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XXVI.—Colonel Vans Kennedy on the Védánta System

Vans Kennedy

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XXVI.—Colonel VANS KENNEDY on the *Védánta* System.

Read 16th February 1833.

THE Council of the Royal Asiatic Society, fully coinciding with the sentiments expressed by its Secretary at the General Meeting held on the 2d of March, has accordingly ordered that the substance of the remarks made by Mr. Haughton should, in justice to Mr. Colebrooke, be printed with Colonel Vans Kennedy's paper, as follows:—

Substance of Mr. (now Sir Graves C.) Haughton's Remarks.

“ It is well known to most of the Members that Mr. Colebrooke has been long in a state of health that incapacitates him from making a reply to Colonel Vans Kennedy's objections; I therefore think it would be unfair to allow this meeting to separate with an impression unfavourable to our esteemed Director, more particularly as I conceive he has been misunderstood by the able writer of the paper.

“ I am not aware that Mr. Colebrooke has asserted, or ever meant to imply, that the basis of the *Védánta* philosophy is material, although he certainly has said that the term *máyá*, or illusion, which is now so commonly employed by the followers of this school, is not favoured by a reference to the early commentators. It is, indeed, impossible to suppose that Mr. Colebrooke, the most profound expositor of the doctrines of the Hindú metaphysicians that Europe has yet produced, could have entertained such a singular opinion; an opinion that would be contrary to that of almost every boy in India. If I may be allowed to offer an opinion upon the subject, I would say, that there is not one of the six *dars'an/as* or schools, into which Hindú metaphysics are divided, that is *essentially* material. All these schools have the same primary ideas, employ the same terms, and use the same mode of argument; it is only in the application and in the results that they disagree; in short, their differences are rather those of sects than of distinct schools. The Colonel has said that the Hindús have no word that corresponds to our idea of *matter*. This opinion I conceive to be quite erroneous; for the word *matter* itself appears to be originally *Sanscrit*, and is employed in the first book of MENU* in the very sense of *matter*. Thus we find *an'vyó mátrá*, &c. ‘With minute transformable atoms of the five elements, called

* v. 27.

mátrás,* the whole of this (universe) comes into existence in due succession.' This word is derived from the root *má* 'to measure,' and implies the thing which measures space : as good a definition, perhaps, as human reason can give of matter. These abstract inquiries have always occupied the Hindús, but they have proceeded in a way different from ourselves: they have attempted to begin at the Source of all things, and to come down the stream accounting for all our perceptions; while the metaphysicians of Europe have endeavoured to rise 'from Nature, up to Nature's God,' and thus to reach the Fountain of life.

"It may be necessary to say a few words with regard to the statement of the Colonel, that Mr. Colebrooke has asserted that the *Védántins* identify the Creator with the creation, and that he thus incorrectly turns the *Védánta* system into one of pure materialism. The Hindús undoubtedly make Nature a dependent existence, and so far identify the Creator with it. Nature must be either a dependent or an absolute existence: if the latter, we shall then have a duality of which God and Nature are the heads; and this view cannot be intended to be imputed by Colonel Vans Kennedy to the Hindú metaphysicians of any of the schools. The Deity is therefore identified with Nature as its Source, and this is so far from conveying the idea of pantheism, that even in MENU, where the system of CAPILA is followed, the Deity is made the author of Nature, and is declared, even in his plastic character as BRAHMÁ, to be *sarvabhútamaya*† 'made up of all beings.' In the comment of CULLÚCA, on the first passage already quoted, it is expressly stated, that Nature is *mánasa-srishti* 'an intellectual creation.' Mr. Colebrooke, therefore, is in no way chargeable with inconsistency or incorrectness in saying that the *Védántins* identify the Creator with Nature, and consider him as the efficient and material cause of the universe, for this is done by them in common with the followers of the remaining *dars'an'as*. The opposite views, arising from these considerations, may be summed up in a few words: an intellectual system supposes GOD IS ALL; a material, and therefore pantheistic view, involves the idea that ALL IS GOD. The first has a spiritual, and the second a material basis."

If any support were considered necessary to the view of the subject taken in the foregoing remarks, it might be found in the subjoined extracts from the Translations of several principal Books, Passages, and Texts of the Védas and Védánta, published by the Rájá Rammohun Roy: they are taken from the London edition of 1832.

1. From the "Abridgment of the *Védánt*," p. 15.

"God is the efficient cause of the universe, as a potter is of earthen pots; and he is also the material cause of it, the same as the earth is the material cause of the different earthen pots, or as a rope, at an inadvertent view taken for a snake, is the material cause of the conceived existence of the snake, which appears to be true by the sup-

* *Mátrá* is a feminine noun in Sanscrit, as *materia* is in Latin; and both mean the substance of which things are made.

† MENU I., v. vii.

port of the real existence of the rope. So says the *Védānt* : * ‘ God is the efficient cause of the universe, as well as the material cause thereof (as a spider of its web), as the Ved has positively declared, that from a knowledge of God alone, a knowledge of every existing thing proceeds.’ ”

2. From the “ *Mundak Upanishad* of the *Atharva-Véda*,” p. 28.

“ That Supreme Being, *who is the subject of the superior learning*, is beyond the apprehension of the senses, and out of the reach of the corporeal organs of action, and is without origin, colour, or magnitude, and has neither eye nor ear, nor has he hand or foot. He is everlasting, all-pervading, omnipresent, absolutely incorporeal, unchangeable, and it is he whom wise men consider as the origin of the universe ; in the same way as the cobweb is created and absorbed by the spider independently of exterior origin, as vegetables proceed from the earth, and hair and nails from animate creatures, so the universe is produced by the eternal Supreme Being.”

COLONEL VANS KENNEDY'S REMARKS ON THE VEDANTA SYSTEM.†

As two most opposite accounts of the *Védānta* system have been published, I am induced to think that a farther discussion of this subject will not be devoid of all interest. The question, indeed, seems to be one that well deserves consideration, since the answer to it, if resting on sufficient grounds, is to determine whether the *Védānticas* adopt the system of *material* pantheism that prevailed among the Grecian philosophers, or whether they have invented a most refined system of *spiritual* pantheism altogether unknown to the philosophers of Europe. Under this impression I have the honour of submitting the following remarks to the Royal Asiatic Society, in the hope that they may at least tend to assist in forming a correct opinion with respect to the real nature of the *Védānta*.

Thirty-eight years ago Sir WILLIAM JONES thus described this system : “ The fundamental tenet of the *Védānti* school, to which in a more modern age the incomparable SANCARA was a firm and illustrious adherent, consisted, not in denying the existence of matter, that is, of solidity, impenetrability, and extended figure (to deny which would be lunacy), but in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending that it has no essence independent of

* xxiii., 8th, 1st.

