# CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA.*

NO other work of Sanskrit literature is so well known and so highly valued in India and the Occident as the Bhagavadgîtâ (Mbh., VI, 830 ff.), "The Song of the Exalted One," i. e., the solemn discourse of Krishna. Originally a text-book of the Bhâgavata sect, the Bhagavadgîtâ in time attained such a significance for all Brahman India that it has become the sum of all wisdom to the cultured Indian. In his contact with Christians he falls back on it as an authority against the New Testament, whose fundamental doctrines he believes to be contained in the Bhagavadgîtâ which in Hindu opinion is much the older. On the other hand European scholars have thought that no other Indian work bears such abundant evidence of Christian influence as the Bhagavadgîtâ. For these reasons I cannot limit myself simply to mention and discuss the points which have given rise to such statements. An exposition of the relations between Christianity and Brahmanism with reference to the history of religion requires a connected summary of the contents of the Bhagavadgîtâ[1] even though I must state most posi-

* Authorized translation from the German manuscript by Lydia G. Robinson. In the bibliographical references the following abbreviations will be observed: ERE, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*; IA, *Indian Antiquary*; JAOS, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*; JRAS, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

[1] I may be allowed to use for this purpose extracts from the exhaustive introduction to my translation of the Bhagavadgîtâ (Leipsic, 1905).

tively that the oft asserted dependence of the Indian poem upon the New Testament is only an apparent one.

After a feud of many years' duration, the two closely related but hostile tribes of the Kauravas and Pândavas with their military forces and allies advance to battle against each other on the field of the Kurus near where Delhi now stands. A mighty crashing of shells, drums and trumpets resounds, and arrows begin to fly from both camps. Then Arjuna, the famous archer of the Pândavas, catches sight of some of his kinsmen in the enemy's army, is shocked at the thought of killing them and lets fall his bow and arrows, because he would rather die than to fight and win under such circumstances. But Krishna, who stands at his side in human form as charioteer on the war chariot, admonishes him to do his duty without considering consequences and convinces him that he must take part in the battle.

These admonitions and instructions of Krishna become more and more profound and treat in sublime diction—in many places with rare beauty and loftiness of expression —the highest questions about the nature of deity and man's relation to it. Upon the foundation of metaphysical speculation is here erected a sublime ethical code. Gradually Arjuna perceives who is speaking to him. Krishna reveals himself to Arjuna as the only God, the Lord of all worlds, who has taken upon himself the form of the hero of the Yâdava tribe, and in the eleventh song at Arjuna's request shows himself in his celestial radiant form penetrating the entire world.

It has long been known that we do not possess the Bhagavadgîtâ in its original text, but in a form which is the result of substantial transformations. The teachings put into the mouth of Krishna in the Bhagavadgîtâ offer a remarkable mixture of pantheistic and monotheistic ideas,

of philosophical thought and of pure and deeply religious faith in God.

A personal God appears in human form, propounds his teachings, demands of the hearer before all else, besides fulfilment of duty, faithful love and submission to him, then reveals himself with special grace in his divine but still anthropomorphic form, and promises that after death as a reward for his love of God the faithful one shall enter into himself, shall attain communion with God. Along with this God, as personal as can be, who dominates the whole poem, there often stands as the highest principle the *impersonal* neutral Brahman, the Absolute. Sometimes Krishna says of himself that he is the only Supreme God who has made the world and all creatures, and governs the All; sometimes he proclaims the pantheistic doctrine of the Brahman and the Mâyâ, the cosmic illusion, and places before man as his highest aim, that he should overcome Mâyâ and become Brahman.

These two doctrines, the theistic and pantheistic, are dovetailed into each other and follow sometimes very directly and sometimes with a loose sort of connection. Nor is the one set forth as the lower, exoteric, and the other as the higher, esoteric doctrine; it is not taught that theism is the preparatory step to knowledge or the symbol of truth, and that pantheism is truth itself; but both forms of faith are treated almost without exception as if there were no distinction between them either as regards value or content.

The attempt has been made to do away with the contradictions in the Bhagavadgîtâ by explaining that no definite system is here propounded, but that it is a poet who speaks, who takes the thoughts and forms them as they crowd upon him without regarding the contradictions which may arise in separate details.

But the great contradiction extending through the

Bhagavadgîtâ can not be set aside by appealing to the poetic temperament. It can only be removed by the assumption that one of the two heterogeneous doctrines which Krishna proclaims in the Bhagavadgîtâ must be a later addition. Therefore Adolf Holtzmann has upheld the view that the Bhagavadgîtâ was originally a purely pantheistic poem and that later it was worked over by worshipers of Vishnu-Krishna whereby it attained its present form. But this also is a mistaken view; the reverse is true. The whole character of the poem is so overwhelmingly theistic both with regard to setting and method, that we must suppose that the Bhagavadgîtâ was from the start a purely theistic poem and was worked over in the pantheistic spirit after the Brahmans had succeeded in winning over the religious community of the Bhâgavatas, the worshipers of Krishna, by identifying Krishna with their god Vishnu who had already become the All-God.

