

XI.

THE MODERN HINDU DOCTRINE OF WORKS.

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THE great mass of Hindūs of the present day follow, and for nearly five centuries have followed, the religious doctrine of salvation by *bhakti*, or loving faith. This, although nominally based on the Vēdas and Upaniṣads, is strongly opposed both to the *advaita* Vedantist doctrine of salvation by knowledge and to the Mīmāṃsā doctrine of salvation by works. Its very idea of salvation, a life of never-ending bliss near the Holy One, is radically different from that offered by these two schools.

The *bhakti*-school of religion is really, as is well known, a descendant of the noble thoughts found in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and this is more particularly true as regards that part of the doctrine which treats of what we, in discussions on Christianity, should call 'works.' As it is assumed as the basis of belief that faith, and faith alone, can save a man, the question naturally arises as to what relation his good or evil works bear to his salvation.

The controversy on this point has divided the Western Church since the dawn of Christianity, and it is interesting to note that the *bhakti*-church of India has been troubled by exactly the same difficulty, mixed up, too, as with us, with the puzzle of predestination. In India, in this cult, we find two sharply opposed systems of belief, one known

as the 'cat' and the other as the 'monkey' school. The 'cat'-school, which holds the truth of what we should call the doctrine of 'irresistible grace,' teaches that *Bhagavat*, the Holy One, saves the soul as a cat takes up its kitten, without free-will on the part of the latter. The 'monkey'-school, which holds to the doctrine of 'co-operative grace,' teaches that the soul, in order to be saved, must reach out and embrace the Holy One, as a young monkey clings to its mother. Nearly all the North Indian sects of the *bhakti*-church are followers of the latter school, and it is natural that its adherents should investigate the question of works, and discuss how far they are involved in the 'clinging' which they believe to be necessary to salvation. We are familiar with the importance given to works in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the subject is still treated in Northern India very much on the lines laid down by that poem, and, indeed, the modern teaching professes to be derived from it.

As the subject is of interest alike for the comparative study of religions and for the comprehension of modern Hindū belief, I give in the following pages a translation of two sections from the *Bhakta-kalpadrūma* of Prātāpa Siṃha (written in 1866). Although the original has been printed more than once, I think it is better to offer a translation rather than a summary in my own words; for so little is known about the *bhakti*-cult in this country that it is important that those who read the following pages may be certain that they have before them what the author actually said, and not a picture coloured by my own prepossessions. I think that it is worth translating, for it gives very complete, if rather long-winded, explanations, and, although written in Hindī, is by no means easy for the foreigner to understand unless he has made a special study of this side of India's religious speculation.

The *Bhakta-kalpadrūma* is a version in modern language and a rearrangement of the famous *Bhakta-māla*

of Nābhā-dāsa (circ. 1600 A.D.). Pratāpa Simha gives the lives of the various saints referred to in that work, and groups them, not in Nābhā's order, but according to their *niṣṭhās*. A *niṣṭhā* is literally 'a position' or 'attitude,' and in the *bhakti*-cult it is a technical term, meaning the heading under which a saint is to be classed. Some saints are classed as being distinguished for a sense of duty, others as preachers, others for their devotion, others for their hymn-writing, others for their holy love, and so on. Each of these classes is a *niṣṭhā*. A saint may belong to several *niṣṭhās*—a perfect saint belongs to all—but his classification depends on that characteristic which is most prominent from the point of view of the observer.

There are twenty-four of these *niṣṭhās*, and Pratāpa Simha devotes a section of his work to the saints of each. To each section he prefixes an introduction describing the particular characteristic on which the *niṣṭhā* is founded. What are here translated are—

(1) The introduction to the *Dharma niṣṭhā*, or that of which the characteristic is *bhāgavata-dharma*, literally "the morality of those devoted to the Holy One," i.e. what we should call "a State of Grace."

(2) The introduction to the *Dharma-pracāraka niṣṭhā*, or that of Preachers of the Gospel of Grace.

The introduction to the *Dharma niṣṭhā* deals directly with the question of works. It divides good works into two classes, viz., those that are done in the hope of a reward, and those that are done simply to be dedicated to the Holy One. The latter must be entirely free from self-interest, and are then the only works that are of any account towards salvation. This distinction between works which are interested (*sakāma*) and those which are disinterested (*niṣkāma*) fully agrees with the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

But, to the believer in one and only means of salvation—*bhakti*, or faith—the question arises how works, which are the antithesis of faith, can be a means of salvation. The answer is that they act only indirectly. Good works, which are disinterested, produce *bhakti*, and it is this *bhakti*, so produced, that wins release from the weary round of continual births and rebirths.

This idea is further developed in the introduction to the *Dharma-pracāraka niṣṭhā*. Here special stress is laid on the value, both to the doer and to the hearer, of preaching. If the *bhakti*-cult is to be counted as a form of Hinduism (and if it is not, there would be very few Hindūs in India), few statements so inaccurate have been made as that Hinduism is not a missionary religion. Here we have a form of belief which actually *lives* upon its missionary work. It ignores all caste and condemns no religion as utterly useless, and ever since its foundation its converts have increased in geometrical progression. Every follower of the cult is, and if he is genuine must be, a missionary. Nor is the missionary field confined to existing forms of Hindū belief. The common statement that no Musalmān can become a Hindū is disproved by the fact that some of the greatest saints of the cult, men whose hymns are household words and are printed and sold by thousands, were converts from Islām. Others, such as Kabir and Prāṇanātha, succeeded in forming important sects which absorbed many of the actual doctrines of that belief. As in Buddhism, what we may name the laity was not called upon to abandon caste or its old household worship. Kabir's famous couplet—

saba-sē hiliyē, saba-sē miliyē saba-kē lījiyē nāā,
'*hā-jī,*' '*hā-jī*' *saba-sē kahiye basiye apānē gāū—*

teaches universal tolerance, and similarly, in the translation below, we have Pratāpa Siṃha urging us to encourage

our neighbour to study his own scriptures, whether they be those of our belief or not. And then, on the top of this great tolerance, there comes the missionary zeal for preaching faith in a personal God—a God whose name is of small import, whether it be Allāh, or Rāma, or Kṛṣṇa, but always a God who has been incarnate as a man, who loves mankind and calls for mankind's love. So long as this is believed and acted upon, to the *bhakti* reformer, a man might believe what else he liked.