† The Council of the R. A. S. is not answerable for the correctness of the Sanscrit quotations, as it is not in possession of the original works from which they are extracted. The quotations are printed verbatim from Colonel VANS KENNEDY'S MS.

mental perception; that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms; that external appearances and sensations are illusory, and would vanish into nothing, if the divine energy, which alone sustains them, were suspended for a moment.”* But M. F. VON SCHLEGEL has remarked, “In the *Bhāgavad-gītā*, and probably in all the works ascribed to VYĀSA, the *Védānta* system predominates, of which he was the inventor; hence, amongst the schools of Indian philosophy, we are best acquainted with this system. From the translation of that work every one may easily convince himself that the *Védānta* is nothing but pure and complete pantheism, and there are many passages in the original which exhibit this in a stronger manner than it appears in the translation.”† Mr. WARD, also, has represented the *Védānta* to be a system of materialism, and the learned Director of the Society thus concludes his Essay on this school of Hindú philosophy:—“The notion, that the versatile world is an illusion (*māyā*), that all which passes to the apprehension of the waking individual is but a phantasy presented to his imagination, and every seeming thing is unreal and all is visionary, does not appear to be the doctrine of the text of the *Védānta*. I have remarked nothing which countenances it in the *Sūtras* of VYĀSA, nor in the gloss of SANCARA, but much concerning it in the minor commentaries and elementary treatises.”

The question, therefore, is to ascertain whether these remarks of Sir WILLIAM JONES be correct or not. The *Védānta* theologists asserted, in a very remote age, “that all spirit is homogeneous, that the spirit of God is in kind the same with that of man, though differing from it infinitely in degree, and that, as material substance is mere illusion, there exists in this universe only one generic spiritual substance, the sole primary cause, efficient, substantial, and formal of all secondary causes and appearances whatever.‡ But I must at once confess that I am surprised how two opinions could ever have been entertained on this subject. For the work on the *Védānta* system which is universally admitted to be of the highest authority, is the Commentary of SANCARA ĀCHĀRYA on the *Sūtras* of

* Sir WILLIAM JONES's Works, vol. I. p. 165.

† Ueber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier, pp. 147, 148.

‡ Sir WILLIAM JONES's Works, vol. I. p. 173.—It will be observed, that these remarks are somewhat inconsistent with those contained in the preceding quotation; in which Sir WILLIAM JONES more correctly represented the energy of the Supreme Being as the efficient cause of all secondary causes and appearances.

VYĀSA; and throughout the whole of that voluminous work SANCARA shows himself a determined maintainer of *spiritual*, but not of *material* pantheism. To evince this it is merely necessary to quote the following passages:—"Thus the Supreme Soul is not affected by the *māyā* of transitory existence."* Another passage is as follows:—"In both the *S'ruti* and the *Smṛiti*, it is said that the *māyā*, the *śacti*, the *pracriti* of the omniscient Lord is the seed from which transitory existence and delusion have originated."† I will merely add two more without the texts; the first is as follows:—"Persons skilled in the *Vēdas* say, that though it is said in the *Vēdas* that BRAHM is the immediate cause of the existence of this universe, still it is to be understood that it was produced by *māyā*, without exertion on the part of BRAHM."‡ The other, "Those who practise meditation and devout abstraction, behold, through the irradiation of their own souls, the mysterious nature with its qualities of the energy (*śacti*) of the Supreme Soul; which energy is also called *avidyā*, *māyā*, and by other names. It manifested itself in a mysterious manner of three colours, white, red, and black, representing the qualities of purity, impurity, and darkness; and it is, through the infused power of BRAHM, the origin of all causes and effects connected with time. For though there is but one sole substance devoid of difference, and but one form, still are multitudinous forms displayed by *māyā*."§

But even in the *Sūtras* of VYĀSA the very term *māyā* occurs at least once, as in this *Sūtra*, which seems to mean "all is *māyā*, as the form of the Supreme Being is not manifest."|| SANCARA's commentary, however, on

* एवंपरमात्मापिसंसारमाययानसंस्पृश्यत Comment upon the 9th *Sūtra* of the 1st pad of the 2d chapter.

† संसारप्रपंचबीजभूतेसर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्यमायाशक्तिः प्रकृतिरिति श्रुतिस्मृत्योरभिलष्यते Comment on the 15th *Sūtra* of the same pad and chapter.

‡ I need scarcely remark, that to translate quotations from a prolix commentary *literally* is quite out of the question; and I have therefore only endeavoured to give the substance and true meaning of the passage quoted.

§ SANCARA, however, in general uses other terms than *māyā*, but all imply the same meaning and convey the same doctrine, namely, that this universe is a mere illusion, and that man, even in this life, may become so enlightened by the acquisition of divine knowledge, as to perceive that there is nothing real except the Supreme Soul, and that *he* is that soul.

|| मायामात्रं कात्स्न्येनानभिद्यक्तस्वरूपत्वात् 3d *Sūtra*, 2d pad, 3d chapter.—Mr.

this text is singularly unsatisfactory ; but its meaning is rendered unquestionable by this parallel passage in the *Chanducya Upanishad*,—" If delusion be known it will undoubtedly cease ; this duality is merely *máyá*, and there is nothing that is real except actuality." But, as I do not possess SANCARA'S Commentary upon this *Upanishad*, I cannot state the manner in which he may have explained this passage. But the same doctrine is as clearly inculcated in the *S'wétás'walara Upanishad*, as for instance : " From meditation upon the Supreme Soul, from union with it, and from a knowledge of its real essence, is effected the cessation of that *máyá* which causes a belief in the existence of a multiform universe."* Upon which SANCARA has commented to this effect : " Let it be known that *all* (το παν) is the Supreme Soul, and soulless *máyá* ceases. Let the intimate conviction be acquired that *I am BRAHM*, and the knowledge of the divine nature of the soul be obtained, and *máyá* will cease. Then also will cease the belief in the existence of this universe, as the cause of such belief is *máyá*." The following passage also, in the same *Upanishad*, is either quoted or referred to more than once in SANCARA'S commentary on the *Sútras* : " By this means the universe is produced by *máyá*, and the soul encompassed by *máyá* [appears to be] other [than the Supreme Soul]. Be it therefore known, that *máyá* is the same as *pracriti*,† and that even *mahé'swara* partakes of *máyá*."‡

If, at the same time, the four great sentences (महावाक्याणि), one of which is ascribed to each of the *Védas*, be actually contained in those works, it must necessarily follow that the *Védānta* system is founded upon

COLEBROOKE has justly observed, that these *Sútras* are in the highest degree obscure, and could never have been intelligible without an ample interpretation. But, unfortunately, the commentary of SANCARA on the *Sútras*, and his commentaries on most of the *Upanishads*, are frequently as obscure as the text itself.

