. 222. See also Lilly's 'Ancient Religions,' pp. 340-42. And it is undoubtedly a scientific truth, for if the entire cosmos is an organism and an organism implies a growth from *within*, all the potentialities—from the lowest to the highest—must be in all beings from the commencement, and capable of development according to the environment in which each one may from time to time find itself.

such *Advaitins* advocate, they are bound to recognise a kind of activity, *sattâ pradatvam* in Brahma. Their theory of appearances (*vivarta vâda*) is that these appearances are due to *Mâyâ*, the inherent and inseparable power of *Brahma*. A *vivart*, say they, is no reality existing apart from its substrate; it is nothing but the substrate itself, which *in some inexplicable way* appears under a different form, that form disappearing on the realisation of the true nature of the substrate. This substrate is called *adhishthâna*, which is described as *sattâ pradam*[1], giving existence to that which it pervades and making it appear in consciousness[2].

Besides, as stated before, Shankar does not say that the explanations suggested by the conceptions of the Word and Emanation are invalid, but having himself assumed an agnostic attitude by his theory of unaccountableness (*anirvachanîyatâ*), he thinks that the explanations based on the Word and Emanation theories, are rather metaphorical, though well calculated to throw light on this abstruse problem of philosophy. In fact, Shankar himself in his writings has often sought to explain the problem by means of those theories[3].

In effect, therefore, all *Vedântins* are agreed that the Universe has its origin in *Brahma*—directly according to the theories of the Word and Emanation, or indirectly, through its inherent and inseparable power, the *Mâyâ*.

Still these questions remain :—How or why the One becomes Many ? How or why the Infinite becomes the finite, to return again into itself and become Infinite in the course of evolution and development ? How or why[4] it appears to give birth to many things or to take many forms ? These questions, it must be confessed, must ever remain unanswerable by man with his limited intelligence. When the *Ad-*

[1] Even this *Sattâ Pradam* quality, says Shankar, is not in *Brahma*. He refutes the illustration of the magnet and its proximity to iron, for this, in the case of *Brahma*, would create a permanency of motion; and the permanency of such capability would imply the impossibility of final release from *Sansâra*. The highest self, which is the cause of the world, is characterized by non-activity in its own nature, and at the same time, by a moving power inherent in *Mâyâ*, and is thus superior to the soul of the *Sânkhyas*. *Cf.* Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 2, 7, S.B.E., Vol. 34, p. 371. See also *ibid.* p. 369.

[2] 'Siddhânta Muktâvali', 168.

[3] See *e.g.*, Ved. Sutr. 1, 4, 3 and Shankar's Gloss thereon.

[4] The mind must fulfil the nature of its being and realize its own end. Then you have the why of the process of finitude. See Haldane's "Pathway," II, 115, 116, 'सोऽयताराय' says "Mând. Up."

vaitin relies upon his theory of unaccountableness or the doctrine of the Inscrutable *Mâyâ* or *Avidyâ*, he simply disguises but does not explain the problem. It is rather a confession of man's incapacity to offer a complete solution. Whether we adopt one view or another of the three suggested solutions under B. 1-2-3,[1] we have either to leave unexplained the inscrutable working of the *Mâyâ* or admit the possibility of the unchangeable (*nirvikâra*) *Brahma* becoming liable to changes, and leave this possibility unexplained[2].

Shankar admits that such questions are unanswerable, but he adds that they are likewise irrelevant—unanswerable, because truth is veiled by nescience, and we are thereby deluded[3]; irrelevant, because from the standpoint of the Absolute, there being no causation, no emanation, &c., which are purely time conceptions, these questions do not arise[4].

The true position of the *Advaitin*, accordingly, is that though from our point of view the unity of One and Many is an inexplicable mystery, from the standpoint of the Absolute this antithesis of the One

[1] See *supra* p. 34.

[2] Edward Caird's view on this point is worth quoting. He says, (Evol. Greek Theol., Vol. 2, p. 241):—

"The pure self-consciousness of God .... cannot logically be conceived as going beyond itself to create the finite world of movement and change. For though the latter involves the former as that on which it depends for its existence, the former cannot be regarded as involving the latter, or as in any way essentially related to it. The world in time and space is a realisation of the pure unity of thought in a matter in which it can never be perfectly realized; but the existence of such matter seems in no way to be accounted for by the purely ideal principle of thought [but see the Author's note at pp. 49 & 50 *infra*]. Thus we are obliged to refer the world to God, but God seems by His nature to have no need of the world, and, indeed, to be incapable of acting upon it. In short, there seems to be no reason for the existence of the world at all—except the presupposed matter, which, if it exists, cannot but come under the dominion of the universal principle in so far as its nature admits" . . . "A further regress becomes necessary [at this stage]. The Stoics sought to fortify the individual against all the chances and changes of the world by teaching him to retire into himself, and to treat everything that was not in his power as unnecessary and without value for him. . . . To live in harmony with nature, both with the nature of the world without and with the nature of the self within, meant nothing more than to treat every particular object and end as indifferent, and to fall back upon the simple 'I am I' of self-consciousness as complete in itself and self-sufficient" (*ibid.* p. 242). Here Edward Caird harps upon the same string as Ferrier and Hegel—Synthesis of subject and object—completeness of both in case of severance, to illustrate the process of thought by which the stoic gave rise to the Neo Platonic philosophy. (*ibid.* pp. 243, 248).

[3] Bhag. Git. V. 15 .See also Shankar's "Swâtma Nirûpana," (verse 93), quoting from Sacchidânand Swâmi.

[4] See the authorities cited in note 2 at p. 34 *supra*.

and Many is nothing [1]. The One is One, though it appears to be Many, as the sun with its reflections in water[2] "*Brahma* is really One" says Shri Krishna[3] to Arjun, " and indivisible, though to individual creatures it appears as inhering in them in a state of division."

This problem of existence is as old as man, and every philosopher has tried to explain it. It is impossible to refer in this article to all the attempted solutions which I have noted in the course of my reading. But as I am chiefly concerned here with Hegelianism, I must refer to Hegel's views on the subject.

Absolute Pure Being, according to Hegel, is the pulse of actual living thought, which in its movement is adequate for its own *internal* realisation, and which again sunders into an *external* realisation. All things are thus resolvable into thought. This, says Dr. Stirling, is the secret of Hegel's dialectic. This is the Absolute Idealism of Hegel[4].

Dr. Stirling has endeavoured to render Hegel's philosophy intelligible by the following metaphor, which is nearly on the lines of the Indian *Vedânta*.

" Suppose all that existed in the world were a single drop of water —space and its contents retracted into that. Well, evidently, seeing that it is only *one* drop that is concerned, there is no room for any considerations of size. It is indifferent whether we figure the drop as a pin's point, or a pin's head in magnitude. This drop, then, shall be the Absolute. But this drop now is not more *one* than it is *many*. It is a drop, a one, a single entity; and yet, whether it be infinitely small or infinitely large, being a *water* drop, it consists of an infinitude of drops each of which is a one—a drop, quite as much as the original, though only subordinate and dependent. Now, even so I can figure Spirit and Spirits, the monad and the monads. Then further, if we conceive that these spirits, monads, droplets, are not externalities but internalities—there is room for the additional conception of each of them, the individual droplets and the universal drop, being phenomenally, say in the manner of a shadow, sundered, or projected into externalities, an external world, which should appa-

[1] *Cf.* Deussen's 'Metaphysics', 182.

[2] *Cf.* Shankar's introdn. to 'Svet. Up.'

[3] Bhag. Git. XIII, 16 and 17.

[4] Schweglar's 'Hist. Phil.', pp. 431-432

rently surround all and each of them, though they themselves were self-retained. 'And God said, Let there be light, and there was light': the summed internality saw before itself, still self-retained, its own self *externalised* and constituting in the fashion of externality, a boundless out and out of contingent, material, infinitely various atoms, into which fell, however, as principle of retention, the shadow of the original tree of intellect.

> Friendless was the mighty Lord of all,
> And felt defect. . .
> From the cup o' th' realm of spirits
> Foams now infinitude".[1]

"Nature, according to Hegel, is potentially reason, but only through the spirit does this inherent rationality become actual and apparent. Spirit has the certainty which Adam had when he saw Eve. This is the flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. For Nature is in like manner the bride to which Spirit is wedded. . . . . The inner heart of Nature is nothing but the universal; hence when we have thoughts, we recognise in Nature's inner heart only our own reason, and feel ourselves at home there".[2]

It would thus appear that the position of the Indian *Advaitin* in suggesting *Âtman* as the solution—the universal mind or spirit—as

[1]. Schweglar's 'Hist. Phil.' pp. 442-3. The reader is specially requested to compare the above with Shankar's passage quoted from 'Tait. Up.' II. 6. "The *Âtman*, All-Light, imagines Himself by Himself, through the power of His *Mâyâ*. He Himself cognises the objects so sent forth." 'Mândukya Up.' II. 12. The self as the substantial cause becomes the self of the effect. Ved. Sut. I. 4, 26. *Cf.* an apposite passage in 'Brihad. Up.' "*Brahma* felt itself lonely; it said let me have a spouse and progeny." According to the old Christian Theology, says Mr. G. Tyrrell commenting on Campbell's 'New Theology' in the *Hibbert Journal* for July 1907, p. 919, God felt Himself lonely and hence He "limited Himself continuously to become conscious of His endless possibilities. Man is limited by his environment, through conflict with which he learns his own latent possibilities; but this voluntary self-limitation on the part of the Infinite in search of self realisation suggests a wilful tying of knots for the sake of untying them, and in order to kill the *ennui* of eternal solitude . . . It cannot be said that the New Theology belittles Christ, except so far as by raising us all to the dignity of incarnate deity, it threatens His essential and eternal pre-eminence. If we are but organs or parts of the All which is God, if He is as much the subject, the doer of what I do, as I am the doer of what my hand does, if my Self is identically the eternal Self, then I seem to stand as high as the Old Theology placed Christ."

[2]. 'Hegel's Works,' VII. 22, quoted in Prof. Seth's 'Hegelianism and Personality,' p. 128. Other passages which are quoted by Prof. Seth at pp. 112 and 144 are highly suggestive of the Indian ideas of Emanation, *Ecshana* (thought and will) and *Mâyâ*; The passages are too long for quotation here.

the connecting link between God, Man, and Nature, is at least intelligible and not the outcome of "unbridled madness." At all events, it does not lie in the mouth of Hegelians to stigmatise it thus. When the *Advaitin* says that the world is only an appearance due to something inexplicable, and that nothing exists apart from and independent of *Brahma*, he uses the language of philosophy and distinguishes between what is necessarily true for all possible intelligences, and what is only contingently and relatively so to us, and to intelligences like our own. The world *as we see it* may be and is to us a reality, but not to all possible intelligences. Higher intelligences, and even man on higher planes of thought, may find this "petrified spirit" (to use Hegel's expression for Nature) quite melted in the presence of the highest philosophic truth, which is All-Thought, All-Effulgence, Universal Sentiency[1].

Whether the Advaitin is right or not in his view, this much I may venture to assert—that if ever a correct and complete solution of the problem is possible, it could only be in a system from which the antithesis between Spirit and Nature, Mind and Matter has disappeared. Modern European philosophy, which is greatly influenced by the Cartesian school of thought, can never hope to obtain that solution. Where a sharp line of distinction is drawn between these two apparently opposed entities, where Nature and Spirit, Matter and Mind are viewed as absolutely independent of each other, where matter is considered lifeless and spiritless, it is impossible to get a *nexus* to connect the two, and the only way by which to bridge over the chasm, so arbitrarily created between the two, is by a recourse to an equally arbitrary idea of creation out of nothing, by the arbitrary will of an outside God, to whom nothing is impossible. But this is disguising what cannot be explained.

If Absolute Existence and Intelligence is a position which is acceptable to modern philosophy, it must follow that whatever has come into being by its intelligence must partake of the character of that

[1] See 'Mând. Up.' IV. 89, and following, and see Shankar's Gloss thereon: *Cf.* also J. Caird's 'Spinoza,' pp. 291-292, where he says "For the mind that sees things under the form of eternity, the body as a phenomenon in time has already vanished, the disillusioning power of reason has anticipated in a deeper way the physical disintegration of death." The same process is described by the Maráthá saint Rámdás in his 'Dása Bodha' as *Viveka-Pralaya* (dissolution by the power of Reason).

Absolute Being. If the Absolute Being is a spirit, the character of the universe must be spiritual; and, however unwilling we may be to accept the situation, we are bound to recognise its spiritual character. If Evolution is a scientific fact, we are bound to acknowledge that there is a unity of method running through the entire universe of mind and matter, and that what we call matter manifests marvellous capacities which are inherent in it; the old notion of matter being inert and dead must now be abandoned as scientifically untenable. If life is at last coming to be recognised as inherent not only in the animal[1] and vegetable kingdoms, but in the mineral kingdom also, the day is not far distant when this antithesis of Spirit and Nature will, for the philosopher [2], altogether vanish. One might well say with Lilly's Damon that "the old wall of partition between spirit and matter is breaking in all directions. I think I already hear the sound of the trumpets before whose blasts it is doomed to fall." [3]

[1] *Cf.* Shankar's view that animals have souls and the five Sheaths (पंचकोश), 'Taitt. Up.,' II. 3, Madras Edn., p. 149.

[2] This is exactly what happened to the Indian philosopher ages ago. Even such a writer as Gough, who is generally unsympathetic in his treatment of the *Vedânta* and is fond of using expressions like fiction, fictitious, illusion, etc., with reference thereto, has to admit (See p. 50 of his 'Phil. Up.') that the unreality of the world maintained by the *Vedânta* is an unreality *for the philosopher* intent on the one and only truth, relatively a reality for the Multitude, to whom the world exists with all its possibilities of pain. To him that sees the truth, all these bodies and their environments will disappear, merging themselves into that fontal essence, and the self will alone remain, a fullness of unbroken and unmingled bliss (*ibid.* p. 57). See also Shankar's view as to the correspondence between nature and spirit in his 'Vâkya Sudhâ,' verses 41, 42: Carlyle, with the true vision of a seer, appears to have realized that "this solid-Seeming world is but an air-image over Me, the only reality. . . . . All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, it is not there at all. Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea and body it forth."

[3] Lilly's 'Ancient Rel.,' p. 340. It is interesting to note in this connection what views have been variously taken about Matter by European thinkers in modern times. Some say that it is spirit in its lowest form of self-manifestation. Nature is petrified spirit, says Hegel. It is spirit visible, says Schelling. Spinoza, Leibnitz and Kant, too, took a like view. Others say that matter is simply the result of a play of forces—that it is "nothing more than an aggregation of minute electrical charges." Prof. Gates of Washington says that consciousness (sentiency) is "eternally a condition or property of what fills space, and must consequently be universal in space." Haeckel, a scientific philosopher, is of opinion that matter has sensation and will, as latent potentialities in embryo from the very beginning. (See Theosophical Review for 1906, pp. 553-4) Huxley attempted to express all knowledge in materialistic phraseology, but he took care to explain that he regarded such phraseology as in reality 'a sort of shorthand idealism.' He maintained that what we call the material world is only known to us under the forms of the ideal world, and the very existence of matter and force is at best a highly probable hypothesis, that our certain knowledge does not go beyond our states of consciousness, that our certainty is the certainty of the

The gap [1] which appears to exist between Spirit and Nature must disappear when it is recognised that all is Life (*âtman*). *Âtman* and *Âtman* alone in that case would be the mediating link connecting all that appears "differentiated in name and form." This is the rock on which the Indian systems are built; this is the rock on which the *Advaitin* takes his stand.

As in the world of Sense, so in the world of Spirit, new truths are coming to light. The researches of the Psychic Research Societies and other scientific bodies are bringing to light some extraordinary powers of the human mind, and there is no saying to what extent the theories of knowledge now current in Europe may be affected by the new discoveries. As these discoveries, so far as they have been made and verified, confirm some of the results arrived at in India some three thousand years ago, may we not hope that the *Advaita* doctrine of the *Vedânta* will find a scientific confirmation at last?

mental World (Flint's 'Agnosticism,' pp. 355-6). The new conceptions of thought and sound—of thought waves and thought forms, the multiplicity of forms depending on the variety of sound—may likewise be mentioned here, in this connection. Some of these ideas may, indeed, be supposed as suggestive of materialism; but if they indicate only a play of *spiritual* energy, would that objection have any validity? The explanation of the problem would still be in terms of the mind (Spirit). See Flint's 'Agnosticism,' pp. 355-356, and 572-3, where he points out how unfair it is to describe men like Huxley and Spencer as materialistic. See 'Hist. Panth.,' p. 299.

[1] How this gap is being fast bridged over by modern European thought is shown by Clifford Harrison in his "Notes on the margins," pp. 143-49, which are an extremely suggestive reading. The whole passage is too long for quotation here, but a short extract may be subjoined. "Are we not misled" [in regarding matter and spirit as ever distinct and separable] "by our notions of what matter is? We are apt to think of it as something gross, tangible, palpable something to be cognized by the senses of touch and sight. We do not sufficiently realize even the more ethereal forms of matter of which science herself tells us—nay, of which we ourselves have daily experience, as in scent, in the air, and in many material forms which escape detection by our ordinary sense." The author then proceeds to show, with the help of instances of objects like Crookes' vacuum tubes and the tail of a comet, how the old test of grossness, tangibility or palpability has to be largely modified. The author concludes by pointing out that even such a seemingly dead and inert object as a rusty piece of old iron is responsive to laws which have great affinity with those governing human life, thought and action. "Thus even in the bit of rusty iron we approximate the idea of life very closely, if we only look deep enough. And who can say that if we could look, in inverse ratio, as deeply into human thought and action, we should not find an answering process, approximating matter at last quite as closely as the iron approximates life? Both are manifestations of one force—movement. Let us have the courage of our convictions, and, running before science a little way (in the wise fashion of children?), own that "matter" and "spirit" are one and the same, in different degrees and under many expressions, obeying one law." *Cf.* also "Zero's" article in 'East and West' for 1905, pp. 81-83, and another article in "The Arya" for July 1906, showing "life in matter;" *Cf.* also an article in the "Monthly Review" for September 1905, entitled "Can plants feel"; and the discoveries of Dr. J. C. Bose in this behalf.

CHAPTER IV.

KNOWING AND BEING.[1]

PROFESSOR Ferrier, in his Institutes of Metaphysic, remarks that the mistake which the Ancient Greeks committed in their philosophical investigation was, that they began enquiry into the question of Being *before* an enquiry into the question of Knowing. The right course to pursue was to arrive first at a correct theory of Knowledge, and with that view to ascertain first what we *do*, as a fact, know, and what we can never possibly know, and then, in the light of what we thus discover, find out what *is*. The theory of Being, thus arrived at, becomes a reasoned and demonstrated truth and not a mere surmise.

Whatever may be said of Ancient Greece in this connection, it does not appear likely that Indian Epistemology was guilty of that fault in its method. It must be remembered that Ancient India had reached what is called the third or subjective stage of philosophic thought; and the great peculiarity of the Indian *Advaita* is that it starts with the Self as the highest ground of certitude; for though everything else might be doubted, the doubter could not doubt himself (Shankar's Bodhârya).

The *Vedânt* fully recognises that in every cognition the Self is a necessary and invariable element[2]. Professor Ferrier characterises this truth as "the fundamental necessity to which all intelligence is subject in the acquisition of Knowledge." It is, says he, the primary canon in the code of Reason.[3]

Shankar has, again and again, emphasised this truth in almost the same manner as Professor Ferrier has done. He often complains that "our intellect is quite engrossed in external objects, and that we do not properly investigate into the right sources of Knowledge." The Self (he says) is self-proved; it is not a thing unknown

[1] Originally contributed to 'East and West' for 1905, pp. 164-172 and pp. 662-673.

[2] Bhag. Gît. II, 16.

[3] Ferrier's 'Met.', p. 80.

to anybody at any time; it manifests itself equally in all objects of perception. There is no need for any external authority by which to define the Self, which is even more immediate to us than our body—no effort is needed for knowing the Self; it is needed only to remove the error of identifying the Self with the Not-Self[1]. Its existence is not inferred by any syllogistic process, but *felt* and recognised as a metaphysical fact from which there is no escape[2]. In the language of the *Vedânta* it is *pratibodhaviditam*. It is a postulate of Knowledge. It is the root of experience and makes experience possible; it is that which alone unifies all experiential knowledge.

In the language of Professor Max Müller[3], "it is an Æstheton; it is *felt*, man being in constant contact with it; and this contact is the only legitimate basis on which the Infinite can and does exist for us."

The Indian *Vedântin* thus starts with the Self as the surest ground of certitude, appeals at every step to the facts of experience, (understanding that word in its largest signification) and reaches his conclusions on that basis. He makes no assumptions as working hypothesis, and his speculations, thus reasoned out, promise to be confirmed by Science.

The highest truth which the Indian *Advaitin* has reached in his philosophical research is that *Âtman* (Self) and *Âtman* alone is the ultimate Reality and, apart from it and independent of it, nothing is.

This position, though it is not acceptable to a large body of European thinkers, in its pure form, is one which can be established by the very method, which thinkers like Professor Ferrier have admitted to be the correct method to follow in the search of truth.

[1] See Bhag. Gît. XVIII, 50-51, and Ved. Sutr. II, 3, 7; and Shankar's Gloss thereon, S. B. E. Vol. 38, p. 14:— "for the knowledge of the Self is not, in any person's case, adventitious, not established through the so-called means of right knowledge; it rather is Self established. The Self does indeed employ perception and the other means of right knowledge for the purpose of establishing previously non-established objects of knowledge; . . . . . but the Self, as being the abode of the energy that acts through the means of right knowledge, is itself established previously to that energy."

[2] 'Kena Up.' II, 4; see also Max Müller's Translation, S. B. E. Vol. I, p. 149, note I.

[3] 'Orig. Rel.,' pp. 48-9.

The crowning truths of Western Epistemology and Ontology, as enunciated by Professor Ferrier, are :—

1. That every cognition is the synthesis of the Self and the Not-Self, of the Subject and Object, of the Universal and Particular.[1]

2. That there is one, but only one, Absolute Existence, which is strictly *necessary*, and that existence is a supreme, infinite and everlasting Mind in synthesis with all things.[2]

But do these propositions convey what philosophy ought always to be in search of ? Are they *necessary* truths in the form in which they are enunciated ? A necessary truth is that which is absolute truth—true to all possible intelligences. In the world as we find it, there is one element, the universal and eternal *sat*, which is ever present and without which the world itself would be an absolute non-entity. But is the other element also invariably present and true and as such necessary ?

In the first place, is the synthesis of the two a philosophic necessity for the *existence* of the Absolute ? To us and to intelligences like our own, such a synthesis may be necessary as a condition of *knowledge*. I say *may* be, for I doubt whether the theory of Knowledge, based upon "sense-perception," is quite correct or adequate to explain *all* knowledge. Professor Veitch says, and I think rightly, that "the laws of our knowing the objects in Time and Space are not necessarily the laws of our knowing all objects ".[3]

But whatever the truth about our cognition of the Absolute, is it not possible for that Absolute *to exist* independently of and without the world ? Is not the Absolute Being the *prius* of all things ; and is not its *existence*, at least, conceivable without its synthesis with those things ? If the things, here referred to, be what, according to Eckhart, constitute the ideal world not created in time, but existing in an Eternal Now, still the question would remain—is this ideal world a necessity for the *existence* of the Absolute ?

The position of the *Advaitin* is that *Brahma* alone is *sat* in the sense of Eternal[4] and all else is *asat* in the sense of being contingent

[1] See 'Met.', p. 156.

[2] *Ibid.* 522.

[3] Veitch, "Knowing and Being," p. 3.

[4] *Cf.* Shankar's "Tattva Bodha," p. 27. "What is Sat"—that which abides in all time (past, present and future). The original Sanskrit is worth quoting :—

सत् किम्, कालत्रयेऽपि तिष्ठति इति सत्।
चित् किम्, ज्ञानस्वरूपम्।
आनन्दः कः, सुखस्वरूपः।

and transient. Is it not possible to conceive the *existence* of the Absolute without its synthesis with the contingent *asat*.

Herbert Spencer[1] admits that though the antithetical modes of consciousness, that is, a consciousness of the Absolute subject and a consciousness of the predicate cannot exist asunder, still this is not a reason for questioning the *existence* of the Universal Absolute; it is rather the reverse.

Similarly, Dr. Calderwood, in his "Limits of Religious Thought," p. 200, says: "The Absolute is that which is free from all *necessary* relations, that is, which is free from every relation as a condition of *existence*; but it *may* exist in relation, *provided that relation be not a necessary condition of its existence.*"[2] A better definition of an Absolute Being (says Mill[3]) could scarcely be devised.

Then as to the *cognition* of the Absolute, it is admitted that the question is still undecided, "whether absolute truth can be apprehended by itself or whether it must always be apprehended in union with relative truth."[4]

The *Advaitin* asserts that the conception of One without a Second is not absolutely inconceivable; he asserts that though *Brahma* is ordinarily incomprehensible, except through and in its relation to its manifestations, that is, in its synthesis with the Not-Self, its existence is conceivable and also capable of being realised by itself, even by man under certain conditions[5], *a fortiori*, it must be conceivable by higher intelligences than our own.

In the first place, we are not justified in inferring a thing to be impossible, simply because of *our* inability to conceive its possibility. Hamilton and Mill both agree in saying so[6]. Experience shows that no limit can be set on the penetrating power of thought. Eminent thinkers like Herbert Spencer[7] have noticed the extraordinary capacity which man evinces in bringing long distances of Space and Time within intelligible reach. "Environing objects and environing actions, passing as they do into higher and higher complexities by grada-

[1] 'First. Prin.'

[2] The Italics are the author's see also pp. 63 and following *infra*.

[3] Mill's 'Hamilton,' 116 n.

[4] Ferrier's 'Gr. Phil.' pp. 28, 177, 178.

[5] See Bhag. Git. XIII; for a more detailed reference to this, see *infra*.

[6] Mill's 'Hamilton,' 82.

[7] 'Psychology,' I, pp 304-12, 320-29.

tions that are insensible, it is impossible (says he) to draw among them a line, up to which some alleged kind of intellectual process can go, but beyond which it cannot go."[1]

The reason of this is that Knowledge is One, Eternal, and Infinite, and man has it already "indelibly stamped," as Hudson[2] observes, "upon the tablets of the soul."[3]

"God," says Green[4], "manifests himself in us. We are in our very essential nature the eternal consciousness, reproduced under limitations of time and animal organism, but retaining the essential characteristic of being out of time, as regards our knowledge—as regards that in virtue of which we are men. The potential content of our consciousness—knowledge—eternally exists in us as ideas—which we laboriously attain unto. What exists potentially we try to realise or actualise. What we call our mental history is not history of this (eternally complete) consciousness which in itself can have no history, but a history of the process by which the animal organism becomes its vehicle."[5]

So, too, says Plato. Man is already in possession of ideas; "he is unconscious of their necessary and unfailing presence": "*they* are in possession of *him*, rather than *he* of them," and the hardest of all tasks is to make him aware of his possession.[6]

Mind, says Hegel[7], is One and Eternal; mind as a finite mind has no real existence; and knowledge is simply the making explicit of what is implicit.[8]

If it is true, as says Hudson[9], that we are all God's creatures made after His image, it would seem to follow that we have received the whole message from God at once. Only owing to his limitations, man is not able to elevate the message above his own consciousness. He is incapable of becoming objectively conscious of what is going

[1] 'Psychology' I, p. 389.

[2] "Scientific Demonstration of Future State," pp. 92-93.

[3] *Cf.* Shankar's Gloss on 'Prasn. Up.' VI, 2, Madras Edn. II, 178. See also Socrates quoted in Noire, p. 42; cf. also Emerson's Suggestion that 'truth is of immemorial age, and that our names and eras of origin are in reality but names and eras of development,' Clifford Harrison's 'Notes on the margin,' p. 231.

[4] Fairbrother's 'Green,' p. 49.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 47-48.

[6] Ferrier's 'Gr. Phil.,' pp. 314-5.

[7] Haldane's "Pathway," II, p. 101.

[8] *Ibid.* pp. 13, 207.

[9] "Scien. Dem. Fut. St.," p. 92.

on in his subjective mind, but the message is all there, only lying latent in his subliminal consciousness.

The position of the Indian *Advaitin* must now, in the light of the above observations of eminent European thinkers, appear to be perfectly intelligible. This is what Shankar says on the point. Knowledge is not different from the Knowledge of the Self. This, in one sense, we already have; as this consciousness is invariably present in every act of perception, thought or deed, all that is needed is to get rid of the *upâdhies*, that is, of the finite categories and relations belonging to what is conditioned, which hinder the full realisation of that Knowledge [1]. Knowledge is enveloped by Nescience, and thereby mortals are deluded, says the Bhagvat Gîtâ [2].

But it is impossible to remove this veil of Nescience all at once. The development and perfection which have to be attained can be only gradual. The limitations due to the "animal organism" could be removed only by a gradual course of development. In our study of Nature we have necessarily to proceed from point to point, beginning with experience and the data of experience, and rising gradually from sensations to general principles, classifying the phenomena which come under our observation, learning to look at them from as many points of view as it may be possible to take, so as, in the long run, to rise above experience, above the external and accidental relations which belong to the sphere of the finite, and have, if possible, a grasp of the entire universe as a harmonious whole [3], and, as the *Advaitin* might put it, rise still higher and reach the stage of complete self-realisation.

The synthesis of subject and object which is a recognised truth of Western Epistemology, admittedly represents what is called the necessary *minimum* of knowledge, implying a possibility of indefinite enlargement or expansion [4]. Both the terms in this theory may go on expanding till they become co-extensive. As empirical knowledge grows wider and wider, the individual personality of the knowing subject must become more and more expanded, the individual Self [5], in the

[1] See Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Gît. XVIII, 50, Madras Edn., pp. 334-5.

[2] V, 15.

[3] *Cf.* J. Caird's 'Phil.,' pp. 177-203.

[4] *Cf.* Ferrier's 'Met.,' p. 105 and following; and Haldane's "Pathway" I, pp. 81-84, 131.

[5] In the *Vedânta*, it is not the Self, but the intelligence or mind or the lower or human egohood, that goes on thus expanding by experience.

language of Western thinkers, must become larger and larger in its development of self-consciousness; its sphere of knowledge and activity must become enlarged, as the standpoints become higher and higher—more and more comprehensive.

The process of development here indicated is not confined to the growth and development of the intellect alone. It indicates a corresponding growth and development of the ethical and spiritual element likewise. It is only then that all the standpoints from the side of the universe could be exhausted, and a complete mastery over nature gained. It means a complete *transformation*[1] and *regeneration* of man.

It is interesting to see how different this universe may possibly appear to intelligences higher than our own or to men with finer powers than we ordinarily possess.

Kant holds that to an infinite intelligence the geometrical properties, under which objects present themselves to us, are seen to be unreal. "We suppose real things to lie apart from one another and to have figure and size; but from the point of view of a wider intelligence, these properties are merely the manner in which *we* present things to ourselves, not the manner in which they actually exist. There is no other way in which we can be conscious of things than by exhibiting them as in space; but this arises from a limitation which attaches to us as finite beings and which prevents us from knowing reality as it truly is.[2]"

Bishop Berkeley, too, says as follows:—

"In proportion as the sense is rendered more acute, the object appears greater and its figure varies; those parts in its extremities, which were before unperceivable, appearing now to bound it in very different lines and angles from those perceived by an obtuser sense. And at length, after various changes of size and shape, when the sense

[1] The reader may refer to "In the Sanctuary" by Van De Naillen, p. 47, to have some idea of this transformation. The Author says, *inter alia*, "All changes, which the human mind undergoes, are accompanied by a corresponding change in the physiological condition of the cells of his brain, for brain cells are very important living entities, having birth and growth, and are subject to the laws of evolution, as well as all other things in nature. All moral, mental, or spiritual discipline affects these cells, and gives them higher qualities."

[2] Watson's 'Out. Phil.', p. 46. *cf.* also, Ferrier's 'Gr. Phil.', pp. 464-465, as to how our faculties are incompetent to inform us as to what a thing is *in itself*.

becomes *infinitely* acute, the body shall seem *infinite. During all this time there is no alteration in the body, but only in the sense.* Each body, therefore, considered in itself, is infinitely extended, and consequently void of all shape and figure. . . . *It is the mind that frames all that variety of bodies, which compose the visible world, any one whereof does not exist longer than it is perceived.*[1]"

It must always be borne in mind that Divine Intelligence is the inward life and reason of all things.[2] Thought and intelligence is presupposed in all objective reality. . . . To deny this is to subvert the fundamental basis of all knowledge and to reduce the intelligible world to a chaos.[3]

And what happens in every cognition is that the perceiving subject unites itself with the Self in the object perceived; if the cognition, which ensues, be incomplete, that is, if the object perceived be not perceived in its entirety from all possible points of view, as is generally the case in ordinary human cognitions, the perception constitutes a mere *act* of perception, and the person perceiving (the *jiva* of the *Vedânta* system) is said to be merely a knower, and the dualism of the knower and the known continues. In the degree that the knower has entered into the spirit of the thing perceived, he is said to have known that thing, and in the degree that he has known it, he is *at home* with it, as Hegel might say.[4] This is the meaning of the expression that to know a thing is to become it.[5]

Knowing, says Dr. Buck[6], is a progressive becoming, a continual transformation of motives, ideals and perception of the individual. It is such a progressive change or transformation of the original struc-

[1] 'Berkeley,' p. 47; compare the *Drishti Shrishti Vâda* of the Indian *Advaitin*, who says that things do not exist out of the sight of the seer. See Dvivedi's Introd. Mând. Up., p. XXIV.

[2] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 1, 11; S. B. E. Vol. 34; and J. Caird's 'Spinoza.'

[3] J. Caird's 'Phil. Rel.,' pp. 21-22.

[4] All ignorance of the object is ignorance of Self, says Edward Caird, 2 Ward, 196.

[5] See Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutra. II, 2, 28-30. S. B. E. Vol. 34. *Cf.* Flint's remarks "the more accurately and fully physical nature is investigated and explained by the Sciences of nature, the more must the human mind recognize it to be pervaded by thought akin to its own; the more must the human spirit find itself 'at home' therein"; "Agnosticism," p. 267; see also pp. 355-7, 572-3.

Note that the highest knowledge is when the Self has the Self itself for its object. We consider it tautology to say that the Self knows the Self—and is knowledge itself. Hence we say that knowledge is one and infinite.

[6] "Mystic Masonry," pp. 109-110. *Cf.* "In the Sanctuary," p. 47, quoted *supra* p. 57, note 1.

ture as to make of it, at every step, a New Being. Real knowledge or the growth of wisdom in man is an eternal becoming—a progressive transformation into the likeness of the Supernal Goodness and the Supreme Power. And when the cognition is complete, the subject and object must become identical. The Self of the knowing agent and the Self in Nature would fully recognise each other, so to speak, and become One. What began, on the lower plane, with the synthesis of Self and Nature, which must co-operate to constitute Knowledge[1] would, in such a case, on the highest plane of thought, end in Unity or Identity; the dualism of the Knower and the Known here would vanish; and in such a case, says the *Advaitin*, self-realisation would ensue.[2]

There would be no removal, in such a case, strictly speaking, of one of the terms which might be, according to European thinkers, the destruction of "the whole datum of knowledge"; for, *ex hypothesi*, man has here transcended the world of sense-experience, where alone the relations of externality and time conceptions reign supreme. Neither the ego nor the non-ego would be destroyed in this conception; but the two would coalesce, so to speak, like the two reflections of the Sun (in a sextant) at its meridian. Here Intelligence would directly know itself to the fullest extent and true Reality would thus be reached.[3]

"Every form of Knowledge" (says a writer in the Hibbert Journal[4]) "is different from every other in the degree of identification of the object in itself with the object for consciousness, and *the only resting place for knowledge is where the agreement becomes absolute.* Now, if knowledge deals solely with the Self which knows, it is entirely self-constituted, self-determined, self-contained. To be completely self-sufficient, however, is precisely what is meant by being Absolute. *Absolute Knowledge is the presence to consciousness of its own Self—Thought.*"

[1] *Cf.* Flint's "Agnosticism," pp. 341-2.

[2] Or, as the anonymous author of the 'Creed of Buddha' puts it:—"Its [the Soul's] conception of Nature, freed from the limits which the popular criterion of existence imposed upon it, will be raised to an infinite power. So will its conception of itself. And these two parallel conceptions, meeting at last 'at infinity,' will become one," p. 270.

[3] *Cf.* 'Aristotle,' Watson, p. 378.

[4] Vol. I, pp. 609-10. The italics are the author's.

The same truth may be, somewhat differently, stated thus:—

This progressive development of the consciousness—philosophical and religious—tends gradually to remove the two-fold error, which man in his initial stages commits, of identifying the Mind with the Self and of locating outside the Mind the sensations which the mind makes within itself and of giving them an external reality.

The Indian systems were undoubtedly right in including (as they have done) the *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), and *ahankâra* (lower egohood) among the products of *prakriti* (Nature), as distinguished from the true Self, which is ever the same, and by virtue of which alone they manifest an intellectuality which we are accustomed to call our ego. These three are the intellectualising principles of *prakriti*; they constitute what, in European systems, is called the Mind, and are ever undergoing modifications and changes.

The theory of the *Vedânta* is that, in every cognition rightly understood, and in consequence of the activities (*Karma*) which it gives rise to, there is *chitta shûddhi*, the progressive development, transformation, and regeneration of man; that is, the mind, which is generally vacillating, becomes firm and resolute, and thus merges in *buddhi*. The *buddhi*, likewise, in its progress, enlightens the *aham vritti*, (the lower egohood), and this, in its turn, assimilates with the true Self. Thus, the Self which was set against Self becomes assimilated, so to speak, with itself. In other words, Subject and Object become one. Even the lower passions can be brought, in this process of assimilation, to do the higher work.[1] Thus nothing in this process is destroyed in reality. All is transformation, not destruction. It is this assimilation to which the *Vedânta* refers in reality when it says that the Self should be made free from its *upâdhies*.