No one, whether he admits the influence of early Christianity upon Indian thought or not, can fail to be struck by the great similarity to Christian teaching presented by much of what follows. We come over and over again upon arguments which for centuries have been familiar to the West. They are seen amidst strange surroundings. Over all there hangs, like a pall, the Indian belief in transmigration, and, in other ways too, the light thrown by Eastern meditation gives us views which may seem to us to be distorted or strange. But it is a matter of illumination, not of substance, and it is good for us to learn that the conventional laws of perspective are not always the same in the Orient and in the Occident.

Save for a few places where compression seemed desirable, my translation is as literal as is consistent with the genius of the English language. My aim, nevertheless, has throughout been to give the sense rather than to strive for verbal reproduction. I have endeavoured to represent the numerous technical terms by the same English words throughout, and have in each case given the original as well when there could be any doubt. In one instance I have not been literal; the words *bhāgavata-dharma* have been translated 'state of grace' or 'gospel of grace,' as the context required. The literal meaning has been given above, but I think that the English technical term represents the force of the original more nearly than any verbal translation. The word *Bhagavat*,

by itself, I have throughout translated by 'the Holy One,' while, as in previous writing on the same subject, I have given 'the LORD' as the equivalent of *Hari*. According to the *bhakti*-doctrine, the Hari-incarnation of Viṣṇu has a very definite and special position in the theology of those who profess it. It is the thirteenth of the twenty-four (not ten) *avatāras* of the school.

THE FIRST *niṣṭhā*: THAT OF MORALITY AND THE STATE OF GRACE.

I bow, first of all, to the mark of the elephant-goad¹ on the foot of the Lord Kṛṣṇa, inasmuch as through meditation thereon that infuriate elephant, the mind, is speedily brought under control. Then bow I to the Fish² incarnation of the Holy One, which for the instruction of the world taught religion to King Śrutadēva³ and protected him by manifesting His own illusion.

Morality (*dharma*) consisteth of the conduct and of those good works (*śubha karma*) which are consonant with the Vēda and with the Sūtras. Its opposite is *adharma*, or unmorality. To adopt conduct that is righteous and to abandon blameworthy deeds, is therefore

¹ The *aṅkuśa*, or elephant-goad, is one of the forty-eight marks said to be on the feet of Viṣṇu, each of which has a mystic meaning. These marks are the lines on the sole of the foot, and correspond to the lines on the hand that are still employed in this country for palmistry.

² The Fish is the first of the ten well-known incarnations of Viṣṇu. According to the legend as preserved in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, viii, 24, in this incarnation Viṣṇu rescued the Vēda from the demon Hayagrīva and saved Vaivasvata Manu in the Deluge. He also instructed Vaivasvata in religion. See the next note.

³ Vaivasvata Manu was a royal sage, and was also called Satyavrata and Śrāddhadēva (see *Bhāg. Pu.*, as above quoted). 'Śrutadēva' in the text seems to be a slip for 'Śrāddhadēva.'

entirely proper and in accordance with the commands of the Vēda, while the man that doeth works (*karma*) that are opposed to these commands goeth to Hell (*naraka*) and suffereth the pangs of the severest torture. Moreover, he undergoeth the ineffably terrible punishment of being subject to rebirths in eighty-four hundreds of thousands of bodies. From the pangs of Hell there may be release by efflux of time, but in the sorrows of return and departure in birth and death there is no cessation. For the return and departure are like unto the motion of the cups on the Persian wheel ever rising and sinking in their turns. So, under the influence of cause and effect, each time that a man receiveth a human body, it is to him as it were a boat for crossing the ocean of existence to the haven of eternal rest, and he maketh an effort for his release from the bonds of his former actions; but the skiff faileth to make the voyage, and he becometh once more bound in the same woe of further births.

If, however, he remain devoted to the commands of the Gospel of Works (*karma-śāstra*, i.e. the Vēda and Sūtras), these works are like unto steps by the which he riseth quickly and easily to the highest station. If a man be without hope from this, then verily is he without hope of salvation. It is true that some are of opinion that in doing works there is no love (*prīti*), and invent false tales about the highest station,¹ but such will themselves never reach perfection. Consider that the Holy One Himself becometh on occasions incarnate that He may reveal the Vēdas or the Gospel of Works, and secure action (*pravṛtti*). No man can succeed in gaining salvation without performing works. Doth He not say in the *Gītā*, "I myself perform works. If I perform them not, others also would abandon them, and I myself should become the

¹ A reference to the 'cat'-school.

cause of the destruction of the world and of caste-interminglings" ?¹ The holy Lord Raghunandana (i.e. Rāma-candra, an incarnation of the Holy One), after He had conquered Rāvaṇa, learned that that demon was by birth a Brāhmaṇa. Therefore, in order to expiate the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa, He performed the *aśvamēdha* sacrifice, and thus set not His foot beyond the lines laid down by the Gospel of Works. If the Holy One acted thus, then what is man that he should obtain release from this departure and return without performing works ?