* प्रपंचोयदिविद्येतनिवर्तेतनसंशयः ॥ मायामात्रमिदं दैतमद्वैतं परमार्थतः 8th sloca, 3d section.

तस्याभिध्यानातयोजनात्त्वभावादभूञ्चेतिविश्वमायानिवृत्तिः 1st chapter.
It has not been attempted to translate this sloca literally.

† SANCARA explains this to mean that *máyá* or *pracriti* is the immediate cause of the existence of all things.

‡ अस्मान्मायीमृजतेविश्वमेतत्तस्मिन्श्चान्योमाययासन्निरुधः मायांतुप्रकृतिंविद्यान्मायिनंतुमहेश्वरं 4th chapter.

the *Védas*, and that consequently no change can have taken place in its original doctrine ; for these sentences are continually occurring in SANCARA's commentary on the *Sûtras* of VYĀSA, and in all *Védānta* works ; and they alone are fully sufficient to prove that it is a *spiritual*, and not a *material* pantheism, which is adopted by the *Védānticas*. Of these sentences the one said to be contained in the *Rig Vêda* is, " This (the object contemplated, whether animate or inanimate) is BRAHM ;"* in the *Yajur Vêda*, " I am BRAHM ;"† in the same *Vêda*, " Thou art it " (i. e. the Supreme Soul);‡ and in the *Atharva Vêda*, " This soul is BRAHM."§ There is also another celebrated text of the *Védas* which is continually quoted or referred to by *Védānta* writers, and which SANCARA, in his commentaries on the *Sûtras*, thus cites : " Entity existed from the beginning, for there was one entity (the Supreme Soul) but not a second." " Then it wished, 'let me become many, that beings may be produced.' "|| In another place, however, of his commentary, he adds these words to the first part of this quotation : " So this one [entity or real substance] was from the beginning soul only ;" and remarks, that this soul was BRAHM, immortal, and self-existent. But SANCARA equally quotes the text with which the *Aitareya Aranya Upanishad*, translated by Mr. COLEBROOKE in his Essay on the *Védas*, commences, " Originally this [universe] was indeed soul only,

* ब्रह्मेति

† अहंब्रह्मास्मि

‡ तत्त्वंअसि This sentence is given at greater length in the 8th section, 8th praputaca of the *Chandogya Upanishad*, in which UDDALACA thus addresses his son SWÉTACETA :

सर्वतत्सत्य सआत्मातत्त्वंअसिश्चेतकेतो all it which is the soul is real, and thou art it, O SWÉTACETA.

§ अयंआत्मा ब्रह्मेति

॥ सदेवसौम्येदमयआसीत् एकमेवाद्वितीयं — तदैक्षतबहुस्यांप्रजायेयेति

Comment on 5th sūtra, 1st pad, 1st chapter. The words quoted in another place are :

आत्मावाइदमेकएवायआसीत् Comment on 3d sūtra, 1st pad, 1st chapter.

The similar text in the *Aitareya Upanishad* is : आत्मावाइदमेकएवायआसीन्ना-
न्यत्किंचनमिषत्सईक्षतलोकान्नुसृजा

nothing else whatever existed, active [or inactive]. He thought, 'I will create worlds.'"

Why, however, Mr. COLEBROOKE has introduced the word "universe" in his translation * of this text I am not aware; for frequently as I have met with it, either quoted or referred to, the context has invariably led me to conclude that the reason of its being so often cited, proceeded from its so clearly denying the existence of duality, and consequently the reality of the illusive appearances of which alone this universe consists. Because all the schools of Hindú philosophy maintain most firmly the ancient opinion, that *ex nihilo nil fit*. Spirit, therefore, could not possibly become matter; whence it evidently follows, that if nothing but spirit originally existed, and a creation *ex nihilo* be impossible, all that appears to be matter must necessarily be a mere illusion. It is obviously on this account that, in quoting or referring to these texts, the *Védánta* writers most generally use the one that concludes with "let me become many" (बहुस्यं), instead of the other, "I will create worlds" (लोकान्नुसृजा). For what the *Védánticas* understand by the former expression, is thus explained by Mr. COLEBROOKE in his Essay on the *Védánta* System: "That BRAHM is entire, without parts, is no objection: he is not wholly transformed into worldly appearances. Various changes are presented to the dreaming soul. Divers illusory shapes and disguises are assumed by the same spirit." But the *Védánticas* at the same time maintain, as the preceding quotations will have fully shewn, that, though in a certain sense the production of worldly appearances may be ascribed to the Supreme Being, as they proceed from his *fiat*, still he must not be considered as being the immediate cause of them.

The thus separating his energy from the Supreme Being, and giving to it an independent power, is certainly one of the most incomprehensible conceptions that ever occurred to a philosopher. But it is founded on this text of the *S'wétás'watara Upanishad*, which is frequently quoted by both *Védánta* and *Sanc'hya* writers: "One unborn, red, white, and black, creating many beings of the same forms: through delighting in whom, one man is

* This translation seems at the same time to be somewhat inconsistent, for it would imply that the universe existed before worlds were created. It appears to me, therefore, that the proper word to be understood and joined to the pronoun would be सत् as in the preceding quotation, and that the text should be thus translated: "This one entity (or real substance) was from the first soul only, and nothing else whatever existed."

sunk in the slumber [of ignorance], and by forsaking whose allurements another becomes immortal.”* This text is quoted by SANCARA in his commentary on this unintelligible *Sūtra* of VYĀSA : “ From difference in kind like a sacrificial spoon,”† and thus explained : “ In this text, the red, white, and black, represent the qualities of impurity, purity, and darkness. The red, or impurity, being the cause of the passions and affections of men ; the white, or purity, the cause of the mind being enlightened by divine knowledge ; and the black, or darkness, the cause of the mind being obscured by ignorance. By the *one*, also, thus described, is to be understood *pracriti*, who creates many beings endowed with those qualities. Whoever, therefore, delights in that *pracriti*, his soul becomes encompassed with ignorance, and being unable to distinguish the real nature of his soul, he experiences pleasure and pain. But whoever acquires that discriminating knowledge, he forsakes the enjoyments that depend upon *pracriti*, and obtains eternal bliss.” It is particularly to be observed, that in his commentary on the *S'wétās'watara Upanishad*, SANCARA uses the word *MĀYĀ* instead of *pracriti*.‡

From the preceding quotations it will perhaps sufficiently appear that the *Védānticas* have, from the first origin of their school, denied the existence of matter, and maintained that nothing has real existence except one all-pervading and undivided spiritual substance. I am therefore at a loss to understand the grounds on which Mr. COLEBROOKE, in his essay on this system, has thus stated : “ The succeeding section affirms the important tenet of the *Védānta*, that the Supreme Being is the material§ as well as the efficient cause of the universe ; it is a proposition directly resulting from the tenor of the passages of the *Védas*, and illustrations and examples adduced.” For the copy of the *Sūtras* now before me is divided in a different manner from the one referred to by Mr. COLEBROOKE, and I

* अजामेकान्लोहितशुक्लकृष्णाबद्धीः प्रजाः सृजमानांस्वरूपाः ॥ अजो-
लेकोजुषमाणोनुशेतेजहात्येनांभुक्तभोगामजोन्यः 4th Chapter.