This, then, is the *summum bonum* of the Indian *Advaita*. The Absolute, as it were, perceives itself and rises by degrees to Self realisation[2].

[1] *Cf.* the teachings of the Marâthâ saint Tukârâm. The doctrine of Prapâkâra quoted by Prof. Bhanu in his Bhag. Gît. II, 64, may well be referred to here. It says– "as the iron, in contact with fire becomes fire-like, so the Senses, when in contact with the *Âtman*, become *Âtman*-like"—

"अग्निसंगाद् यथा लोहमग्नित्वमुपगच्छति ।
आत्मसंगात्तथा गच्छत्यात्मतामिंद्रियादिकम्" ॥

cf. a similar conception taken by Scotus Erigena from Plotimus: "as iron when it becomes red hot, seems to be turned into pure fire, but remains no less iron than before, so when rational substances pass into God, they do not lose their identity, but preserve it in a higher state of being"—ED.

[2] *Cf.* Dvivedi's 'Mând Up.' introd. p. XVIII.

One, who has reached this highest stage, realises everywhere the condition which is All-Thought, All-Sentiency, All-Effulgence[1].

I have above attempted to show that the Indian *Vedânta* in its theory of knowledge proceeded in its search for truth by the method to which European thinkers could take no exception. It started with the Self as the surest ground of certitude, for though everything else might be doubted, the doubter could not doubt himself.[2] Nowhere in ancient times was the *cogito ergo sum* so well recognised in its correct form as in India. The *Vedânta* also recognised the position that in every empiric cognition, the Self was invariably a necessary element, and that such cognition always meant the synthesis of the Self and Not-Self.[3] It further recognised the fact that this Not-Self was none other than the Self itself, externalised and appearing as conditioned by Time and Space and other relations of externality. And proceeding thus in its search, it discovered that the limitations, to which both the individual Self and the Self in Nature appeared subjected, could, in the course of man's development—mental, ethical, religious and spiritual be gradually sublated, so that, eventually, the two might appear face to face, so to speak, in their true character, and recognise their identity—the result of such consummation being that All must be realised as *advaita*, One and Non-dual.

The same result could be arrived at, if the Hegelian dialectic is fearlessly carried to its legitimate conclusion.

No system of philosophy is so bold and rigorously logical in this respect as the Indian *Advaita*. It has not got to justify or reconcile the dogmas of any Personal Revelation. Unhampered by any such considerations, it boldly pursues its course in the search of truth, and proclaims what it finds with equal fearlessness.

It is ready to admit the fact that in this world of sense-experience, man is met at every step with strife and discord; he has the whole picture of the world, as in a kaleidoscope, in which objects present no uniform appearance in any two moments. All is perpetual flux and change. The *Vedântin* is here at one with Heraclitus.[4] The

[1] Mând. Up. IV, 89.

[2] See Shankar's 'Âtma anâtma Viveka.'

[3] Bhag. Git. II, 16.

[4] For the original sayings of Heraclitus, see G. R. S. Mead's contribution to the 'Theosophical Review' for 1907.

concrete riches of human life lie between these two extremes—a limitless Self and this perpetual flux and change,—this *Samsâra*.[1] To us and to intelligences like ours, the truth consists in the synthesis of One and many.[2]

But this is not a necessary truth. It must be remembered that this perpetual flux and change imply time relations which it would be philosophically wrong to carry into the region of the Mind (*Âtman*) which is itself timeless—timeless, because time itself, as Dr. Haldane might say, falls within it[3], or as a *Vedântin* might say, it cannot be without it.

And although the Hegelian dialectic as to the alternation of self-externalisation and return with richer content each time in the process, is of use to *us* as a guide to a complete comprehension, in the end, of the Absolute Being as the Ultimate Reality, it is unphilosophical to think that such a process of externalisation and return is necessary in the case of the Absolute Being itself to become self-conscious.[4]

The Absolute, from its very nature, must be self-conscious, if it is All Intelligence. It cannot require an Other to become itself Self-conscious. To say that it does would be to deprive it of its natural freedom and subject it to a law of necessity. Hegel, however, does this, and explains the descent of the Logos by means of his dialectic, and also vindicates thereby the Christian dogmas of the Trinity and Atonement—God, Father, going into Otherness, finite mind, the Son, that is, God imposing on Himself the limits of man's finitude and then returning unto Himself in the fullness of His Self-consciousness (Holy Ghost).

But is it not true that the truths of philosophy are present to the mind of God as a whole in an Eternal Now, and are not the results of a ratiocinative process? All the great ideals of Absolute Truth, Absolute Beauty, Absolute Goodness, says Professor Upton,[5] are eternally realised in the Eternal Absolute; only in us they are "a revelation of the perfection which *ought to be realised* . . . and it is

[1] *Cf.* Haldane's "Pathway," II, 230–233.

[2] Bhag. Git. XIII, 27.

[3] Haldane's "Pathway," II, 227-228.

[4] Hegel in this respect appears to be wrong.

[5] Upton's 'Hibbert Lectures,' for 1893, pp. 256-7.

only as the Ideal becomes in virtue of self-surrendering devotion and moral effort actually realised in our characters, that man's divine sonship, which is implicit in him, in virtue of his being of the same substance with the Father, becomes an explicit reality."

According to Hegel himself the conceptions of philosophy can be no abstractions, though for us they always will be such[1]. Nature cannot be taken as appearing to God in the abstract externalities of Space and Time and, indeed, stands to him in no direct relation, for the plane of appearance, which is distinctive of it, pertains merely to the finite mind of man[2].

What, then, is the meaning of God standing in need of anotherness to become self-conscious? Does not His relation with that other become a necessary relation and does He not, in such a conception, lose His character of Absolute Being? God (says Origen[3]) does not require the Second Person in order to come to Himself.

The Absolute, as I have elsewhere[4] stated, quoting Dr. Calderwood and J. S. Mill, is that which is free from all *necessary* relations, as a condition of *existence*. It *may* enter into relations, being essentially free; but those relations, if removed, must not affect its existence.

Philosophically, it would not be correct to say that it is in the very nature of God a necessity for Him to create the world. It may be impossible for us to apprehend Him without such a world, but it is not a necessary condition of His *existence*.

Then as to *cognition* of the Absolute, according to the theory of the *Vedânta*, it must ever be borne in mind, that it looks at the question from two—apparently opposed—points of view; and the conclusions thus drawn have to be understood by reference to the standpoint with which they are connected.

These are the two paths called *pravritti* and *nivritti*—the one having a tendency to externality and the other to introspection—the one stimulating to Activity and the other drawing to Renunciation—the

[1] Haldane's "Pathway," II, 254. See, also, Lotze's "Phil. Rel.," pp 59-63.

[2] *Ibid.* 'Analysis of contents,' p. XXII; see also pp. 169-70.

[3] Inge's "Christian Mysticism" p. 90;

[4] *Supra* p. 54.

one giving rise to a world of empirical experience, necessary and useful for practical life; the other leading to philosophic and spiritual enlightenment.[1]

The key to the correct reading of the *Vedânta* consists in the recognition of this two-fold path, which has its sanction in the Vedas. It represents the stages in the evolution of the consciousness of man.

It is undisputed that man in the early stages of his development views himself and the object world as self-subsisting and independent entities, with sharp and clear distinctions in forms in which separation and isolation are the order of things. Everything observable in the world appears as being the effect of an antecedent cause; all objects in it appear as occupying space; all events occurring in it appear as taking place in time. But in a further stage of development, man finds that these relations of Cause and Effect, Space and Time, are relations which the mind itself makes, for its own purposes, and which fall within itself, and that they are true only for itself. They are forms in which the mind perceives the so-called objective world, which, independent of it and apart from it, has no existence.[2] Its reality to the mind is only to the extent that it is presented to the mind *within itself*, and by laws peculiar to itself. This reality is termed phenomenal or dependent reality, which both Western and Indian idealists equally assert.

It is a mistake to suppose that Indian *Advaitins* condemn this reality as illusory, in the sense of a positive blank or absolute nothing. On the contrary, they have, again and again, emphasised its necessity and usefulness for practical life. No man in his daily life can well neglect the body in which his Self is, so to speak, encased; he is bound to maintain himself and work out the rôle of his earthly existence. No man can, without injury to himself, ignore the environment in which he finds himself placed, or discard his social and other relations and the duties they impose on him. A personality, and that a knowing personality, with all the appliances which Nature has furnished, is absolutely necessary to man for his onward progress—intellectual, social, moral and religious. Without it his own evolution and development and ultimate self-realisation, which is his

[1] Ish. Up. and Max Müller's Note on it in S. B. E. Vol. I, pp. 314-315.

[2] Mând. Up. IV, 36.

goal, would be impossible[1]. All this universe, says Shankar, is for man's edification to help him in self-realisation; experience acquired in the process of self-externalisation (*pravritti*) and return (*nivritti*) developing the Self, so to speak, and making it richer and richer in content in the process.[2]

Professor Max Müller[3] is, therefore, not wrong when he says that "Shankar claims for the phenomenal world a reality sufficient for all practical purposes—sufficient to determine our practical life, our moral obligations, nay, even our belief in a manifested or revealed God."

The knowledge, then, which man acquires in his initial stages of development, is not ignored by the *Advaitin* as unessential. He knows that man here has duties, purposes and ends, necessary for his social needs. But he also knows that this knowledge is not of a nature sufficiently far-reaching to guide us in the search after the ultimate truth; he designates this knowledge *Avidyâ* or false knowledge—false in the sense of empirical and as implying the tendency of the mind to look for truth outside itself. The manifold, says Shankar, is evolved out of wrong knowledge.[4] This knowledge indicates the *pravritti mârga* of the *Vedântin*, in which all the Space and Time relations have full play.

This path admittedly does not lead to the end which the Self ought always to have in view, *viz.*, its own self-realisation. In the world, as we see it, the mind meets at every step with strife and discord, and every sort of differentiation and antithesis; it forgets that all this strife and discord is of its own making, that it is due to its own activity and has no reality *outside* itself.[5] It is, as Hegel would say, for itself and within itself. It is only on reflection that it discovers that these differentiations and antithesis are referable to a higher unity, in which they find their reconciliation and explanation, and acquire a deeper meaning when thus viewed.[6] Such a process of alternate self-externalisation and return into a higher unity must continue till self-realisation results, and when that stage is reached, where

[1] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 1, 1.

[2] Shankar's Gloss on Ait. Up. IV; and Mând. Up. III, 15.

[3] "Theosophy," p. 319. See also his "Six Systems Ind. Phil.," p. 202.

[4] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 323.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Cf.* Haldane's "Pathway," II 61.,

it possibly can be, the result must necessarily be that these differentiations disappear and all is realised as one and Non-dual (*advait*). *Paramârtha-avasthâyâm vyavahâr-abhâvam vadanti vedântâh sarve.*[1]

In Hegelian language, as thought itself makes distinctions and relations, so it also transcends and cancels them; in the very process of distinguishing, there is an implication of higher and higher standpoints where these distinctions begin to disappear[2], and, as the *Advaitin* puts it, ultimately vanish.

This return of the Self unto itself is indicated in the Vedantic conception of *nivritti* (turning inwards). The region in which this return takes place is not conditioned by the relations of cause and effect, or of time or of space, which are valid only so far as the phenomenal world is concerned.[3] The inward path is free, says the *Advaitin*, from such limitations, from *desha kâla vastu parichchhêda.*

The reader must have noticed how far the dialectics of Hegel and the Indian *Advaitin* run parallel, and where they diverge. The following summary may be of use in this connection:—

1. Being and Not-Being finding their reconciliation in becoming (Hegel). Compare Bhagavat Gîtâ, IX, 19 and Shankar, quoted at p. 10 *supra.*

2. Self-externalisation of Being (Hegel). Compare the Vedantic conception of Being projecting itself through its power called *Mâyâ*[4]. The phantasmagoria of a world which is thus projected, man regards as external to himself.[5]

3. In this process of externalisation the Absolute Being is unmoved though moving.[6]

The *Advaita* conception of the Absolute projecting itself *on itself* conveys the same idea[7]. But Shankar candidly admits that though it is impossible to explain *how* the One becomes many, he does not ignore the eternal activity of *Brahma*, when he attributes the world

[1] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14; S. B. E. Vol. 34, pp. 329-330. *Cf.* a similar thought in J. Caird's 'Spinoza,' pp. 291-292. The whole of Chapter XVI of that book is worth reading in this connexion.

[2] Haldane's "Pathway," II, 221.

[3] See Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14; and Shankar's Gloss S.B.E. Vol. 34, pp. 324, 326, 330.

[4] Ved. Sutr. 1, 4, 26; Mândukya Up. II, 12.

[5] Ballantyne; Shankar's 'Viveka Chûdâmani,' 142-146.

[6] Hegel; also Ved. Sutr. II, 2, 2. Shankar's Gloss S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 369.

[7] *Supra* p. 37.

and all that has come into being to its inseparable power *Mâyâ*; this is implied in the intelligent guidance (*sattâ sphoorti*) under which alone it is said that *Mâyâ* can act.[1]

4. What happens in this process is the gradual and progressive elimination of the notion of Nature being related to Intelligence as the effect of a cause.[2]

This is exactly what the *Advaita* teaches in its *nivritti* path.[3] When man abandons the outward path and begins to see *within* himself, he realises, or at all events he is on the way to realise, the truth that All is One in an Eternal Now, without any of the limitations and relations of externality, which oppressed him in the outer world of finitude.[4] He begins to understand that, though he cannot explain *how* the world has come into being, it can have no existence and no meaning independent of *Brahma*, since the individual itself is *Brahma* and the world itself is based on it, is for it and within it.[5] The differentiations and distinctions, which he used to make in this world of finitude as being external to himself, begin to lose[6] their significance for him.

5. "The picture of a pure self-consciousness regarding things from the highest standpoint, finding itself in its objects, and no longer troubled by any distinction between the object world and itself, because it has got rid of all the abstractions of lower standpoints—such a picture we cannot present to ourselves, because we are compelled to view the universe from the standpoint of the particular individual. But by reflection we may get towards the grasp of the concrete truth that this is the final conception of the Self, the real foundation and meaning of experience, and that it is really actualised in experience."[7]

For the *Advaita* view on this subject see p. 61 *supra*. It asserts that *Âtman* (Self) and that alone is the ultimate Reality, and nothing independent of it is.

6. That Reality is Mind. There is only one Reason, one Mind; and Mind, as finite, has not a real existence.[8]

[1] See Ved. Sutr. II, 2, 2, and Shankar's Gloss, S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 369.

[2] Hegel; see Haldane's "Pathway," I, 112.

[3] Mând. Up. II, 32; IV, 22, ; and Shankar's Gloss thereon.

[4] See pp. 33 and 34 *supra*.

[5] Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14; and Shankar's Gloss, S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 322.

[6] They vanish, says J. Caird in "Spinoza," pp. 291-2.

Haldane's 'Pathway,' I, 112.

[8] Hegel; see Haldane's ('Pathway,') II, 101.

What is called Mind in the Hegelian system is designated *Brahma*, or *Âtman* (Self) in the *Vedânta*. Both agree in holding that this is One, and there is nothing like a finite *Âtman* or Self. In the Hegelian system, the human soul is called a "finite spirit"—an objectionable expression, I should think, since it is inconceivable, in the very nature of things, for spirit to be finite. In the *Vedânta*, it is designated *Jîva*, but the *Vedânta* asserts that it is not different from *Brahma*; it is metaphorically called individual soul on account of its connection with the limiting adjuncts (*upâdhies*[1]). Till the dawn of true knowledge it continues to be influenced by such limiting adjuncts; it considers itself fettered by Time and Space relations in this world of sense-experience; it erroneously identifies itself with the intellect (*buddhi* and *manas*) and *ahankâra* (the lower egohood). These, in the Indian systems, are only the instruments of knowledge, and can only function when enlightened by the true Self (*Âtman*); they do not constitute our ego; like other organs of sense and body, they are only a product of *prakriti* (Nature, Becoming) and, as such, liable to constant change. The true Self is the universal, eternal, and changeless Self and never finite.

7. All things are ultimately reducible to thought, according to Hegel.[2] God is defined as "Mind that comprehends itself completely. Within such Mind all reality of whatever character or degree must fall.[3]"

Compare Bhag. Git. XIII, 30, in which Shri Krishna is represented as saying: "When he perceiveth the diversified existence of beings as rooted in One, and proceeding from it, then he reacheth *Brahma*."

The last stage or category is All Thought, Universal Sentiency, says Shankar in his Gloss on Mândukya Up. IV, 89.

8. The spirit of man whereby he knows God is simply the spirit of God Himself[4]. There is a "potential identity of man and God in a single subject of knowledge.[5]

When the *Advaita* posits man's identity with God and subscribes to the doctrine of *tat twam asi*, it does not mean anything more than that the two are identical in essence; that both are one *Âtman* or

[1] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. III, 2, 10; S. B. E. Vol. 38, p. 149.

[2] Schweglar, p. 432.

[3] Haldane's 'Pathway,' II, 170.

[4] Hegel, "Phil. Rel." III, 303

[5] Haldane's 'Pathway,' II, 169.

Brahma. It does not identify the man of the flesh with the Supreme Being. What it says most significantly is that stripping *Brahma* of the category of cause and the individual soul as the effect of that cause, what remains is All Thought, All Intelligence : *kâryopâdhirayam jeevah kâranopâdhireeshvarah kâryakâranatâm hitwâ poornabodhovashishyatê*[1].

This is the identity which the *Advaitin* claims for man, and holds forth as the ideal, which, he says, it is possible to reach under proper culture.

It is only at this last stage—this culminating point—that some divergence between Hegelianism and the Indian *Advaita* becomes manifest. The one apparently holds it to be absolutely impossible for man actually to become identical with God, while the other holds it to be possible, though, indeed, under conditions almost bordering, in practice, on the impossible. The one retains the element of plurality in the Unity, while the other discards it in the highest stage of development. The one posits, as an ultimate reality, the unity of Being and Not-Being=Becoming ; the other says that Becoming is not a necessary truth but only contingent as involving relations which in the case of the Absolute cannot be necessary.

This is what according to Dr. E. Caird is the *summum bonum* of Hegelianism :—

Thought has always its opposite or negative, which it at once "excludes and involves, and this process is repeated in regard to it, with the result of reaching a still higher unity. . . . And so on through ever widening sweep of differentiation and integration, till the whole body of thought is seen in its organic unity and development—every fibre of it alive with relation to the whole, in which it is a constituent element."[2]

Beyond this, Hegelianism apparently refuses to go ; and, indeed, generally speaking, all European idealists[3] do the like. They seem to think that it is *absolutely* impossible for man to reach the condition of complete self-realisation, although potentially he is identical with God, and that it is blasphemous to conceive the possibility of such identification.

[1] Prapâkâra, quoted by Prof. Bhânu in his Bhag. Gît. XIII, 2.

[2] E. Caird's 'Hegel,' p. 164

[3] See *e. g.* Haldane's 'Pathway,' II, 99 and following.

No doubt, so long as this feat is not accomplished, and, indeed, to the generality of human beings, it is practically impossible, the position taken by these thinkers is correct; and Shankar himself admits its correctness[1], and the distinctions of subject and object, knower and known, and the relations involved in them continue as valid as ever.

But where complete self-realisation is possible (as to which, see later on) and ensues in any given case, then, in such a case, the only philosophically correct view is that All is Thought and all element of plurality giving rise to variety must disappear as a differentiated entity. One who has reached this stage, if haply there be any, sees no differentiations anywhere; to him All is *Brahman*. This is the position which the *Advaitin* takes, and it is certainly the most impregnable position logically.

Plurality presupposes relations—relations of subject and object, &c., but "how (asks Shankar[2]) can the One enter into relations with itself?" He, however, concedes that having regard to the manifold of existence manifested on itself by its own power, *Mâyâ*, under its intelligent guidance, *Brahma* may be *assumed* to have within it this element of plurality, as its potential content, *nâma roopa beeja shakti roopam*[3]. But such experience is *our* experience and the experience probably of intelligences like our own. We cannot assume it to be the experience of all possible intelligences. "The truths of the senses are not necessarily the truths for *all* minds, but only truths for beings with senses like ours.[4] As in the Eleatic system, the universe is a "mere subjective phenomenon," possessing no such truth as that which Reason might compel us to attribute to the Permanent One.[5]

[1] Shankar's Gloss on Taitt. Up. II, 1; Chhând. Up. II, 23, Kath. Up. III, 14. In the references I have given above from Chhând. Up. II, 23, Shankar appears to be distinctly against any but a *Sannyâsin* (ascetic in the fourth order) striving for the highest knowledge. The others, he says, have duties to perform and continue to be active in life.

[2] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 2, 10; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 379. *Cf. Ibid.* II, 1, 14, p. 323. *Cf.* J. Caird's 'Phil. Rel.,' pp. 245–246;

"The most exalted of religious natures finds its consolation in passing away from the contradictions of the finite, from the enigmas which human life and history present, and in rising to that loftier point of view where they vanish away in the thought of Him, of whom and through whom and to whom are all things, to whom be glory for ever".

[3] See Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 2, 22; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 140.

[4] Ferrier's "Gr. Phil.," pp 33 and 87.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 86.

The highest philosophical truth seems to be "Mind" conscious of Itself—Mind knowing Mind in its completeness—*Âtman* seeing *Âtman*, the veil of Nescience being now completely removed.[1]

The way in which the *Advaitin* seeks to arrive at this truth is by what is termed *adhyâropâpavâda*[2]—an assumption of the negative of Being to explain the Becoming[3]. This negative of the *Âtman* is *Anâtman*. It is this to which the world with its relations of externality is due. When this has fulfilled its purpose of effecting the complete self-realisation of the *Âtman*, there is no longer any occasion for the recognition of the *Anâtman* as a differentiated entity in its negative aspect. The assumption of *anâtman*, as the logical opposite of *Âtman*, is necessary only for explaining the universe and its object and aim. When that is accomplished, the true nature of the *anâtman* becomes revealed. As *avidyâ*, it was assumed to be in the *Âtman* and inseparable from it[4]; with the dawn of knowledge it is itself resolved into Thought and must disappear as a differentiated opposite.[5] With light must disappear darkness.

It is interesting in this connection to quote here a passage from Hegel himself:—"The good, the absolute good, eternally accomplishes itself in the world, with the result that it is already accomplished in and for itself, and *does not require to wait for us*. That it does so wait is the *illusion in which we live and which is the sole active principle upon which interest in this world rests. The idea in its process causes this illusion to itself*, and its whole action consists in cancelling this illusion. *Only from this error does the truth spring, and herein alone lies the reconciliation with error* and finitude; otherness or error

[1] See Aristotle quoted in Haldane's 'Pathway,' II, 122.

[2] See Dvivedi's 'Introd.' 'Mând. Up.,' p. XVII, where this process is explained as follows:—"In its attempts at Self realization, it [*Âtman*] makes itself the cause (so to speak) of experience of everything which appears as *anâtman* (non-*âtman*). Hegel points out that pure being is both thing and no-thing, the positive implies the negative. The idea of mind implies that of no-mind, *Âtman* implies *anâtman*, and self-realization ensues only from experience, based upon this *assumed* opposition. The process of Self-realization is called in *Adwaita* the *adhyâropâpavâda* (the negation of something assumed for the time as opposed to the real thing). The world of experience does not really exist, but *Âtman* takes it (*Âropa*), as all *Anâtman*, for its own purpose of self-realization, which, when fully accomplished (*Apavâda*) shows everything as inseparably one."

[3] See *supra* pp. 41 and 42.

[4] See *supra* p. 18.

[5] See, as to the process of transformation, the doctrine of Prapâkâra, quoted *supra* p. 60.

as cancelled is itself a necessary moment of truth which *is* only in so far as it makes itself its own result."[1]

And what is the result when the climax is reached, assuming the possibility of such an event in the case of any particular individual or intelligence? Dr. Haldane[2] thinks it difficult to ascertain "what in ultimate analysis that [Ultimate] reality would disclose itself to be."

Fichte, in his enumeration of the several stages of mental development, states as follows:—

"God alone is and beside Him nothing is; . . . . that the *divine life appears broken up in a multiplicity of things as the one light in the prism is broken up into a number of coloured rays*; . . . . that the form ever conceals from us the essence, our seeing itself hides the object we see; our eye itself impedes our eye. Yet this only applies to the empirical point of view; . . . . *But, 'only raise thyself to the point of view of religion, and all wrappings disappear, the world passes away for thee with her dead principle and the Deity itself enters thee again, in its first, in its primal form, as life, as thine own life,* which thou must live and art to live.' *The multiplicity of phenomena remains, it is true, for the empirical consciousness, but it is now known for what it is,* as the unsubstantial reflection of the One Divine Being in the mirror of thought[3] . . . . '*As soon as man abolishes himself, purely, entirely, to the very root, God alone remains and is all in all;* man can produce no God for himself, but he can do away with [his lower] Self as the great negation, and then *he passes into God.*"[4]

How closely analogous are these sentiments[5] to the *Vedânta*! Still, there are passages in Fichte which indicate that while, like Hegel,

[1] Hegel's Encyclopædia, Works, Vol. VI, p. 15, quoted by Prof. Upton in his 'Hibbert Lectures' for 1893, p. 305. The italics are the author's.

[2] Haldane's 'Pathway,' I, 285.

[3] Pfleiderer's 'Phil. Rel.', Vol. I, p. 291.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 293; the italics in this para. are the author's; *cf.* also J. Caird's 'Spinoza,' pp. 291-292.

[5] *Cf.* Bhag. Git. XIII, 16. "Not divided amid beings, and yet seated as if distributively; that is to be known as the supporter of beings; He devours and He generates." *Ibid.* XIII, 27 "Seated equally in all beings, the Supreme Lord unperishing within the perishing—he who thus seeth he seeth." *Ibid.* XIII, 13. "Everywhere That hath hands and feet, everywhere eyes heads and mouths; all hearing, He dwelleth in the world, enveloping all." *Cf.* also Wilson's note to Sânkya Kârikâ, XVIII.

एक एव हि भूतात्मा भूते भूते व्यवस्थितः।
एकधा बहुधा चैव दृश्यते जलचंद्रवत् ॥

"It is the one *Âtman* that is seated in every being; though one, it appears manifold, like the Moon [reflected] in water."

he posits the "fellowship of God and Man," the dualism is not entirely wiped away.

It is only the Indian *Advaita* which has taken the lofty position and boldly asserted that, *from the standpoint of the Absolute*, the highest necessary truth is Unity, and Unity alone, without any differentiated element of plurality in it.

I say from the standpoint of the Absolute, for, as stated before, and it can never be too often repeated, that from the empirical point of view of the universe, the truth is, undoubtedly, Unity in difference, the unity of Being and Not-Being, the synthesis of Subject and Object, the *chit-jad granthi* of the *Vedânta*. But, on the highest plane of thought, this very synthesis is discovered to be a synthesis of the self with itself, and is a unity in identity, with the differentiation of subject and object wholly disappearing. The multiplicity of outward phenomena may remain, but it would be for empirical consciousness only.[1]

When all has been realised as thought, where is the room for any element of plurality to remain? In the case of one who has reached this highest stage, the sum total of his past experience, which has transformed his entire personality and character, has no distinctive meaning whatsoever. To use a Hegelian expression, it has enriched the mind, it is true, but in the very process of so enriching it, it has disappeared.

And what, again, would be the distinguishing characteristic of this plurality, if it is supposed to exist *in relation* after complete self-realisation? As a distinctive element it must be either in its infinitude or as a finite existence *within* the infinite. If the former, it must, as another infinite, destroy the infinitude of the Absolute itself. Shankar [2] says that a plurality would imply substances exclusive of each other, and thus the Self would itself become limited. If it is a finite existence *within* the infinite, it would be superfluous to the conception of the Absolute, as Maimonides might say[3]. It may be truth for us, but not for all possible intelligences. It is not a necessary truth.

Thus starting with Self (*Âtman*) in our search for the reality, we come back to self (*Âtman*) in the end. The individual soul thus regains its heritage at last.

[1] See Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II 2, 1½; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 381.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 180.

[3] See. *supra.*

CHAPTER V.

TAT-TWAM-ASI[1] AND WESTERN THOUGHT.

'It is man's highest dignity that he should Know himself to be a nullity'—HEGEL.

THE highest truth, according to the *Vedânta*, is that there is One and only One Eternal Being without a second—and that, as a corollary from it, man is identical with that One—a position which is generally signified by passages like 'I am *Brahma*,' 'Thou art That'—passages which are called *Mahâ Vâkyas* (Great Truths)—as giving expression to the highest verity.

Indian Theology is based on this ideal. The *Vedânta* is thus both—Religion and Philosophy.

The ideal (तत्त्वमसि) *tat-twam-asi*[2] expresses an attitude in which man has risen, from the finite and relative, to the Absolute—an attitude in which he realises everything as one with *Brahma*. This does not necessarily mean a denial of the finite, for whenever he chooses to come down from his serener heights to act his part on the lower plane, he again sees everything in its differentiations as before, although he himself in reality is above it, since he has realised his own identity with *Brahma*. To use Fichte's expression, the world has "passed away for him with her dead principle. . . . . The multiplicity of phenomena remains, it is true, for the empirical consciousness, but it is now known for what it is, as the unsubstantial reflection of the One Divine Being in the mirror of thought."

As statement of a philosophic view, it is intelligible enough that, if there is but one Eternal Being without a second, the individual soul itself must, in essence, be nothing but that Eternal Being.

[1] Contributed originally to the 'Indian Review' for 1905, pp. 385-389, 473-478. For a confirmation of the author's views expressed in this Chapter, see 'Theosophical Review' for 1905.

[2] The expression literally means "Thou art that," *i.e.*, the Individual Soul is in essence identical with the Supreme Soul.

But this conception is ordinarily incapable of realisation and the sentiments involved in the conception are such that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to adequately express them in intelligible language. Much more has this been the case with a certain class of European thinkers, whose bias against this doctrine has been so strong as to completely mislead them in their understanding and appreciation of the Indian view.

The principal objections taken by diverse European thinkers to the Indian conception are :—

I. That it is revolting to common sense and blasphemous for Humanity to claim complete identity and equal rank with the Eternal Absolute.

II. That the said conception presupposes the fictitious character of the individual soul or the annihilation of that individual soul.

III. That it involves the destruction of Nature and is thus one-sided.

IV. That the conception is inconceivable and absurd.

V. That it means Pantheism, with a decidedly antitheistic and immoral tendency.

VI. That it does violence to the Christian Ethical ideal, which is acceptable to all mankind.

VII. That it is mystic in its character, and can furnish no guide either in Philosophy or Theology for general acceptance.

VIII. That, as leading to a life of Quietism, it is practically useless in the development of man or the progress of society.

I now proceed to offer a few remarks on each of these objections; but I must, at the outset, earnestly invite attention to the broad distinction which the *Vedânta* makes, and which, indeed, every philosophy ought to make, between what is strictly a philosophical and, therefore, a necessary truth—a truth for all possible intelligences—and a practical truth which has only a relative value to us and to intelligences like our own. If this distinction is well borne in mind, much of the confusion, that has arisen, could be avoided. "Philosophy and popular thinking move on different platforms, and most

of the greatest errors in speculation arise from the transference of considerations which are in due place in one of them into the other where they are absolute absurdities."[1]

The first objection to the doctrine of *tat-twam-asi*, noticed above, is that though by reason of the divine element being in us we might claim the divine sonship of God and the brotherhood of man, as in the Christian system, it is revolting to common sense and it is rank blasphemy for humanity to claim absolute identity and equal rank with the Supreme Being.

What *common sense* has to do in a philosophical enquiry, one can scarcely understand. If philosophy is to be controlled by common sense, philosophy had better be done away with altogether. The province of philosophy is to be in search of the necessary truth and proclaim it fearlessly when it is discovered, without regard to its consequences on popular belief or common sense. Such a truth, the *Advaita* says, its conception of *tat-twam-asi* is.

But what *blasphemy* is there involved in that conception? Where is the blasphemy when All is One? Hegelianism admits the potential identity of man with God in the single element of knowledge. Is there no blasphemy in that conception? Is there no blasphemy when you identify the self of the individual with the self of the Supreme Being in howsoever slight a degree? What is the meaning of saying (as Hegel does) that there is one and only mind and that the absolute mind, and that mind as finite has no real existence? Is there no blasphemy in locating God in man, at least after "Adam's Fall," in whatever sense this location may be understood? Is not the idea of union with God blasphemous? Is it not blasphemous to say, as Jesus has done, "I in Thee and Thou in me, that they be made perfect in One?" "God and man (says the Theologia Germanica) should be wholly united, so that it can be said of a truth that God and man are one." "God became man (says Athanasius) that we might be made God."[2] Is there no blasphemy in these utterances?

The truth is that this idea of blasphemy is a purely Semetic conception, and is conceivable only in a system in which God is conceived as unapproachable, sitting high in the Heavens and far away from

[1] Adamson's 'Fichte,' pp. 145-6. [2] 'Theol. Germ.' preface, p. xiii.

man, and where to approach such a Being would be the height of absurdity and profanity. But it would be absolutely wrong to engraft this conception on Aryan or Indo-Germanic thought, which avowedly posits the Divine element in man and asserts the possibility of his becoming a God-man, if nothing more.

Those who first create an unapproachable Deity and are afterwards afraid to approach Him have to thank themselves for the impiety involved in the conception I am now discussing. In the language of Professor Max Müller they have made an abyss between the human and the Divine and they dare not cross it. This was not so in the early days of Christianity.[1]

I have often heard this idea of *tat-twam-asi* ridiculed for its supposed effrontery in man claiming equal rank with his Maker.

Even professed Pantheists consider this to be a wild idea. But does the *Vedânta* say that every man whom you meet in the streets *is Brahma* ? He may *become Brahma*, if he follows the path of righteousness and attains to a state of perfection ; he must become God-like to become God, the *germ* of such affinity being in him. He must surrender his lower egohood completely ; to use a Hegelian phrase, he must 'die to live' ; to use a Biblical expression, he must lose his lower life that he may gain the higher. He must pass through rigorous, moral and spiritual discipline and become fit to realise the Divinity in him, and it is only when complete self-realisation ensues, that he will be entitled to identify himself with *Brahma*. Till then he has no right to say *I am Brahma*.

Christian thinkers, who acknowledge the teachings of Jesus, ought to have nothing to say against the possibility of realization of such

[1] *Cf.* Max Müller's 'Theosophy,' p. 534, where he rightly observes :—"If people conceive God as a kind of Jupiter, or even as a Jehovah, then the idea can only be considered blasphemous as it was by the Jews, or can only be rendered palatable to the human understanding in the form of characters such as Herakles or Dionysius. So long as such ideas of the Godhead and its relation to humanity are entertained, and we knew that they were entertained even by Christian theologians, it was but natural that a claim on the part of humanity to participate in the nature of the divine should have excited horror and disgust. But after the Deity had been freed from its mythological character, after the human mind, whether in India or elsewhere, had once realized the fact, that God was all in all, that there could be nothing beside God, that there could be one Infinite only, not two the conclusion that the human Soul also belonged to God was inevitable." The whole passage, too long for quotation here, is very suggestive reading.—ED.

an ideal. "Be ye, therefore, perfect (says Jesus) as your Father in heaven is perfect."[1]

There is, further, no *annihilation* of the individual egohood involved in this conception of *tat-twam-asi* as is generally supposed.

Many European writers in referring to this *Vedânta* doctrine have employed extravagant language, without pausing to consider how their own conceptions might fare, if judged by their own standard and measure. One writer considers this to be "the self-annihilation of the Pantheist"; another says that the individual soul of the *Vedântin* is swallowed up in the great bottomless abyss of *Brahma*; a third says that it is a fiction, and so on.

But what self-annihilation is there involved in this conception, when it is said that the individual soul which is itself *Brahma* and, therefore, divine, must realise its true nature, and regain its own heritage, which, by undue and even false attachments to "things earthly," it has at present lost.

If this is self-annihilation, is it not self-annihilation when the Bible asks you to "lose life that you might gain it." Yet Dr. Edward Caird admits there is no extinction of the self in this conception.

It is admitted that man has two natures—the human and the Divine —combined in him. The one draws him outward to nature, the other inward to God. If he is asked to give up or rather to exalt the human, that he might become entirely Divine, is that an annihilation of the self? If it is, the whole of Christianity and Christian Philosophy must fall to the ground; if it is not an annihilation of the self in the Christian system, why should the Indian *Vedânta* be made the victim of that charge? Some Christian writers, and among them notably Professor Pfleiderer, accredit the *Vedânta* with the conception that in this system both the individual self and God are fictions—a conception which betrays a complete ignorance or misapprehension of Vedântic terminology. Attempts to interpret the philosophic thoughts of any nation, in utter disregard of the terminology peculiar to its philosophy, are like the attempts of a school boy, who, with the help of his school-dictionary, ventures to criticise the work of a specialist on any technical subject.

[1] Math. V, 48.

Professor Pfleiderer is a philosopher and if he professed to speak about Indian Philosophy in his lectures, he should have considered that, however faulty that philosophy might appear to him from the European point of view, it could not be guilty of such an absurdity as to wipe away the thinker who thinks and with him the supreme principle to which his very existence is due. If the learned Professor had turned to any of the pages in Thibaut's translation[1] of the *Vedânta Sûtras*, he would have seen his mistake.

What would Prof. Pfleiderer say, for instance, to the following passage in Principal J. Caird's Philosophy:—

"It is just in this renunciation of the self that I truly gain myself or realise the highest possibilities of my nature. . . . Whilst in one sense we give up self to live the universal and absolute life of reason, *yet that to which we thus surrender ourselves is, in reality, our truer self.* . . . When we attain the ideal perfection of our nature, *the self, that is foreign to it, is foreign to us too; it becomes lost and absorbed* in that deeper and higher self with which our whole life and being is identified."[2]

Is the individual self in the above passage a fiction? If not, is the absorption there spoken of an annihilation of that self? If the above writer's brother, Dr. Edward Caird, were asked these questions, he would at once return an emphatic negative.[3]

Curiously enough, Professor Pfleiderer himself correctly interprets similar sentiments, found in the writings of Eckhart and Fichte, and does not deduce from them the absurd conclusions with which he accredits the *Vedânta*. This is what he says of Eckhart[4]:—"But although Eckhart frequently describes this mystical union with God as an absorption of the soul in God, as a total losing of one's self, as

[1] See *e.g.*, S. B. E. Vol. 34, pp. 130, 135, 251, 281; Vol. 38, pp. 46, 47, 65, 66, 149, &c.