If it be objected that works are material, while the soul of man is a spirit, and how can the material release the spiritual ? the answer is, just as a boat is a material thing, and yet, with the aid of the hands of the boatman, carrieth thousands across the stream ; or as a flight of steps is material, and yet without it no man can ever reach the upper story ; so are works. They are a help-means for crossing the ocean of existence.

Again, let it be objected that if a man doeth good works and would enjoy their fruits, he must have a body wherewith to enjoy them, and that, as a body is mortal and one day death must come, there will thus continue to be births and rebirths with no release. To this I reply that good works are of two kinds, interested (*sakāma*) and disinterested (*niṣkāma*). Interested works are those which are performed for the accomplishment of some wish. These certainly are the cause of departure and return, because as soon as the word *finis* is written upon the fruits of these good works the man leaveth that heaven which he had earned by them, and returneth to be born

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, iii, 22-4 :—

*yadi hy ahaṁ na vartēyaṁ
mama vartmānuvartantē
utsīdēyur imē lōkā
saṁkarasya ca kartā syāṁ*

*varta ēva ca karmaṇi ||
jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ |
mānuṣyāḥ, Pārtha, sarvaśaḥ ||
na kuryāṁ karma cēd ahaṁ |
upahanyāṁ imāḥ prajāḥ ||*

again upon the earth.¹ Disinterested² good works, on the other hand, are a cause of release and of ultimate salvation. They are those which are performed without any wish: that is to say, the man who performeth them never in any way desireth their fruits, but dedicateth these fruits to, and layeth them before the feet of, the Holy One. Now, the Holy One is imperishable, everlasting, and indestructible, and for this reason those fruits which have been dedicated to Him without any ulterior object also become themselves imperishable, everlasting, and indestructible. Then, in His mercy, the Holy One manifesteth His nature in the heart of the man, or, in other words, begetteth therein a love and devotion for His gracious feet. Just as, when some poor man offereth to a mighty king a gift worth but a few farthings, the king considereth not the value of the gift or the person of the giver, nor giveth in return something merely of the like value, but of his own bounty bestoweth liberally and removeth the poor man's poverty for ever; or again, just as in this world a man giveth a present freely, nor asketh for its price, and the man who receiveth it feeleth gratitude within his heart; so the Holy One, who is the diadem-jewel of those who know the value of gratitude, showeth His full recognition of that which is offered to Him. For when love for the Holy One hath thus entered

¹ It is hardly necessary to point out that the whole of the above is written with a belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Every work, good or bad, has its fruits. Bad works consign the performer, for a longer or shorter period, to one or other of the numerous hells, while good works exalt him to one or other of the numerous heavens under similar conditions. A man's fate after death (so far as it is dependent upon works) is settled by the balance of the fruits of his good and bad works. These fruits, in course of time, become exhausted, and then he has to begin over again. When salvation is gained (in this system of belief) by faith (*bhakti*), the chain of cause and effect is broken, and there is no more rebirth.

² 'Disinterested' (*niṣkāma*) corresponds to what *Bhag. Gītā*, iii, 19, calls *asaṅga*.

into the man's heart and is fostered by the due performance of the daily holy ceremonies, that love increaseth day by day until it hath no bounds, so that the heart becometh pure and in it is established a sure and certain Faith (*bhakti*) in the Holy One. Then, by the blessing of that Faith, he reacheth the feet of the Holy One (*Bhagavat-pada*), and is never born again.

Moreover, the Gospel of Works is the command of the Holy One, and it is a well-known experience that if any servant be continually devoted to carrying out his lord's orders, then that lord is pleased with his man and fulfilleth all his desires. So, wherefore should not the Holy One, who is the Lord of lords, show delight in that servant who obeyeth His commands? Wherefore should He not therefore grant accomplishment to all his efforts, and wherefore should He not release him from the woes of perpetual rebirth? Nay, wondrous in His grace; for, on account of these disinterested works, the Holy One doth Himself grant the earthly wishes of His servants in addition to accepting the offerings made to Him, whereof Prahlāda, Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira, Dhruva, and other saints are witnesses.¹

But this serious doubt may arise that, granted that these good works lose themselves by becoming merged into the Holy One, there are on the other hand evil works committed by the same man, and how can these be caused to disappear without fruit? ² The fact is that works can

¹ The stories of these are all well known, and I need not repeat them here.

² It is of course to be understood that, as has been said in a preceding note, all works have fruits, and unless these fruits are destroyed there must be this 'departure and return' for ever. The fruits of good works are destroyed by being accepted by and merged into the Holy One, but this cannot be expected of the fruits of bad works. These therefore remain, and prevent by their mere existence, irrespectively of the punishment due for them, the salvation of their doer.

also be classed under two other divisions—those that are involuntary (*ajñāta*) and those that are wilful (*jñāta*). Involuntary works (or sins) are those which are expiated by ceremonials such as the daily religious rites (*nitya-sandhyā*), offerings (*bali*), the morning and evening homage (*vaiśva-dēva*), oblations to the Manes (*śrāddha*), hospitality (*abhyāgata-pūjana*), or the like. These expiatory works, when they are disinterested, reach the Holy One, and give the everlasting fruit. As for wilful works (i.e. wilful sins), when a man is devoted to works of the disinterested class, then he committeth not great sins, and if perchance he do commit such, then the Holy One, who is the Lord of good works, Himself forgiveth the sin of the evil works. This is plainly written in the Vēda and other scriptures (*śruti*), and it is verily in accord with justice that when a man hath given the fruit of his good works to the Holy One, his evil works should, for him, no longer remain in existence. As for this question of interested and disinterested works a parable cometh to my mind. If a man have a paid servant or workman, and through him incur any loss, then the servant or the workman, who is paid for his labour and who therefore worketh for reward, will have to make it good. But if the loss be incurred through a slave born in the house, who worketh not for reward, then the master beareth the loss and none thereof falleth upon the slave. Here, the doer of interested works is like the paid servant who worketh for reward, while the doer of disinterested works is like the son of the slave-girl.

