

that the Franks in the sixth century sacrificed children to idols. But the important fact remains that the Christians retained for their sacramental food the old name of *hostia*, "the victim," and the Gospels<sup>1</sup> all dwell on the eating and drinking of the God's body and blood with a literalness that is unintelligible on the hypothesis of mere originating allegory. It is true that for the ancients it was a commonplace to call bread "Ceres," and wine "Liber" or "Dionysos";<sup>2</sup> but that was just because in a special and peculiar sense Ceres and Liber stood for the sources of bread and wine, and might with literal fitness be so called in the ritual of their cult; whereas the Christ myth has on the face of it no such pretext. The whole series of the later Fathers anxiously explain that the Gospel phrase is figurative; but no one ever explains why such a revolting figure should have been used. They had need deny the literal meaning, which laid them open to just such reproaches as they were wont to cast at the pagans; but it is clear that in the shadow of the Church there always subsisted a concrete conception, which finally took the doctrinal form of Transubstantiation. And as it is now an admitted principle of comparative mythology that where there is a sacred banquet in connection with a worship, with a specified sacred food, *it is the God that is eaten*, we may take it as nearly certain that just as some Christian groups ate a baked image of a lamb, others would carry the freedom of symbolism further and make a dough image of a child. The lamb itself was the symbol of the God; and the disuse of an actual lamb was doubtless motivated by the not uncommon dislike to the eating of flesh. A baked image, after all, would still be a symbol; and when once the symbolism had gone so far, there was no reason why the mystic God should not be represented in the shape of a child, as of old.

When nothing in human or animal form was baked for the old cult-offerings, the mere round cake (often marked

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. xxvi. 26-28; Mark xiv. 22-24; Luke xxii. 19-20; John vi. 48-58.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* iii. 16; Clemens Alexandrinus, *Protrept.* ii. (Trans. in Ante-Nicene Lib. p. 34.)

by a cross, as in the hot-cross-bun still in Christian use) stood for the God or Goddess as Sun or Moon; and this is the explanation of the Catholic wafer, reverently described and worshipped as "Jesus" or "God" in Anglican High Church ritual at the present time. Jesus is there revealed by his devoutest worshippers as a Sun-God. But there is no evidence for an early use of the wafer; which indeed was too close to pagan sun-worship<sup>1</sup> in the pagan period to be readily acceptable by a sect desirous of marking itself off from its leading competitors. It was apparently adopted with other institutions of sun-worship after the Pagan cults were disestablished, when the Church could safely use their symbols and turn their usages to economic account—economic in both senses of the term, since the priestly miracle of the Eucharist was one of the main grounds of ecclesiastical influence and revenue, and the wafer withal was extremely cheap.

Alike then as to the Gospel myth and the charge of child-eating, a baked image seems the probable solution. And that this rite, like the others, was borrowed from previous cults, is proved by a remarkable passage in Pliny as to the praise due to the Roman people for "having put an end to those monstrous rites" in which "to murder a man was to do an act of the greatest devoutness, and to eat his flesh was to secure the highest blessings of health."<sup>2</sup> It is not clear that this refers to the Druids,<sup>3</sup> mentioned in the context; in any case there are many reasons for holding that a sacrament of theophagy was in pre-historic times widely practised;<sup>4</sup> and even if the sacramental and

<sup>1</sup> The usage was to eat round *panicula* after a sacrifice. Pollux, *Onomasticon*, vi. 6. Cp. Suetonius, in *Vitell.* c. 13, and Smith's *Dict. of Ant.*, art. *Canephoros*. See the question of the pagan origin of the wafer discussed in *Roma Antiqua et Recens*, ed. 1889, pp. 44-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Nat.* xxx. 4.

<sup>3</sup> But see Strabo, bk. iv. c. iv. § 5, where the Druidical sacrifices are specified, with the remark that the victims are said to have been *crucified in the temples*—another noteworthy clue to the Christian myth.

<sup>4</sup> It has been ingeniously argued by Professor Robertson Smith (*Religion of the Semites*, pp. 341-6) that human sacrifices did not ante-date those of animals, but came to be substituted for these at a time when the early way of regarding the animal as a member of the tribe had become psychologically obsolete. The great difficulties in the way of such a theory are (1) that, even

theophagous usages which chronically revived or obscurely persisted among the Jews<sup>1</sup> be held to have died out among them at the beginning of the Christian era, the Christians seem to have had alongside of them, in the cult of Dionysos, an example which they were as likely to follow as that of the Mithraic resurrection-ritual and Lord's Supper. The survival of a symbolical cannibalism—the eating of the baked image of a child—in the Dionysian mysteries,<sup>2</sup> is the most probable explanation of the late myth of the Titans rending the child Dionysos in pieces, and further of the myth of the rending of Orpheus, which was bound up with the Dionysiak. Though the former tale was allegorically understood of the spread of vine-culture,<sup>3</sup> that would hardly account for its invention; nor would the allegory put a stop to the ritual practice.

A connection between the child-carrying and the ritual of child-eating, again, is brought out in the peculiarly parallel case of the ritual of the *arrephoroi* or bearers of “nameless things” in the cult of Erichthonios at Athens.<sup>4</sup> The explanation of the myth of the child in the chest that was not to be opened is probably that given by Miss Harrison,<sup>5</sup> to the effect that the *Kistae* carried by the maidens contained figures of a child and a snake. These figures would hardly

if primitive men sacrificed animals as members of the tribe, they had still a psychic reason for selecting animals rather than men; and (2) that in most cults human sacrifice figured as a far-off thing, while the animal sacrifice survived. Cp. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i. 7. Human sacrifices, further, were in many cases avowedly superseded by offerings of *images*, where animal sacrifices went on. In any case, the habit of eating the sacrificed animal would psychologically involve the eating of the sacrificed man, which is the point in hand. As to the deification of the victim, see Smith, as cited, and Frazer's *Golden Bough*, ch. iii.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 336–340.

<sup>2</sup> Clemens (as cited; trans. pp. 27, 30, 33) distinctly associates the eating of “raw flesh” with the mystery in which the rending of the child Dionysos by the Titans was commemorated; and probably some groups continued to eat one of the God's symbol-animals while others substituted images, as among the Christists. But the Orphic poems, to which we owe this phase of the Dionysiak myth, give the detail that the Titans who surprised the boy had *covered themselves with plaster*, a proceeding of the Dionysiak festivals (Müller, *Lit. Anc. Greece*, c. xvi. § 7); and here we seem to have a derivation from the usage of baked images.

<sup>3</sup> Preller, *Griech. Myth.* i. 554; Diodorus Siculus, iii. 62.

<sup>4</sup> Pausanias, i. 18, 27.

<sup>5</sup> *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens*, 1890, pp. xxvi.–xxxv.

be of marble, which would be impossibly heavy: they are likely enough to have been of baked flour. But the myth of Erichthonios, born of Gaia,<sup>1</sup> the Earth, is only a variant of that of Dionysos, born of Demeter, the Earth Mother, or of Semelê, equally the Earth;<sup>2</sup> and again of that of Agdistis, borne by the Earth to Jupiter.<sup>3</sup> We have seen that the Divine Child figured in the birth-ritual of Dionysos as in that of Horos; and as the images in the other rituals would have a sacrosanct virtue, the eating of them sacramentally would be a natural sequence. In the artistic treatment of the myth of Erichthonios, as Miss Harrison points out, the lid of the chest is of wicker-work. The whole may well have been a basket, like the *liknon* of Dionysos.<sup>4</sup> On that view the carrying of the image was simply a variant of the usage of carrying an actual child—a practice always open to the objection that the child might at any moment take to crying. In ordinary animal sacrifice it was considered fatal to the efficacy of the rite if the victim showed any reluctance;<sup>5</sup> and even if the child were not to be sacrificed, his crying would be apt to pass for a bad omen.<sup>6</sup>

Given, however, the pre-Christian existence of a child-carrying rite, in connection with the Christian festival as observed in the Egyptian and Mithraic cults, or as practised in the Dionysia; and given the adoption of this rite by

<sup>1</sup> Pausanias, i. 2, *end.*

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Cox (*Mythol. of Aryan Nations*, ed. 1882, p. 260, *note*) observes that "no Greek derivation has been attached to this name, which certainly cannot be explained by reference to any Greek word." But it has not been noted that in modern Servia to-day *Semlje* is actually the word for the Earth. And the Servians have many mythic ideas in common with the Greeks. See Ranke, *History of Servia*, Eng. trans. pp. 42-43.

<sup>3</sup> Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, v. 5, 10.

<sup>4</sup> But cp. the Eleusinian formula:—"I have received from the box; having done, I put it in the basket, and out of the basket into the chest" (Clemens, as cited, p. 32). This testimony is confused by the different version in the same author:—"I have eaten out of the drum, I have drunk out of the cymbal, I have carried the Cernos [said by the scholiasts to be a fan = *liknon*], I have slipped into the bedroom." Cp. Firmicus, *De Errone*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> As to the same idea in connection with the sacred victim among the Khonds, see Frazer, *Golden Bough*, i. 386-7.

<sup>6</sup> Compare, however, the sinister process of primitive casuistry by which the Mexicans, in sacrificing their children, sought to feel that the inevitable tears were the promise of abundant rain and harvest (Lecture on "The Ancient Religions of America," in *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 360).

Christism, the idea of making the mythic Giant Christophoros separately carry the Christ-child *across a river*, it might be supposed, could be grafted fortuitously on the old ritual-motive. It being necessary to have a story of the child being carried somewhere, a river was a possible enough invention. But here again the hypothesis is upset when we turn to the light which Professor Weber so strangely ignored—that of the mythology of Greece. The carrying of a Divine Child by a Divine Person—a very small child by a very big person—is one of the commonest figures in Greek religious art. In Hindu pictures the babe Krishna is carried by Vasudeva in its swaddling clothes. In Greek sculpture Hermes carries the babe Dionysos “carefully wrapped up” to his nurses. At times he bears it on his shoulder.<sup>1</sup> He also carries the boy to heaven.<sup>2</sup> In the drama of Euripides he carries the swaddled and cradled child Ion to the temple.<sup>3</sup> Similarly he carries the infant Aristæus, the Sun-Child, from his mother to the nourishing Hours;<sup>4</sup> and he carries in turn the child Herakles.<sup>5</sup> Yet again, as Psychopompos, he carries Psyche *over the Styx*;<sup>6</sup> and here, in a myth-motive, we have a marked parallel to the ritual motive of the river-crossing in the Krishna tale. And this recurs, for we have Herakles represented carrying Zeus *over the water*, “a still enigmatical representation,” says Müller.<sup>7</sup> Herakles, yet again, carries his own infant Têlephos in his hand or arm;<sup>8</sup> and Têlephos is a Divine Child, figuring in a Birth-Ritual in swaddling clothes.<sup>9</sup> On vases, too, we have Peleus holding the child Achilles,<sup>10</sup> and so on—the representations are endless. Dionysos himself, in one myth, carries Hephaistos, drunk, to heaven.<sup>11</sup> How far the motive may have been ritually associated with a passing over

<sup>1</sup> K. O. Müller, *Ancient Art*, pp. 492–4; Apollodorus, bk. iv. c. iii. § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, iii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ion*, 31–40, 1597–1600.

<sup>4</sup> Pindar, *Pythia*, ix. 95–97.

<sup>5</sup> Müller, *Ancient Art*, p. 554.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 486.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 562. Compare the myth of Typhon carrying the disabled Zeus over the sea on his shoulders. Apollodorus, I. vi. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Müller, p. 558.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* p. 559.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* p. 571.

<sup>11</sup> Pausanias, i. 20.

water<sup>1</sup> it is difficult to decide; but when we are asked to believe that the Christophoros legend, in which Pagan myth and art and ritual were eked out with Christian fiction, so impressed the Hindus at an early period in our era that they transferred it bodily to the worship of their God Krishna, it is difficult to take the suggestion seriously. On the contrary, we are again moved to answer that, if either cult borrowed from the other, it must have been the Christians who borrowed from the religious drama or dramatic ritual of the Hindus. Once more, the carrying of the child Krishna across the mythological river by Vasudeva is naturally embedded in the Krishna legend; while in Christian mythology the story is patently alien, arbitrary, and unmotived, save in so far as it rests on the ancient epithet *Christophoros*; on the familiar presentment of Hermes or Herakles carrying a Divine Child, at times over water; and on the inferable usage of carrying a child or an image representing the new-born God in early Christian ritual. And, finally—what I cannot but think a noteworthy coincidence—the festival day of St. Christopher is placed in the Roman Catholic Calendar on the *25th day of July*, precisely at the time of year when, in the Hindu ritual, and almost certainly in the early Hindu drama, Vasudeva would be represented as carrying Krishna across the river.<sup>2</sup> Clearly the Indian *date* cannot be borrowed from the Christian: it depends on the Birth Festival, which is as wide as possible of the Christian

<sup>1</sup> Dionysos, we know, was lord of the whole element of moisture (Plutarch, *I. and O.* 35), and in one myth passes as an adult over the sea (above, p. 83)—a solar item, which might very well be symbolized in the ritual of the Babe-Sun-God. In many Hindu ceremonies, again, water is devotionally employed as being the product of the sun. One suspects the same myth-motive in the story of the kingly child Pyrrhus of Achillean descent being carried across a river, when flying from pursuers, in the arms of a man named *Achilles*. Pyrrhus in the story is put on his father's throne by force at the age of twelve—a very mythical-looking narrative (Plutarch, *Pericles*, cc. 2, 3). Again, the people of Clazomenæ had a grotto called the grotto of Pyrrhus' mother—presumably a Birth Cave—and a tradition about Pyrrhus as a shepherd (Pausanias, vii. 5). Apparently Pyrrhus was mythically handled very much as was Cyrus before him.