See this charge refuted *supra*.

The passage in S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 281, is worth quoting here:—"Scripture itself explains that what is meant is not the annihilation of the Self . . . . 'verily, beloved, that Self is imperishable, and of an indestructible nature, but there takes place non-connexion with the *Mâtrâs*.' That means the eternally unchanging Self, which is one mass of knowledge, cannot possibly perish; but by means of true knowledge there is effected its dissociation from the *Mâtrâs, i.e.*, the elements and the sense organs which are the product of nescience."

[2] J. Caird's Introdn. 'Phil. Rel.' The italics in the passage are the author's.

[3] E. Caird's 'Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers.'

[4] Pfleiderer, 'Phil. Rel.,' Vol. I, pp. 4-5. See also *ibid.* p. 291, as to Fichte.

an annihilation of the Ego, he still does not mean to denote by these expressions an indolent passivity, an unfruitful Quietism. On the contrary, *the abolition of the undivine Ego* is, in his view, at the same time, the reception and invigoration of the true; the rest in God is at the same time 'freedom of movement'; to suffer in God means God working through us."

Is the Vedantic conception more difficult to grasp? We say that when man realises the true nature of the Self in him as being Divine and Identical in essence with the Universal Self, he ceases (as might be expressed in popular language) to attach himself to anything that is inconstant and everchanging; he ceases to identify himself with the ever-changing products of nature (*Prakriti*) with the five sense organs (*antahkarana-panchaka*) which, instead of being the true or Divine Ego, furnish only the instruments of knowledge, themselves dependent for their illumination on the true or Divine Ego; and when he knows that the only eternally real is the Supreme Self or *Brahma,* while the world itself has no reality independent of or apart from that Supreme Self, the differentiations, which he was accustomed to see, would be to him (*and to him alone*) as if they were not, and the two would appear in their true nature. What vanishes are the differentiations which the activity of his own mind had made for him, in this world of finitude for his limited aims and ends. It is like the unveiling of the self within and the self in Nature[1] and the discovery of their identity with the Supreme Self. It is "the return into identity from difference".

All that which is inconstant and ever-changing and with which the two were hitherto associated,—the entire "earthly nature," in the language of the *Vedânta,* all the Upâdhi (sheaths) under which they lay concealed, and with which they were hitherto held as intimately connected and even identified—it is these which are said to vanish with the dawn of true knowledge[2].

[1] *Cf.* Aristotle quoted in Haldane's "Pathway," II, p. 122.

[2] तच्छक्त्युपाधिसंयोगाद् ब्रह्मैव ईश्वरतां व्रजेत्
"*Brahma itself* becomes Îshwara (the Supreme Lord) when associated with its own power (Shakti)". See Pancha Dasî, III, 40:

कूटस्थब्रह्मणोर्भेदो नाममात्रादते नहि । "There is no difference, except in name, between *Kûtastha* (*Îshwara*) and *Brahma.*" *Ibid.* VI, 237.

कार्योपाधिरयं जीव : कारणोपाधिरीश्वर :।
कार्यकारणतां हित्वा पूर्णबोधोऽवशिष्यते ॥
प्रपाकार :

"The individual Soul has the *upâdhi* of being the effect, *Ishwara* has that of being the cause; stripping both of their relation as cause and effect, what remains is All Thought." Prapâkara quoted by Prof. Bhânu in his Bhag. Git. XIII, 2.

All are now viewed in their true identity. The self in man, the self in Nature and the self in God—all remain—*not* as so many distinct beings, as they appeared before the complete self-realisation, but as identical and one. Neither the individual soul of the *Vedântin*, nor his God is a fiction, as stated by Professor Pfleiderer[1].

The language of the *Advaitin* is that the individual, the Creator and the creation are all *Brahma* itself, only appearing, in this world of finitude, under the veil of Nescience, as conditioned and differentiated.

What is called Nescience here is not ignorance in the popular signification of that term. The Sanskrit word for it is *Avidyâ*—it is a technical term denoting empirical or worldly knowledge,—a knowledge of Nature. This is not true knowledge, according to the *Vedântin*, for it is outward-facing (*bahirmukha*), looking outward and hiding the true reality under it.[2] It means separation and not unity. That power which is inward-facing leads to true knowledge.[3] "The more we study physical nature, the further God is removed from us; the more we study man, the nearer God approaches to us.[4]"

What is true knowledge with us was gnosis with the early Christian Fathers. In Christian Philosophy, it is Faith.[5]

What we call Nescience has, in the language of Christian Philosophy, reference to the lower or purely human aspect of the individual self, in alliance with all that is "of the earth earthly." It is this aspect which has to be expunged, or to speak more correctly, the human has to be transformed and raised to the Divine and the Divine thus fully realised.

The Hegelian expression "dying to live" conveys the same sentiment and this (as stated by Dr. Edward Caird) constitutes the essence of Christianity. There is no extinction of the self in such a case, but, as stated by this eminent thinker, there is "rather the opening up of the way to its true realisation."

But what is this true realisation? If the potential identity of Man and God is admitted, and if it be true that there are possibilities in man

[1] See also Wilson's Sânkhya Kârika, p. 64, n.

[2] Bhag. Git. V, 15: "Wisdom is enveloped by unwisdom; therewith mortals are deluded."

[3] 'अन्तर्मुखा शक्तिरेव विद्या' See Devî Bhâgawata.

[4] Hudson.

[5] Deussen.

for union with God, (as to which see later on), why should it be supposed that they can *never* be realised? Why is man endowed with those possibilities, if they were intended *never* under any conditions to be realised; why such equipment except for self-realisation? Christian writers may think it blasphemous arrogance to entertain such an idea; but those, who have no traditions to uphold, fearlessly assert that we have no right to say "thus far and no farther."

Western thought, it is said, "has always tended to emphasise the distinctions of individuality and has been suspicious of anything that looks like juggling with the rights of persons, human or divine." Men like Inge try to distinguish the Christian doctrine of Unity from the Indian doctrine; in the latter, according to him, everything is ultimately swallowed up and lost in 'the white radiance or black darkness of an empty Infinite'; while 'the aspiration of European Mysticism is,' says he, 'to find the unity which underlies all diversity, or, in religious language, to see God face to face. From the Many to the One is always the path of the European Mystic'.

But Rev. Charles Kingsley has the candour to admit that, however startling this idea of 'deification' may appear to Christian readers of the present times, they are bound to acknowledge that their own sacred writings and the utterances of their own Saints countenance such an idea[1].

The author of 'Theologia Germanica' is most emphatic on this point. The highest idea is, according to him, as said above, that 'God and man should be wholly united, so that it can be said of a truth that God and Man are one'.

The truth is that the intuitive faculty, which is *always* with us, is never so much prized in Europe as the faculties which are developed by labour and effort. The development of this faculty is more a matter of the heart than of the head. The culminating result of this development is to find God who is ever within us, or, as the *Advaitin* would say, we find God, for we are he. The author of 'Theologia Germanica' tells us, and rightly, 'God can be known only by God'.

This may sound blasphemous to modern European thought, but it must be remembered that, *ex hypothesi*, the man who uses this

[1] See 'Indian Review' for June 1905.

language, has, at this stage, transcended the limitations of externality—the limitations of the external senses and the intellect—and is in the region, where the relations of Time and Space, Cause and Effect, and all the differentials they imply, have no place.

Some writers consider this to be an absorption in the Divine vision, and an annihilation of all consciousness of oneself and of the World. How illogical and irrational is such a view, if spiritual enlightenment means an opening up of the way to Self-realization ? What the exact experience of Self-realization is, those only are competent to say who have reached that condition of bliss ; but it can never mean an annihilation of anything, since nothing is annihilated in evolution and development, all is assimilation and transformation. Some writers call it transmutation or glorification ; others call it Reintegration into the bosom of the Infinite, as a living factor of the *Parabrahma.*

The happy illustration taken by Scotus Erigena from Plotinus may well be referred to in this connection. " As iron, when it becomes red-hot, seems to be turned into pure fire, but remains no less iron than before, so when. . . . . rational substances pass into God, they do not lose their identity, but preserve it in a higher state of being ".

If, therefore, the Indian conception is " juggling ", the so-called juggling is there—in the Bible, in the epistles of the Apostles, in the utterances of St. Athanax.

Another objection[1] taken by European writers to the Indian ideal of *tat-twam-asi* is that it involves the destruction of Nature and means Acosmism.

The general apprehension of these writers seems to be that the view which the Indian *Advaita* takes of this problem, though philosophically correct, involves the destruction of one of the terms, which enters into the conception of their theory of knowledge and, likewise, of their theory of Being, according to the Cartesian Dualism of Matter and Mind.

I have already answered, in some measure, this objection in the previous chapters. But assuming that my answer, so far as I have been able to discuss the question, is wrong, and assuming also that the

[1] See objection No. III noted at p. 75 *supra.*

Advaita position of "One without a Second" does involve the destruction of the world of sense-experience, such a result must be accepted, if it is philosophically true.

Without repeating what I have said elsewhere, I may well ask 'Are we quite sure that the physical world is after all a physical world?' Professor Drummond says that "the preponderating view of science at the present (day) is that it is not." "It is impossible (says Prof. FitzGerald) to resist the conclusion that all Nature is living thought." So, too, says Leibnitz. It is only a cerebral phenomenon, according to Schopenhauer.

"The presence of a special world outside us—material atoms and forces—these are all *ideas*, without using which, not only the common but the philosophic understanding, which denies their validity, would not be able to rightly observe and handle the external world. In all these cases we do not get at the truth, but only at a picture or figurative appearance, by means of which we can make clear to ourselves the true relations of the real world, which in themselves cannot be expressed."[1]

Again, are we sure that our senses convey to us the truths of Nature correctly? Or, is it not true that the impressions conveyed by them have, in many cases, to be corrected by reflection? Heraclitus tells us that our senses are 'liars.' Eminent scientists and metaphysicians of modern times, likewise, say that the senses are seldom trustworthy. M. Flammarion[2] gives us an analysis of the testimony of the senses thus:—

"We see the sun, the moon and the stars revolving, as it seems to us, round us. That is all false. We feel that the earth is motionless. That is false, too. We see the sun rise above the horizon; it is beneath us. We touch what we think is a solid body. There is no such thing (as a solid body). We hear harmonious sounds; but the air has only brought us silently undulations that are silent themselves. We admire the effects of light and of the colours that bring vividly before our eyes the splendid scenes of Nature; but, in fact, there is no light, there are no colours. It is the movement of opaque ether striking on our optic nerve which gives us the impression of light and colour. We burn our foot in the fire; it is not the foot that pains us; it is in our brain only that the feeling of being burned resides. We speak of heat and cold; there is neither heat nor cold in the uni-

[1] See p. 49 *supra*.

[2] "The Unknown," p. 11.

verse, only motion. Thus, our senses mislead us as to the reality of objects round us."

What, again, are these objects which are round us? Take, for instance, a tree and consider what it is. Mr. G. H. Lewes' exposition[1] of Fichte's views on this point may be read here with profit. That exposition is given in the form of a dialogue between Realism and Idealism; it is too long for quotation, but I give here a brief outline of it and ask the reader to compare it with the Indian solution of the question I have given elsewhere.

Realist: I know that the tree, for instance, which I see is altogether independent of *me*. I did not create it; I found it there *out* of me. The proof of this is that, if I turn away or shut my eyes, the *image* of the tree is annihilated, but the tree itself remains.

Idealist: No, the tree itself does *not* remain; the tree is but a phenomenon. You stare? But tell me honestly what your consciousness informs you of the tree. Give me the plain *fact*, and no *inferences* from that fact. Is not the tree a mere *name* for your perception? Does not your consciousness distinctly tell you that the Form, Colour, Solidity, and Smell of the tree are *in you*—that they are only affections of your mind?

Realist: I admit that; but although these are *in me*, they are caused by something *out of me*. Consciousness tells me that very plainly.

Idealist: Does it? I tell you that consciousness has no such power. It can tell you only of its own changes; but it cannot transcend itself to tell you anything about that which causes its changes.

Realist: But I am irresistibly compelled to believe that there *are* things which exist *out of* me, and this belief, because irresistible, is true.

Idealist: Stop, you run on too fast. Your belief is *not* what you describe it to be. The belief that things lie *underneath* all appearances is a philosophic *inference*, not your belief. Your belief simply is that certain things coloured, odourous, etc., exist; so they do. But you *infer* that they exist *out* of you. Rash inference. Have you not admitted that colour, odour, taste, extension, etc., are but modifica-

[1] 'History of Philosophy.'

tions of your mind, and, if they exist in you, how can they exist *out of* you? They do not; they seem to do so by a law of the mind which gives objectivity to our sensations. That in which these qualities are supposed to inhere,—the *substratum* of these qualities—is also necessarily a subjective substratum—not an objective one; the two go together.

In truth, what we call matter we know not. Its nature is unknowable; and this we designate the *sat-vastu*, the thing-in-itself of the Kantian system. The essential conditions of corporeal existence are Space, Time and Causality; but these are themselves only the subjective forms of our intellect, and have no objective existence outside ourselves. And when we say we cannot know an objective existence except as being *caused*, or an object except as being in Space, or an event except as taking place in Time, we, in reality, mean that our knowledge of this objective existence or object or event is necessarily dependent upon the forms, which our own intellect furnishes, and through which sensuous affections reach us. *It is the thing-in-itself, sat-vastu, which appears to us in these forms.* This *sat-vastu* is *Brahma* which, distorted through the media of Time, Space, and Causality appears as the material universe we call Nature.[1]

"The whole of Nature" (says Professor Deussen[2]) "exists only under the pre-supposition of the forms of our intellect and has, apart from them, that is, in a metaphysical sense, no reality; for it is nothing more than the unceasingly generated product of the sensuous affections and mental forms."

"Another question" says Hegel[3] . . . "is raised when it is said, that the world or matter, inasmuch as it is regarded as having existed for all eternity, is uncreated and exists immediately for itself. The separation made by the understanding between form and matter lies at the basis of this statement; while the real truth is that matter and the world, regarded according to their fundamental characteristics, are this Other, the negative which is itself simply a moment or element

[1] *Cf.* J. Caird's "University Sermons," pp. 369-70:—"The seeming constancy and invariableness of the outward World is but a vulgar illusion . . . . the things that abide are *not* those which the eye sees or the senses can grasp . . . . there is no real sameness." According to the *Vedânta* the true philosophic view is that there is no universe outside of the *Âtman*.

[2] "Metaphysics," s. 71.

[3] Quoted in Haldane's "Pathway," II, p. 134.

of posited being. This is the opposite of something independent and the meaning of its existence is simply that it annuls itself, and is a moment in the process. The natural world is relative, it is appearance; *i.e.*, it is this not only for us but implicitly, and it belongs to its quality or character to pass over and return into the ultimate Idea."

There is great truth in the saying that "the seen is the unreal, while the unseen is the real;" and science seems now to have admitted the correctness of this view. Philosophers of eminence like Berkeley, Taine, J. S. Mill, Baine, say that bodies have no real existence, and our own minds under illusion have transformed them into substances. "Exterior perception is a pure hallucination," (says Taine); "spiritual essences are the only real," says Lossius; "outside spirit there is no reality," says Bradley.

Such are some of the philosophical aspects of the problem of the universe. But the truths of philosophy must not be confounded with the truths of sense-experience. These last belong to a lower plane of thought, and have a validity of their own *on that plane.*

What Bishop Berkeley has said in this connection may here be usefully referred to. To the question what becomes of the sun, moon and stars, of houses, rivers, mountains, trees, stones, nay even of our own bodies, if all things that exist, exist only in the mind and are purely notional, his answer is that "by the principles premised, we are not deprived of any thing in Nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear or anywise conceive or understand remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is a *rerum natura* and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its full force."

Or, as the *Advaitin* might put it, so long as we are not able to give up what we call our individual egohood as connected with our physical personality, so long as we view this question with "the eyes of the flesh," the external world, whether as a world of appearances only or as having an independent existence, continues to be valid to our limited capacities. Our practical life is one thing and philosophical and spiritual enlightenment, another. The Eleatics and the Post-Platonic sceptics of ancient times, and Berkeley, Hume, Fichte and others, of the modern period, did not cease "to live, breathe and feel," because their philosophic sense told them that the world was a figment.

It must always be borne in mind that such thinkers never went the length of denying all reality to the universe. They denied its reality only as an *independent and self-subsisting entity*. As stated before, no idealist has ever maintained that there is no sensible world; all that is said is that the things which the world calls real are mere appearances on the true Reality. At the same time it is fully acknowledged that it is by means of these very appearances (emblems as they are sometimes called) and the empirical knowledge gained through them that man could take further steps in advance, and ultimately reach the true Reality, for though veiling, they at the same time possess the capacity to reveal the presence of the deeper truth that consecrates them.

This is exactly what the Indian *Advaitin* means when he says that the world is *Mithyâ* or illusory. He means nothing more than what Plotinus meant in his letter to Flaccus[1]. 'External objects', he writes, 'present us only with appearances, that is to say, are phenomenal only. Concerning them, therefore, we may be said to possess opinion rather than knowledge. The distinctions in the actual world of appearance are of import only to ordinary and practical men. Our question lies with the ideal reality that exists behind appearance. How does the mind perceive these ideas? Are they without us, and is the reason, like sensation, occupied with objects external to itself? What certainty could we then have, what assurance that our perception was infallible? The object perceived would be a something different from the mind perceiving it. We should then have an image instead of reality. It would be monstrous to believe for a moment that the mind was unable to perceive ideal truth exactly as it is, and that we had no certainty and real knowledge concerning the world of intelligence. It follows, therefore, that this region of truth is not to be investigated as a thing outward to us, and so only imperfectly known. It is within us. Here the objects we contemplate and that which contemplates are identical—both are thought. The subject cannot surely know the object different from itself. The world of ideas lies within our intelligence. Truth, therefore, is not the agreement of our apprehension of an external object with the object itself. It is the agreement of the mind with itself. Consciousness, therefore, is the sole basis of certainty'.

[1] Quoted in Max Müller's 'Theosophy,' pp. 430-1.

Even such an unsympathetic writer as Gough[1], who, as previously pointed out, is fond of using expressions like fiction, fictitious, illusion, &c., in his interpretation of the Upanishads, has to admit that the unreality of the world maintained by the *Advaitin* is "an unreality for the philosopher intent on the one and only truth, relatively a reality for the multitude, to whom the world exists with all its possibilities of pain. . . to him [and to him only] that sees the truth, all these bodies and their environments will disappear, merging themselves into that fontal essence ; and the Self will alone remain, a fulness of unbroken and unmingled bliss."[2]

But, curiously enough, many Christian writers and even some Indian Sanskritists influenced by Western thought, *misinterpret* Indian "illusionism," while they seem to understand that expression correctly in their interpretation of European Idealism.

It is the rigorous monism of men like Gaudapâda and Shankar that has furnished a weapon to these thinkers, with which to attack the Indian *Advaita*.

Shankar, it is true, has, again and again, used the expressions *Mâyâ* and *Avidyâ*, and stated that the world is illusory like a mirage, rope-snake or mother-o'pearl. He has emphasised the *Vedânta* idea that *Brahma* alone is *sat* (real) and everything else *asat* (false), and this is considered as conveying the idea that the world is unreal in the sense of a positive blank.

But I make bold to say that no *Advaitin*, not even Shankar, has ever denied all reality to the universe when he maintains that it is *asat* (unreal). I shall have to discuss this question at considerable length in my Article on the Philosophy of Shankara Âcharya;[3] but it is necessary to touch here on some of the salient points of that philosophy and quote his utterances in the original even at the risk of being somewhat tedious.

In the first place, the critics of Shankar must remember what these words *sat* and *asat* mean in Vedantic terminology. It is undisputed that *sat* is used to denote an existence which is eternal and changeless, and whatever has not this characteristic is necessarily *asat*. In this

[1] 'Phil. Up,' p. 50.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 57.
[3] Which unfortunately the author did not live to write.—ED.

view of the question, was Shankar wrong in saying that this perishable world is *asat* (unreal) ?

Shankar, it must be remembered, was a rigorous logician, and he was perfectly aware that any theory of illusion, such as has been erroneously imputed to him, would have been self-contradictory as leading to the utter extinction of the very thinker of such a thought, and of the ground upon which that thought would be based. It would have been acosmism with a vengeance !

If *Mâyâ* itself is the power (*âtmashakti*) of *Brahma*, or, as some choose to say, the power of God acting under the *sattâsphûrti* of *Brahma*, and if the universe is its manifestation on the immanent *Brahma* itself and nowhere else, which owing to its transient and ephemeral character is considered *asat* (unreal), then this unreality could not possibly mean an absolute nothingness.

As observed by Principal Caird[1] on a somewhat similar occasion " Though we have reduced the world of experience to a mere appearance or accident, yet, *as* appearance or accident, it has an existence which still needs to be accounted for . Say that it is but a vain show, a vapour that appeareth for a little and vanishes away; yet, the question still arises, Whence came it ? Why is it ? What is the reason of its existence ? If we are such stuff as dreams are made of, yet our very dreams have a relation to a real and waking life, and even the vagaries of slumber, in their extravagance and fleetingness, point to a something more substantial, of which they are the reflection. The world of experience may be insubstantial and phenomenal, still, in the reality which we seek beyond that world, there must be something that accounts for it, and does not merely annul it ; and that is *more* infinite, if we may use such an expression, which contains and explains the finite, than that which denies or ignores it. . . . By its own necessary movement therefore, thought goes in quest of such an idea—the idea of an Infinite—whose existence explains both itself and the existence of the finite world. "

The same learned author speaks in the same strain when referring to a similar doctrine of Spinoza. He remarks, " though everything else in the finite world is resolved into negation, the negation itself

[1] ' Phil. Rel.,' pp. 131-2.

is not so resolved. Evanescence itself does not vanish. When you have reduced all finite things to phantoms, unsubstantial as the things of a dream, the dream world itself remains to be accounted for; and *more than that obviously the mind, which perceives and pronounces that it is a dream world cannot belong to that world.* In ascribing to intelligence the function of rising above and abolishing the distinction from substance of finite things, Spinoza virtually exempts intelligence itself from the process of abolition. *The criterion of the illusory cannot be itself illusory.*[1]

The reader would no doubt feel delighted in finding how closely this reasoning accords with that of Shankar. When he adduced the instance of a mirage or of the mother-o'pearl, or of the rope-snake to illustrate the doctrine of the *Mâyâ*, he did not fail to posit the reality of the thing which lay *underneath* the appearance which was mistaken for something else; "the dreamland" in which "the dream" is experienced is thus accounted for.

In his comment on the Bhagvat Gîtâ (XIII. 14) Shankar distinctly says, "everywhere the *sat* is present; not even the mirage and the like can exist without a basis. नहि मृगतृष्णिकादयोपि निरास्पदा भवन्ति[2]।

Is not this a sufficient answer to those Sanskritists who persist in saying that if the instances of the mirage, rope-snake, &c., are quoted as illustrations, Shankar can never have meant to ascribe *any kind* of reality to the world of sense-experience. But nothing can be clearer from his writings than this, that he predicates the reality of appearances—appearances on the *sat-vastu* itself which is *Brahma*, and he adds that though no explanation can be given of these appearances, this much is certain, that they can have no reality apart from or independent of the सद्वस्तु on which those appearances are manifested. (ब्रह्मातिरेकतो नान्यत्). This is tantamount to saying that the world has a *phenomenal* reality and that, apart from or independent of the *noumenon*, it has no reality.

[1] The italics in this para. are the author's.

[2] *Cf.* Sureshvarâchârya:—"We have nowhere experienced an illusion which does not rest on some reality. There must be reality as the basis of illusion." See A. M. Shastri's Taitt. Up. 247.

Shankar makes this position still clearer in other places. In his comment on a passage in Chhândogya Upanishad,[1] he formulates this question :—Does this mean that all we see is a non-entity, because the rope as the serpent is a non-entity ? And he answers that question by saying, " No, we say, it is *sat* itself that is mistaken for dualities and diversities, and there is no non-existence anywhere. . . . . It is *sat* alone which names and is named as *other* things ; just as the rope that is named serpent under the notion of its being a serpent . . . While those that know the rope set aside the name and the idea of the serpent, . . . in the same manner, those, that have a discriminating knowledge of *sat*, set aside all words and ideas denoting the modifications ".

So also in Mândukya,[2] he says,no imagination can stand upon nothing; it must have a *substratum* to rest upon and that *substratum* is *Âtman* (*Brahma*). It is the *Âtman* itself that is imagined to be something else.

It is the All-pervading *Paramâtma* [3] itself which appears disguised as *Sthûla* (gross), *Sûkshma* (subtle) and *Kârana* (causal) bodies. All the Universe is *Brahma* and what is predicated of that Universe has no existence separate from the *substratum*.[4]

So far with regard to the phenomenal reality of the world.

Then, as to the thinker of the thought that the world is unreal, Shankar, too, like Spinoza, exempts that thinker from ' the illusion '. Being the *prius* of such a thought, being himself the " criterion of the illusory ", he cannot be and is not illusory. He is absolutely real.[5]

[1] VI, 2-3. The original text is worth quoting :—

असदेव तर्हि सर्वंयद् गूह्यते रज्जुरिव सर्पाद्याकारेण न । सत एव द्वैतभेदेन अन्यथागृह्यमाणत्वात् नासत्वं कस्याचित् क्वचित् इति ब्रूमः ।..... सदेव तु सर्वमभिधानमभिधीयते च यदन्यबुद्ध्या यथा रज्जुरेव सर्पबुद्ध्या सर्प इत्यभिधीयते–लोके रज्जुविवेकदर्शिनां तु सर्पाभिधानबुद्धी निवर्तेते... ..... तद्वत् सद्विवेकदर्शिनामन्यविकारशब्द बुद्धी निवर्तेते ।

[2] II, 33 :—

अतोऽसद्भिरेव प्राणादिभावैरद्वयेन परमार्थसताऽऽत्मना रज्जुवत् सर्वविकल्पास्पद.....नहि निरास्पदा काचित् कल्पनोपलभ्यते ।

[3] " Atma Bodha," 10.

[4] " Viveka Chûdâmani," 233 :—

तस्मादेव तद् ब्रह्ममात्रं हि विश्वं ।
नाधिष्ठानाद् भिन्नतारोपितस्य ॥

[5] Shankar's Gloss. on Mând. Up. II, 32 :—

विकल्पार्थितुश्च प्राग् विकल्पनोत्पत्तेः सिद्धत्वाभ्युपगमादसत्वानुपपत्तिः

(the thinker, being *ex hypothesi* in existence prior to the thought, cannot be obviously described as [*asat*]unreal). Shankar refers to the ' unimagined residuum ' which persists on the elimination of the (*kalpanâ*) idea, and which by reason of that very persistence is proved not to be an idea but the Reality.

[विकल्पनाक्षये ऽविकल्पितस्याविकल्पितत्वादेव सत्वोपपत्तेः]

Again in his स्वात्मनिरूपण, he says " Though the popular belief is that nothing remains in the absence of things which are visible, still that, which is thus considered as nothing, is itself Brahma as would appear from the Veda."[1]

This he makes still clearer in his answer to the Nihilist, in the Vedânta Sutra, II, 2, 25. He there distinctly says that though everything else may be doubted, the doubter cannot doubt his own existence ; he cannot doubt his own personality in the manifoldness of experience.[2]

See also his 'स्वात्मनिरूपण' "Who doubts about his own existence ? Even if you doubt that, the doubter is no other than yourself".[3]

In the face of such utterances, can any one doubt what Shankar really meant when he maintained the unreality of the universe? He undoubtedly maintained (what really all European idealists do) that there is one and only one Ultimate Reality (called *Brahma* in the *Vedânta*) and that nothing, independent of it, is, anything divorced from it, being a non-entity ; and what appears as the external world is but a form of manifestation of *Brahma* itself *on* itself.

This truth, Shankar distinctly says, is only a philosophic truth, which only the enlightened can appreciate ; to the rest, the world, which appears as a self-subsisting entity, is as real as anything real can be.[4]

[1] सतिसकलदृश्यबोधन किमप्यस्तीति लोकासिद्धं चेत्।
यन्न किमपीति सिद्धं ब्रह्म तदेवेति वेदत : सिद्धम्॥

[2] *Cf.* Pancha Dasi, III, 29-33.
सत्यत्वं बाधराहित्यं जगद् बाधैकसाक्षिण : ।
बाध : किंसाक्षिको ब्रूहि तत्वसाक्षिक इष्यते ॥
अपनीतेषुमर्तेषु ह्यमूर्त शिष्यते वियत् ।
शक्येषु बाधितेष्वन्ते शिष्यते यत्तदेव तत् ॥
सर्वबाधे न किंचिच्चेयन्न किंचित्तदेव तत्।
भाषा एवात्र भिद्यंते निर्बाधं तावदास्ति हि ॥
अत एव श्रुतिर्बाध्यं बाधित्वा शेषयत्यदः ।
स एषनेति नेत्यात्मेत्यतद्व्यावृत्तिरूपतः ॥
इदं रूपं तु यावत्तत्यक्तुं शक्यतेऽखिलं ।
अशक्योऽनिदंरूप : स आत्मा बाधवर्जितः॥

[3] अस्तीत्येवमस्मिन्नर्थे कस्यास्तु संशयः पुंसः तत्रापि संशयश्चेत् संशयिता यः स एव भवासि त्वम्॥

[4] Shankar's 'Vákya Sudhá,' 40-41: "To the practical person, the world actually exists; he considers it as real; while the philosopher considers it as unreal. To the philosopher, *Brahma* alone is real; he sees or perceives nothing else; and if he, at all, sees anything else, it is as unreal in essence (*anritátmaná*)"

[व्यावहारिकजीवस्तु जगत् तद्व्यावहारिकं ।
सत्यं प्रत्येति मिथ्येति मन्यते पारमार्थिकः ॥
पारमार्थिकजीवस्तु ब्रह्मैकं पारमार्थिकं ।
प्रत्येति वीक्षते नान्यत् वीक्षेत त्वनृतात्मना ॥]

Cf. Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 1, 12; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 66: "The Shastra (Scripture) wishing to convey information about the primary Self, adapts itself to common notions,

And what is more important still is that he maintains the *necessity* of the phenomenal reality for the religious and spiritual enlightenment of Man. In his comment on *Vedânta Sutra*, for instance, he expressly says that the body with its intellectual equipment, constituting his living personality, is necessary, for "without a knowing agent, the means of right knowledge cannot operate."[1]

Again, in Chhândogya[2] Upanishad: "though the Self is One without a Second, free from all the limitations of Time, Space, &c., yet ordinary people of unenlightened intellect have a firm conviction, that all reality is limited by Space and Time; accordingly, to make the subject intelligible to these people (without which their spiritual enlightenment is impossible) *Brahma* is now taught as conditioned by these limitations . . . Desires for earthly happiness have to be taken into account, for it is impossible to remove all at once such desires, which are the product of individual *karma* extending over many embodied existences." The text referring to such people says "Let them come to the proper path gradually, we shall make them understand what the Real Truth is."

It is by means of the universe and the objects contained in it, that the highest truth is grasped[3].

It will thus appear that the Indian *Advaita* does not contemplate any drastic results in the practical life of Man. The non-duality which it advocates does not mean the annihilation of the universe as we see it. "No man," says Shankar, "can actually annihilate the whole existing

in so far as it at first refers to the body consisting of food, which, although not the Self, is by very obtuse people identified with it; it then proceeds from the body to another Self, which has the same shape with the preceding one, just as the statue possesses the form of the mould into which the molten brass had been poured; then, again, to another one, *always at first representing the Non-Self as the Self, for the purpose of easier comprehension;* and it finally teaches that the innermost Self which consists of bliss, is the real Self." The italics are the Editor's.

[शास्त्रं लोकबुद्धिमनुसरदन्नमयं शरीरमनात्मानमत्यंतमूढानामात्मत्वेन प्रसिद्धमनूद्य मूषानिषक्तद्रूताद्यादिप्रतिमावत् ततोऽनंतरं ततोऽनंतरमिति एवं पूर्वेण पूर्वेण समानमुत्तरमुत्तरं अनात्मानमात्मेति ग्राहयत्प्रतिपत्तिसौकर्यापेक्षया सर्वानन्तरं मुख्यमानन्दमयमात्मानमुपदिदेश इति लिष्टतरम्]

The original has been quoted here, because it is far more clear and suggestive than the translation—ED.

[1] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. 1, 1; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 7.

[न च अधिष्ठानमंतरेण इन्द्रियाणां व्यवहारः संभवति]

[2] VIII, 1, 1.

[3] See Shankar on Chhând. Up. VII, 17; and Mând. Up. III, 15.

world with all its animated bodies and all its elementary substances, such as earth and so on; if this were possible, the very first liberated soul would have done it once for all, so that at present the whole world would be empty, the earth and all other substances having been finally annihilated."[1].

What is said to happen is that in the case of a person who has reached the stage of self-realisation, and recognised his identity with *Brahma*, to him and to him alone all appears as one *Brahma*; he and he alone sees, in that attitude, this apparently self-subsisting world "melting away like the imagery of a dream." So long as there is no such complete self-realisation, "we may (adds Shankar) repeat the Scriptural text a hundred times, 'know *Brahma* and dissolve the world,' we shall never be able to do either the one or the other."[2]

Till such self-realisation ensues, that is, till the knowledge of *Brahma* being the self of all has arisen, the phenomenal world is considered as true, and there is no reason (says Shankar) why the ordinary course of secular and religious activity should not hold on undisturbed[3].

In fact, the usefulness of (*Samsâra*) worldly experience, for its limited aims and ends, is so far recognised, that it would be even a mistake to

[1] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. III, 2, 21; S. B. E. Vol. 38, p. 163. The whole passage is worth quoting: "We ask our opponent of what nature that so-called annihilation of the apparent world is. Is it analogous to the annihilation of hardness in butter, which is effected by bringing it into contact with fire? Or, is the apparent world of names and forms, which is super-imposed upon *Brahman* by Nescience, to be dissolved by knowledge, just as the phenomenon of a double moon, which is due to a disease of the eyes, is removed by the application of medicine? If the former, the Vedic injunctions bid us to do something impossible; for no man can actually annihilate this whole existing world, with all its animated bodies, and all its elementary substances, such as earth and so on. And if it actually could be done, the first liberated Soul would have done it once for all, so that, at present, the whole world would be empty, earth and all other substances having been finally annihilated,—if the latter, *i.e.*, if our opponent maintains that the phenomenal world is super-imposed on *Brahman* by Nescience, and annihilated by knowledge, we point out that the only thing needed is that the knowledge of *Brahman* should be conveyed by Vedic passages, sublating the apparent plurality, superimposed upon *Brahman* by Nescience, such as '*Brahman* is one without a second' &c. As soon as *Brahman* is indicated in this way, knowledge, arising, of itself discards Nescience, this whole world of names and forms, which had been hiding *Brahman* from us, melts away like the imagery of a dream. As long, on the other hand, as *Brahman* is not so realized, you may say a hundred times, 'Cognize *Brahman*! Dissolve this world!' and yet we shall be unable to do either the one or the other."—ED.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 32:—"The entire complex of phenomenal existence is considered as true as long as the knowledge of *Brahman* being the Self of all has not arisen; just as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the Sleeper wakes."—ED.

suppose that one, who is on the way to perceive spiritual truths by close introspection, becomes oblivious of the external world, or indifferent to his relations in it and the duties they involve. While rising higher and higher, and living a larger and larger self, he is still in this world of relativity—this world of the one and many,—and is bound to do his duties here, and retain all the activities which, in his embodied existence, it is improper for him to neglect and even impossible for him to avoid[1]. To him, therefore, his lower or individual self and the world are as real as anything real can be ; only his idea of the reality would be much more exalted than of a person who is entirely uninitiated.

Even the *Jîvan Mukta*[2] (person liberated while in bodily existence) in the Indian system does not altogether lose his individuality or his sense of the reality of the world of sense-experience. He no doubt is able to realise its unreality as a differentiated and self-subsisting entity, and he is now in a position to estimate the things of sense-experience at their true value. One writer describes him as having reached his "re-integration into the bosom of the Infinite, there to live in omniconsciousness, in omnipotence, as a living factor of *Parabrahma*."

The idea is that, instead of being absorbed in *Brahma*, he remains centred in It as in his home, and, from that centre, carries on his mission of regenerating mankind and becoming their Saviour. Even after his physical death he may become re-incarnate in this world ; and if he prefers this voluntary descent for the uplifting of others needing his spiritual guidance, he would be *in* this world, but not *of* it.

It may, indeed, be that the perfection, which a *Jîvan Mukta* is supposed to have attained, is only partial, for it can have reference only to the cosmic evolution pertaining to the particular planetary or solar system to which he belongs—an evolution which in its nature can only be partial,—if he has to move *on* and *with* the entire universe

[1] 'Bhag. Gît.' III, 5 :—"Nor can any one, even for an instant, remain really actionless ; for helplessly is everyone driven to action by the qualities born of nature."

[2] *Jîvan Mukta* is a person who has, *n this life, obtained Mukti* or liberation, *which is the real object of the Vedânta Philosophy, viz., to overcome all Nescience, to become once more what the Âtman always has been, viz., Brahman. He has, however, to wait till death removes the last Upâdhis* or fetters, which, though they bind the mind no longer, remain, like broken chains, hanging heavy on the mortal body. See Max Müller's 'Six Sys. Ind. Phil.,' p. *236.—ED.*

and acquire universal experience for his complete self-development. If the cosmic evolution is itself progressive, the evolution of the *Jîvan Mukta* also must be supposed as progressive and continuing. Endless evolutions have come and gone, and endless other evolutions must naturally be expected to occur; each evolution means development and progress, and it is impossible to imagine when *absolute* perfection can be reached by man in this Myriad-worlded Universe. (*ananta-koti-Brahmânda.*)

But when such perfection is reached, man "will be a pillar in the temple of my God and shall go out no more."[1] He will be at one with the All; Knowing and Being will be one in him. He will be a God in the Platonic sense. This is precisely the view set forth by Herbert Spencer as the consummation of human evolution, when absolute power and supreme knowledge result[2].