In the ancient poem Krishna speaks of himself—and Arjuna of Krishna—as of an individual, a person, a conscious divinity; in the additions of the redaction the neutral Brahman appears as the highest conception and is occasionally identified with Krishna. In short, *in the ancient poem Krishnaism is set forth which is founded philosophically upon the Sânkhya and Yoga systems; in the additions of the redaction Brahmaism is represented, the forerunner of the system of the Vedânta.* It has long been known that the doctrines of the Sânkhya-Yoga are on the whole the foundation of the philosophical doctrines of the Bhagavadgîtâ, and that compared to them Brahmaism remains considerably in the background. Because of this conviction I have sought in my translation of the Bhagavadgîtâ to select the original form of the poem and have eliminated the additions of the Brahmaistic revision.

The view which I here submit and my corresponding

attempt to a reconstruction of the original Bhagavadgîtâ have met with some opposition but still with more assent, among others from such eminent scholars as Sir George Grierson and Winternitz. Winternitz says[2]: "If we read the poem omitting the passages set off in small print by Garbe in his translation, the result is that there is no gap and that even in many places an interrupted connection is again established by leaving out the verses so indicated. It speaks on the whole in favor of the correctness of Garbe's conception that among the 170 verses cut out by him perhaps ten or twelve at the most can be named which show evidence of any poetical beauty." I myself had not noticed this esthetic consideration, but subsequently became convinced that the Bhagavadgîtâ in my reconstruction far exceeded the traditional text in poetical beauty and unity and must be recognized as the work of a genuine poet.

I will now first present as briefly as possible the doctrines of *the genuine original Bhagavadgîtâ,* i. e., the Bhâgavata faith worked out from the elements of the Sânkhya-Yoga with some new interpretations. In doing this it is not advisable to follow the train of thought of the Bhagavadgîtâ which wanders from one thing to another and constantly confuses the various established standpoints especially in the practical requirements. The religious content of the Bhagavadgîtâ corresponds to the Nârâyanîya section of the Mahâbhârata (XII, chapters 336-353), the second ancient text-book of the Bhâgavatas, except that the latter is somewhat more strongly Brahmaistic than the Bhagavadgîtâ.

[2] *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* I, 373. Cf. also *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes,* XXI, 196, 197. I would like to utilize this opportunity to make a concession. I consider it very possible that Winternitz is right when in agreement with W. von Humboldt he feels obliged to consider as mainly later additions, besides the verses I have omitted, the last songs of the Bhagavadgîtâ which compare very unfavorably with the first twelve. By this means the scope of the original Bhagavadgîtâ is still further materially diminished.

As an introduction to my exposition, I must say in advance a few words about the conditions under which the adornment of the Bhâgavata religion with the above mentioned philosophical arguments took place.[3] When, according to the genuinely Indian tendency to fuse religion and philosophy, under the especial instigation of the strongly speculative influence of the Kshatriya caste, the effort was made to give a philosophical basis to the monotheism of the Bhâgavata religion, the pantheism which found expression in the older Upanishads was not chosen for this purpose. The home of this pantheism, the doctrine of the Brahman or the All-One, was the so-called "midland" (*Madhyadesha,* the region around and north of Delhi), the home of the Brahmanic civilization and expansion of power. The Brahmanic pantheism fitted but poorly with the popular monotheism of the Bhâgavatas who therefore directed their attention to the philosophical systems which had arisen "in the freer atmosphere of the less Brahmanized outland"—to use Grierson's happy expression—, the Sânkhya and Yoga. Of these two the Sânkhya, purely atheistic and regardless of ethics, was not sufficient for their purpose; for this system could be used by the Bhâgavatas only in the development of the doctrine of matter and its relation to spirit. Since the religion of the Bhâgavatas possessed faith in God and a pronounced ethical character its followers were better served by clinging more closely to the Yoga system which recognized God and pursued ethical tendencies.