<sup>2</sup> This was also, as already noted, the first day of the Egyptian year; and the festival of the "Birthday of the Eyes of Horos" was held on that day or the day preceding.

Nativity. It will need some satisfactory explanation of St. Christopher's date on other lines to destroy the possibility of the surmise that it was determined by the Hindu practice; and in any case we must infer a non-Christian origin.

#### XIV. INDIAN AND CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS DRAMA.

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

drama at the courts of Greek kings.”<sup>1</sup> Says Wilson, on the other hand:—

“Whatever may be the merits or defects of the Hindu drama, it may be safely asserted that they . . . are unmingledly its own. The science of the Hindus may be indebted to modern discoveries in other regions, and their mythology may have derived legends from Paganism or Christianity; but it is impossible that they should have borrowed their dramatic compositions from the people either of ancient or modern times . . . The Hindus, if they learned the art from others, can have been obliged alone to the Greeks or to the Chinese. A perusal of the Hindu plays will show how little likely it is that they are indebted to either, as, with the exception of a few features in common which could not fail to occur, they present characteristic varieties of conduct and construction, which strongly evidence both original design and national development.”<sup>2</sup>

Probably no one who reads Wilson’s translations and compares them with the classic drama and, say, the Chinese *Laou-Seng-Urh*<sup>3</sup> will have much hesitation in acceding to Wilson’s opinion. Nor is Lassen less emphatic. “In the oldest Buddhist writings,” he points out, “a visit of play-actors is spoken of as something customary”;<sup>4</sup> and he insists again<sup>5</sup> “that the dramatic art in India is a growth wholly native to the soil, without foreign influence in general or Greek in particular.” The origination of Indian drama, he adds, in the former passage, “must certainly be put before the time of the second Asoka; how much earlier it is naturally impossible to say.” Anyone who reads Wilson’s version of the *Mrichchakati*, “The Toy Cart,” dated by him between a century B.C. and the second century C.E., will I think be convinced that the “origination” must be carried a very long way back.<sup>6</sup> That drama really represents in some respects a further evolution—I do not say a higher pitch of achievement—

<sup>1</sup> Berlin lecture cited, p. 25 = *Indische Skizzen*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Theatre of the Hindus*, pref. pp. xi. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Eng. trans. London, 1817. Cp. the *Brief View of the Chinese Drama* prefixed.

<sup>4</sup> *Indische Alterthumskunde*, ii. 502. See Körösi’s analysis of the Tibetan “Dulva,” in *Asiatic Researches*, xx. 50, the testimony cited by Lassen. The antiquity of much of the “Dulva” is disputed by Weber, *Hist. of Ind. Lit.* Eng. tr. p. 199. But cp. p. 198, note 210.

<sup>5</sup> *Ind. Alt.* ii. 1157.

<sup>6</sup> Lassen (*Ind. Alt.* ii. 1160) dates the play about the end of the first century C.E.; Weber (*Indische Studien*, ii. 148) in the second century. See Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, ii. 11.



than the drama of Greece; and could only have been possible after a very long process of artistic development; hence Kalidasa may well belong, as Weber suggests, to a later period than is commonly supposed.<sup>1</sup> But this still leaves the beginnings of Indian drama very far off. And seeing that the common people in modern times still played the history of Râma on his festival day<sup>2</sup>—apparently following a custom of older date than the Râmâyana poem itself, it is a reasonable conjecture that the literary drama arose in India, as in Greece, out of the representations at the religious festivals. It has certainly small trace of the Greek spirit:<sup>3</sup> it is much more akin to the romantic drama of modern Europe.

For the rest, there is, I suppose, no connection with the theatre in the meaning of the name Devakî, which, it appears, has only loosely and indirectly the significance of “the Divine Lady,” and strictly means “the player” or “she-player.” Weber translates it *Spielerinn*, and Senart *joueuse*, with no allusion to any theatrical significance.<sup>4</sup> Nor can I find any explanation of the phrases: “I, who am a person of celestial nature, a mortal *Vasudeva*,” and “I, a man of rank, a *Vasudeva*,” occurring in *The Toy Cart*,<sup>5</sup> save Wilson’s note on the former passage that *Vasudeva* = Krishna. These passages do not seem to have been considered in the discussions on Krishnaism. They serve, however, to repeat, if that be necessary, the refutation of the Christian thesis that the name *Vasudeva* was

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. of Ind. Lit.* pp. 200–207.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Asiatic Researches*, i. 258; and the *Asiatic Journal*, iv. 130, 185, N. S.

<sup>3</sup> The remark of Donaldson (*Theatre of the Greeks*, 7th ed. p. 7, note) that “the Indian stage, even if aboriginal, may have derived its most characteristic features from the Greek,” is professedly based on the proposition that “there is every reason to believe” that Krishna “was an imported deity.” K. O. Müller (*Hist. of the Lit. of Anc. Greece*, ch. xxi. § 2) asserts incidentally that “The dramatic poetry of the Indians belongs to a time when there had been much intercourse between Greece and India,” but offers no arguments, and presumably follows some earlier Indianist. Weber, while leaning to the view of Greek origins, admits (*Hist.* p. 207) that “no internal connection with the Greek drama exists.”

<sup>4</sup> Weber, *Ueber die K.*, pp. 316, 318; Senart, p. 323. Senart points out, however, that in the Mahâbhârata the father of Devakî is a Gandharva—i.e., a “singer of heaven.”

<sup>5</sup> *Theatre of the Hindus*, i. 28, 145. Cp. p. 26, n.

based on that of Joseph; and Wilson's note indicates sufficiently his conviction of the antiquity of Krishnaism. In Act v. of the same play (p. 90) the epithet *Kesava* ("long-locked," *crinitus*), constantly associated with Krishna, is without hesitation taken by him to apply to the same deity. It is one of the commonest characterizations of the Sun-God in all mythologies.

The question as to the practice of dramatic ritual among the early Christians, of course, needs a fuller investigation than can be thus given to it in a mere comparison of Christism and Krishnaism. Suffice it here to say that already orthodox scholarship is proceeding to trace passages in the apostolic Epistles to surmised ancient liturgies;<sup>1</sup> and that such a passage as opens the third Sermon of St. Proclus<sup>2</sup> (Bishop of Constantinople, 432-446), comparing the pagan and Christian festivals with only a moral differentiation; the repeated exhortations, in his fourth Sermon, to mothers, fathers, and children to "come and see" the Virgin and the swaddled child in the cradle;<sup>3</sup> his long account (Sermon vi.) of the dialogue between Joseph and Mary; and in general all his allusions to festivals and mysteries, point clearly to a close Christian imitation of pagan dramatic practices.<sup>4</sup> It is further a matter not of conjecture, but of history, that the old play on the "Suffering Christ" is to be attributed to Gregory of Nazianzen; and Klein, the German historian of the drama, decides that the sacrament of the Mass or the Communion is "*in itself already a religious drama, and is the original*

<sup>1</sup> See the article of Dr. Jessop in the *Expositor*, June, 1889.

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus, Series Græca*, tom. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Serm. iv. 2, Col. 711. The representation as thus described followed the apocryphal Gospels in placing the birth in a cave. But instead of the "ox and ass" of the normal show (which would then be too notoriously Pagan) there are mentioned the "ass and foal" of the entrance into Jerusalem. Col. 713. There appears to have been a whole crowd of New Testament figures, including Paul.

<sup>4</sup> The remark of the Countess Martinengo Cesaresco (art. *Puer Parvulus* in *Contemporary Review*, January, 1900, p. 117), that "there was no actual cult of the infant Saviour till the thirteenth century," is clearly erroneous, though the explicit evidences to the contrary are not abundant. As we have seen, the narratives in the Apocryphal and other Gospels derive from the ancient cult.

*Mystery-play*”;<sup>1</sup> a view accepted and echoed by the orthodox Ulrici,<sup>2</sup> and independently advanced by Renan.<sup>3</sup> Klein has further traced, perhaps fancifully at some points, an interesting series of analogies between the early Christian liturgy and the Greek tragedy, which was essentially a religious service. M. Jubinal, again, in a sketch of the rise of the Mystery-plays, sums up that “the fifth century presents itself with its cortège of religious festivals, during which are simulated (*on mime*) or figured in the church the adoration of the Magi, the marriage of Cana, the death of the Saviour, etc.”<sup>4</sup> This statement, made without citations, is repeated by Klein,<sup>5</sup> who quotes as his authority merely the words of M. Jubinal; and by Dr. Ulrici,<sup>6</sup> who, carrying the statement further, merely cites these two writers. Such defect of proof would be suspicious were it not for the above-cited evidence from Saint Proclus; and, though that is so far decisive, there is evident need for a complete research. Milman has made little or none. Admitting that there were pantomimic spectacles at the martyr-festivals, he rejects the view that they represented the deaths of the martyrs, but says nothing as to the early mystery-plays, merely denying that plays such as that by Gregory were written for representation;<sup>7</sup> and in his later work he discusses the Mysteries of the Middle Ages without attempting to trace their origin.<sup>8</sup>

A complete theory would have to deal with (1) the original mystery-plays which preceded and provided the Gospel narrative; (2) the reduction of some of these to pseudo-history and their probable cessation (*e.g.*, in the case of the Last Supper) as complete dramatic representations; and (3) the later establishment of such exhibitions as that of the Nativity, in the teeth of the ascetic objection to all forms of pleasurable art. Here, however, I can

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

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*, Bohn trans. i. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Etudes d'Histoire religieuse*, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> *Mystères Inédits du XVIème Siècle*, 1837, pref. p. viii.

<sup>5</sup> iv. 11.

<sup>6</sup> i. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *History of Christianity*, bk. iv. ch. 2, ed. Paris, 1840, ii. 320, 326.

<sup>8</sup> *History of Latin Christianity*, bk. xiv. ch. 4.

only posit the fact that such exhibitions did occur, and note that such a conclusion is supported by orthodox clerical statement. Dr. Murdock, discussing the Christian adoption of the Christmas festival, observes that

“From the *first institution* of this festival, the Western nations seem to have transferred to it many of the follies and censurable practices which prevailed in the pagan festivals of the same season, such as adorning the churches fantastically, *mingling puppet shows and dramas with worship*, universal feasting and merry-making, visits and salutations, revelry and drunkenness.”<sup>1</sup>

It is, indeed, one of the commonplaces of Protestant church historians to point out that after the State establishment of Christianity it borrowed many observances from Paganism.<sup>2</sup> What the student has to keep in view is that these usages, especially such a one as that of “puppet shows and dramas,” cannot have been suddenly grafted on a religious system wholly devoid of them. The Christians certainly had the practice of celebrating *some* birthday of Christ long before the fourth century; and we have seen some of the reasons for concluding that on that occasion they had a mystery-ritual. It is noteworthy, too, that the subjects first specified as appearing in Christian shows or plays were precisely those which we know to have figured in the cults of Mithra and Dionysos, and in the Egyptian system. Further, it was exactly such subjects that were represented in the earliest medieval Mysteries of which copies remain; and it was especially at Christmas and Easter that these were performed. It is hardly possible to doubt that these representations derive from the

<sup>1</sup> Note on trans. of Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii. ch. 4, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Mosheim, *Eccles. Hist.* 3 Cent. pt. ii. ch. 4, § 3; 4 Cent. pt. ii. ch. 4, § 1, 2; 5 Cent. pt. i. ch. 3, § 2, etc.; Gieseler, *Compend. of Ec. Hist.* Eng. tr. 1846, ii. 24–26, 32, 51, 61, etc.; Waddington, *Hist. of the Church*, pp. 37, 212–4. Cp. *Roma Antiqua et Recens*, 1665, rep. 1889, *Pagano-Papismus*, 1675, rep. 1844, and Middleton's *Letter from Rome*, 1729, etc., for detailed statements. For later views see Dyer, *History of Rome*, 1877, p. 295; Lord, *The Old Roman World*, 1873, p. 558; Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs*, 1846, p. 306; Seymore's *Evenings with the Romanists*, 1844, p. 221; Merivale's *Four Lectures on some Epochs of Early Church History*; Lechler's *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, p. 262. See finally some very explicit Catholic admissions by Baronius, *Epitome Annalium*, a Spondano, Lugduni, 1686, p. 79; Polydore Vergil, *De Inventore Rerum*, l. 5, c. 1; Wiseman's *Letters to John Poynder, Esq.*, 1836.

very earliest practices of the Christian sect, established when Paganism was still in full play. The dramatic character of the early Mysteries, which, as we have seen, were almost as inviolably secret as those of the Pagans, pierces through the cautious writings of the Fathers, as read even by clerical eyes :—

“Chrysostom most probably refers to the commemoration of our Saviour’s deeds and words at the Last Supper, as used in the liturgy, when he attributes such great importance to the words of institution of our Lord, which he considers as still chiefly efficacious in the consecration of the eucharist. He often speaks of the eucharist under the title of an unbloody sacrifice. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Other admissions are no less significant :—

“There can be little, if any, doubt that Christian liturgies were not at first committed to writing, but preserved by memory and practice.”  
 “When we examine the remains of the Roman, Italian, Gallican, and Spanish liturgies, we find that they all permitted a variety of expression for every particular feast. . . . It appears to me that the practice of the western Churches during the fifth and fourth centuries, in permitting the use of various ‘missæ’ in the same church, affords room for thinking that something of the same kind had existed from a remote period. For it does not seem that the composition of new ‘missæ’ for the festivals excited any surprise in these ages, or was viewed as anything novel in principle.”<sup>2</sup>

That is to say, the first Christians, in their feeble and illiterate way, tried to do what the Greeks had long done in their dramatic mysteries, which must have conformed in some degree to the creative tendency fulfilled on such a splendid scale in their public drama, itself a development of religious ritual.<sup>3</sup>

“The Eleusinian mysteries were, as an ancient writer [Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* p. 12, Potter] expresses it, ‘a mystical drama,’ in which the history of Demeter and Cora was acted, like a play, by priests and priestesses, though probably only with mimic action, illustrated by a few significant sentences, and by the singing of hymns. There were also similar mimic representations in the worship of Bacchus: thus, at the Anthesteria at Athens, the wife of the second archon, who bore the title

<sup>1</sup> Palmer, *Origines Liturgicæ*, i. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* pp. 9, 10. Cp. Mosheim, 4 Cent. pt. ii. ch. 4, § 3.