In such a case, Subject and Object will become One; the individual Self will become the Self of All; and the Indian ideal *tat-twam-asi* (Thou art That) will have been fully realised.

[1] New Testament, Rev. III, 12. [2] *Cf.* Buck.

CHAPTER VI.

PANTHEISM AND THE VEDÂNTA[1].

By far the most serious objection taken to the *Vedânta* ideal of *tat-twam-asi* is that it is a species of Anti-theistic Pantheism [2] which is generally designated Acosmism. It is said that it destroys all sense of Individualism and strikes at the root of all the fundamental moral convictions and spiritual aspirations of humanity.

In the first place, it is necessary to ask what is Pantheism. Are Christian writers themselves agreed as to what is really meant by the term ?

While Christian philosophers generally charge Absolute Idealists as Pantheists, saving their own Pantheism from the attack, European idealists, in their turn, stigmatise Oriental Pantheism as anti-theistic and, therefore, different from their own, alleging that that Pantheism makes no distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice, and considers them all as immanent in God. Though each one justifies his own Pantheism and picks holes in the Pantheism of others, it is noteworthy that most of these join in condemning Oriental Pantheism in no measured terms.

One instance will suffice to show what I mean. Professors Flint and Upton charge Hegelianism as unmitigated Pantheism, the latter naming the two eminent brothers Caird, in this connection. Principal J. Caird,[3] in his turn, severely criticises the Pantheism of the Hindus as inevitably immoral in its tendency, and thus accounts for the "unbridled license of a sensuous idolatry" resulting in a social system, in which "the grossest impurities are not only permitted, but perpetuated under the sanction of religion,"—a whole nation thus charged, on what authority, it is left to the reader to imagine.

[1] Originally contributed to the 'Indian Review', for 1905, pp. 627-632. In reading this Chapter, reference may be usefully made to two articles on "Immanence" and "Transcendence" in the Hibbert Journal for 1907, especially pp. 751, 777 and 923.

[2] This has a reference, to objection No. 4, noted at p. 75 *supra*.

[3] 'Phil. Rel.' pp. 321 ,323.

But Hegel[1] himself does not charge us as Pantheists at all. He calls such systems as those of the Indian *Vedânta* and Spinoza "the philosophical systems of substantiality."

Professor Flint[2], too, exempts us from the charge of anti-theistic Pantheism, for, according to him, no system which does not include determinism and exclude freedom is truly Pantheistic, and he expressly excludes the Pantheism of India, for, says he, it "has always been, to some extent, combined or associated with Theism;"[3] although, under a complete misconception of the Vedàntic ideas of Illusion and Nescience, he considers the central idea of the *Vedânta* to be a "false conclusion from a false principle"[4].

From the historical development of the idea of Pan, which meant in Greece the Shepherd God, Pantheism appears to express a kinship between all things—one universal life being manifested in all—one universal brotherhood—a brotherhood with nature in its fulness. Animism, Plato's World-soul, *anima mundi, the Vedânta Hiranya-garbha*—all these are more or less suggestive of the same idea, that there is one eternal Being in whom all "live, move and have their being." It represents the *Âtman* of all that is.

We find Pantheism commonly defined as a "doctrine which refers all phenomena to a single, ultimate constituent or agent—the opposite of dualism."

It is that doctrine which "identifies God with the entire universe, which beholds him in the movement of the tiniest insect or in the lustre of the brilliant gem; in the mind of a Socrates or in the brain of a Newton;"[5]—as One Universal Existence, acting from *within*, as a Pervading Omnipresent Power, and not from *without*, as an anthropomorphic person.[6]

This is a belief which has been entertained by thoughtful people from the most ancient times. In India, it is ingrained in the mind of every Hindu and every Sûfi, high or low. In Greece, Pythagoras and the Eleatics held the same view; also the Platonists and the Neo-Platonists. Servetus, Giordano Bruno, and Vanini, were burnt

[1] "Phil. Rel." Vol. I, p. 97; *cf.* also *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 319-320.
[2] "Anti-theistic Theories," p. 337.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 341 343.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 345, 350.
[5] 'Hist. Panth. Vol. I p. 252.
[6] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p 329.

alive as heretics for this belief. And although modern Idealists have differed in matters of outward form, they are all agreed as to the main idea. Even Agnostics like Herbert Spencer may be named in this connection.

So that one may fairly say that Pantheism argues a higher order of intelligence, which cannot be lightly shoved aside, to make room for the popular idea of an anthropomorphic or an extra-mundane God, creating the universe from nothing and governing as a Big King sitting on his throne, high in a region inaccessible to man.

And what has been thus believed from the most ancient times has only now begun to be confirmed by European Science as scientifically true also.

"From the time of the Vedic writers" (says the anonymous[1] author of the *History of Pantheism*) "up to that of our most modern philosophers, there had been a growing belief in God as the One Universal Existence, whose outward manifestation displays itself through all phenomena and . . . . what philosophy had, for thousands of years, persistently asserted, Science [is] at last beginning to verify . . . . Pantheism seems the necessary outcome of these discoveries [of modern science]."[2]

There is no religion "from Indian Brahminism to English Protestantism," nor philosophy "from Thales to Hegel," which might not be called Pantheistic.[3] And it is difficult to understand why Christian writers should be so much in dread of Pantheism. Does not the teaching of Jesus himself "I in thee and thou in Me that both may be made one" amount to Pantheism?

Again, is not Pantheism implied in the somewhat elevated passages even in the Old Testament? Take, for instance, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."[4]

[1] Mr. Clifford Harrison thinks that Mr. C. E. Plumptre is the author of that work. See "Notes on the Margins," p. 116 n.

[2] *Ibid.* Vol. II, p. 325.

[3] *Cf.* Hunt.

[4] Psalms, CXXXIX, 7-10.

Again, "Am I God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."[1]

What, again, is the meaning of St. Paul's saying, "For in God we live and move and have our being."[2]

Yet Professor Flint[3] says: "There is no Pantheism in the Bible. . . to call language of the kind [noted above] Pantheistic has no warrant in reason, and no other tendency than to mislead." Such language, he says, is common to Pantheism and Theism, and "distinguishes both from Deism. . . [Pantheism] cannot consistently conceive of [God's presence] as a personal and spiritual, but only as a natural and necessary presence. . . as substance, force and law, not as reason, love and will."

If Pantheism represents God and Nature as eternally and *necessarily* co-existent and co-extensive, the Pantheism of the *Vedânta* also must be excluded from that category, for it recognises the Freedom of the Will both in God and Man. When it talks of nature, it tries to explain it, to our empiric consciousness, as sprung into being by the *Ícshana* of *Brahma*, that is, by the thought and will of *Brahma* or by the Word or by Emanation or by *Mâyâ*, the inseparable power of *Brahma*.[4]

No *Vedântin* ever says that every object, we see in this world, in its state of apparent isolation and self-subsistence, is *Brahma*. "Such an absurd idea[5] has never come into anybody's head outside of the ranks of these opponents of Pantheism". The language of the *Vedântin* is that there is *Brahma* everywhere, and nothing independent of it is. His deification of the world is, in no way, different from the Christian deification, which, according to Principal Caird[6], is "not an apotheosis of the world as it is to the outer eye, but of the world as its hidden significance is revealed, of the world as it is seen *sub specie eternitatis*."[7]

[1] Jer. XXIII, 23, 24

[2] Acts, XVII, 28.

[3] "Anti. Theo." pp. 384-5.

[4] See *supra*.

[5] Hegel's 'Phil. Rel.' Vol. 3, p. 319.

[6] 'Phil. Rel.' p. 322.

[7] *Cf.* Bhag. Git., Ch. X, and XVIII, 20-21: "That by which one indestructible Being is seen is all Beings, inseparate in the separated, know, then, that knowledge as pure. But that knowledge which regardeth the several manifold existences in all beings as separate, that knowledge know thou as of passion."

The main idea running through Ch. X of the Bhag. Git. has been well expressed by Hegel in his "Phil. Rel.," Vol. I, p. 97, where he says, with reference to the

"It were idly mischievous cruelty", says Dr. Ballantyne, "to hurl [the charge of anti-theistic Pantheism] against the *Vedantin*. . . I here state my conviction, that those, who consider the *Vedantins* as Pantheists on this ground, would, in like manner, condemn St. Paul, if he were to reappear, declaring expressly what was implied in his asserting of God that in Him we live and move and have our being."

Those who maintain the doctrine of Unity are undoubtedly, in a sense, Pantheists, *nolens volens*. If, according to them, God fills all in existence with Himself alone, so that All is He, since He is All, if God is All, then All must be He, and from this fact there is no escape, and no other conclusion can be arrived at which does not do violence to all rational thought. But, as says Trine, people engrossed in bigotry say that God is All and immediately begin to fill up the universe with that which God is not.

It is obvious that the traditional prejudices of Christian writers, due mainly to Semetic influences, are so strong, that they apparently believe Sin and Evil to be objective realities, and then consider it shocking to their sense of Divine justice to connect God with them in any degree; to suppose that God is in anything that is sinful or evil or even loathsome to man is, in their view, to take away from Him His character of purity, goodness, &c., &c.

Calvin, one of the pioneers of the Reformation of the 16th century, felt himself shocked, when his victim Servetus, at his trial for heresy, fearlessly said that "this bench, this table and all you can point to around us is of the substance of God"; and when on this Calvin remarked that, on such showing, the Devil must be of God substantially, Servetus smilingly replied, "Do you doubt it? For my part, I hold it as a general proposition that all things whatsoever are part

Indian conception, that "[it] contains the thought that in everything the divine is only the universal element of a content, the essence of things, while at the same time it is also represented as being the determined or specific Essence of the things. When *Brahma* says, 'I am the brightness, the shining element in metals, the Ganges among rivers, the life in all that lives, &c.', what *is individual is done away with and* absorbed. Brahma does not say, 'I am the metal, the rivers, the individual things of each kind by themselves, as such, as they exist immediately.' The brightness is not the metal itself, but is the Universal, the substantial, elevated above any individual form; . . . . . What is expressed here is no longer what is called pantheism; the idea expressed is rather that of the essence in such individual things."—ED.

and parcel of God, and that Nature at large is His substantial manifestation."[1] The end of the trial was that Servetus was burnt alive!

Another writer[2] says that the God of the Pantheist is "by inclusion, every moral and immoral agent, and every form and exaggeration of moral evil, no less than every variety of moral excellence and beauty, is part of the All-pervading and All-comprehending movement of His universal life. If this revolting blasphemy be declined, then the God of Pantheism must be the barest of abstract Being."

Hence, the necessity of a personal God, in the Christian system, to escape the charge of 'revolting blasphemy,'—an extra-mundane God, whose immanence in Evil and Sin it would be highly impious to assert! "It is better (says Bacon) to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him."

Such a God has been secured in the Christian system. The present Christianity, says Professor Pfleiderer[3], "combines the transcendence of the Semetic and the immanence of the Indo-Germanic notion of God in the Christian synthesis of the God, who is above all, and through, all and in all. (Epiph. iv, 6.) It is called Panentheism—a word, coined by Krause and Baader, to denote a reconciliation of Theism and Monism. Schelling calls it Concrete Monotheism."

Christianity is thus saved, from the lifeless Deism of the Theist, which isolates a man from God and the unmoral Pantheism of the Absolute Idealist which identifies them and effaces all true moral responsibility and all moral distinctions in the nature of God.[4] And it is to the Hebrew race that, according to him, "the world owes a great debt of gratitude for saving modern culture from the two extremes of Pantheism and Materialism."[5]

[1] See also 'Theol. Germ.,' p. 188: "The Devil is good in so far as he hath Being. In this sense nothing is evil or not good. . . . . All things have their being in God, and more truly in God than in themselves. Therefore all things are good in so far as they have a Being, and if there were aught that had not its Being in God, it would not be good."

See also J. Caird's 'Phil. Rel.,' p. 322, where he says, with reference to the teachings of Christianity, "to Christianity we owe also that deeper insight which can discern a Soul of goodness even in things evil—a divine purpose and plan beneath the discord of man's passions, and the strife and sin of the world." May we not ask if Shree Krishna did not voice forth the same sentiment ages ago, when he said in the Bhag. Git. (X. 36) "I am the gambling of the cheat."(यूतं छलयतामस्मि)—ED.

[2] Liddon's 'Elements of Religion.'

[3] "Phil. Rel." Vol. III, p. 253.

[4] Upton's 'Hibbert Lectures' for 1893, pp. 287-8.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 244-8.

Saved, indeed! but at what cost? A transcendent God and immanent, too, but only in things which man in his wisdom may choose to consider good!—a complete go-by being given to the logically consistent, philosophic and scientific position, that there can be no conceivable place or object, where God is not. It is forgotten that if there be any such place or object, God cannot be an Absolute Immanent God; He would become isolated in such a case and, therefore, necessarily a limited God. The reasoning of the Pantheist is considered "a narrow rationalising logic," and the two ideas of Immanence and Transcendence, though obviously contradictory, *when thus viewed*, have become acceptable to Christian Philosophers. An outside God has thus saved them, it is supposed, from the charge of Pantheism.

But, if we say that *Brahma* is immanent everywhere, and that there is no place or object where it is not, is our system a Pantheism, in the anti-theistic sense of the term? From the most ancient times what the *Vedânta* has maintained is that, while *Brahma* is immanent everywhere, the universe that it manifests on itself occupies but a portion of it, so to speak. In the *Purusha Sûkta*[1] of the Rig Veda, (X. 90) it is said:—*Purusha* has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet; He compasses the earth on every side *and stands ten fingers' breadth beyond.* . . . Such is his greatness, and *Purusha is more than this: one quarter of him is all existing things, three quarters that which is immortal in the sky.*

In this view, it is rather the universe that is immanent in *Brahma*; to use St. Augustine's mode of expression, the universe is bounded in *Brahma* and *Brahma* bounded nowhere.

There is no logical inconsistency in the Hindu conception. When once it is admitted that the eternal being is a spirit with complete freedom in its manifestations, the two ideas of Transcendence and Immanence are quite compatible in the same being. Its manifestations are on itself, and not outside it.

[1] The italics are the author's; see the original text:
सहस्रशीर्षापुरुष: सहस्राक्ष: सहस्रपात्।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वाऽत्यतिष्ठद् दशाङ्गुलम्॥
एतावानस्य महिमाऽतो ज्यायाँश्च पूरुष:।
पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि॥

Cf. also Bhag. Git., X. 42: "Having pervaded this whole universe with one fragment of Myself, I remain."

[विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत्]

See this text referred to by Shankar in his Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 1, 26.

At all events, the Indian *Vedânta* has stated the great problem "in all its fulness," as Philo is said to have done, for the first time, in Europe[1].

The *Vedânta* has again and again asserted that while in the universe, which *Brahma* appears to have manifested on itself, there is always apparent strife and discord between each "pair of opposites," it itself is beyond that pair [द्वंद्वातीत] while at the same time immanent in it.

Whether under these circumstances the *Vedânta* system is Pantheism pure and simple, or no, it is most certain that it is not worthy of condemnation, unless the Pantheism of European idealists is.

Pantheism, in the sense which I have referred to at the commencement of this article, while being logically consistent and philosophically correct, possesses certain advantages which even unsympathetic writers on Pantheism have to admit. It ministers moral strength to men by teaching them that God worketh in them and through them. It teaches them to rise above the good and evil of the visible and temporal world, and to yearn after eternal rest in the world of immutable being. It teaches them to sacrifice egotism and to glory in being parts and particles of God.

Another writer, Canon Liddon[2], equally non-pantheistic in his views, says as follows :—

"The great attraction and strength of Pantheism lies in the satisfaction which it professes to offer to one very deep and legitimate aspiration; it endeavours to assure man of his real union with the source of his own and universal life. It is this profound idea, this most fascinating allurement, that can alone explain the empire which, in various ages and under various forms, Pantheism has wielded in human history." After referring to the Eleatic, and Indian philosophies, to the systems of Spinoza, Schelling and Hegel, the writer proceeds to say "Pantheism often presents a noble plea that God shall not be banished by modern thought from all real contact with humanity . . . it would make men partakers of the Divine nature. And this, its religious aim, is, beyond question, a main secret of its power."

[1] E. Caird's "Evol. Gr. Theo.", Vol. 2, p. 208.

[2] "Elements of Religion," p. 46.

Yet there is a large class of Christian writers, who think that the absolute unity which Pantheists advocate is only a delusion and a dream; that it means nothing but the sacrifice or suicide of reason, the destruction of belief in a Personal God and of all the hopes and assurances attached to that belief. These writers can never remain satisfied without an extra-mundane God, in which case alone, according to them, there could be scope for Faith, Love and Hope. An Impersonal Absolute, say these writers, is something "which neither knows itself nor cares for us"!!

That unity is the logically correct conclusion deducible from the doctrine of Absolute Intelligence in Christian philosophy, is admitted by many writers like Noire, Upton and Inge, and the only reason why it becomes an article of discarded faith is that the profound ethical spirit of Christianity is, (it is said), opposed to this scientific idea, morality being possible only with self-determinism or individualism[1].

But, is philosophic truth to be sacrificed, lest its recognition might disturb the ethical ideal, shake the very foundation of religion, and result in mischievous consequences to society, assuming, for a moment, that such would be the consequences of the recognition?

It is the duty of philosophy, as has been again and again pointed out, to state the truth which can command universal acceptance. No doubt, philosophy is not to be separated from life, nor life from philosophy; while explaining the life we are actually leading, philosophy must try to *elevate* it; theology is nothing but the philosophy of religion. But truth ought not to be sacrificed to practical life; the highest truth should always be held forth as the ideal, and religious consciousness should grow unfettered on the line that will lead to it as the goal. This is what the Indian *Vedânta* has done, and herein lies the strength of Hinduism as the sequel will show.

Religion, understood in a higher sense, means a sphere in which "mind transcends its finite forms," and in this sense there can be no conflict between religion and philosophy. Religion, thus understood, indicates the regions in which all the riddles of the world are solved, all the contradictions of profounder thought illuminated, all the pains of feeling lulled to rest; *the region of eternal truth, of eternal peace.* In

[1] Noire.

its dealings with religion, the mind gets rid of all that is finite. These dealings bring it satisfaction and emancipation. Religion is a consciousness absolutely free, the consciousness of absolute truth, and so itself true consciousness[1].

But when it is said that philosophy is not religion, and that the former is for the few and the latter for the many, it evidently refers to religious life and not to theology. Religious life and conduct may vary with individual environment, but theological or theosophical truth must be the truth underlying them all.

This, then, is the correct attitude to take; when it is determined what the philosophic or highest truth is, that ought to be taken as the basic truth and ideal in life and conduct, and religious consciousness must grow in the direction and on the line of that ideal as the goal. It is no use saying that it is "consummate folly ever to hope to attain it," and thus practically shutting it out from view. We must remember that all growth means progress, and this must begin at the lowest rung of the ladder, and with individualism and empiric consciousness.

Individualism and Freedom of the Will cannot possibly be ignored in the initial stages of development; and it is only when individual consciousness in its progress is sufficiently expanded that larger views of things are possible, and a capacity is acquired to grasp spiritual truths.

The *Vedânta* is, therefore, right in saying that there is no conflict between its doctrine of *tat-twam-asi* and the ethical ideal, which Christian writers are so much in dread of losing, by the recognition of the philosophic or highest truth. *The one presupposes the other, and does not repudiate or ignore it, as is generally supposed.*

Ethics, morality, and religious life admittedly belong to the sphere of relativity—to the world of the One and Many; but they are as much necessary to the development and spiritual progress of man as the initial stages in the development of a child are to his attaining manhood. The only avenue to the realm of things spiritual is the ethical one.

Christian writers mostly take no note of these truths. As if it is an algebraic equation, they think that if Pantheism means All is

[1] Hegel, Pfleiderer's 'Phil. Rel.,' Vol. II, pp. 82-3.

One and One is All, there cannot be any distinction between Virtue and Vice, &c., and a belief in Pantheism means a license for the grossest impurities in the name of religion.

It does not occur to these writers to pause for a moment, and consider, if it is possible for any nation to deny the reality of evil in practical life, ignore the distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice, and yet continue as a nation for centuries. It never occurs to them to consider how it was that the Hindus (if such absurd doctrines prevailed among them) had been, from the most ancient times, a highly civilised nation, known for its respect for Truth and Virtue, for its readiness to forgive the evil-doer, and its sympathetic desire to relieve the needy and the oppressed.

It is unnecessary to dwell here at length on this topic, as the recent controversy about the Eastern and Western conceptions has placed, beyond dispute, the high ethical ideal of the Hindus.

If all this is true, Indian Pantheism can hardly be represented as "striking at the root of all morality and obliterating the distinction between good and evil, virtue and vice."

Nor is there any reason for supposing that the system destroys the idea of individualism, so as to exclude the sense of moral responsibility, and literally reduce everything to one dead level.

The *Vedânta*, while it holds forth Absolute Unity as the highest truth, distinctly recognises, in the sphere of Ethics and Morality, the principle of individualism as a *sine qua non* to the attainment and realisation of that truth. No individual loses his personality at least till self-realisation has ensued; he still belongs to the sphere of Relativity—the sphere of the One and Many—where the dualism of the Ego and Non-Ego of Man and Nature is fully recognised.

The *Vedânta* takes full note of these factors, and insists that, if development and evolution be the aim and end of all that has come into being, man must pass through the several stages of progress, involving his mental and moral culture, before he can expect to rise above intelligence and enter the spiritual sphere of the Absolute. A regular system has been formulated with this view, based, of course, on the philosophical ideal of *tat-twam-asi* in which moral distinctions are fully recognised.

The *Vedânta* recognises, what may be termed, *qualitative* differences between finite things, for, though *Brahma* is held to be equally immanent in all, its manifestations throughout the universe are not all alike.[1] It recognises also the distinction between the higher and lower nature of man, and says that the Self being the same as the Supreme Self is eternally free, and man can, accordingly, control his lower nature, and elevate himself to a higher stage of being, by his own voluntary action (कर्म); it teaches that man, who is by nature free and perfect, but who is temporarily subjected to an environment affecting his natural position, must strive to rise above that environment by rigorous moral discipline, realise his true nature and regain the heritage which he has, for a time, lost.

This is variously expressed by the Indian sages in terms perhaps more or less mystical; but a careful consideration of their utterances leaves no doubt that in the spiritual salvation which each one has advocated, the ethical element is uniformly and imperatively insisted on, as a condition precedent to the attainment of the end in view.[2]

And the most important part of the moral discipline that is imperatively insisted on, in every case, is that in all the actions that man will perform, in all the duties which he will be bound to discharge to other beings with whom he stands in domestic or other social relations, he must act thoroughly in a spirit of disinterestedness, without attachment, and without any desire to obtain any reward; in other words, he must do duty for duty's sake; and, lastly, he is told not only to look upon friend and foe alike, for there is no difference between his own self and the self of another, but he must even consider his enemy as himself and love him. "Cross the passes so difficult to pass; (conquer) wrath with peace, untruth with truth."[3]

[1] See *supra*.

[2] Here is a Christian writer's testimony: "Vedant declares that a righteous life and meritorious acts, though promoting godliness and preparing the heart for *Moksha* (liberation), cannot directly save. The Soul has yet to learn its Eternity and Divinity." See 'East and West' for 1906, pp. 773-774.

[3] Arka Parva, Sâma Veda.

[सेतूंस्तर दुस्तरान् अक्रोधेन क्रोधं सत्येन अनृतम्]

See also Mahâ Bhârata, Shanti Parva, 86; Manu Smriti, VI. 48, S. B. E. Vol. 25, p. 207:—

"Against an angry man let him not in return show anger, let him bless when he is cursed."

The ideal that All is One is constantly kept before man, while he is moving in this world of sense-experience, and he is told that this could be realised only *after* the ethical ideal is attained. If, therefore, he neglected his duties here and led an impure life, he could not be ripe for spiritual instruction, much less could self-realisation be possible in his case.

Thus, instead of treating the ethical ideal as the goal, the *Vedânta* considers it simply to be the means—but the absolutely necessary means—to get at the highest truth.

That such an ideal is calculated to give vitality to the religious and moral sense, there can be no doubt. To hold forth the idea of a universal community is in itself a great boon; and our immediate consciousness that we are in *Brahma*, the Eternal Reality, and *Brahma* is in us, and our feeling of the unity and identity of *Brahma* in the manifold forms of its manifestation, must assuredly give us a very exalted idea of Man's mission on earth; so that even if such an ideal be "above and beyond," we should feel that it is in striving to approximate it that our lives would have worth.

The position of the Indian *Advaitin* is that it *is* within Man's reach to realise the Indian ideal.

How far he has succeeded in vindicating that position, and whether the Indian ideal is capable of proving to be of great value will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ETHICS OF THE VEDÂNTA.[1]

In the previous chapter on Pantheism I have endeavoured to show that the ideal of *tat-twam-asi* is not at all incompatible with the ethical ideal, such as is insisted on in Christianity. The ethical ideal of the *Vedânta* is at least as high as the Christian ideal, if not higher, and occupies an important place in the Indian system.

The greatest error which many Christian writers commit (and this can never be too often repeated) consists in their ignoring the distinction which the *Vedânta* has emphasised, and which Philosophy ought always to emphasise in all its teachings, the distinction between the two kinds of knowledge—spiritual and empirical—called in the *Vedânta*, higher and lower, *Parâ* and *aparâ vidyâ*. I have already explained that the lower knowledge has reference to the world of sense experience, while the higher one is spiritual in its character. Both are recognised as essential to the development of man—one as a step to the other. But it would be absolutely unphilosophical to apply considerations, which are true in one sphere, to the other where they look obviously absurd.

Ethics and Morality admittedly belong to the world of sense-experience, having, for their object, the development of man in practical life, which necessarily presupposes the dualism of Man and Nature finding their ultimate reconciliation and explanation in the Highest Reality, by whatever name that Reality may be called.

Man's relations to that Reality and his social and other relations are all recognised, and rightly recognised, in this sphere of Relativity; all these relations reign supreme in this sphere. And it is ordained that man must first learn to do the duties which those relations imply and attain, by a course of moral discipline, the ethical ideal, before he can become fit for spiritual enlightenment.

[1] Originally contributed to the Indian Review for 1906, pp. 94-102.

In the ethical system which the *Vedânta* has formulated, it recognises a principle, which is of the highest practical importance, that though religious truth, as philosophic truth, is and must be one that can only be reached by a course of life and study leading to spiritual enlightenment, and though the religious ideals of *individuals* in a community may and do necessarily vary with the degree of general culture and aptitude for grasping spiritual truths, still, while thus differing in degree, they must have, as their basic truth, the highest ideal which is justified by Philosophy and Theology, and is capable of realisation at the highest stage.

All considerations, which introduce an element of variety in Ethics and Morality, are thus subordinated to the highest ideal of *tat-twam-asi*, as to which it is always insisted on that it must be the aim of every individual to reach it.

In this view of the matter, the *Advaita* is as practical in its religious and ethical aspects, as it is speculatively profound in its philosophy. I even venture to think that its teachings, if correctly understood, would be found to be capable of a very wide application and be of practical value as much to the king, to the statesman, to the patriot and to the citizen, as to other individuals in different walks of life. They furnish an excellent foundation for corporate political action and liberty.

The key-note to the practical ethics of the *Vedânta* is *abheda*, as the key-note to its philosophy and theology is *advaita*. As *advaita* means Oneness without a Second, so *abheda* means Oneness without any distinction of I and Thou, Mine and Thine.

This word *abheda*, when correctly understood, means Love in its purity and fulness, and the manifestation of the principle denoted by it consists in altruistic action and not in selfish inaction or passivity, as is generally supposed.

In no system has this principle of Altruism been so well appreciated and emphasised as in the Indian *Vedânta*. The entire life of the *Vedântin*, it is ordained, must be one of disinterested self-sacrifice.

This idea of sacrifice had its origin in the earliest Vedic literature, where the entire creation was explained as an act of supreme self-sacrifice—the sacrifice of the Supreme Being *Purusha*, that He might call into existence and contemplate and commune with those dependent

images of Himself, which form the object of His thought and love.[1] This He did by sacrificing a fourth part of Himself.[2] "Let me sacrifice myself (He said) in living things and all living things in myself," and He thus acquired greatness, self-effulgence and lordship.[3] He thus limited Himself by this partial sacrifice that His life might produce and sustain a multiplicity of separate lives.

What is essentially suggested by this conception is the pouring out of life for the benefit of others—a truth underlying all evolution, physical as well as spiritual.

Advaita philosophy has thus led to the ethics of Universal Love—a disinterested sacrifice of the heart in the service of all.

The principle of *abheda* teaches man that though he himself is apparently an independent individual, there is the universal principle in him, in common with all other beings,[4] which has made him what he is, and binds him to them all as parts of one organism, "as beings all moving on one wheel (of universal life)," as "jewels threaded on a string."[5]

[1] See Mândukya Up.; see also Upton's Hibbert Lectures for 1893, p. 169.

[2] See the *Purusha Sûkta*, Rig Veda, X, 90. See infra p. 184.

[3] Shatap. Brâh. XIII, 7, 1, where the great sacrifice involved in creation is beautifully described in the following terms:—"Brahman, the Self-existent, performed *tapas* (austerities). He thought 'in *tapas* there is no infinity. Come, let me sacrifice myself in living things, and all living things in myself' Then having sacrificed himself in all living things and all living things in himself, he acquired greatness, Self-effulgence and lordship."

[ब्रह्म वै स्वयंभू: तपो ऽतप्यत । तदैक्षत न वै तपस्यानन्त्यमस्ति हंत अहं भूतेषु आत्मानं जुहवानि भूतानि च आत्मनि इति । तत्सर्वेषु भूतेषु आत्मानं हुत्वा भूतानि च आत्मनि सर्वेषां भूतानां श्रैष्ठ्यं स्वाराज्यं आधिपत्यं पर्यैत् ।] See Translation 'Sanâtana Dharma,' Vol. 3, p. 126. *Cf.* also Manu Smriti, I, 22, (S. B. E. Vol. 25, p. 12) where Manu declares that *Brahma* created the 'eternal sacrifice' [यज्ञं सनातनम्] ere He drew forth the Veda. *Cf.* also Bhag. Gît. XV, 7, and especially III, 10, where Shree Krishna describes how Prajâpati having created mankind together with Sacrifice [सहयज्ञा: प्रजा: सृष्ट्वा] bade man find in sacrifice his *Kâmadhuk*, *i.e.*, the cow whence each could obtain the objects he desired.—ED.

[4] Bhag. Gît. X, 39:—"and whatsoever is the seed of all beings, that am I, oh Arjuna; nor is there Aught, moving or unmoving, that may exist bereft of me." See also Ish. Up. 6. Hegel stated the same truth when he observed:—"The comprehension of the identity of the Self with that other who is recognized as equally a Self, bound together with me in a common Social whole, is one of the instruments by which I work out my own self-comprehension . . . . When I think of M or N as in a Social world, with duties and obligations and common ties with other inhabitants of that world, then I have got to a larger and higher conception, and one at which I am above the externality of nature." See Haldane's 'Pathway', II, p. 138.—ED.

[5] Bhag. Gît., XVIII, 61, and VII, 7.

It teaches him a most important lesson that he is not a solitary being on earth, but his very existence and well-being are tied up with those of others. Wherever he may be, whether alone by himself or otherwise, he is at one with them and bound to help them as they help him. He lives *on* others, and he must in common honesty live *for* them.

Another lesson, insisted on with equal stringency, is that, while Self-sacrifice and Altruism are the guiding rule of conduct, they must be practised without any personal attachment or hope of reward. Care should always be taken that there is no tinge of egoity in either thought or deed. Duty must be done for duty's sake and dedicated to God.[1]

The practical value of Kant's categorical imperative is thus fully appreciated as a rule of conduct by the Indian *Advaitin*—whether he be a householder or a recluse[2]. Never flinching from the path of duty, one should try to gain the calm[3] which is unruffled by the gusts of fortune, and live a life of supreme joy.[4] (*Sukham uttamam.*)

The sentiments presupposed and involved in this conception of *Ábheda* are—an absence of all egoity, an absence of all distinction between friend and foe, and between Mine and Thine; an absence of all attachment to earthly possessions and earthly ties. No room is thus left for selfish passions to exercise their sway, and in their place come self-abnegation, self-contentment, renunciation, resignation, equanimity, truthfulness, sense of justice—a desire to injure none, love, compassion, forgiveness, charity, humility, and peace, which no man can take away.

In the words of Shree Krishna[5] "He who beareth no ill-will to any being, friendly and compassionate, without attachment and egoism,

[1] Bhag. Gît. IX, 27-28:—"Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou doest of austerity, Oh Kaunteya, do thou that as an offering unto Me. Thus shalt thou be liberated from the bonds of action, yielding good and evil fruits; thyself harmonized by the Yoga of renunciation, thou shalt come unto Me, when set free." *Cf. Ibid.* XVIII, 23:—"An action which is ordained, done by one undesirous of fruit, devoid of attachment, without love or hate, that is called pure." *Cf. Ibid.* III, 19, 30.—ED.

[2] *Cf.* Shankar's Introdn. to 'Ait. Up.' Madras Edn., p. 9.

[3] *Cf.* Bhag. Gît. II, 48:—"Perform action, Oh Dhananjaya, dwelling in union with the Divine, renouncing attachments, and balanced evenly in success and failure: equilibrium is called Yoga" *Cf. ibid.* II, 51; III, 7, 9, 19, 30 V, 3-11, 19-26.

[4] *Ibid.* VI, 21-27.

[5] *Ibid.* XII, 13-20.

balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, ever-content, harmonious, with the Self controlled, resolute, with mind and reason dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me. He from whom the world doth not shrink away,who doth not shrink away from the world, freed from the anxieties of joy, anger and fear, he is dear to Me. He who wants nothing, is pure, expert, passionless, untroubled, renouncing every (selfish) undertaking, he, My devotee, is dear to Me. He who neither loveth nor hateth, nor grieveth, nor desireth, renouncing good and evil, full of devotion, he is dear to Me. Alike to foe and friend, and also in fame and ignominy, alike in cold and heat, pleasures and pains, destitute of attachment, taking equally praise and reproach, silent, wholly content with what cometh, homeless, firm in mind, full of devotion, that man is dear to Me. They verily who partake of this life-giving wisdom, as taught herein, endued with faith, I their Supreme object, devotees, they are surpassingly dear to Me."

A certain amount of preparation is necessary to discipline the mind for a correct observance of this principle in practice. The most disquieting or disturbing element in human nature is the element of egoity. It is the most fruitful source of desires for self-satisfaction, and these desires bind man to things earthly, and give rise to passions when they are not satisfied.

Hence the necessity of insisting on the practice of self-denial; hence also the necessity of the teachings that nothing on earth is man's except his own thoughts and deeds, which ought always to be pure, good and great; that he should disentangle himself from sense objects; that his happiness or misery is dependent on himself alone, that he gets only what he has earned, and that, accordingly, he himself is the maker of his destiny.

He is taught that a life of self-restraint and self-surrender, with indifference to all that is "of the earth, earthly," brings in its train, the virtues mentioned above, culminating in that happiness, which the world can neither give nor take away.

These virtues have necessarily the effect of purifying the heart and making man righteous and religious. But their sphere of influence is not confined to this mundane existence; they elevate man to higher and higher planes. In every step that he takes towards the attain-

ment of these virtues, he goes through the process of "dying to live"; at every step he goes on living a larger and larger self.

He learns first to identify himself with his kith and kin, next his friends and relations, then his caste and country, and so on. In other words, he gradually goes on including within his Self the 'Selfs' of others, realising the truth that their happiness is his happiness, and their misery his own misery, and having faith in the assurance that such expansion of the Self is sure ultimately to prove to him his own identity with the Divine Self.

Such is the analysis of the sentiments involved in the conception of *Abheda* and such exactly is the ethical ideal insisted on in the *Vedânta*.

One has only to read the Bhagvat Gîta to see how wrong it is to suppose that Indian philosophers were simply soaring high in the regions of speculations and cared little for the practical concerns of life.

That little Book,—whether a Revelation or not in the sense in which orthodox Christians consider their Bible to be—is, indeed, a sacred book in the fullest sense of the term and highly deserves the reverence which is paid to it both in Europe and America.

This is what one reads in Sir Edwin Arnold's Preface to his translation of the Bhagvat Gîta:—

"In plain but noble language, it unfolds a philosophical system which remains to this day the prevailing Brahminic belief, blending as it does the doctrines of Kapila, Patanjali and the Vedas. So lofty are many of its declarations, so sublime its aspirations, so pure and tender its piety, that Schlegel, after his study of the poem, breaks forth into this outburst of delight and praise[1] towards its unknown author:—'Reverence to the great [teachers] is counted by the Brahmins among the most sacred duties of piety. Therefore, thou, Oh most holy Poet, favoured of the Deity, whatever at length thou art called among mortals, (thou) the author of this Lay, by the prophetic strains of which the mind soars to an eternal divine height, with a certain unerring pleasure to thee, foremost, I say, I offer my salutation and constant adoration to the vestiges thou hast left."

"Lassen re-echoes this splendid tribute; and, indeed, so striking are some of the moralities here inculcated and so close the parallelism

[1] The origina is in Latin.

—oftentimes actually verbal—between its teachings and those of the New Testament, that a controversy[1] has arisen between Pandits and Missionaries on the point whether the author borrowed from Christian sources or the Evangelists and Apostles from him."