The sum of all this is that in accord with the command of the Vēda it is most proper to perform works, provided they are disinterested. The wise men (*jñānī*) and the faithful (*bhakta*) of old, as well as those who are now and those who will be, reached the highest stage through the power of their works alone; as it is written in the *Gītā* that only so did the resolute devotion (*sthīratā*) of heart

in Janaka and other old saints reach perfection,¹ and again that without works there is never emancipation²; in short, all the scriptures are at one that without works there is no salvation.

Moreover, it is forbidden by the law-books (*smṛti*) to apply one's reason to the commands of the Vēda, and to argue that such and such is one of these commands, and is therefore of necessity intended only for such and such a benefit. Opportunity is here taken to show that these commands are not only directed to the future life but are also for earthly benefits. For instance, rising at dawn, bathing, reverence to parents and preceptors, truth-speaking friendship, kindly words, associating with the intelligent, study, avoidance of calumny, being true to salt, common honesty, faithfulness to friends, honouring as a spiritual preceptor (*guru*) him who teacheth wisdom or who leadeth to the Holy One, and undertaking the thousands of holy works, such as lauding the Holy One and the like; or abstaining from falsehood, theft, adultery, taking of life, gambling, winebibbing, association with the wicked, deception, treachery, stupidity, ingratitude, and the like; or not allowing one's attention to be distracted when bathing in a river, or when walking in a rain-storm, or when being shaved; or not eating tainted or very indigestible food, or another's leavings, or anything pungent, sour, or salt, and on the contrary making

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, iii, 20 :—

karmanaiva hi saṁsiddhim āsthītā Janakādayaḥ |

By works alone did Janaka and the rest work for complete accomplishment.

Cf. iv, 15 :—

ēvaṁ jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma pūrvair api mumukṣubhiḥ |
kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṁ kṛtaṁ ||

² As suggested to me by Dr. Barnett, the passage referred to is evidently *Bhagavad Gītā*, iii, 4 :—

na karmāṇāṁ anārambhān naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣo 'śnutē |

Without undertaking works no one attains to worklessness.

one's food of digestible, palatable, sweet, and tender substances; or not going by night upon a mountain,—there are commands for thousands of such works, and they should be obeyed, for what benefits do they not confer even in this life! Nay, there are some works of this kind which are such that if a man do not perform them he is even expelled from his caste.

Nevertheless, evil fortune hath entangled some so that they never turn their thoughts towards the commands of the Vēda, and many even say: "Sir, how is it possible for any man to perform works as they are ordained in the Scriptures? There is no place where you can put down your foot with certainty. There is no knowing where you are among them." Here we see the real cause for these people abstaining from the commands of the Scriptures, namely, that they have never had an opportunity of hearing them. For the commands, both orders and prohibitions, are so simple that any man can follow them. Even if some procedure be enjoined that is extremely difficult of accomplishment, beside it another kind of command is also written by which all difficulty is done away with. Thus, if the oil of a lamp fall upon the hand, so large a quantity of earth is prescribed for cleansing the hand that great difficulty would be experienced in carrying out the direction; but in the same passage it is explained that this means that the hand is rendered clean by rubbing it upon the ground. Again, in many places the extremely difficult *cāndrāyana*¹ fast is enjoined as a penance for certain sins, yet in the same places it is written that if it be found too difficult, then a fast for three days, or even for one day, may be

¹ The name of a fast regulated by the moon, the food being diminished every day by one mouthful during the dark fortnight, and increased in like manner during the light fortnight. I regret that I have failed to identify the passages referred to.

substituted. This showeth how all the commands of the Scriptures are in truth easy of accomplishment, and that the only difficulty is to understand them, and to gird up the loins in the resolve to perform them.

This also should be considered that, if it were not intended that men should carry out these commands, why then were they ever written in the Scriptures? There are many classes of people who are called infidels (*nāstika*) or barbarians (*mlēccha*), and they are so called because they obey not the command of the Vēda, but the rather conduct themselves in opposition to it. It followeth therefore that whosoever conduct (*pravṛtti*) be not based upon these commands is, for this account only, an infidel and a barbarian; while if a man venture to call the Scriptures false, or to consider them merely to be like any other knowledge, or to speak of Heaven and Hell as old wives' fables, without doubt his lot will be damnation (*durgati*).

THE SECOND *niṣṭhā*: THAT OF PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL OF GRACE.

I bow to the Vyāsa¹ incarnation of the Holy Lord Kṛṣṇa, that incarnation by the which He revealed the Vēdas for the salvation of the world, and in the which He spread abroad the Gospel of Grace by composing the Brahma-sūtras, the Mahābhārata, the eighteen Purāṇas, and the Books of the Law (Smṛti). Then bow I to the mark of the Thunderbolt² upon His lotus-feet, the destroyer of the terrible Vṛtrāsura and of the mountains of sin.

¹ Including the well-known ten, followers of the *bhakti*-religion count no less than twenty-four incarnations of Viṣṇu. Of these twenty-four the Vyāsa is the eleventh.

² Regarding the marks on the feet see note 1 on p. 342. Indra with his thunderbolt slew Vṛtra, and cut off the wings of mountains. Similarly, meditation on the thunderbolt mark on Viṣṇu's foot crumbles the mountain of sin to dust.