<sup>3</sup> K. O. Müller, *Hist. of the Lit. of Anc. Greece*, ch. xxi. § 2–5; xxvii. § 1. It is true that, as remarked by Fustel de Coulanges in *La Cité Antique* (8ième. éd. p. 196), the words and rhythms of the hymns in the ancient domestic and civic rites were preserved unaltered; but this would not apply to the later syncretic mysteries.

of Queen, was betrothed to Dionysus in a secret solemnity, and in public processions even the God himself was represented by a man. [A beautiful slave of Nicias represented Dionysus on an occasion of this kind: Plutarch, *Nic.* 3. Compare the description of the great Bacchic procession under Ptolemy Philadelphus in *Athen.* v.] At the Bœotian festival of the Agrionia, Dionysus was supposed to have disappeared, and to be sought for among the mountains; there was also a maiden (representing one of the nymphs in the train of Dionysus), who was pursued by a priest, carrying a hatchet, and personating a being hostile to the God. This festival rite, which is frequently mentioned by Plutarch, is the origin of the fable, which occurs in Homer, of the pursuit of Dionysus and his nurses by the furious Lycurgus."<sup>1</sup>

The last proposition is one more application of the principle which has been so often followed in the present essay—that ritual usages are the fountains of myth, and typically the most ancient things in religion. But while the central ritual was immemorial, it may be taken for granted that the secret drama and hymns were innovated upon from time to time. And this frequent or customary change, proceeding from spontaneous devotional or artistic feeling, would seem to have been attempted in some degree, and even in an artistic spirit,<sup>2</sup> by the first Christians, till the religious principle and the church system of centralization petrified everything into dead ritual. And only when we know better than we do at present the details of the process by which they built up alike their liturgy and their legends, their mysteries and their festivals, from the medley of religious systems around them, can we possibly be entitled to say that they did not take something from the ancient drama and ritual of India, to which so many Western eyes were then turned.

Finally, we must remember that in all probability the ancient race of travelling Pagan mummers survived obscurely all through the Dark Ages, as did so much genuine Paganism.<sup>3</sup> It seems to have been their encroachment on the hitherto purely clerical domain of religious

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* xxi. § 3 (Lewis' trans. 1847), pp. 287–8.

<sup>2</sup> Mosheim (1 Cent. pt. ii. ch. 4, § 6) decides that even in the first century the liturgical hymns "were sung not by the whole assembly, but by certain persons during the celebration of the sacred supper and the feasts of charity."

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Warton, *History of English Poetry*, sect. xxxiv.; Symonds, *Shakespeare's Predecessors*, p. 95; Vernon Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, pp. 233–4; Ulrici, as cited, p. 10; *Academy*, April 6th, 1889, p. 231.

play-acting that brought upon things theatrical the curse of the Church, who naturally wanted to destroy the art when she found it slipping from her hands. In any case, we know that, though the early Fathers had often denounced secular drama and actors, doing indiscriminately what Plato had done with discrimination, not till about the thirteenth century did the dramatic art and its devotees begin to come absolutely under the ecclesiastical ban. By that time the Church no longer knew—collectively, indeed, her children had never realised—that primitive drama was the very womb and genesis of the whole faith.

#### XV.—THE SEVEN MYTH.

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

§ 1. Here we are at once up to the eyes in universal mythology. On the very face of the Christian martyrology, these Seven Brother Martyrs are mythic: they are duplicated again and again in that martyrology itself. Thus we have the specially so-called *Septem Fratres Martyres*, who are sons of a martyr mother Felicitas, and whose martyrdom is placed in the reign of Antoninus Pius—a safe way off. But on the 18th day of the same month we have the martyred Saint Symphorosa and *her* seven martyred sons, whose date is put under Hadrian, a little earlier still. But yet earlier still we find included in the same martyrology the pre-Christian case of the seven Maccabee brothers<sup>1</sup> and *their* mother, fixed for August 1st. And still the list mounts. On July 27th—we are always

<sup>1</sup> 2 Maccabees, vii.

in or just out of July—is the holy day of the *Septem Dormientes*, our old friends the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, fabled to have been “walled up in a cave in which they had hid themselves” in the year 250, in the persecution of Decius, and to have waked up—or to have been discovered, as the scrupulous Butler would prefer to put it—in 479.<sup>1</sup> Nor is even this all. There are further the Seven Martyrs of Samosata, whose holy day is somewhat belated, December 9th; and the seven *Virgin* Martyrs of Ancyra, who are placed under Diocletian, so as to help to cover the martyr-ological ground, and who in the Roman Catholic Calendar are commemorated on May 18th, but in the Armenian Church on June 20th. Doubtless the Seven Virgins, all ladies of about seventy years, have a different mythic origin from the seven brothers or sleepers, who in the four first cases are invariably youths or boys; and the seven of Samosata (whose actual date of martyrdom was June 25th) also divide off from the July group in respect that two of them, the leaders, are old, and that the remaining five in the story are represented as joining these two, who adored the crucifix seven times a day.<sup>2</sup> We are left with four sets of Seven Martyrs, three of them sets of brothers, whose mothers were martyred before or after them, they themselves suffering between July 10th and August 1st.

That the Seven Sleepers are of the same myth stock is clear. In the Musæum Victorium of Rome is, or was, a plaster group of them, in which clubs lie beside two of them; a knotty club near another; axes near two others; and a torch near the seventh. Now the general feature<sup>3</sup> of the other martyrdoms is the variety of the tortures imposed. Of the first seven, one is flogged to death with loaded whips, two with clubs, one thrown over a precipice,

<sup>1</sup> See their story in Gibbon, c. 33, end. This date *should* have been the end of the world, as to which there were even more guesses in the early than in the later Christian times. If the chronology of Julius Africanus were accepted, 469 would be the year of the end of the world, on Tertullian's (Magian) view that it was to last 6,000 years.

<sup>2</sup> For these legends see Butler's or any other *Lives of the Saints*, under the dates given.

<sup>3</sup> Butler, ed. 1812, etc., vii. 359–60.



and three beheaded; and of the sons of Symphorosa each one dies a distinct death. The seven Maccabees are not so much particularised; but of the seven of Samosata, the first, who is old, is flogged with loaded whips like the eldest son of Felicitas; and, though all are crucified, they are finally despatched in three different ways. Again, though the Sleepers are commonly conceived, naturally, in their final Rip Van Winkle aspect; in the plaster group they are beardless, and "in ancient martyrologies and other writings they are frequently called boys." In the Koran again,<sup>1</sup> still youths, and still "testifying" in bad times, they sleep, *with their eyes open*, for 309 years—a longer period than that of the Christian legend, which gives them a sleep of only some 227 years<sup>2</sup>—and they are guarded by a dog; while the Deity "turned them to the right and to the left," and the sun when it arose passed on the right of their cave, and when it set passed them on the left; a sufficiently obvious indication of the solar division of the year. And the mythic dog, Mohammedans believe, is to go with the Seven to heaven. He is, of course, of the breed of the dogs who, in certain old Semitic mysteries, "were solemnly declared to be the brothers of the mystæ";<sup>3</sup> and his connection with the Sleepers doubtless hinges on the ancient belief that he "has the use of his sight both by night and by day."<sup>4</sup>

Seven, as the reader need hardly be reminded, is a "sacred number"<sup>5</sup> that constantly figures in Jewish, Vedic, and other ancient lore; and there is reason to surmise here, as in so many other cases, a Christian connection with Mithraism. Among the admittedly Mithraic remains in the Catacombs is a fresco representing a banquet of seven persons, who are labelled as the *Septem Pii Sacerdotes*, the seven pious priests.<sup>6</sup> Now,

<sup>1</sup> Sura 18, "The Cave." Rodwell's trans. 1st ed. p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> In one version; in others the time is under 200 years.

<sup>3</sup> Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 273.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, c. 44. Cp. Diodorus Siculus, i. 87.

<sup>5</sup> "An infinite number of beauties may be extracted from a careful contemplation of it." *Philo Judæus*, Bohn trans. iii. 265.

<sup>6</sup> *Roma Sotteranea*, as cited, Appendix B, vol. ii. p. 355.

the very Catholic authorities who admit the Mithraic character of the picture have put forward an exactly similar one as being Christian, stating that it is common, without a word of misgiving or explanation, beyond an uncalculating suggestion that it represents the meeting of Jesus with *seven* disciples (John xxi. 1-13) after his resurrection. "It is not stated," argue these exegetes, "that He Himself sat down and partook of the meal with them."<sup>1</sup> So that we are to assume the Catacomb artist painted the seven fisher disciples, on the shore of the lake, sitting on a couch, banqueting at an elaborately laid table, in the presence of their Lord and Master, whose figure is considerately left to the imagination. It is plain that the picture is either Mithraic pure and simple or an exact Christian imitation of a Mithraic ceremony; and indeed it is very likely that the story in the fourth Gospel, which is evidently an addition, was one more fiction to explain a ritual usage. The picture could not have been painted for the story; but the story might very well be framed to suit the rite, which existed before the painting. And here at least Mithraism had handed on to Christianity an institution of ancient India, for the seven priests figure repeatedly in the Rig Veda in connection with the worship of Agni.<sup>2</sup> But, again, the rite is probably a widespread one; for in the Dionysiak myth the Child-God is torn by the Titans into seven pieces; and there is reason to surmise that a Banquet of Seven gave rise to that story.<sup>3</sup>

We cannot here, of course, trace such a myth minutely

<sup>1</sup> Plate xvii. vol. ii. and pp. 67-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Rig Veda Sanhita*, Wilson's trans. i. 101, 156; iii. 115, 120, etc. It may have been Mithraic example that led to the creation of seven *epulones*, rulers of the Roman sacrificial feasts, in place of the original three; as later the institution of the seven Christian deacons. The *Septemviri Epulones* appear often in inscriptions. There was, however, a traditional ceremonial banquet of Seven Wise Men at Corinth, the founding of which was attributed to Periander, about 600 B.C. Plutarch, *Banquet of the Seven Wise Men*, ii.

<sup>3</sup> See the bas-relief from the Dionysiak theatre, reproduced in *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens*, by Miss Harrison and Mrs. Verrall, 1890, p. 283. Cp. that on p. 278.

to all its parallels;<sup>1</sup> and there is a risk of oversight in bracketing it with all the Sevens of general mythology. The Rev. Sir George Cox traces these generally to the seven stars of Ursa Major:—

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

Sir George Cox, however, does not connect these groups with the sets of Seven Martyrs; whereas Christian and Teutonic mythology alike entitle us to do so. In every case the point is that the Seven are to *rise again*, that being the doctrinal lesson in the story of the Maccabees as well as in those of the Christian Martyrs. In the Northern Sagas the Seven Sleepers are the sons of Mimer, “the ward of the middle-root of the world-tree”; they are “put to sleep” in “bad times” after their father’s death; and they awake at the blast of the trumpet of Ragnarök. They are in fact the “seven seasons,” the seven changes of the weather, the seven “economic months” of Northern lore; and in Germany and Sweden the day of the Seven Sleepers is a popular test-day of the weather, as St. Swithin’s day, July 15th—we are always in July—is for us.<sup>4</sup> Now, whereas the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus—Maximian, Malchus, Martinian, Dionysius, John, Serapion, Constantine—have no connection with a weather-myth, the very first name of the *Septem Fratres Martyres* is Januarius, and the list includes the names of Felix, Sylvanus, Vitalis, and

<sup>1</sup> The myth gets into Danish history in the story of the seven young Danes of Jomsburg, who, being captured in Norway, undergo their deaths with unparalleled fortitude, having been trained to despise death and all suffering. Each “testifies” separately. Mallet’s *Intr. to Hist. of Denmark*, lib. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 225.

<sup>4</sup> Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, pp. 488–494.