Another writer, whom we all esteem as one of the truest friends of India, Mrs. Annie Besant, says of this our precious treasure as follows:—

"Among the priceless teachings that may be found in the great Hindu poem of the Mahabharata, there is none so rare and precious as this, 'The Lord's Song' . . . how many troubled hearts has it quieted and strengthened, how many weary souls has it led to [the Lord]? It is meant to lift the aspirant from the lower levels of renunciation where objects are renounced, to the loftier heights where desires are dead, and where the Yogi dwells in calm and ceaseless contemplation, while his body and mind are actively employed in discharging the duties that fall to his lot in life. That the spiritual man need not be a recluse, that union with the Divine Life may be achieved and maintained in the midst of worldly affairs, that the obstacles to that union lie not outside us but within us—such is the central lesson of Bhagvat Gita."—(Preface.)

The Gîta is at once a code of ethics, holding forth the highest spiritual ideal, a code of religion, inculcating a loving devotion to God, and a philosophy of *Advaita*, beautifully expounding the scientific truth that the dualism involved in the idea of *bhakti* begins to fade with the intensity of the devotional element, and ultimately culminates in Unity, where all differentiations must disappear with the development of the altruistic element and the complete realisation of the principle of *Abheda*.[2]

[1] See the learned introduction by Mr. (afterwards Mr. Justice) Telang to his translation of the Gîta in verse, where he conclusively proves that the Gîta is anterior to the Christian era. Of course, this view is not acceptable to the generality of Christians, who believe what they wish to be true.

[2] *Cf.* Brahma Vâdin, for 1898, pp. 135-6. It is this same old-world truth, ever fresh, that is stated by J. Caird('Phil. Rel.' p. 116) in the following terms:—What we call love is, in truth, the finding o our own life in the life of another, the losing of our individual selves to gain a larger self. And as the scope of our sympathy widens till it embraces the more complex life of the family, the nation, the race, at each successive step we are simply expanding the range of our own spiritual life, escaping farther and farther from the finitude of the individual Self and approximating more and more to a life which is unlimited and universal."—ED.

The whole ethics of the Gîta[1] may be briefly summed up thus—

(*a*) Renounce all selfish striving after earthly things, so that your thoughts and deeds may be free from the tinge of egoity, and free also from earthly desires and attachments, which arouse selfish passions and lead one astray.

(*b*) Forbear injuring any being.

(*c*) Treat all alike.

(*d*) Help the needy even at a sacrifice to yourself.

(*e*) Do all your duties in a disinterested spirit and as an offering of love to the Supreme Being, in purity of heart.

Even that unsympathetic translator of the Gîta, Mr. Thomson, has, in spite of himself, to exclaim "would that in the present selfish age and this northern active clime, it ['the sensible and religious doctrine' of the Gîta] could be applied and successfully carried out by Christians, as we call ourselves. . . .We, too, should have *our* final emancipation, our salvation ever as our only desire, and *our* Supreme Being,—so far superior, so far more lovable than the imperfect deity of the Hindu philosopher[2]. . . . ever as our chief object of love. We, too, should do our duty in this world without self-interest and attachment, and morally renounce the world in the rejection of all interest in it." (Introduction, p. cxxx.)

When such a presentment of the Indian Ethical ideal was possible, we had reasons to expect that the attitude of Christian writers generally would be one of admiration, first, because the Buddhistic ideal which is derived from that of the Indian *Vedânta* and which prac-

[1] For a general survey of the ethics of the Upanishads, see Deussen's "Phil. Up." pp. 364-395, from which a short extract may be quoted here as showing the high stage of moral life attained in those times: "Many an Indian Chieftain might make, in substance, his own the honourable testimony which Ashwapati Kaikeya bears to his subjects:—

In my Kingdom there is no thief,
No Churl, no drunkard,
None who neglects the sacrifice or the Sacred Law,
No adulterer or courtesan.

This is in keeping with the gentle humane tone, which we see adopted in the Upanishads, in the intercourse of husband and wife, father and son, teacher and student, prince and subject."

[2] Of course, to a narrow minded Christian our deity must be imperfect, and what not besides! We here are without a Divine Guide! There is only one unerring Preceptor (p. 90) and with that only Christians have been blessed! So none of the other children of God in the world dare claim any Divine guide among their own people, and Mr. Thomson warns his readers that no more praise should be accorded to the author of the Gîta than is due "to a clever reformer and a wise ethical philosopher." (Introduction, cxxx.)

tically is identical with it[1] has become attractive to the Western mind; and, secondly, because of the "strong parallelism—oftentimes actually verbal," between the teachings of the Gîta and those of the New Testament.

But, unfortunately, objections have been seriously made to our ideal, and others, too, are possible, of a character similar to what Christian writers are wont to take to the Stoic standard of morality.

It might, for instance, be objected that this ideal is too high and impracticable, or that it is too cold and unemotional, there being an utter absence of religious fervour; it might be said that it improperly advocates indifference to family ties and to matters concerning the practical life of man, that it discourages the virtue of patriotism, and leads to a life of Quietism, based upon a pessimistic view of nature and, as such, is of no practical value at all.

The first of these objections has been taken to Stoicism, which is much akin to the Indian system in this respect. It is said that the ideal is one of "unapproachable perfection," "unpractical and even impracticable," and that if any one professed himself to have realised it, he would justly expose himself to ridicule.

This is not a matter on which any argument could be usefully employed. Whether such a life as is portrayed in the Bhagvat Gîta and other sacred writings of the Hindus is possible, can be best answered by another question whether such a life has, as a matter of fact, been lived or no; and if the answer to this last question be in the affirmative, that ought to settle the other question. The Indian literature—both ancient and modern —teems with instances of complete self-sacrifice and devotion to truth and justice under the most trying circumstances. And I feel "washed in better moral air" in mentioning, with reverence, the names, for example, of Bali, Janaka, Râma, Harischandra, Bharat, Bhîshma and Karna, of Chaitanya, Kabir, Nânak, Guru Govind, Janârdan, Eknâtha, Râmdas and Tukàram, and referring generally to other saints who flourished between the 12th and 18th centuries of the Christian era.

[1] No doubt Buddhism is less metaphysical and less mystical, but this makes no difference in the *practical* ethics of the two systems.

Even in the present degenerate age, instances of saintly characters would not be found wanting,[1] I expect, if one were to take the trouble of travelling in India, as Count Tolstoy did in his part of the country, in search of instances of Christ-life actually lived.

"The best fruits of religious experience (says Professor James[2]) are the best things that history has to show. [To recount them], to call to mind a succession of such examples [of genuinely strenuous and religious life] is to feel encouraged and washed in better moral air. The spirit of piety and charity, . . . of love and humility, . . .of severity for one's self, accompanied with tenderness for others—[these] have the same savour in all countries under distant suns and in different surroundings.....These devotees have often laid their course so differently from other men, that, judging them by worldly law, we might be tempted to call them monstrous aberrations from the paths of nature."

Here, then, are instances of saintly characters having, as a fact, actually lived such a life as is portrayed in the highest ethical ideals.

Turning now to the teachings of the Bible itself, we find Jesus telling his disciples, 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'; and Mr. Clifford Harrison[3] observes, "If the great words of Jesus of Nazareth are true, true on all planes, as such words of such a speaker must ever be, an ideal for the whole entity of man is proclaimed in them, nothing short of perfection . . . . *If man once realises his present state and has faith in what the Great Ones of the world have told him and will put it into action, the advance lies before him.*"

The undisputed fact that such lives have been lived in the past, and are being lived now—lives which are individual cases of the faith received and the will exercised into triumphant expression[4]—tells us that we need not fear to take for our ideal the highest possibilities that can be announced to Man, nor call them impracticable, because his present condition seems so far removed from them. The first step out of that condition is the admission that it is not final.

[1] The instance of Râmakrishna Paramhansa of Bengal may be mentioned as one that readily suggests itself in this connection.—ED.

[2] "Varieties of Religious Experience," pp. 259-261.

[3] "Notes on the Margins," pp. 214-5.

[4] *Ibid. cf.* Trines 'What all the world's a—seeking,' p. 8: the fact that really great, true, and happy lives have been lived in the past and are being lived to-day gives us our starting point [in the pursuit of true happiness].—ED.

'We are near waking when we dream that we dream.'[1] We have here the assurance of Emerson that the longing of a soul is the prophecy of its fulfilment.

As to the second objection above noted, it is generally supposed that the idea of Divine Love is unknown to the Indian *Vedânta* and that the ideal it presents is too severely abstract to touch the heart and the imagination.

"Having convinced himself by rigorous logic of his oneness with *Brahma*, the *Vedântin* (says Max Müller) knows no raptures and no passionate love for the Deity."

In other words, rapturous devotion (*premal bhakti*) is said to be an idea of modern growth.

If the *Advaitin* is taught that he is one with *Brahma*, if it is also said that, among the aims of self-realisation in this life, Universal Love is one,[2] it is obviously wrong to suppose that he has no love for *Brahma*, unless one is prepared to say of him that he does not love himself. In fact, unflinching devotion is laid down as one of the necessary means of acquiring a knowledge of *Brahma*,[3] and of one's identity[4] with It.

But says Professor Upton :—

"Both in Brahminism and Buddhism, man's ethical ideal is not regarded as a real revelation of the essence and character of the Eternal Self; for, in their view, the *end* of Ethics is not to realise in increasing fulness a sense of *personal relationship* to the Divine Self or the Father within us, but either to so fuse the human self with the Eternal Brahma as to virtually destroy all distinct sense of individual personality, or else, as in the case of Buddhism, to achieve that total extinguishing of the desire to live which appears to be equivalent to personal annihilation. The tendency of these systems of Hindu thought is to weaken and efface all personal passions and affections and so to destroy that distinct consciousness of individuality which,

[1] 'Notes on the Margins,' p. 210.

[2] See "Jivan-Mukti-viveka."

[3] Bhag. Git. XIII, 11 :—"Unflinching devotion to Me, by Yoga, without other objects."

[4] *Ibid.* XIII, 11-34 *cf.* Swâmi Vivekânanda's "Râja Yoga," pp. 54-55.

in their view, was not a privilege but rather an undesirable condition from which they sought redemption."[1]

I have quoted this page *in extenso*, for it fairly represents the views generally entertained by Christian writers on Indian *Vedânta* and Indian Theology.

The whole of this passage, however, is misleading, and the error consists in the confusion of the two standpoints, which the *Vedânta*, again and again, insists on being always borne in mind—I mean the moral and spiritual—the standpoint of the individual who is moving in this world of relativity and the other, the standpoint of the Absolute, where all relations lose their significance in the One Eternal Life.

To those who cannot transcend the former, the relation of a devotee to his God is the highest fact in their religious experience, and this is no doubt the experience of the large majority. In their case there is no effacement, at all, of either the individual ego, or of the passions and affections of the devotee.

But as to the philosopher in search of the highest verity, his philosophic sense tells him that the highest ethical ideal is but a means for

[1] Hibbert Lectures, 1893, pp. 241-2.

It is surprising that such an erroneous conception still continues to dominate the mind of Western writers, when the Bhag. Gîta alone, not to speak of less accessible writings, furnishes enough proof to the contrary. A few passages may as well be referred to here, by way of illustration.

Bhag. Gît. III, 25:—which enjoins that the wise man *should act*, as much as the ignorant, but without attachment, *for the welfare of the* world.

V, 25:—Even a Rishi, whose sin is destroyed, whose duality removed, whose self is controlled, should be *intent on the welfare of all beings*, if he seeks to obtain the Peace of the *Eternal*.

XI, 55:—He who *doeth actions* for Me . . . . . without *hatred of any being*, . . freed from attachment, he cometh unto Me.

XII, 4:—He that *is devoted to the welfare of all*, comes unto Me.

XII, 15:—He, from whom the world doth not shrink away, and *who doth not shrink away from the world* . . . . is dear to Me.

XVIIII, 45:—Man reacheth perfection by *each being intent on his own duty*.

III, 19:—Therefore, without attachment, *constantly perform action which is duty*, for, *by performing action without attachment, man verily reacheth the Supreme*.

III, 20:—Janaka and others indeed *attained to perfection by action: then having an eye to the welfare of the world also, thou shouldst perform action*.

III, 4:—*Man winneth not freedom from action by abstaining from activity*, nor *by renunciation doth he rise to perfection*.

III, 5:—Nor can any one, *even for an instant*, remain really actionless.

III, 8:—*Perform* then *right action*, for *action is superior to inaction*, and, inactive, even the maintenance of thy body would not be possible.

III, 9:—The world is bound by action, ... for that sake [*i.e.* for sacrifice] free from attachment . . perform thou action.

II, 37-38, which indicates the burden of the Gîta, in the words "Stand up . . . resolute, to fight, taking, as equal, pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, gird thee for the battle." *Cf.* also XII, 18; XIII, 8 and 9.

the attainment of something still higher. Where man has begun to realise, in increasing fulness, a sense of personal relationship to the Divine Self, where is this to culminate, if such culmination be ever possible, if not in a complete self-surrender of his own personality?

Is this "fusion of the human self with the Divine Self" to be condemned as virtually destroying all distinct sense of individual personality? If Love means the feeling and consciousness of identity, "I in thee and thou in me," if love is implied in our desire to realise unity, is not that love the greatest and truest, when the lover entirely forgets himself to *become* the beloved[1]?

In other words, is not the progressive self-surrender to the immanent and self-revealing Divine Being pre-supposed as an accomplished fact in one who has reached the highest ethical ideal; and what value would such an one, at that stage, attach to his individual personality? Are his passions and affections weakened and effaced or purified and ennobled? Why did Jesus teach man to deny himself, to hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yea, his own life also? What is the meaning of the Christian saying "He that *loses* life shall *have* it"? Are not the same sentiments re-echoed by Christian divines? "The Self, the I, the me, and the like, all belong to the Evil Spirit . . . . Be simply and wholly bereft of Self.[2]"

The Bishop of Ripon, in the *Hibbert Journal*, for April 1905, writes:—

"Christ is born, and the Christ-spirit must be formed in men; Christ dies, and so *the self in man must be crucified*, for how can love live alongside the life of Self? Christ rises, and the true Self is only found *when the old self has been crucified.*[3] Is there no virtual destruction of all distinct sense of individual personality in any of the above utterances?

[1] This sentiment is beautifully expressed by Chaitanya, the Bengali Saint, as follows:—

"Four eyes met. There were changes in two Souls.
And now I cannot remember whether he is a man
And I a woman, or he a woman and I a man.
All I know is, there were two, love came, and there is one."

Quoted in Brahmavâdin for 1906, p. 358.

[2] 'Theol. Germ., p. 73.

[3] The italics in the above passage are the author's. It is gratifying to find that Christian theologians are willing now to interpret the Christian dogma by sentiments like those which the *Vedânta* has always entertained. The Supreme self-surrender, the Neo-platonic idea of the Logos, God's descent unto him and love for him, the Crucifixion of Jesus, that is, of the lower egohood in man, his Resurrection or the rise of the Christ, that is, of the true Self in him, and his

It may at once be conceded,[1] however, that *passionate* love there may not be at a stage which pre-supposes the possession of true knowledge (Gnosis, ज्ञान) but love it certainly is,—only ennobled by ज्ञान, by which is understood spiritual enlightenment. It is spiritual, but it is none the less love, nor is it less intense, because there is no display of emotion in it. "Love must be guided and taught of knowledge . . . This love so maketh a man one with God that he can never more be separated from Him."[2] It is Love in its purity and fulness.

Devotional or what is called emotional Love is considered by the *Vedânta* as a means of acquiring spiritual knowledge.[3] And there cannot be the slightest doubt that devotion, practised in the attitude and under the conditions prescribed in that behalf, must bring in spiritual enlightenment and ultimately, of a surety, lead to salvation.[4]

ascension or union with Godhead—all these become intelligible when thus interpreted. It is interesting to note, in this connexion, what Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, a missionary preacher who came out to India on a lecturing tour, said in his lecture on Mysticism. After paying a compliment to the profundity of Indian thought, and referring to a Sinhalese student at Oxford who had told him that he could understand the Bible because it was a truly oriental book, containing the thought and life of the East, the learned Doctor proceeded to observe, "I was much struck with this remark of my friend, especially because since visiting the East four years ago, and coming, in sweet affection, near to the mode of thinking and feeling that governs Eastern minds and hearts, I have read my Bible with new intelligence and fresh delight." See 'Advocate of India', 8th January 1907.

[1] In this connexion, it is interesting to read the views of Rabindranath Tagore, in his "Sâdhana," pp. 16-18, where that eminent poet and philosopher says: "Some modern philosophers of Europe, who are directly or indirectly indebted to the Upanishads, far from realizing their debt, maintain that the Brahma of India is a mere abstraction, a negation of all that is in the world. In a word, that the Infinite Being is to be found nowhere except in metaphysics. It may be that such a doctrine has been and still is prevalent with a section of our countrymen. But this is certainly not in accord with the pervading spirit of the Indian mind. Instead, it is the practice of realizing and affirming the presence of the Infinite, in all things, which has been its constant inspiration. We are enjoined to see *whatever there is in the world as being enveloped by God.*

I bow to God over and over again who is in fire and in water, who permeates the whole world, who is in the annual crops as well as in the perennial trees.

Can this be God abstracted from the world? Instead, it signifies not merely seeing Him in all things, but saluting Him in all the objects of the world. The attitude of the God-conscious man of the Upanishads towards the universe is one of a deep feeling of adoration. His object of worship is present everywhere. It is the one living truth that makes all realities true. This truth is not only of knowledge but of devotion. "*Namo namah,*" we bow to Him everywhere, and *over and over again.* It is recognised in the outburst of the Rishi, who addresses the whole world in a sudden ecstacy of joy: *Listen to me, Ye sons of the immortal Spirit, Ye who live in the heavenly abode, I have known the Supreme Person, whose light shines forth from beyond the darkness.* Do we not find the overwhelming delight of a direct and positive experience, where there is not the least trace of vagueness or passivity?"—ED.

[2] 'Theol. Germ.,' p. 159.

[3] Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Git. XIII, 10.

See *e.g.* Bhag Git., Ch. XII.

Nor is our belief in such salvation a vain one. "The Gîta (says Barnett) has a gospel to deliver, telling of a consecration of life's every work to the selfless service of God, and an Infinite Love that, at every place and every time, pours forth its illimitable grace to all that seek after it."

The next objection noticed above has reference to the indifference which the *Vedânta* advocates to things earthly, to earthly attachments, etc.

It is said that a philosophy or theology which insists on the abandonment of all earthly concerns, on the killing of all passions and desires, for the purpose of obtaining union with God, simply means an attempt to go empty-handed into an empty house, to be there left as it were alone with God without any world to mediate between the two, with the result that in the ecstatic vision of the Absolute the light of reason is extinguished. This is what Dr. Edward Caird has said of the Stoic system.

We in India also consider it a true and a noble lesson that nothing on earth is ours except our own thoughts and deeds, which we carry with us; that all things pertaining to our empiric consciousness are transient and ephemeral—wealth, fame, honors, even our domestic affections and bonds of friendship—that all these have, no doubt, their limited aims and ends, and serve as steps in our progressive development and enlightenment; but for higher and spiritual ends they have to be left behind.

No doubt, too, we insist on the practice of self-denial.

The question however is whether, in doing so, we strip ourselves of all that we had, and try to reach an abstract emptiness, deluding ourselves into the belief that we have attained the goal, or that we are possibly on the way to it, when in reality we are only in a state of spiritual nudity and physical nothingness.

If spiritual enlightenment pre-supposes the transcendence of the ethical standpoint as an accomplished fact, if man at this stage has already transcended the world of sense-experience, if, at this stage, as Fichte says, all wrappings disappear and the world passes away for him with her dead principle,[1] or if, as Shankar says, the world ap-

[1] See *supra* Chap. 4, and *cf.* Ved. Sutr. III, 2, 21 S. B. E. Vol. 38, p. 163.

pears as melting away like the imagery of a dream, of what value is the mediation of such a world at that highest stage? Of what value is a toy-elephant to one who understands that it is only a toy? Of what value is a diagram (and that too an inaccurate one) to one who is face to face with the original Reality?

Again, what is the meaning of the remark that "the light of reason is extinguished?" The question here raised can only be answered with the help of what Principal John Caird terms 'the hidden logic of a spiritual process.' If what the learned Master of Balliol calls reason is extinguished, he may be assured that something better and nobler is acquired in this process of transformation. But why assume the extinction of reason, when it is admitted that nothing is annihilated in the process of development, but all is assimilation and transformation? Why not say that the potential universality of reason becomes a realised and accentuated fact in such a case?

Similarly, as to Passions and Desires, when the *Vedânta* advocates Self-denial as a virtue, it does not ask us to destroy the senses or the sense-objects, but to keep the senses under proper control, while moving among sense-objects.[1] Nor are we asked to demolish all the desires, as is popularly believed; for this is impossible in the very nature of things. To demolish all desires would mean the cessation of all activity, which is absolutely impossible.[2]

No doubt, the senses are described as very powerful, trying impetuously to carry away the heart of even a prudent man who strives to restrain them.[3] No doubt, also, that desires and passions are said to be the greatest enemies of man.[4]

But all these are a part of our nature, though only a perverted part, and cannot be eradicated or plucked out as thorns in one's body. They are not at peace with man, it is true, yet they cannot part com-

[1] Bhag. Git. II, 64:—"But the disciplined Self, moving among sense-objects, with senses free from attraction and repulsion, mastered by the Self, goeth to peace."

[2] *Ibid.* III, 4-7:—"Man winneth not freedom from action by abstaining from activity, nor by mere renunciation doth he rise to perfection. Nor can any one, even for an instant, remain really actionless; for helplessly is every one driven to action by the qualities born of nature," etc., etc.

[3] *Ibid.* II, 60.

[4] Bhag. Git. III, 37-39:—"It is desire, it is wrath, begotten by the quality of motion; all—consuming, all—polluting, know now this as our foe here on earth," etc. etc.

pany and virtue consists in man's victory over them, not by killing, but by *converting* these enemies into friends.

In other words, what is meant is, that what constitutes the lower nature of man should be made to do higher and nobler work. As was well said by a celebrated poet, let the object of *Kâma* (desire) be devotion to God, let *Krodha* (anger) be employed to control the senses, etc., and when so employed, they are purified and idealised by being made the natural basis of a higher spiritual satisfaction; they are brought in harmony with the self and assimilated with it. This is exactly the idea which the Bhagvat Gîta means to convey.

"Let him raise the self by the Self, and not let the self become depressed; for verily is the Self the friend of the self, and also the Self the self's enemy. The Self is the friend of the self of him in whom the self by the Self is vanquished; but to the unsubdued self, the Self verily becometh hostile as an enemy."[1]

Even the utterances of Shankar, the greatest *Advaitin*, may well be referred to as showing what, according to him also, is meant by the "raising of the self by the Self."

It is the *manas* which creates objects of desire, and gives rise to egoity and attachment to things earthly, and these make man a ceaseless wanderer in this phenomenal world, *Sansâra*. The pursuit of external objects being checked, evil desires are subjugated, tranquillity of the mind thus results, and thence arises the vision of the *Paramât-man*. Purify, therefore, the mind and strengthen it for its fitness for *mukti*, liberation. This is attainable by the performance of one's duties and this world would then be, to such an one, as naught.[2]

But why should the indifference advocated in the Indian systems to earthly attachments meet with no sympathetic response from modern Western thought? Is it in any degree worse than the indifference advocated in the sacred writings of Christianity and by Christian saints in the name of Jesus?

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself . . . and follow Me" (Matt. XVI. 24). "If he hate not his father and mother and wife and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke, XIV. 26.)

[1] Bhag. Gît. VI, 5-6. [2] Viveka Chûdâmani.

"So long as a man clingeth unto the elements and fragments of this world, (and, above all, to himself) and holdeth converse with them, and maketh great account of them, he is deceived and blinded."[1]

"A man must begin by denying himself and willingly forsaking all things for God's sake.... He who will have the one, must let the other go.''[2]

"Eschew bodily pleasures and rest in Me alone. . . Desire to despise thyself, break thy appetites, and crush out all thy pleasures and desires." (Suso) "Disengage thyself so completely from all creatures in all things which might hinder thine eternal salvation . . . There is no other way, however hard this may appear . . We must divest ourselves of external occupations and establish ourselves in a tranquil stillness of soul by an energetic resignation, as if we were dead to self and thought only of the honor of Christ and his heavenly Father."[3]

It is difficult for Christian writers to escape the criticism which they are pleased so freely to pass on others. Mr. Thomson, who has translated the Bhagvat Gita, feels that some of the passages above quoted come "from the mouth of the only unerring preceptor," meaning Jesus Christ, and he explains in his note to B. G. XIII.-9., where similar sentiments (but couched in much milder language), occur, that such passages should not be construed literally; "they only mean that where one's salvation requires it, even the nearest earthly ties must be disregarded."[4]

This explanation is only superficial. The meaning of such teachings involving indifference to family ties, to earthly attachments and objects, lies much deeper. When a person has learnt the lesson of "dying to live," his self in the process goes on becoming larger and larger and in the end it includes within itself the selfs of all other beings. The individual identifies himself with all. With him numanity is a big brotherhood, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, so that the particular relationships of father, mother, &c., fall in the shade; there is here exclusion of the relations *as such*, no doubt, but there is their inclusion in the larger whole. He dies to them as he dies to himself, to live a larger self. He thus rises above all considerations

[1] 'Theol. Germ.,' p. 66.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 45, 46.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Thomson's Bhag. Git. p. 90.

connected with the mere *personality* of those around him, and so is free from all the injustice and partiality which ordinary love so often brings in its train.

This is what the *Vedânta* means when it desires the extinction of the *Ahamvritti* (egoity); what is aimed at is not the destruction but the elevation or transformation of the individual Self which brings with it the spiritual capacity of looking upon all alike[1], *Samadrishti*. It means the expansion[2] of the Self to become the Self of all. There is no "emptiness" in such a conception, where the Self is conceived as becoming, in the course of its development, so far expanded as to embrace within it the 'selfs' of all beings. The language of one who has reached this stage, says Vasishtha, is :—

"Self fills the whole universe . . . within, without, below, above, everywhere all is Self, here and there ; there is no Not-Self anywhere . . . There is nothing which is not in me. What should I desire, when the whole world is one web of Universal Consciousness."[3]

"He who knows (says Shankar[4]) the Oneness of the Self has no desires, because for him there is no object to be desired ; as his *Âtman* is himself, he cannot desire it. The being centred in Self is emancipation. This proceeds from [spiritual] knowledge alone . . No doubt the variety of *Karma* prescribed in the Shastras are useful as aids to knowledge."

It is interesting to read the following description of the Indian Sage given in the Mahâbhârata :

"He who behaves towards all creatures as if he is their kinsman, who has acquired the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, who is free from all passions and is absorbed in the knowledge of the Self, he who is compassionate, whom all creatures have ceased to fear, who abstains from injuring others in thought, speech or deed, he who is free from

[1] Bhag. Git. II, 54-71.

[2] I have advisedly adopted the above mode of expression to make my meaning intelligible to those who are not *Advaitins*. From the *Advaita* point of view, it is not the Self that is expanded, for the Self is eternal and changeless ; the expansion here referred to means the gradual removal of the veil of Nescience.

[3] Jivan Mukti Viveka, Ânandâshram Series, 1901 Edn. p 85 :—
आत्मनापूरितं विश्वं महाकल्पाम्बुना यथा ॥
सबाह्याभ्यंतरे देहे ह्यध ऊर्ध्वंच दिक्षुच ।
इत आत्मा तथेहा ऽऽत्मा नास्त्यनात्ममयं जगत् ॥
न तदस्ति न यन्नाहं न तदस्ति न यन् मयि ।
किमन्यदभिवाञ्छामि सर्वं संविन्मयं ततम् ॥

[4] Taitt. Up. I, 12, 1. Ânand. Series, No. 12, pp. 33-35.

the bondage of desire, he into whose mind all sorts of desires enter like diverse streams falling into the ocean without being able to transcend its limits by their discharge—it is such an one who gains Peace—not he who cherishes desires for earthly objects."

And those who have studied the psychic constitution of man tell us that the powers of such a personage become so far developed that, while they are far-reaching, they are also so tender and sensitive, that they are capable of responding to every thrill in the outside universe. The person, who has reached this degree of enlightenment, feels and answers to everything, and just because he desires nothing for himself is able to give everything to all. Such an one, it is said, becomes more and more a channel of Divine Life to the world ; he asks nothing save to be a channel, with wider and wider bed, along which the great Life may flow, and his only wish is that he may become a larger and larger vessel with less of obstacle in himself to hinder the outward pouring of the Life, working for nothing save to be of service.[1]

So, too, says Shankar in Viveka Chûdâmani :—

"The great and peaceful ones live regenerating the world like the coming of spring ; and after having crossed the ocean of embodied existence, help those who try to do the same thing, without personal motives. It is the innate character of the great ones to remove the sufferings of others, as it is the character of the moon to allay the pains of those who are suffering from the intense heat of the sun."

Every great man is a living power, an impressive personality, even while living in one country or clime, he is in a sense, everywhere, (शरीरैष्वशरीरेषु परिछिन्नोपि सर्वग :) (Shankar), and his influence on mankind continues even when he is physically dead.

"Such men (says Dr. E. Caird[2]) seem still to grow beyond the end which hides them from our eyes . . . The great man in his lifetime stands before his contemporaries as an external image of excellence which may, indeed, awaken a new spirit in those who are able, even partially, to appreciate it ; but when the outward presence is removed, the awakened spirit reproduces the inmost reality of fact in an idealised vision, which is truer than anything seen with the eyes of sense

[1] Annie Besant's 'Karma', p. 69. also Tiele and D'Alviella.
[2] "Evol. Rel." Vol. 2, p. 227. See

. . . and this new idealised image in turn re-acts in further developments of the same spiritual energy which produced it."

And why is it that such men command such an influence over people among whom their lot is cast ? What is it that makes them the pioneers of religious movements ? It is the *life they live* ; it is the spiritual light which shines forth through their life, which directly touches the vision and pierces the heart of every man who comes within its all embracing[1] radiance. Their very presence changes sorrow into joy, fear into courage, despair into hope, weakness into power.[2]

Inspired with the Divine Spirit, full of the Infinite *Âtman* and *Âtman* alone, endowed with a vision which pierces through things visible to things invisible, realising the Infinite everywhere in this finite existence, these men live the life of the Infinite, and what they think, will and act is what the Infinite thinks, wills and acts through them.[3] They embrace within their fold the universe and all that is contained within it. It is this life which makes their impressive personality a living one ; it is these who have really conquered death.

It is these who, though they may appear to be doing little, in reality do much—much that is good and noble and of everlasting interest. In India the Upanishads, Aranyakas, and many other writings are a living monument of the work done by such choice specimens of humanity.[4]

Such is the ideal of the Indian Sage, and the Asceticism of the Indian *Vedânta* is no other than what the sage's life represents.

But, unfortunately, as said of the Greek Cynics, many sturdy beggars and ill-conditioned vagrants take up, as a convenient disguise, the ascetic's staff and mantle and bring into disrepute the entire scheme of Hindu society and with it the wisdom that has planned that scheme.

[1] *Cf.* Swami Vivekânanda's 'Raja Yoga', p. 41.

[2] See Jivan Mukti Viveka. *Cf.* Patanjali Yoga Sutras, II, 35 :— "in his vicinity all living beings give up their everlasting hostilities [तत्संनिधौ वैरत्यागः] and *cf.* Vivekânanda's note on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, II, 19, at pp. 166-7 of his "Raja Yoga."

[3] *Cf.* Tiele.

[4] *Cf.* Deussen's "Phil. Up." pp. 17-22.

CHAPTER VIII.

INDIAN ASCETICISM.[1]

In the previous chapter on "The Ethics of the *Vedânta*," I gave some idea of an Indian Sage, and stated that Indian asceticism meant nothing more than what the Sage's life represented.

There is undoubtedly a good deal of misconception about Indian asceticism, and this misconception is due partly to the degenerated form in which it is at present observable in practice and partly to the garbled accounts of unsympathetic and prejudiced writers, who offer themselves as authorities on this question.

These writers invariably associate with asceticism the ideas of mortification of the flesh and retirement into solitude with no really noble end in view. The Indian ascetic is always represented as a person who renounces the world as a pessimist and seeks refuge in a jungle from the vicissitudes of life, as a discontented soul, and ekes out his existence there, doing nothing really useful. He is sometimes described as "a bundle of negations."

This is not the correct view of Indian asceticism. The Hindu system, in its pristine purity, did not enjoin either mortification of the flesh or bare retirement into solitude, any more than Christianity in its pristine form did.

The Indian ascetic is called a *tapasvin*, *sanyâsin* or *yogin*, none of which words connotes the notions so freely accredited to Indian asceticism by foreign writers.

The term *tapas* (which is generally translated as mortification of the flesh) is to be found in the Rig-Veda; it literally means 'glow, burning,' and was suggestive of spiritual enlightenment about to culminate in self-realisation. If I might borrow an expression, it signified "the putting on of the vesture of glory" preparatory to

[1] Originally contributed to the 'Indian Review' for 1906, pp. 258-264.

"union with *Brahma*"—somewhat like the Christian conceptions of Crucifixion and Ascension in Esoteric Christianity. It signified the Crucifixion, so to speak, of the lower self and re-appearance in the higher self.

The word *tapas*, no doubt, presupposed self-denial or proper control over mind and body, but the idea associated with it of mortification by "the burning heat and bodily austerity" is highly suggestive of degenerate asceticism.

The cruel practice of mortification of the flesh was a species of fanaticism, which was always denounced as most reprehensible. Says the Bhagvat Gîta[1]:—

"The men who perform severe austerities unenjoined by the Scriptures, wedded to vanity and egoism, impelled by the force of their desires and passions, unintelligent, tormenting the aggregated elements forming the body, and Me also seated in the inner body, know these demoniacal in their resolves."

For a correct idea of *tapas*, one might refer to the Bhagvat Gîta,[2] which says as follows:—

"Worship given to the Shining Ones, to the twiceborn, to the Teachers, and to the wise, purity, straightforwardness, continence and harmlessness, are called the austerity (*tapas*) of the body. Speech causing no annoyance, truthful, pleasant and beneficial, the practice of the study of the Scriptures, are called the austerity (*tapas*) of Speech. Mental happiness, equilibrium, silence, selfcontrol, purity of nature—this is called the austerity (*tapas*) of the mind."

This shows that even in the times of the Bhagvat Gîta, *tapas* conveyed the notions of saintly life, purity, chastity, harmlessness, and generally all acts amounting to conduct, gentle, good and virtuous, in thought, word and deed. Buddha himself approved of this species of asceticism, while he condemned in no measured terms what the Gîta also had condemned before him.

It is not mortification of the flesh (says Bhîshma to Yudhishtir) that constitutes a true penance. It is truthfulness of speech, bene-

[1] XVII, 5-6. [2] XVII, 14-16.

volence, compassion, and abstention from injury to others, which are regarded by the wise as true penances.[1]

Then as to *sannyâsa* we find that divided into two classes, *viz.*, the *vidwat sannyâsa* (the renunciation of the Wise) and the *vividishâ sannyâsa* (विविदिषा संन्यास), the renunciation enjoined on householders and others, who are not yet prepared absolutely to renounce all earthly considerations and their social and domestic ties.

But into neither of these two divisions does the idea of mortification of the flesh enter. The Jîvan-Mukti-Viveka—a work, written, according to Professor Dvivedi, in the fourteenth century,—says not a word about mortification of the flesh as one of the duties of a *sannyâsin*—high or low.

Nor is it mentioned in any of the recognised works on Yoga. The whole practice of Yoga breathes a spirit of moderation in exercise, such as may, instead of causing bodily pain and distraction of attention, be helpful to concentration of the mind and a proper meditation on the *Âtman*. A Yogin, says Shree Krishna, must always avoid the two extremes of excess and abstinence.

"Verily Yoga is not for him who eateth too much, nor who abstaineth to excess, nor who is too much addicted to sleep, nor even to wakefulness, Oh Arjuna, Yoga killeth out all pain for him who is *regulated* in eating and amusement, *regulated* in performing actions, *regulated* in sleeping and waking."[2]

The truth is that all the rigorous practices involving mortification of the flesh, etc., belong to what is called *hatha yoga*—resorted to by the uncultured, in the belief that it leads to the acquisition of extraordinary powers, called *siddhis*. But this practice has been always severely condemned by all right-minded thinkers.[3] The author of the *Jîvan-Mukti-Viveka* says that the ascetic who thus occupies himself "swerves away from the real aim of existence.[4]" He is a false *Paramahansa* and, instead of being a knower of *Brahma*, becomes, as it

[1] Mahâbhârat.

[2] Bhag. Git. VI, 16-17.

[3] See, in this connexion, 'Shatapatha Brahmana,' 'Hatha Pradîpikâ,' and 'Mârkandeya Purâna,' quoted by Prof. Dvivedi in the note to Ch. VI of his translation of the Bhag. Git.

[4] "ततः परमपुरुषार्थाद् भ्रष्टो भवति"

were, "a killer[1] of *Brahma*;" and he is beyond the pale of all religion and intercourse.[2]

On the other hand, a *Vidwat sannyâsin* is described as "becoming delightfully satisfied in the fulfilment of all duties, self-realisation of the truth, 'I am Brahma,' the eternal source of all transcendental bliss."[3]

It is only *Râja Yoga* that is countenanced and recommended, and here what is said about the life of the *yogin* is that it is one of self-sacrifice, that is, of a sacrifice of the heart by self-surrender and self-abnegation, for the good of others. Shree Krishna repeatedly lays it down in the Bhagwat Gîta that a life of inaction, in retirement or otherwise, should never be the ideal of a genuine *Yogin* or *Sannyâsin*. For instance in VI. 1, he says, "he that *performeth such action as is duty*, independently of the fruit of action, *he* is an ascetic.....(*Sannyâsin*), *he* is a *Yogin*, not he who has given up the fire-sacrifice and kindred rites." While defining the term *Yoga* itself, so as to guard against perhaps a common popular misconception even then prevailing, Shree Krishna says, in the clearest terms possible, that *Yoga* is '*to excel in action*[4]' remaining 'in perfect equilibrium.'[5]

As to retirement into solitude, it may be stated that the scheme of life as conceived by the Hindu Scriptures, no doubt, ordains the same, but it must be remembered that such a step is recommended only at the stage when the social and domestic duties of life in the midst of one's fellowmen have been fully discharged; and one is ushered on the stage when the higher problems of life and existence demand one's attention and crave for a solution. When such a stage has been reached, it is enjoined that one has, as a first step, to seek congenial surroundings in the solitude of a forest or mountain, the cathedrals and the retreats of nature as they have aptly been described, and there, free from the distractions of domestic and social worry, and even of personal pleasure and pain, devote oneself to the study of philosophy, that further research into the same may be

[1] 'ब्रह्महा'

[2] 'सर्वधर्मबहिष्कृत :'

[3] 'यत् पूर्णानन्दबोधः तद् ब्रह्माहमस्मीति कृतकृत्यो भवति'

[4] *Bhag. Gît.* II, 50 :—
'योग : कर्मसु कौशलम्'

[5] *Ibid.* II. 48 :—
'समत्वं योग उच्यते'

carried on, for the glory of God and the enlightenment of humanity. It was to be a life of a vigorous pursuit of truth, not a life of inaction, not even a *dolce far niente*.