[Having dealt in the preceding section with the question of morality (*dharma*) and works (*karma*) generally, the author now proceeds to distinguish between morality and a state of grace (*bhāgavata-dharma*). The latter he defines as resulting from all those disinterested (*niṣkāma*) works which, whether in this or in any future life, are dedicated to the Holy One and are concerned with faith (*bhakti*) in Him. Morality, he explains, includes all good works, whether interested (*sakāma*) or disinterested, while the works which constitute a state of grace must be disinterested. All this involves a great deal of repetition of what has been already said above, and I do not translate it. He then proceeds:—]

Although the heart of a faithful one (*bhakta*) devoted to the observance of the Gospel of Grace, and with his thoughts at each moment turned only to Him, is independent of the necessity of doing or of abstaining from any other works, still many teachers have said that it is by the power of works that faith in the Holy One cometh into existence, and that until he hath forgotten every bodily fetter, and hath become totally absorbed (*magna*) (in his faith), he must continue performing the obligatory ceremonies, such as the daily rites (*sandhyā*) and the like. The contradiction here is only apparent, for if a man be devoted with a single mind to the Gospel of Grace, then every work that he may do is concerned with faith, and cannot be considered as a work, but as an act of faith.

Whoever be a preacher of this Gospel of Grace, as it hath been above declared, he is as it were its boat, which not only crosseth itself, but also carrieth others across. The saying *taraṇa-tāraṇa*, or the ferrier of the ferried, is well known, and was invented to be said of such faithful saints (*bhakta*). Although the Holy One Himself is a preacher of the Gospel of Grace, inasmuch as He taught the Vēda unto Brahmā, and the state of grace hath

been spread abroad through being in accordance with the Vēda, nevertheless, in His special mercy, He showed such unceasing graciousness towards this currency that He threw not the entire weight even upon Brahmā, but also employed other means for its further diffusion.

Firstly, He caused faithful ones and mighty saints to prepare and utter *sūtras*, *tantras*, law-books (*smṛti*), the six systems of philosophy, the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki, the Mahābhārata, and other *itihāsas* and *purāṇas*, so that, being in accordance with them, the currency was fostered, and at the same time mankind received benefit from hearing them read and from reciting them. Afterwards, when the Holy One perceived that the tastes of men had become directed towards the art of poetry, He taught them by means of dramas, *campūs*, epics (*kāvya*s), and poetics (*sāhitya*), and when He saw that, in studying these, people's intellects became wearied and confused, He moved men to write commentaries. When mankind did not perfectly understand even these, in the Kali age He made manifest Sūra-dāsa, Tulasi-Dāsa, Nābhā (the author of the *Bhakta-māla*), Agra-dāsa, Nanda-dāsa,¹ and others, to narrate in their own tongue His deeds and the Gospel of Grace, and this again gave them currency in the world.

As a second means, He Himself, with His own lotus-mouth, clearly explained it, and having caused Lakṣmī, His attendants (*pārṣada*), Brahmā, Śiva, Sanaka and his brethren, Nārada, Śukra, Bṛhaspati, Vasiṣṭha, the Vyāsa, and thousands of others² to become spiritual guides (*guru*),

¹ These are the names of famous poets of the *bhakti*-school. They all wrote in the vernacular.

² All the persons named above are well known to students of Sanskrit literature. According to the *bhakti*-system they were energetic proclaimers of the gospel. One important tradition may be mentioned. Nārāyaṇa himself taught Lakṣmī. She taught the *Pārṣadas*. These *Pārṣadas*, or attendants on the Holy One, occupy a very prominent place in the theology of the school. Their leader was Viṣvak-sēna. He taught Śaṭha-kōpa, who taught Vopadēva, who taught Śrīnātha, who taught

through them He gave instruction in this Gospel of Grace. In the Kali age, manifesting Himself by partial incarnations of various kinds as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Mādhava, Viṣṇusvāmī, Vallabha, Hita Hari-varṁśa,¹ and hundreds of other teachers (*ācārya*), He even now, in His mercy, giveth salvation to millions of sinful men.

Puṇḍarikākṣa, who taught Rāma-miśra, who taught Parāṅkuśa, who taught Yamunācārya, who taught Pūrṇācārya, who taught Rāmānuja. It is thus claimed that Rāmānuja, the great founder of the modern Rāma-bhakti religion, was twelfth in spiritual descent from Nārāyaṇa himself, through Lakṣmī and Viṣvak-sēna.

¹ These are all famous religious teachers. Śaṅkara was the great Vēdānta apostle. He cannot, by any stretch, be looked upon as a teacher of *bhakti*. His followers make him an incarnation of Śiva. To a Vaiṣṇava, that deity was one of Viṣṇu's pupils in *bhakti* (see below). The ordinary Vaiṣṇava explanation (see, e.g., Hariścandra's *Vaiṣṇava Sarvasva*, p. 5) of Śiva's connexion with Śaṅkara is that when the world was filled with Buddhism and other heresies, the Holy One directed Śiva to become incarnate and to preach a doctrine invented by himself (Śiva), so as to turn people from the Holy One and to manifest his glory by the consequent destruction of unbelievers. Wilson (*Religious Sects*, p. 11) quotes a similar legend from the *Padma Purāṇa*, a Vaiṣṇava work, according to which Namuci and other Daityas had become so powerful by the purity of their devotions that Indra and the other gods were unable to oppose them. The gods had recourse to Viṣṇu, who ordered Śiva to introduce Śaiva tenets, by which the Daityas were beguiled and rendered "wicked and thence weak." The idea of the Supreme Being Himself being the motive cause of the invention of heretical doctrines, in order to consign their believers to damnation, conveys quite a refreshing whiff of Western *odium theologicum*.