Martialis, all of which have a seasonal suggestion. So, too, have the names alike of Felicitas, *Fertility*, and Symphorosa = propitious, useful, profitable. And the source of the legend is put beyond all doubt when we find that *Temporum Felicitas* is actually the inscription on ancient coins or medals representing that Roman Goddess<sup>1</sup> and her children the seasons. On one side she herself is represented with three children, she bearing symbols, but they bearing none; while on the other are four boys, who distinctly stand for the seasons in respect of the symbols they bear.<sup>2</sup> Now, the ancients had two conceptions on the subject—one of *three* Horæ, who were “not seasons, properly speaking, for the winter was never a Hora,” and who were often represented without attributes;<sup>3</sup> the other, the more definite notion of the *quatuor anni tempora*; and the medal under notice simply presents both fancies. And the Christian myth-maker in his turn has simply combined them anew, adding the four to the three and making seven sons of *Felicitas*, accounting for the *Temporum* as he thought fit. Thus can myths be made.

It is not to be supposed, of course, that the myth could always keep the same cast; and it may be that it is at bottom the same as that of the seven boy and girl victims of the Minotaur in the legend of Theseus; but there is certainly a close kinship between the Teutonic and Christian forms under notice. In the view of Dr. Rydberg, the myth is originally Teutonic; though he notes that “Gregorius says that he is the first who recorded in the Latin language” the miracle of the Seven Sleepers, “not before known to the Church of Western Europe. As his authority he quotes ‘a certain Syrian,’ who had interpreted the story for him. There was also need of a man from the Orient as an authority when a hitherto unknown miracle was to be presented—a miracle that had transpired (*sic*

<sup>1</sup> *Felicitas* was separately deified. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, iv. 18, 23; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See the reproduction by Spanheim, *Obs. in Callimachi Hymn. in Cererem* ed. Ernesti, 1761, ii. 815–16.

<sup>3</sup> K. O. Müller, *Ancient Art*, p. 530.

trans.) in a cave near Ephesus." It might be answered to this not only that, as Dr. Rydberg himself candidly notes, the sleeping Endymion was located in a cave in Latmos near Ephesus, but that the seven Pleiades of Greek mythology were rain-givers, and presided over navigation, just as he says the northern Seven Sleepers did. It is doubtless this idea that occurs in the legend of the Seven Virgins of Ancyra, whom the persecutor drowns in a lake, and whose holy day, May 18, is set just about the time the Pleiades rise.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Græco-Syrians had their doctrine of the seven zones or climates into which the earth was divided,<sup>2</sup> just as the northerners had their seven seasons; the zones being doubtless correlative with the "seven bonds of heaven and earth" which in the ancient Babylonian system were developed from the seven planets and their representative spirits.<sup>3</sup> But Gregory's derivation of the Christian myth from the East, where also are located the *Septem Fratres Martyres*, brings us back to our bearings as regards the present inquiry.

§ 2. The occurrence of all these dates of "sevens" in July, or just after July, the seventh month, is a very remarkable coincidence; and it is impossible to miss the surmise that they have a connection with the month's ordinal number. But further surmises are suggested by the fact that in the Krishna legends there is a variation, and an evident confusion, as to the numerical place of the God in the list of his mother's children, of whom he would appear in some versions to have been the seventh, while commonly he is the eighth.<sup>4</sup> Devakî's eight children are

<sup>1</sup> The lake itself, in the Christian legend, is the scene of a local water-worship in connection with Pagan Goddesses. Now, the Semites attached a special sanctity to groups of Seven Wells; and the Arabic name given to (presumably) one such group signifies the Pleiades. See Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 153, n., 165, 168.

<sup>2</sup> Bardesan, *Fragments*, Eng. tr. Ante-Nicene Lib. vol. xxii. b. p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 110. There were seven bad spirits as well as seven good—the number was obligatory. *Id.* pp. 82, 102, 105, 283. Cp. Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. tr. p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Compare M. Barth's account with that of Maurice (*History of Hindostan*, ii. 330), who follows the Bhâgavat Purâna, but cites Balde, who made Krishna the seventh son.

said to have been seven sons and a daughter ; but only the six sons are said to have been killed by Kansa ; while in the Bhâgavat Purâna her seventh child is Bala Râma, and, he being "transferred" to the womb of Rohinî, her seventh pregnancy is given out as ending in miscarriage. It is hardly possible to doubt that there has been manipulation of an earlier myth-form ; and the suspicion is strengthened by the confused fashion in which it is told that after the birth of the divine child the parents' eyes were closed by Vishnu, so that "they again thought that a child was born unto them"—a needless and unintelligible detail.<sup>1</sup> The myth, besides, is certainly pre-Krishnaite. "In the Veda, the sun, in the form of Mârtânda, is the eighth son born of Aditi ; and his mother casts him off, just as Devakî, who is at times represented as an incarnation of Aditi, removes Krishna."<sup>2</sup> In other mythologies as in the Hindu the number of the supernatural family varies between seven and eight. "To Kronos [Il or El] were borne by Astarte seven daughters.....and again to him were borne by Rhea seven sons, the youngest of whom was consecrated from his birth";<sup>3</sup> but again the divine Eshmun (Asklepios) was the eighth son of Sydyk.<sup>4</sup> The solution is dubious.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that a myth of the birth of seven inferior or ill-fated children, followed by that of one who attains supreme Godhood, may be a primitive cosmogonic explanation of the relation of the "seven planets" to the deity, which is certainly the basis of the familiar myth of the "Seven Spirits" who figure so much in the Mazdean system and in the Christian Apocalypse. Mithra, the chief of the

<sup>1</sup> It is made partly intelligible in the *Prem Sagar* ("Ocean of Love"), a Hindi version at second hand of the tenth book of the Bhâgavat Purâna. The idea there is that the parents are made to forget the preliminary revelation of the divinity. Cp. Cox, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 173. See Wilson's *Rig Veda Sanhita*, vi. 199. Aditi "bore Mârtânda for the birth and death of human beings."

<sup>3</sup> Sanchoniathon in Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.*, cited in Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Apollo, reputed born on the seventh day of the month, was probably first known as *seventh-day-born*, ἑβδομαγένης. Scholiasts on Æsch. *Seven against Thebes*, 800, where the epithet is εβδομαγέτης. Cp. Plutarch, *Symposium*, viii.

seven Amshaspands or planetary spirits of the Persian system, who are clearly akin to the "Adityas" of the Vedas,<sup>1</sup> rose in his solar character to virtual supremacy; and it is noteworthy that throughout the Avesta the heavenly bodies always appear in the order: Planets, Moon, and Sun, the Sun coming last.<sup>2</sup> In this light, the conception of stars and moon as ghosts or dead divinities in comparison with the sun seems not unlikely. On the other hand, on Mr. Frazer's view of the primitive universality of the worship of a God of Vegetation, whose cult survived in such as those of Dionysos, Osiris, and Adonis, there may have been an association of a myth of the seasons with that of the Life-God, who finally dominates everything. And as there appears to have been a legend of seven slain sons of Devakî,<sup>3</sup> these seven sons of the "celestial man"<sup>4</sup> may be duplicates of the seven sleeping sons of the northern Mimer, whom we have seen identified with "the seven seasons." The Christian legends have shown us how the sleepers (always young) could be transformed into martyrs. It is a curious coincidence, again, that in one version of the myth of the twelve Hebrew patriarchs<sup>5</sup> the undesired Leah bears to the solar Jacob seven children, six sons and a daughter, before the desired Rachel bears the favourite, the solar Joseph; while in the dual legend of Râma and Krishna the younger brother becomes the greater, as happens in so many Biblical cases of pairs of brothers—Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Reuben and Joseph, Pharez and Zarah, Manasseh and Ephraim.<sup>6</sup>

The suspicion of manipulation is further strengthened by the fact that, while the Birth Festival falls in July, the date

<sup>1</sup> Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> Goldziher, *Hebrew Mythology*, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> M. Pavie, in his translation (*Krishna et sa Doctrine*, 1852) of Lalatch's Hindi version of the tenth book of the Bhâgavat Purâna, heads the first chapter, "King Kansa kills the first seven children of his sister Devakî," though the text is not explicit to that effect.

<sup>4</sup> Barth, as cited, p. 172.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. xxx. 20-24.

<sup>6</sup> Compare the ascendancy of Zeus over his elder brethren. Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus*, 58-59. In Hesiod (*Theogony*, 453-478) Zeus is the *sixth* and youngest child; but in the Iliad (xv. 182, 204; cp. iv. 60) he is the eldest born.

of the birth in late texts appears to be August. It could be wished that Professor Weber had brought his scholarly knowledge to bear on the problem of the meaning of these dates rather than on the impracticable thesis he has adopted from his supernaturalist predecessors. Sir William Jones gave a clue<sup>1</sup> in noting the fact that in the Brahman almanacs there are two ways of dating Krishna's birthday. One puts it "when the moon is in Rohinî, on the eighth of any dark fortnight; the other when the sun is in Sinha." It is a conflict of myths.

As to the "seven seasons" notion in old Aryan mythology, it is impossible to speak. The number in Hindu lore as preserved is six;<sup>2</sup> and though these might be connected with the six slain children of Devakî, they do not square with the eight births of Aditi. But for this last precedent, it might be suspected that Krishna had been made the eighth child of the Divine Lady because he was the eighth Incarnation of Vishnu; but the Aditi myth is a strong reminder that the story of the eight children may be older than the scheme of the Avatars, the genesis of which is so difficult to trace.<sup>3</sup> In Rhodes, Poseidon was held to have six sons and one daughter by Halia; while Helios had seven sons and one daughter by Rhode.<sup>4</sup> And here we are reminded that the number eight figures in the Vedas as well as seven, there being indeed *eight* "planets" in the Indian system.<sup>5</sup> Yet again, in Egyptian mythology there are "eight personified cosmic powers" "from whom the city of Thut, Hermopolis, derived its Egyptian name," and who are "always united with Thut, but nevertheless to be distinguished from his seven assistants."<sup>6</sup> Again, it has been pointed out that the Pythian cycle of eight years was one of ninety-nine lunar months, "at the end of which the revo-

<sup>1</sup> *Asiatic Researches*, iii. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, in *Asiatic Researches*, iii. 258; Patterson, *id.* viii. 66.

<sup>3</sup> For an ingenious if inconclusive attempt to find an astrological solution of the problem, see Salverte's *Essai sur les Noms*, 1824, vol. ii. Note C. Salverte has followed some account which makes Krishna the seventh child of Devakî.

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus, v. 55, 56.

<sup>5</sup> Barth, as cited, p. 261, *n.*

<sup>6</sup> Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 49. Cp. Herodotus, ii. 43, 46, 145, 156.



lutions of the sun and moon again nearly coincided.<sup>1</sup> Finally, it is not impossible that the old perplexity as to Hesperus and Phosphorus—the question whether it was the same planet, Venus, that was seen now at dawn and now at sunset: a problem which was said to have been settled by Pythagoras<sup>2</sup>—may underlie the alternations of a seven and an eight myth. It would seem as if an eight myth and a seven myth, both of irretrievable antiquity, had been entangled<sup>3</sup> too early to permit of any certainty as to their respective origins.

On that view, of course, the possibility remains that a week-myth may after all be bound up with the legend of Krishna and the six slain children. The names of the days of the week, ancient and modern, remind us that the “seven planets”—that is, the five planets anciently known, and the sun and moon—formed the basis of the seven-day division of time, in which the sun has always the place of honour.<sup>4</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> K. O. Müller, *Dorians*, Eng. tr. i. 281. Cp. pp. 263, 270.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *De nat. deor.* ii. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Macrobius, *In Somn. Scip.* i. 6. Colebrooke (*Asiatic Researches*, viii. 82–3) notes that “the eight Sactis, or enemies of as many deities, are also called Matris or mothers. . . . However, some authorities reduce the number to seven.” So there are two accounts of the number of children borne by Megara to Herakles, Pherecydes making them seven, and Pindar (*Isth.* iii. 81, 116) eight. (Duncker, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, iii. 98.) Apollodorus in one place (ii. 7, 8) makes the sons four; in another (ii. 4, 11) three. It may very well be that this ancient perplexity is the origin of the odd phrase in *Ecclesiastes* (xi. 2): “Give a portion to Seven, and also to Eight”—a formula which the commentators seem to regard as having no special meaning. The two numbers occur again in Micah, v. 5. See Mr. Gerald Massey’s *Natural Genesis*, ii. 80, 104–5, for a surprising number of other instances, one from the Fiji islands! See also the same work, ii. 2, as to the number of the Pleiads.

<sup>4</sup> On this point, in connection with India, see Von Bohlen, *Das Alte Indien*, 1830, ii. 245 ff. The origin of the week appears still to be disputed. Le Clerc long ago urged the planetary basis against Grotius, who accepted the Judaic (*On the Truth of the Chr. Rel.* i. 16); but Professor Whitney (*Life and Growth of Language*, p. 81) writes that “the planetary day-names would have remained to Europe, as to India, a mere astrologers’ fancy, but for Christianity and its inheritance of the Jewish seven-day period as a leading measure of time”—a perplexing statement to me. The Day of the Sun or Lord’s Day was certainly a popular institution under Paganism. On the general problem cp. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. tr. i. 264; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 113; *Indian Antiquary*, March, 1874 (iii. 90); Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, iii. 41, end; Max Müller, *On False Analogies in Comparative Theology*, *Contemporary Review*, 1870.

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

<sup>1</sup> Gesenius, *Commentar über d. Jesaia*, 2ter Theil, Beilage, 2, p. 344, citing Nordberg, *Lex.* p. 76 ff. (Donaldson, *Theatre of the Greeks*, 7th ed. p. 15.)

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

<sup>3</sup> *Fasti*, i. 238.

<sup>4</sup> Preller, *Röm. Myth.* p. 85.

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

<sup>6</sup> Preller, p. 414; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i. 10.