What valuable work the ancient sages were able to accomplish in such an atmosphere of serene thought, what colossal heights of bold metaphysical speculation they could scale, has been amply evidenced by the Upanishad and *Âranyaka* (forest-composed) literature of ancient India. Verily a life devoted to the discovery of the sublime truths which have conveyed and do still convey solace to disconsolate and erring humanity, can never be described as a life of useless inaction.

At the same time, it must be borne in mind that if any one ventured on this step of retirement *before* having fulfilled the duties attached to his station in life, and before having passed through a proper course of moral discipline and become fit for spiritual enlightenment, he was liable, as a rule, to be condemned as a hypocrite, just as a false *tathâgata* would be, in the Buddhistic system; for no man could become a *sannyâsin* or *yogin* merely by abandoning his duties and retiring into solitude. In every true *sannyâsa*, the first essential is the performance of one's duties in a spirit of devotion and complete selflessness[1].

It must, no doubt, be admitted that passages do frequently occur in Hindu sacred writings to the effect that the highest stage of spiritual enlightenment is that of a *paramahamsa*, and, in the case of such a person, it is often said that "for him all *karma* (action) has ceased."

And because such a high ideal is placed before man, some writers think that the teachings of the *Vedânta* might fail to call out and strengthen the many qualities required for the practical side of life, and that it might raise the human mind to a height from which the most essential virtues of social and political life might dwindle away into mere phantoms.

Yes, there might be this danger, if one ignored the distinction between the two paths, which the *Vedânta* considers as most essential to be borne in mind, as a key to a correct reading of its teachings—the

[1] Bhag. Gît. XVIII, 7, 9-11.

two paths, *viz.*, of *pravritti* and *nivritti*—the one as a preparation for the other.

If one fully realises to oneself the fact that one who wants to go to the top of a hill must *climb* and not fly to reach it, there will be no danger of the social and political virtues dwindling away into mere phantoms. All these virtues have to be exercised and exercised as a consecration of life's work to the selfless service of God and man, before the highest point could be reached, at which eternal Bliss and Peace reign supreme, and from which there is no longer any return to earthly life, for personal development and perfection. Of such a life, Shree Krishna[1] says :—

"Without pride and delusion, victorious over the vice of attachment, dwelling constantly in the Self, desire pacified, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, they tread, undeluded, that industructible path. Nor doth the sun lighten there, nor moon, nor fire ; having gone thither *they return not ; that is My supreme abode.*"

If this condition is deemed unattainable and if, therefore, the position itself condemned by Christian writers as meaning a useless life of Quietism, the teachings of Jesus, too, would be open to the same reproach.

The Kingdom of God, set forth by Jesus, is (says Prof. Pfleiderer) in sharpest contrast to the kingdoms of this world and their glory ; which must be renounced by whoever would win the Kingdom of Heaven,—the renunciation here referred to being of all earthly ties and earthly possessions (Matt. xix 29 ; Luke, xiv. 26).

And Jesus adds, as to one who wins the Kingdom of God :—

"I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and *he shall go out no more.*[2]" (Rev. III. 12.)

The truth is that when it is said that "(*Karma*) action for the spiritually perfect has ceased," it does not mean that he, from that time, becomes a cypher or a block of stone. It means that action in his case for *his own* individual enlightenment has ceased ; having reached the highest condition, he has nothing to desire for *himself*, nothing to

[1] Bhag. Git. XV, 4 and 6.

[2] The italics in the passage are the author's.

do for *himself*; but for that very reason, as stated before, there is much which he has to do, and that is, in helping those who are on the lower planes and need an uplifting hand.

This truth is brought out very clearly by Shree Krishna[1] in the Bhagwat Gîta in the following words :—

'There is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Me, nor anything unattained that might be attained; *Yet I mingle in action. For if I mingle not ever in action* unwearied, men all around would follow My path; these worlds would fall into ruin, if I did not perform action; I should be the author of confusion, and should destroy these creatures.'

If God acts thus for the good of His creatures, why should not man do the like? If all are dependent upon each other as parts of an Organism, and if the spiritually enlightened one has realised to himself his identity with all that forms this unity, it would be a contradiction in terms to say that he has, by the very reason of his spiritual culture, become a useless member of that brotherhood.

The Bhagwat Gîta[2] emphasises this lesson as follows :—

"But the man who rejoiceth in the Self, with the Self is satisfied, and is content in the Self, *for him verily there is nothing to do.* For him there is no interest in things done in this world, nor any in things not done, nor doth any object of his depend on any being. . . . [even such a person has to perform action]. Janaka and others indeed attained to perfection *by action*: then having an eye to the welfare of the world, action should be performed. [For] whatsoever a great man doeth, that other men also do; the standard he setteth up, by that the people go."

It must, indeed, be conceded that the highest stage, contemplated by the *Vedânta*, is beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. The path of the *paramahamsa* is, indeed, very difficult. It is said to be "sharp as a razor[3]" and hardly one that the ordinary man can be expected to tread.

[1] Bhag. Git. III, 22-24.

[2] III, 17-21.

[3] Kath. Up. III, 14:—'The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over; thus the wise say the path [to the Self] is hard.

"क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गं पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति."

Shree Krishna tells Arjuna :—

"Among thousands of men scarce one striveth for perfection; of the successful strivers scarce one knoweth Me in essence".[1]

Nor is one life enough for the purpose. As Suso, the German Mystic, puts it :—

"Be sure thou wilt have to endure many deaths before thou canst put thy nature under the yoke."

But ultimate success is assured to us as being within our reach.

The religious and ethical truths which are of immediate practical value to man belong to the lower plane—the plane of the One and Many—the sphere of Relativity, as I have elsewhere often termed it, and here all is activity and no Quietism.

But one must not forget that the activities implied in this sphere if well directed with the ideals of *advaita* and *abheda* always present to the mind, prepare the way for a higher and holier life. Our lower civilisation is but a preparation for the higher.

These ideals of *advaita* and *abheda* are as useful to social and political progress as they are to the progress of the individual. The ideas of 'dying to live' and of 'living a larger[2] and larger self' are sufficiently suggestive of higher and nobler aspirations.

As stated by Rev. Charles Kingsley in connection with European Mysticism, I might, with equal truth, assert that the great spiritual laws, upon which the *Vedânta* has founded its practical Ethics, 'hold just as good in the family, in the market, in the senate, in the study, aye, in the battlefield itself; and teach (man) the way to lead, in whatever station of life he may be placed, a truly manlike, because a truly Godlike life.'

The teachings of the *Vedânta* are as practical[3] as they are speculative. There is a vast amount of sacred literature intended to convey

[1] Bhag. Git. VII, 3.

[2] *Cf. Ibid.* VI, 30-31.

[3] *Cf.* a Christian writer's testimony in this behalf contained in an article appearing in 'East and West,' for 1906, pp. 774-775: "Vedânta seems to us a practical creed, which, if taken in earnest, cannot but enrich and ennoble life, in the most exalted station as well as in the humblest position. . . . . [After referring to what he considers the adequacy and efficiency of the Christian faith, he proceeds to say] yet these reflections cannot blind us to the moral excellence and religious truth of Vedânta, and we sympathise with the Hindu people who look upon all missionary efforts

truths of a practical character to the popular mind. Of this I may here mention only the two Epics—the *Mahâbhârata* and the *Ramâyana*. These two Epics contain a great deal of practical teaching with historical illustrations, all founded on the Vedantic ideals of *advaita* and *abheda*. Great ideals are placed before the people in such a popular form, that very few, indeed, could be found, who are unfamiliar with the episodes of the great personages related in them or with the truths intended to be conveyed by them. They furnish topics for *kîrtans*[1] and *bhajans*[2] in every Hindu temple; they are in the mouth of every rustic, young and old, whose whole life is influenced thereby. It is impossible to estimate this influence on their daily life, but it cannot be denied that it is wide and far-reaching.

The Bhagvat Gîta is another sacred book which I ought to mention in this connection as being one of the best exponents of the practical aspect of the *Vedânta*.

To begin with, the practical character of the Gîta is prominently observable in its teachings as to the true nature of devotion (*Bhakti*) and the necessity for unselfish endeavour (Yoga of action). While recognising to the fullest extent the philosophical ideal of *tat-twam-asi*, it takes note of the broad fact that all men are not of the same intellectual calibre to be able to grasp this ideal and appreciate and realise it, all at once. Man is, accordingly, told that the Absolute and Unrelated cannot at once be intelligible to him, for it requires the most abstract contemplation and elevation of thought, which is beyond the ordinary powers of his intellect to accomplish; that till that stage of intellectual and spiritual attainment is reached, he must content himself with contemplating and worshipping, as God, the Supreme Essence as a differentiated entity, in Its manifestations throughout the Universe, taking any of such manifestations as a *symbol* through which to reach It in a proper, moral, and religious attitude.

Some Christian critics have denounced this as a "conscious alliance with falsehood, the deliberate propagation of lies.[3]"

to make them converts to Christianity as a national insult. . . . The Hindus require no foreign preaching—they have religion to the fullest in their own Upanishads and Bhagvat Gîta."

[1] Religious Sermon accompanied with Music.—ED.

[2] Devotional songs recited by a congregation.—ED.

[3] See Hibbert Journal, 1906, p. 747.

I will deal with this objection in my article on "Hinduism and Its Strength[1]." It is enough, for the present, to say that, if the use of symbols to explain truths, which cannot otherwise be grasped, be hypocrisy, we must bid farewell to all the methods of teaching adopted in schools to convey abstract notions to youthful minds. For instance, in teaching geometry: though a point has no magnitude and a line is a length without breadth, the teacher has to employ diagrams, which are singularly devoid of these characteristics, to make geometrical truths intelligible to his pupils.

If these critics think that Christian Churches have done well in trampling down and destroying the lower worships, instead of explaining them, and in insisting upon one uniform standard, irrespective of whether it is suited to men of every grade of culture, we venture to say that in India we think differently. If we provide food to human beings according to their physical capacity to digest it, if we regulate the education of the people according to their intellectual capacities and needs, it is obvious that we ought to observe the same law in respect of their religions and spiritual culture.[2]

Hinduism makes its abstract religious conceptions popular by means of symbols, pictures and images, never forgetting at the same time to impress the truth that these are but *symbols and pictures*, and that the various beliefs and worships and divinities are but manifestations of *Brahma*—the only Eternal Verity in the Universe. So that, when a Hindu worships his divinity by symbols, pictures or images, he does not worship the symbol, picture or image, but the metaphysical verity underlying it, all these being but manifestations of that Eternal Verity.

We are here reading no modern thought into an ancient conception, for even before the advent of the British into India, the great Maràthâ Saint and Poet Tukârâm expressed the very same idea in clear and beautiful language in one of his *abhangas*. He says:—

"I made an earthen image of *Shiva*,
But the earth is not *Shiva*;
My worship reaches *Shiva*,
The earth remains the earth it was.

[1] Unfortunately the author did not live to write this article as here intended.

[2] See this same idea in Hibbert Journal for 1906, pp. 747, 854 and 856.

I made a stone image of *Vishnu*,
But the stone is not *Vishnu*;
My worship reaches *Vishnu*,
The stone remains the stone it was.

I made a pewter image of *Ambâ*,
But the pewter is not *Ambâ*;
Ambâ receives my worship
Through the pewter that pewter remains.

Even so, are Saints worshipped;
The worship reaches the Lord;
The Saint is but His servant,
An instrument, a conduit [1] pipe."

As has been aptly suggested, the analogy of a ladder with innumerable rungs well and correctly represents the position. Each individual soul stands on the rung suited to itself; and no person has a right to say that the rung on which he himself stands is the only true one and the others, false; there is a germ of truth even in the lowest layers of superstition and each one must climb the ladder by stages and not jump over the intermediate rungs to go to the top.

This very fact has rendered the religion of the Hindus elastic and tolerant; it adapts and assimilates the lower forms of worship, instead of endeavouring to destroy them.

The rules about *lokasangraha* given in the Bhagvat Gîta are also suggestive of profound wisdom. Of these the first and foremost is, 'Let no wise man unsettle the mind of ignorant people attached to action.[2]'

[1] The original Marâthi is worth quoting:—

केला मातीचा पशुपती। परि मातीसि काय क्षणती॥
शिवपूजा शिवासि पावे। माती मातीमाजी सामावे॥
केला पाषाणाचा विष्णु। परि पाषाण नव्हे विष्णु॥
विष्णुपूजा विष्णुसि अर्पे। पाषाण राहे पाषाण रूपे॥
केली काशाची जगदंबा। परि कांसें नव्हे अंबा॥
पूजा अंबेची अंबेला घेणें। कांसे राहे कांसेपणें॥
तैसें पूजिती आह्मा संत। पूजा घेतो भगवंत॥
आह्मी किंकर..... ED.

[2] See Bhag. Gît. III, 26.

It is well ordained that the wise must take the ignorant masses on and on *with* them, being always *with* them and *of* them; that they should act prudently and try to purify the conduct of the ignorant, improve their moral character and aptitude for grasping and appreciating higher truths, well remembering that it would be most imprudent and useless to force higher truths on them, without preparing the ground for their reception.

It will not be out of place to recall here the story of Moses and the Shepherd. The Shepherd in his prayer was using the language of an anthropomorphic God, and offering to serve him with food, clothing, etc., when Moses rebuked him saying that God was a spirit, and needed no such ministrations. The effect of this rebuke was that the shepherd lost his God, and had none other given him whom he could devoutly worship.

A voice from heaven was (then) heard, saying, "Oh Moses, wherefore have you driven away my servant? Your office is to reconcile my people with me, not to drive them away from me. I have given to each race different usages and forms of praising and adoring me. I have no need of their praises, being exalted above all such needs. I regard not the words that are spoken, but the heart that offers them. I do not require fine words, but a burning heart. Men's ways of showing devotion to me are various, but so long as the devotions are genuine, they are accepted."

The above is a complete echo of the sentiments contained in the Bhagvat Gîta.

The *Vedânta* has, therefore, wisely ordained that religious ministration and instruction should be graded according to the varying receptivity (*adhikâra*) of the pupil.

With every advance in intelligence and moral culture, each one is sure to find explanations which will satisfy him, and there will be a corresponding improvement in his religious attitude.

Thus, with the backbone of the philosophical ideal, the religion of the *Vedânta*, in a thoroughly tolerant spirit, opens the path to every one who is desirous of salvation. It has been rightly described as the "grand Religious Republic of the *Vedânta*."

Then as to social relations and the duties those relations impose, throughout the book, when it speaks of *duties*, the Gîta tells us that we are bound to do the duties attached to the position in which we are placed.

It first tells us that man's mission on earth in his embodied existence is *action*[1]—not one single moment of his life can anybody pass without[2] it.

The entire humanity is divided into four classes according to the kind of *Karma* and the degree of development which have determined the situation each one occupies in this life. The duties thus assigned to man constitute his *Dharma* and these must be religiously observed. One who has the *sâtvic* element (element of piety) preponderating in his nature, is enjoined to do the work of spiritual instruction and of elevation of man's character in every thing that pertains to his moral, religious and spiritual welfare. One who has the *râjâsic* element (of activity) preponderating in him must do all that requires activity; all political activities belong to this sphere. Commercial activity belongs to the third class; and the last and lowest class represents the people in whom the *tâmas guna* (element of indolence) predominates, and who, therefore, stand by far in the greatest need of protection from the higher classes, while in a state of serfdom and bondage.

Each man, says the Gîta, must actively do the duties peculiar to his station in life, and these he cannot well neglect, for any neglect on his part would create a hindrance in the way of his further development in the right direction. This would constitute *his sin*, bringing its own punishment with it.

"Fight and conquer or die in the struggle against iniquity and wickedness" is the teaching rung into Arjuna's ears at the end of every Discourse. Fight in the interests of dethroned Virtue, and recover the crown for her by conquest or die in the attempt. Unmindful of earthly ties, fight bravely, not for bread, nor for money, nor for fame; fight in the name of Duty which is thy allotted lot.

Nor is this teaching in the least inconsistent with the other teachings which enjoin Non-Resistance to evil, the Return of good for evil, etc. It is only in the Indian *Vedânta* that such teachings, though appa-

[1] Bhag. Gît. II, 47. [2] *Ibid.* III, 5.

rently inconsistent with each other, are found side by side; and the key to their correct interpretation consists in a strict observance of the distinction which I have repeatedly emphasised in my writings.

All social duties necessarily imply relations and active conduct for the maintenance and development of those relations. Shree Krishna's advice to man to fight is perfectly intelligible and proper, from the social point of view. Man must fulfil his duties in his mundane existence, before he can become fit to enter the region wherein all relations lose their significance.

Society as a whole can never be expected to enter this region, all at once or simultaneously. This world of sense-experience, wherein man has to struggle for existence and for his supposed happiness, cannot be transformed into a "Kingdom of God" all at once. It contains beings of various degrees of culture, and, though they all may be on their onward march, they cannot be expected to reach the goal, all simultaneously.

Activity must, therefore, continue to be their watchword and a *sine qua non*.

It must also be remembered that our life in this world is one of probation and difficulties—difficulties arising from wickedness and evil, fighting to conquer which must, therefore, be one of our first duties to society.

Each individual has to pass through this struggle, which is necessary to fit him gradually for spiritual enlightenment. It disciplines and builds up his character and improves the tone and strength of the whole society. But, in carrying on this struggle, he should not allow himself to be led away by *personal* feelings of hatred and the like. The struggle is a duty undertaken in the higher interests of Society, and must be carried on in that spirit. The blow has to be struck, not that *his* enemy may be hurt, but that the interests of truth and justice may be advanced. He strikes not to chastise, but to chasten the offender, for, is not the one a part of the human organism as much as the other?

In this view of the matter, it is through Resistance that man has to go to the higher plane, where Non-Resistance to evil is the rule. There is, therefore, in reality no antagonism between the two princi-

ples of Resistance and Non-Resistance to evil, just as there is none between Egoism and Altruism. They are only two stages in Evolution.

Duties, says the Gîta, must be performed by us in a spirit of complete selflessness, with the fact ever present to our mind that the good of all is our own good. Duties, begun on the lower rungs of the ladder may go on expanding, and embracing what are generally known as the duties of citizenship and patriotism, and eventually duties to the entire humanity and to all other beings, the principle of *abheda* being the truth underlying them all.

Even a whole nation can become a model nation, if this principle of *abheda* were rightly apprehended and correctly reduced into practice. The individualism and self-seeking, which the present materialistic age unfortunately fosters, must give way before a life of altruism; men under proper culture must begin to feel that each one lives not for himself but for the common good, their sense of egoism must become so far enlarged that the interest of the majority may become the interest of each one individually. In such a case, the people would identify themselves with their king, merging their will in the will of their monarch, and ascribing their virtues to the virtue of the king. The king, on the other hand, would realise the nation, as it were, within himself, as a company of souls grouped with mutual bonds into an ordered host, for the higher purposes of divine economy.

Nor is this a mere fanciful picture of an ideal nation, impossible of actual realisation. History has furnished us even recently an excellent illustration of such a nation in the Japanese people.

It is interesting in this connexion to notice the observations[1] of Professor Anesaki of the Imperial University of Japan, who, after referring to the precepts of his spiritual teachers, enjoining altruism and the sacrifice of every thing to the *Dharma*, remarks :—

" These were no mere teachings, but the morality inculcated by them has tuned the actual life so deeply, that self-sacrifice for the sake of one's ideal has become the spirit of our national life. Applied to the morality of the warrior class, it has caused many warriors to die gladly for the sake of their lord or of the nation. The spirit of self-sacrifice is the vital force of our morality, and has manifested its power during the present war most remarkably."

[1] See Hibbert Journal for October 1905.

This is an instance highly suggestive of more than a bare possibility of realisation of the Vedântic ideal—an instance in which we find conquest going on hand in hand with gentleness and self-control.

The Gîta itself gives instances of Kings leading an active life, even after their spiritual enlightenment. King Janaka is mentioned by name in III. 20. He fought battles, improved commerce and industry and is reported to have been one of the justest kings of the world, and withal one of the greatest Indian *Vedântins*. Râma, the hero of the Ramayana, is another instance ; and a number of other instances might also be found showing that *kingly duties were not considered to be in any way incompatible with spiritual culture.*

Rulers ought to be philosophers, says Plato ; and some of the Upanishads[1] show that Kshatriya Kings were the custodians of philosophical knowledge and Brahmans sat at their feet to acquire learning.

There is also abundant evidence to show that, side by side with the high ideals which the Indian *Vedânta* placed before man, there existed institutions[2] in India, even in the pre-Buddhistic period, for the education of the young—male and female —in which all the most noble and heroic virtues were taught, both in theory and practice—institutions intended for philosophical, moral, religious and political instruction, for the elevation of the disciples 'in spirit and in action'—institutions somewhat similar to those which were founded by Pythagoras in Crotona and other places in the sixth century B. C.

And, what is more important still, the teachers, who volunteered their services in this mission, without any pecuniary gain to themselves, were the very men whom European writers are wont to condemn as so many 'bundles of negation'—I mean, the Sages and Ascetics, who had renounced the world and who, having nothing to desire for themselves, were ever devoted to serve others, in order to elevate them to their own heights.

How literally true was it that the Great Ones, instead of being the Masters, were the servants of the people among whom their lot was cast.

[1] See Deussen's 'Phil. Up.,' pp. 17-22. see Brahmavâdin for 1906, pp. 377-388.

[2] For an excellent account of these

If institutions, such as those mentioned above, existed, as a fact, in ancient India, it might safely be inferred that they had a most salutary effect on the society in which they flourished, and on the government which advanced and encouraged them. If members of the royal household were among the disciples attending these institutions, if the sons of the nobility and commonalty, all received instruction, so to speak, on one common ground—instruction based on the broad ideals of *advaita* and *abheda*,—such instruction must naturally have had a beneficial effect upon both the rulers and the ruled.[1]

The relations between the two must naturally have been all that could possibly be wished—the ruler acting with wisdom like an unselfish and loving father towards his children, and the ruled serving him in a loyal spirit with devotion and love. Filial piety and loyalty would, in such a case, be completely united, as they are seen united in Japan at the present day.

We have thus in the *Vedânta* a philosophy which has never been "excelled in its spiritual heights or in speculative profundity," and an ethical and a religious ideal which is eternally and universally true and capable of *practical* application.

It has a power to strengthen the souls of the noblest man for action and endurance. Owing to its firm grasp of the central idea that there is a rational principle in the world, which is one in nature with the self-conscious intelligence within us, it has been able to make every thing bend to it. It recognises a principle of a highly practical character, which is legitimately deducible from it. The noble idea, of the entire universe being one big brotherhood—*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—finds its justification and explanation in that central idea—a brotherhood, in which all distinctions of Mine and Thine lose their significance, and all are bound to co-operate, sinking their individual personality in the higher interests of their fellowmen.

Such a state of society is no fantastic dream of the theorist, but a noble ideal, worthy of being striven after, and potent enough to appeal to the higher and deeper instincts of the human race. For what altruism can surpass benevolence or philanthropy reaching

[1] As to the state of society then prevailing, see Chap. VII, note *supra* p. 118, note 1.

the supreme height of moral greatness, when the lover of his kind not merely rejoices in good deeds that can be reciprocated—in beneficence that will bring him back a return of honour, gratitude, affection, but is content to spend his life, like the Indian *Rishis* of old, for the advancement of society in knowledge and virtue, and for the happiness of countless multitudes in future ages, long after he, their benefactor, has passed away; and what nobility is greater than that of the man who knows that his must be the strife, but to others shall come the success, that the fruit of his labours shall be reaped when he shall be for ever beyond the reach of earthly honour or reward.[1]

1 *Cf.* J. Caird's 'University Sermons, pp. 392-393. *Cf.* also the utterances of the Indian patriot, G. K. Gokhale.

CHAPTER IX.

MYSTICISM.[1]

ONE of the objections taken by Christian writers to the *Vedânta* ideal of *tat-twam-asi* is that the potential identity of Man with God, which it posits, is inconceivable and absurd, while any attempt at its realisation involves a mysticism of no practical value to man. The idea may, indeed, be inconceivable and absurd, if tested by the theories of knowledge now current in Europe. But, as stated in the previous chapters, these theories themselves require correction.

It is quite obvious that, so long as we pay little heed to the laws of psychic phenomena, and consider the laws of our knowing the objects in time and space to be equally the laws of our knowing *all* objects, most of the spiritual truths must remain beyond our reach.

Those who are competent to speak on the subject tell us that we do not yet know the nature of that intellectual faculty which we ordinarily call the mind. Notwithstanding the great researches of men like Gall and Spurzheim, Combe and Hollandar, medical science has not yet succeeded in making an exhaustive analysis of the human brain, with which the mind is supposed to function: it is not yet able, for instance, to say definitely what function the pineal gland in the brain or the pituitary body which is situated near it, or the capillary tube in the spinal canal perform. "Cerebral anatomists" (says Mr. Hudson) "have not yet studied the subject from the standpoint of duality of mind." They do not know what that which Mr. Hudson calls the subjective aspect of the mind is, whose functions, according to him, are entirely independent of the brain; they do not know that "the brain is not the organ of the highest intelligence in man."

The researches of the Psychic Research Society and other scientific bodies on these points have not yet received due recognition in

[1] Originally contributed to the Indian Review, for 1906, pp. 583-586, 649-651, 737-740.

Christendom. And, although it is not my purpose here to advocate, as a partisan, the claims of these scientific bodies, it cannot be denied that some of the results arrived at by them have been verified in Europe and America, and the tendency of the present age appears to be to accept them as scientific facts and to accept with them the theories by which they are explicable.

It is undisputed that Psychology in Europe is still in its infancy. As stated by a European writer, Europe "has been sleeping for ages under the soporific influence of a spurious theology." Only since half a century has the fact begun to dawn on the European mind that man is already endowed with a complete intellectual and moral equipment and divine potentialities; and that he possesses powers kindred with Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, Omnipresence, and Universal Love.

European Science seems only now to be on the way to acknowledge that there is one Divine Centre—sometimes called the Spiritual Sun—from which are projected radiating lines of spiritual light or energy, which permeate all space, which is called ether; that these projections or rays are endowed with all the attributes, possibilities and potencies of the Pure Spirit; that space (ether) is accordingly one endless world of consciousness,—cosmic consciousness, as it is termed by Dr. Buck; that the Universe is only one continuous motion, due to the vibrations or radiations from the Divine Centre, and that what is called matter is simply the Divine Energy, "reduced to a low degree of vibration" and thus rendered visible as diverse objects which constitute the universe.[1]

Then, as to mind, it seems to be acknowledged as a scientific fact that the manifestations of the human mind are in the shape of what are called thought-waves or thought-forms—which are kindred in their character with those which proceed from the Divine Centre, and which it is in the power of man to make his own, if he chooses; that in every step he may take in the course of his development—moral and spiritual—he comes more and more into tune with the Infinite and acquires powers of a far-reaching character.

[1] As to how these modern discoveries of science are confirmatory of the ancient Indian teachings of *Sânkhya* and *Yoga* philosophy, see Vivekânanda's 'Raja Yoga,' pp. 35-36—ED.

Clairvoyance, Clairaudience, Telepathy, and Telekinetism are thus brought within the range of human possibility and obtain a scientific explanation.

There is at the present day any amount of literature on these subjects of Clairvoyance, Telepathy, etc., but I am tempted to quote here what Mr. Hudson[1], a scientist himself, has said about one of such powers, *viz.*, the Telekinetic energy—the power to move ponderable bodies without physical contact or mechanical appliances :—

"I can only say to the sceptical that I *know* the power to exist, having for more than thirty years of my life pursued the investigation of so-called spiritistic phenomena, under the strictest test conditions. . . I can assure my readers that I applied every possible scientific test to nearly every form of physical phenomena, especially to that of levitation of ponderable bodies without physical contact or mechanical aids ; and that, as the result of my researches, I am prepared to asseverate that the power exists in the subjective mind of man to cause inanimate matter to obey his will rather than the law of gravitation."

A consideration of the powers I have above named means a consideration of the question of vibrations, involving simply an extension of the powers which we are all using every day of our lives.

We are told (says M. Flammarion) of five doors to human knowledge—sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. *These five doors open for us but a little way to any knowledge of the world around us*, especially the last three—smell, taste and touch. All our ordinary human knowledge might be symbolically represented by a tiny island surrounded by a limitless ocean.

At present we ordinarily know only two out of sixty-two vibrations. If we succeed by a steady and progressive extension of our powers in acquiring finer faculties, we could surely make ourselves quite sensitive to the other vibrations.

A development, then, in this direction brings to light new faculties of a higher order, the exercise of which brings us into possession of verities which are beyond the reach of ordinary mortals.

[1] "Divine Pedigree of man," p. 371.

And though the development or exercise of such powers is ordinarily discouraged as having a ruinous tendency and often leading to insanity, it is possible that a steady and progressive development could be attempted by proper culture and rigorous moral discipline and under proper guidance; and the exercise of the powers thus acquired could be regulated and brought under the control of reason. In the language of Mr. Hudson, the two aspects of the human mind (the subjective and the objective) might thus be made synchronous.

Such methodical cultivation of the higher consciousness had been, in days of yore, resorted to among Hindus, Buddhists, Mahomedans, and even Christians and bore excellent fruit.[1] The saints and sages of every nation—ancient and modern—furnish notable instances of "synchronism of development," though curiously, indeed, according to Mr. Hudson, history furnishes but one instance of such perfect synchronism, *viz.*, Jesus Christ!

The ancient Aryans were not ignorant of the immense potentialities of the human mind for infinite progress, and of the extraordinary powers actually manifested by it. In India, especially, the subject was closely and systematically studied.

But, says Mr. Hudson, apparently in all earnestness, that Hindu philosophers were "not content to await their allotted time but rush unbidden to the gates of heaven, determined to penetrate the secrets which Jesus withheld from all mankind and which must, for ever, remain a secret to incarnate man"!!

Comment on such a wild anachronism in utter disregard of history is unnecessary.

Whatever Mr. Hudson might say, the most ancient Upanishads and the subsequently systematised *sûtras* of Patanjali are a living monument of the work done by the Indian sages, which is not without its admirers even in Europe and America. The Indian sages of old, who lived centuries before Jesus, had developed, by a close study of the psychic constitution of man, powers which enabled them to see what, in our present state of ignorance, has been shut out from our view. The *Vedântins* claim that it is by means of the powers brought

[1] See Prof. James' "Varieties of Religious Experience."

to light by the teachings of *Yoga* that spiritual truths can come within man's reach. Spiritual truths could only be spiritually discerned.

One of the most important conditions insisted on in their practice is a deliverance from the empire of the senses, which at once opens up the higher (spiritual) faculty and with it the spiritual powers presupposed in it. With them the solution of the mysterious problems of Whence, What, Whither, was thus found in *a life* and not in a book, as Emerson might say. It is the life they lived that brought forth the powers by means of which they worked directly on those problems.

They required nobody's bidding "to enter the gates of heaven," but their own aptitude for discovering the key which lay *within themselves*, and their Will to take possession of the citadel. They full well knew that their *Yoga* meant nothing more than a discipline on their part to develop the faculties, which we all possess but which lie latent, awaiting development; that it is simply a discipline in view of further expansion, in right moral attitude, of individual consciousness by close introspection, concentration and a strong exercise of Will power for good. There is nothing of the miraculous or the mysterious in this discipline.

They full well knew that it is in the study of the Self alone that the search for truth was possible, and, with full knowledge of this fact, they entered on a study of practical psychology, to develop in themselves the powers to perceive and realise spiritual truths, and they found that such truths could be realised by the development of the *sâtvic* element in man and a life of purity. Such realisation necessarily means self-experience (स्वानुभव), which alone furnishes the highest certitude of the truths of spiritual knowledge.

It is unfortunate that the importance of the æsthetic element in man has not been sufficiently recognised in Europe. This plays a most important part in the religious experience of man. It has a profound psychological and scientific significance. Herbert Spencer, too, admits that any theory of things which takes no account of this attribute must be extremely defective.

Some European writers now admit that ordinary logic, which is based on the assumptions of limitations on human intelligence, is

incompetent as an organon for philosophical religious knowledge, which is attainable only by "the hidden logic of a spiritual process."

The organon of communication with God and divine things is (says Principal Caird) one which transcends the method and process of logic, brings the consciousness into immediate converse with its objects and conveys to us an inexplicable yet absolute assurance of their reality. Formal logic (says Prof. Inge) is utterly unsuited to spiritual view of things.[1]

If, then, all I have said above be true, how much of the theories of knowledge now current in Europe will be affected thereby? The laws of Thought, as now formulated, will have to be supplemented, so as to include within their range rational explanations of some of the important psychic truths, which have been so far boastingly excluded as so much admixture of medieval Mysticism.

This condemnation of the mystic comes naturally from people who are themselves outside the pale of Mysticism—people who cannot go or who refuse to go beyond the faculties which they employ in acquiring sense-experience. They label as mysticism every thing that is beyond the clouds of their own horizon. They unhesitatingly reject whatever is incapable of verification by the theories of knowledge current among them, although it is often admitted that the rudiment of the temper of mysticism is in all our lives, and although it is a historical fact that every true genius is, in one sense, a mystic, since every high thought which has moved the world can only be mystically apprehended as a flash of Divine Intelligence. It is impossible for these thinkers to realise or appreciate the possibility of a real irradiation of the soul from the Light that for ever shines.

And, while thus moving still in the world of sense-experience, they venture to pose themselves as authorities, and criticise, from *their* plane of vision, the thought and language of Mysticism, without pausing for a moment to consider if they are really qualified to pronounce

[1] *Cf.* the *abhanga* of the Marâthâ Saint Tukârâm :—

"Faith alone is proof here: *leave Reason aside.*

Ratiocinative processes have no place here.

Without faith, says Tukâ, words are a weary waste."

एक भावचि प्रमाण । ठेवा जाणीव गुंडाळून ॥
तर्कावितर्कासि । ठाव नलगे तयापाशी ॥
तुका ह्मणे भावेविण ॥जितुका बोले तितुक. शीण ॥

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any judgment on it. In seeking to throw ridicule on Mysticism, they, in reality, betray their own ignorance and unphilosophical attitude. The mystic tells them plainly to consider his utterances from *his* point of view ; and if they cannot or will not reach that point, they had better leave him and his mysticism alone. His language is : Judge us from within and not from without. You cannot really know us, unless you were of us.

But what is Mysticism after all ? It is a moral discipline having for its object the acquisition of a condition, indicating, as a European mystic puts it, the union of Man with God, or, as an Indian Yogin might say, a self-realisation, within one's self, of one's identity with *Brahma*, the Universal Self. In fact, the Indian *Yoga* does nothing more than show us a passage from the world of sense-experience into the spiritual region through the *gate of ethics*, in view of gaining such self-realisation.

" Our whole doctrine " (says Jacob Boehme) " is nothing else but an instruction to show how man may create a Kingdom of Light within himself. He in whom the spring of divine power flows, carries within himself the Divine Image. . . Not I, the I that I am, know these things, but God knows them in me."

Know thyself, says the *Vedânta* ; that Self, (it adds), is the Universal Self and not the individual egohood which thou deemest to be thy own Self.

Such is the basic truth upon which all the mystic systems work. However much they may differ in matters of form and detail, in their essence they are all alike.

Their great achievement is the removal of barriers between the individual and the Absolute and the acquisition of mastery over the individual. In mystic states we become one with the Absolute and also become aware of our oneness.

" This " (says Prof. James) " is the everlasting and triumphant mystical tradition, hardly altered by differences of clime or creed. In Hinduism, in Neo-Platonism, in Suffism, in Christian Mysticism, in Whitemanism, we find the same recurring note, so that there is about mystical utterances an eternal unanimity, which ought to make a critic stop and think."

And although generally mystic experiences (as being so much what is *felt* rather than intellectually known) are in their nature incommunicable and incapable of articulate self-description, one can definitely assert that they tend to establish optimism and advaitism or monism.

Mysticism in modern Europe is said to be directly due to Neo-Platonism and indirectly to Indian and Persian influences.

"There is no doubt" (says Prof. Inge) "that the philosophers of Asia were held in reverence at this period. Origen, in justifying an esoteric mystery-religion for the educated and a mythical religion for the vulgar, appeals to the example of the 'Persians and Indians.' And Philostratus, in his Life of Apollonius of Tyana, says or makes his herd say, that while we wish to live in the presence of God, 'the Indians alone succeed in doing so.' And certainly there are parts of Plotinus and still more of his successors, which strongly suggest Asiatic influences."

Even this slight tribute to the Asiatic origin of European mysticism, Western writers are unwilling to accord. One calls it nonsense; another says it is of secondary importance with an uncertain sound.

We have no quarrel on this score with those who may be inclined to take a different view of the historical origin of European mysticism. We shall not be sorry, if it turns out to be totally the outcome of an independent development of thought, suggestive of an independent originality.

It would be all the better for our argument, since European thought, in that view of the matter, would furnish an independent confirmation of the Indian thought.