The Yoga system is a daughter of the Sânkhya. It has adopted all the important Sânkhya views except its denial of God, and upon these has built up its doctrine of the concentration of thought and the powers to be won thereby. The personal God is inserted into the Yoga system in a very loose and disconnected way and the suppo-

[3] Cf. for the following, Grierson, article "Bhakti-Mârga," ERE, II, 541 *a*.

sition is not unjustified that this insertion has been undertaken in the interest of the union with the Bhâgavata religion; for thus did the system intended originally only for the comprehension of scholars, gain an influence over wider circles. The Bhâgavatas on their side borrowed several concepts from the Yoga system, especially that of the Yoga or the concentration of thought which they gradually transformed in the sense of submission to God, and approximated to the conception of the love of God.[4]

I shall begin my analysis of the doctrine of the Bhagavadgîtâ with the *systematic* part, and start with the personality of God. God is a conscious, eternal and omnipotent being, the "great Lord of the world without a beginning" (X, 3). He is not only different from the perishable universe but also from the imperishable spirit of the beings (XV, 17-19), hence spirit in another and a higher form than the souls of all creatures. When we read in VII, 4-6 that God possesses two natures, a higher spiritual nature through which the world is preserved, and a lower material nature consisting of everything that according to the Sânkhya belongs to *prakriti* or matter, we must not understand by this that matter constitutes one-half of God's essence. Rather does it mean that matter itself is not independent, following its own blind impulses, but unfolds under the direction of God; in other words, that God operates in matter and acts through it. This is established beyond doubt in other passages of the Bhagavadgîtâ. God implants in matter the germ of development (XIV, 3, 4) and hence is the father of all creatures, whereas matter may be compared to the mother's womb (XIV, 4). God directs the origin, development, and dissolution of the universe (IX, 7, 8, 10) and in this sense he calls himself the beginning and the end of the whole world (VII, 6; X, 8)

[4] The significance of the Yoga system for the Bhâgavata religion is still clearly apparent in the legend of Akrûra, Bhâg. Pur., X, 57, 29, in Grierson, IA, 1908, p. 257, Note 25.

and identifies himself with death (XI, 32). All conditions of beings are derived from him (X, 4, 5), he directs their fate, i. e., rewards them according to their deeds, and so causes creatures in the course of life "to whirl around like figures on a puppet stage" (XVIII, 61). All God's actions are performed merely for the sake of the world; for himself there is no desire to be fulfilled, no purpose to be attained (III, 22, 24). "Whenever right is decreasing, and wrong is increasing," God who has existed from eternity and is imperishable, creates himself anew, i. e., assumes new forms of manifestation "for the protection of the good and the extermination of the wicked, in order to establish justice" (IV, 6-8). Because God's acts pertain always to the creation he governs and never arise from any selfish motive he is not bound by his acts (IV, 13, 14; IX, 9); hence he can never be entangled in the world's existence. The visionary description of God in Song XI is a dramatic adornment intended to work upon the imagination, but is of little importance for the teaching of the Bhagavadgîtâ proper.

The relation of God to the world of men is not only determined by the stern law of compensation, but *God loves the people who recognize him and submit to him with their whole hearts,* (VII, 17; XII, 14-20; XVIII, 64, 65, 69), *and he saves from all sins those who take their refuge in him alone* (XVIII, 66). Here (and likewise XVIII, 56, 58, 62, 73) *we already have faith in divine mercy* (*prasâda*) which we meet with in some later Upanishads and which consequently plays so conspicuous a part in the Indian sects.

Although God directs the dispensation of the universe, yet, as we have seen above, it is matter which performs all acts (III, 27; V, 14; XIII, 20, 29). The world develops from primitive matter and returns to it again (VIII, 18, 19); the idea of evolution and reabsorption as well as the

notion of the eons is borrowed from the Sânkhya system. On the whole all views pertaining to matter in the Bhagavadgîtâ agree with the Sânkhya doctrine. The three *gunas,* or constituents of matter,[5] play the same part here as in the Sânkhya system; i. e., by their influences they put the spirit in fetters (XIV, 5 ff.), and the consequences of their activity are manifest in life on every hand, as is shown in great detail in Songs XVII and XVIII. The physiological ideas about the internal organs and senses are likewise those of the Sânkhya system (III, 40, 42; XIII, 5). All these agreements, however, are not so important for the teaching of the Bhagavadgîtâ as the fundamental conception with regard to the nature of matter which was borrowed from the Sânkhya and from which starts the philosophical speculation in Song II. To be sure matter was not created by God, but has existed from the beginning, and is subject to constant change and transformation.

All its products and effects are transitory; its influences, especially joy and pain, come and go and hence do not deserve that we should allow ourselves to be regulated by them (II, 14).