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

This is away from the week myth. To return to that: we find that in seven-gated Thebes, Apollo the Sun-God is lord of the seventh gate<sup>2</sup> because lord of the number seven, and born on the seventh day of the month;<sup>3</sup> and though in the Hellenic legend of the seven chiefs who die in the attack on the seven-gated city the basal myth is much sophisticated, it can hardly be doubted that there is a dualist nature-myth behind the detail of the mutual slaughter of the two opposed brothers at the gate of Apollo. More obvious is the conception as we have it plausibly explained by Sir George Cox, followed by Mr. Tylor, in the case of Grimm's story of the wolf and the seven little goats. The wolf is the darkness (Kansa was black) who tries to swallow the seven days of the week, and does swallow six, while the seventh *hides*.<sup>4</sup> In the Teutonic story the six days come out again, which they do not in the Hindu; but the myth may be the same at bottom. In any case, here we have six or seven slain "children," whose fate makes part of the story of Krishna, the Hindu God honoured in the seventh month; and these compare strikingly with the Christian sets of Seven Martyrs, who are all either "children" of a mother who dies with them, or simply boys, as in the case of the Sleepers of Ephesus; and who

<sup>1</sup> Preller, last cit.; Macrobius, i. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Æschylus, *Seven against Thebes*, 801. Each gate has its God, and the virgin Athênê presides over all. In the Mithraic mysteries, Mithra, the Sun-God, was lord of the seventh gate, the gates being named from the planets, moon, and sun. Origen, as last cited. The same principle held in Babylon. In ancient Scandinavia, finally, if we can trust the *Grimnismal*, Balder dwells in the seventh celestial house. Bergmann, *Le Message de Skirnir et les dits de Grimnir*, pp. 228, 249, 269. There is no sign of Christian suggestion here. Cp. Donaldson, *Theatre of the Greeks*, 7th ed. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Scholiast on Æsch.; Müller, *Dorians*, Eng. tr. i. 348 and refs. In four months, two in each half of the year, the seventh day was sacred to Apollo. Müller, as cited, p. 350. Cp. p. 270. See also Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 770; Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Plato*; and Herodotus (vi. 57), who makes the seventh day of every month as well as the day of each new moon sacred to Apollo in Sparta.

<sup>4</sup> Cox, p. 177, note. Cp. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i. 302-8.

are so curiously associated with the same month. I am not arguing that the Christian myth must have filtered in the early centuries of our era from India: I have no information as to whether the Hindu ritual includes any allusion to Krishna's martyred brothers. But at the very least the mythological basis of all the stories should be plain enough to help to disabuse all candid minds of the notion that Krishnaism drew its myths from Christianity. Here, again, the myth is embedded in the Hindu story, while it only fortuitously appears in Christian mythology.

§ 3. There is one other possible key to this part of the Krishna myth, which should not be overlooked. It would appear that in old Hebrew usage the *seventh* month was also known as the *first* month, owing to a change which had been made in the reckoning. Wellhausen writes:—

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

There seems reason to suppose that a similar change took place earlier in Egypt. “The beginning of the year, or the first of Thoth,” says Sir J. Gardner Wilkinson, “was perhaps originally at a very different season.”<sup>2</sup> But during the Sothic period, which subsisted from 1322 B.C. onwards, the usage would seem to have been substantially the same as it was in Cæsar's time, when the first of

<sup>1</sup> Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, Eng. tr. pp. 108–109.

<sup>2</sup> *Ancient Egyptians*, abridged ed. ii. 254. Cp. *Bible Folk-Lore*, 1884, p. 79, and the *Classical Review*, April, 1900, p. 146.

Thoth, or new year, fell on 29th August.<sup>1</sup> We have to remember, too, that in Krishnaism itself there are different dates for the Birthday Festival, the Vârâha Purâna entirely departing from the accepted view. In that Purâna the Krishna Birth-Festival appears to be "only one of a whole series, amounting to twelve, which relate themselves to the ten—or rather eleven!—avatars of Vishnu as Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-Lion, Dwarf,<sup>2</sup> Bhârgava (*i.e.*, Parasu Râma), Râma Krishna, Buddha, Kalkin, and Padmanâbha (*sic*)."<sup>3</sup> On which Professor Weber justly observes that the festival calendars of other peoples betray similar discrepancies. A case in point is that of Horus, who had more birthdays than one.<sup>4</sup> But enough, perhaps more than enough, of a mythological problem which on any view is subsidiary to our main inquiry.

#### XVI. THE DESCENT INTO HELL.

Finally, a much more important myth-parallel than the last—though I do not even here contend for more than the possibility of direct Christian borrowing—is that between the story of Krishna's "descent into hell" and the Christian dogma and legend of the same purport. In this last case, as in others, Professor Weber would doubtless argue that India borrowed from Alexandria. The known historical fact is that the dogma of the "descent into hell" made its first formal appearance in the Christian Church in the formulary of the church of Aquileia late in the fourth century,<sup>5</sup> having before that time had great popular

<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson, as cited, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> It is a small matter, but it may be as well to guard the English reader against an error which occurs in the Rev. Mr. Wood's translation of M. Barth's admirable book on *The Religions of India*. On p. 170 there is an allusion to the Avatâra of "the Brahman Nain." This should be "the Brahman Dwarf" or "the Dwarf Bahmun." "Nain" is the French for dwarf, which the translator had misconceived; and "Bahmun," in some versions, was the dwarf's name. It is only fair to say that Mr. Wood has done his work in general very well.

<sup>3</sup> Weber, pp. 260-1.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, c. 52.

<sup>5</sup> Nicolas, *Le Symbole des Apôtres*, 1867, pp. 221, 364.

vogue, as may be inferred from the non-canonical Gospel of Nicodemus, which gives the legend at much length. Only in the sixth century<sup>1</sup> did it begin to be formally affirmed throughout the Church, Augustine having accepted it without exactly knowing what to make of it.<sup>2</sup> Here clearly was one more assimilation of a Pagan doctrine;<sup>3</sup> for the Pagan vogue of the myth of a God who descended into the underworld was unquestionably very great. Osiris was peculiarly the judge of the dead;<sup>4</sup> and he goes to and comes from the Shades;<sup>5</sup> Hercules went to Hades before he went to heaven, his last labour being to carry away Cerberus, the three-headed dog; and then it was that he took away with him Theseus and Peirithous. Dionysos descends to Hades to bring back his mother Semelê from the dead, and is so represented in art.<sup>6</sup> Hermes, the Psychopompos, is not only the leader of souls to the Shades,<sup>7</sup> but the guide of those who, like Hercules, return;<sup>8</sup> he being the "appointed messenger (angel) to Hades."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* pp. 217-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> On this compare Dr. Gardiner, *Exploratio Evangelica*, 1899, ch. xxi.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, ii. 123. Compare any account of the Egyptian system.

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, c. 19. Professor Tiele, indeed, states that "Osiris, according to the old monuments, comes back to earth no more" (*Hist. of the Egypt. Rel.* Eng. tr. p. 43); but Plutarch's words are explicit as to his return to visit Horus. In any case, the real point is, of course, that the God does not die; and his residence in the other world as Judge of the Dead in the Egyptian system is quite a different thing from residence in the Hades of the Greeks.

<sup>6</sup> Pausanias, ii. 31, 37; Apollodorus, iii. 5, 3; Pindar, *Olymp.* ii. 46-52; *Pyth.* xi. 2; K. O. Müller, *Ancient Art*, pp. 492, 495.

<sup>7</sup> *Odyssey*, xxiv. 1-10.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* xi. 626.

<sup>9</sup> Hom. Hymn, 572. Long ago, according to the indignant Mosheim (note on Cudworth, Harrison's trans. iii. 298), one Peter a Sarn "dared to compare our blessed Saviour to Mercury, and to advance this as one of the principal arguments by which he attempts to bear out the comparison, that Mercury is said by the poets to discharge the twofold function of dismissing souls to Tartarus and evoking them from thence." Mosheim's own conviction was that "Beyond all doubt a man of that name" [*i.e.* Mercurius, not Hermes] "had lived in ancient Greece and had acquired for himself a high reputation by swiftness of foot, eloquence, and other virtues and vices; and I have scarcely a doubt that he held the office of public runner and messenger to Jupiter, an ancient king of Thessaly." Such was the light of orthodoxy on human history one hundred and fifty years ago. It is noteworthy that Agni, the Child-God, messenger of the Gods, mediator, and "wise one" (the Logos) of the Vedas, was a leader of souls to the Shades (with Pûshan, a form of the sun), just as was Hermes (Barth, p. 23; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 114). Hermes himself is supposed to be a development of Hermeias, perhaps the Vedic dog

In the myth of Venus and Adonis, the slain Sun-God, or Vegetation-God, passes six months of the year in the upper and six in the under world, as does the Sun itself;<sup>1</sup> Orpheus goes to harp Eurydice out of Hades; and among the Thracian Getæ, who early developed the belief in a happy immortality, the man-God Zamolxis, otherwise Gebeleizis, who had introduced that doctrine, disappeared for three years in a subterraneous habitation he had made for himself, and on his unexpected return the Thracians believed his teaching. So tells the incomparable Herodotus,<sup>2</sup> who "neither disbelieved nor entirely believed" the story in this evidently Evemerized form. But the doctrine is universal, being obviously part of the myth of the death and resurrection of the Sun-God, either in the form of the equinoctial mystery in which he is three days between death and life, or in the general sense that he goes to the lower regions for his winter death before he comes to his strength again. It is bound up with the religion of Mithra, in which, as we gather from later myth-versions, the God originally passed into the "place of torment" at the autumn equinox.<sup>3</sup>

Sârameya, who was once possibly "the child of the dawn," and whose name was given to the two dogs of the Indian Hades (Max Müller, *Nat. Relig.* pp. 453, 483; Tiele, p. 211). This and other identifications of Greek and Indian mythological names have been challenged, along with the whole theory of the derivation of the Aryan race from India. See Mr. Lang's *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i. 23, citing Mannhardt; but cp. the remarks above, p. 22. The old race theory may now be said to be exploded (see Dr. Isaac Taylor's work *The Origin of the Aryans*, which gives the results of scholarship on the subject); but the question of the relations between Indian and other myths remains to be worked out on the new lines.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Frazer (*Golden Bough*, i. 282) will not allow that this myth has any solar significance; asking how the sun in the south can be said to be dead for half or a third of the year. But he is satisfied to say that "vegetation, especially the corn, lies buried in the earth half the year, and reappears above ground the other half," which is surely not accurate. No doubt the Proserpina myth had such a purport; but the explanation given by Macrobius (*Sat.* i. 21) of the Adonis myth is that the sun, passing through the twelve signs of the zodiac, spends six months in the "superior" and six in the "inferior" signs, which last called are the realm of Proserpina, while the others belong to the realm of Venus. For the rest, the fatal boar was held to typify winter, though that part of the myth is certainly not congruous with the rest. But concerning the predominantly solar Apollo it was told that he was present in Delos from the sacred month (January-February) to Hekatombaion (June-July) and absent in Lykia from Metageitnion (July-August) to Lenaion (= Gamelion: December-January). Here is an apparently solar precedent for the Adonisian usage.

<sup>2</sup> B. iv. 93-96.

<sup>3</sup> Wait, as cited, p. 194.

It is even probable that the myth of Apollo's bondage to Admetus (a name of the God of the underworld) originally implied his descent to the infernal regions;<sup>1</sup> a myth rightly connected by Ottfried Müller with the solitary story of Apollo's death. The same conception is fully developed in the Northern myth of the Sun-God Balder, who, wounded in a great battle, in which some of his kindred oppose him, or otherwise by the shaft of magic mistletoe, goes to the underworld of Hel, where he grows strong again by drinking sacred mead, and whence he is to return at the Ragnarök, or Twilight of the Gods, when Gods and men are alike to be regenerated.<sup>2</sup> Common to all races, it appears poetically in our legend of Arthur, the gold-clothed solar child, born as was Hercules of a dissembling father, and like Cyrus secretly reared, who after being stricken in a great battle in the West, in which the British kindred slay each other as do the Yâdavas of the Krishna lore, goes to the island valley of Avilion to heal him of his grievous wound, and to return. In pre-Christian Greece, from a very distant period, such a myth was certainly current—witness the visit of the solar Ulysses to the Shades in the *Odyssey*—and it was doubtless bound up with the doctrine of immortality conveyed in the *Mysteries*.<sup>3</sup> As the latter belief gained ground, the myth of descent and return, always prominent in the fable of Proserpine, would become more prominent; and in the "Orphic" period this fascinating motive was fully established in religious literature. In one "Orphic" poem, the *Minyas*, which elaborately described the lower regions, we have the exact title-formula of the later Christian doctrine, ἡ ἐς Αἶδου κατάβασις, "the

<sup>1</sup> See K. O. Müller, *Dorians*, Eng. tr. i. 339–340; *Introduction to Mythology*, Eng. tr. pp. 239–246.

<sup>2</sup> See the minute and scholarly examination of this myth in Dr. Rydberg's *Teutonic Mythology*, pp. 249–264, 492, 530–8, 595, 653, 655, etc.; and the account given above, pp. 118–126, of recent discussions. The second part of Dr. Rydberg's great work, which contains a fuller study of the Balder myth, is unfortunately not yet translated into English.

<sup>3</sup> K. O. Müller, *Hist. of Lit. of Anc. Greece*, Lewis's tr. 1847, p. 231. Cp. Professor Nettleship, *Essays in Latin Literature*, pp. 105, 136–140; Dr. Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 1890, Lect. ix.; and Mosheim's extracts in note on Cudworth, iii. 296.