† 9th sūtra, 4th pad, 1st chapter.

‡ For instance, in the concluding sentence of his commentary on the *Sūtras*, the expression is एनांप्रकृतिंभुक्तभोगां but in that on the *Upanishad* it is एनांमायांआवरणविक्षे-
परूपांभुक्तभोगां

§ See quotation from the Vedant, page 413.

have not been able to find in them a single *Sūtra* which, in my opinion, would bear such a meaning. In fact, the Sanscrit language does not contain any term equivalent to the word matter ; and even the four principal schools of Hindú philosophy concur in rejecting the notion of matter which has invariably prevailed in Europe. For the *Védānticas* declare, that what appears to be such is a mere illusion ; the *Sanc'hya*s consider the universe to be the development of a plastic nature, in the same manner as the tree is developed from the seed, to which they also ascribe the power of again withdrawing such development into itself, in the way that a tortoise puts forth and retracts its members ; and the followers of GÓTAMA and CANÁDE hold that substance is an aggregation of atoms, which are constantly liable to separation, and even to returning to their original unaggregated and imperceptible state. But it will be evident, that none of these definitions apply to the different opinions which have been entertained respecting matter, by the philosophers of Europe, and consequently this term ought to be carefully avoided, whenever it is wished to convey a correct description of Hindú philosophy.

No doubt, however, but that the illustrations and examples adduced in explanation of the *Védānta*, might seem to warrant the conclusion that it is a mere system of materialism, for never were more inapplicable examples adduced to illustrate any subject ; as for instance, the favourite one, in describing the repeated destruction and reproduction of the universe, of the spider spinning its web from its own substance and then retracting it : since, were this example to be understood literally, it would follow, contrary to the texts of the *Védas* above quoted, that it was matter and not spirit which had eternally existed. The other comparisons, also, which are generally employed—the rays from the sun, the sparks from fire, the stream from its source, air confined within a closed vessel, are all equally incompatible with the real doctrine of the *Védānta*. But this figurative language never for a moment misleads, even the least informed follower of this school, for after making use of such illustrations, which so clearly admit the existence of duality, he will immediately maintain that what appears to be matter is mere illusion, and that nothing really exists except spirit. The *Védānta* writers, at the same time, in general qualify such arguments as imply an admission that matter is a reality, by employing such terms as, “to speak popularly, or according to common use,” or some such like expression. In reading *Védānta* works, therefore, the utmost attention should be paid to

this circumstance ; since, were it not adverted to, the greatest part of SANCARA's commentary on the *Sútras* of VYÁSA would be self-contradictory, as, in refuting the opinions of opposite sects, he of course makes use of words according to their usual acceptance. Nor, in attempting to explain the ideal system which the *Védánticas* profess, would it be possible to avoid all expressions and illustrations of a material nature ; for they do not deny that, to all intents and purposes, man, while the soul is imprisoned in the body, unless he becomes enlightened by divine knowledge, is impressed with the firm belief that matter really exists, and that he must, in consequence, act according to this belief.

It is this marked difference between its practical and speculative tenets, that so remarkably distinguishes the *Védánta* from all other systems of philosophy. But this distinction rests solely and entirely on the doctrine of *Máyá*—on the belief that the human soul, though the same originally as the Supreme Soul, is by some mysterious means excluded from participation in the divine nature, and exposed to many illusive appearances and sensations which are productive of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, both in this and in a future life. It is at the same time maintained, as it appears from the four great sentences above quoted, that this exclusion does not actually exist, and that such a supposition is a mere illusive conception proceeding from ignorance, the erroneousness of which is immediately perceived if the human mind becomes enlightened by divine knowledge. Until then, however, man must act precisely in the same manner as if all the illusive appearances with which he was surrounded had a real existence ; and it is even considered deserving of blame if an individual adopts a contemplative life, before he has for a considerable time performed all the duties incidental to his station in society. But the apparent man is, in reality, an undivided part of the Supreme Soul itself, and it is mental darkness alone which conceals this truth from him, and leads him to suppose that he, and other similar appearances, possess material forms, and that this universe not only actually exists, but that it is composed of material substances.

It will be hence evident, that the *Védánta* does not in any respect correspond with any system of European philosophy, for it neither derives substances, admitted to be material, from the divine nature of the Supreme Being, nor does it identify him with the universe, and it equally rejects an eternal matter co-existent with him, and a matter created *ex nihilo*. In it, also, the denegation of the real existence of sensible objects is simple and

decided, and rests not on the arguments resorted to for that purpose by the academics and sceptics. Some resemblance, however, might on a cursory view seem to exist between the *Védānta* and *Eleatic* schools; for BRÜCKER appears to have correctly stated that the following were the metaphysical opinions of PARMENIDES :—

I. *Ex nihilo nil fit.*

II. The cause of all things is *one*, immoveable and immutable.

III. That *one*, therefore, is the *all*.

IV. That the *one* is unproduced, eternal, and of a spherical form.

V. That this one *ens* is alone real, and all other things are nonentities, and consequently non-existent.

VI. Nothing, therefore, is generated or destroyed, but such changes are merely appearances which deceive us.

Hence, several writers have maintained that the *one* and *all* of the *Eleatic* sect, was intended to apply to one sole and incorporeal deity; and M. COUSIN, in his life of XENOPHANES, has remarked : “Let us, therefore, not ascribe to XENOPHANES the work of PARMENIDES; but at the same time let us admit that the germ of the opinions of PARMENIDES is contained in those of XENOPHANES, not in the Ionian, but in the Pythagorean part of the latter’s philosophy. And this is so true, that the unity, which in his successor’s system might have been either material or spiritual, according to the prevalence of the Ionian or Pythagorean element, was spiritual, and exclusively spiritual, in the system of PARMENIDES; that, liable to become in his hands either that of the world or that of God, it has become a divine unity, an unity solitary and retired into itself, before which the world, that is to say the universe, is so little the unity and the God of PARMENIDES, that, according to PARMENIDES, in proceeding from unity one cannot acquire the conception of the world and the universe. Far, therefore, from being a Pantheist, PARMENIDES distinguished the *all* from unity, the *το πᾶν* from the *το εἷς*, that he denies the *all*, and plunges into the abyss of an absolute unity, which alone exists, an unity without number, existence without substance or reality, which is nothing more than a sublime abstraction that resembles the annihilation of existence.”*