Rāmānuja, the founder of the *Śrī-saṃpradāya*, which directed its faith more especially to Rāma, is said by his followers to be an incarnation of Śeṣa, the serpent of eternity. The name of the sect is derived from Śrī, or Lakṣmī, through whom, as explained in the preceding note, Rāmānuja is believed to have had spiritual descent.

Nimbārka, the founder of the second, or *Sanakādi*-, *saṃpradāya*, is said to have been an incarnation of Sūrya, or the sun. The Holy One, in his incarnation as a *Haṁsa*, or swan (the fourteenth in the *bhakti* list of incarnations), taught Sanaka and his brethren, who taught Nārada, who taught Nimbārka or Nimbāditya. The followers of this sect worship Rāma and Kṛṣṇa conjointly.

Mādhava or Madhvācārya, the founder of the third, or *Brahma*-, *saṃpradāya*, is said to have been an incarnation of Vāyu, or the air, and had been previously incarnate as Hanumān and as Bhīma. He also had spiritual descent from the *Haṁsa* incarnation of the Holy One. *Haṁsa*

Thirdly, He manifested temples and images, places for adoration and austerities, such as Badarikāśrama,¹ His own abodes on this earth, such as Mathurā² and Ayōdhyā,³ and bathing-places, such as the Ganges, the Yamunā, or Puṣkara, that by their power faith might be spread abroad.

The sum of the whole is this, that so desirous is the Holy One for the spread and for the confirmation of His Gospel of Grace, that whenever even the smallest

taught Brahmā, who taught Nārada, who taught the Vyāsa, who taught Subuddha, who taught Narahari, who taught Mādhava. The sect is a Vaiṣṇava one, and its distinguishing point is that it teaches duality, or the distinctness of the principle of life from the Supreme Being. Although a *bhakti*-sect, it does not single out any special incarnation of the Holy One for worship. For further particulars of his teaching see R. G. Bhandarkar, *Report on the search for Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bombay Presidency during the year 1883-84*, p. 74.

Viṣṇusvāmī, the founder of the fourth, or *Rudra*-, *sampradāya*, is said to have been an incarnation of the Vyāsa. His spiritual descent is derived from the Varada-rāja form of the Holy One, who taught Śiva, who taught Prēmananda. From the last-named, Viṣṇusvāmī was forty-eighth in spiritual descent. The sect is considered to have been derived from Śiva or Rudra, whence its name. It is devoted mainly to the worship of the Holy One under the form of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.

These four, the *Śrī*-, the *Sanakādi*-, the *Brahma*-, and the *Rudra*-, are the four great *Sampradāyas*, or Churches of the *bhakti*-school. Every sect claims to be a member or branch of one or other of them. The first and the last are the two which are current in Northern India, and with which I am best acquainted. The *Śrī-sampradāya* includes all those sects which specially worship Rāma, and the *Rudra-sampradāya* those that worship Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. According to Wilson the dates of the four masters are as follows :—Rāmānuja, middle of the twelfth century ; Nimbārka, date unknown (tradition makes him very ancient) ; Mādhava, early in thirteenth century ; Viṣṇusvāmī, date unknown (tradition puts him as living during the war of the Mahābhārata).

Vallabha, or Vallabhācārya, was a teacher of the *Rudra-sampradāya*, born in 1479 A.D., who founded the *Vallabhācārī* sect, and introduced the now very popular worship of the infant Kṛṣṇa.

Hita Harivaṁśa (born 1559 A.D.) was the founder of the well-known Rādhā-vallabhī sect, and a famous poet. According to some he belonged to the *Brahma*-, and according to others to the *Sanakādi-sampradāya*.

¹ I.e., Badrināth in Garhwāl, a famous place of pilgrimage. One of the sources of the Ganges.

² The abode of Kṛṣṇa.

³ The abode of Rāma.

impediment thereto appeareth, then He Himself, the Holy One, becometh incarnate to slay the offender and to make steadfast His own people. In the *Gītā*,¹ saith the Holy One, “Arjuna, when piety (*dharma*) minisheth and impiety waxeth strong, then do I myself become incarnate to protect my Faithful (*bhakta*), to destroy the wicked, and to establish my Gospel of Grace.”

It therefore followeth of necessity, and is most urgent, that everyone should labour and endeavour to spread abroad the Gospel of Grace; for not only doth this please the Holy One, but also he that spreadeth it abroad is counted as forming a part of His *vibhūta avatāra*, or ‘transcendent’ incarnation. Somewhere is it written in the Scriptures that he who taketh one that is averse and turneth him towards the Holy One, hath earned the fruits of ten thousand horse-sacrifices. Now these are among the means of spreading the Gospel of Grace,—telling the Gospel of the Lord: erecting temples, choirs (*bhajana-kutī*), rest-houses, gardens, wells, tanks, schools, and buildings where they who hymn the Holy One and where the world at large may find rest; composing narratives of His deeds and commentaries on ancient works; encouraging the Gospel of the Holy One and putting aside that which is opposed to it; the distribution of daily alms (*sadā-vrata*), especially at holy places such as Badarikāśrama, Ayōdhyā, or Haridvāra; vigils and attendance at litanies (*kīrtana*) on the eleventh² of each

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, iv, 7, 8:—

<i>yadā yadā hi dharmasya</i>	<i>glānir bhavati, Bhārata </i>
<i>abhyutthānam adharmasya</i>	<i>tadātmānam sṛjamy aham </i>
<i>paritrāṇāya sādhuṇām.</i>	<i>vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām </i>
<i>dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya</i>	<i>sambhavāmi yugē yugē </i>

It will be observed that the people preserved are called *sādhu*, not *bhakta*. Strictly speaking, in technical language, the two words do not connote the same thing.