Descent into Hades.”<sup>1</sup> But there is reason to believe that the “Orphic” system was a result of the influence of Asiatic doctrine;<sup>2</sup> and indeed, of all mythic analogues to the Christian myth of the descent into Hell, I can remember none more exact than the story of the similar descent of Krishna. He too, like Agni and Hermes, is a “conveyer of the souls of the dead,” and as such is invoked at funerals by the name of Heri, the cry being “Heri-bol!”<sup>3</sup> Singularly enough, he connects with Hermes further in that he is identified with “Budha,” the name given by the Hindus to the planet Mercury;<sup>4</sup> but on the Christian side he exhibits a number of other parallels which do not occur in the Hermes myth as we have it. Take the account of Moor:—

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

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

“In Hindu pictures Vishnu, who is identified with Krishna, is often seen mounted on the eagle Garuda.... And were a Hindu artist to handle the subject of Krishna’s descent to hell, which I never saw, he would most likely introduce Cerbura, the infernal three-headed dog<sup>5</sup> of

<sup>1</sup> K. O. Müller, as last cited, p. 233. Cp. Pausanias, ix. 31, as to the poems attributed to Hesiod.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Mr. Lang’s *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 1st ed., i. 291–3, and Grote and Lobeck as cited by him.

<sup>3</sup> Balfour’s *Indian Cyclopædia*, art. NEMI.

<sup>4</sup> Max Müller, art. on “False Analogies” in *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, 1st ed. p. 308.

<sup>5</sup> “Yama, the regent of hell, has two dogs, according to the Purânas, one of them named Cerbura and Sabula, or *varied*; the other Syâma, or *black*;

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

For obvious reasons, the whole of this passage is suppressed in the Rev. W. O. Simpson's 1864 edition of Moor's work. But the parallel goes even further than Moor represents; for the descent of Jesus into hell, curiously enough, was anciently figured as involving a forcing open of the jaws of a huge serpent or dragon.<sup>2</sup> Thus, whether or not the Christian adaptation was made directly from Indian communications, it carried on a myth which, appearing in some guise in all faiths, figured in ancient India in a form more closely parallel with the Christian than any other now extant. The appropriation would seem to have been made confusedly, from different sources. Christ in one view went to Hades in his capacity of avenger<sup>3</sup>—an idea evidently derived from the Osirian system, which, however, closely approaches the Indian in the story of Osiris descending to the Shades on the prayer of Queen Garmathone and restoring her son to life.<sup>4</sup> In

the first of whom is also called Trisiras, or *with three heads*, and has the additional epithets of Calmâsha, Chitra, and Cirmîra, all signifying *stained* or *spotted*. In Pliny the words Cimmerium and Cerberium seem used as synonymous; but, however that may be, the Cerbura of the Hindus is indubitably the Cerberus of the Greeks" (Wilford, in *Asiatic Researches*, iii. 408). There seems some doubt as to the antiquity of the "three heads" in Indian mythology: M. Barth (p. 23) speaks only of "two dogs" as guarding the road to Yama's realm; but the notion seems sufficiently Hindu. See note above as to the Sârameya, and compare Gubernatis, *Zool. Myth.* i. 49, as to Cerberi. Professor Müller decides (*Nat. Rel.* p. 453) that the name Kerberos is from the Sanskrit *Sarvarî*, "the night"—which chimes with Wilford's definitions; but here the assumption of derivation must be discarded. In northern mythology there is sometimes one hell-dog, sometimes more (Rydberg, as cited pp. 276, 280, 362); and there is in the underworld a three-headed *giant* (Rydberg, pp. 295-6; cp. Bergmann, *Le Message de Skirnir*, 1871, pp. 99, 154). In Greek mythology Typhon is hundred-headed (*Æschylus, Prom.* 361; *Hesiod. Theog.* 825; *Pindar, Pyth.* i. 29; viii. 23); while Cerberus is also fifty-headed (*Theog.* 312); and Chimæra, born like Cerberus of the dragon-nymph Echidna, has three heads (*Theog.* 321; *Horace, 1 Carm.* xxvii. 23, 24).

<sup>1</sup> *Hindu Pantheon*, pp. 213-4. Compare the varying account of Maurice (ii. 377), following the Persian version of the Bhâgavat.

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

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, Letter to Evodius, cited by Nicolas, p. 228, n.

<sup>4</sup> Pseudo-Plutarch, *Of the Names of Rivers and Mountains*, sub tit. Nile (xvi.).

another view, which prevails in the main legend as given in the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Christ descends to the Shades, where Satan and Death are one, on a mission of liberation, taking all the "saints" of previous history with him to heaven, but further restoring to earth for three days the two sons of the blessed high-priest Simeon, who had taken the babe Jesus in his arms. Now, not only was the Brahman Kasya the Guru of Krishna, but his children were *two sons*.<sup>1</sup> Again, for the more canonical story of Jesus going to preach to "the spirits in prison,"<sup>2</sup> which was adopted by many of the Fathers<sup>3</sup> and became bound up with the Pagan-Christian doctrine of purgatory, there is a parallel in the Purâna myth, in which Krishna, in the earlier part of his search for the lost children, reaches the under-sea or over-sea region of "Cusha-Dweepa," where he "instructed the Cutila-Cesas in the whole system of religious and civil duties."<sup>4</sup> Doubtless we shall be told once more that the Indian legend borrows from the Apocryphal Gospel, without any attempt being made to show how or whence the Christian compiler got his story. To which I once more answer that in the Indian version the myth has all the stamp of the luxuriant and spontaneous Eastern imagination, while in the Christian mythology it is one of the most obviously alien elements, and in the detailed legend it is a confused patchwork. In the Purâna, Krishna's blast on his shell at the gate of the Shades is perfectly Asiatic; as is the Greek legend of Pan's striking terror in the battle of Gods and Titans by his blast on the same instrument;<sup>5</sup> in "Nicodemus" the thunderous voice of Christ at hell-gate may indeed be compared to the shouting

<sup>1</sup> Maurice, as last cited.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter iii. 19.

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

<sup>4</sup> Wilford, in *Asiatic Researches*, iii. 399. Cp. pp. 349, 370.

<sup>5</sup> Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi*, 27; Hyginus, ii. 28.

of Mars in Homer, but is obviously inspired by *some* primitive myth, and may much more easily be conceived as suggested-by than as suggesting the Krishnaite tale. And if we are to choose between (a) the proposition that it was through a Christian legend that India became possessed of a myth-motive common to half-a-dozen ancient faiths before Christianity was heard of, and (b) the inference that the Christian legend was more or less directly inspired by the Indian legend in something very like the form in which we now have it—there can be little room for hesitation among unprejudiced students. Such an alternative, however, is not really forced on us. There are many reasons for surmising that Hindu and Greek mythology may alike have been influenced by the ancient Asiatic mythology known to us as Akkadian, which on one hand shaped the system of Babylonia, and so wrought on the Greek through Asia Minor, and on the other is likely to have had affinities with the pre-Aryan cults of India. As to this, thus far, we can only speculate, restricting our special reasoning to the problem under notice.

In regard, finally, to some of the myth-parallels dealt with, it might very well be that the Christian appropriation was made through the channel of Buddhism, whence so many elements of the Christian system are now held to have come.<sup>1</sup> That question falls to be considered apart from the present inquiry,<sup>2</sup> but it has an obvious bearing on the problem of the relations between Christianity and Krishnaism. In regard to Buddhism the actual historical connections with Christianity are in some measure made out *à posteriori*; and if sometimes points are stretched, the general argument is impressive. But the argument for Buddhist priority over Christianity owes a large part of its strength to the very fact that, as we shall see, the Buddhist legends are to a great extent themselves refashionings of

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Arthur Lillie's work, *Buddhism in Christendom*, and his smaller work, *The Influence of Buddhism on Christianity*, 1893, for general views and details. As to the general Indian reaction on the West, especially under Asoka, see Professor Mahaffy's *Greek World under Roman Sway*, 1890, ch. ii.

<sup>2</sup> See hereinafter, *The Gospel Myths*, § 10.

Krishna legends. The weakness of the Christian position is that it claims originality for a body of lore which, obviously non-historical, is as obviously myth in a late and literary though unphilosophic stage; and that this claim is made with no attempt at explaining how such myths could so appear without antecedents. For the Buddhist mythology, as M. Senart has shown, many of the antecedents lie in that very Krishnaism which the prejudiced Christist assumes to be borrowed from his own, so to say, virgin-born mythology. For the Krishnaite myths, again, as we have in part seen and shall see further, antecedents lay in part in the simpler Vedic system, and may further be reasonably assumed to have existed in the great mass of popular religion that *must* have flourished outside the sacerdotal system of the Vedas. The scientific grievance against scholars like Professor Weber is that they claim priority on certain points for Christian myth without once asking the question as to whence the Christian myth itself came.

If, then, it be shown that any of the myths before discussed came to Christism through Buddhism, our argument is not impugned, but strengthened, unless (which is unlikely) it be contended that the Buddhist form preceded the Krishnaite. In some cases it is plainly probable that the Buddhist legend was the go-between. Thus the late Christian myth of the synchronous birth of the Christ's cousin, John the Baptist, is reasonably to be traced to the Buddhist myth of the synchronous birth of the Buddha's cousin Ananda,<sup>1</sup> rather than to the Krishnaite motive of Arjuna or Bala Râma; but this course is reasonable chiefly because the Krishnaite system gives an origin for the Buddhist myth. So, too, the motive of the Descent into Hell may have been taken by the Christists from the Buddhist fable of Buddha's expedition to preach "like all former Buddhas" the law to his mother in the upper-world of Tawadeintha, since there not only is the preaching extended to a multitude of others of the unearthly population,

<sup>1</sup> Bigandet's *Life of Gaudama*, Trübner's ed. i. 36.

but there appear also the mythic "two"—in this case "two sons of Nats," who obtain from Buddha "the reward of Thautapan."<sup>1</sup> Certainly Krishna's literal *descent*, and the item of the dragon, are details that come specially close to the Christian myth; and one would have expected the Christian borrower to introduce the Christ's mother if he had before him the Buddha legend as we now have it. But on the other hand he may well have had a different version; or some of the details may have been added to the Christian story at different times, as they must have been in the Buddhist. All I stand upon definitely is that the Krishna stories are almost always the more primitive; and that if they are the basis of the mythology of the Buddhist system—a system which so largely parallels or enters into the Christian—it is exorbitant to presume that Krishnaism would systematically borrow again from Christianity. In the case of the "preaching to the spirits in prison," in particular, the Buddhist myth is on the face of it pre-Buddhistic, yet Indian. Our general argument, then, for the antiquity of Krishnaism as compared with Christianity, holds good through a whole series of myth motives in respect of which Christianity is unquestionably a borrower, and sometimes apparently a borrower from India.

#### XVII. SPURIOUS AND REMOTE MYTH-PARALLELS.

It remains to consider the minor quasi-coincidences noted by the *Athenæum* critic,<sup>2</sup> between the Krishna saga, as given in the Mahâbhârata and elsewhere, and the narrative of the Gospels. These are (1) Krishna's address to the fig-tree; (2) his invitation to his followers to "worship a mountain"; (3) his teaching that those who love the God shall not die; (4) his Transfiguration; (5) his being anointed by a woman; (6) his restoring a widow's dead son to life; (7) his washing of feet; (8) the

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* pp. 219–225.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 150–1.

hostility of the demon-follower who "carries the bag." By this time, perhaps, the reader will be slow to suppose that such items stand for any Hindu adaptation of the Gospels. Raising once more the crucial question, Whence came the Gospel stories? we are rather led to query whether, by way, as before suggested, of Buddhism, the Gospel stories did not come from India.

Some may be put aside as false coincidences. The Krishnaite story of the fig-tree appears to be as edifying as the Christian is otherwise; but there is no sufficient ground even for supposing the latter to be a perversion of the former. So with the "worshipping a mountain," a usage too common in the ancient world to need to be suggested by one race to another within our era. The mystic teaching as to immortality, again, is certainly pre-Christian in Europe and in Egypt, and, in a manner, implicit in Buddhism;<sup>1</sup> and the Transfiguration of Krishna is simply an item in the sun-myth, whence, probably by way of the Neo-Hellenic mysteries, it reached the Christians. The disciplinary washing of feet, again, is one of the established usages of Buddhistic monkery; and there is positively no reason to doubt that it was so before the Christian era. If the Krishna myth borrowed in this instance, it did so at home; but there is every reason to suppose that the religious practice in question was common long before the rise of Buddhism. The miracle of the raising of the widow's son, again, is preceded long before Christianity in the duplicated myth of the Hebrew Elijah and Elisha;<sup>2</sup> and as all Semitic mythology centres round Babylon and points back to the Akkadians, the story presumptively had a common Asiatic currency. In all likelihood it had a solar significance, in common with the myths of the slain Osiris and Adonis and the slain child Dionysos, over the restoration of both of whom there figures a widowed

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 21-22; 2 Kings iv. 34-35. In the Elisha story, the mother is not a widow; but the husband is "old"; and it would appear that in the unexpurgated form of the story the solar prophet was the real father.