But M. COUSIN himself makes these admissions : “Let one now judge of the folly of those who, repeating without any historical or philosophical

* Nouveaux Fragmens Philosophiques, p. 86.

criticism assertions founded on texts undeserving of credit, of bad writers of the Greek empire, have charged XENOPHANES, and also his school, with the imputation of pantheism, at present so thoroughly established and accredited in respect to the philosophic crowd, that in attacking such a ridiculous prejudice, and in here substituting the authority of ARISTOTLE for that of THEODORET, the pseudo PLUTARCH and the pseudo ORIGEN, it is we who will be considered as rash, and the mere advancers of a paradox.”* This will no doubt appear a strange manner of treating the inestimable works of a BRUCKER, a TIEDMANN, and a TENNEMANN; but as so arrogant a mode of contemning the labours of preceding authors is not likely to detract from their authority, I shall transcribe the following remarks of TIEDMANN :

“ However firmly the *Eleatic* philosopher may have hitherto sustained his flight into the intellectual regions, and however well he may have maintained himself there, still he could neither separate himself sufficiently from sensible objects nor abstract extension from substance. In consequence, he suddenly falls into absurdities, which greater metaphysicians, who lived after him, have not failed to mention. PLATO, from the same passages (as those before quoted), draws the conclusion, that the *one* has also extension, has parts, and consequently that it is not in the strictest sense *one*, and therefore that PARMENIDES is not free from self-contradiction. ARISTOTLE makes the same objection with perfect justice.”

“ The *one* or *all*, equally thinking and extended, is God; for the same verses of PARMENIDES, which PLATO refers to the *all*, are explained by ARISTOTLE as applicable to God; and amongst all the ancients, without exception, it was assumed as fully admitted, that the terms God, the *one*, and the *all*, bore one and the same signification.”

“ So, consequently, PARMENIDES is, like his teacher XENOPHANES, a pantheist, but a better pantheist, in so far that he elevated the gross materialism of all his predecessors, by denying that separate and separable parts and mutability were ascribable to the *all* and to the divine nature, and thus he drew nearer to the simple and spiritual: in so far, also, that, in respect to immutability, he thought more sublimely of the divine nature, and that he was the first amongst philosophers who ascribed that attribute to the deity, without which he cannot be considered as God, nor duly distinguished from all other things.

* Nouveaux Fragmens Philosophiques, p. 87.

PARMENIDES was likewise a better pantheist than SPINOZA, or the maintainers of the system of emanation, since these declare that the divine nature is susceptible of mutable and varying modifications, so that it can appear a man, an animal, or a stone, and assume all the forms of finite beings, or rather can change itself into a man, an animal, or a stone.”*

MOSHEIM, also, in his remarks upon the twenty-first section of the fourth chapter of “CUDWORTH’S Intellectual System,” has observed, “I would, however, wish that no one should persuade himself that PARMENIDES was so insane and devoid of reason, as to suppose that all sensible objects were mere dreams and fallacies of the senses, and that he was of opinion that there was no motion, nothing produced or destroyed, but that it only seemed to us that such changes took place. If any man so thought, he must have also thought that he was not a man, but the shadow of a man. I am not ignorant that most of the ancients, ARISTOTLE, SEXTUS, and others, have thus explained the opinion of PARMENIDES. COLOTES also, in PLUTARCH, accuses PARMENIDES of having taken away fire and water, the precipice and the cities, that is, that he had reduced all things in nature to the delirious and spectral phantasies of the sick.” “PARMENIDES not only discoursed with respect to such things, but also with regard to their causes and origins, thus reducing them to their first elements. This however he never would have done, had he been of opinion that we were merely dreaming and deceived by our senses, and that nothing of what we thought we saw had real existence. For what man in his senses would investigate the causes and reasons of a thing which he believed to have never existed.”†

To this objection TIEDMANN thus replies, and his remarks are so applicable to the *Védānticas* that I am induced to quote them : “What the great man here imputes as a fault to the philosopher of Elea, has the misfortune that it is also imputable to all idealists ; and the ascribing insanity to them all, without exception, may readily be deemed an inconsiderate degree of harshness. Let it be once admitted that all which lies within the circuit of our experience is mere appearance, and then it is both natural to, and compatible with reason, to search after the grounds and principles of this appearance, in order to know why this appearance displays itself to us

* TIEDMANN’S “Geist der Spekulativen Philosophie,” vol. I. p. 178.

† MOSHEIM’S Latin translation of “CUDWORTH’S Intellectual System,” vol. I. p. 600, note, second column.

at all times in such an order, according to such laws, and with such properties; nor is it an evident want of sense to philosophize respecting such appearance. PARMENIDES might answer, "men, animals, bodies, as well as their production, destruction, and changes, are in truth nothing but mere appearances; but still you may comprehend why these appearances change themselves in so fixed and regular a manner. Represent to yourself that the first origin of them was fire and water, and that these two elements, through their various conjunctions, exhibit to you all that you take for reality; you will gain so much at least that you will not imagine that you are living in an Utopian world, and thus you will be able to regulate your actions prudently, and to the best advantage, according to the laws of such appearance."*

But no account of the *Eleatic* system admits of its being concluded, that PARMENIDES had ever the slightest conception of the *Védānta* doctrine of *Máyá*; nor does it appear probable, either from the philosophical opinions that prevailed at the period when he lived, or from any impartial view given of his system, that he ever succeeded in drawing a marked distinction between matter and spirit. For if the latter had been the case, it is impossible that so many acute metaphysicians should have experienced any difficulty in at once determining whether PARMENIDES was a Pantheist or not. Supposing, however, that M. COUSIN is correct in stating that PARMENIDES distinguished the *το πᾶν* from the *το εἶν*, and denied the existence of the former, his system would still remain dissimilar from the *Védānta*, inasmuch as PARMENIDES denied absolutely the existence of sensible objects. The *Védántica*, on the contrary, gives to them, as far as the enlightened man is concerned, a positive existence; as man's perception of their being merely illusory appearances, depends entirely upon his acquisition of divine knowledge. At the same time, also, that he contends that the system of PARMENIDES was pure idealism, M. COUSIN shows how impossible it is for an European philosopher to form any conception of such a system as the *Védānta*. For he has observed: "On the other hand, unity without plurality is not more real than plurality without unity. An absolute unity, which does not display itself, or merely appears as a shadow, may well overwhelm by its grandeur, and enchant by its mysterious charm; but it does not enlighten the mind, and it is forcibly contradicted by such of our

* TIEDMANN'S "Geist der Spekultativen Philosophie," vol. I. p. 192.

faculties as are connected with the world, and which assure us of its reality ; and by all our faculties, active and moral, which would be a mockery and an accusation against their author, if the theatre on which they are obliged to act was nothing but a snare and illusion. A God without a world, is as false as a world without a God ; a cause without effects to manifest it, or an indefinite series of effects without a primary cause ; a substance that does not develop itself, or an ample development of phenomena without a substance to support them ; reality, solely derived from the visible or invisible : on each side equal error and equal danger, equal forgetfulness of human nature, and equal forgetfulness of the essential qualities of thinking and of things.”* But what M. COUSIN thus objects to, is precisely the *Védānta* system, in which it is maintained that absolute unity exists without plurality, and that though there is a primary cause, still the multitudinous and varied phenomena displayed in this universe, have no substance to support them ; or, to use the words of Sir WILLIAM JONES, “ That all bodies and their qualities exist, indeed, to every wise and useful purpose, but exist only as far as they are perceived.”