In contrast to this mutability of everything that matter brings forth stands the immutability of *spirit.* The spirit (the soul, the self) resembles matter only in so far as both are eternal and indestructible; for what is has always been and always will be, "the non-existent knows no existence, the existent no non-existence" (II, 16); but the great contrast between matter and spirit consists in the fact that the latter is never capable of change. Indeed the spirit dwells in the body absolutely inactive, "neither acting nor causing to act" (V, 13-15) and remains unmoved by all influences and operations of matter. This is brought out in sublime language in the second song. Whosoever knows

[5] See my *Sânkhya-Philosophie,* 209-220, *et passim;* "Sânkhya und Yoga," *Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde,* III, No. 4, pp. 19, 20.

that the spirit is the true self, that the worn-out body is abandoned and passes into a new one as old clothes are laid aside and new ones donned (II, 22), that the spirit can be neither injured nor destroyed—such a one does not lament over the suffering and death of a man, that is to say, over matters which concern only the perishable body.

All this is pure Sânkhya doctrine; but nevertheless the conception of the spiritual principle in the Bhagavadgîtâ is essentially different from that in the Sânkhya system, not exclusively philosophical but predominantly religious. According to the Bhagavadgîtâ, which proclaims the faith of the Bhâgavatas, the individual soul has not led a separate existence from the beginning, but has detached itself from the divine soul as a separate part (XV, 7; cf. also XVI, 18; XVII, 6). Hence the individual souls have a divine origin; they have entered into a connection with matter which is not able to produce any transformation in them but which has brought life and consciousness into the world. It is man's task so to conduct himself that his soul may return again to its origin, to God.

With this we come to the practical part of the doctrine of the Bhagavadgîtâ. Here stand the two opposing ways of salvation, one of which consists in withdrawing from worldly life and striving after knowledge, the other in acting according to duty apart from all desire. Although the second way is frequently characterized as the better one (III, 8; V, 2; XVIII, 7) and according to the whole context of the Bhagavadgîtâ is to be regarded as the particular moral ideal of the poem, still the author has not dared to disregard the path of salvation of world renunciation and abstract knowledge. The idea that salvation from the circuit of life is to be attained by meditation in complete isolation from the world had been for centuries so rooted in the thoughtful circles of the Indian people that it could not be seriously opposed. Nothing else remained

than to recognize both ways side by side and to teach that right action led to salvation as well as knowledge which presupposed the renunciation of works and inactivity. From the fact that in the Bhagavadgîtâ now one standpoint is advocated and now the other, and occasionally the ideal of quietism is frankly placed above that of activity (VI, 3), all sorts of inconsistencies and confusions have arisen which might have been avoided by the positive rejection of the quietistic standpoint. The two standpoints are assimilated with one another in the Bhagavadgîtâ by the explanation that the dutiful act performed entirely without reference to consequences and without any personal interest loses its effective power, and hence does not result in continued existence for the doer. Actions of this kind therefore in this respect have the same value as the inactivity of the way of salvation through knowledge.

The knowledge to be attained on the quietistic path of salvation is described in several passages (XIII, 23; XIV, 19) exactly in the sense of the Sânkhya system, as a distinction between spirit and matter; and as a result of this distinction the prospect of liberation from the necessity of rebirth is held out to the one who possesses this knowledge (XIII, 23) without reference to his conduct. This may be looked upon as an isolated recognition of the genuine Sânkhya ideal. In general the saving knowledge, according to the view of the Bhagavadgîtâ, is not limited to the distinction between spirit and matter, but this distinction may be regarded only as a preliminary condition of the *knowledge of God* which in truth leads man to supreme salvation.

The other path of salvation, the Yoga, conceived as disinterested fulfilment of duty, is preached in the Bhagavadgîtâ incessantly and in various ways. Fulfilment of duty alone would not lead to the goal as long as it is in the slightest respect accompanied by hope for the results. Man

should do what is commanded him without passion, with quietness and equanimity, feeling the same towards every one, esteeming of equal value pleasantness and unpleasantness, joy and pain, success and failure, without desire and without any personal interest. The works of him who acts with this disposition, without troubling himself about the transitory effects of material things (II, 14) solely according to the dictates of duty and following the divine example (III, 22) and leaving the results of all his work to God, are not subject to the law of compensation (IV, 22, 23; IX, 27, 28; XVIII, 12, 17). The requirements here set forth presuppose the condemnation of the Vedic ritual which in the original Bhagavadgîtâ is enunciated without any limitation. All the ceremonies of the Brahmanic ritual serve personal desires throughout and hence stand in sharp contrast to the ideal of morality of the Bhagavadgîtâ. "Give up all sacred usages," we therefore read in XVIII, 66, and in II, 42-45, outspoken scorn is shown for the promises of the Veda which take only the material world into account and offer only transitory rewards (cf. also IX, 20, 21). Accordingly indifference for the prescriptions of the Vedic ritual is likewise a preliminary condition for the attainment of salvation (II, 52, 53). That in this requirement also we have genuine Sânkhya-Yoga doctrine is clear to every one acquainted with the Indian systems.