“mother.”<sup>1</sup> On this view the resurrection of the Widow’s Son is only an Evemerized form of the resurrection of the Sun-God (himself at his death a widow’s son), interpolated in the pseudo-biography of the latter as a miracle wrought by him. To suppose that such an ancient myth-motive was suddenly appreciated for the first time by the miracle-multiplying Hindus only after it had taken Christian form, is a course barred to rational criticism. We are left to the two connected items of the anointing and the hostile attendant with “the bag.”

Obviously it matters very little from the rationalist point of view whether or not these items were conveyed to Krishnaism from Christism. But even this scanty measure of debt on the Hindu side is entirely unproved; while there is cause to conclude that on the Christian side we are dealing with just another adaptation. While the story of the raising of the widow’s son occurs in only one Gospel,<sup>2</sup> that of the anointing occurs in all; and as it is non-miraculous, the natural tendency is to accept it as historical. Yet a moment’s scrutiny shows that its circumstantiality is quite delusive. Both the version of the synoptics and that of John are minutely circumstantial, and each excludes the other, since John tells the story of Mary the sister of Lazarus in her own house, while the synoptics specify another house and a strange woman. John’s version might be excluded as false on the face of it, since it represents a pauper household as possessing a peculiarly costly and useless article;<sup>3</sup> but John’s myth (itself twice introduced—xi. 2, xii. 3) is only a variant of the other, which in the synoptics is related simply of “a woman,” but which later fancy, without Scriptural warrant, attaches to the mythic personality of Mary Magdala, Mary “the

<sup>1</sup> For Lactantius, Isis is the mother of the lost or slain “boy” Osiris (*Divine Institutes*, i. 21); and Dêmêtêr assists at the reanimation of the slain boy Dionysos. Diodorus, iii. 62. So in one view the Goddess who mourned for Adonis was the Earth Mother (Macrobius, *Sat.* i. 21); and in another Adonis is a child (Apollodorus iii. xiv. 4).

<sup>2</sup> Luke, vii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Evemerism has in private gone so far as the suggestion that Lazarus may have had the ointment given him by “Dives” for his sores! There is really as good ground for believing that as for accepting the story at all.



Nurse" (= Maia = Mylitta), a pseudo-historical variant of Mary the Mother.<sup>1</sup> And on the principle that "a myth is never so graphic and precise in its details as when it is a simple transcript of a ceremony which the author of the myth witnessed with his eyes,"<sup>2</sup> the reasonable presumption is that the anointing was a part of a mystery drama, Christian or pre-Christian, or both;<sup>3</sup> while the ascription of the act to a "Mary" was a normal expedient of the Gospel-makers.

Finally, we have the myth of the discontented Judas carrying "the bag"—a detail unexplained on the Christian side by any dicta as to the source of the money so carried. The story, like that of Lazarus and his household, is found in the fourth Gospel only,<sup>4</sup> and is just another non-miraculous myth added to the primary myth of Judas the Betrayer. On our theory,<sup>5</sup> that "Judas" is simply a fictitious personality made out of "Joudaios," "a Jew," in a Gentile-Christian mystery drama, "the bag" would be to Gentile eyes simply the symbol of the act of betrayal for money, the receptacle for the "thirty pieces of silver," with perhaps a general anti-Semitic suggestion of Jewish usury or avarice. Between this and the remote detail in the Mahâbhârata there seems to be only an accidental resemblance. But, if for once there was actually a borrowing by India, the smallness of its significance is in striking contrast with the claim of which it is the last uncanceled item.

### XVIII. EXPLANATION OF THE KRISHNA MYTH.

§ 1. We have seen that the latest claims as to the Christian origin of Krishnaite legends are only repetitions of guesses

<sup>1</sup> See hereinafter, *The Gospel Myths*, § 2.

<sup>2</sup> Frazer, as cited above, p. 182, note.

<sup>3</sup> Oil and ointment were alike signified by one Hebrew term (Isa. i. 6. R. V. and marg.); and the usage of anointing was general in the East. Cp. Isa. lvii. 9.

<sup>4</sup> John xii. 6; xiii. 29.

<sup>5</sup> See "The Myth of Judas Iscariot" in the author's *Studies in Religious Fallacy*; and hereinafter, *The Gospel Myths*, § 17.

made by missionaries in the days before comparative mythology, and that there is really no more valid argument behind the later than behind the earlier statements. It is also the fact, however, that sound and satisfying explanations of Krishnaism on the basis of universal mythology were sketched nearly a century ago; though they have been completely ignored by the later adherents of the missionary view, including even the scholarly and open-minded Professor Weber.

Not only was the solar character of Krishna recognized by the first European investigators,<sup>1</sup> being indeed avowed by the Brahmans, but the main elements of the whole myth were soon judiciously analyzed. Take the following early exposition:—

“The Earth is represented as a Cow, the cow of plenty; and, as the planets were considered by the Hindus to be so many habitable Earths, it was natural to describe them by the same hieroglyphic; and as the Sun directs their motions, furnishes them with light, and cherishes them with his genial heat, Krishna, the symbol of the Sun, was portrayed as an herdsman, sportive, amorous, inconstant.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> The monk Paulinus (quoted by Kleuker, *Abhandlungen*, as before cited, ii. 236) was satisfied that Krishna “originally (*primigenie*) signified the sun, and indeed the sun in eclipse” [here giving a meaning for the “black”], and that “the fable was accordingly to be referred to astronomy.” He had probably met with the myth of Krishna hiding himself in the moon (Jones, *Asiatic Researches*, iii. 290)—a notion found also in the Osiris myth (*I. and O.*, c. 43). He further saw that the mythic wars meant that “the sun in the heavens fought with planets, stars, and clouds,” and that the quasi-historic (it is not clear if he thought there was ever a real) Krishna was as it were a “terrestrial sun or” [here anticipating Lassen] “Hercules, as Arrian has it.”

<sup>2</sup> It should be added that, as later inquirers have noted, the clouds are cows in the Vedas, as in the myth of Hermes, and that this idea also enters largely into the Krishnaite symbolism.

motion of the machine the revolution of the year is pointed out.

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

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

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

Here is a rational, a scientific explanation of some of the main outlines of the Krishna myth, which holds good independently of the author’s further theory that the origin of Krishnaism lay in the separation of the sect of Vaishnavas from the Saivas, and that the legends may

<sup>1</sup> Patterson, in *Asiatic Researches*, viii. (1803), pp. 64–5. As to the astro-nomic significance of the dance in Greece, see Donaldson, *Theatre of the Greeks*, 7th ed. p. 24.

contain an element of allegory on the persecution of the new sect. The former part of that theory was put forward also by Colebrooke, who held that "the worship of Râma and of Krishna by the Vaishnavas, and that of Mahâdêva and Bhavânî by the Saivas and Sactas, have been introduced since the persecution of the Bauddhas and Jainas."<sup>1</sup> But the same sound scholar declares that he supposes both Râma and Krishna to have been "known characters in ancient fabulous history," and conjectures "that on the same basis new fables have been constructed, elevating those personages to the rank of Gods."<sup>2</sup> Hence he opposed the surmise that early references to Krishna in the sacred books were interpolations. There can be little doubt, I think, that Colebrooke would have admitted the "new fables" to be in many cases new only in their application, and to be really repetitions of the ancient myths of the race. This proposition, inductively proved, renders impregnable the earlier deductive position.

Every solar hero or deity necessarily repeats certain features in the myths of his predecessors; and this the more surely because on the one hand the popular fancy is so far from being clearly conscious of the identities between God and God, or hero and hero,<sup>3</sup> and because on the other the priest either sees in these, like the Jews, a system of types, or, like the Pagans, sees no harm in mystic correspondences. It is thus that so many dynasties of Gods have been built out of the same fabulous material. Now, though Krishna, figuring as he does as a demon in the Vedas, was presumably an outsiders' God even in the Vedic period, with what qualities we know not, we can find in the Vedas precedent for all his main features. Agni, the Fire-God, always tending to be identified with

<sup>1</sup> *Asiatic Researches*, viii. 474.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* ix. 293.

<sup>3</sup> "The story of Perseus is essentially the same as the story of his more illustrious descendant [Herakles]; and the profound unconsciousness of the Argives that the two narratives are in their groundwork identical is a singular illustration of the extent to which men can have all their critical faculties lulled to sleep by mere differences of names or of local colouring in legends which are only modifications of a single myth" (Cox, *Mythol. of Aryan Nations*, p. 303).

the Sun, is the prototype of the modern Krishna, not only in respect of being a marvellous child, but of being a lover of maidens: "Agni, as Yama, is all that is born; as Yama, all that will be born: he is the lover of maidens, the husband of wives."<sup>1</sup> That, indeed, is an extremely natural characteristic, whether mystic or anthropomorphic, of all popular deities in primitive times; and M. Senart notes<sup>2</sup> that in a Vedic description of a storm, Soma, the personified God of the libation or eucharist, "plays among the Apas like a man among beautiful young girls." But "it is above all to the atmospheric Agni that we must trace voluptuous legends like those which have received such an important place in the Krishnaite myth";<sup>3</sup> and for the multiplications of Krishna also we find the prototype in the child Agni, who, at his birth, "enters into all houses and disdains no man."<sup>4</sup> And this view is substantially adopted by the leading English mythologists. On the relations of Krishna with the Gopis Sir George Cox writes:—

"This myth is in strict accordance with the old Vedic phrase addressed to the Sun as the horse: 'After thee is the chariot; after thee, Arvan, the man; after thee the cows; after thee the host of the girls.' Thus, like Agni, Indra, and Yama, he is the husband of the wives, an expression which, in Professor Max Müller's opinion, was probably 'meant originally for the evening sun as surrounded by the splendours of the gloaming, as it were by a more serene repetition of the dawn. The Dawn herself is likewise called the wife; but the expression "husband of the wives" is in another passage clearly applied to the sinking sun, *R. V.* ix. 86, 32: "The husband of the wives approaches the end."'"<sup>5</sup>

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

"If it be urged that the attribution to Krishna of qualities or powers belonging to other deities is a mere device by which his devotees sought to supersede the more ancient gods, the answer must be that nothing is done in his case which has not been done in the case of almost every other member of the great company of the gods, and that the systematic

<sup>1</sup> Wilson's tr. of Rig Veda Sanhita, i. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Essai*, p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 322.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 291, citing *R. V.* x. 91, 2, from Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*, v. 204.

<sup>5</sup> Cox, as cited, p. 369, *n.*

adoption of the method is itself conclusive proof of the looseness and flexibility of the materials of which the cumbrous mythology of the Hindu epic poems is composed.”<sup>1</sup> And again: “It is true, of course, that these myths have been crystallized round the name of Krishna in ages subsequent to the period during which the earliest Vedic literature came into existence; but the myths themselves are found in this older literature associated with other gods, and not always only in germ. Krishna as slaying the dragon is simply Indra smiting Vritra or Ahi, or Phoibos destroying the Python. There is no more room for inferring foreign influence in the growth of these myths than, as Bunsen rightly insists, there is room for tracing Christian influence in the earlier epical literature of the Teutonic tribes.”<sup>2</sup>

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

“He is....also identified with Hari or the dwarf Vishnu, a myth which carries us to that of the child Hermes as well as to the story of the limping Hephaistos. As the son of Nanda, the bull, he is Govinda, a name which gave rise in times later than those of the Mahâbhârata to the stories of his life with the cowherds and his dalliance with their wives; but in the Mahâbhârata he is already the protector of cattle, and like Herakles slays the bull which ravaged the herds [Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, iv. 206]. His name Krishna, again, is connected with another parentage which makes him the progeny of the black hair of Hari, the dwarf Vishnu [*Ib.* 331]. But he is also Hari himself, and Hari is Narayana, ‘the God who transcends all, the minutest of the minute, the vastest of the vast, the greatest of the great.’ In short, the interchange or contradiction is undisguised, for he is ‘the soul of all, the omniscient, the all, the all-knowing, the producer of all, the God whom the Goddess Devakî bore to Vishnu.’<sup>3</sup>

“The character of Rudra, said to be sprung from Krishna, is not more definite. As so produced, he is Time, and is declared by his father to be the offspring of his anger. But in the character of Mahâdeva, Rudra is worshipped by Krishna, and the necessary explanation is that in so adoring him Krishna was only worshipping himself. Rudra, however, is also Narayana, and Siva the destroyer....It is the same with Râma, who is sometimes produced from the half of Vishnu’s virile power, and sometimes addressed by Brahma as ‘the source of being and the cause of destruction, Upendra and Mahendra, the younger and the elder Indra.’<sup>4</sup>....This cumbrous mysticism leads us further and further from the simpler conceptions of the oldest mythology, in which Rudra is scarcely more than an epithet, applied sometimes to Agni, sometimes to Mitra,

<sup>1</sup> *Id.* p. 365.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 371 *n.*

<sup>3</sup> *Sic* in Cox; but Muir, who is cited, has “to Vasudeva,” p. 224.

<sup>4</sup> Muir, iv. 146, 250. So cited in Cox; but 250 should apparently be 150, where the passage runs: “Thou art the source of being and cause of destruction, Upendra (the younger Indra), and Madhusûdana. Thou art Mahendra (the older Indra)....”