It is true, however, that the *Eclectic* sect maintained that there was only one real *ens*, and that was God ; but in adopting the doctrine of emanation, they were obliged to admit that matter as well as spirit had emanated from the deity. “ For if (observes BRUCKER) we follow PLOTINUS, who had heard AMMONIUS, he expressly affirms that *ex nihilo nil fit*, and it hence necessarily follows that all flowed from the *one*, since the *one* existed before the *duad*. In consequence of this emanation, not only the divine intellect and the soul of the intellectual world, and all the spiritual entities that are contained in it, but also matter from which it was necessary to frame all things, and to give a form to the seminal causes that lay concealed in the *anima mundi*, had flowed from the fount of all things. As, however, all things were said to be made by a necessary sequence of eternal nature, PLOTINUS could not but affirm that the emanation of this matter was from the supreme fount of all things. But this was contrary to the disorderly, brute, and evil quality which PLATO ascribed to matter. It was therefore necessary that this should be given up, and resort had to metaphysical ideas and distinctions, in order that the *Eclectic* philosophers should not appear to admit

* Nouveaux Fragmens Philosophiques, p. 72.

any thing unworthy of God.”* TIEDMANN expresses the same opinion in these words : “PLOTINUS teaches gross Spinozism, when he affirms that all things are parts of the divine nature, and allows that this is the first matter, which through innumerable changes is exhibited to us in countless forms. He teaches refined Spinozism, when he considers God as the logical subject of the multitudinous phenomena that come within our experience, and when he endeavours to derive all our notions of sensible objects, from ideas belonging to the understanding.”†

From the preceding remarks it will also appear, that although Sir WILLIAM JONES has, in his “Essay on the Philosophy of the Asiatics,” given a pretty accurate account of the *Védánta*, his observations respecting it, contained in his “Essay on the Mystical Poetry of the Hindús and Persians,” are totally inapplicable to this system. The beauty of the passage, to which I particularly object, will perhaps excuse the length of the following quotation : “If these two passages were translated into Sanscrit and Persian, I am confident that the *Védántis* and *Súfis* would consider them as an epitome of their common system ; for they concur in believing that the souls of men differ infinitely in degree, but not at all in kind, from the divine spirit, of which they are particles, and in which they will ultimately be absorbed ; that the spirit of God pervades the universe, always immediately present to his work, and consequently always in substance ; that he alone is perfect benevolence, perfect truth, perfect beauty ; that the love of him alone is real and genuine love, while that of all other objects is absurd and illusory ; that the beauties of nature are faint resemblances, like images in a mirror, of the divine charms ; that, from eternity without beginning, to eternity without end, the supreme benevolence is occupied in bestowing happiness, or the means of attaining it ; that men can only attain it by performing their part of the primal covenant between them and the Creator ; that nothing has a pure absolute existence but mind or spirit ; that material substances, as the ignorant call them, are no more than gay pictures presented continually to our minds by the sempiternal artist ; that we must beware of attachment to such phantoms, and attach ourselves exclusively to God, who truly exists in us as we exist solely in him ; that we retain,

* *Historia Critica Philosophia*, tom II. p. 428.

† TIEDMANN'S *Geist der Spekultativen Philosophie*, vol. III. p. 429.

even in this forlorn state of separation from our beloved, the idea of heavenly beauty, and the remembrance of our primeval vows ; that sweet music, gentle breezes, fragrant flowers, perpetually renew the primary idea, refresh our fading memory, and melt us with tender affections ; that we must cherish those affections, and by abstracting our souls from vanity, that is from all but God, approximate to his essence, in our final union with which will consist our supreme beatitude. From these principles flow a thousand metaphors and other poetical figures, which abound in the sacred poems of the Persians and Hindús, who seem to mean the same thing in substance, and differ only in expression, as their languages differ in idiom !”*

This exquisite description applies no doubt to the writings of the *Súfis* and of all other mystics ; but there is not a trace of mysticism in the sacred books of the Hindús, nor, as far as I am aware, in any Sanscrit work. It is even singular that such expressions as “ the love and fear of God ” never occur in those sacred books, nor in any *Védānta* treatise, although the terms themselves are frequently used, but love is then referred to terrestrial objects, and fear denotes the apprehension of being exposed to future states of apparent individual existence, previous to obtaining identification with the Supreme Being. The *Védānta* system, consequently, is taught, not in figurative and allegorical language, but in the most plain and direct manner, as the following quotations will at once evince. SUTA addressing the sages, “ God being like one asleep, all has been made by *Máyá*, and being so made it is of the same nature as *Máyá*, for the effect is inseparable from the cause, and all has been produced by the agency of *Máyá*. But nothing subsists except BRAHM, supreme, one, and adualistic ; and it is through *Máyá* that BRAHM is thus manifested. In the world, in the vital soul, and in other forms, is displayed the all-pervading power of God, but never is his real essence otherwise manifested. Whoever, therefore, considers the world to have a distinct existence, is bound and not liberated ; but he who considers that all this is PARABRAHM, is no doubt released from the dreadful state of transitory existence.”† SÍVA addressing VISHNÚ : “ I will now explain to you, in a few words, the means of obtaining final beatitude ;

* Sir WILLIAM JONES’s Works, vol. I. p. 450.