Whichever of the two paths of salvation man may follow, in both cases he must overcome an obstacle in his natural disposition. When it is said in III, 33, that "beings follow their nature" and when in XVI, 1 ff. the distinction is made between men born for divine existence and those born for a demonic existence, this predetermination is to be understood as an effect of previous merit or of previous sin. In the Bhagavadgîtâ there is no question of predestination properly so called. Instead we can

recognize in it the assumption of moral freedom. Man is entirely free whether or not he will overcome the obstacles which lie upon the path to salvation, whether he strives after low aims or the highest. On the path to the latter innate ignorance stands opposed to the practice of knowledge (V, 15), and the likewise innate desire which is the peculiar enemy of mankind to the practice of duty (III, 37, 43); but unbelief and skepticism are also destructive (IV, 40). As an expedient toward the successful overcoming of these obstactles moderate Yoga exercises are recommended (V, 27, 28; VI, 10 ff.; VIII, 10, 12 ff.). Even if a man is not successful in mental concentration these Yoga exercises are nevertheless not in vain, for such a man is reborn under favorable circumstances and finally attains the supreme goal (II, 40; VI, 41 ff.).

We finally come to the most important requirement which the Bhagavadgîtâ makes of men in need of salvation. As is well known the Bhagavadgîtâ is the Canticles of *bhakti,* the faithful and confiding love of God. Both on the path of knowledge and on that of the self-denying fulfilment of duty, love to God leads to the goal with absolute certainty. The whole poem is filled with this thought; to proclaim this thought it was written. From the love of God arises the *knowledge of God* (XVIII, 55) and love of God likewise brings about that the faithful refer all works to God and leave the consequences to him. To every one without distinction of birth or of previous behavior bhakti vouchsafes the certainty of salvation—even to criminals, women, Vaishyas and Shûdras (IX, 30-32). But it is not a question of a passing impulse of love for God, but the whole nature of man must be filled with an unchangeable love. When this is the case man's thoughts are directed upon God even in the hour of death. Special weight is laid upon this point in the Bhagavadgîtâ (VIII, 5, 9, 10,

13) because man enters into that form of existence of which he is thinking in the hour of death (VIII, 6).

What now are we to understand of the condition of the soul which has been freed from the existence of the world and has entered into God? Are we to regard it as unconsciousness, as is taught in the Sânkhya-Yoga? Is the individuality of the soul which once separated itself from the divine soul, extinguished in the return to its origin? No! Salvation is thought of as a blessed condition of the soul which continues to exist in its individuality in the presence of God.

This has remained for all time a fundamental and leading doctrine of the Bhâgavata religion. God has caused all individual souls to go forth from himself to a separate conscious existence and since then they exist for all eternity as individual conscious beings. When they have won salvation from their worldly existence they do not become God but become like God and at his feet enjoy an everlasting bliss which consists solely in serving him.[6] How indeed on the assumption of the Sânkhya-Yoga a soul can lead a conscious existence without regard to matter, we learn neither from the Bhagavadgîtâ nor any other Bhâgavata work. Apparently we have here to do with a view which is derived from the earliest times of the Bhâgavata religion, and which ever since these times has formed one of the main props of this faith. Therefore in its adornment with elements of the Sânkhya-Yoga this view must not be supplanted by the opposite doctrine of the two systems. Pious conviction helped to do away with the difficulties of method which thus arose. In general, however, the religio-philosophical doctrines of the *original* Bhagavadgîtâ, as the above exposition shows, are of transparent clearness. This clearness is greatly impaired by the pantheistic redaction. The traditional form of the poem in

[6] Grierson, ERE, II, 544*a*.

which sometimes the personal God (Krishna) and sometimes the impersonal World Soul (the Brahman) appears as the supreme principle, and both are often identified, in which sometimes the conscious continued existence in the presence of God and sometimes the absorption into the world-soul is set up as the highest goal—is full of intrinsic contradictions.

Looking back we find in the Bhagavadgîtâ the following agreements with Christian views:

1. Faith in God's love to man and in his mercy and forgiveness of sins arising therefrom;

2. The requirement laid upon man of faithful love to God, *bhakti*.[7]

From these agreements have arisen all sorts of similarities of New Testament modes of expression which very naturally suggested the thought of a loan.