Varuna, the Asvins, or the Maruts....It was in accordance with the general course of Hindu mythology that the greatness of Rudra, who is sometimes regarded as self-existent, should be obscured by that of his children."<sup>1</sup>

Further illustration could be given, if need were, of this interfluence of myths in the case of the three Râmas, Bala Râma, Parasu<sup>2</sup> Râma, and Râma Chandra, who pass for three different incarnations of Vishnu, but who were early surmised by students to be "three representatives of one person, or three different ways of relating the same history,"<sup>3</sup> and whom M. Senart declares to be indeed mythologically one:—

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

Now, Bala Râma, whom Sir William Jones<sup>5</sup> identified with the Greek and "Indian" Dionysos, but whom we have seen<sup>6</sup> to be probably the Hercules of Megasthenes, "appears to be an ancient agricultural deity that presided over the tillage of the soil and the harvest. He is armed with a ploughshare,<sup>7</sup> whence his surname *Halabhrî*, 'the plough-bearer'; and his distinctive characteristic is an ungovernable passion for bacchanalian revels, inebriation, and sensual love."<sup>8</sup> Like each of his duplicates, he was doubtless contingently a Sun-God (Râma Chandra, who

<sup>1</sup> Cox, pp. 365-7.

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

<sup>3</sup> Moor, *Hindu Pantheon*, p. 191.

<sup>4</sup> *Essai*, p. 234, n.

<sup>5</sup> *Asiatic Researches*, ii. 132.

<sup>6</sup> Above, pp. 162-3.

<sup>7</sup> See Moor, as cited above, p. 162.

<sup>8</sup> Barth, p. 173. M. Senart writes (p. 325, n.): "As to his name of Bala, the analogy of Krishna would suggest that it also had originally a more specially demonic significance, and that the form Bala is only an alteration of Vala, a Vedic personage connected by name and function with Vritra. This is indeed certain as regards the epic Bala, enemy of Indra." In the same note M. Senart draws a connection between Râma and the Persian Râma-gastra, who is an atmospheric genie watching the "pastures" of Mithra, and who figures both as lightning and sun.

represents the moon,<sup>1</sup> being also solar);<sup>2</sup> and it might conceivably have been his fortune to become the supremely popular deity instead of Krishna. He too has a Birth Festival, which Professor Weber supposes to be based on that of Krishna, which it very closely resembles; he too figures then as the Child-God; and he too is associated with the stable-myth in that Jamadagni, the father of Parasu Râma, was entrusted by Indra with the charge of the boon-granting cow, Kamadenu.<sup>3</sup> His old standing was the cause of his being made Krishna's twin; and at present he ranks next him in popularity.<sup>4</sup> It is even conceivable that he is for historic India the original "Child born in a Stable"; and as a God of Vegetation he may have been carried in the corn-basket by way of an incantation to make the fields fruitful. On the other hand, he has assimilated clearly solar attributes. "Like Krishna, Râma is a hero, an exterminator of monsters, a victorious warrior. But, idealized by the poetry of a more fastidious age, and one less affected by the myth [*i.e.*, in the Râmâyana], he is at the same time, what we cannot maintain in regard to the enigmatic son of Devakî, the finished type of submission to duty, nobility of moral character, and of chivalric generosity."<sup>5</sup> Krishna in turn, however, has his transfiguration in the Bhagavat Gîtâ. In fine, ancient India, then as now a manifold world of differing peoples and faiths, had a crowd of Sun-Gods apart from those of the priest-made Vedas, but based like those on immemorial myth; and of these Krishna, ancient as the others were ancient, is the one who, by dint of literary and sectarian manipulation, has best been able to "survive."

§ 2. It may be, however, that while the antiquity of the main material of Krishnaism is admitted, it will still be argued, as by Professor Weber, that only in comparatively late times was Krishna a deity at all, and that this alleged lateness of creation permitted of, and partly depended on, the adoption of some of the Christian legends early in our

<sup>1</sup> Barth, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 143, citing Tiele, and p. 163, citing Moor.

<sup>3</sup> Moor, p. 190.

<sup>4</sup> Moor, p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> Barth, p. 176.



era. But it will be necessary, I think, only to state Professor Weber's position in contrast with the argument of M. Senart to make clear the soundness of the latter and the untenableness of the former.

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

“ This testimony is the more important in that it leads

<sup>1</sup> Treatise cited, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Essai*, p. 339.

<sup>3</sup> As cited, p. 163.

us to carry further back the date of the legends of this order. M. Lassen, in spite of his opinions on the antiquity of the doctrine of Avatars and the cult of Krishna, seems on this point to go even further than M. Weber. In support of that opinion there is little weight in the negative argument from the silence of the ancient works which have come down to us. What idea should we have had of the date and importance of Buddhism, if we were shut up to the testimony of Brahmanic literature? We can certainly distinguish in Krishna a triple personage; it does not follow, however, that these mean simply three successive aspects of the same type, until it be determined that logically they derive and develop one from the other. Now, the fact is quite the contrary; an abyss separates each one of these stages from the next, if we take them in the supposed order. How could a sacred poet, the obscure disciple of a certain Ghora, suddenly have become the national hero of an important Indian people, the bellicose performer of so many exploits, not merely marvellous, but clearly mythological? And how could this warrior, raised so high, from the epic period, in the admiration and even in the worship of Indians, be subsequently lowered to the position of the adopted child of a shepherd, the companion of shepherds, and mixed up in dubious adventures, which do not fail at times to disquiet and embarrass his devotees? It is clear that the first step at least of such an evolution could be made only under powerful sacerdotal pressure: now there exists in this connection no sign of such a thing in the literature we possess; the cult of Krishna is not a Brahmanic but a popular cult. In fine, there is no doubt that we must reverse the statement. Krishna must have been at first the object of a secondary cult, connected especially, as it remained in the sequel, with the legends of his birth, of his infancy, and of his youth. Localized at first among the Sûrasenas and at Mathura, this cult would have sufficed to introduce into the epic legend of the Kshatriyas, fixed in that epoch under Brahmanic influence, the bellicose character in which we know him. On its part, the Brahmanic school, desirous to appropriate him, would put him in the list of its singers and masters, until the ever more powerful spread of his popularity forced it to embrace him, under the title of Avatara of Vishnu, in its new theory and in its modern systems. It must not be forgotten that the organization of castes creates, alongside of the chronological succession, a

superposition not only of social classes but of traditions and ideas which could live long side by side in a profound isolation. Thus considered, the history of the cult of Krishna resolves itself into two periods, which I would not, however, represent as necessarily and strictly successive. Krishna was at first a quite popular deity, whose worship, more or less narrowly localized, spread little by little; till at length, identified with Vishnu and admitted to the number of his incarnations, he was *ipso facto* recognized by the superior caste.<sup>1</sup>

“It is possible, indeed, that Christian influences may have developed among the Indians in his connection the monotheistic idea and the doctrine of faith..... However that may be, what interests us chiefly at present is the age not so much of his cult, still less of a certain form of his cult, but of the legend of the hero, and more precisely of that part of his legend which embraces his infancy and his youth. Now, this narrative has its roots in the images of a perfectly authentic naturalism; it cannot be isolated from the various kindred mythological series; and if we only apply, without rashness and without prejudice, the customary methods of mythological analysis, it leads us obviously to more ancient conceptions; and the homogeneity which is exhibited by the whole demonstrates the normal and consequent development of all the parts. Several precise testimonies, independent of any argument borrowed from resemblances, attest the existence of essential elements of the legend at an epoch when there can be no question of those influences which have been conjectured; and these influences finally rest on a very limited number of very inconclusive facts, which, besides, only touch entirely secondary details.”

This argument has been criticised by Professor Weber in a review of M. Senart's essay, in which, while differing from his conclusions, he speaks in high terms of his French

<sup>1</sup> A passage in the Mahâbhârata shows this evolution clearly enough:—  
“And thou Krishna, of the Yâdava race, *having become the son of Aditi*, and being called Vishnu, the younger brother of Indra, the all-pervading, becoming a child, O vexer of thy foes, hadst by thy energy traversed the sky, the atmosphere; and the earth, in three strides. Having attained to the sky and the ether, and occupied the abode of the Adityas, thou, O soul of all beings, hast overpassed the sun by thine own force. In these thousands of thy manifestations, O all-pervading Krishna, thou hast slain hundreds of Asuras who delighted in iniquity.” Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, iv. 118.

opponent's scholarship and ability. With his invariable candour, the Professor, remarking that the theory of Krishna's herdsmanship being derived from the cloud-cows of the Vedas is new to him,<sup>1</sup> admits that in itself it is very plausible. But he goes on :—

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

The force of the last objection I have admitted; and as to the date of Patanjali, of which Professor Weber had seemed formerly<sup>3</sup> to take Professor Bhandarkar's view (shared by both Senart and Barth), it can only be said that if the “doubts” are ever strengthened, that part of our evidences will have to be reconsidered; though Professor Weber and the doubters will also have to face and explain the fact, which they constantly overlook, of the ancient currency of the Cyrus myth on the Iranian side. In any case Patanjali would have to be dated *very* late to counter-vail the implied antiquity of the phrases he quotes. But as regards the Professor's objection that the Gopî idyl is not mentioned in the oldest documentary references to Krishna, the reader will at once see that it is no answer to M. Senart, whose argument is that the Gopî idyl is part of an immemorial popular myth, originally current outside the Brahmanic sphere. Nor does the Professor in any way meet M. Senart's refutation of his own development theory, or answer the questions as to how (1) the deity could be

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

<sup>2</sup> *Indische Streifen*, iii. 429.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 155-6.

developed out of the student of the Upanishad, and how (2) the warrior hero of the epic could be lowered from that status to the position of the adopted son of a shepherd and companion of shepherds, given to dubious adventures, unless there were an old myth to that effect?<sup>1</sup> These questions, I venture to say, are unanswerable. We are left to the irresistible conclusion that the myths of Krishna's birth and youth are not only pre-Christian but pre-historic.

§ 3. But yet one more reinforcement of the strongest kind is given to the whole argument by M. Senart's demonstration<sup>2</sup> of the derivation of a large part of the Buddha myth from that of Krishna, or from pre-Krishnaite sources. It is needless here to give at length the details, which include such items as the breaking of Siva's bow by Kama, the God of Love, of Kansa's by Krishna, and of various bows by Siddartha (Buddha);<sup>3</sup> the exploit against the elephant, similarly common to the three personages;<sup>4</sup> the parallel between the births of Buddha and Krishna;<sup>5</sup> their early life of pleasure,<sup>6</sup> and their descent from "enemies of the Gods."<sup>7</sup> The prodigy of the divine infant speaking immediately after birth occurs in the Buddha myth as in those of Krishna, Hermes, Apollo, and Jesus;<sup>8</sup> and where Krishna, as Sun-God, takes three miraculous strides, the infant Buddha takes seven marvellous steps.<sup>9</sup> There is, in fine, a "close relationship" between the Buddhist and the Krishnaite legends,<sup>10</sup> as we have partly seen above.

"In nearly all the variations of this legendary theme one point remains fixed and constant: it is among shepherds that the hero is exiled; and it is impossible to separate from the series either the *vraja* or the herdsmen and herdswomen who surround the youth of Krishna. And this trait is found in the story of Sakya."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are in the Mahâbhârata allusions which show the herdsman characteristics to have been associated with the hero. See Senart, p. 340, *n*.

<sup>2</sup> *Essai*, p. 297 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* p. 302.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 303.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p. 312.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* p. 305.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* p. 315.

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 190.

<sup>9</sup> Bigandet, *Life of Gaudama*, i. 37; and Beal's trans. of the *Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King*, i. 1 (S. B. E. xix. 3-4).

<sup>10</sup> Senart, *Essai*, p. 326.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* p. 319.

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

#### XIX.—KRISHNAITE AND CHRISTIST DOCTRINE.

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

"Their Christian origin is as little to be doubted as the conclusion [*Ind. Studien*, i. 423] that 'in general the later exclusively monotheistic tendency of the Indian sects who worship a particular personal God, pray for his favour, and trust in him (*bhakti* and *sraddhâ*), was influenced by the acquaintance made by the Indians with the corresponding teaching

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 164.

of Christianity'; or, in the words of Wilson (quoted in Mrs. Speir's *Life in Ancient India*, p. 434: cp. my *Abh. über die Râmâtâp. Up.* pp. 277, 360), 'that the remodelling of the ancient Hindu systems into popular forms, and in particular the vital importance of faith, were directly [*sic*] influenced by the diffusion of the Christian religion.'"<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Treatise cited, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> H. H. Wilson, in review of Schlegel's trans. of the Bhagavat Gîtâ, *Orient. Quart. Rev.* Calcutta, vol. iii.; reprinted in Works, vol. v. pp. 156-7.

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

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

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

It cannot be denied that all this bears a very close resemblance to the practical applications of the Christian

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

<sup>2</sup> *Two Lectures on the Religious Practices... of the Hindus*, Oxford, 1840, p. 31, = Works, ii. 75. See also Works, i. 368. It is well to keep in mind that while Krishnaism, like Christism, can be turned to the account of lawlessness, it has similarly been turned to higher ends. Thus the Brahman reformer Chaitanya, who flourished in the sixteenth century, and whose movement still flourishes in Bengal, made “discipline of the intellect and a surrender of all to Krishna” one of his main positions. Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, p. 100.



doctrine of faith in European history, and that that is of all Christian doctrines the one which may with most plausibility be held to have originated, in Europe, with the New Testament. Nor is it incumbent on rationalists to object that such a derivation brings small credit to Christianity. An impartial inquiry, however, reveals that the doctrine of salvation by faith is already fully laid down in the Bhagavat Gîtâ; and the Christian hypothesis involves the conclusion that that famous document is a patchwork of Christian teaching. Now, there are decisive reasons for rejecting such a view.

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

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

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