† Scanda Púran Suta Sanhita yadgna Weibhawa khand, the 4th chapter of the Suta Upanishad.

listen, therefore, with faith and devotion. Final beatitude is obtained by a knowledge of the real nature of the soul, and not by works, and that knowledge is acquired from understanding the important meaning of the *Védánta* doctrines. The soul having thus become enlightened, it will be manifest to it that it is BRAHM. From having acquired this knowledge, man's belief in the individuality of his own soul will cease, and on such belief, ceasing the belief in duality will be also destroyed. This being destroyed, nothing will longer appear lovely or unlovely, and thus affection and hate will be also annihilated. Then, from their cessation will end the distinction of virtue and vice, and hence will finally be destroyed the senses and sensible objects. Thus, solely by a knowledge of the soul's real nature, is the belief in its individuality destroyed, and by this means, ignorance, the radical cause of the apparent existence of this universe, is likewise destroyed. From this knowledge, also, proceeds that of the real nature of BRAHM, in the same manner as certainty convinces us that the cord is not a serpent, or the post a man (as it was at first supposed); and as soon as this knowledge is acquired, it is perceived that ignorance was the origin of the belief that there are causes and effects, a maker and things made, and it is ascertained that nothing really exists except BRAHM.*

It will no doubt be evident that, in whatever freedom of thinking Christian philosophers may have indulged, the religion in which they had been instructed in their childhood, and which continued to prevail around them, would necessarily prevent such a system as the *Védántica* from occurring to their conception. In consequence, DES CARTES thus expressly contradicts its fundamental principle: "If God should by himself exhibit to our minds an idea of extended matter, or if he should only cause it to be exhibited from something in which there was no extension, nor figure, nor motion, no reason could be conceived why he should not be considered as a deceiver. But we clearly understand that this substance is perfectly different from God and from our own minds; and we seem to perceive clearly that the idea of it comes to us from external objects, with which the idea in every respect corresponds. But it is evidently contrary to the nature of God that he should be a deceiver, as it has been before remarked; consequently, it must be concluded that a certain substance, possessing length, breadth,

* Scanda Púran Suta Sanhita yadgna Weibhawa khand, the 37th chapter of the Suta Upanishad.

and depth, and all those properties which we clearly perceive to belong to an extended substance, does really exist. It is this substance which we call matter or body.”*

But MALLEBRANCHE and BERKELEY, in denying the real existence of sensible objects, have approached, in some degree, to the *Védánta* system. A difference of opinion, however, prevails with respect to the nature of the union which the former supposed to exist between the human soul and God; and in making God the efficient cause of all secondary causes and effects, MALLEBRANCHE differs entirely from the *Védántica*. But in BERKELEY’S “Treatise on the Principles of Human Knowledge” occur several passages which correspond very nearly with the speculative doctrine of the *Védánta*. For instance: “It is indeed an opinion strangely prevailing amongst men, that houses, mountains, rivers, and, in a word, all sensible objects, have an existence, natural or real, distinct from their being perceived by the understanding. But with how great an assurance and acquiescence soever this principle may be entertained in the world, yet whoever shall find in his heart to call it in question, may, if I mistake not, perceive it to involve a manifest contradiction, for what are the forementioned objects but the things we perceive by sense; and is it not plainly repugnant that any one of these, or any combination of them, should exist unperceived?” Sec. iv.—“From what has been said, it follows there is not any other substance than spirit, or that which perceives,” Sec. vii.—“But it is evident, from what we have already shown, that extension, figure, and motion are only ideas existing in the mind, and that an idea can be like nothing but another idea, and that, consequently, neither they nor their archetypes can exist in an unperceiving substance. Hence it is plain, that the very notion of what is called matter, or corporeal substance, involves a contradiction in it.” Sec. ix.—But both MALLEBRANCHE and BERKELEY admitted the individuality of the soul, and its distinctness from the divine nature; for the latter remarks, in the same treatise, “From what hath been said, it is plain that we cannot know the existence of other spirits otherwise than by their operations, or the idea excited by them in us. I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents like myself which accompany them, and concur in their

* Principiorum Philosophiæ, Pars Secunda, sect. I.

production. Hence the knowledge I have of other spirits is not immediate, as is the knowledge of my ideas ; but depending on the intervention of ideas, by me referred to agents or spirits distinct from myself, as effects or concomitant signs." Sec. CXLV.

It is however in Germany only, and during the last forty years, that metaphysicians have attempted to discover an absolute unity, which differed from the identification of the Supreme Being with the universe, and from Spinozism ; but the only original works on the subject which I have read, are some of the writings of FICHTE and SCHELLING, and these, as well as the accounts given of the metaphysical systems that have prevailed during that period in Germany, are so obscure, that it is almost impossible to understand them. Friend and foe, indeed, admit the dark profundity of KANT's speculations, and both FICHTE and SCHELLING have published complaints of their opinions having been misunderstood.

FICHTE even thought it necessary to publish a short work, entitled "Advice to the Public, clear as the Sun,"* in which he exposes the real principles of his system, and endeavours to rectify the erroneous notions entertained respecting it. But in this very work he complains of the difficulty, which the imperfection of language opposes to his rendering his opinions intelligible, and wishes that he could explain them by a system of figures, each of which had a known and positive value. At the same time he expressly declares, that the scope of his system has never been spoken or explained by words, and that it even admits not of being so explained, but must be comprehended by intuition. This remark seems to be quite correct, for this system is founded on the assumption that there is absolute identity between the subject and the object, which is denoted by FICHTE by this formula $A=A$. Former metaphysicians, however, were of opinion that from an identical proposition no conclusion could be drawn. But FICHTE disdains to employ logical reasoning in support of his opinions, and contents himself with appealing to intuition. Hence he gives, in page 186 of the tract above referred to, the following explanation of the fundamental principle of his system, which the reader is expected to find clear as the sun : "Egoism (die Ichheit) is subject-objectivity, and nothing else

* The title at length of this work is a most singular one. It is "Advice, clear as the Sun, to the Public, respecting the Real Nature of the Newest Philosophy ; an attempt to compel the Reader to Understand. By Iohann Gotlieb Fichte."

whatever ; the considering that the subject and its object, consciousness and conception, are one and the same ; and that there is absolutely nothing except this identity." Nor does FICHTE conceal the consequences which must result from this system, since he begins the last dialogue of this tract with these words : " I see thee, my reader, stand there in astonishment ; and thou seemst to think,—is there nothing further than this ? a mere picture of actual life is presented to me, which spares me nothing that exists in life ; a faint representation in pallid colours of all in nature that I have daily before me, without trouble or labour. And for this purpose shall I subject myself to fatiguing study and wearisome thought, &c."

In this tract, however, FICHTE does not explain in what manner the *I*, that is both subject and object, becomes conscious that other *I*'s similarly constituted actually exist, or whether the *I* is dependent for its consciousness on itself, or on some superior being. But in his work, entitled " A Guide to a Holy Life," occur these passages : " Except God there is nothing real, or in the proper sense of the word *there*, and except the intimate conviction of this truth (*wissen*), for that is absolutely and immediately the presence of God himself ; and, as far as we possess that conviction, we are ourselves implanted in the divine nature. All else which appears to us to have existence—substances, bodies, souls, ourselves, in so far as we ascribe to ourselves a personal and independent being—is not real and actually existent ; but they exist in consciousness and thinking, as the conception and the thought, and in no other way whatever."* " God is essentially one without plurality, he is always of one substance without change or transformation, here is he now present, even as he essentially is, one without change or transformation ; and we ourselves partake of his divine presence, so that also in us, in so far as we partake of his divinity, no change or transformation, no plurality or multiplicity, no separation, or distinction, or sundering can take place. So must it be, as it cannot be otherwise therefore it is."† From these passages it would appear, that FICHTE had formed some conception of the absolute unity which is the peculiar tenet of the *Védānta* ; but his earlier opinions respecting God, evidently prevented him from constructing a system in conformity to these conceptions ; for even in the greatest part of this work he expresses himself

* Page 64, Fourth Lecture.