Lorinser[8] has gone the farthest in pursuing this idea when with great decision he expresses his conviction, "that the author of the Bhagavadgîtâ not only was acquainted with the writings of the New Testament and made frequent use of them, but on the whole has woven into his system Christian ideas and views," "that this much admired monument of the spirit of ancient India, this most beautiful and loftiest didactic poem which can well be regarded as one of the noblest flowers of pagan wisdom, owes precisely its purest and most highly praised teachings for the most part to Christian sources" (page v). Lorinser even undertakes to show from what writings of the New Testament more and from what fewer "sentences are borrowed," that "all the epistles of St. Paul with the exception of those to the Thessalonians and to Philemon were utilized" (page 285), and the like.

No one to-day would dare draw such bold conclusions

[7] See above, pp. 501, 506.

[8] In the introduction, notes and appendix to his metrical translation of the Bhagavadgîtâ, Breslau, 1869.

from such very indefinite similarities in thought and expression. Even Lorinser would certainly not have allowed his joy in discovery to carry him so far beyond all bounds if he had been more intimately acquainted with the Hindu thought cycles.[9] Even A. Weber, though always inclined to a great extent to believe in Christian influences upon India, thinks that Lorinser has greatly overestimated the weight of his argumentation, and that the question whether an acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity must be assumed for the Bhagavadgîtâ, still continues to be *sub judice*.[10]

Almost all the other Indologues have completely rejected Lorinser's argumentation, last of all Winternitz[11] in whose opinion "not more than twenty-five of the more than one hundred parallel passages from the Gospels which Lorinser compares with passages of the Bhagavadgîtâ, are of such a kind that a loan would be *conceivable*. However, in no single case," Winternitz continues, "is the similarity so close that the assumption of a loan would be any more probable than that of an accidental agreement. Even love of God is not of course limited to Christianity. I will only mention Sufism in which it plays no less significant a part than with the Christian mystics."

But the best criticism of Lorinser's theory is furnished by the materials collected by John W. Robertson[12] who brings forward from the *pre-Christian* Greek and Roman literature passages which bear a much greater similarity to New Testament ideas than the verses of the Bhagavadgîtâ which Lorinser compares with them.

[9] A particularly striking proof of this deficiency in Lorinser I have mentioned in my translation of the Bhagavadgîtâ, page 105, Note 3.

[10] *Indische Literaturgeschichte,* 2d ed., 367.

[11] *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* I, 370, Note 3.

[12] *Christianity and Mythology,* London, 1900, 285, cited in van den Bergh van Eysinga, *Indische Einflüsse auf evangelische Erzählungen,* 2d ed., 21, Note 4.

Of all the Indologues Hopkins after his change of view[13] approaches most closely the standpoint of Lorinser. Hopkins[14] has collected a large number of parallels from the Bhagavadgîtâ and the New Testament and incidentally has ascribed particular significance to the circumstance that most of them are to be found in the Gospel of John. That in the narrow space of this Gospel so many parallels "partly of surprising similarity" stand side by side, seems to Hopkins in consideration of the more general agreements in the other Gospels, to be an almost conclusive proof of the dependence of the Bhagavadgîtâ. Hopkins explains the partiality for the Fourth Gospel alleged to be observed in the Bhagavadgîtâ from the fact that this Gospel—perhaps not uninfluenced by the gnosticism of that time—was peculiarly suited because of its mystical tone to cause the Indian theologians to borrow such expressions and thoughts as best fitted in with the conception of Krishna as a god of love.[15]

It would lead too far and would not be worth while to speak in detail of the parallels brought forward by Hopkins after I have already (July *Monist*) treated more particularly of the Christian similarities in other parts of the Mahâbhârata in which Hopkins considers a loan from the New Testament possible. All those similarities are satisfactorily explained from the intrinsic parallelism of the fundamental religious and philosophical conceptions of the Bhagavadgîtâ and the Gospel of John. We shall also see at once that the age of the Indian ideas precludes the assumption that they were borrowed from Christianity. First I will add that Paul Deussen in his translation of the Bhagavadgîtâ points out only in the following three verses the passages of the New Testament (in John and

[13] See "Christian Elements in the Mahâbhârata excepting the Bhagavadgîtâ," in *The Monist* of July, 1913, page 337, Note 33.

[14] *India Old and New*, 148-159.

[15] *India Old and New*, 155, 158.

Galatians) which are related in sense, without taking into consideration the possibility of a loan.