² The eleventh *tithi* of each lunar fortnight is sacred to Viṣṇu. It is known as the *Hari-vāsara*, the LORD’s day.

fortnight and on other fast days dedicated to the Holy One ; considering as days sacred to the Holy One the festivals of His various incarnations and other occasions dedicated to His memory, rejoicing on them openly and with affection ; doing a man's best to learn and to teach ; and all other such actions as shall turn men's hearts to the Holy One.

Who can worthily describe or fitly extol him who is a faithful servant of the Holy One, and the man whose heart and soul are directed only towards the welfare and salvation of his neighbours ? He hath achieved the Great Success. Nay, even he is dear unto the Holy One who preacheth the Gospel of Grace only for his own glory and to be seen of men ; for through such a man thousands may be put upon the way of salvation, and by virtue of the morality which he must needs practise, or by the prayer of some Faithful one, his own heart may perchance turn really to the Holy One. The Scriptures never weary in celebrating the favour shown by Him unto those that preach the Gospel. I call to mind one story from the *Prapannāmṛta*¹ about Anantācārya. A breach became formed in the road between the temple and the town in which he preached, so that the way became obstructed. In order that the people might have no difficulty in going backwards and forwards, Anantācārya himself took a basket and mattock, and began to fill up the hollow. He asked his wife, who was then far gone in pregnancy, to help him in his work. When the time of her labour drew nigh and she carried hardly the basket of earth, the Holy One, Himself, in His graciousness, took the form of a coolie, and bade her rest while He carried the basket for her. After a while Anantācārya beheld a coolie

¹ An anonymous life of Rāmānuja. Anantācārya was one of the most eminent of Rāmānuja's successors as a preacher of *bhakti*. See Hariścandra's *Caritāvalī*, p. 25.

doing his wife's work, and running up to him with a stick cried angrily to him: "Who art thou that, without permission given, takest a share in my labour?" As he approached, the Holy One fled (for there was naught else for him to do) and took refuge within the temple. Anantācārya ran in after him, cudgel in hand, and when he had entered, lo! the image of the Holy One therein had its body smeared with mud, and was all covered with the dust of the road. Then Anantācārya understood that the Holy One, in His graciousness to one who preached His Gospel, had taken compassion on his wife and had Himself carried her basket. Folding his hands in supplication, and drowned in a sea of love, he cried: "Lord, have compassion on me! Such a deed was the labour of a slave, and yet it hath been done unto me by my Master!"

In this way we see that it is incumbent on every man, with all his heart and soul and strength, to preach as best he can this supreme Gospel. If a man be skilled in words and learned, let him compose histories of the Holy One; and let him remember that there have been hundreds of poets who have chattered without measure, but all the time have not once thought of writing one line about Him or His glorious deeds. Often hath it been said unto such an one, "Cleanse thy voice and thy heart by telling of the glory of the Holy One," and this one will give answer, "Sir, I am busy describing the doctrine of the identity of the universe with the Deity," and that one replieth, "I must suit my rhymes to the times," and yet another saith, "A poet hath no leisure for heeding anything but metre and diction. *Laborare est orare*. This is an effectual way of serving the Holy One."¹ Such answers are bootless, and such work hath no profit in it; for the long and short of

¹ The first reply is supposed to be given by a professor of the pantheism of the *advaita Vēdānta*, to which the *bhakti*-belief is in the strongest opposition. '*Laborare est orare*' is a free translation of *yah bhī to Bhagavat-bhajan hai*.

it is that the poem, or any composition with all the graces possible of style, that doth not tell of the acts of the Holy One, is altogether fruitless and most base. Odious is it as a fair moon-faced damsel who goeth about naked and unashamed.

Moreover, most of the business of this world hath its foundation on wealth and on great possessions, and well know the rich that no one had wealth in the beginning nor will he keep it to the end. Empty-handed did he come, and empty-handed will he go. This wealth is named *māyā*, or illusion, and Lakṣmī, who is its guardian goddess, is the faithful spouse of the Holy One. Where her Lord is not, there will she not remain, but instantly departeth. Therefore let him, who would make his wealth to be eternal, lay it upon the path of the Holy One, and pass his time in service and in worship. Thousands have there been of opulent bankers and men of great possessions. Yet their very names are now forgotten. But the name of every man who hath built a temple or a choir, or who hath dug a tank, endureth to this day. The pity of it is that so many who gain wealth spend not more of it upon the spreading abroad of the Gospel of Grace. The knowledge of God, of the soul, of the world, of heaven, of hell, of faith, of knowledge itself, of freedom from the passions, and of the churches and their teachings, all dependeth upon means of learning. Now that the four castes, Brāhmaṇs, Kṣattriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras, have all given up the habit of searching the scriptures, all moralities have become destroyed. In the Deccan—in Cināpaṭṭana (i.e. Madras), Telinga, Drāviḍa, and the twelve Malhārs¹—there is a law that if any boy be disobedient in applying himself to the

¹ Dr. Fleet, to whom I am also indebted for the reference to Cināpaṭṭana, suggests that 'the twelve Malhārs' means 'the Mallāḍ,' a Kanarese corruption of *Malnāḍ*, *Malanāḍu*, and a well-known name for the Ghāt regions of the Kanarese country. Why the writer numbers them as twelve is not clear.