† Page 69, Fourth Lecture.

in a manner that shows he did not clearly understand, what he himself meant by the union which he supposed to exist between the human soul and the divine nature.*

SCHELLING, also, has found it necessary to explain his system, in a work written partly in support of it, and partly in refutation of that of FICHTE, and has in it exposed his opinions in a clear and decided manner. For instance, "As it is, also, a philosophical knowledge of God to consider him as the alone positively existent, so is it a knowledge of God to consider him as the only actually existent in the actual or natural world, and this is natural philosophy."

"Were it not natural philosophy, then must it be asserted that God exists only in the world of thought, and consequently that there is nothing positive in the actual or natural world, and thus the idea itself of God would be taken away."

"That which is, is reality, and reality is, that which is. What the philosopher thinks, and concerning which he speaks, must be, and therefore it must have reality. That which is not, is not real. The philosopher, therefore, who discourses about nature as if it were nothing, speaks not of a reality, and speaks himself nothing that is true, while he gives to the unreality of which he is speaking, a reality which it does not possess. True philosophy must speak of what actually exists, of nature as it is. God is essentially that which is; say then, God is essentially nature, and nature is essentially God. Hence all true philosophy, that is, such as leads to a knowledge of the only real and positive, is *ipso facto* natural philosophy."†

"According to which opinion, this eternal phenomenal interchange of the substance and form into one another, is the kingdom of nature, or the eternal birth of God in things, and the like eternal absorption of all things in God; so that, according to its real essence, nature itself completely exhibits the divine presence, or God displayed in the actuality of his life, and in a manifestation of himself."‡

* In this work FICHTE talks of man being love, and of that love being transfused, melted, and poured into the divine nature, see p. 199. His notions, therefore, respecting the union of the soul with God, seem to be of a mystical nature, rather than to indicate that he had formed any conception of the human soul being actually an undivided part of the Supreme Soul.

† Darlegung des Wahren Verhältniss der Natural Philosophie, &c. p. 15.

‡ Ibid. p. 60.

“ Except the Godly world, which as such is also unintermediately the actual one, there is positively nothing than the arbitrary thinking of individuals, by means of which the world may be changed into a dead and absolute plurality, though nothing will hence be necessarily changed. Herr FICHTE has imagined such a dead and endlessly imperfect world; will he assert that this has for him an actual existence, then must he also assert that he can see and does see, what neither is nor can be, *i. e.* that his senses have become erroneous and disordered. He who lives and moves merely in imagination, and holds his doing so as an absolute necessity, ventures, notwithstanding, to say, out of this imagination, to the natural philosopher, that he imagines things to be different from what they are; he, the dreamer, alleges that the real perceptions of him who is awake are nothing but dreams.”*

These passages will be sufficient to shew that SCHELLING’S system has no resemblance to the *Védānta*, and, most ingeniously as he has supported it, the idealism which he ascribes to it is more apparent than real—at least, let God be once considered as Nature, and Nature as God, and the difference between this and other systems of material pantheism must depend on mere metaphysical distinctions, which have no real existence.†

To these remarks it may be objected, that they merely consist of a *cento* of quotations; but in the discussion of a disputed subject, it seems to me that the adducing only the opinions of the writer, without explaining the grounds on which such opinions rest, can never prove satisfactory to the

* Darlegung des Wahren Verhältniss der Natural Philosophie, &c. p. 121.

† Such reasoning as the following displays much metaphysical ingenuity, but is it in the least convincing?—“ But (SCHELLING supposes some one to object) *I actually see matter as extended in space, multiform, divisible, and circumscribed.* This, I answer, is the fundamental error, namely, the notion that thou seest this. Thou mightest as well assure me that thou seest spots in the sun, for thou merely convertest thy not seeing into seeing. Thou beholdest, whether thou knowest it or wishest it, only the eternal unity of the bounden and the bond, *i. e.* the bond itself; all the rest thou mayst conceive or imagine, but never in any manner really perceive it. So, from what has been said, plurality is in no manner visible; it can only be seen where it is manifested in unity, *i. e.* when it is no longer plurality. Thou canst conceive plurality, and as such it exists in thy conception, but otherwise it is neither reality nor what actually is, since that is always *one*.”—*Ibid.* p. 62. But unless this supposed identity between God and Nature be a mere mental abstraction, a mere *ens rationis*, I do not perceive how a system which maintains that this universe positively exists, and that all things proceed from and return unto the divine nature, can be considered to differ from other systems of material pantheism.

reader. Unusually numerous, therefore, as these quotations no doubt are, they will enable the peruser of this paper to form his own judgment with respect to the point in question : namely, whether the *Védānta* is a system^(a) of material pantheism or emanation, or whether it is not one which has attained to the *ne plus ultra* of transcendentalism. In the latter case as it is unquestionably founded on the *Védas*, it must have been invented at least three thousand years ago ; and, consequently, it cannot but excite surprise that man at that remote period should have been capable of entering into such abstruse speculations, and of forming conceptions to the sublimity of which no philosopher of Europe has ever attained. Hence Sir WILLIAM JONES hesitated not to remark : I have not sufficient evidence on the subject to profess a belief in the doctrine of the *Védānta*, which human reason alone could, perhaps, neither fully demonstrate nor fully disprove ; but it is manifest that nothing can be farther removed from impiety, than a system wholly built on the purest devotion.”*

Bombay, 5th December 1831.

VANS KENNEDY.

* Works, Vol. 1. p. 166.

NOTE.

(a) It will be evident from what has been said in pp. 412-414 that the learned writer is under a misconception regarding Mr. COLEBROOKE's idea of the *Védānta* system of philosophy. With respect to the views expressed in the *Parmenides* of PLATO, it may be said that it was owing to the *form* of their investigation *not being sufficiently general*, that the Pythagoreans, and their followers the Platonists, could never arrive at truth in their speculations on the nature of the Deity. Any contemplation of his essence with reference to number, shape, size, quality, or proportion must lead to fallacious results, and can only tend to confound him with his works. To say therefore that the Deity is *το ειναι* is to say that he is concrete, that is, that he is material. The mystic notions of Pythagoras about number and fire ever misled him and his followers in their search of truth. It is undoubtedly true that when we contrast the Deity with the gods of polytheism we call him *one* ; and we must do the same when we speak of him or his attributes in a theological sense as the moral governor of the universe ; but the case is altogether different when we philosophize upon the nature of his essence in the abstract.

G. C. H.