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| Bhag., IV, 4, 5. (After Krishna has told Arjuna that he has proclaimed to Vivasvat the imperishable doctrine of submission in the days of old, Arjuna asks): Later is thy birth, earlier the birth of Vivasvat; how am I to understand that thou hast proclaimed the doctrine before him? (Krishna answers): Many have been my past births....all of these I know, etc. | John, viii. 57, 58: Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am. |
| Bhag., IX, 29: I am the same to all creatures; no one is hateful to me and no one is dear. But those who are devoted to me in love are in me and I in them.[16] | John xiv. 20: At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. |
| Bhag., IX, 32: Even those, O Son of Prithâ, who are of lowly birth, women, Vaishyas and Shudras, will attain the highest aim, when they take their refuge in me. | Gal. iii. 28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. |

I now come to the question, What on the whole is the historical possibility of the assumption of Christian influences upon the Bhagavadgîtâ? The traditional text belongs to a period in the development of the Mahâbhârata which with Hopkins[17] we must place in the time between 200 B. C. and 100-200 A. D. I had thought that I had ascertained for this text (i. e., for the redaction of the Bhagavadgîtâ in the pantheistic sense), the second century after Christ and for the composition of the original

[16] Deussen might just as well have named as parallel passages to this verse of the Gospel of John the two following verses of the Bhagavadgîtâ, IV, 35: "Thou wilt not again, so fall into confusion, Oh Pândava, when thou hast attained the knowledge by which thou wilt perceive creatures without exception (first) in thyself and then in me;" and VI, 30: "Who sees me in all things and all things in me, from him will I not be lost nor will he be lost from me." It is clear that these verses of the Bhagavadgîtâ express the well-known fundamental view of Brahmaism. It is remarkable however that these parallels to John xiv. 20, which are closer than all other agreements with the New Testament brought forward from the Bhagavadgîtâ, are entirely lacking in Lorinser's lists of alleged loans.

[17] See the introduction to my translation of the Bhagavadgîtâ, 58 ff.

poem the second century before Christ.[18] A considerable interval must be assumed between the two compositions for the reason that in India they would not have dared until after considerable time had elapsed to transform by such a comprehensive revision and redaction a work which was considered a revelation of deity and was surrounded by the nimbus of the greatest sanctity. But there may be different opinions about the length to be assigned to this interval. However, for the question in hand the problem is of secondary importance since of course the adherents of the theory of Christian influence can insist that this influence was not felt until the revision of the Bhagavadgîtâ. If the date I have just assigned to the revision is correct it excludes the assumption of Christian influence, because at the very earliest Christianity penetrated into northwestern India at the beginning of the third century. Any *considerable* shifting of this date to a later time is excluded; nevertheless some scholars like Lassen, Weber, and John Davies place the composition of the text of the Bhagavadgîtâ as it has been handed down, in the third century, and for this time to be sure although we cannot grant the probability of Christian influence, there is nevertheless a remote possibility of it. Moreover since some specialists believe in the historical character of the legend of St. Thomas as far as it concerns the Indo-Iranian borderland and at the same time consider Christian influence possible as early as the first century, the proof for the love of God and a loving God in a pre-Christian age must be found here.

Scholarly Indians[19] claim that the religion of *bhakti*.

[18] My main reason for the latter date which I derived from the age of the Yoga-sûtras, pp. 62, 63 of my introduction) I can no longer maintain since H. Jacobi has proved in a keen and convincing fashion that the author of the Yogasûtras, Patañjali, is not identical with the grammarian of the same name and that he can not have written before 450 A. D. (JAOS, XXXI, 24 ff.).

[19] For instance R. G. Bhandarkar in his *Report on the Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bombay Presidency During the Year 1883-84*, Bombay, 1887, p. 74, near the bottom, and at the end of his lecture on "The Râmânu-

or faithful confiding love of God, has existed in India time out of mind. The statement is certainly not correct in this form for the reason that such a high degree of culture as is necessary to produce the idea of love of God never existed on earth in immemorial times; but still it contains an element of truth, for bhakti did not, as Grierson once erroneously said,[20] make its appearance directly and like a flash of lightning as something quite new whereby knowledge (of the alleged truth) has been forced out of its dominant position in religion, but in its beginnings and earliest impulses it may be traced back to ancient Vedic times.[21] In the Rigveda where the gods are often called father, brother, friend, etc. and are supplicated for health and protection in all sorts of expressions of childish confidence, the ancient poets were prompted to use these words from the same feelings that joined them to the human beings who were most closely related to them. When monotheistic tendencies had gained the upper hand, this old feeling of naive affection for the gods was gradually ennobled and exalted to a submissive, devout and confiding love of God which filled the whole personality. Love of God first became the pinnacle and center of religious life among the sect of the Bhâgavatas out of which Krishnaism arose; it seems also to have received the name *bhakti* among the Bhâgavatas as this word is derived from the same root as *Bhagavat* and *Bhâgavata*.

From Pânini's grammar (IV, 3, 95, 98) it follows that at the time of its composition *bhakti* was not only used in the secular sense of "love, submission, devotion," but that it was also applied to men's relations with God.

jiva and the Bhâgavata or Pâncharâtra Systems," before the Aryan section of the Congress of Orientalists at Vienna in 1888. See also B. C. Mazumdar, JRAS, 1910, 171.