And whatever merit is discovered or acknowledged in the one must be acknowledged in the other, just as whatever objections may apply to the one must apply to the other. If the mysticism of any of the well-known Christian mystics be deemed unexceptionable, the Indian *Vedânta* ought to be freed from the obloquy cast upon it.[1]

Mysticism is essentially religious in its character; it is always in quest of the Divine truth, and that Divine truth is that there is one

[1] According to Max Müller, the objections that are urged against the *Vedânta* apply with even greater force to Christian mysticism see "Theosophy," p. 526.

eternal principle which pervades the entire universe, and that nothing beside it is. It is based on an unfaltering conviction that our union with the Eternal Being, our self-realisation, must be a fact of experience and not a mere philosophic theory. Mysticism is, in essence and at foundation, a scientific faith; and it is entirely practical in its character.[1] There is no contradiction between Mysticism and Rationalism; only their methods are different, and involve the exercise of two different faculties of the human mind. In Mysticism the perception of the Absolute Principle is 'immediate and unanalysable'; in Rationalism it is reasoned out. In fact, idealistic Rationalism and the deductive method peculiar to it, invariably presuppose, as their starting point, the immediate and *a priori* perception of an Absolute Principle, a perception which we call mystical, precisely because it is immediate and unanalysable. Platonic Idealism, like its offshoots, the systems of Plotinus, Spinoza, Schelling, begins with a mystical act and culminates in a Religion.[2]

Some of the noticeable features of Mysticism in general are[3]:—

(*a*) That all Nature is living thought, and what is called Matter is but the last and densest expression of Spirit.

(*b*) That man has an affinity with all that exists, from the highest to the lowest, merged in the Divine stream of Life that pours through the Universe.

(*c*) That all that is seen is unreal, in the sense of its being contingent and transient; and all that is invisible is real.

(*d*) That as above, so below.

(*e*) That man has the whole universe within himself; he is but a microcosm of the macrocosm.

(*f*) That the Eternal is in man, but lying hidden 'under earthly natu re'.

(*g*) That man is, in essence, one with that Eternal.

(*h*) That the Eternal can be experienced or realised only by the Pure and Righteous.

[1] *Cf.* Ruysbroek, Inge, Harrison, Charles Kingsley, Max Müller, and Prof. James.

[2] *Cf.* Weber's 'Hist. Phil.,' p. 91.

[3] The author omitted to give any references to Indian texts, in connexion with the following propositions which he has formulated, in the hope that the reader would find no difficulty in understanding how far they were analogous to the Indian view.

(*i*) Mysticism, accordingly, insists on a high ethical standard as a qualification for spiritual insight or vision.

(*j*) And it strongly condemns false mysticism, which consists in the acquisition of powers (bare *siddhis*) without a consciousness of Divine illumination. Such powers have no essential mystical significance.

(*k*) It insists upon the necessity and advisability of disentangling oneself absolutely from the changeable things of sense-experience and from the pleasures of the world. (*cf.* Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, &c.)

(*l*) It insists upon the performance of duty for duty's sake, in the name of God, without attachment and without hope of reward.

(*m*) It insists on the virtues of self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, self-denial, humility, compassion, &c.

(*n*) And it says that man has "to endure many deaths," before he can put his "nature under the yoke." (Suso.)

(*o*) And that it is only with such preparation and after self-realisation that man can hope to be free from metempsychosis. He will then be "a pillar in the temple of God and he shall go out no more." (Rev. III. 12.)

(*p*) There is no other way to salvation; however hard this may appear, it must be followed. (Suso.) That path, says the *Vedânta*, is as sharp as a razor. (Katha Up.)

(*q*) There is no evil or sin in Nature but what is of man's own making. ('Theo. Germ.')

Some of the features above formulated, chiefly, (*g*), (*n*), (*o*), (*p*) and (*q*), are now in Christendom so many articles of a forgotten faith,[1] and others have, I apprehend, lost their original significance and importance.

[1] See this view confirmed in a contribution by a modern English writer to the 'Theosophical Review,' entitled "A Gospel that is new but not disappointing,' bringing to light a document, in the form of a Gospel, which is described as "one of the most ancient and complete of the early Christian fragments, preserved in one of the Monasteries of the Buddhist Monks in Thibet, where t was hidden by some of the Essene Community rom the hands of the corrupters, and now for the first time translated from the Aramaic." It contains for a Christian Gospel, "most unexpected teachings—abstinence from flesh-eating and alcohol, kindness to animals, reincarnation and Karma, continence and prayers for the dead;" and quotations are given, in illustration of the same, of injunctions as proceeding from the lips of Jesus Christ himself

The doctrine of *tat-twam-asi*, or, as it is termed, the deification of man, the doctrine of Re-incarnation, that is, of successive births and deaths, and of a final release from this alternation when man has found his home and is for ever one with the One and All—these have been repudiated in Europe, apparently as degenerate, if not also oriental barbarism.

This is not the place to discuss these questions. That of the deification of man I have already discussed in previous chapters. And as to Re-incarnation, all I may do at present is to ask the orthodox Christian whether he can explain, on any *other* hypothesis, the following passages, for instance, in the Bible. God promised his chosen people that He would send them "Elias (Elijah) before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Malachias, iv. 5.) When Jesus was asked whether this promise was fulfilled before his own coming, his answer was that "Elias is already come, and they knew him not." Math. xvii. 12-13, and referring to John the Baptist, he told the people that "he is Elias that was for to come." Math. xi. 14.

How, again, is Rev. iii. 12, which I have quoted above under (*o*), explicable ?

And what is Christianity in its spirit but what is known as mysticism ? Was not Jesus himself a mystic, when he preached, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for *they only* shall see God" ? What, again, is the meaning of the Christian teaching that only he who lives in this world *as not of this world* lives a true life ? Undeniably, there is the mystic element in the Bible itself, notably in the Gospel of St. John and the Epistles of St. Paul. The early Christian Fathers also were mystics.

Mystic Christianity, says Max Müller, was Christianity in its true spirit; and to understand it correctly, one must (he adds) study the Upanishads.

The fountain-head of Christian mysticism is said to be Dionysius *the Areopagite, a writer with an assumed name, who lived in the fifth century, A.C.; but Eckhart, who lived in the 13th century,*

There is no doubt that, if genuine, it would be a most remarkable discovery, tending to bring Christ's teaching into conformity with the ancient teaching of the Indian Sages—ED.

is more widely known as the father of Christian mysticism, as Plato was known to be the father of European mysticism in ancient times.

The teachings of Eckhart are said to be the essence of the New Testament. (Schopenhauer.) "He is the interpreter of the thoughts of Christ, of St. John, and St. Paul; [he was] the forerunner of the Reformation." (Max Müller.)

The teachings of the other German mystics of eminence, Tauler, Suso, and Ruysbroek were also on the same lines as those of their great master.

The anonymous author of the *Theologia Germanica*, whom Luther greatly admired and took as his guide, may also be mentioned here. That little book of two hundred and twenty-five pages, while it professes to be to the popular mind a book useful for devotional purposes, is said to be the most beautiful and occult treatise, which has emphasised the teachings of Jesus himself and furnished a rational interpretation of them. In this book, says Prof. Inge, we see introspective mysticism at its best.

The teachings of Eckhart read almost like the teachings of the Indian *Vedânta*. According to him, God becomes God by reason of the Word (Logos), and the universe is the language of that Word; before creation, by which is meant the Platonic Ideal creation, He is an undeveloped potentiality of Being. God thought and willed, and there was the universe, and this by a process in an Eternal Now. God is thus both unchangeable and an everlasting process. He is everywhere undivided, yet the creatures participate in Him according to *their* measure. To be united to God, man must rid himself of his 'creatureliness'; his knowledge must be reduced to Not-knowledge, and his reason and will, as well as his lower faculties, must transcend themselves.

Eckhart develops the doctrine of *tat-twam-asi* in the 'Life of his Spiritual Daughter'; and Prof. Inge suspects Indian Yogism to be probably the origin of this story.[1]

[1] Yes, it looks like it; and if any further confirmation be needed of the Indian origin of the Christian mysticism, one finds it in the illustration of the '*tree of faith*,' in the teachings of another German Mystic, Ruysbroek,—the tree "growing from above downwards, for its roots are in the Godhead, with twelve branches, the lower ones speaking of the humanity of Christ and of things which concern the salvation of the body, and the higher ones speaking of the

Christian writers are unwilling to accredit their mystics with the doctrine of the deification of man, as they term it; but, as stated in the previous chapters, however startling this idea may appear to Christian thinkers of the present times, they must acknowledge that their own sacred writings countenance such an idea.

The original oneness, says Max Müller[1], of the human soul with God is accepted by all German mystics as the fundamental article of the Christian faith.

One cannot help referring, in this connexion, to the sentiments on this point of that eminent Hegelian Philosopher, Principal John Caird. They are too long for quotation *in extenso*. I can, therefore, give here only a short extract, referring the reader generally to pages 234—238 of his Philosophy of Religion, which furnish very interesting reading in this connection. After referring to the renunciation of one's individual self to live the Highest Self, Principal Caird proceeds to say:—

"When in the language of religion, we say 'I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me'—'It is God that worketh in me to will and to do of His good pleasure', pious feeling is only giving expression in its own way to that which philosophy shows to be in strictest accordance with the principle of man's nature. . . When we attain the ideal perfection of our own nature, the Self that is foreign to it is foreign to us too,—it has become lost and absorbed in that deeper and higher Self, with which our whole life and being is identified."

This happens, according to Principal Caird, as soon as man has once transcended the sphere of morality and entered the spiritual sphere.

Godhead, the Trinity and the Unity of the Divine Nature." Compare this with the (अश्वत्थ) *ashwattha* tree, which is described in the Bhagvat Gîta (XV, 1-3) in the following terms:—

"With roots above, branches below, the *Ashvattha* is said to be indestructible; he leaves of it are the Vedic hymns; he who knoweth it is a Veda-Knower. Downwards and upwards spread the branches of it, nourished by the qualities (*Gunas*); the objects of the senses its buds; and its roots grow downwards, the bonds of action in the world of men. Nor here may be acquired knowledge of its form, nor its end, nor its origin, nor its rooting place; this strongly rooted *Ashwattha* having been cut down by the unswerving weapon of non-attachment."

Cf. also the same idea mentioned in Kath. Up. VI, 1:—"There is that ancient *Ashwattha* tree, whose roots grow upward and whose branches grow downward;—that indeed is called the Bright, that is called *Brahman*, that alone is called the Immortal. All worlds are contained in it and no one goes beyond."

[1] "Theosophy," p. 530.

"The very first pulsation of the spiritual life, when we rightly apprehend its significance, is the indication that the division between the spirit and its object has vanished; that the ideal has become real, that the finite has reached its goal, and become suffused with the presence and life of the Infinite. . . [In this spiritual life] there is involved the identification of the finite with a life which is eternally realised[1]. . . it is not a finite but an infinite life which the spirit lives. It is a divine spirit which animates and inspires it. In all its activities, it is a divine will that moves it. Every pulse-beat of its life is the expression and realisation of the life of God."[2]

Sentiments like these are exactly the utterances of what the mystic feels but cannot adequately express and the saint in hearing them recognises his own experience in them. It is gratifying to find the content of religion reported so unanimously.

And what is Prof. James's own experience in this connection? In writing about certain psychological experiences of his own, he says:—

"One conclusion was forced upon my mind at the time, and my impression of its truth has ever since remained unshaken. It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. . . No account of the universe in its totality can be final, which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. . . Looking back on my own experiences, they all converge towards a kind of insight, to which I cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance. The keynote of it is invariably a reconciliation. It is as if the opposites of the world, whose contradictoriness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity. Not only do they as contrasted species belong to one and the same genus, but *one of the species*, the nobler and the better one, *is itself the genus, and so soaks*

[1] 'Phil. Rel.,' p. 281. [2] *Ibid.* p. 286

up and absorbs its opposite into itself. This is a dark saying, I know . . . [but] those who have ears to hear, let them hear."[1]

Prof. James then quotes the experience of another mystic :—

"The one remains, the many pass and change ; and each and every one of us is the one that remains."[2]

With such credentials in favour of Mysticism, it is, indeed, surprising that it should have been condemned in any age or by any nation claiming to be ranked among the civilized ; yet we know that Mysticism was at one time denounced, in no unmeasured terms, in Europe, and that men, eminent for learning and high virtues, for their piety and charity and true religious fervour, were cruelly persecuted as heretics by the Christian Churches—both Catholic and Protestant. The great masters of Mediæval Schools, says Lilly,[3] began, since the Renaissance, to be looked upon with contempt by an age of conceited, self-sufficient half-learning, of meretricious eloquence, of inflated arrogant littleness. And Descartes, with his sharp distinction between Spirit and Nature, mind and matter, scattered, it is said, the phantoms of mysticism with the whole rubbish of scholastic formulas.[4]

No wonder, then, that Christendom, backed by a false philosophy, which insisted on the recognition of a sharp distinction between Mind and Matter, Spirit and Nature, as two antithetically independent and eternal verities, and backed also by a spurious theology, based on an unnatural alliance between the Semitic and the Aryan or Indo-Germanic lines of thought, resulting in the recognition of a Personal God and Creator outside His Creation and unapproachable by far to mortal man—no wonder, I say, that Christendom, influenced by such considerations, should have denounced Mysticism and persecuted its votaries, whom Jesus Christ himself would have honoured.

No wonder, also, that there should be deep-laid prejudice against Mysticism even now.

One reason why it does not find favour in Europe is due to a misapprehension of the doctrine that all that is seen is unreal, while what is

[1] 'The Varieties of Religious Experience,' p. 388.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 389.

[3] 'European History,' p. 295.

[4] Noire.

invisible is real. The mystic is, accordingly, looked upon as a dreamer moving in unrealities, and absurdly trying to prove realities a dream.

I have already discussed this point in the earlier chapters and shall have again to recur to it in connection with Shankar Âchârya and the doctrine of Illusion.[1] It is enough here to say that Science has now come to the aid of the mystic, and furnished 'the hundred and one' instances in which the seen is, in a sense, unreal.

The mystic is not a visionary as is generally supposed. His reason is the *logic of the whole personality* and not merely the logic of the things of Space and Time; he is conscious of the most valuable possession in the inmost recesses of his heart—the Light that for ever shines—the Light that gives vitality to all. He has faith that, by reason of the moral discipline he undergoes, he can realise that Light within himself; he has a firm belief in the illumination and guidance of that Light.

Nor is it correct to say that Mysticism means a life of Quietism, of no practical good to society. I have touched upon this point in the previous chapters on the 'Ethics of the *Vedânta*' and 'Indian Asceticism.' It is enough here to refer to what Eckhart and Tauler, both most eminent mystics, think of this objection. They believed, says Max Müller,[2] that it was quite possible to take part in the practical work of life, and yet maintain a perfect tranquillity and stillness of the soul within; and, what is more conclusive still on this question, is that both of them took a prominent share in the affairs of the Church and State, and tried to introduce much needed reforms in the life of the clergy and the laity.

Prof. James[3] refers to the case of another mystic—St. Ignatius—whose mysticism made him assuredly one of the most powerfully practical human engines that ever lived.

Rev. Charles Kingsley is of opinion that the mystics are "a terribly practical people, quiet students and devotees though they may seem".

[1] The author did not live to finish these Chapters.

[2] 'Theosophy,' p. 529.

[3] 'The Varieties of Religious Experience,' p. 413.

In fact, the history of European Mysticism is the history of martyrdom. And, indeed, if the reader were to go over the names of the thinkers, from the most ancient times to the present day, who were either mystics themselves or showed a marked sympathy with the mystic line of thought, he would find that true and genuine mystics could not have been mere visionaries. Their mysticism was Philosophy Applied, and its morals admittedly "sweet and good". The expressions *Sânkhya* and *Yoga*, as used in the Bhagvat Gîta, well illustrate the two-fold division of Theory and Practice obtaining in the Indian system.

Another reason, why mysticism is looked upon with disfavour, is that it is shrouded in mystery. But there is no mystery in the teachings of mysticism as the name implies. Whatever secrecy is observed by those who have entered on the practical discipline is due not to any desire to monopolise the knowledge of the highest truths, but to the excellent motive of communicating such high knowledge only to those who are living a life of absolute purity and righteousness, and are incapable of abusing the sacred trust and the great responsibility which such knowledge implies. For this sacred knowledge does not mean merely intellectual acquirement, but is an immense power for good or evil, which would make man either a God-man or a man-devil, according to the use he may make of it. The utterances of St. Paul and St. Clement on this point are confirmatory of this view.

With such a laudable object in view, wherever Mysticism prevailed—whether in times ancient or modern—care was taken to protect its teachings from the inroads of unholy curiosity; they were accordingly shrouded more or less in mystery, but were otherwise open to all men who came to seek them under proper guidance. Beyond this there was no secrecy about them.[1]

At least, such was the original object; and although, in later times, we find sacerdotalism taking advantage of this wholesome principle of secrecy for its personal aggrandisement, the true mystic always denounces this corruption as boldly and vehemently as he would denounce any case of false mysticism, imposture and fraud.

[1] Except for obvious reasons, in Europe in the Middle Ages, when, for historic causes, the mystics had to form secret fraternities and work in secret conclaves.

One more reason, perhaps, for the existence of European prejudice against Mysticism may be that the manifestations of the mystic temper in sudden outbursts jar on the 'refined susceptibilities' of the European mind, and appear revolting to its 'matter-of-fact' judgment and temper. Such manifestations are probably considered as the outcome of unbridled emotionalism or the ravings of the deluded. It is unintelligible to such observers that a person who may have spiritually discerned a spiritual truth is generally indifferent to all external conventionalities; and this often happens in cases where the subjective and the objective aspects of the mind are not equipoised and synchronous. Such an one, though *in* this world, is not, for the moment at least, *of* this world. His may be 'madness,' as Socrates is made to say in the Phœdrus, but it is Divine madness, which, according to Plato, is the source of the choicest blessings granted to man.

It is possible that the so-called mystic experience may, in any particular instance, be the outcome of what, in Psychology, is called auto-suggestion, that is, that one sees what one anxiously expects or wishes to see. It is equally possible that, for every one case of genuine and honest mysticism, there may be a number of cases of imposture and fraud.

But when we have, connected with this movement, names of people well known for deep learning, purity of life, strength of character and honesty of purpose, it would be most unreasonable to suspect their experiences as being due to diseased imagination, self-delusion or imposture and fraud. Their high character, their wisdom, their possession of god-like powers, and their desire to exercise them for the good of humanity and never for any baser purposes, ought to give us the assurance that the experiences of these "choice specimens of human wisdom and virtue in all ages" have not been wrong, when they believed themselves to be holding communion with supersensible realities.[1]

And this assurance becomes all the more emphasised, when it is remembered that, among these 'choice specimens,' there have been saints of a most marked personality.

[1] Lilly's "European History"

These experiences may no doubt be varied in form, but, as stated before, they are one in essence. One with a philosophic turn of mind, for instance, may see the Eternal Verity in its purely impersonal form; the experiences of others, again, who, though not philosophers, are, nevertheless, devoted worshippers may be somewhat different. A few illustrations will make this clear.

The following cases, taken from Prof. James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," refer to experiences more or less impersonal in their character:—

"In that time the consciousness of God's nearness came to me sometimes. I say God to describe what is indescribable. A presence, I might say, but that is too suggestive of personality, and the moments of which I speak did not hold the consciousness of a personality, but something in myself made me feel myself a part of something bigger than I that was controlling. I felt myself one with the grass, the trees, birds, insects, everything in nature."[1]

Similarly, St. John of the Cross says:—

"We receive the mystical knowledge of God, clothed in none of the kind of images, in none of the sensible representations, which our mind makes use of in other circumstances. Accordingly, in this knowledge, since the senses and imagination are not employed, we get neither form nor impression; nor can we give any account or furnish any likeness, although the mysterious and sweet-tasting wisdom comes home so clearly to the inmost parts of our soul."[2]

Another mystic—a Swiss—gives his experience thus:—

"I think it well to add that in this ecstasy of mine, God had neither form, colour, odour nor taste. Moreover, the feeling of His presence was accompanied with no determinate localization. It was rather as if my personality had been transformed by the presence of a *Spiritual Spirit*."[3]

On the other hand, as stated before, the experiences of others less gifted but nevertheless most sincere in their devotions, may be somewhat different; in their visions, these may see something more con-

[1] "Var. Rel. Exp.," p. 394, Note 2. *Cf.* Rabindranath Tagore's vision.
[2] 'Var. Rel. Exp.,' p. 407.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 68.

crete. A Christian may see Jesus in his vision; a Hindu his Vishnu or Shiva; a Suffi may see Mahomed; but each one sees his own ideal of the Godhead, thus illustrating the truth contained in the Bhagvat Gîta.

"In whatsoever manner men may approach Me, even so do I accept them; for the path which men may take from every side is Mine.[1] In whatever form a devotee may seek to worship Me, in that form I confirm the faith of that devotee.[2] Even as to those devotees who worship other gods, *if they worship them full of faith*, they worship Me, though their worship is not in any approved form."[3]

In all these cases the essential and underlying truth is always one and the same, and is as pure and spiritual at the farthest known point of ancient times as in its latest development.

Christian mystics of note speak to having experienced in their own case the bliss of union with God; they had visions in which they experienced what Plotinus describes as the "flight of the Alone to the Alone". Prof. Inge refers to—

"Three places in the Bible where revelations of the profoundest truths are recorded to have been made during ecstatic visions—the revelations received by Moses, Isaiah and St. Peter. St. Paul, too, is said to have had such visions—visions which have every right to be considered as real irradiations of the soul from the Light that for ever shines."

Prof. Inge, however, warns us that these recorded experiences of the Christian saints ought not to be supposed as belonging to the essence of mysticism. Of course not, if Mysticism was under a cruel ban in Christendom and Christian saints of Biblical renown must be saved from the odium! But the question is not whether these experiences belong or do not belong to the *essence* of this cruelly persecuted mysticism. It is enough that they are admitted to be of great psychological interest and cannot be confounded with hallucination or idiosyncrasy.

[1] IV, 11.
[2] VII, 21.
[3] IX, 23.

Prof. Inge himself describes ecstasy or vision as follows :—

" Ecstasy or vision begins when thought ceases, to our consciousness, to proceed from ourselves. It differs from dreaming, because the subject is awake. It differs from hallucination, because there is no organic disturbance ; it is or claims to be a temporary enhancement, not a partial disintegration of the mental faculties. Lastly, it differs from practical inspiration, because the imagination is passive."

Plotinus [1] is worth noting in this connection ; his description of ecstatic condition is as follows :—

"It is a state in which you are your finite self no longer—in which the Divine Essence is communicated to you. It is the liberation of your mind from its finite anxieties. Like only can apprehend like. When you thus cease to be finite, you become one with the Infinite. In the reduction of your soul to its simplest self, its Divine essence, you realise this Union, nay, this Identity."

Emerson, too, considers that an ecstatic vision is not a wild phantasy. The seers who realise this condition have—

" an access to the secrets and structure of nature by some higher method than by experience, and what other knowledge is necessary. . . By being assimilated to the Original Soul by whom and after whom all things subsist, the soul of man does then really flow into it."

And were it not for such spiritual importance and intrinsic worth of Mysticism, were it not for the high ethical ideal it invariably insists on, were it not also for the fact, as acknowledged by Plato and a number of other philosophers who came after him, that it is a source of the rarest blessings granted to man, it would have been impossible for Christian mysticism to have had such 'a long and vigorous life' in Europe, notwithstanding the incessant persecution to which it was subjected. Even to this day, it is said, it is exercising its influence on many a learned man.

The experiences of the mystic were, at one time, considered to be " unjustifiable pretensions, all Icarus-like flights towards forbidden regions ", but the time, it seems, is not far distant, when such

[1] See Max Müller's ' Theosophy,' p. 432.

an idea will have to be abandoned, or, at least, appreciably modified.

The day is past, as says a writer in the *Hibbert Journal*, in which the mystic could be ignored as an eccentric or an abnormal individual; his spiritual assertions are supported rather than denied by psychologists and by ethnological research.

In fact, the tide is now changing. There is a growing interest now taken in psychic questions. The fact is now begun to be realised that science goes hand in hand with mysticism. As Prof. Jowett[1] remarks "the most fanciful of ancient philosophies is also the most verified in fact."

It is now freely admitted[2] that among the much-despised schoolmen there were thinkers of the first rank whose names may be set by the side of the most brilliant philosophers of ancient or modern times.

A mystic reaction appears to have already set in throughout the West,[3]—a return to the primitive spirit of Christianity, as found in the teachings of Eckhart, Tauler, and Suso, proclaiming the direct beholding of all things in God as the source of all enlightenment and the resting on His heart as the sole and highest wisdom.[4]

This intuition of the Eternal is within "the lotus of one's own heart". It is this listening to the voice that speaks within, which, as Schelling truly observes, is the innermost and most real experience—of Spirit speaking to Spirit. This experience of "seeing by the Inner Light", when realised, cannot be shaken away by any amount of argument. It results in bliss, which, after it is once experienced, for however short a time, can never fail to exercise its influence for good.

It is this experience, this vital realisation of our oneness with the Infinite Life which, in the *Vedânta*, constitutes true knowledge, *Parâ Vidyâ*; (in Christianity it is called Faith); all other knowledge is worldly and *aparâ*.[5]

[1] Introd. "Timmœ."
[2] See Noire.
[3] Prof. D'Alviella.
[4] See Noire.
[5] See Mund. Up. I, 1, 4-5.

What this spiritual experience may be it is impossible, says the *Vedânta*, to adequately describe in any intelligible language. Any attempt to do so would, in the first place, imply the dualism of the seer and the seen, the thinker and the thought, and, secondly, it would result in paradoxical utterances, such, for instance, as the following :— 'Brahma is neither cause nor Not-Cause';—'It is known to those who do not know; not known to those who know; etc.'

St. Paul also calls attention to this inadequacy of language by a series of formal contradictions—'I live, yet not I'—'Dying and behold we live'; 'When I am weak, then I am strong.' It is thus obvious that language can only furnish us with poor, misleading, and wholly inadequate images of spiritual facts. As Plotinus observes :—

'God is neither to be expressed in speech nor in written discourse; but we speak and write in order to direct the soul to Him and stimulate it to rise from thought to vision. . . Our teaching reaches so far only as to indicate the way in which they [who wish to find Him] should go, *but the vision itself must be their own achievement.*'

The self-experience (*Swânubhava*) here referred to is not so much of what becomes intellectually known as of what is spiritually *felt*. Who, then, can blame the *Vedânta*, if it says that *Brahma* is that from which Speech recedes.[1] The most eloquent expression to indicate self-realisation is Silence. The best thing that man can say about God is to be able to be silent about Him.[2]

Sat-chit-ânanda and such like expressions are, no doubt, used in the *Vedânta* to denote the highest condition of self-realisation, but all these, it is acknowledged, fall short of the exact truth.

We, on the lower plane, fully engrossed with the consciousness of our individual ego-hood and of our earthly relations and attachments, are incapable of a complete self-realisation. Situated as we are in this world of sense-experience, most of us have to be content with the degree of spiritual enlightenment within our reach; but has not Providence given us an indication of the *possibility* of this most exalted condition of bliss? Are there no occasions in the lives of most of us,

[1] Taitt. Up :—
यतो वाचो निवर्तन्तेऽप्राप्य मनसा सह

[2] St. Augustine.

when we experience a delight, pure and simple, with a complete unconsciousness, however momentary, of the *ego* that enjoys and the *non-ego* that occasions it ?

There is no 'spurious rapture' of the mystic in such a case. It is a psychological fact which cannot be gainsaid.

'The positive delight of æsthetic contemplation is to us a warrant that beyond individuality there is not a mere painless Nothing, but a state, the exuberant bliss of which cannot be compared to any earthly feeling of delight.'[1]

Those who may be unwilling to acknowledge this or unable to appreciate it, are no more justified in *denying* the reality of such experience than the blind man is in denying reality to the stars which *he* cannot see. They have no right to ridicule the colossal soul that experiences this highest bliss. Such a soul 'lies vast abroad on his times, uncomprehended by them, and requires a long focal distance to be seen.'[2]

[1] Deussen's "Metaphysics." [2] Emerson.

CHAPTER X.

AVIDYÂ: NESCIENCE.[1]

THIS word *Avidyâ*,[2] which is a technical term in the *Vedânta* philosophy, is translated into English by Nescience—Ignorance.

But the question is whether it means ignorance in the popular sense of the term. This certainly cannot be its meaning in the *Vedânta* writings. It would be insulting the entire human intelligence for a philosopher to say, for instance, as Shankar has done, that this world is the result of Nescience, if nescience meant ignorance as commonly understood, or that 'the Highest Lord manifests himself by means of Nescience.[3]

When such language is used in philosophic writings, it may indicate an inability to express philosophic or spiritual truths in human language, or it may indicate emotionalism which generally results in paradoxical utterances; but it could not certainly be utter nonsense or suggest rank idiotcy in the writer.

What, then, is the meaning of *Avidyâ* in the *Vedânta*?

Briefly stated, it means the natural incapacity of man, with his ordinary limited intelligence, to comprehend the Eternal Absolute, called *Brahma*, which is unknowable by the senses or such other means of knowledge.[4]

Ordinarily, our faculties enable us to acquire empiric knowledge—that is knowledge pertaining to the phenomenal world of sense-experience; but that knowledge is not true knowledge. It is 'lower' knowledge (*aparâ vidyâ*) from the point of view of the *Vedântin*, and even false. All *aparâ vidyâ* is *avidyâ*.

[1] Contributed originally to the Indian Review for 1908, pp. 420-424.

[2] For a history of the development of the idea of *avidyâ*, see Deussen's 'Phil. Up.' pp. 74-77, and Max Müller's "Six systems," pp. 211 and following.

[3] See Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. S. B. E. Vol. 34, pp. 190, 352.

[4] See Shankar's Gloss on the Bhag. Git. II, 18:—

अप्रमेय : प्रत्यक्षादिप्रमाणैरपरिच्छेद्य :

Philosophically *avidyâ* is unreal. It is simply assumed to account for the otherwise inexplicable production of an unreal world. The process of ratiocination which the *advaita* adopts is mostly akin to the Eleatic dialectics; it is technically called *adhyâropâpavâda*[1] अध्यारोपापवाद (superimposition and eventual elimination), and it is this. The world around us incessantly presses itself on our attention, and man cannot avoid giving an explanation of it, such as his own faculties, limited as they are, can suggest. By the laws of our thought, a positive implies a negative, Being implies Not-Being, *Âtman* implies *Anâtman*, Spirit implies Nature, Mind implies Matter; but both the elements of these pairs of opposites cannot be conceived as two co-existing eternal principles, for they would be a limitation of each other and would destroy the infinitude of both. If both of them are really existing entities, one of them must be subordinate to the other, as being derived from it or as being dependent on it.

Strictly speaking, if the One is real, the Many, as its antithesis, must be unreal; if Being is real, Not-Being must be unreal. If *Brahma* is real, the sensible universe must be unreal. These are conclusions forced by logical necessity.

But with the mental equipment and the Categories of Causation, Time, Space, &c., to which his understanding is subject, man views the world and everything in it as happening in Time, as having a Cause, as being in Space, and as having thus a differentiated and independent existence.

[1] The Marâthâ Saint Râmdâs aptly describes this process of "*adhyâropâpavâda*" in his Dâsa-bodha, VII, 3 (4), in the following terms :—"First raise an unreality, then, knowing, give it up; thus, Truth, in its essence, is realized."

[आधीं मिथ्या उभारावें । मग तें ओळखोन सांडावें । पुढें सत्य तें स्वभावें । अंतरीं बाणे ॥]

This process we commonly employ in finding out the value of an unknown quantity in an algebraical equation. Thus :—

$X^2+2X=24.$

add 1 to both sides

$\therefore X^2+2X+1=24+1=25.$

$\therefore (X+1)^2=5^2$

$\therefore X+1 =5$

$\therefore X =5-1=4.$

Here the addition and eventual subtraction of the figure 1 was for the purpose of determining the value of the *unknown quantity* X. Likewise, in the *Vedânta*, in order to realize the true nature of the *unknown Âtman*, by antithesis, several unreal objects (*anâtman*) have to be first super-imposed and eventually eliminated.

This corresponds to the process called "Dialectics" in Greek philosophy. It means the refutation of error by a *reductio ad absurdum*, as a means of establishing the truth. Zeno, the Eleatic, was the first to adopt this method, which, in the hands of Socrates and Plato, became a very powerful weapon of offence. See Lewis's 'Hist. Phil.,' p. 73.—ED.

This is Empiric knowledge, which has, no doubt, its value for its limited aims and ends. For, generally speaking, it is by means of what is called Matter, that the mind becomes revealed ; it is by means of Nature that Spirit is apprehended ; it is by means of *Anâtman* that the *Âtman* is self-realised.

And the moment such revelation, apprehension or Self-realisation becomes an accomplished fact in its fulness, the true nature of what was hitherto called Matter, Nature or *Anâtman* becomes revealed as being identical with its opposite. At this stage, the unreality of Matter *as Matter*, of Nature *as Nature*, of Anâtman *as Anâtman*, becomes self-evident, for the man who has reached this stage has, *ex hypothesi*, already transcended the sphere of empiricism and entered into the Spiritual region, where all differentiations, due to the categories of the human understanding, have lost their significance.

All empiric knowledge is thus *avidyâ* and that alone which concerns *Brahma* is *vidyâ—parâ vidyâ*[1].

Originally, *avidyâ* simply denoted a *subjective* incapacity to obtain a knowledge of *Brahma* ; in course of time, it came to be looked upon as an *objective* power ; and while the *Nyâya* system defined it as a "privation (*abhâva*) of knowledge," the *Vedânta* excluded the idea of privation by the use of the expression (*bhâvarûpa*)—an *existent* Not-Being in the Being itself and associated with it, and furnishing, from our limited point of view, an explanation of the phenomenal world.

As an objective power, *Avidyâ* is supposed to have two properties of *âvarana* and *vikshepa*, that is, of *giving rise* to the conceit of egoity or conscious individuality, and of *projecting* the phantasmagoria of a world, which the individual regards as external to himself.

It is the Absolute Naught or Not-Being of the Hegelian system or the *asat* (unreal) aspect of *Brahma*, to which the Becoming of the Hegelians or the *Samsâra* of the *Vedânta* is due, and by reason of which, the Eternal Absolute is, or, according to the *Advaitin*, *appears* to be *becoming*.

Avidyâ is the *power of the Âtman* (*Brahma*) to which all the manifold of phenomenal existence is due.[2] It is by *avidyâ* that the 'only One

[1] Mund. Up. 1, 1, 5.

[2] Mândukya. Up. III, 10 :—"All entities are mere dream, being *sent forth* by the *power* of *Mâyâ* (*avidyâ*) in *Âtman*.' [संघाताः स्वप्नवत् सर्वे आत्ममायाविसर्जिताः ।

existent' (*Sadekameva*) is differentiated as so many things undergoing production, destruction and the like-changes, like an actor on the stage.[1]

Shankar calls *Avidyâ* the primeval natural nescience, which has its use for our limited aims and ends in practical life.[2] Consisting in the notion of variety involving actions means and ends, it is always present in the Self (*âtman*) in the following form : "Mine is action. I, the agent, will do such an action, for such and such a result." This *avidyâ* has been active since time immemorial[3].

The unmanifested *Brahma* is assumed to contain *avidyâ* within it as its limiting adjunct, giving rise to the notion of *Mâyâ*, of a personal God,[4] and of *Samsâra* as the result of their joint activity.[5]

It is obvious that *avidyâ*, in the above passages, is likened to *Mâyâ*. All objects in the creation are projected by the power of illusion in the *Âtman*. This power of *âtman* is called *avidyâ*; all objects are evolved from it and are, therefore, from a philosophic point of view, unreal.[6]

As in the case of *Mâyâ*, so here, questions are asked whether this *Avidyâ* (Nescience) is a product and if so, how it is caused ? If a product, what is its cause ? Certainly, not the Absolute *Brahma*

[1] Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Git. XVIII, 48 :—"
"सदेकमेव वस्तु अविद्यया उत्पत्तिविनाशादिधर्मैः नटवत् अनेकधा विकल्प्यते "

[2] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr III, 2, 15 ; S. B. E. Vol. 38, p. 156 :—
'सत्यां एवं च नैसर्गिक्यां अविद्यायां लोकवेदव्यवहारावतारः '

[3] Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Git. XVIII, 66 :—
क्रियाकारकफलभेदबुद्धिः अविद्यया ऽऽत्मनि नित्यप्रवृत्ता 'ममकर्म' 'अहं कर्ताऽमुष्मै फलाय इदं कर्म करिष्यामि' इतीयं अविद्या अनादिकाल प्रवृत्ता '

Cf. "Indian Thought" for 1907, p. 76 :—
"We cannot deny the *anâdi* (immemorial) *avidyâ* which our immediate consciousness vouches for as something, which, while depending on the existence of the inward Self, hides and obscures the intelligence and bliss of the Self. Were we to deny this, we should have to deny the inward Self as well." (*Vivarana prameya Sangraha*). As to why *avidyâ* is immemorial, see *ibid.* p. 76, and p. 153 for why *avidyâ* is a positive entity. As to how *avidyâ* abides in the Self, *ibid.* pp. 79, 297, 304, 368, 386.

[4] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 2, 22 ; S. B. E. Vol. 34, pp. 140, 243.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 268.

[6] Shankar's 'Gloss on Mândukya, Up. III, 10 :—
'आत्ममाया विसर्जिता' आत्मनो माया ऽविद्या तया परमार्थतः संति इत्यर्थः

itself, for, *ex hypothesi*, it is actionless and changeless. If not a product, is it another entity self-caused and like *Brahma* itself ?

The answer given is that it is inscrutable and inexplicable (*anirvachanîya*). It is neither *sat* nor *asat*—not *sat*, because it is not eternal, not *asat*, in the sense of precluding all possibility of existence in one's experience, like the 'horns of a hare' or the 'son of a barren woman'. It is something which presents us with the spectacle of an external world in which we experience pleasure and pain, and appears also in our consciousness and entangles us in the principle of Individualism. It is thus more than nothing but less than real.

Perhaps, it is like "Opinion" of the Greek Philosophers, which Plato defines as "something lying between the purely existent and the absolutely non-existent[1]—something more dusky than knowledge [but] more luminous than ignorance."