scriptures, his elders take the order of the ruler of the land, and send him to school with fetters on his legs; nor are these taken off until he study the scriptures through and through. For this cause is every man in that land steadfast in morals. From the Brāhmaṇs down to the lowest castes, no one is ignorant of the doctrines of his own religion, and but few become entangled in the meshes of the words of the ungodly. Therefore, let every man, so far as in him lieth, help the reading of the scriptures, whether those of his own church or those of another. If he know not Sanskrit, then the reading of them in his mother-tongue will accomplish all that he desireth. Such glory hath the Holy One given unto the *Sūra-sāgara*¹ and to the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Tulasī-dāsa² that they who study them from day to day, of a surety become dear unto Him. So also is the glory of the words of Nanda-dāsa, Kṛṣṇa-dāsa, Agra-dāsa, and Chīta-svāmi;³ and in the commencement of the commentary to the *Bhaktā-mālā*⁴ it is written how it is all-important that a man should have the story of the Holy One recited and should teach others to hear it, and that, just as he bringeth up his retainers and his children and his children's children in the conduct of this world, so should he turn others to the Holy One, and teach them His *Thousand names*,⁵ the *Gītā*,⁶ the *Stava-rāja*,⁷ and such

¹ The work of Sūra-dāsa. The vernacular Bible of the Kṛṣṇa-worshippers.

² The famous *Rāma-carita-mānasa*. The vernacular Bible of the Rāma-worshippers. These two works are between them said to exhaust all possibilities of the poet's art.

³ These are all poet saints of the northern *Bhakti*-school.

⁴ The famous work of Nābhā-dāsa, the *Acta Sanctorum* of the *Bhakti*-school. I have failed to trace the passage referred to.

⁵ A section of the *Anuśāsana Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, cataloguing the thousand names of Viṣṇu. Its repetition is over and over again enjoined on *Bhaktas*.

⁶ The *Bhagavad Gītā*.

⁷ The name of Bhīṣma's hymn in honour of Kṛṣṇa, in the *Śānti Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*. The title means the 'King of Hymns of Praise.'

scriptures. For if a man turn not his family and his household towards the Gospel of Grace, and teach not the knowledge that holdeth thereunto, then the sin, lasting his life long, lieth upon the heads of his parents, who trained him not up to teach, and showed him not its necessity. Contrariwise, if a man hath in his family those who are faithful to the Holy One, he releaseth from hell not only himself, but also them that went before him. Prahlāda and others are witnesses of this.

O Thou Ocean of Mercy ! O Thou Friend of the lowly ! O Thou Royal Moon of Vraja ! deign Thou to come for a while unto this house, and to cast a glance upon Thy slave. For, save at thy lotus-feet, there is no other refuge, no other guardian. If Thou wilt but look upon the works which I have dedicated unto Thee, no longer shall I be compelled to linger here through the round of countless births and rebirths. Therefore, in Thy mercy and in Thy compassion alone do I take refuge ; and though I know full well that I offer praise and honour and devotion and adulation to the worldly, who have turned aside from Thee, a thousand times more than I pass my time in reverential devotion and meditation upon Thee, still the bark of faith will bear me across in but a moment of time. But, so luckless, so vile, so sinful, is this heart of mine, that even by mistake it turneth not willingly to Thee, and, therefore, in order that this heart, foolish, and dull of comprehension, may ever bear Thee in mind and thus may speedily gain its highest wish, have I laid out a fair garden on the bank of the holy Yamunā.

(The writer concludes with a poetical description of this garden in which he has built a shrine for the due worship of the Holy One. It is not necessary for our present purpose to translate it.)

* * * * *

So ends the *Bhakta-kalpadruma* account of the doctrine of works. One important point has been obscured by my

method of translation. I have given the "Gospel of Grace" as the equivalent of the vernacular *Bhāgavata Dharma*, but the original words link the modern *bhaktas* in an unmistakable manner with a past far older than Christianity. Some months ago, in a discussion held in this room on the influence of early Christianity upon modern Hinduism,¹ I hesitated to ascribe so ancient an origin to the modern *bhakti*-doctrine. That that doctrine, as it now stands, has been deeply influenced by Christianity I am still as convinced as ever, but further study in the direction suggested by Professor Keith has led me to give more weight than I had hitherto done to the importance of its descent from the old Bhāgavata monotheistic religion dating from an age perhaps contemporary with the early Upaniṣads, introduced and spread abroad not by Brāhmaṇs but by men of other castes in opposition to Brahmanic pantheism, and ultimately absorbed, like many other Indian religions, by Brahmanism itself. That the ancient Bhāgavata faith was originally a rival of the Vedic religion is, I think, admitted by all scholars, whether Indian or European, who have studied the subject. As adopted by Brāhmaṇs, and given a superficial Vedic coating, we have it in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and even here the loose connexion with orthodox Brahmanism is patent in every line. As Mr. Telang shows, all that we can say of the author of the poem as we have it now is that he does not throw the Vēdas absolutely overboard. He even contends that acting upon the ordinances of the Vēda is an obstacle to the attainment of the *summum bonum*. But the Brāhmaṇs, compelled by the exigencies of their struggle against Buddhism, had been forced to make terms with this hostile teaching, and to endeavour to show that it was consonant with their own. Having once drawn the followers of the Bhāgavata religion within their fold,

¹ See Journal of the Society for 1907, p. 493.

they have, with characteristic astuteness, infected it more and more with their own ideas, till we see it as presented in what has been here translated. The supernatural holiness of everything touched upon by the Vēdas is now insisted upon, and has given rise to the controversy regarding faith and works that has divided the Bhāgavata churches as sharply as it has the Christian Churches of the West. Going back to the origins, we see that, as all the world over, it is to the priestly caste that we owe the emphasis laid upon works and ceremonial, while it is the laity,—the Kṣātriyas and Vaiśyas of ancient India,—who first laid down the law of the necessity of devotion and faith that in the course of centuries has developed into the modern Hindū doctrine of *bhakti*.