[20] JRAS, 1907, 313 at the bottom. But he no longer holds this view in *ibid.*, 1910, 172; ERE, II, 539*b* at the bottom.

[21] Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 537 ff.

The connection of the word with Vâsudeva in rule 98 is a proof which is now indisputable since Grierson has definitely refuted Kielhorn's view that Vâsudeva in this passage is not the name of a god, but of a human person.[22] Heretofore it has been generally supposed that Pânini lived about 300 B. C., but there was not a positive proof for this date. Now from Jacobi's study of the Kautilîya[23] we know with certainty that Pânini was recognized as a grammatical authority as early as the fourth century B. C. Accordingly in its religious signification *bhakti,* because mentioned by Pânini, must have been a generally current concept in India about 400 B. C. Therefore it is not at all necessary to assign a later date to the Shvetâshvatara Upanishad because of its concluding verse, "He who feels the highest love to God (*yasya deve parâ bhaktih*)...."

When Hopkins says[24]: "The doctrine of bhakti, faithful love as a means of salvation, can not be much older than the Song" (i. e., the Bhagavadgîtâ), we must on the contrary emphasize that it may have been proclaimed in the circle of Krishna worshipers centuries before the composition of the original Bhagavadgîtâ. A new doctrine is submitted differently than the bhakti in the Bhagavadgîtâ where this sentiment is required throughout as a matter of course. It is found also in the closest connection with the doctrine of devotion (*yoga*) which in the beginning of the fourth song Krishna expressly characterizes as very ancient.

The assumption that the use of the word *bhakti* in its

[22] JRAS, 1909, 1122. See also R. G. Bhandarkar, *loc. cit.,* 1910, 168-170. Edmund Hardy, in the *Lit. Centralblatt,* 1903, col. 1269, has further called attention to the fact that *bhakti* (in the Pâli form *bhatti*) appears in Jâtaka V, 340, 3, 6, and 352, 11, denoting "love, devotion," and with regard to the transition to the specific meaning, love of God, has referred to Theragâthâ, verse 370. Hence we have here from the far south a further proof that the Indian idea of the love of God is older than Christianity.

[23] *Sitzungsberichte der K. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften,* 1911, XLIV, 966.

[24] *Religions of India,* 429.

specifically religious sense has been brought about by a conception borrowed from Christianity ought not to require any further refutation. The idea was very improbable from the first because distinct traces of the religious sentiment which Hindus call *bhakti* are to be found also in the Greek and Roman religions in pre-Christian times.[25] In this respect the Indians, who from the earliest days have always taken the salvation of the soul more seriously than most other peoples, have certainly not remained behind the Greeks and Romans in development.

The idea of Krishna as a loving God must also have been as old as that of the love of God; for each of these ideas is dependent on the other. Only a loving God could demand love. But a loving God also shows mercy and by forgiving sins delivers from perdition otherwise unavoidable. Although *prasâda,* the usual word for the grace of God first appears in the later Upanishads[26] and in the passages of the Bhagavadgîtâ cited above (p. 501), yet the idea of divine grace itself is much older. Without it the countless prayers of the Vedic poets for all manner of divine favors would not have been possible. Hopkins[27] instances as a particularly characteristic case the verse in the Rigveda (10, 125, 5) where speech (Vâch) personified as a goddess declares "Whom I love I shall make a man of power, a priest, a seer, a sage."

Hand in hand with the victorious advance of the monotheistic faith in a loving God must have gone the development of the doctrine of his grace. "The doctrine of *prasâda*, or grace, has formed an essential part of the Bhâgavata religion so far back as literature takes us," says Grier-

[25] Barth, *Religions de l'Inde,* 132; A. Berriedale Keith, JRAS, 1907, 490.

[26] Kath., 1, 2, 20; Shvet., 3, 20; 6, 21; Mund., 3, 2, 3 (Hopkins, *Great Epic,* 188). It is probable that we have here a loan from the Bhâgavata religion since the idea of mercy does not harmonize with the Upanishad doctrine of the pantheistic Brahman. Grierson, IA, 1908, 260, Note 34.

[27] *India Old and New,* 147 note.

son,[28] and in this connection he emphasizes most decisively that India owes the idea of a God of mercy, of a kind father, to the Bhâgavatas.

The seemingly Christian coloring of the Bhagavadgîtâ and of those later portions of the Mahâbhârata whose contents are akin to it, must therefore in consideration of all that I have here set forth be characterized as an outgrowth of genuine Indian religious feeling.

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[28] In the article "Bhakti-Mârga," ERE, II, 543*b* note.