This, then, appears, to be the Vedantic sense of *Avidyâ*. It is the negative aspect of *Brahma*, which, coupled with the positive aspect, becomes the origin of the Universe. To the *Vedântin*, *avidyâ* furnishes an explanation[2] of the Universe, and denotes all that has come into existence.

On a general review of the Upanishads, of the Vedânta Sûtras, of the Bhagvat Gîta, and of Shankar's commentaries thereon, it would seem that the word *avidyâ* is variously used to denote

1. Nature or Creation[3];
2. The Mystery underlying Nature[4];

[1] See G. H. Lewis, quoted in Jacob's 'Vedânta Sâra,' p. 48 n.

[2] Professor Ferrier, who could not take the bold step of proceeding yet further, states it as his conviction that "some great truth lies here; that here, if anywhere, is the embryo of the solution of the enigma of the universe. I am convinced that the unity of contraries is the law of things; that all life, all nature, all thought, all reason, centres in the oneness or conciliation of Being and Not-Being." ('Greek Phil.' p. 145). This is no doubt a solution of the problem of the universe, but valid only to us and to intelligences like ours. And such a solution the *Vedânta* has given at one of the stages of philosophic thought in India; the conception of *Sad-asat* or union of *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna* (क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञसंयोग) in the Bhag. Gît. IX, 19; XIII, 26, means the unity of Being and Not-Being. But that is not enough. What Philosophy needs is a solution of the problem of existence—of what *is*, as distinguished from what appears to be—and such a solution, moreover, must be valid not only to our own intelligence but to all possible intelligences. Such a solution only the Eleatics in Greece and the *Advaitins* in India have been bold enough to attempt. See Chap. III, *supra*.

[3] *Cf.* Shankar's introdn. to Brihad. Up. Tukaram Tâtyâ's Edn., p. 53.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 54-55; and see Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Gît. XVIII, 48, Mahâdeva Shâstri's translation, p. 331.

3. *Mâyâ*, the postulated cause of Nature;
4. The innate forms of the human intellect, *viz.*, Time, Space, Causality, &c., which stand, so to speak, between us and *Brahma*[1];
5. In other words, the Limitations on the human understanding, or the incapacity to understand the mystery underlying nature;
6. The principle of Individuation and our entanglement in that principle;[2]
7. Our identification with our body and the organs of sense, which are themselves the products of Nature[3], *Prakriti*;
8. The consequent erroneous imposition of the attributes of one upon the other, as when I say 'I am fat or I am lean,' the properties of *prakriti* are ascribed to the Ego, or, on the other hand, when I say 'my body feels,' 'my mind tells me,' the property of intellectual activity (*chaitanya dharma*) is ascribed to the products of *prakriti*;
9. Our attachment to things earthly[4];
10. Empirical knowledge generally.

As stated before, the terminology used by the *Vedântins* has always to be borne in mind before the reader could understand the *rationale* of their writings. It is only then that he will be able to understand and appreciate such noteworthy passages as the following, which might, otherwise, appear absurd:—

"The Highest Lord manifests Himself by means of Nescience,[5]... The whole world exists in the sphere of Nescience[6]...Manifoldness is fictitiously created by Nescience...Plurality is due to Nescience[7]...Nescience is the seed of all manifestation[8]...It is the

[1] The mind or intellect (*Manas*) is itself said to be *avidyâ*. "The wise, who see the truth, have described the *Manas* as *avidyâ*, by which is moved the world, as clouds by the wind." Viveka Chûdamani, verses 182, 172.

[2] See Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Git. XVIII, 66, Mahâdeva Shâstri's Translation, p. 344. (See note 3, p. 177 *supra*).

[3] Shankar's 'Gloss on Ved. Sutr. S. B. E. Vol. 38, pp. 63-5. See also Deussen's 'Phil. Up.' p. 77.

[4] Kath. Up. 2 Madras Series,

[5] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. S. B. E. Vol. 34, pp. 190, 352.

[6] *Ibid.* pp. 135, 155; also S. B. E. Vol. 38, p. 294.

[7] S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 352; and Vol. 38, pp. 54, 55.

[8] Shankar on Ken.Up. I. 3; I Madras Series, p. 44

seed of worldly life[1]...All beings are sleeping in the beginningless Nescience[2]...Names and Forms are presented by Nescience[3]... The body is the product of Nescience[4]...The elements and the sense organs are the product of Nescience[5]. The conditions of being agent, enjoyer, are due to Nescience[6]...At death the soul takes Nescience with it[7]...All that is knowable is of the nature of Nescience.[8] *Karma* is Nescience[9]....Birth and Death are Nescience.[10]"

In fact, *avidyâ* means, as Professor Max Müller puts it, "common sense with its well understood limitations, or the wisdom of the world." It practically means our worldly life, unenlightened by a knowledge of the Divine truth, which alone is the truest and highest knowledge, all other knowledge being deemed lower and, from the spiritual point of view, designated as false.

What we ordinarily call knowledge is worldly knowledge, acquired by the mind through the senses. As stated before, it is concerned with all that pertains to the phenomenal world of sense-experience—with objects which, as conditioned by Time, Space and Causality, appear in their condition of differentiation and separation.

Such knowledge is *avidyâ*, and the highest that might be predicated of such knowledge is that "in its ultimate essence nothing can be known."[11]

As Hudson[12] properly remarks, Nature conceals God; Man reveals him; the more we study physical nature, the farther God is removed from us; the more we study Man, the nearer God approaches to us.

There is a tendency of human nature persistently to look outward and seek happiness in the external world. Empirical knowledge thus becomes an obstacle to the realisation of Unity which is the highest truth. In this sense, it is called the enemy of (true) knowledge

[1] S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 300.

[2] Shankar's Gloss on Kath. Up. III, 14, 2 Madras Series, p. 58.

[3] S. B. E. Vol. 34, pp. 140 and following.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 244.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 281.

[6] S. B. E. Vol. 38, pp. 54, 55.

[7] *Ibid.* p. 102

[8] Shankar's Gloss on Ken. Up. I, Madras Series, p. 44.

[9] Shankar's Gloss on Ish. Up. 11, Tukaram Tatia's Translation, p. 637, note 2.

[10] Svet. Up. III, 8, and Shankar's Gloss thereon.

[11] H. Spencer; see also Hudson's 'Future Life,' pp. 66-7.

[12] *Ibid.* pp. 260-1.

(*Dnyâna virodhi*). It throws a veil (the veil of creation) and hides the true reality from our view ; it throws a mist on our understanding and creates in us a tendency to attach ourselves to the creation as the true reality.[1]

And if it ought to be our aim to discover the true Reality, the *Vedântin* rightly suggests, what Socrates taught in Greece :—" Turn inwards and know thyself."[2]

A study of Nature alone, in this view of the matter, will not help us in reaching the goal. That study by itself is of use in the affairs of this world—for the practical life of man, but not for the higher or spiritual life. It must be made to subserve the higher end, and this is possible only when man develops, by proper culture, his capacity to grasp higher truths. He must rise above Nature and by close introspection and development (under rigorous moral discipline) of his powers, which are potentially great, endeavour to discover the Divine truth, using, where necessary, the instruments furnished to him by Nature itself, but without attaching himself to, or identifying himself with them.

If he enters on the path in the right attitude, he will begin to see things differently ; he will begin to realise that there is One eternal Principle pervading all creatures and its appearance as Many is like the 'reflections of the moon in water'[3]. He will begin to see that the *anâtman* is being transformed and, by assimilation, takes on the character of *âtman* itself, just as iron when heated becomes red hot and acquires the properties of fire.[4]

In other words, he will begin to see that experience which begins in this world, with the *synthesis* of the Self and the Not-self-of *âtman* and its supposed antithesis *anâtman*—must end in the Spiritual region with Unity and Identity.

How this is possible I have endeavoured to explain at length in the previous chapter on Knowing and Being.

[1] Bhag. Git. V, 15.

[2] "The capacity to turn inward is alone *Vidyâ* (true knowledge)". "अंतर्मुखा शक्तिरेव विद्या "

[3] एक एव हि भूतात्मा भूतेभूते व्यवस्थितः ।
एकधा बहुधा चैव दृश्यते जलचंद्रवत् ॥
See also *supra* p. 72.

[4] अग्निसंगाद्यथालोहं अग्नित्वं उपगच्छति ।
आत्मसंगात् तथा गच्छत्यात्मतां इन्द्रियादिकम् ॥
प्रभाकारः cited *supra* p. 60.

It is enough here to note that there is Divine Intelligence in Nature as there is in Man ; and that thought and intelligence is presupposed in all objective reality. To deny this is to subvert the fundamental basis of all knowledge, and to reduce the intelligible world to a chaos.

The whole of Nature is pervaded by thought akin to our own ; and what happens in every cognition is, as previously pointed out, that the perceiving Subject unites itself with the Self in the object perceived ; if the cognition which ensues be incomplete, that is, if the object perceived be not perceived in its entirety, from all possible points of view, as is generally the case in ordinary human cognitions, the perception constitutes a mere *act* of perception and the person perceiving (the *jîva* of the *Vedânta* system) is said to be merely a knower, and the dualism of the knower and the known continues. In the degree that the knower has entered into the spirit of the thing perceived, he is said to have known that thing, and in the degree that he has known it, he is "*at home*" with it. This is the meaning of the expression that to *know* a thing is to *become* it.

Those who are competent to speak on the subject tell us that at this high stage of moral and spiritual culture one sees things which are concealed from ordinary humanity by the illusion of the senses. Ordinarily, however, the senses, by hiding the higher verities from our gaze, are in reality our benefactors, since they prevent us from perceiving that which, if realised without due preparation, would throw us into unutterable consternation—things which we could not bear to behold[1]. The Bhagvat Gîta in Chapter XI gives an excellent illustration of this truth.

In this view of the matter, *avidyâ* is bliss where it is folly to try to become wise without a proper preparation and guidance. Verily, the path to self-realisation is 'sharp as a razor'.

[1] *Cf.* Steiner.

CHAPTER XI.

SAT-ASAT (BEING AND NOT-BEING[1]).

It appears that in the most ancient times, these words, *sat* and *asat*, meant exactly the opposite of their modern significations. Whether the word *sat* had anything to do with the Eternal Reality would depend upon whether there was at all then a belief in such Reality.

European Orientalists say that Polytheism was the primitive form of belief in Vedic times and that abstract conceptions of the Deity were only the work of a later period, when speculation had made considerable advance.[2]

But there are, even according to these thinkers, passages in the earlier Books of the Rig Veda, which suggest an advance towards the idea of a Sovereign Deity. Rig Veda, I, 89, 10,[3] for instance, is thoroughly pantheistic, as it asserts all things to be the manifestations of one All-pervading Principle, which, in this hymn, is designated *Aditi*. In Rig Veda, III, 55,[4] 1, again, it is said that "the great divinity of the gods is one." So, too, Rig Veda, I, 164,[5] according to Sâyaṇâchârya, conveys the principal doctrines of the *Vedânta* philosophy or the unity or universality of the Spirit, now called *Brahma*. It asks, *inter alia*, 'who is that One alone, who has upheld these six spheres in the form of the Unborn ? Whence is the Divine Mind in its supremacy engendered ?' It refers to the now well-known illustration of two birds associated together and perching on a fig tree, where one of

[1] Originally contributed to the Indian Review for 1909, pp. 344-349.

[2] Muir's Sanskrit Texts, V, 251.

[3] "The Goddess *Aditi* is the heaven, *Aditi* is the sky, *Aditi* is mother, father and son. All the Gods are *Aditi*, the Five People are *Aditi*, *Aditi* is all that is created as well as Creator."

अदितिः द्यौः अदितिः अंतरिक्षं अदितिः माता
स पिता स पुत्रः ।
विश्वेदेवा अदितिः पंचजना अदितिः जातं
अदितिः जनित्वम् ॥

[4] 'महद् देवानां असुरत्वं एकम् '

[5] 'अचिकित्वान् चिकितुषः चित् अत्र कवीन्
पृच्छामि विद्मने न विद्वान्'
वियः तस्तंभ षड् इमा रजांसि अजस्य रूपे
किमपि स्वित् एकम् ॥ ' Verse 6

'देवं मनः कुतोऽधि प्रजातम् ' verse 18.

'द्वासुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते।
तयोः अन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति अनश्नन् अन्यो
ऽभिचाकशीति ॥ ' Verse 20.

them is eating the sweet fig, while the other is simply a looker on. It also refers to the well-known formula, '*ekam sat viprâh bahudhâ vadanti*': that which exists is One: sages call it variously.

But by far the best evidence of Monistic conception in the Vedic times is afforded by the two hymns of the Rig Veda, known as the *Purusha Sûkta*[1] and the *Nâsadiya Sûkta*[2]. These may have been com-

[1] Rig Veda, X, 90; see translation, Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. 1, p. 9, and Vol. 5, p. 368:—

"1. *Purusha* has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth, he overpassed (it) by a space of ten fingers. 2. *Purusha* himself is this whole (universe), whatever has been and whatever shall be. He is also the lord of immortality, since (or, when) by food he expands. 3. Such is his greatness, and *Purusha* is superior to this. All existences are a quarter of him; and three-fourths of him are that which is immortal in the sky. 4. With three quarters *Purusha* mounted upwards. A quarter of him was again produced here. He was then diffused everywhere over things which eat and things which do not eat. 5. From him was born *Virâj*, and from *Virâj*, *Purusha*. When born, he extended beyond the earth, both behind and before. 6. When the gods performed a sacrifice with *Purusha* as the oblation, the spring was its butter, the summer its fuel, and the autumn its (accompanying) offering. 7. This victim, *Purusha*, born in the beginning, they immolated on the sacrificial grass. With him the gods, the *Sâdhyas*, and the *rishis* sacrificed. 8. From that universal sacrifice were provided curds and butter. It formed those aërial (creatures) and animals both wild and tame. 9. From that universal sacrifice sprang the rich and *sâman* verses, the metres, and the *yajush*. 10. From it sprang horses, and all animals with two rows of teeth; kine sprang from it; from it goats and sheep. 11. When (the gods) divided *Purusha*, into how many parts did they cut him up? what was his mouth? what arms (had he)? what (two objects) are said (to have been) his thighs and feet? 12. The *Brâhman* was his mouth; the *Râjanya* was made his arms; the being (called) the *Vaisya*, he was his thighs; the *Sûdra* sprang from his feet. 13. The moon sprang from his soul (*manas*), the sun from his eye, *Indra* and *Agni* from his mouth, and *Vâyu* from his breath. 14. From his navel arose the air, from his head the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ear the (four) quarters: in this manner (the gods) formed the worlds. 15. When the gods, performing sacrifice, bound *Purusha* as a victim, there were seven sticks (stuck up) for it (around the fire), and thrice seven pieces of fuel were made. 16. With sacrifice the gods performed the sacrifice. These were the earliest rites. These great powers have sought the sky, where are the former *Sâdhyas*, gods."

Cf. also Max Müller's "Hist. Sans. Lit.", p. 570

[2] Rig Veda, X, 129:—

"Then was not non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.

What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter?

Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?

2. Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal: no sign was there, the day's and night's divider.

That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

3. Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness, this All was indiscriminated chaos.

All that existed then was void and formless: by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit.

4. Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit.

Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.

5. Transversely was their severing line extended: what was above it then, and what below it?

paratively later in date than the other hymns, as European Orientalists suppose, but they are admittedly earlier than the Atharva Veda and, therefore, decidedly of great antiquity.

They unmistakably point to a belief in One Supreme Being[1]—a belief which seems to have been as primeval a conception in Theology and Cosmology as absolute or despotic monarchy was the primitive conception in archaic society.

There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here and energy up yonder.

6. Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation?

The gods are later than this world's production.

Who knows then whence it first came into being?

7. He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it,

Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not."

Griffith's Translation, Vol. 4, p. 367.

Cf. Max Müller's 'Chips Ger. Work'. I. 78 and Lilly's 'Anc Rel. Mod. Th.' p. 133.

[1] See also Rig Veda, IV, 40, 5:—

"He is HANSA (the sun), dwelling in light; VASU (the wind), dwelling in the firmament; the invoker of the gods (AGNI), dwelling on the altar; the guest (of the worshipper), dwelling in the house (as the culinary fire); the dweller amongst men (as consciousness), the dweller in the most excellent (orb, the sun), the dweller in truth, the dweller in the sky (the air), born in the waters, in the rays of light, in the verity (of manifestation) in the (eastern) mountain, the truth (itself)."

Translation, Wilson's 'Rig Veda Sanhitâ,' Vol. III, p. 199.

Rig Veda, X, 81:—

"He who sate down as *Hotar*-priest, the *Rishi*, our father, offering up all things existing,—

He, seeking through his wish a great possession, came among men on earth as archetypal.

2. What was the place whereon he took his station?

What was it that supported him? How was it?

Whence Visvakarman seeing all, producing the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens.

He who hath eyes on all sides round about him, a mouth on all sides, arms and feet on all sides, He, the sole god, producing earth and heaven, weldeth them, with his arms as wings, together.

What was the tree, what wood in sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven?

Ye thoughtful men inquire within your spirit whereon he stood when he established all things. * * * * *"

Griffith's Translation, Vol. 4, p. 260.

Rig Veda X, 82:—

"1. The father of the eye, the wise in spirit, created both these worlds submerged in fatness.

Then, when the eastern ends were firmly fastened, the heavens and the earth were far extended.

2. Mighty in mind and power is Visvakarman, Maker, Disposer, and most lofty Presence.

Their offerings joy in rich juice where they speak of One, only One, beyond the Seven Rishis.

3. Father who made us, he who, as Disposer, knoweth all races and all things existing.

Even he alone, the deities' name giver,—him other beings seek for information.

4. To him in sacrifice they offered treasures, Rishis of old, in numerous troops, as singers,

Who, in the distant, near, and lower region, made ready all these things that have existence.

5. That which is earlier than this earth and heaven, before the Asurâs and gods had being,—

What was the germ primeval which the waters received where all the gods were seen together?

6. The waters, they received that germ primeval wherein the gods were gathered all together.

The first of these hymns, the *purusha sûkta*, emphasises the idea of Sacrifice, which is the basic principle of Altruism, and which has rendered the Ethics of the *Vedânta* universally acceptable. It explains the entire creation as an act of Supreme self-sacrifice—the sacrifice of the Supreme Being, *Purusha*, that He might 'call into existence and contemplate and commune with those dependent images of Himself' which form the object of His thought and love. This He did by sacrificing a fourth part of Himself. 'Let me sacrifice myself (said He) in living things and all living things in myself,' and He then acquired greatness, self-effulgence and lordship. He thus limited Himself by this partial sacrifice, that His life might produce and sustain a multiplicity of separate lives.[1]

The other hymn, *nâsadiya sûkta*, clearly asserts that, while it is impossible to say whether this Universe was or was not in the beginning, there is no doubt that there was and always has been the One Supreme Being in whom we have our being.

The Only One breathed calmly by Itself, other than It, nothing since has been. That One *desired* to become many and It became many by *tapas*.[2] It thought and willed and created all this Universe (*idam*). Prior to what is called the creation, all was in an undifferentiated condition; 'there was not death nor immortality, there was no distinction between day and night.'

The One willed and became many, it is true; but how it did so is a mystery to Man, who has not yet attained the highest stage of Self-realisation. From the standpoint of the Universe, as the *Brihad*

It rested set upon the Unborn's navel, that One wherein abide all things existing.

7. Ye will not find him who produced these creatures: another thing hath risen up among you.

Enwrapt in misty cloud, with lips that stammer, hymn-chanters wander and are discontented."

Griffith's Translation, Vol. 4, p. 261.

See Prof. Roth's excellent remarks on *Vishvakarman* quoted at 4 Muir's Sanskrit Texts, p. 8. See also Taitt. Up. the preliminary invocation:—

"May Mittra grant us welfare,—Varuna grant us welfare,—Aryamâ grant us welfare,—Indra (and) Brihaspati grant us welfare,—the far-stepping Vishnu grant us welfare,—Salutation to Brahma,—Salutation to thee, O Vayu—Thou art even visibly Brahma.—I will call thee even the visible Brahma,—I will call (thee) just,—I will call (thee) true.—May he (Brahma) preserve me,—preserve the speaker,—preserve me,—preserve the speaker."

Dr. Roër's Translation, Tookâram Tâtya's Upanishads, p. 447.

[1] See Chap. VII, "The Ethics of the Vedânta," *supra* p. 113.

[2] *Tapas* in such passages means thought; See Shankar on Taitt. Up. II., 6; Madras Series, p. 520; See also on *tapas*, *supra*, pp. 132, 133.

Âranyaka[1] tells us, "The Immortal is veiled by the (empirical) reality," or, as the Bhagwat Gîta[2] puts it, Knowledge is veiled by Nescience, and thereby men are deluded.

It is this *sûkta* which, according to Gough, contains the germ of the doctrine of *Mâyâ*—a doctrine which plays an important part in the philosophy of the *Advaita*. The One, the sole Reality, which has always lain hidden in an inexplicable principle of Unreality, permeates and vitalises all things through the agency of that Unreality. This is Cosmical Illusion—*Mâyâ* or *Avidyâ*. The doctrine of *Mâyâ* is thus not a later graft upon the old *Vedânta* philosophy as supposed by Colebrooke and Max Müller.[3]

It is interesting to note in this connection a passage in Rig[4] Veda in which it is intimated that Indra is the only real object of adoration to whomsoever any hymn may be nominally addressed, whether to Agni, Vishnu, or Rudra; for it is Indra, who by the power of his *Mâyâ* assumes various forms and proceeds to his worshippers in multiform manifestations; the horses yoked to his car are a thousand.

Coming now to the words *sat* and *asat*, as they were used in the most ancient times, it is quite clear that the One Supreme Principle or Being was not called *sat*. It was perhaps deemed to be beyond both of them, or, what is more probable, it came in the category of *asat*, as meaning an incomprehensible and invisible Being from which the Universe arose.[5]

[1] 1, 6, 3 —'एतत् अमृतं सत्येन छन्नम्'

[2] V., 15:—'अज्ञानेन आवृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यंति जन्तवः'

[3] See Deussen's 'Phil. Up.' and Gough's 'Phil. Up.'

[4] VI, 47, 18:—

'INDRA, the prototype, has assumed various forms, and such is his form as that which (he adopts) for his manifestation: INDRA, multiform by his illusions, proceeds (to his many worshippers), for the horses yoked to his car are a thousand.' Translation, Wilson's 'Rig Veda Sanhitâ.' Vol. III p. 473.

[5] See Chând. Up. VI, 2, 1:—

"In the beginning, my dear, there was *Sat* alone, one only without a second; others say, in the beginning there was *Asat* alone, one only without a second; and *from Asat Sat was born.*"

[सदेव सोम्य इदं अग्र आसीत् एकमेवाद्वितीयम् तद् ह एक आहु ३ र ६ इदं अग्र आसीत् एकमेवाद्वितीयम्। तस्मात् असतः सत् जायत।]

A passage from the *Shatapatha Brâhmana*[1] probably the oldest commentary on the *Nâsadîya Sûkta* according to Dr. Muir, says :—

"In the beginning, this Universe was not either, as it were, non-existent, nor, as it were, existent. In the beginning this Universe was, as it were, and was not, as it were. Then it was only that mind (*tad ha tad manah eva âsa*). This Mind being developed wished to become manifested, more revealed, more embodied. It sought after itself, *tad âtmânam anvaichchhat* ; it practised tapas, *tat tapo atapyata* . . . [and the Universe was apparently the product of this Mind.]."

From this rather agnostic attitude which said that there was neither entity nor non-entity in the beginning, we come to a phase of thought somewhat akin to what is known in modern times as Realism.

Man, in his primitive stage of culture, endeavoured to solve the problem of the Universe by the knowledge which he had acquired by means of sense-experience ; and he would naturally call that real (*sat*) of which he could have sense-perception, and he would call all else *asat* of which he could have no such perception.

But he, surely, would not mean an absolute void by the word *asat*. His innate sense of the principle of causality would naturally suggest to him the idea of an invisible cause to every thing he saw coming into being.

At such an early stage of thought, the word *sat* would naturally denote, what we are now accustomed to call, empirical reality, and the source from which this *sat* arose would be called *asat*.

Accordingly, we find passages to the effect that in the beginning was *asat* and from *asat* arose *sat*. Thus, in Rig Veda,[2] "In the earliest ages of the gods, *sat* sprang from *asat*."

[1] X, 5, 3, 1 ; quoted and commented on in 5 Muir's Sanskrit Texts, p. 358 :— 'न इव वै इदं अग्रे असत् आसीत् न इव सत् आसीत्। आसीत् इव वै इदं अग्रे न इव आसीत्। तद् ह तद् मनः एव आस। तस्मात् एतद् ऋषिणाऽभ्यनूक्तं "न असत् आसीत् नो सत् आसीत् तदानीं" इति। न इव हि सत् मनो न इव असत्। तद् इदं मनः सृष्टं आविरकुर्भूषत् निरुक्ततरं मूर्ततरम्। तद् आत्मानं अन्वैच्छत्। तत् तपोऽतप्यत। तत् प्रामूर्छत्। .....'

[2] X, 72 :—'*Devânâm pûrvyê yugê asatah sad ajâyata.*"

[देवानां पूर्व्ये युगे असतः सत् अजायत]

In the Taittirîya Brahmana,[1] it is said that "this Universe was not originally any thing. There was neither heaven nor earth nor atmosphere. That being non-existent resolved, 'Let me become.'"

There are similar passages to be found in the Taittirîya Upanishad[2] and Chhândogya Upanishad.[3]

This empirical reality was sometimes called *satyam* (truth), in which case, the Eternal and Absolute Reality—whether known as *Âpa*, or *Prâna*, or *Vishva Karman*, or *Prajâpati* or *Hiranyagarbha*, or *Âtman* or *Brahma* was called the *truth of truths* (*Satyasya Satyam*[4]).

What is named *asat* in the above passages is not, strictly speaking, a non-existent entity or an absolute void, but it is *as if it were asat*—(*asadiva*).

Not-Being is Being itself prior to its manifestation; when It is differentiated by Name and Form (*nâmarûpa*) it is called *sat*. *Brahma* is thus *asat* in a secondary sense.[5] It is the invisible cause or source of the manifested Universe which technically is named *This* (*idam*).

This (*idam*) is none other than *sat* itself differentiated by Name and Form.[6] The whole of this Universe is, therefore, in reality *Brahma* itself.[7] (*Sarvam khalu idam Brahma*).

And there being an essential identity of Cause and Effect,[8] that is, of *Brahma* and the Universe which proceeds from It, Thou art that

[1] II, 2, 9 :—
'इदं वै अग्रे नैव किंचन आसीत् नद्युः आसीत् न पृथिवी न अंतरिक्षं तत् असत् एव मनोऽकुरुत स्यामिति'

[2] II, 7, 1 :—"In the beginning there was *asat* alone; from it sprang *Sat*."
[असत् वा इदं अग्र आसीत्। ततः वै सत् अजायत।]

[3] III, 19, 1 :—"In the beginning this [Brahma] was non-existent. It became existent, it grew." Max Müller, in a note, explains the word "Non-existent" as not yet existing, not yet developed in form and name, and therefore as if not existing. The original text is as follows :—
'असत् एव इदं अग्र आसीत्। तत् सत् आसीत् तत् समभवत्।'

[4] See Brihad. Up. II, 1, 20.

[5] Shankar's Gloss on Ved. Sutr. I, 4, 15; S. B. E. Vol. 34, p. 267 :—
"We have therefore to conclude that, while the term *Sat* ordinarily denotes that which is differentiated by name and form, the term *Asat* denotes the same substance previous to its differentiation, *i.e.*, that Brahman is, in a secondary sense of the word, called *Asat*, previously to the origination of the world."

[6] Shankar's Gloss on Chând. Up. VI 2, 2.

[7] Chând. Up. III, 14, 1.

[8] Ved. Sutr. II, 1, 14, and see Shankar's Gloss on it.

Universe itself[1]. He attains to Brahmahood who sees all this to be *âtmâ* and *âtmâ* alone[2].

We see here an advanced stage of Indian thought. It indicates a transition from Realism to Idealism—due to a consciousness of the fleeting and ephemeral character of the world, and of every thing contained in it, and of its being dependent, for its existence, on the Eternal and unchanging Reality of the Supreme Principle or Being, which pervades all that exists. All is *Brahma* and nothing, beside it or apart from it, is.

The Châdogya Upanishad[3] seems to have been, according to Dr. Muir, the first development of the idea that the Supreme Principle or Being is *sat*, for from *asat* nothing could arise, *ex nihilo nihil fit*.

"In the beginning, my dear, there was pure *Sat alone*, One without a Second. Some say that in the beginning there was *asat* alone, one without a second, and from that *asat* the *sat* was born. But how can *sat* be born of *asat*? The truth is that *sat* alone was in the beginning." And Shankar adds that it would be absurd to consider the *asat* to be an absolute non-entity, for if it were such a non-entity, what would be the meaning of the expression that it is 'one without a second,' and that *from* it was born the *sat*?

See, also, the Bhagvat Gita[4] which says that that which *is not* can never come into existence, while that which *is* can never cease to exist.

The word *sat* now came to signify the Absolute Reality—by whatever name that Reality was otherwise called—as opposed to the fleeting

[1] Kaush. Up. I, 6:—"*Sarvam idam sarvam asi.*"

Cf. Chând. Up. VI, 9, 4:—"In it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and thou art it."

[एतदात्म्यं इदं सर्वं तत् सत्यं स आत्मा तत् त्वं असि]

[2] Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Gît. XIII, 30:—"he who sees All This to be the *âtman* alone, becomes *Brahma* itself."

[3] VI, 2; See the 1st half of this text quoted in Note 5, p. 187 *supra*. The latter half runs as follows:—

'कुतः तु खलु सोम्य एवं स्यात् इति ह उवाच कथं असतः सत् जायते इति। सत् तु एव सोम्य इदं अग्र आसीत् एकं एव अद्वितीयम्।'

"But how could it be thus, my dear?' the father continued. 'How could *Sat* be born of *Asat*.' 'No, my dear, only *Sat* was in the beginning, one only without a second.'" See the whole of VI. 2, in this connexion.

[4] II, 16:—'नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः'

and ephemeral Universe, which having no independent reality of its own, came to be called *asat*[1] (unreal).

But since there is no object in the Universe in which the *sat* is not present, the entire Universe is known as constituted by the synthesis, combination or conjunction of *sat* and *asat*[2], (*chit-jada-granthi*).

Brahma itself is *sat-asat* (*sadasat*) in this view of the matter. "Both *sat* and *asat* exist within God."[3]

It must also be remembered that while *Brahma* embraces within it both the *sat* and *asat*, it is *beyond* them likewise. "The *Purusha*, having compassed the earth on every side, stands ten fingers' breadth beyond"[4]; "O Thou, *Mahâtman*! Thou art that which is and that which is not and that which is beyond them."[5]

It is thus both Immanent and Transcendent; this is suggestive of the Panentheism of Krause and Baader.

In other words, while the Universe is bounded by that portion of *Brahma*, so to speak, on which it is manifested, Brahma itself is bounded nowhere. It may be likened to a circle which has its centre everywhere, and circumference nowhere.

To sum up, then, in the initial stages of philosophic thought in India, *sat* meant the visible Universe; and *asat* meant its invisible cause or source; this was called *asat*, not because it was non-existent, in fact, but because it was non-existent, *as it were* (*asadiva*). The *idam* (visible Universe) was called *sat* or, sometimes, *satyam*, in which latter case, the highest Reality—the root of all sensible existence, was called *satyasya satyam*, the truth of truths.

In later stages, *sat* meant the Eternal and Absolute Reality, by whatever other name called, while *asat* meant the unreal manifestations of that Reality upon Itself—unreal, because not independent

[1] See Taitt. Up. II, 6:—"He wished, may I be many, may I grow forth. He brooded over himself. After He had thus brooded, He sent forth all whatever there is. Having sent forth, He entered into it. *Having entered it, He became Sat* (what is manifest) and *Tyat* (what is not manifest). . . . . The *Sattya* (true) became All This whatsoever and therefore the wise call it (*Brahman*) *Sattya* (the true)."

[2] See also Bhag. Git. XIII, 27.

[3] Atharva Veda. X, 7—10.

Cf. Bhag. Git. IX, 19 :—"Immortality and also death, *Sat* and *Asat* am I, Arjuna." See also the same idea in Prasn. Up. II, 5; Mûndak. Up. II, 2, 1; Swet. Up. V, 1; Taitt. Up. II, 6.

[4] Purusha Sûkta quoted *supra* p. 184.

[5] Bhag. Git. XI, 37; XIII, 13.

of or apart from that Reality; unreal, also, because transient and ephemeral and even illusory.

This has been the meaning of *sat* and *asat* ever since; and in this sense alone the words Being and Not-Being would be their proper English equivalents. The first denotes the Reality and the other the unreal appearances on that Reality. Philosophically (*paramârthatah*), *Brahma* alone is *sat*, and all else, viewed as differentiated from it and as having an independent existence, is *asat* (unreal).

We must always remember that, situated as we ordinarily are, we cannot perceive the *sat* or the *asat* by itself. Every objective existence has these two elements invariably and inseparably present together. There is always this synthesis. The *asat* in this *presentation* cannot have any reality of its own, independent of and apart from the *sat*.

It is in *this* sense that this Universe is unreal (*mithyâ*), and not in the sense of its being a *positive* blank or void. We predicate its reality, but we do so from a *vyâvahâric* or practical point of view.

Some German Orientalists[1] consider this to be a compromise effected between the philosophic Idealism of the *Vedânta* and the Empirical Realism of the popular mind. Idealism, they say, has, by accommodation to the empirical consciousness, regarded the Universe as real and passed over to the pantheistic doctrine of the Upanishads.

It is unnecessary here to discuss at length the question whether this "accommodation to the empirical consciousness" was a proper step to take. As stated[2] previously, it is quite clear that as the Universe presses itself on our attention as an apparently external objective existence, it was natural to attempt an explanation of it, which might be acceptable. Man has made such attempts in every age and every clime. In India, various explanations, perhaps more or less metaphorical, have been given since the Vedic times. But the idealistic philosopher understands that none of those explanations can, in strictness, be philosophically true. The Universe itself being non-eternal and having no independent relaity of its own, any explanation about it must be philosophically untrue. All that we can,

[1] *e. g.* Deussen.

[2] See *supra* Chap. III.

with our limited intelligence, predicate of it is that it is a phenomenal reality or a reality of appearance—an inexplicable manifestation of *Brahma* on *Brahma* Itself, possibly for the edification of Man.

My own submission is that though, from a philosophical standpoint, a discussion about the Universe and all that it contains may be unnecessary and irrelevant,—though in the strict *Vedânta* sense it is simply *avidyâ*—still it has its uses for our limited aims and ends. The *Shâstrâs*, dealing with what is technically called *avidyâ*, are not without their use to those who are still in this world of Nescience.[1]

We cannot forget that we must begin with sense-experience to be able eventually to acquire spiritual knowledge. We must pass through what is called *avidyâ* as a preparation for acquiring what is called the highest spiritual knowledge (*parâ vidyâ*). We cannot reach the *advaita* standpoint except through *dvaita* (duality).

No man can ordinarily hope to enter what may be termed the spiritual sphere, without a proper preparation on the lower planes. No man can have any idea of the Supreme Principle or Being unless he believes, in his initial stages of development, that the Universe is a reality, and that the Supreme Principle is immanent in it and transcendent also; he cannot sufficiently realize the idea of Unity and Identity with that Principle, except through *bhakti* (devotion), which presupposes the dualism of God and His *bhakta* (devotee). He cannot understand his duties to himself and others and practise Altruism on the principle of *abheda*, except as one moving in the world of sense-experience and forming a member of 'a universal family' (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*).

Ethics is necessary to a right comprehension and exercise of all these duties, without which man can never be fit for realising his own spiritual identity with the Eternal Reality. Pantheism or rather Panentheism, *Bhakti*, Ethics—all these presuppose the phenomenal reality of the Universe and of all the individual existences therein.

It is by a preparation of the kind above indicated that one is enabled to understand correctly the distinction between Subject and Object, and to attach to each its proper function and importance. It pre-

[1] *Cf.* Shankar's Gloss on Bhag. Git. XIII, 2, Mahâdeva Shâstri's Translation, pp. 227-8.

vents the confusion that generally arises from predicating what is phenomenal or objective of what is real and subjective, and *vice versa*. Prof. Max Müller[1] rightly observes :—

"I should even go so far as to say that this warning might be taken to heart by our own philosophers also, for many of our fallacies arise from the same *avidyâ* and are due in the end to the attribution of phenomenal and objective qualities to the subjective realities, which we should recognise in the Divine only and as underlying the Human Self and the phenomenal world."

The Indian *Vedânta* was, therefore, right in not severing the phenomenal reality of the Universe from the Absolute Reality, *Brahma*, and ignoring its practical importance. If it had thus severed and altogether ignored it, it would have meant, says the author of the *Vedânta Paribhâshâ*[2], that the Universe was somewhere and not in *Brahma*, and *Brahma* would thus have lost its Immanence and Infinitude. The correct position, even according to the strictest *Advaitin*, is that the Universe has no reality independent of and apart from *Brahma*.

If this is a compromise between philosophic Idealism and empirical Realism, it, surely, is not a compromise which a philosopher should condemn.

If this is a fault, the Eleatic philosophers of Greece were, likewise, guilty of it.[3] Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno—all held views almost like those of the *Vedântins*. They did not say that there is no sensible world, but maintained that there is but One Being, though to the uncultured that One appears as a plurality—the changeless appearing as *becoming* and changeable. They, too, like the *Vedântins*, held that All is One and nothing independent of it exists.

[1] "Six Systems Ind. Phil.," p. 201.
[2] See "Pandit," Vol. 7, p. 386.
[3] See Weber's 'Hist. Phil.,' pp. 41 and 43.

Printed by E. G. Pearson, at The Times Press, Bombay, and published by M. R. Jayakar, Bombay.—1412'21.

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